

## LEARNING TO TEACH USING VEX ROBOTICS

By Ms. Shelly Roberts

AMSTI 6-8 Science Specialist at the JSU In-Service Center

JSU's Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) and JSU's Alabama Science in Motion (ASIM) recently partnered to provide science and math teachers a professional development opportunity to deepen their content knowledge in science, technology, engineering, and math education (STEM).

The focus of this STEM training offered training and equipment in VEX Robotics. The training workshop was funded through a Mathematics and Science Partnership Grant. This grant also provides professional development funding for the On-Going Assessment Project (OGAP). In the teacher leader model of OGAP, JSU's In-Service staff provides professional development and support directly to selected teachers, who in turn provide training and mentor support to other teachers in their school as they learn about and then implement the OGAP formative assessment system. The OGAP formative assessment tool is based on math research and allows teachers to gather real evidence of students' conceptual understanding of mathematics.

The primary purpose of the JSU In-Service Center's AMSTI and ASIM is to raise student achievement by providing instructional support and professional development opportunities. The VEX Robotics Design System was chosen to provide hands on manipulatives that support STEM projects. Students use science, technology, engineering, and math in VEX Robotics Design System projects. These projects further help



to develop a student's abilities and experiences in teamwork, leadership, and problem solving. Teachers were shown how to customize VEX projects to meet the level of students' abilities.

Twelve teams of teachers were chosen from the JSU In-Service Center's service area to participate in the robotics training. The teachers had various levels of experience in working with robotics. Some of the teachers have established robotics teams at their schools, while other teachers plan to begin a team during the 2013-2014 school year.

The VEX Robotics Design System development kit the teachers were trained on includes programming software, assorted hand tools, and materials for assembling the VEX robots, and VEX robotic components. During the 2013 summer's week-long

training session, teacher participants learned how to construct, operate, and program their robots. The teachers will use this training to guide their students in building an innovative robot using the VEX Robotics components.

Each year, VEX Robotics presents an engineering challenge in the form of a game. The VEX Robotics Competition game for the 2013-2014 season is VEX Toss Up. Students use their VEX Robotics to build robots that will score the most possible points in qualification matches, elimination matches, and challenges. The teachers participated in a mock VEX Toss Up competition on the last day of the training. Each team of teachers will receive ongoing support at their request through the JSU In-Service Center's AMSTI and ASIM staff members.

# ECE BLOCK TRIP TO JOSEPH BRUNO MONTESSORI ACADEMY



Dr. Celia Hilber and Dr. Nina King traveled to the Joseph Bruno Montessorri Academy in Birmingham, Alabama, on August 28, 2013. There they met the Early Childhood Education (ECE) block students at the Joseph S. Montessori Academy.

Together they toured the infant and toddler program and the lower and upper elementary classes. The group also visited the art, music, and Spanish classrooms. The students learned and enjoyed hearing about the programs available to students at the Bruno Montessori Academy.

In class the ECE block students discuss and compare this example of contemporary Montessori school that also includes the theories of Jean Piaget and Howard Gardner, to the school Maria Montessori created in Italy in the early 1900s.



LEARNING ABOUT COUNTING AND PLACE VALUE USING BEADS



SPANISH TEACHER, MS. EVELYN LA ROTA, AND DR. CELIA HILBER



DR. NINA KING AND ART TEACHER, MS. BEV MABRY





# STUDENT COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS

The Student Council for Exceptional Children (SCEC) is a student organization that advocates for students with special needs and promotes professional preparation for future teachers. The JSU SCEC is a student chapter of the National Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) organization. The CEC is an international community of professionals who are the voice and vision of special and gifted education. CEC is one of the largest advocacy organizations for students with disabilities in the nation.

