Sensory Overload and Multitasking

By Dean Gail Stuart, PhD, APRN, BC, FAAN

When I see someone driving poorly, I know there’s a good chance that they are on a cell phone and I get annoyed. When I’m talking with someone on a phone and they put me on hold to answer another incoming call I get annoyed. When I am at work meeting with someone and they interrupt our interaction to answer their cell phone I get annoyed.

Here’s why. First, if you are engaged with someone then stay engaged with them. Don’t place them “on hold” to thereby give them the message that someone else out there may be more important. Second, how much stimulation can a person absorb and still function effectively? Research suggests that multitasking may not be either efficient or effective.

Multitasking appears to interfere with the brain in several ways. At the most basic level, the mental balancing acts that it requires—the constant switching and pivoting—energize regions of the brain that specialize in visual processing and physical coordination and simultaneously appear to shortchange some of the higher areas related to memory and learning. What that means is that we wind up concentrating on the act of concentration at the expense of whatever it is that we’re supposed to be concentrating on.

What does this mean in our daily lives? It means that we sacrifice remembering important information for the act of completing a task. Even worse, certain studies find that multitasking boosts the level of stress-related hormones, such as cortisol and adrenaline, and wears down our systems through biochemical friction, prematurely aging us. In the short term, the confusion, fatigue, and chaos merely hamper our ability to focus and analyze, but in the long term, they may cause it to atrophy.

Thus this is the great irony of multitasking - that its overall goal of getting more done in less time, turns out to be chimerical. In reality, multitasking actually slows our thinking. It forces us to chop competing tasks into pieces, set them in
Sensory Overload (continued from pg. 1)

different piles, then hunt for the pile we’re interest in, pick up its pieces, review the rules for putting the pieces back together, and then attempt to do so, often quite awkwardly.

Productive? Efficient? I don’t think so. It’s more like running up and down the beach repairing a row of sand castles as the tide comes rolling in and the rain comes pouring down. So consider this definition of multitasking: “The attempt by human beings to operate like computers, often done with the assistance of computers.” It begins by giving us more tasks to do, making each task harder to do, and dimming the mental powers required to do them. It finishes by making us forget exactly how on earth we did them, assuming we didn’t give up, or “multiquit.” So now that I’ve finished sharing my thoughts with you, I will “singletask” to the next item on my desk…Gail

Getting to Know...Carol

Name: Carol McDougall, RN, MSN
Position: Instructor
How many years at CON? 5
How many years at MUSC? 16
First position at MUSC?
Case manager for MUHA operating rooms and joint faculty to the College of Nursing
Most rewarding thing about your job?
Interacting with the students and seeing them develop into highly qualified nurses.
Hometown: Troy, OH
Describe your hometown: Small, pretty, and football!
Family: Husband, David; two stepchildren, Noel and Patti; four grandchildren, Jorden, Korey, Kira and Ali; three cats; five dogs.
Astrological sign: Taurus
If you could invite four guests (living or deceased) to dinner, who would they be? Tim Russert, Elizabeth Edwards, John Kennedy and Ina Garten. The first three are/were inspirational, and Ina can cook the dinner.
Last movie you saw? Firehouse Dog
First concert you ever attended? The Association (Cherish is the word...)
Favorite place you’ve traveled to? Scotland
If you could attend any sporting event what would it be? Stanley Cup final between the Montreal Canadians and the Toronto Maple Leafs
One thing you’ve never done, but hope to accomplish one day? Skydive
In which store would you like to win a $3,000 shopping spree? Nordstroms
What do you enjoy most doing in your spare time? Knitting
Favorite color: Purple
Favorite flower: Yellow rose
Favorite sports player or team: Montreal Canadians
Favorite outdoor activities: Chasing escaped Jack Russells
Favorite movie: ET: The Extraterrestrial
Favorite TV show(s): Two and a Half Men
Favorite magazine: Time
Favorite chips/snack: Popcorn
Favorite candy bar: Dark chocolate Mars bar
Favorite thing about living in the Charleston area?
No snow!

