

# Head Start Graduate Student Research Program: 2007 Research Scholars

**Amy M. Casey, M.Ed.**

*Project Title:*

Receipt of feedback as a predictor of teachers' use of recommended practices

*Mentor :*

R.A. McWilliam, Ph.D.

*Project Funding Years:*

2007-2009

*University Affiliation:*

Vanderbilt University Medical Center

*Project Abstract:*

Vanderbilt University Medical Center will examine the current supervision and feedback practices in Head Start and childcare centers from teachers' perspectives. The specific aim of the study is to determine whether performance feedback is being used nationwide and whether teachers who receive performance feedback are more likely to use recommended practices. A questionnaire assessing use of recommended practices and receipt of feedback will be mailed to a nationwide sample of 1,824 teachers from Head Start programs and programs accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The effect of feedback on teachers' use of recommended practices will be examined. It is expected that results from this study will provide information about preferred supervision strategies, how performance feedback is being used by teachers, and whether teachers are more likely to use recommended practices when they receive feedback about their behavior in the classroom.

*Sample:*

150 lead and assistant Head Start teachers (field test)

16 Head Start teachers (focus groups)

1,824 preschool teachers from Head Start programs and programs accredited by NAEYC (survey)

*Measures:*

Author developed receipt of feedback and use of recommended practices questionnaire

## **Carl Hermanns**

### *Project Title:*

Leveling the playing field: Investigating vocabulary development in Latino preschool-age English Language learners

### *Mentor:*

Catherine Snow, Ph.D.

### *Project Funding Years:*

2007-2009

### University Affiliation

Harvard Graduate School of Education

### *Project Abstract:*

Harvard Graduate School of Education will examine the impact of a vocabulary development intervention, dialogic reading, for Head Start Latino English Language Learners (ELL). In addition, the researchers will assess the effect of including the home language in the intervention process. Study participants will consist of 137 ELL children from ten Head Start classrooms. The intervention will occur over 12 weeks. Children will be assigned to one of three treatment conditions: Spanish-English; English-only; and a comparison group. Children in the two treatment groups will read two books per week and be introduced to six target vocabulary words each week that are found in both books. General vocabulary knowledge in Spanish and in English will be assessed using the Spanish and English versions of the Receptive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test (ROWPVT and ROWPVT-SP). Target word vocabulary knowledge will be measured in Spanish and English using researcher-developed assessments modeled on the ROWPVT and ROWPVT-SP. Results from this study will contribute to the current knowledge of effective early literacy for Head Start English language learners and provide Head Start teachers with the skills to implement dialogic reading as part of their daily curriculum.

### *Sample*

137 ELLs

### *Measures*

Children

Receptive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test (ROWPVT)

Receptive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test – Spanish Edition (ROWPVT-SP)

Target Vocabulary Assessment - English (TVA-E)

## Target Vocabulary Assessment –Spanish (TVA-SP)

### **Amy E. Lowenstein, M.P.P**

#### *Project Title:*

Fostering the socio-emotional adjustment of Hispanic English Language Learners: A comparison of the effects of the universal pre-kindergarten and Head Start programs in Oklahoma

#### *Mentor :*

Deborah Phillips, Ph.D.

#### *Project Funding Years:*

2007-2009

#### *University Affiliation:*

Georgetown University

#### *Project Abstract:*

Georgetown University will compare the effects of the Community Action Project Head Start program to those of the Tulsa Public Schools universal pre-K (UPK) program in Tulsa, Oklahoma on low-income Hispanic English Language Learner (ELL) children's socio-emotional adjustment at school entry. The study will also examine program effects on low-income English-speaking Black and White children. In addition, researchers will seek to identify factors (aspects of the classroom and teacher characteristics) in Head Start and UPK that predict low-income children's social competence. Teachers assessed children's socio-emotional adjustment in the fall of the kindergarten year using the Adjustment Scales for Preschool Intervention and the Self-Regulation subscale of the Instrumental Competence Scale for Young Children. Classroom quality and instructional time allocation in Head Start and UPK were measured using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System and the Child Engagement section of the Emerging Academics Snapshot. Information on teacher characteristics was collected via a teacher questionnaire, the Ideas about Raising Children survey, and teachers' undergraduate transcripts. Results of the study are expected to expand the research base on the effects of early childhood education programs on low-income children's social development and inform policy debates about the types of programs and aspects of the classroom that best prepare Hispanic and ELL children for school.

#### *Sample:*

*Head Start* (28 4-year-old classrooms)

*Hispanic ELL children:* 166 kindergarten children who attended Head Start the previous year (treatment group) and matched sample of kindergarten children who did not attend Head Start (control group)

*English-speaking Black children:* 239 kindergarten children who attended Head Start the previous year (treatment group) and matched sample of kindergarten children who did not attend Head Start (control group)

*English-speaking White children:* 50 kindergarten children who attended Head Start the previous year (treatment group) and matched sample of kindergarten children who did not attend Head Start (control group)

*UPK (78 4-year-old classrooms)*

*Hispanic ELL children:* 115 kindergarten children who attended UPK the previous year (treatment group) and matched sample of kindergarten children who did not attend UPK (control group)

*English-speaking Black children:* 237 kindergarten children who attended UPK the previous year (treatment group) and matched sample of kindergarten children who did not attend UPK (control group)

*English-speaking White children:* 155 kindergarten children who attended UPK the previous year (treatment group) and matched sample of kindergarten children who did not attend UPK (control group)

*Measures:*

Children

Adjustment Scales for Preschool Intervention (ASPI)

Self-Regulation subscale of the Instrumental Competence Scale for Young Children

*Parents*

Demographic questionnaire

*Teachers*

Teacher questionnaire

Ideas about Raising Children survey

Undergraduate transcripts

*Classrooms*

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

Child Engagement section of the Emerging Academics Snapshot

## **Marissa Owsianik, M.A.**

### *Project Title:*

Using Mixed Methods to Explore the Development of Underactive Head Start Preschoolers

### *Mentor:*

Christine McWayne, Ph.D.