In the past, members of the JSU SCEC have volunteered for the Tootsie Rolls Drive to help The ARC of Cleburne and Calhoun counties raise money for The ARC's summer day camp for children with intellectual disabilities. They also had an



BACK ROW FROM THE LEFT: LEANN SHEEHAN (PRESIDENT), TERESA COLLINS (PUBLIC RELATIONS), ANDREA FLOYD (TREASURER), MRS. GAMBLE (ADVISOR), DR. CONNOR (ADVISOR)  
FRONT ROW: HOLLEY SMITH (SECRETARY), KAELYN CROWE (VICE-PRESIDENT)

unbelievable experience volunteering to assist at this year's Special Olympics.

In March, they campaigned to "Spread the Word to End the Word" on campus at JSU. This is a nationwide effort to encourage education professionals and people in the community to replace the offensive "R" word (retarded) from today's speech and replace it with the more acceptable term "intellectual disability." The Student Council

for Exceptional Children (SCEC) has great plans for the fall semester here at JSU! In the coming months, the SCEC plans to continue working with The ARC to raise money for projects and volunteer at events. The SCEC plans to host on campus student activities and professional development opportunities for all members.

The SCEC provides a great opportunity to become involved with a professional organization here at JSU. There is a \$5 membership fee per semester to join. Joining the national

chapter is encouraged, but it is not a requirement to be a part of the JSU SCEC. For more information, please visit the website at <http://jsu-scec.webs.com> or like the Facebook page "JSU Student Council for Exceptional Children." The SCEC's mission is to improve the quality of life for individuals with exceptionalities and their families through professional excellence and advocacy.

## LUNCH CRUNCH AND GAMECOCK GALLOP

By Ms. Aubrey Crosson

Instructor, Department of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation

The JSU Wellness Center will be offering its "Lunch Crunch" fitness class in Pete Mathews Coliseum from 12:15-12:45 PM on Mondays and Wednesdays this fall. The class will consist of dynamic, fun workouts including Zumba, Pilates, strength training, and aerobics. All fitness levels are welcome! The class is open to all faculty and staff. Please contact Aubrey Crosson at [jcrosson@jsu.edu](mailto:jcrosson@jsu.edu) or 256-782-5518 for more information.

The HPER Department will hold its 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Gamecock Gallop 5K and Youth Run on Saturday, October



26<sup>th</sup>. The 5K begins at 8:00 AM at Pete Mathews Coliseum and the Youth Run will begin at 9:15 AM on

the JSU track. Pre-registration cost for the 5K is \$18 or \$16 for JSU faculty, staff, and students. Race day registration for the 5K begins at 7:00 AM and is \$20. Pre-registration cost for the Youth Run is \$10 and race day is \$15. Please visit our registration page at <http://www.active.com/jacksonville-al/running/gamecock-gallop-2013>. Please enter JSU2013 at checkout to apply the JSU discount. For more information or to request a hard copy of the registration form, please call the JSU Wellness Center at 256-782-5114.

# SUMMER JOURNALISM INSTITUTE AT JSU DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

A diverse group of high school students from across North Alabama recently spent a week at Self Hall on the Jacksonville State University campus to learn more about the world of digital journalism, broadcasting, and public relations.

The annual Summer Journalism Institute sponsored by the Jacksonville State University Department of Communication, and supported by a grant from the Alabama Press Association, featured classes taught by regular faculty as well as outside speakers.

Aside from taking classes and working on TV, radio, and newspaper projects, the SJI students also toured the JSU campus media facilities and

got an up-close look at the daily operations of the broadcast media.

The group visited the television studios operated by the JSU Department of Television Services and took a tour of campus radio station WLJS. They also heard a presentation from Ben Cunningham, metropolitan editor of *The Anniston Star* and a JSU communication alumnus, who talked to the students about the daily routine of publishing a local newspaper.

The program concluded with remarks from JSU alumnus Roy Williams, who has spent more than twenty years as a journalist in Birmingham and who currently serves as director of marketing for Holy Family Cristo Rey Catholic High School in Birmingham.

