**Vishal Jayesh Thakkar, PhD**

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**EDUCATION**

PhD **Texas Christian University**, Fort Worth, Texas August 2016-May 2021

Major: Experimental Psychology in Neuroscience, Minor: Quantitative Psychology

Dissertation Title: Non-Invasive Vagus Nerve Stimulation Improves Language and Comprehension: Empirical Evidence and a Review of Reading Skills

Dissertation Committee Chair: Tracy M. Centanni, PhD

MS **Texas Christian University**, Fort Worth, Texas August 2016-May 2019

Major: Experimental Psychology in Cognition

Thesis Title: Emotion and Reason in Ethical Decision Making: The Effect of Habituation on Judgments in Ethical Dilemmas

Thesis Committee Chair: Timothy M. Barth, PhD

BS **Saint Louis University**, Saint Louis, Missouri August 2012-May 2016

Major: Neuroscience, Minors: Health Care Ethics and Medical Humanities

Capstone Title: Comparison between Computerized and Paper-and-Pencil Neuropsychological Screening Assessments

Capstone Mentor: Tony W. Buchanan, PhD

**CURRENT ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS**

**Assistant Professor, Research Track**  October 2024-Present

Department of Psychiatry

University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center

**Graduate Faculty Member, Clinical Psychology** May 2022-Present

Division of Psychology, Department of Psychiatry

Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center

**PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE**

**Instructor, Research Track** September 2022-October 2024

Department of Psychiatry

University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center

**Biostatistical Consultant**  February 2022-September 2022

Division of Translational Research in Psychosis, Department of Psychiatry

University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center

**Adjunct Instructor, Psychology** July 2021-May 2023

Department of Behavioral and Social Sciences

Tarrant County College District

**Research Study Coordinator** April 2021-February 2022

Perot Foundation Neuroscience Translational Research Center, O’Donnell Brain Institute

University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center

**SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS**

U = undergraduate student, G = UTSW graduate student, R = UTSW resident, + = equal contribution

**Peer-Reviewed Publications**

Kromenacker, B.R, Yassin, W., Keshavan, M., Parker, D., **Thakkar, V. J.**, Pearlson, G., Keedy, S., McDowell, J., Gershon, E., Ivleva, E., Hill, S. K., Clementz, B. A., & Tamminga, C. (2025). Evaluating the exposome score for schizophrenia in a transdiagnostic psychosis cohort: Associations with psychosis risk, symptom severity, and personality traits. *Schizophrenia Bulletin*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1093/schbul/sbae219

**Thakkar, V. J.**, Toups, M., & dela Cruz, A. M. (2025). Skills acquisition and engagement with the use of a structured journal club curriculum. *Academic Psychiatry*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40596-024-02079-2

McClintock, S. M., Deng, Z. D., Husain, M. M., & **Thakkar, V. J.**, Bernhardt, E., Weiner, R. D., Luber, B., & Lisanby, S. H. (2025). Comparing the neurocognitive effects of right-unilateral ultra-brief pulse electroconvulsive therapy and magnetic seizure therapy for the treatment of major depressive episode. *Biological Psychiatry: Cognitive Neuroscience and Neuroimaging*, *10*(2), 175-185. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bpsc.2024.10.016

**Thakkar, V. J.**, Crupper, J. E.U, Engelhart, A. S., & Centanni, T. M. (2025). Parameter optimization of non-invasive vagus nerve stimulation for novel language learning in typically developing young adults. *Journal of Neurolinguistics*, *73*, 101225. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jneuroling.2024.101225

Pre-print (2023) available at https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/fsehy

LoBue, C., McClintock, S. M., Chiang, H-S., Helphrey, J.G, **Thakkar, V. J.**, & Hart, J. (2024). A critical review of noninvasive brain stimulation technologies in Alzheimer’s dementia and primary progressive aphasia. *Journal of Alzheimer’s Disease*, *100*(3), 743-760. http://dx.doi.org/10.3233/JAD-240230

Druffner, N.U, Egan, D.R, Ramamurthy, S.R, Folsom-Davis, A.R, Jack, J.R, O’Brien, J.R, Symester, D.R, Thomas, K.R, Palka, J. M.+, **Thakkar, V. J.**+, & Brown, E. S.+ (2024). IQ in high school as a predictor of mid-life alcohol drinking patterns. *Alcohol and Alcoholism*, *59*(4), agae035. https://doi.org/10.1093/alcalc/agae035

