

Steven G. Zecker, PhD is Associate Professor of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. He obtained a BA degree with a double major in Psychology and Sociology from the University of Michigan and a PhD from Wayne State University in Cognitive Psychology. In his early professional career he taught and conducted research in experimental psychology at Hamilton College and Colgate University. Dr. Zecker always has had an interest in conducting cognition research that utilized individuals with disordered functioning and his initial work in the field examined phonological and orthographic processing in disabled readers. This interest grew into a line of research looking at the processes underlying decoding and spelling in normally-achieving children and children with learning disabilities and eventually, a position at Northwestern in a department where there are many opportunities to conduct interdisciplinary research that crosses traditional boundaries between hearing, speech and language and learning disabilities

At Northwestern, Dr. Zecker's research interests have focused on listening and attention skills in children with language and learning problems. He has been an author on several dozen studies examining the subtle deficits that such children have on simple tasks involving the processing of single speech syllables under optimal and noisy listening conditions. Much of this work, which has taken place over the last decade, has formed the basis for the creation of BioMARK: A Biological Marker of Auditory Processing, a diagnostic tool brought to market by Natus, Inc., which utilizes an electrophysiological technique on which nearly two-thirds of children with learning problems are deficient relative to their non-disabled peers.

In addition to his responsibilities on the Toolbox project, Dr. Zecker is at the present time involved in several projects that attempt to 'translate' basic research findings into clinical applications. He is currently a Co-Investigator on NIH-funded projects examining the neural representation of acoustic elements of speech and the reformulation of hearing assessment through the use of new clinical tools to evaluate the auditory periphery. He also is Co-investigator on a study that is assessing the plasticity of the auditory brainstem in response to the use of a personal FM communication system in a classroom setting.

Dr. Zecker teaches courses in psychoeducational assessment, statistics, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and mathematics disability. He serves as a disabilities consultant to two national standardized testing agencies and is a reviewer on several professional journals in the areas of hearing, language, and learning disabilities.