This year's SJI participants were: Miaya Webster of Leeds, a student at the Alabama School of Fine Arts. Lauren Jackson of Boaz, a student at Sardis High School. Sarah Keener of Gadsden, a student at Gaston High School. Elizabeth Brown of Oxford, a student at Oxford High School. Sh'Zavia Hill of Oxford, a student at Anniston High School. Alyson Smith of Anniston, a student at Oxford High School. Austin Noakers of Gadsden, a student at Gaston High School. Justin Wooten of Pleasant Grove, a student at Holy Family Cristo Rey High School.





## CEPS WELCOMES NEW FACULTY

Department of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation

Ms. Aubrey Crosson is no stranger to Jacksonville State University or the Department of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (HPER). She earned her bachelor's degree in exercise science and wellness with a minor in nutrition from JSU in 2009. She then worked as a graduate assistant in the HPER department, teaching several activity classes including Zumba, Pilates, and Body Shaping, from the Fall of 2010 until the Spring of 2012, when she earned her master's degree in human performance.

Ms. Crosson immediately followed her master's graduation with a year of adjunct work in the department, adding classes such as Fitness Testing, Physical Fitness Techniques, and Concepts of Wellness to her repertoire. She is currently teaching many of those same classes, as well as Introduction to Personal Training and Introduction to Exercise Science and Wellness.



During her time as both an undergraduate and graduate student, Aubrey has been very heavily involved in the activities of the JSU Wellness Center, and her passion for helping others through the Wellness Center continues to this day. She is an avid participant in department events such as the Gamecock Gallop 5K and JSU Employee Health and Fitness Day. Aubrey has also been associated with the YMCA of Calhoun County

since her internship there in 2009. She has taught many classes for the Y, and currently teaches Pilates for a special group of regulars who depend on her for their (intense) weekly core workouts.

Ms. Crosson is a certified Group Fitness Instructor and Personal Trainer through the Aerobics and Fitness Association of America, and she also holds certifications in Zumba, Aqua Zumba, Pilates, and Tabata Bootcamp. She is also a proud member of Phi Epsilon Kappa, a national professional fraternity for those engaged in or pursuing careers in exercise science.

In her spare time, Ms. Crosson enjoys spending time with her husband, Tim, and their two dogs, Yogi and Heidi. She also enjoys many types of outdoor recreation, reading, training her friends (she makes everyone exercise!), and developing delicious gluten-free fare. Most weekends, she can be found traveling to Albertville or Birmingham to dote on her niece and nephews.



## CEPS WELCOMES NEW FACULTY (CONTINUED)

Department of Secondary Education

Dr. Rhonda Kilgo joined the Jacksonville State University Department of Secondary Education as an assistant professor in August of 2013. Her responsibilities include serving as the primary advisor for undergraduate and graduate secondary education mathematics majors as well as the mathematics specialist for the department. Her classes focus on math methods as well as assessment in the secondary classroom. Dr. Kilgo will also serve as the liaison between secondary education and faculty who teach mathematics content courses.

Dr. Kilgo is not new to the JSU family. She taught undergraduate mathematics for the Mathematical, Computing and Information Sciences Department for eleven years. Her courses were primarily general studies math courses as well as math classes which help prepare pre-service elementary education majors.

“I have worked at JSU in the Department of Mathematics for eleven years teaching mathematics. Now I am able to put to work all the information I have learned about mathematics education that I prepared to teach,” said Dr. Kilgo.

For the last five years, she has also served as the Gamecock Orientation advisor coordinator for the JSU freshman orientation program. Prior to that, she was a faculty advisor on the team. This position has allowed



her to work with people from all areas of the JSU community. Dr. Kilgo earned her BS in secondary education with a concentration in mathematics and English and her MS in mathematics secondary education from Jacksonville State. Last August, Dr. Kilgo earned her EdD in Higher Education Administration from the University of Alabama. Her research interests include technology in the mathematics classroom, mathematics education, freshman learning communities, college retention, and intercollegiate athletics.

