

# COUNSELING CONNECTIONS



Western Carolina University Counseling Program

Volume 23, Issue 1

## WCU Conference Engages Counseling Community with Ten Professional Development Opportunities

The 2015 Break by the Lake conference will take place on Oct. 2 at the Lake Logan Episcopal Center in Canton, NC. The annual conference, which has been happening for over 20 years, is an opportunity for attending students, professionals, and support personnel to connect with current trends and issues relevant to today's K-12 students and youth.

This year's 10 presentations are diverse and include: T'ai Chi as a metaphor for counselor/student relations, DSM-5 updates for current psychiatric medications, support for transgender or gender variant youth, career planning with elementary and middle school students, the results from a mindfulness pilot program with 7th grade students, and more.

"The conference provides a professional development opportunity for school and clinical counselors and other student personnel in a retreat type setting," said Dr. Phyllis Robertson, Interim Department Head of Human Services. "The money from registration funds both the *Mary Deck Break by the Lake Endowed Scholarship* and also the Haywood Schools Foundation, which provides scholarships to high school youth in Haywood County."

This year's main presenter is none other than au-

thor, speaker, and *National Geographic's* 2012 "Adventurer of the Year," Jennifer Pharr Davis. She may be most recognizable to conference participants for her record-shattering completion of the entire Appalachian Trail, which she finished all 2,181 miles of in just over 46 days.

Running alone, supported only by her husband in a van, Pharr Davis averaged just over 47 miles per day during the record-setting feat, and while her record was recently bested by professional ultra-marathoner Scott Jurek in 2015 by a mere three hours and 17 minutes, she has said that she does not plan on trying to take the record back.



Jennifer Pharr Davis,  
Retrieved from WCU.edu

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## Making Testing Work For Students

According to recent article from the [August 2015 Scientific American](#), tests are one of the best ways for teachers, or for anyone who is acting as a teacher, to cement student knowledge and foster in them what is called "deep learning" or "transfer," the process by which students are able to apply facts from one context (Math class) to a problem in a different context (say, Chemistry class).

This access to knowledge increases dramatically in students who practice information retrieval or "quizzing," versus those who use any other method. The human brain

is not too dissimilar from some cell phones, according to Jeffrey Karpicke, Professor of Cognitive Psychology at the University of Purdue. When one number is called often, it stores to speed dial automatically, because the phone recognizes its importance. Likewise, when the human brain is asked to recall facts, it too recognizes "that if we need that information *now*, we're probably going to need it again later, as well."

Karpicke said that recalling the information is more powerful than learning it in the first place. "Retrieval is the process that makes memories stick."

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## Counseling Cohorts Converge at Lake Julian for Annual First-Year Orientation

The Mentor/Mentee program at WCU was designed by second year students as a way to facilitate first year students' transitions into the Counseling Program.

This year's program, which began in the early months of Summer 2015, as new students were accepted, culminated on August 21 with a sunny celebration, relaxed banter, free sandwiches and drinks, and a patrol of baby ducks that walked in and out of sight throughout the event. Most importantly, it gave each mentee a chance to ask a mentor any pressing questions they might have had after their first week of classes.



"This is something we genuinely wanted to give to the first years, as it was given to us," said Jonny Pack, a second year Clinical Mental Health student who organized this year's program.

"There are a lot of unknowns when you first enter the program, but at least for those of us who have been there, we can give you one 'known' through our presence. That's what I hoped to achieve through our involvement."



## Fall 2015 Counseling Program Changes

The following is a summary of program changes, effective as of May 2015:

**COUN 665: Implementing School Counseling Program** ("School Capstone") and **COUN 624: CMHC Grant Writing and Program Development** ("CMHC Capstone") are *no longer required* courses and *no longer offered*.

The three credits previously earned in these courses are moved to **COUN 687: Internship**, which, beginning Spring 2016, is 6 hours. Each semester (Spring 2016 and later), there will be two sections of **COUN 687: Internship**, one at 6-hours, which is the correct course for most students, and one at 3-hours, which is appropriate only for students doing a split internship.

The comprehensive examination (or "comps") is now organized through a 0-credit course **COUN 500: Comprehensive Examination**. Students must be registered for **COUN 500** at the start of the semester in which they plan to take their comprehensive exams.

## Making Testing Work (cont.)

"Test," on the other hand, has become a dirty word, according to Marsha Lovett, Director of the Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence and Educational Innovation. Lovett, who specializes in "meta-cognition," or thinking about the learning process, noted that there are three important things missing from typical testing in schools.

First, students should be given time to assess their own test preparation. A sample question from what Lovett calls a "test wrapper" might be, "What % of points were lost due to not understanding concepts?" or "How much time did you spend reading class notes before the exam?" These wrap-up questions cause students to identify what works and what doesn't, instead of forgetting about it.

Second, frequency matters.

When students were quizzed daily in a University of Texas at Austin study, they not only scored better by a half of a letter grade in that class, on average, but they also performed better in the other classes they took that semester. Most promising was that the typical achievement gap numbers for that demographic also dropped by 50 percent, meaning that daily quizzes actually helped to teach the students who are often left behind.

Finally, test material should be deep and cross boundaries. Standardized tests have been rightly accused of including only surface level, generic questions. According to a 2012 analysis of 17 states' end of year tests using Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK), only 1-6% of reading questions, 2-3% of science questions, and 0% of mathematics

questions engaged the student at DOK4 level, a "deep learning" that requires investigation and planning. DOK3 questions (inference and reasoning) were also largely absent. A majority of questions consisted instead of DOK1 (simple recall) and DOK2 (application of skills).

