

Connections 2017

Presenter Bio-sketches

Shannon Mortenson-Dewsnap:

Dr. Shanna Mortensen-Dewsnap is licensed in Arizona as a doctor of audiology and Dispensing Audiologist. She obtained her bachelor's degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders, with an emphasis in Deaf Education, from Utah State University. She also studied at the University of Cincinnati where she obtained her degree as a Doctor of Audiology. Dr. Mortensen-Dewsnap is Board Certified by the American Board of Audiology and is a member of the American Academy of Audiology and the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association. She specializes in difficult hearing aid fittings and hearing rehabilitation. Dr. Mortensen-Dewsnap is an expert in hearing aid technology and hearing aid fittings. She has spoken extensively on hearing healthcare and is very passionate about educating individuals about hearing loss and treatment options. She is a clinical supervisor for audiology doctoral students who frequently rotate through her practice. Dr. Mortensen-Dewsnap has a passion for helping individuals and their families cope with hearing loss, and she finds joy in their success.

Dr. Mortensen-Dewsnap grew up in Phoenix, Arizona and she resides in Peoria, Arizona with her family. She has two teenage boys. Her oldest son was born with a severe hearing loss, is legally blind, and has been wearing hearing aids since birth. He inspired her to go into the field of audiology. In her free time, she loves to travel, restore old Volkswagens, and spend as much time as she can with her family. She also runs a parent support website for families of children with hearing loss found at www.littleears.org and is in the process of creating a website for families of children who are deafblind called www.myusherlife.com.

Meher Banajee:

Meher Banajee, Ph.D. CCC-SLP is an Associate Professor and program director of speech language pathology program of Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center. Her area of expertise includes working in the field of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) with clients of all ages and with a variety of disorders. Dr. Banajee has worked in AAC in a variety of educational and hospital settings including Metropolitan Developmental Center, Children's Hospital, Prentke Romich Company, Human Development Center, Assistive Technology Coordinator for Region 1. She is the coordinator of ASHA's Special Interest Group 12 in AAC and the topic chair for AAC at ASHA convention in Boston, MA in 2018.

Barbara Purvis:

Barbara Purvis, M.Ed., has over 30 years of training and experience in elementary education and early childhood special education, and served as an early intervention provider with specialized training in developmental care for preterm and medically fragile infants. She recently retired from the National Center on Deaf-Blindness, where she served as team leader for the Early Identification and Referral Initiative. Barbara has provided state, national and international training in the areas of early intervention, literacy, family empowerment and person-centered planning.

Shelley Chesney:

Shelley Chesney, M.S., CCC-SLP, LSLC Cert AVT is a Speech-Language Pathologist who has worked with children with hearing loss in a variety of settings for over 25 years including public school, hospital, early intervention, and private practice. She is now the owner of Chesney Center Therapies, LLC, a private therapy clinic offering speech, physical, and occupational therapy services to children and adults with locations in Baton Rouge and Hammond, Louisiana. Shelley serves as an Advisory Board Member for the Southern University Department of Speech-Language Pathology, has previously served as Director of Healthcare for LSHA and is a current member of the Core Faculty of the Collaborative for Students with Unique Communication Needs. Her true area of expertise is in working with families with children with hearing loss who chose listening and spoken language. She is currently the only LSLC Certified Auditory-Verbal Therapist in Louisiana.

Rose Angelocci:

Rose Angelocci, Ph.D., CRC, CVRT, LPC is the Assistant Project Coordinator for the Louisiana Deafblind Project for Children and Youth housed within the Human Development Center at the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center in New Orleans. From 1987 to 2017, Dr. Angelocci worked at the Training, Resource and Assistive-technology Center at the University of New Orleans.

Dr. Angelocci has a doctorate in counselor education with a minor in qualitative research methods from the University of New Orleans. She has a Masters in Health Sciences in Rehabilitation Counseling from Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center. Dr. Angelocci is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, a Licensed Rehabilitation Counselor/Supervisor, a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, a Licensed Professional Counselor/Supervisor, a National Certified Counselor, and a Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapist.

Dr. Angelocci has over 25 years of experience in assessing and training persons with disabilities (visual, hearing, learning, and physical) in the use of assistive technology and Braille. She has 30 years of experience in operating residential programs for the blind. In addition, she has experience in conducting vocational evaluations and teaching work readiness skills with clients with disabilities.

Dr. Angelocci has served as adjunct faculty at the University of New Orleans and has taught graduate-level courses in Braille, counseling theories, counseling techniques, counselor supervision, and lifespan development. She has provided supervision to 40 counselors-in-training.

Dr. Angelocci has given numerous presentations at local, state, national, and international conferences as well as published work in professional journals, newsletters, conference proceedings, a book chapter, and audio and video productions.