Roark, C. L., **Thakkar, V. J.**, Chandrasekaran, B., & Centanni, T. M. (2024). Auditory category learning in children with dyslexia. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, *67*(3), 974-988. https://doi.org/10.1044/2023\_JSLHR-23-00361

Preprint available at https://psyarxiv.com/bdwyh

**Thakkar, V. J.**, Richardson, Z. A.U, Dang, A.U, & Centanni, T. M. (2023). The effect of non-invasive vagus nerve stimulation on memory recall in reading: A pilot study. *Behavioural Brain Research*, *438*, 114164. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bbr.2022.114164

Pre-print (2021) available at https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/wvsrc

Tauber, S. K., **Thakkar, V. J.**, & Pleshek, M. A.U (2022). How does expecting to teach impact students’ self-regulated learning? *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*, *11*(1), 106-119. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jarmac.2021.08.002 (Selected as JARMAC Editor’s Choice Article).

Barth, T. M., Lord, C. G., **Thakkar, V. J.**, & Brock, R. N. (2020). Effects of resilience strength training on constructs associated with moral injury among veterans. *Journal of Veterans Studies*, *6*(2), 101-113. https://doi.org/10.21061/jvs.v6i2.199

**Thakkar, V. J.**, Engelhart, A. S., Khodaparast, N., Abadzi, H., & Centanni, T. M. (2020). Transcutaneous auricular vagus nerve stimulation enhances learning of novel letter-sound relationships in adults. *Brain Stimulation*, *13*(6), 1813-1820. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brs.2020.10.012

**Submitted Manuscripts**

LoBue, C., Bickart, K. F., Bieniek, K. F., Brett, B. L. Cabrera, H., Chiang, H.-S., De Los Santos, Y., Gonzales, M. M., Hart, J., Hernandez, R. S., Hromas, G., Peters, M. E., Salter, A., Schaffert, J., **Thakkar, V. J.**, White, C., & Cullum, C. M. (revisions submitted). A systematic review of neuropsychological functioning in chronic traumatic encephalopathy.

**In Preparation**

Centanni, T. M., **Thakkar, V. J.**, Gunderson, L., Crossnoe, R.U, & Engelhart, A. S. (in preparation). Rapid processing deficits in children with dyslexia: Influence of stimulus, modality, and genes of interest.

Solórzano-Restrepo, J., **Thakkar, V. J.**, Engelhart, A. S., & Centanni, T. M. (in preparation). Parental education influences reading but not rhythm perception in children. Pre-print available at https://psyarxiv.com/8ybuj

Shurtz, L., Shorter, S. S., Neaves, S., Thakkar, V. J., Bunt, S. C., Didehbani, N., Stokes, M., Miller, S. M., Bell, K. R., & Cullum, C. M. (in preparation). Impact of resilience on adolescents returning to school following concussion.

Storage, D. S., Peters, J. M., **Thakkar, V. J.**, Mendoza, A., Woodward, A. M., Gosnell, C. L., Gohar, D., Lazzara, J., Malavanti, K., Metz, M. (in preparation). On the successful early career psychologist: Crafting your career trajectory, documenting it, and being happy while you do.

**Thakkar, V. J.+**, D’Mello, A. M.+, & Centanni, T. M. (in preparation). Becoming automatically fluent in reading research: Delineating key reading skills.

**BOOKS**

**Author/Editor**

dela Cruz, A. M., **Thakkar, V. J.**, & Toups, M. (in preparation). *From paper to practice: Using the psychiatric literature to enhance patient care, teach trainees, and continue lifelong learning*. American Psychiatric Association Publishing.

**Thakkar, V. J.**, Pantesco, E., Besing, R., & Naufel, K. Z. (Eds.). (in preparation). *Beyond the code: Integrating ethics into the undergraduate psychology curriculum*. Society for the Teaching of Psychology.

**Book Chapters**

Malavanti, K.+, Maffeo, M.+, **Thakkar, V. J.**+, & Witherby, A. E.+ (accepted). Teaching the neural basis of behavior: Updates and best practices. In A. S. Richmond & D. S. Dunn (Eds). *Oxford Handbook of Undergraduate Psychology Education* (2nd ed.).