MUSC Receives Accreditation

The AAALAC has granted MUSC/Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center full accreditation for three years. The site visit team and the AAALAC Council described our program as “exemplary”, a description used for very few academic laboratory animal programs. This is the eighth consecutive “full accreditation” for our animal program since 1987, a record that may be unprecedented for academic institutions. The exemplary status is all the more remarkable, as it was accomplished despite significant budgetary challenges, a growing unfunded compliance burden, and a thriving and complex research portfolio.

“The (most important) practical lesson that can be given to nurses is to teach them what to observe...”

~Florence Nightingale, 1859

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DNP Update
The Advisory Committee on Academic Programs of the SC Commission on Higher Education has approved the College’s proposal to implement a Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree Program. This was a major accomplishment in the approval process and was required for the proposal to be considered by the full Commission on Higher Education. The Commission will meet October 2nd to decide if the College can offer the degree program. If approved, the College will offer students DNP course load beginning in fall 2009.

Thumbs Up!
The latest NCLEX scores for April 1st through June 30th show that 43 students took the test and 100 percent passed. That gives the College a cumulative total for the year of 98.53 percent. Congratulations to our outstanding faculty for a job well done!

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save the dates
College of Nursing 125th Anniversary Events Calendar
SEPTEMBER 2008
“Health Attitudes, Behavior and Care: A Grassroots Perspective” presented by Dr. Herman Blake. Dr. Blake is the Humanities Scholar in Residence at MUSC
Friday, September 5
Room 402
10:30 a.m.

Day of Caring - Nursing students and faculty take on different community projects.
Thursday, September 11

Midday Networking Series - Fall 2008
WOMEN SCHOLARS INITIATIVE EVENING COLLOQUIUM
September 24
4 p.m.
BSB, Room 100
Rosalie Crouch, PhD and the Women’s Scholars committee chairs will present a summary of the initiative up to this point, followed by audience discussion of the next steps. A wine and cheese reception will be held in Colcock Hall Atrium immediately following the colloquium. All faculty are encouraged to attend.

RESEARCH PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES
October 10
12 - 1 p.m.
Gazes Room 125
Dr. Gary Gilkeson, Vice Chairman for the Research in the Department of Medicine, will present information on new programs developed to improve and increase grant funding, mentorship, and sharing of resources. Discussion on how the Department can further help researchers succeed will follow the presentation. All faculty, staff and students are encouraged to attend.

EMINENT SCHOLAR AWARD
November 14
11 a.m. - 12 p.m.
IOP Auditorium
Catherine D. DeAngelis, MD, MPH, Editor-in-Chief, JAMA and Scientific Publications Professor, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, will present her seminar apart of the Psychiatry Grand Rounds. Dr. DeAngelis is the winner of the MUSC Eminent Scholar Award 2008. All faculty, staff and students are encouraged to attend.

Xerox Totals - July
Student Svs - 3,769 Mail room - 2,634
3rd Floor - 2,422 4th Floor - 6,723
5th Floor - 3,208
Congratulations to **Dr. Lynne Nemeth** who has just had an article entitled, “High Performance in Screening for Colorectal Cancer: A Case Study” accepted in the *Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine*. This work is funded by the NCI and reflects Dr. Nemeth’s ongoing AHRQ-funded study concerning implementation of colorectal screening guidelines in primary care practices across the US.

**Funding Achieved!**

Congratulations to **Dr. Martina Mueller** whose proposal “Decision Support in the Care of Preterm Newborns-Tool Development” was just funded as an R21 proposal for two years for $275,000 from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health. This research, that includes collaborators from The University of Texas - M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, as well as Dr. Carol Wagner from the pediatric department at MUSC, will seek to establish a method of examining predictors of successful extubation of preterm infants using Artificial Neural Networks. This research could eventually change the standard of practice in newborn care!

**New Research Support Resources**

There is a new and comprehensive Research Portal that will be able to assist your research needs. The new portal will be managed by the Office of the Associate Provost for Research and can be accessed at http://www.musc.edu/researchhome/.

