

COUNSELING CONNECTIONS



Western Carolina University Counseling Program

Volume 22, Issue 1

WCU Growth Mind Study Approved

A new study taking place on Western Carolina University's Cullowhee campus aims to measure the effects of teaching growth mindset to students who are currently on academic probation.

Growth Mindset, for those unfamiliar, originates with the research of Stanford's Dr. Carol Dweck, who has shown that by teaching students that their mind is expandable, and that intelligence is not a "fixed" trait, their motivation level improves, which leads to increased academic success and improved self-worth.

The study involves approximately 120 WCU students, 60 in treatment and 60 in a control group. The primary dependent variables are end-of-semester GPAs and semester completion.

The study was recently approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) on Jan. 28 and six counseling graduate students, under the supervision of Dr. Russ Curtis (Gentry Hamrick, Laura Holst, Shawn Hudson, Nicole Kelley, Annie Meyer, and Heather Ridge), are teaching the students growth-minded principles in order to better recognize their strengths in regards to academics.

In an effort to better illustrate the details and inspiration behind the study, *Counseling Connections* asked Dr. Curtis a few questions about the importance of growth mind in post-secondary education.

For more information concerning Dr. Dweck and Growth Mindset, you can visit her website: <http://www.mindsetonline.com>

Cont. Page 3

Students & Faculty Represent Western at Area Conferences

The North Carolina Counseling Association (NCCA) selected 16 WCU students and two faculty members to present posters and lead sessions. The annual conference is located this year in Greensboro, NC at the Grandover Resort, and it takes place between Feb. 11-13.

In addition, the Cross-Cultural Counseling and Education Conference in Savannah, GA has selected two students (Sarah Raines and Alex Hill), as well as two faculty (Dr. Phyllis Robertson and Dr. Dale Brotherton) to present their session: *Reviewing*

Cont. Page 2

Also In This Issue:

- Jessica Sims receives NBCC Fellowship - 2
- Summer Scheduling Guide - 2
- UNCA Autism Conference - 2
- A Conversation with Dr. Curtis - 3
- Biltmore Park Services & Counseling Events - 4

Resting Better: Five Restorative Sleep Tips

A study released by the University of Rochester in 2013 proved what many people have believed all along - that better sleep results in a better you. The reason, it turns out, is because of what's called the "glymphatic system." This area of the brain is highly active during sleep, and it is responsible for flushing the brain of toxins such as amyloid-beta, which can lead to diseases such as Alzheimer's.

During interrupted or shortened sleep, this flushing process is interrupted, and those toxins sit in the brain instead of being whisked through the circulatory system and into the liver.

Still, most graduate students have to tow the line between ideal sleep and

what sleep is available.

In an effort to improve your own "acquisition, consolidation, and recall" - three factors that are listed by the Sleep Science Division of Harvard Medical School as being most important to learning new information, here is a short list of five sleep tips, culled from various articles with links to their sources for further exploration.

1. [Learn how much sleep you need.](#)
2. [Lay off the caffeine at least 30 minutes before bed.](#)
3. Try apps like [F.lux](#) to reduce the [harmful effects of 'blue light'](#).
4. [Stand up and exercise for 10 min. or more.](#)
5. [Meditation.](#) It helps with sleep, too.

Jessica Sims Awarded NBCC Fellowship

The National Board for Certified Counselors Foundation awarded WCU Counseling student Jessica Sims a fellowship for addictions counselor education.



Congratulations to Jessica for all of her hard work, and for impressing upon the NBCCF that WCU students are integral to mental health in the Western North Carolina area.

NCCA Conference Cont.

From Page 1

Mixed Media for Understanding Historical Views of Cultural Groups. The conference is scheduled for Feb. 20-21.

Students presenting posters on Feb. 12 at the NCCA conference are: Brittani Cachine and Ciera Kegler - *Girls' Empowerment Program*; Natasha Cramer and Kim Granelle - *Child-Centered Play Therapy and Childhood Trauma*; Rob Davis and Kellie Hayes - *Call of Duty: Suicide Prevalence Among North Carolina's National Guard*; Angelica Echevarria and Lauren Myers - *Physical Appearance and Counseling*; Allyson Frick - *Fostering Identity Development with Biracial/Multiracial Youth*; Shawn Hudson - *Creating a Self-Care Plan That Works*; Laura Lindsey - *Mindfulness and*

Second Annual Autism Conference at UNCA

Empower Autism and University of North Carolina Asheville are partnering for their second-annual Empower Autism Conference, titled "Autism and the Pursuit of Happiness."

