

THE LION'S EYE

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Brandywine's Dr. Zosh Makes Headlines

ANDREA LUISTRO

Lion's Eye Staff Writer, aml5495@psu.edu

Penn State Brandywine's own Dr. Jennifer Zosh was featured on Fox 29's 5 O'clock News on March 6th for her latest research on the learning abilities of preschoolers. Dr. Zosh was also highlighted in articles on Yahoo! and The Huffington Post. The study discovered that toddlers learn new words better when they had to compare a known word to a new word.

Dr. Zosh along with colleagues Meredith Brinster, University of Texas at Austin, and Justin Halberda, Johns Hopkins University, studied 48 children ages 3 to 3 1/2 whose primary language was English. During the experiment, children were shown pictures of familiar and unfamiliar objects and learned new and made-up names for the unfamiliar objects either by instruction or by inference. Another experiment tested the children's memory of the new words and objects. Four of the six new objects were presented to the children and were asked to point to the objects by name. As a result, research concluded that the toddlers' vocabulary recall was better for the words learned by inference instead of direct instruction. Dr. Zosh told reporters that the results of the study don't mean that kids can only learn new objects by inference, but they may be more engaged when it's more of a game. Dr. Zosh plans on continuing a follow-up study on younger children who might find learning by inference more challenging.

Jennifer M. Zosh graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of Delaware with a B.A. in Psychology and a minor in Cognitive Science. She received both her M.A. and Ph.D. in Psychological and Brain Sciences from Johns Hopkins University. She has worked in the Laboratory for Child Development under the direction of Drs. Lisa Feigenson and Justin Halberda also during her time at Johns Hopkins University. Today, Jennifer M. Zosh is an Assistant Professor of Human Development & Family Studies at Penn State Brandywine. Not only does she teach at the university but she also still conducts research with undergraduates to help them gain hands-on experience. Jennifer M. Zosh also has several publications in The Origins of Object Knowledge, Journal of Child Language, Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, and Behavioral and Brain Science.

Congrats to Dr. Zosh and her colleagues on their hard work on developing research!

Penn State to the Moon!

Lunar Lion offers students diverse research experiences in space competition

REBEKKA COAKLEY

Special to the Lion's Eye- PSU News

Without textbooks, blueprints, or even a template to follow, Penn State students are working side-by-side with faculty in a rare opportunity to build a robotic spacecraft — the Lunar Lion — that will land on the moon and return high-resolution images, video footage and scientific data.

Led by Michael V. Paul, space systems engineer in the University's Applied Research Laboratory, students and faculty in engineering, physics, astronomy, geoscience, journalism and business are competing against the world's rising stars in space exploration to win the Google Lunar X PRIZE Competition.

"This is an opportunity for Penn State to establish itself as a leader in a growing field — a provider of the best research and the best graduates to the commercial and private space industry," Paul said.

Funding for the mission comes from a combination of philanthropy, corporate sponsors and scientific partners in the private sector. Maria Matthews, who graduated from Penn State in December with a doctoral degree in physics, served as the team's business development coordinator. Her work has given her insight into the diversity of the space industry and opened new doors for her in the field.

Matthews, a California native, was focused on building a career in the space industry. Her adviser told her about Penn State's Lunar Lion and recommended she get involved. "There are people from so many disciplines working on this project," she said. "I thought I'd be here to work on systems engineering, but I've learned so much more about the business side of the project, and it's a lot more exciting to me." She recently started a job at an aerospace start-up in Huntsville, Ala.

Paul, who himself was the spacecraft systems engineer for NASA's MESSENGER Mission to Mercury, says Penn State is the only university leading a team in the contest. The other competitors are privately funded. Nevertheless, he likes his team's chances. "With a group of scientists and engineers who understand the difficult tasks of operating in harsh environments, coupled with the energy and ambition of Penn State students, the Lunar Lion can win this competition," he said.

According to Kevin Walker, a senior from Annapolis, Md., and the student project coordinator, about 20 students are working closely on the project, with more joining every month. For Walker, an industrial engineering major, participating in

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