Gosnell, C., Gohar, D., Kidder, C. K., **Thakkar, V. J.**, & Woodward, A. M. (2024). Rethinking course syllabi and assignments: How to generate engaging, equitable, and transparent student materials. In H. Scherschel & D. S. Rudmann (Eds.), *Teaching tips: A compendium on conference presentations on teaching, 2023-2024*. (pp. 39-41). Society for the Teaching of Psychology. https://teachpsych.org/ebooks/teachingtips9

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

**Clinical Psychology Doctoral Program, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center**

CLP 5392: Research Design & Multivariate Statistics Falls 2022-Present

CLP 5303: Cognitive and Affective Aspects of Behavior Springs 2023-Present

**Psychiatry Residency, School of Medicine, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center**

PGY-2 Research Rotation 2022-2023, 2023-2024 Cohorts

PGY-4 Scholarly Project 2022-2023, 2023-2024 Cohorts

**Tarrant County College District**

PSYC 2301: General Psychology Fall 2021, 2022; Spr 2022, 2023

PSYC 2314: Lifespan Growth and Development Fall 2021

**Texas Christian University**

PSYC 30503: Research Methods in Psych ology Spring 2021

PSYC 10514: Principles of Behavior I Lab Falls 2018, 2019, 2020

PSYC 10524: Principles of Behavior II Lab Spring 2017

PSYC 30523: Exp. Psychology: Cognition Lab Spring 2018

**RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

**Graduate Student Researcher**

Texas Christian University Department of Psychology November 2017-May 2021

Genetics of Auditory Perception and Plasticity Lab PI: Tracy M. Centanni, PhD

Texas Christian University Department of Psychology August 2016-April 2019

Ethics and Moral Reasoning Lab, Lab Manager PI: Timothy M. Barth, PhD

**Undergraduate Research Assistant**

Saint Louis University Department of Psychology November 2014-May 2016

Cognitive Neuroscience of Stress (CNS) Lab PI: Tony W. Buchanan, PhD

Saint Louis University Department of Psychology November 2014-May 2016

Brain & Cognition Lab PI: Brenda A. Kirchhoff, PhD

Saint Louis University Department of Psychology August 2014-December 2015

Wellness, Addiction, Gambling, Exercise Research (WAGER) Lab PI: Jeremiah Weinstock, PhD

**BLOGS AND OTHER MEDIA WRITING**

**Thakkar, V. J.** (2022, August). I’m a member of STP and this is how I teach. Blog post available at: https://teachpsych.org/page-1703896/12884215

**CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

U = undergraduate student, G = UTSW graduate student, + = presenting author (if not first author)

**Poster Presentations**

**Thakkar, V. J.** (2023, December). Learning peer-review: A new class assignment using PsyArXiv pre-prints. Poster to be presented at the Teaching to Enhance Research Methods and Statistics in Psychology (PsychTERMS) Conference. Virtual Meeting.

Helphrey, J.G, Cabrera, H., Neaves, S., Ahmed, D., Chiang, H. **Thakkar, V. J.**, Peters, M., McClintock, S., Hart, J., & LoBue, C. (2023, October). Preliminary outcomes on depression symptoms in a randomized controlled trial of high-definition transcranial direct current stimulation in Alzheimer’s dementia. Poster presented at the 43rd Annual National Academy of Neuropsychology Conference. Philadelphia, PA.

**Thakkar, V. J.**, & Robinson, D. (2022, October). Teaching tips for community college biopsychology. Poster presented at the Society for the Teaching of Psychology’s 21st Annual Conference on Teaching. Pittsburgh, PA.

**Thakkar, V. J.**, Engelhart, A. S., & Centanni, T. M.+ (2022, October). High frequency taVNS increases retention of novel language learning in young adults. Poster presented at the Society for the Neurobiology of Language Annual Meeting. Philadelphia, PA.

**Thakkar, V. J.**, Richardson, Z. A.U, Dang, A.U, & Centanni, T. M. (2020, November). The effects of transcutaneous auricular vagus nerve stimulation on reading comprehension. Poster presented at the 61st Annual Meeting of the Psychonomics Society. Virtual Meeting.

**Thakkar, V. J.**, Engelhart, A. S., Dang, A.U, Richardson, Z. A.U, Mattox, N.U, Turner, K.U, Mortenson, G.U, & Centanni, T. M. (2020, October). The effects of taVNS on novel language learning. Poster presented at the 12th Annual Society for the Neurobiology of Language Annual Meeting. Virtual Meeting.

**Thakkar, V. J.**, Engelhart, A. S., Mattox, N.U, Pecoraro, G.U, Richardson, Z.U, & Centanni, T. M. (2019, October). Auricular vagus nerve stimulation as a method for driving brain plasticity in learning a novel orthography. Poster presented at the 49th Annual Society for Neuroscience Meeting, Chicago, IL.

