



**PACE**  
UNIVERSITY

College of  
**Health  
Professions**



# The Research Newsletter

Despite an incredibly challenging time for our College and our Community, faculty and students continued to make great strides in research at The College of Health Professions. Read on for more about scholarly research conducted over the last year!

## Faculty Spotlight:

**Supawadee Cindy Lee, PhD, MS, MA, OTR/L, SIPT**

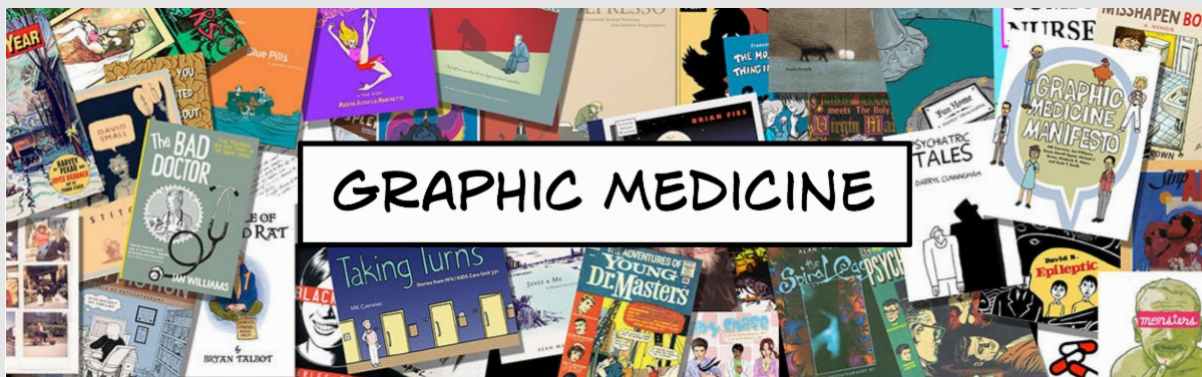


Information technology has become a vital part of people's everyday lives. As mobile apps designed for young children increasingly become available, many parents, educators, and therapists are using the apps in their homes, schools, and therapy settings. "With the widespread use of mobile technologies, there is an opportunity for parents, educators, and pediatric occupational therapists to use mobile applications to promote children's visual perceptual skills and monitor the performance of children who have visual perceptual disabilities," says **Dr. Supawadee Cindy Lee**, chair and assistant professor, CHP Occupational Therapy Program.

Despite a wide range of mobile apps available, there are currently none designed specifically to evaluate and address visual perceptual difficulties in young children. Dr. Lee and co-researcher Dr. Zahn Zhang of the Seidenberg School are conducting a study to develop new mobile apps to fill this gap.

They first reviewed the apps that were available from the Apple store and identified important shortcomings in current available apps for promoting visual perceptual skills. They also interviewed pediatric occupational therapists about their experience in using mobile applications for promoting children's development in therapy sessions, and any challenges and issues they have faced in using mobile applications in occupational therapy practice.

The information gained from these studies were used to develop the apps that will serve as therapeutic and evaluation tools available for occupational therapists and/or educators who work with children with visual perceptual difficulties. These apps can also benefit children and their families by promoting a child's visual perceptual skills, which are important skills for reading, writing, and self-care.



### Integrating Comics in Graduate Education

According to **Dr. Abbey Berg**, professor, Communication Sciences and Disorders Program, narratives are becoming more common in healthcare delivery as they provide a more complete, holistic perspective of a patient's health condition.

"Narratives build empathy in practitioners' care and increase understanding of the patient experience, trust, and health outcomes. Graduate students involved in healthcare delivery, however, still often view the communication impairment as a disorder and/or disease with a primary focus on the structural and physiologic deficits without considering the impact of the personal and environmental contexts on the individual, family members, and prognosis. While comics are a type of narrative in that they tell a story, they are relatable, very visual and when combined with metaphors and character-driven stories, appealing, engaging, non-threatening, and accessible to a wide range of audiences."

Professor Berg, who co-authored with Keyra-Nicole Leconte, CSD Graduate Program, the article "Comics in Graduate Education: Preliminary Findings," further explains how this type of "graphic education" has a positive influence on students understanding and treatment of communication disorders.

"Comics are engaging and producing them can increase perspective-taking, and assist individuals, family members, and significant others, as well as healthcare providers to empathize, recognize, reframe, and reflect on the influence of the impairment on interactions and quality of life. They can be used in communication therapy to develop pragmatic skills, language

sequencing skills (beginning, middle, and end of stories), and introduce and increase inference skills. Comics are also becoming more mainstream in healthcare delivery. Thus, narratives, and in particular graphic novels and comics, have a role in health care practices and graduate education. Individuals' perception of their disability, as well as their response to it, is central to their perspective."

***Click the image to read more!***

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### **Dr. Christen Cupples Cooper: Nutrition and Dietetics Research**

**Dr. Christen Cupples Cooper**, chair and assistant professor of the Nutrition and Dietetics Program, is actively researching the food habits and changes in eating behaviors among Americans of all ages during COVID-19 in a national study conducted on social media. In addition, she is conducting studies in the perceptions of lower-income parents regarding sugar-sweetened drink intake among pre-school age children and the beliefs, practices and feeding styles of teachers at lower-income preschools and associations with nutrition-focused professional development.

***Click the image to read more!***

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## Student Research Spotlight

As part of the Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Program, class of December 2020, Danielle Bard was proud to present at the Eastern Nursing Research Society (ENRS) Conference for a second time.

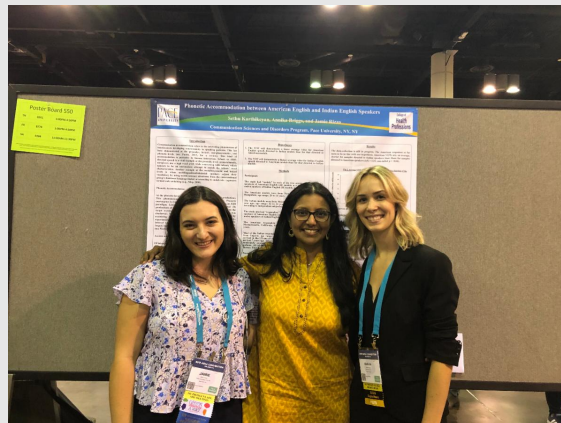
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## Currently Funded Research Projects

Faculty and students are supported to conduct their research through external and internal grants.

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## Conference Presentations by Faculty Members

Faculty members present their research to interprofessional colleagues at professional conferences.

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