Prior to coming back to JSU to teach mathematics, she taught high school math for five years. Her responsibilities included teaching a wide range of courses from math

skills to AP calculus. She was also very involved with the students and faculty outside of the classroom serving as faculty advisor for many student organizations, participating on various committees both local and state, and working as the junior varsity cheerleader coach.

Her desire to take part in organizations outside of the classroom and become involved with people all across campus did not end when she came to JSU. Dr. Kilgo currently serves as faculty advisor for Alpha Omicron Pi sorority and Phi Eta Sigma freshman honor society. She is a member of several professional organizations and honor societies herself. In 2009, she was awarded the Dean's Service Award by the JSU College of Arts and Sciences.

Next spring, she will be presenting “VIRTUAL VS. PHYSICAL: Manipulatives in the Mathematics Classroom” at the 2014 International Conference on Technology in Collegiate Mathematics in San Antonio, Texas.

Dr. Kilgo enjoys spending time with her husband, Wesley, and their two-year-old daughter, Whitley. She feels very blessed to have become a part of the Department of Secondary Education and the College of Education and Professional Studies family. Dr. Kilgo is hoping that she can soon give back the support and help that others have given her in her new endeavor at JSU.





## CEPS WELCOMES NEW FACULTY (CONTINUED)

Dr. Tracy Windle joined the Jacksonville State University Department of secondary education as assistant professor of Secondary Education this fall. Her responsibilities include the advisor for the alternative fifth-year master's students. She is a generalist for the secondary education department. Currently she is teaching Adolescent Development and working as a liaison between area schools, the Department of Secondary Education, and Practicum I students.

Dr. Windle is new to the Jacksonville area as well as to the JSU faculty. For the last six years, she has lived in Tuscaloosa, Alabama where she was a doctoral student, graduate assistant, and adjunct professor. In 2012, Dr. Windle earned her PhD in



secondary curriculum and instruction with an emphasis in English language arts. She also holds a master's in library science, from The University

Department of Secondary Education of Alabama, and a BA in English education from Freed Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee. Her research interests include literacy education, young adult and children's literature, and teacher practice.

Prior to coming to JSU, she taught for eight years in Huntsville City Schools and four years in Tuscaloosa City Schools. During her K-12 experience, she served as a library media specialist in both the elementary and secondary setting as well as an English and reading teacher. It was during this time that she developed a passion for young adult literature and adolescent literacy

When Dr. Windle is not working, she enjoys spending time with friends and family, watching football, and being outdoors.



## CEPS WELCOMES NEW FACULTY (CONTINUED)

Ms. Kelly Roper is a new AMSTI K-5<sup>TH</sup> math specialist. She received a BA, MEd, and Educational Specialist Degrees from Jacksonville State University in elementary education. Ms. Roper taught seven years in fourth-sixth grade in the Calhoun County School System at Pleasant Valley Elementary.

While teaching in the Calhoun County School System, she had the privilege of participating on the Calhoun County's Curriculum Project. With her colleagues, they worked on aligning lessons and resources with the Common Core Math and LEA standards.

At Pleasant Valley Elementary she served as a math mentor for the fourth grade teachers in the Calhoun County School System. Ms. Roper served on the Professional Learning Team for the system as well.

Ms. Roper has participated in numerous professional development



training sessions in best practices and formative assessments. She has been involved with the On-Going Assessment Project (OGAP) Additive, Multiplicative, and Fractional Reasoning. In addition, Ms Roper has been awarded several mini-grants from surrounding businesses for math,

AMSTI at the JSU In-Service Center science, and technology integration in her instruction.

In April 2007, Jacksonville's Kiawanis Club named Ms Roper Educator of the Month. In 2013, she was nominated as Pleasant Valley Elementary School's representative for the JSU Teacher Hall of Fame.

Recently, Ms. Roper completed the process for National Board Certification in Middle Childhood Generalist and is awaiting confirmation later this year.