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**SAVE THE DATE**

August 18
11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (note earlier time)
Simulation Classroom 102

Dr. John Welton will be presenting his R01 proposal for review.
Please plan to attend.
Contact Stephanie Brown-Guion for a copy of Dr. Welton’s proposal.

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Success is getting what you want; happiness is wanting what you get.

~Author Unknown
Hispanic Health Initiative News

On August 5, third semester Hispanic Health Initiative Scholar students, Amanda Baxley, Kellar Lambert, Ryan Law, Maria Olimpio, Lauren Rushing, and Johanna Wiel, gave a presentation for parents with children enrolled in the Rural Mission Head Start program on Johns Island. The Rural Mission Head Start, a member of the national Head Start program, provides preschool, health and other social services to children of migrant workers and their families. The “Merienda” (coffee break) included information on pediatric first aid topics such as choking, CPR, poisoning, household safety, burns, falling injuries, and fever. Jackie Proveaux, a Charleston County employee, was also present and provided participants with information on disaster preparedness and hurricane awareness. First aid kits and digital thermometers were presented to all families with children in the Head Start program.

Teen Health Scholars

Seven Johns Island Teens participated in a 10-week program, called A Summer Program, that addressed self esteem, setting goals, and resume building skills, as well as adolescent health issues and health careers. Tiffany Williams is the program coordinator for A Summer Program that is funded by the New Morning Foundation. Assisting her in program development and implementation were Melissa Cox and Jamie Andrews. Thanks to Candice Moore and Janice May from the MUSC Medical Library who conducted “Hands on Health” training for the teens.

Health Career Day

Health Career Day was held on July 23. Angel Payton-Harmon, social worker from MUSC Pediatric HIV clinic, Frederica Hughes-Joyner, MUSC Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, and Ann Lawn, MUSC Medical Interpreter, spoke to the students about their professional career fields.

Upcoming Conferences & Courses

CONTINUING NURSING EDUCATION CONFERENCES

INTENSIVE REVIEW OF EMERGENCY MEDICINE
September 24 - 27, 2008

NEONATAL PHARMACOLOGY CONFERENCE 2008
November 16 - 19, 2008

FRONTIERS IN PEDIATRICS
December 5 - 7, 2008

OB/GYN SPRING SYMPOSIUM
March 23 - 25, 2009

For more details, visit http://www.musc.edu/nursing/departments/continuiningeducation/courses.htm.

WOUND CARE COURSES

WOUND CARE SPECIALTY COURSE
(three week courses at the College of Nursing)
August 9 - 30, 2008
October 11 - November 1, 2008

INTRODUCTION TO THE PRINCIPLES OF DEBRIDEMENT
August 16, 2008
October 18, 2008

MEDICAL SPANISH COURSES

BEGINNING BASIC MEDICAL SPANISH FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS
Fall Semester 2008

INTERMEDIATE BASIC MEDICAL SPANISH FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS
Fall Semester 2008

Thank You Jamie

Jamie Andrews has been working at the College as a summer intern in the Office of Practice. She is a rising sophomore at the University of Georgia and is majoring in Biology with an interest in adolescent health. Jamie is very passionate about literacy and has volunteered with numerous organizations working with adolescents. Another interesting fact about Jamie is that she has a twin brother named Josh who attends Georgia Tech. Jamie will be working with the Office of Practice until mid-August. Faculty can e-mail work requests for Jamie to Maria Toler at tolerm@musc.edu.
Dr. Phyllis Bonham was awarded funding from the South Carolina Clinical & Translational Research Institute (SCTR) for the pilot research project: “Are Toe Pressures Measured with a Portable Photoplethysmograph to Assess for Lower-extremity Arterial Disease Interchangeable with Those Measured with Standard Laboratory Equipment?”

Reliable and valid non-invasive measures of lower-extremity circulation are necessary to identify persons with lower-extremity arterial disease (LEAD) that can be unrecognized or asymptomatic. Toe pressure measures are frequently needed in patients with diabetes, renal failure or arthritis who have calcified ankle arteries resulting in elevated ankle brachial index (ABI) values from incompressible arteries.

