



The Insider

Life Span Institute at Parsons

March, 2004

Pat White, Editor

Grants Submitted

Adam Doughty submitted an RO3 proposal to NICHD entitled "Factors influencing sustained attention in persons with mental retardation" the first of February.

Kate Saunders submitted an R01 proposal to NICHD entitled "Recombinative Generalization of Within-syllable Units in MR" the first of February.

Richard Saunders submitted a proposal entitled "Data Collection on Food Purchase, Preparation and Consumption for Johnson County Developmental Clients" to Johnson County Developmental Supports in January.

Presentations

Benham, T. J. (2004, February). *Top resource picks for 2004*. Paper presented at the Kansas Division for Exceptional Children Conference, Wichita, KS.

Jack, S. L., Broyles, L., Lindeman, D. P. (2004, February). Developing positive behavior support in Head Start: A program-wide approach. Poster presented at the Midwest Symposium for Leadership in Behavior Disorders, Kansas City, MO.

Nelson, C., & Hogan, J. (2004, February). *What do you do when you get there? Providing ECSE services in inclusive settings*. Workshop presented at the Kansas Division for Exceptional Children Conference, Wichita, KS.

Stroup-Rentier, V. L., & Thompson, T. (2004, February). *Making your child care provider a partner on the IFSP team*. Paper presented at the Kansas Division for Exceptional Children Conference, Wichita, KS.

Publications

Mills, S. C. (2004). Computer-assisted instruction. In A. Kovalchick & K. Dawson (Eds.), *Education and Technology: An Encyclopedia* (pp. 141-144). Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

Mills, S. C. (2004). Research on media and learning. In A. Kovalchick & K. Dawson (Eds.), *Education and Technology: An Encyclopedia* (pp. 489-493). Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

Mills, S. C. (2004). Web accessibility. In A. Kovalchick & K. Dawson (Eds.), *Education and Technology: An Encyclopedia* (pp. 613-618). Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

Project Highlight

PictureReader: Behavioral Technology for Teaching Task Sequencing Skills

by Charles R. Spellman

Dr. Charles Spellman collaborated with Dr. Karen Mahon, Research Scientist for Praxis, Inc., (formerly an Assistant Research Professor at the Life Span Institute at Parsons) to obtain an SBIR Phase I grant to develop and study a computer-based product called the PictureReader, intended primarily for individuals with intellectual disabilities. This project is compatible with the current commercial development of methodologies used by the Behavioral Technology Group at the Shriver Center, University of Massachusetts Medical School, and allied laboratories. These programs teach most of the “readiness skills” required to use the PictureReader.

The PictureReader addresses skills needed to complete a sequence of steps of multi-step tasks. The objective is to teach learners to “read” pictures that represent nouns and symbols that represent essential verbs, and to read novel combinations in order to complete tasks independently. The curriculum requires the learner to imitate a video model of a task and to reproduce the behavior sequence when presented with pictures corresponding to the steps of the video task. This work builds on the findings of Spellman and his colleagues who have studied picture reading over the past 30 years. In the past, creating instructional materials that include pictures, verb symbols, and video has been a time-consuming task. With a digital camera and the *PictureReader* program the task of designing and developing individualized programs is greatly simplified.

This grant will provide an initial field test of the PictureReader. The questions to be answered are: (1) Can the product be used by teachers for teaching video imitation and/or picture reading? (2) What aspects of the program need revision prior to additional field testing? Once revisions are made based on the initial field testing, the primary field test will evaluate the effectiveness of the product for teaching picture reading to individuals with intellectual disabilities. Although earlier research and experience indicate that the *PictureReader* package is likely to be highly effective, it will be necessary to demonstrate this with the prototype and with a representative group of users. This research and product development will provide the software and data needed to apply for a Phase II SBIR project which will address: recombinative generalization, application to hand-held devices and development of on-line teacher tutorials and an extensive library of videos, pictures and symbols needed to create novel instructional programs.