"I believe learning is an ongoing process, and I am passionate about children and math." said Ms Roper.

She is married to Ashley Roper, who also works at JSU. They have an eight year-old daughter Macey, and a four year-old son Walker. They attend Webster's Chapel Baptist Church. Ms Roper enjoys reading, traveling, and camping with her family.





## CEPS WELCOMES NEW FACULTY (CONTINUED)

Ms. Christie Calhoun is entering the Department of Curriculum and Instruction as an instructor in Children's Literature and Integrating Theory and Practice. She has grown up in Calhoun County, attending Jacksonville State University for both undergraduate and graduate studies. She received her BS in elementary education in April 2004, and began teaching in Talladega City Schools the following school year. During this time, Ms. Calhoun began working on her MS in elementary education and continued her pursuit of this degree, moving into the Anniston City Schools for a short time and finally settling in the Calhoun County School System. She received her master's in elementary education in December of 2006 and Educational Specialist in elementary education in April 2013. She came into the College of Education and Professional Studies, Department of Curriculum and Instruction in August 2013, leaving Weaver Elementary School after seven years. She has taught



Kindergarten, second, third, and sixth grades.

Ms. Calhoun has delivered professional development workshops on a number of occasions to the faculty at Weaver Elementary School. She has also sponsored extracurricular activities such as the Spelling Bee and Green Team, an environmental club for sixth graders created in

Department of Curriculum and Instruction cooperation with the Calhoun County Extension Office. She served on numerous committees for school improvement and development, including the committee for the development of an outdoor classroom. Additionally, she served on a grant-writing team which was awarded a significant sum for the development of the outdoor classroom.

Ms. Calhoun volunteers with the Kiwanis Club of Anniston, where her husband has served for twenty years as a member, officer, and board member. She has volunteered for the annual Pancake Day fundraiser and volunteers each year with Back-to-School shopping for local students in the Calhoun County area.

She enjoys cooking, traveling, and spending time with family and friends.

She plans to begin her doctoral studies in the next two years at the University of Alabama. "I am very excited to be a part of the team at Jacksonville State University and eager to see what the future holds for me in upcoming pursuits," she said.



## MS. GENA MABREY INTERIM DEPARTMENT HEAD OF HEALTH PHYSICAL EDUCATION, AND RECREATION

Ms. Gina Mabrey has been appointed interim head of the Department of Health Physical Education, and Recreation (HPER). She has served the department since 1994 teaching a variety of courses including serving as the past program chair for recreation and current exercise science program chair. Ms. Mabrey was the first student to graduate from JSU with a BS in exercise science and wellness. She received her master's degree from Auburn University in exercise physiology. Currently she is ABD in a doctoral program through the University of Alabama at Birmingham in health education/health promotion. She began her career in HPER as an adjunct, then pro-rata until being hired as an instructor in 2006. With the exception of the physical education pedagogy class she has taught most of the classes HPER offers.

Ms. Mabrey is not the first female to serve as department head for HPER, the first was Ms. Palmer Calvert, who held that position for twenty-three years. Ms. Mabrey has been in charge of the JSU Wellness Center since 2006. There she has organized the Gamecock Gallop 5K, Wellness Wednesdays, National Employee Health and Fitness Day, along with health screenings for faculty, staff,



and students that include blood-lipid profiles, body-age testing, and stress testing.

Ms. Mabrey spoke of the years before her appointment as a time she “gained valuable insight.” Although it is not required of adjunct and pro-rata employees, Ms. Mabrey served on committees, attended departmental meetings and was the advisor of the HPER Club. “I like inspiring people,” said Ms. Mabrey. “I get pleasure from helping others achieve their goals.” Her efforts have been recognized as she has twice won a JSU award as Advisor of the

Year. She also was selected as a board member for the Alabama Department of Public Health’s Obesity Task Force and elected vice president with the Alabama State Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance organization.