Bonham is the principal investigator (PI) for the pilot project; Dr. Teresa Kelechi is the Co-PI, Dr. Martina Muel ler will serve as the biostatistician, and Dr. Jacob Robison is a collaborator. SCTR received a total of 89 applications from MUSC, USC and MCG with 41 applications from MUSC PIs.

Also, Bonham was an invited speaker at the 40th Annual WOCN National Conference in Orlando, Florida in June and presented a half-day workshop: “Differential Assessment of Lower Extremities and Role of Ankle Brachial Index (ABI)” and a lecture on the 2008 New LEAD Guidelines.

Robin Matutina, PhD student, was invited to join The National Scholars Honor Society. She was asked to contribute to “Scholarly Advise for Academic Mastery” an area on their web site for successful students to provide advice to other students. She received an honorarium for her accepted submission.

Carol McDougall successfully completed “The Quality Matters Peer Reviewer Training” in May and is now certified as a peer reviewer for the Quality Matters Consortium.

Ruth Stockdell, PhD (c), FNP-BC, an Instructor in the College of Nursing, successfully passed her Comprehensive Examination on July 25 and became a Doctoral Candidate.

Welcome New Faculty

Carole Bennett, PhD, RN, CS, is an Assistant Professor in the College of Nursing. She earned her BSN, MSN, and PhD in nursing at the University of South Carolina. Dr. Bennett coordinates the Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing course in the undergraduate program, teaches the Community Health Program Planning in the master’s program, and provides clinical supervision to psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner students.

Susan Newman, PhD(c), RN, CRRN, is an Assistant Professor and Junior Research Scientist at the College of Nursing. She received her BFA from Clemson University and her BSN from MUSC. Newman is a Certified Rehabilitation Registered Nurse with over 13 years of clinical experience in the acute inpatient physical rehabilitation setting. Her research interests led her to the community setting for her dissertation work, which involved the engagement of individuals with spinal cord injury (SCI) in a community based participatory research project using Photovoice. The primary aims of the project were to identify, and address through social action, the environmental factors that act as barriers or facilitators to community participation of individuals with SCI.

Tiffany Williams, MSN, APRN, CPNP, is an Instructor in the College of Nursing. A native of Charleston, she received her BSN and MSN from MUSC and an MA from Webster University. Williams works as a pediatric nurse practitioner for the College of Nursing Hispanic Health Initiative at the Franklin C. Fetter Clinic on Johns Island, and for the College of Nursing School-based Clinics at Burns Elementary School and North Charleston High School. She is also a clinical instructor for the undergraduate Population Focused Nursing Care course.
Fall 2008 Scholarship Recipients

Over $136,600 in scholarship monies for the fall 2008 semester have been awarded to 89 students enrolled in various College of Nursing degree programs. Scholarships are awarded based on financial need, scholarship, and scholarship criteria. Additional scholarship monies may be made available throughout the academic year and announcements about external scholarships are made regularly via e-mail.

The following are scholarships awarded by the College of Nursing and their recipients:

- **Andell Scholarship**  
  Zerlinna Shannon and Anna Stipp

- **Callen Scholarship**  
  Peggy Bollinger and Blair Webb

- **Dean’s Scholarship**  
  Christen Black, Heather Blanton, Jessica Bullington, Maria Caruso, Catherine Coker, Kelly Coleman, Abigail Heston, Stephanie Kott, Bernard Krafsig, Richard Larson, Dawn McNeil, Catherine Mindel, Micaela O’Keeffe, Amy Parker, John Sailor, Alyssa Tober, Shannon Whitehead, Sarah Wieber, and Nicole Woodberry

