Dr. Valarie B. Fleming, Director of the Cognitive-Communication Laboratory (C2L) recently received a 2009 Alzheimer’s Association New Investigator Research Grant to Promote Diversity (NIRGD). The grant will be used to fund the study, “Early Detection of Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI).” The purpose of the study is to identify characteristics of spoken language and higher cognitive-abilities in adults with MCI and to determine the rate of decline or change in the language and/or higher-cognitive abilities in individuals with MCI.

The purpose of the NIRGD is to increase the number of underrepresented investigators working to solve problems related to Alzheimer’s and associated dementias. The Alzheimer’s Association supports early-career development that will assist principal investigators in building a strong foundation for future research applications. The $80,000 grant is for two years of research directed by principal investigator Dr. Valarie B. Fleming. The grant is a first for the Department of Communication Disorders, which is housed in the College of Health Professions. For more information visit the Alzheimer’s Association at www.alz.org.

Warning Signs of Alzheimer’s Disease

1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life
2. Challenges in planning or solving problems
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work, or at leisure
4. Confusion with time or place
5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships
6. New problems with words in speaking or writing
7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps
8. Decreased or poor judgment
9. Withdrawal from work or social activities
10. Changes in mood and personality

If you experience any of these, please contact your physician. More information can be found at www.alz.org

C2L’s Recent Scholarly Publications/Presentations

Harris, J.L., Fleming, V.B., & Harris, C.L. (accepted; to be presented November 2009). African Americans’ knowledge and beliefs regarding communication phenomena: Educational implications. Paper for poster session submitted to American Speech-Language-Hearing Association National Convention, New Orleans, LA.
Fleming, V.B. (2009, April). Age-related deficits in discourse comprehension: The role of executive function. Research technical session presentation to the National Black Association for Speech-Language and Hearing Annual Convention, Atlanta, GA.
Fleming presents at national conventions

In April 2009, Dr. Valarie Fleming presented in research technical session at the National Black Association for Speech-Language and Hearing Annual Convention in Atlanta, Georgia. Fleming’s discussion was titled *Age-related deficits in discourse comprehension: The role of executive function*. The mission of the association is “to maintain a viable mechanism through which the needs of black professionals, students, and individuals with communication disorders can be met” (www.nbaslh.org).

In May 2009, Dr. Valarie Fleming presented a poster based on her paper *Discourse comprehension and aging: The mediating effects of executive function* at the annual Clinical Aphasiology Conference in Keystone, Colorado. The conference is an “annual forum for clinicians and researchers engaged in the study and clinical management of person with acquired neurologic language disorders” (www.clinicalaphasiology.org).

C^2^L welcomes new research assistant

Rachel Wynn began working in the Cognitive Communication Laboratory in September 2009 as Dr. Fleming’s Graduate Research Assistant. Rachel is a first-year graduate student studying Speech-Language Pathology at Texas State University. She previously served as a research assistant at the Human Abilities in Bilingual Language Acquisition lab on the University of Texas at Austin campus. Rachel earned a bachelor of science degree from Indiana University.

Fleming receives Excellence in Scholarship award

The College of Health Professions annually selects three individuals to receive Faculty Excellence Awards in Teaching, Scholarship, and Service. In 2009, Dr. Valarie Fleming was one of two faculty members in the Department of Communication Disorders that were honored. Fleming received the Excellence in Scholarship Award. In addition to being the principle investigator for the Cognitive Communication Laboratory, Fleming teaches graduate and undergraduate level courses such as Aphasia, Cognitive Rehabilitation and Dysphagia. For more information, please visit http://www.health.txstate.edu/cdis/Faculty-Excellence-Awards.html.