### *Funding Years:*

2007-2009

### *University Affiliation:*

New York University

### *Project Abstract:*

In collaboration with a local Head Start program, New York University seeks to examine the development of Head Start preschoolers who engage in high levels of underactive behaviors. Specifically, the objectives for this project include: (a) identifying underactive children in the classroom, (b) quantitatively assessing the children's social and emotional adjustment in relation to social and academic outcomes, (c) comparing the reports of preschoolers peer play at home and at school, and (d) examining parents' and teachers' beliefs related to the development of underactive preschoolers (focusing on immigrant parents). Participants for this study will include 180 three and four year-old Head Start children and their families. Children's behavior in the classroom will be assessed using the Adjustment Scales for Preschool Intervention and competencies in peer play will be measured using the Penn Interactive Peer Play Scales. Children's developmental abilities will be assessed using the Preschool Child Observation Record, Second Edition and the Early Screening Inventory-Revised. Results from this study are expected to add to the existing knowledge base of young, low-income children with mental health needs. In addition, it is expected that this study will assist in supporting the development of underactive, Head Start children and their families.

### *Sample:*

180 Head Start children and their families

### *Measures:*

#### *Children*

Adjustment Scales for Preschool Intervention (ASPI)

Penn Interactive Peer Play Scales (PIPPS)

Preschool Child Observation Record, Second Edition

Early Screening Inventory-Revised

*Parents/Teachers*  
Demographic Questionnaire

**Erin E. Reid**

*Project Title:*

NumberFun: Promoting Early Numeracy Skill Growth in Head Start Children

*Mentor:*

James C. Diperna, Ph.D.

*Project Funding Years:*

2007-2009

*University Affiliation:*

The Pennsylvania State University

*Project Abstract:*

The Pennsylvania State University seeks to develop and evaluate the effectiveness of an early numeracy skill promotion program, *NumberFun*, designed for use with children in Head Start programs. Specifically, the program will examine whether implementation of the *NumberFun* program is feasible in Head Start classrooms and whether it is effective in fostering early numeracy skills in Head Start children. Participants will include 240 Head Start children from eight classrooms. Classrooms will be matched on teacher and classroom characteristics and then one classroom from each pair will be randomly assigned to the *NumberFun* or control conditions. Children's early mathematics skills will be measured using the Test of Early Mathematics Ability, 3rd Edition and EARLI Numeracy Probes. In addition, implementation fidelity will be measured at several points throughout the year using the Implementation Fidelity Checklist and the Numeracy Instruction Self-report. Researchers anticipate that implementation of the *NumberFun* program will be feasible in Head Start classrooms and effective in promoting early numeracy skills in Head Start children. Results from this are expected to benefit curriculum, instruction, and assessment for Head Start centers and fill in the knowledge gap concerning numeracy development and instruction.

*Sample:*

240 Head Start children (eight classrooms)

*Measures:*

*Children*

Test of Early Mathematics Ability, 3rd Edition (TEMA-3)

EARLI Numeracy Probes

*Classroom*

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised, Updated (ECERS)

*Teachers*

Implementation Fidelity Checklist

Numeracy Instruction Self-Report

Intervention Acceptability Rating Scale

Teacher Rating Scales of Early Academic Competence (TRS-EAC)

**Gabriela Simon-Cerejido**

*Project Title:*

Validation of an Oral Language Assessment Tool (OLA) for Latino English Language Learners at Risk of Language Impairment

*Mentor:*

Vera Gutierrez-Clellen, Ph.D.

*University Affiliation:*

San Diego State University

*Funding Years:*

2007-2009

In collaboration with Head Start centers in California, San Diego State University will seek to validate an oral language assessment tool for Latino Spanish-speaking children. Specifically, this study will focus on whether children with a disability such as language impairment (LI) have disproportionately more difficulties with verbs of increasing number of arguments than age- and language- matched peers in both Spanish and English. Participants for the study will include 120 Latino English Language Learners with and without a LI who are currently enrolled in Head Start. Children's production of verb arguments will be measured using a picture verb naming task, a picture description task, and a sentence repetition task. Results of the study are expected to provide Head Start teachers with an assessment tool to screen Latino children with special language needs.

*Sample:*

120 Preschool Head Start Children

*Measures*

*Children*

BESA Spanish Morphosyntax Task (S-MST)

English Morphosyntax Task (E-MST)

Differential Abilities Scale

EOWPVT (Spanish and English)

Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised: Picture Vocabulary

Teacher questionnaire

Parent questionnaire