Dr. Angelocci has served on several state and local advisory committees regarding the accessibility needs of people with disabilities. She has served on the Louisiana Rehabilitation Advisory Council, the Louisiana Statewide Independent Living Council (Chairperson), the board of Directors at WRBH Reading Radio, and the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (Louisiana Chapter President).

Kenneth Lacho:

Kenneth Lacho has worked at the University of New Orleans at the Training, Resource, and Assistive-technology Center as a Program Specialist since 1991. He has a Master's Degree in Business Administration (MBA). In 2003, he completed an Associates of Applied Science in Computer Networking Technology from Delgado community College. His work experience includes instructing persons with

disabilities to use the computer and assistive technology, screen reading, such as screen enlargement, and voice recognition, with applications such as word processing, database, and spreadsheets. The persons taught had either a visual, hearing, learning, or physical disability. He has taught students as a group in the classroom setting and one-on-one in an individual setting. He has shared his experience by presenting at local, state, national, and international conferences and preparing two instructional videos on assistive technology.

Mr. Lacho has set up and maintains state-of-the-art assistive technology (including computers). He is familiar with much of the hardware and software which make up the different types of assistive technology. He performs evaluations of persons to determine their effective use of the assistive technology. He also provides technical support for hardware and software (including assistive technology) for both staff and clients. In addition to his work at TRAC, Mr. Lacho has been an instructor in the Visual Communications Department at Delgado community college where he has taught courses in graphic design.

Anne Dardis:

Anne Dardis, M.A., C.T.V.I, received her Bachelors and Master's degrees from LSU and has been an Educator for the past 32 years. She earned additional certification from UNO as a Teacher of the Visually Impaired. She has been a CTVI for the past 14 years, additionally serving as Coordinator of the Visually Impaired Program in St. Tammany Parish Public Schools for the past 12 years.

Scott Crawford:

Scott Crawford was born and raised in Missouri. He received his Master in Rehabilitation of the Blind from University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) in 1990. He interned at the Veterans Administration in Birmingham, AL and then began his mobility career in Atlanta, GA at the Center for the Visually Impaired (CVI), where he worked with clients with a wide variety of disabilities in addition to their blindness. In 1995, his addiction to Cajun Music and Cajun Dancing took him to Lafayette Louisiana. In 1997, he commuted from Louisiana to UALR to take RT classes. In 1998, he returned to CVI in Atlanta to work in the community-based program doing both O&M and RT, but couldn't stay away from Louisiana and returned in 2001. He initially did Job Placement, but has returned to teaching Orientation & Mobility. Over the years, Scott has frequently done presentations on various subjects including working with wheelchair users, working with walkers, working with the elderly, avoiding burn-out and creating tactual maps and graphics.

Danielle Mercer:

Danielle Mercer, Au.D., M.S., CG(ASCP)CM, CCC-A, is a Postdoctoral Fellow at Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, Department of Genetics, in the laboratory of Fern Tsien, Ph.D., where she is investigating genetic heterogeneity in families with Usher syndrome and other forms of genetic hearing loss. In addition, Danielle is a clinical audiologist who serves as a project faculty member for the LSUHSC Collaborative for students with unique communication needs. She has over 15 years of laboratory experience in clinical diagnostics and scientific research, including cytogenetics, molecular genetics, leukemia research, and clinical research. She is certified in cytogenetics by the American Society for Clinical Pathology Board of Registry, and in clinical audiology by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. She is excited to be serving on the Connections 2017 conference planning committee.

Denise Crochet:

Denise Crochet, Semantikos, LLC, has been actively working in the interpreting field for twenty-two years. She has been trained in the field from sign-language institutes, mentorships with Deaf individuals (Interpreting for a Fulbright Scholar) and college training (Gallaudet University Summer Institutes, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, fellowship, AA degree from Delgado College, ITP, BS Tulane University, New Orleans, La.). Ms. Crochet's career has included educational, medical, mental health, theatrical, minimal language skills, legal and video-relay interpreting. Denise is particularly fond of Deaf/Blind interpreting. She has presented workshops including ASLI Conference in Bristol, England, 2012, Belize 2015, consulted with the Cambodian School for the Deaf, 2017 and across the United States with a particular focus on educational interpreting in a variety of settings.

In addition to the various schemas in which she has interpreted, Ms. Crochet formerly served as the Executive Director of the non-profit Deaf Action Center, Northshore, as a mentor for the Louisiana State Dept. of Education, and mentor for Sorenson Video Relay Service. She also is an adjunct instructor in the Tulane University Linguistics Department. She provides sign language instruction for a dynamic range of clients whose interests are interpreting as a profession, as well as those who are losing their functional hearing and are seeking an alternative mode of communication. Her passion for both interpreting and mentoring led her to establish Semantikos, (the Greek root for Semantics), in July of 2007.

