

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION RANKED 45TH IN THE NATION

The College of Education continues to prove that it is a nationwide leader in education research and teacher preparation. *U.S. News and World Report* ranked the College of Education number 45 of all colleges of education in the nation in 2009 *America's Best Graduate Schools*, with five programs ranked in the top 25 in their respective areas.

RANKED 18TH IN HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION

The Program in Higher Education celebrated 50 years of excellence in 2007. Its master's, specialist and doctoral programs are consistently recognized as some of the best at preparing leaders in the fields of higher education. Graduates are employed nationwide as both K-12 and postsecondary level administrators.

RANKED 19TH IN COUNSELING AND PERSONNEL SERVICES

Master's and doctoral students are trained in the Program in Psychological Services for roles as psychologists, school psychologists, and career and mental health counselors. The program affords the College a unique relationship with the FSU Career Center through the Center for the Study of Technology in Counseling and Career Development where jointly appointed faculty conduct research and service that leads to career-based programs in universities and governments around the world.

RANKED 19TH IN EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION

The Program in Educational Leadership/Administration develops and enhances dynamic, high-performing leadership for the renewal and improvement of schools and school systems. Offering on-campus and distance-learning curricula at the master's, doctoral and specialist levels, the program's research focuses on topic areas such as improving schools and school systems, effective teaching and learning, and ethics in educational leadership.

RANKED 19TH IN EDUCATIONAL POLICY

Offering doctoral, master's and certificate programs, the Program in Educational Policy and Evaluation prepares individuals for policy-related careers that involve designing, developing, implementing, analyzing and evaluating federal, state and local educational policies, as well as preparing students to teach and research at the university level.

RANKED 24TH IN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

The Program in Educational Psychology offers master's and doctoral programs in three specific areas of specialization: learning and cognition, measurement and statistics, and sport psychology. Led by world-class faculty in each of these fields, the programs conduct educational research in a broad range of topic areas.

FACULTY PROFILE: FEEDING OFF KRYPTONITE

By NASH McCUTCHEN

Joe Valente appears to be a typical academic devoted to his students and passionate about his research in Deaf and disability studies. But as he speaks, the depth of his enthusiasm points to another dimension shimmering beneath the surface. Valente is a superhero and he is gunning to quell the repressive forces of disability discourse.

Superhero may seem a dramatic description, but it is a fitting analogy for someone who, as a self-proclaimed comic book junkie, has been fighting his own form of Kryptonite since infancy.

At six weeks of age, Valente contracted a near-fatal fever that claimed most of his hearing. Surprisingly, the deafness itself has never been his nemesis. Instead it is the predominant and insistent belief that deafness is a disability, often promoted by the medical and educational communities, that has served as a spirit-sapping Kryptonite.

There are two warring schools of thought on deafness. The pathological philosophy views hearing loss as a physical disability, seeks treatment through devices such as hearing aids or cochlear implants and tends to reject the use of sign language. In essence, deaf children are regarded as broken vessels that must be fixed.

The cultural philosophy, espoused by advocates of the *Deaf community, is radically different. This view rejects the notion of

disability, indicating that Deafness describes a minority group defined by their shared symbols, values and language (American Sign Language). Cultural proponents believe that Deaf children should be accepted as they are and allowed to flourish through the use of their natural language.

Though Valente subscribes to the latter, he was educated in an environment that reflected the pathological viewpoint. As a student he was not permitted to use sign language and was forced to learn to speak. He recalls feeling like an "in-between," not fitting neatly into the hearing world and not having access to deaf peers – essentially belonging nowhere. He suggests that this absence of cultural identity can be devastating to the emotional, intellectual and spiritual development of a child.

"Without peers, you can't enculturate. The problem with mainstreaming (inclusion) is that it ends up actually excluding the child who is different."

Nevertheless, the clinical model seemed to work for him. Only 20 percent of deaf students who enter college graduate, and he has decisively broken the mold by attaining two advanced degrees. He contends that his success occurred despite the educational system, not because of it. When asked what factors led to his achievement his answer points to destiny.



Joe Valente, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education
School of Teacher Education

Valente received his Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Bates College in Lewiston, Maine. He earned a Master's of Education and a Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction from Arizona State University.