Simply put, standardized tests (of which students in grades three through eight take an average of 10 per year), are not helping students. They do not inspire transfer of knowledge from one context to the next; the results are not specifically and meaningfully processed with those students; and they inspire "shallow learning" in which students memorize facts for short-term recall, according to Linda Darling Hammond, emeritus professor at Stanford's School of Education.

Bad tests give tests a bad name.

Break by the Lake 2015  
WNC Annual Support Services Conference

Friday, October 2  
Registration Form

*Educating, Connecting and Serving*

For more information go to:  
[breakbythelake.wcu.edu](http://breakbythelake.wcu.edu)

Please print legibly.

<b>Name</b> (this will be used to print nametags)	
<b>Position</b>	
<b>School/Work Name</b>	<b>County</b>
<b>School/Work Address</b>	
<b>City, State, Zip</b>	
<b>School /Work Phone</b>	
<b>Email address for confirmation</b>	

To ensure we have adequate space, please check the **THREE** sessions you will be attending for **BBL 2015**:

- Supporting Transgender/Gender Variant Youth and their Families- *Heather Branham, LSCW & Stephen Wiseman, LCSW*
- Check and Connect: A Comprehensive Student Engagement Program- *Allyson Baisden, LCSW & Nicole Killeen, LCPC*
- Going to College from Elementary and Middle School- *Laura Misner*
- Keeping the College and Career Focus through the High School Years- *Laura Misner*
- T'ai Chi for Self Care and as Metaphor for Counselor/Student Interactions- *Bob Cummings*
- RAMPing it Up! An Overview of the ASCA National Model Process- *Deborah Lockett*
- Mindfulness & Stress Reduction in a 7th Grade Pilot Program- *Scott MacGregor, MS, LPCA, CFLE*
- Group Work: From Start to Finish- *Molly Luplow, MS, LPCS*
- The DSM5 and a Brief Update on Psychiatric Meds for Kids- *Raymond Turpin, Psy. D.*

**Make checks payable to:**

**Haywood County Schools Foundation**

**Non-refundable registration fee includes lunch & NBCC CEU  
Credit: 5 Credits**

- Registration fee postmarked by September 25th - \$35
- Student or Retiree Registration fee - \$25

**Mail Registration & Non-Refundable Payment To:**

**Break By the Lake  
WCU Counseling Program  
Department of Human Services  
91 Killian Building Lane, Rm 206  
Cullowhee, NC 28723**

Upon receipt of your Registration Form, a **confirmation will be sent via e-mail**. If you do not receive confirmation by September 29<sup>th</sup> please contact Denise Royer at 828-227-3325. If your Central Office is responsible for submitting your registration fee – please verify prior to coming that the registration fee has been paid and that you are pre-registered. **Thank you and we look forward to seeing you at Lake Logan.**

\*\*\* Registration begins August 4 and ends on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

\*\*\* There is no on-site registration. We are accepting only pre-registration this year!

## Letter from the Editor

Most second year students that I know through the WCU Counseling Program would echo the sentiment: "Where exactly did the first year go?"

For me, it went a little something like this: 1,347 unfilterable emails from three people who shall remain unnamed but must be well loved at traffic update/parking lot closure parties; 250 hours spent learning all about the Office of Disability Services and meeting with students who are way more determined than I feel; 77.5 Russ jokes with only 40 meditative grounding exercises in which to think about them; 20 freshmen students who reminded me of how awesome it

is to be 36 years old; 10 Learning Contract students who reminded me that it is conversely very hard to be 18; 10 painful hours of watching myself ask "Do You = Doo Doo" questions during a counseling session even though I'd sworn never to use them again; 3 separate drives to WCU's main campus that ended with me lost near Erwin, TN, instead; 3 Brix Bashes; and ... oh, I give up.

Every moment, unique. Every challenge, beaten. Every new friend, delightful. What do you want to get out of your first year, First Years? Send me [a message](#) if you please.

- Shawn Hudson

## Pharr Davis (cont.)

Instead, Pharr Davis has written two trail memoirs, "Becoming Odysa" and "Called Again," since her 2012 run, and she has transferred her fame and talents into a trail guide business named "[Blue Ridge Hiking Company](#)." She is also a professional speaker who has given talks about her trail adventures in all 50 states.

For those interested in attending this year's conference, early registration is required, and all registration forms and fees must be post-marked no later than Sept. 25. You will find a registration form on page three of this newsletter.

Visit the [Break by the Lake website](#) for more information.



## Sept./Oct. 2015 : Counseling Calendar

### Hispanic Heritage Month

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
13 <b>Grandparents Day</b>	14	15	16 <b>Mexican Independence Day</b>	17	18 <b>Inside Out playing at the UC Theater - \$2</b>	19
20	21 Fifth Week Grades Due	22 <b>Business Women's Day</b>	23	24	25 <b>Break by the Lake Registration Due</b>	26 
27	28	29	30	Oct. 1 <b>World Vegetarian Day</b>	2 <b>Break by the Lake</b>	3
4	5 <b>World Teacher Day</b>	6	7	8	9 <b>Nature as a Metaphor Trip &amp; Fall Break &gt;</b>	10