**Thakkar, V. J.**, Mason, A., Jefferson, A.U, Stacey, C.U, Khodaparast, N., & Centanni, T. M.+ (2018, November). Effects of auricular vagus nerve stimulation on novel orthography acquisition. Poster presented at the Society for Neuroscience. San Diego, CA.

**Thakkar, V. J.**, Thielman, M. A.U, & Tauber, S. K. (2018, April). The impact of expecting to teach on students’ self-regulated learning. Poster presented at the 64th Annual Southwestern Psychological Association Annual Meeting. Houston, TX.

**Workshops**

Kidder, C. K., Gohar, D., Iankilevitch, M., **Thakkar, V. J.**, & Woodward, A. M. (2024, October). Helping the next generation of teachers of psychology. Workshop presented at the Society for the Teaching of Psychology’s 23rd Annual Conference on Teaching. Louisville, KY.

**Thakkar, V. J.**, Gohar, D., Gosnell, C., Kidder, C., & Woodward, A. M. (2023, October). Rethinking course syllabi and assignments: How to generate engage, equitable, and transparent student materials. Workshop presented at the Society for the Teaching of Psychology’s 22nd Annual Conference on Teaching. Portland, OR.

**Conference Talks**

**Thakkar, V. J.** (2024, November). A journal club classroom to learn from all voices. Invited talk presented at the 26th Annual Mid-Atlantic Teaching of Psychology Conference. Virtual.

Barth, T. M.+, Lord, C. G., **Thakkar, V. J.**, Guyton, N.\*, & Brock, R. N. (2019, May). Resilience strength training (RST) for veterans: Preliminary quantitative results. Oral presentation workshop at the Moral Injury Pathways to Recovery Conference. Los Angeles, CA.

Brock, R. N.+, English, E. J.+, **Thakkar, V. J.**+, & Barth, T. M. (2018, October). Update on the moral injury project. Oral presentation workshop at the 68th Annual North American Association of Christians in Social Work. Windsor Locks, CT.

**FUNDING**

**Funded Projects**

**Hydrocephalus Association** January 2025-December 2025

Neuropsychological Phenotypes of Idiopathic Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus

Role: Biostatistician (3% effort)

**Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium (TCMHCC)** September 2024-August 2026

Recovery through Inspiration, Support, and Empowerment: A Community-Based, Peer-Delivered Recovery Education and Support Intervention for High School Teens with Suicidality Discharging from Acute Psychiatric Treatment

Principal Investigator: Joseph Guillory, MD

Role: Biostatistician (15% effort)

**External Grants**

**American Statistical Association:** $500 Early Career Travel Grant May 2024

**Society for the Teaching of Psychology**: $500 Early Career Travel Grant November 2023

**Internal Grants**

**Texas Christian University**: $2,000 Graduate Student Research Grant October 2019

**Texas Christian University**: $400 Graduate Student Travel Grant July 2019

**Texas Christian University**: $400 Graduate Student Travel Grant February 2018

**STUDENT TEACHING AND RESEARCH MENTORING**

**Graduate Student Teaching Assistants**

Oscar Kronenberger CLP 5303: Cognitive and Affective Aspects of Behavior Spring 2025

Matt Hutnyan CLP 5303: Cognitive and Affective Aspects of Behavior Spring 2024

**Dissertation Committee Member**

Kaser, A. (proposed 2024). Everyday functioning in a diverse, community-based cohort of older adults with cognitive impairment. Chair: Laura Lacritz, PhD.

Fatima, H. (proposed 2024). Cognitive dispersion as a metric for predicting risk of Alzheimer’s disease in racial-ethnic minority patients: Considerations to sociocultural factors and disease-specific biomarkers. Chair: C. Munro Cullum, PhD.

Cabrales, A. (proposed 2024). Executive functioning in bilingual and monolingual children with spina bifida. Co-Chairs: Veronica Bordes Edgar, PhD and Beatriz MacDonald Wer, PhD.

Shear, D. Z. (proposed 2024). Does the integration of point-of-care psychosocial screening facilitate the patient-oncologist therapeutic alliance with young adults with cancer? A within-subject repeated measures design. Co-Chairs: Laura Howe-Martin, PhD and Brittany Hall, PhD.

Turner, E. D. (proposed 2024). Measuring the prevalence of secondary traumatic stress and related factors in burn care clinicians. Chair: Kimberly Roaten, PhD.

Michaels, M. (proposed 2023). Resilience factors in suicidal youth entering an intensive outpatient program for suicide prevention. Co-Chairs: Kristin Wolfe, PhD and Betsy Kennard, PsyD.