- **Halkyard Scholarship**  
  Ryan Law

- **Harper Scholarship**  
  Andrea Garlock and Lauren Rushing

- **Kerr Scholarship**  
  Caitlyn Tabler-Bishop

- **Kinard Scholarship**  
  Amanda Baxley and Jessica Caples

- **Whitehead Scholarship**  
  Louisa Burris, Casie Carroll, Ashley Clary, Catherine Coker, Nicole Dumitru, Elsa Edwards, Charlotte Gettys, Jane Hawkins, Maisie Hudson, Jasmine Kennerly, Donna Laird, Mary Lawton, Maureen Maginnis, Nicole Martin, Marlee McKenzie, Rachael Mullis, Abigail O’Bryan, Ashley Plonk, Christa Purcell, Ashley Ragan, Alison Swingle, Jennifer Walker, Lucy Wessinger, Andrea White, Karen White, and Heather Williams

- **Mason Scholarship**  
  Ashley Bath and Nicole Staubes

- **McAlhaney Scholarship**  
  Trent Bishop and Damon Clembury

- **MUHA Patron Scholarship**  
  Lauren Harris and Aaryn Markham

- **Smith Scholarship**  
  Sarah Jones and Keller Lambert

- **O’Keeffe Scholarship**  
  Johanna Wiel

- **Piechnik Scholarship**  
  Olivia Burgess

- **Rowley Scholarship**  
  Tiffany Hunter and Roscoe McMillan

- **Thurmond Scholarship**  
  Matthew Alexander

- **Wilson Scholarship**  
  Melissa Barr, Lauren Bennett, Charles Burger, Britney Diaz, Jessica Hundt, Jvonne Hunter, Stacy Hutto, Sarah Jenkins, Courtney Jordan, Kristen McDaniel, Katelyn Mucklow, Megan Riser, and Rachel Thorne

Reminder

125th Anniversary T-shirts, lunch bags, and totes are still available. The cost for each item is $10 and proceeds go to the College of Nursing Student Government Association to support student activities. To make a purchase, see Mardi Long in CON, room 307.

Stethoscope Ceremony

The College of Nursing Stethoscope Ceremony will be held Wednesday, August 27, 2008 at St. Luke’s Chapel. Class of May 2008 graduate, Rebecca Freeman, and Class of May 2009 student and MUHA Patron Scholarship recipient, Aaryn Markham, will speak to the 60 entering ACC BSN students. All are invited to attend the ceremony and the reception following.
Nursing Goes High Tech

On July 23rd, nurse executive Melissa Fitzpatrick, RN, MSN, FAAN, visited the College of Nursing as part of College’s 125th Anniversary events.

Fitzpatrick, Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer of Hill-Rom, gave two knock out presentations to faculty and students. The first presentation was titled, “Embracing the Leader Within: Schlumpy Mary Beware!” This session was so well attended that it became standing room only. The second presentation of the day was titled, “Using People, Process and Technology to Enhance Outcomes for Patients and their Caregivers.” During her visit, Fitzpatrick met with doctoral students and discussed various nurse leadership roles available in non-health related fields. Fitzpatrick was very pleased with her visit to CON and found her time with the students “very illuminating.” She is planning on a return visit in the future.

125th Anniversary Fund

Many thanks to the following faculty:

- Cindy Allen
- Elaine Amella
- Jane Anderson
- Jeanette Andrews
- Susan Benedict
- Robin Bissenger
- Sharon Bond
- Phyllis Bonham
- Annemarie Donato
- Nancy Duffy
- Barbara Edlund
- Elizabeth Erkel
- Gail Gilden
- Janet Grouch
- Ann Hollerbach
- Lenora Horton
- Dianna Inman
- Carolyn Jenkins
- Teresa Kelechi
- Marilyn King
- Marilyn Laken
- Gayenell Magwood
- Mary Martin
- Carol McDougall
- Martina Mueller
- Lynn Nemeth
- Susan Newman
- Georgette Smith
- Sheila Smith
- Peggy Spain
- Ruth Stockdell
- Sally Stroud
- Gail Stuart
- John Welton
- Deborah Williamson

Total raised to date: $53,535

If you are a faculty member who has donated, but your name does not appear on this list, please contact Jo Smith at smithjo@musc.edu.
Beat the Heat with an Ice Cream Treat!

Please join us for an ice cream social celebrating our new students and the College’s 125th Anniversary.

Monday, August 18
12:30 p.m.
Historical Library