Kristyn Wypych Tramel:

Kristyn Wypych Tramel, Au.D., earned a Bachelor of Science in Behavioral Psychology and Communication Sciences and Disorders from Western Michigan University in 2008 and a Clinical Doctorate in Audiology from Louisiana State University Health – New Orleans, LA in 2016. She completed her externship training at Creel Hearing Center in Covington, LA and is currently employed at a private ENT practice in New Orleans, LA where she works with both children and adults. Dr. Tramel is also an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher for children ages 4-12 years old and a member of the Louisiana State University Collaborate Grant Project for Children with Unique Communication Needs.

Angelea Kronlage:

Angelea Kronlage, Au.D., CCC-A, is a clinical audiologist with over 20 years of experience in providing diagnostic and rehabilitative services to children and adults. Her focus is on family-centered care with improved communication based on individual needs always being paramount. As a native of Pensacola, Florida, Dr. Kronlage earned a bachelor of science degree in audiology and speech pathology from Florida State University and was then awarded a graduate research assistantship at the University of South Alabama where she earned a master of science degree in speech and hearing sciences. She recently went on to complete her doctoral degree in audiology at the University of Florida. Dr. Kronlage has worked in multi-physician ENT practices and private practice audiology clinics where she provided services through early intervention programs, contractual services to school districts, and worked with adults providing diagnostic testing and the fitting of hearing instruments and assistive technology. Dr. Kronlage also worked for a small hearing instrument manufacturer providing training and education to dispensing audiologists working with patients with tinnitus and hyperacusis. Dr. Kronlage currently provides contract audiology services to various ENT and audiology clinics in the greater metropolitan New Orleans area and serves as project faculty member for the LSUHSC Collaborative for Students with Unique Communication Needs. She holds the certificate of clinical competence from the American Speech-Language Hearing Association and is a member of the American Academy of Audiology as well as the Louisiana Academy of Audiology.

Alice “Jo” Brown:

Jo Brown, B.A., LA HQ, is the Co-coordinator of Deaf Services for St. Tammany Parish School System in Southern Louisiana where she is responsible for bridging the gap in services and communication between the deaf and non-deaf community in St. Tammany Parish Schools and beyond. A graduate of Northern Colorado University and Delgado Community College, Jo holds degrees in ASL/ English Interpreting, Interpreter Supervision and Leadership and Educational Interpreting. She is certified as a Louisiana Qualified Educational Interpreter and has over 18 years’ experience working in Deaf Education. Jo is a board member of the National Association of Interpreters in Education- NAIE and was recently a conference co-chair.

Michael Norman:

Michael Norman, Ph.D., has worked in the field of Speech-Language Pathology and special education for 44 years in schools, clinics, hospitals and universities. Dr. Norman received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Nicholls State University in 1973, a Master of Communication Disorders degree from L.S.U. Medical Center in 1976, and a Ph.D. in Special Education – Early Intervention in 2016. Dr. Norman holds Louisiana Teacher’s Certificate endorsements in speech-language pathology, secondary grades, and hard of hearing. He is currently licensed in Louisiana and Texas as a speech-language pathologist and holds a Certificate of Clinical Competence from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

Rana Ottallah:

Rana Ottallah, A.S, Criminal Justice, is a Certified ASTra advocate (Advocacy, Support, and Training for DHH), a Louisiana Commissioner for the Deaf, Deaf Education Alliance Chair, Parent Advocate of a 12 years old deaf oral daughter with bilateral cochlear implants. She presented multiple state, regional and local level trainings about educational rights for students with disabilities with an emphasis on early childhood, transition, and special education services for DHH students, educational rights under IDEA, ADA, and 504. In addition to being a member of Collaborative for students with unique communication needs faculty, Rana is as Louisiana Lead Astra advocate and the Advocacy Center Policy and Community Engagement Assistant.

Sharon Edwards:

Sharon Edwards, M.Ed., CCC-SLP, has a Master’s degree in Speech-Language Pathology and has worked in the area of assistive technology for 18 years. Before joining the Center, Sharon worked for Ascension Parish School Board as the Assistive Technology Specialist. She has presented at numerous conferences on the local, regional and national levels. She has served as the AT facilitator for the South River Assistive Technology Center for the last 13 years.

Karen Nelson:

Karen M. Nelson, MA, L-SLP, has been working with autism and significant disabilities for over 35 years. Currently she is the lead support therapist for autism and significant disabilities in East Baton Rouge Parish. Karen earned her master’s degree in Speech language pathology from the university of Northern Colorado. Her Bachelor degree of science in Speech language pathology from Ohio university. Karen’s knowledge and expertise got her a spot on many state communities related to students with Autism and communication needs.