Helphrey, J. (2024, October). HD-tDCS over frontal frontal cortex and neuropsychological functioning in cognitively impaired older adults. Chair: Christian LoBue, PhD.

Tran, C. K-N. (2024, June). Prevalence rates, trajectories, and risk factors posttraumatic stress in those who contracted COVID-19. Chair: Anne-Marie Warren, PhD.

Ahmed, S. (2023, March). The role of optimism in interdisciplinary pain management. Co-Chairs: Richard Robinson, PhD and Robin Jarrett, PhD.

**Biostatistical Consultant on Psychiatry Residency PGY-4 Scholarly Projects**

Adler-Neal, A. (2024, July). The effects of meditation on depressive symptoms in those with mild to moderate major depressive disorder. Supervised by Adriane dela Cruz, MD, PhD.

Kendrick, C. (2023, July). Investigating M&M conferences and bad outcomes. Supervised by Monica Gonzalez, MD.

Khonsari, N. (2023, July). Surveying chief residents and program directors on willingness and motives for chiefs across psychiatry programs in Texas. Supervised by Adam Brenner, MD.

Lampley, J. (2023, July). A discussion of ACGME requirements about a family systems rotation in residency. Supervised by Connie Cornwell, MA.

Nuako, K., & Cole, L. (2023, July). CURES act faculty development seminar. Supervised by Sarah Baker, MD.

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

**American Psychological Association**: member November 2024-Present

**Quantitative and Qualitative Methods (APA Division 5)**: member January 2024-Present

**American Statistical Association**: member November 2023-Present

North Texas Chapter

Section on Statistics and Data Science and Education

Social Statistics Section

Section on Teaching of Statistics in the Health Sciences

**Dallas-Fort Worth Neuropsychological Association**: affiliate member November 2023-Present

**Society for the Teaching of Psychology (APA Division 2)**: member January 2021-Present

**Southwestern Psychological Association (SWPA)**: student member October 2017-December 2021

**Psi Chi: The International Honor Society in Psychology**: member April 2015-Present

**AWARDS AND HONORS**

**UTSW Medical Center**: Clinical Psychology Outstanding Teacher Award November 2023

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CERTIFICATIONS**

**Teaching-Related**

Faculty Development Education Training (UTSW) May 2024

Passion Driven Statistics Workshop July 2022

TCU Hybrid Teaching Training Program December 2020

Koehler Center Graduate Student Pedagogy Course December 2018

**Association of College and University Educators**

Designing Learner-Centered and Equitable Courses January-March 2025

Promoting Active Learning September-October 2024

Inspiring Inquiry and Preparing Lifelong Learners January-March 2024

**Research-Related**

Clinical Dementia Rating Scale Rater August 2021

Neuropsychological Inventory Questionnaire Interviewer Module July 2021

CITI Human Subjects Research, Good Clinical Practice, HIPAA April 2021

TCU Research Planning and Grant Writing Course (Dr. Sarah Hill) May 2020

TCU Writing Workshop (Dr. John Dunlosky) February 2020

Jump StaRt: An Introduction to Statistics in R Workshop December 2016

Jargon is Jibberish Workshop September 2016

**COMMITTEE SERVICE**

**University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center**

Division of Psychology Curriculum Committee October 2024-Present

Co-Chair

Teaching Assistantship (TA) Sub-Committee

Continuing Education Didactics Sub-Committee

Master’s Degree Graduate Program Study Committee September 2024-Present

Co-Chair, Personnel and Operating Costs Sub-Committee

Co-Chair, Curriculum Sub-Committee

Clinical Psychology Recruitment & Retention Enhancement Committee May 2022-Present

GRE Subcommittee

Diversity Survey Subcommittee

**Regional/National Affiliations**

American Psychological Association Science Partner – Division 2 February 2024-Present

STP Presidential Task Force on HBCU/MSI/TCU Institutions January 2023-October 2023

STP Early Career Psychology Committee January 2023-Present

Associate Chair January 2024-December 2024

Chair January 2025-December 2025

STP Presidential Task Force on Teaching Ethics February 2022-Present

Abstract Reviewer for Southwestern Psychological Association December 2020

**Texas Christian University**

Departmental Review Board for Human Subjects Research January-October 2019

***Ad Hoc* Reviewer**

*Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications Journal of Dual Diagnosis*

*Neuropsychologia Psi Chi: Journal of Psychological Research*

*Learning and Individual Differences*

*Neuromodulation: Technology at the Neural Interface*

Last Updated: 28-February-2025