Ms. Mabrey feels that through her numerous experiences at JSU she can appreciate the needs of the department as a whole. “My priority is our students. I will try to foster a learning environment to help students be prepared to excel in their careers and ensure they are the best applicant for the job,” said Ms. Mabrey. We can do this through the experiential learning, collaboration, and experiences involving current technology. Ms. Mabrey sees courses such as Concepts of Wellness and Introduction to Recreation as a key for HPER majors. Here students in exercise science, physical education, and recreation build the foundations for future courses.

For fun, Ms. Mabrey enjoys ‘practicing what she preaches’ about fitness. Her office walls show the medals and certificates she has earned as a marathon and half-marathon participant. “I like preparing for races even though I am not competing to win. I also enjoy playing golf occasionally.” Her co-workers attest that she is a talented cook, as well!





## MS. JANET BAVONESE INTERIM DEPARTMENT HEAD OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Ms. Janet L. Bavonese has been named interim department head for the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. Ms. Bavonese believes in a team-approach to leadership. Her plans for the department include building capacity through teamwork and capitalizing on each faculty member's strengths. She will be working to establish a fresh vision for Curriculum and Instruction that includes implementation of a social media plan, program changes, and 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom strategies. Since joining the faculty of JSU two years ago, Ms. Bavonese has taught literacy methods courses in the



Early Childhood/Elementary and Collaborative/Elementary programs. She has also served as the C & I liaison for the JSU Co-Teaching Institute, implemented a social media project with colleagues, presented research at both national and regional conferences, and contributed to upcoming program changes.

Ms. Bavonese is currently completing an EdD at the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa. Her field of study is curriculum and instruction in elementary education with a specialty in literacy development. Her research interests include new literacies, multimodal strategies, social media, and preservice teacher education.



HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND RECREATION STUDENT SOLICITS MEMBERS TO THE HPER CLUB



CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION STUDENTS IN THE LITERACY BLOCK



TUTORING OF COMMUNITY STUDENTS BY CLINICAL LEVEL II STUDENTS IN THE TEACHING/LEARNING CENTER



DR. JOSEPH AKPAN, PROFESSOR IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION MEETS WITH STUDENTS IN HIS NEW OFFICE A-6 IN RAMONA WOOD HALL

# iPad Apps, Tech Tips and Tools

There are many apps that can help a person or just enhance your knowledge of the world. Below are a few that I have loaded.

- **iBooks Author:** Everyone wants to write that masterpiece. With iBooks Author not only can you write your book but you can have it ready to sell on iTunes. The app is easy to use. You basically fill in your content into a generated format. Teachers can use the app to create a textbook for their students.
- **Flashlight:** There exists more than one of these apps at the app store. It can be useful when extra light is needed. You will be surprised at how much light an iPhone or iPad can produce.
- **Barefoot World Atlas** An up to date look at the world. Although whimsical and meant for children, this app allows a look at other cultures , wildlife, landmarks and famous buildings.
- **Leafsnap:** This application is an electronic field guide to leafy plants. The application compares what you snap with a large and growing database of leaves. Once identified, it will display images of leaves, flowers, fruit, and bark.
- **How to Cook Everything Essentials:** Is basically an electronic form of the book “How to Cook Everything” by Mark Bittman. The free app will provide you with 100 or so recipes, a guide to equipment for cooking, illustrations, techniques, and ingredient information.
- **Shazam:** If you hear a song and want to know the artist and the album, Shazam can hear what you do and provide that information.
- **Turboscan:** Turns your iPad or iPhone into a scanner. The results of the scan can be saved as pdfs or jpeg files.
- **Fontly:** Allows you to be a collector of type on signage. When you take a photo of type it is categorized and geotagged into a website. Go to <http://www.font.ly> to see the collection.
- **Myjsu Mobile:** JSU’s own app is available for free from the iTunes Store.



Please visit <http://ceps.jsu.edu>  
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