His first book, *d/Deaf and d/Dumb: A Portrait of a Deaf Kid as a Young Superhero*, has been accepted for publication by Peter Lang Publishing Group and scheduled for distribution in 2010.

www.peterlang.com

**In print, the pathological view of deafness is identified by standard lower case, deaf – while the cultural view applies capitalization to the word, Deaf.*



“IF YOU WANT ANSWERS, I’M NOT THE PERSON TO CONNECT WITH. IF YOU WANT MORE QUESTIONS, TALK TO ME.”

“I guess I feed off the Kryptonite ... I vividly remember my childhood and I was hurt a lot as a kid. I promised myself that I would do something about that ... It is my purpose to tell the larger world how they impose on young children.”

Valente believes he was appointed by whatever cosmic forces rule the universe to relay a message. The superpower he was granted – an antidote to the Kryptonite – is found in his distinctive method of research that emotionally and intellectually engages the reader.

“The problem with research is that it can be boring ... I use creative writing methods infused with theories from the social sciences and humanities ... when you read about marginalized populations, I want you to cry, laugh, become angry.”

Valente also uses testimonials as a major source of data. Before receiving advanced degrees he recalls being deemed unqualified to comment on special education. Yet he felt an authoritative claim on the needs of special education students precisely because he was one.

“The real experts are the children, the parents – the people on the front lines. They are the ones who deserve to be heard.”

Another unique aspect of Valente’s technique is that he borrows and combines theoretical models from a variety of sources.

“Most scholars follow a theory and if it is proven wrong, the world ends. But theory is just a tool and rarely will you see me use the same methods throughout my work. Anthropology to Zoology, I’m using all of it.”

Valente feels honored to be at Florida State University where his unorthodox approach to research has been welcomed, and credits the open-mindedness of College of Education Dean Marcy Driscoll.

“I have a great sense of pride in Florida State ... of all the representatives of institutions I visited, Dean Driscoll was the only one who clued in to what I was talking about. Did she agree with everything I put forth? I don’t know, but she engaged me.”

In the School of Teacher Education Valente challenges students to interrogate constructs and think creatively rather than frantically searching for an absolute truth. He is more interested in initiating inquiry than in hammering audiences with 60 minutes of theoretical information that may not be applicable in the real world.

“In my classes we are always spinning. If you want answers, I’m not the person to connect with. If you want more questions, talk to me.”

Valente hopes to raise enough questions about the current educational approach to disability that minds open to needed change. He looks to the day when disability discourse defines children by what they possess rather than by what they lack. He is resurrecting the voices of children who are too often silenced and urging a world of perfectly functioning ears to listen.



SNAPSHOT: EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY & LEARNING SYSTEMS

By CANDICE FRANCO

The Department of Educational Psychology and Learning Systems (EPLS) prepares students to become leading researchers, dynamic faculty and skilled practitioners in the fields of educational psychology, instructional systems and psychological services.

COLLABORATION

In October, EPLS hosted a symposium as part of the Dean’s Colloquium Series. The symposium, Assessment for the 21st Century: Insight, focused on efficiently and responsibly integrating assessment and instruction. It allowed COE faculty and students to collaborate with Florida’s policymakers and agency officials, assessment specialists, and educational professionals on how to improve student learning in today’s environment.

Keynote speakers included national experts in the field who presented their research and discussed how current research might shape policy recommendations for Florida’s schools.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Project KICK received its third consecutive award when named the Substance Abuse Best Practices Recognition Program by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association (FADAA).

Project KICK (Kids In Cooperation with Kids) focuses on the prevention of involvement with the criminal justice system and drug use through peer mentoring, family/community service and achievement motivation.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Issy Masduki** and **Jennifer Myers**, Instructional Systems, won top prize for the PacifiCorp Design and Development Award that recognizes the most innovative solution to a business problem dealing with learning and performance.
- **MaryAnn Green**, School Psychology, received the 2008 Minority Scholarship Award from the National Association of School Psychology.
- **Kimberlee Bethany Bonura**, Sport Psychology, received the American Psychological Association (APA) Division 47 – Exercise and Sport Psychology – Dissertation Award

The Project KICK team



WELCOME NEW FACULTY

Angela Canto
Assistant Professor
Ph.D., Florida State University

Pei-Hua Chen
Assistant Professor
Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin

Georgios Lampropoulos
Assistant Professor
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Valerie Shute
Associate Professor
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