The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders is pleased to offer the following research project for the summer of 2016. Interested students are urged to contact the faculty member(s) directing the project that most interests them. By contacting the faculty member, you can discover more about the project, learn what your responsibilities will be and, if possible, develop a timetable for the twelve-week research period.

PROJECT TITLE: *Listen to my story: Perspectives of people with aphasia and their communication partners regarding AAC options*

Professor Aimee Dietz, PhD
Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders
Office Room and Building FE G45A
Cincinnati, OH 45221-0394
Tel: (513) 558-8551
Fax: (513) 558-8500
Email: aimee.dietz@uc.edu

**Project Description**

The ability to share stories about our experiences is crucial to maintaining social closeness with family, friends, and colleagues. Storytelling becomes challenging, and often impossible, for people who experience aphasia; a language disorder commonly caused by stroke (or “brain attack”), which limits their ability to share life experiences. Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), or computerized devices (including mobile technologies, such as the iPadTM) can “speak” for a person and facilitate conversation; these AAC devices can enhance the communication competence of people with aphasia (PWA). For this project, we will explore the perspectives of 12 people with aphasia (PWA) and their communication partners when using different AAC options using a qualitative, phenomenological approach. This project is important because PWA are increasingly using mobile devices, such as iPads, for AAC; however, the communication apps are often not evidence-based. As such, they may be a poor fit with the needs and skills of users. Moreover, there has been limited research to describe PWA and their communication partners’ perspectives towards different layouts (screens) underlying AAC devices. By understanding their preferences and needs, we will be able to provide PWA with a critical tool for adjusting to their new life and to renegotiate their social roles in their new post-stroke life.

- full-time work with flexible scheduling (outside of lab meetings etc)
- student will assist with transcribing all verbal and non-verbal communication and coding of the semi-structured interviews
- potential to co-author the related peer-reviewed manuscript and conference proposal
- strong collaborative skills are required