The event will take place on Saturday, Feb. 7 from 9am to 2pm in the UNCA Highsmith Building.

Guest speakers will include Autism professionals, adults with Autism, and parents of Autists. Registration for individuals is \$25. For more information, visit Empower Autism's [Conference Page](#).

Puppet Making: Stress Management for Adolescents; Mallory Lovice and Laura Lindsey - *Treating Trauma and Addictions*; and Heather Ridge - *Trauma-Focused Equine Assisted Psychotherapy*.

Faculty, alumni, and students presenting at the NCCA are: Dr. Russ Curtis and Katie Goetz - *Positive Psychology in Integrated Care*; Dr. Curtis and Sara Hunter - *How to Instill Growth-Mindedness in Clients and Students*; and Dr. Lisen Roberts and Luke Gill - *Ethical Use of Social Media in Counseling*.

Counseling Connections would like to recognize and thank those students, staff, and alumni for their dedication.

Summer Scheduling Guide

REQUIRED COURSES

COUN 617: Addictions, Tues-Thurs 5-8:50pm, June 1-July 1

COUN 650: Career Development (CMHC), online with one "live" meeting TBA, June 1-Aug 4

COUN 650: Career Development (SC), online with 3 face-to-face meetings (Tues July 7, 21, 28), June 1-Aug 4

COUN 645: Consultation (SC req. only), online, June 1-Aug 4

ELECTIVES

COUN 637: Creative & Expressive Arts in Counseling, 4 week-ends (Friday 5-8:50 and Saturday 9am-4pm), July 10-Aug 1

COUN 672: Positive Psychotherapy in Integrated Care, online, July 6-Aug 4

COUN 693: Play Therapy, Mon-Wed 5-8:50pm, June 1-July 1

NOTE (for planning purposes) There is only one Fall 2015 elective: **Nature as a Metaphor**, online with an overnight camping trip Oct. 9-12.

Letter from the Editor: Message in a Bottle

Communication via newsletter can feel very much like stuffing a message into an old bottle and hurling it into the sea. And waiting.

If you found this old bottle on a beach and uncorked it, thank you for taking the time to read the message inside.

I have two main things to share with you about the direction of the newsletter, and then finally, a request.

First, I want the newsletter to be informative, covering topics that are often lost in inboxes or hard-to-find via web search. Information all collected in a central location. I hope the scheduling

guide, calendar, and updated service listing for Biltmore Park are helpful to students, and if you have ideas or requests for future issues, "ink it, don't think it." Email me.

Second, I believe this should be a place to highlight WCU's achievements, and also what is unique and perhaps essential to Western NC Counseling.

For example, next issue we'll talk with Dr. Dale Brotherton about his *Nature as a Metaphor* elective course and find out what inspires him to teach the course, and touch on nature as an agent of change, specifically dealing with how we can use nature in helping

ourselves and also future clients.

That's the general direction of this ship, but as future issues are still unwritten, here's the part where you come in.

Think a while. Ponder what made you choose WCU as your graduate program. Think about what questions have popped up concerning courses, professors, future jobs, or literally anything tied to WCU Counseling. Have a question that you want to ask Dr. Brotherton? Send me a message, and together, we'll go explore.

Shawn Hudson
smhudson@email.wcu.edu

Ins, Outs, and Inspiration Behind the Growth Mind Study

Counseling Connections: Thank you for agreeing to answer some of these questions and help out. What is the general scope of the study's size, in regards to participants, mentors and faculty involved?

Dr. Russ Curtis: The study involves approximately 120 LC 101 students, 60 treatment and 60 control, 6 WCU counseling GAs.

Dr. Laura Cruz, the director of the Coulter Faculty Commons and Chesney Reich, director of the Writing and Learning Commons inspired this study and were instrumental in its design and IRB approval process. Dr. Lisen Roberts has been instrumental in getting our GAs involved and excited about the project.

CC: Does the study go beyond LC101?

Dr. Curtis: The results of this study should expand the knowledge-base of using growth minded strategies with post-secondary students, which, to date, have not received adequate attention.

I believe growth mind will quickly infiltrate the substance abuse and mental health treatment world as well. There is preliminary evidence that this could serve many people, but I believe that helping K-12 and beyond students persist with their dreams will go a long way in keeping people from needing mental health services.

In other words, growth mind interventions might be a powerful prevention strategy.

CC: Was there an inspiration behind it, and if so, what was that?

Dr. Curtis: Chesney Reich contacted me after consulting Laura Cruz who shared that I specialized in positive psychology.

During my initial phone call with Chesney, I shared my excitement about the growth mind research from Carol Dweck and everything seemed to take off from there. I should say that Dr. Cruz's energy and fearless

can do attitude coupled with Chesney's care and concern for student success (which we all have) and her thoughtful attention to detail make this an exciting team to work with.

CC: When did the project start?

Dr. Curtis: The project began with a training I gave to our WCU counseling LC 101 GAs the Friday before classes started. That information, then, was used by our GAs to begin working with the LC 101 students.

CC: How do you expect that teaching students the fundamentals of growth mindset will help them?

Dr. Curtis: Perseverance pays off and is far more valuable of a skill/trait than intelligence.



CC: Is this your first study at Western?

Dr. Curtis: No. I've conducted several studies with WCU students.

CC: What is the first action that someone who has an idea for a study needs to take?

Ultimately, success is the degree to which you make meaning and happiness in your life. - Curtis

Dr. Curtis: Read as many refereed journal articles about your interested topic as possible. That's always the first step.

CC: Have you had any personal experiences with using or teaching growth mindset that you would like to share?

Dr. Curtis: This is a personal topic for me because I believe we live in a society that values and prizes intelligence and is completely unaware that most of the folks who do well in this world did so by being closely aligned to their personal values and incorporated said values into their work, lives, relationships. Ultimately, success is the degree to which you make meaning and happiness in your life, and I believe those who stay true to themselves despite immense (and growing) distraction and pressure to do otherwise are the ones who reap the benefits of happiness.

Think about it, all the best creative writing programs attempt to help writers rediscover their own voices and not imitate their favorite authors. The same could be said about any profession.

CC: Thank you very much for your time.

Biltmore Park Student Services Update

In preparation for the full transition of WCU's Counseling Programs to the Biltmore Park, this newsletter will attempt to keep up with and remind students of available services.

New Study Room

BP Classroom 334 is available Mon-Thurs, 5-9pm as a quiet study room.

Career Services

Director of the WCU Career Center Mardy Ashe can help students with resumes, curriculum vitae, and job searches on the first Wed. of every month, starting Feb. 4 from 1-6pm in BP 351.

To schedule an appointment, email Mardy at mashe@email.wcu.edu

Writing Center

Allyson Frick from the Writing and Learning Commons is available to help students with writing assignments in BP 347 on Wednesdays, 11:30am-4:30pm and Thursdays, 9am-12pm.

To schedule an appointment, call 828-227-2274 or go to: walc.wcu.edu

Mental Health Counseling

A counselor is available to students by appointment in Suite 355 during Tuesdays, 9am-5pm and Wednesdays

9am-5pm.

For an appointment, please contact [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) at 828-227-7469.

Health Care

Suite 355, Staff Available on Mondays, by appointment. For an appointment, please call 828-227-7640. A Registered Nurse is also available M-F, 8-5pm at the *Nurse Line*: 828-227-2531.

YMCA Access

Students are eligible for free semester-long YMCA membership at the Reuter YMCA with a valid CATCard.



February 2015: Counseling Calendar

Black History Month

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 Groundhog Day	3	4 Tu Bishvat Mardy Ashe@BP Resume Help By Appt.	5	6 Lunch N Learn: Validating Heart & Soul: Mary Deck PhD	7 Empower Autism Conference: UNCA 9am - 2pm
8	9	10	11-13 NCCA Conference: Greensboro, NC			14 Valentine's Day
15	16 President's Day & 5th Wk. Grades Due	17 Mardi Gras	18 Ash Wednesday	19 Chinese New Year App Deadline: Graduate Research Symposium	20-21 Cross Cultural Counseling & Education Conference	
22	23	24 Advising Day (no classes)	25 Priority Registration	26	27	28