

PSHA TOWNHALL AND BUSINESS MEETING



ASHA CE
APPROVED PROVIDER

Pennsylvania
Speech-Language-Hearing
Association

Introductory Level

.1 ASHA CEUs

**MARY WEIDNER PHD CCC-SLP AND
NICOLE BILLAK EDD, CCC-SLP/LBS**

Learning Objectives:

- Describe PSHA key goals and strategic priorities for the current leadership term, including focus areas for growth and engagement.
- Describe ongoing advocacy initiatives and upcoming legislative events and describe how members can actively participate in advocacy efforts.
- List at least two ways to get involved with PSHA, such as committee service and supporting membership growth initiatives.



Course Abstract

The PSHA Town Hall provides members and stakeholders with an overview of the association's current initiatives and future directions. This interactive session will provide an opportunity to engage directly with PSHA leadership and contribute ideas that will help shape PSHA's strategic direction. Join us for an informative and collaborative dialogue focused on strengthening our collective voice and advancing the fields of speech-language pathology and audiology in Pennsylvania.

Speaker Bio

Speaker's Bio: Mary Weidner, PhD, CCC-SLP, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders at Pennsylvania Western University at Edinboro where she instructs courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels. She maintains numerous international collaborations and is involved in advocacy efforts aimed to improve services for people who stutter around the world. Dr. Weidner also serves as the Co-VP of Convention Planning for the Pennsylvania Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

Dr. Nicole Billak is serving as the current president of the Pennsylvania Speech-Language-Hearing Association. She has 20 years of experience as a school-based speech-language pathologist in Mercer County, PA. Dr. Billak obtained her master's degree from Duquesne University and her doctorate from Slippery Rock University. She is also a licensed behavior specialist and has a certificate in special education supervision. She has also worked as an adjunct professor specializing in childhood language disorders, autism and behavior. Dr. Billak resides with her family in Mercer County with her son, who has special needs, and husband.

Speaker Disclosures

Dr. Weidner and Dr. Billak are both members of the PSHA Executive Board

CROSS-CULTURAL EFFECTS OF ICONICITY AND AUTISTIC TRAITS IN WORD LEARNING



ASHA CE
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Speech-Language-Hearing
Association

Intermediate Level

.1 ASHA CEUs

**VIJAYACHANDRA RAMACHANDRA PHD, KAIRI
SUGIMOTO M.S., KELLY ZISKIND M.S., ARK VERMA
PHD, IRFAN AHMAD MASTER'S IN NUCLEAR
SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING, MAHAYANA GODOY
PHD, AND KATSUMI WATANABE PHD**

Learning Objectives:

- Describe the bouba-kiki phenomenon and the benefits of iconicity on word learning
- Discuss the findings of the 'bouba-kiki' effect in individuals with autism spectrum disorders
- Discuss the benefits of using iconic words in the treatment of individuals with autism and other speech and language disorders



Course Abstract

This study examined how iconicity and autistic traits influence a novel word learning task. A total of 1,481 healthy adults aged 18 to 40 from four countries—Brazil (N=261), India (N=416), Japan (N=493), and the USA (N=311) completed a bouba–kiki-based word learning task, viewing novel images paired with either iconic (congruent) or arbitrary (incongruent) names. Word recognition was tested using a three-alternative forced-choice method, and autistic traits were measured with the autism spectrum quotient (AQ). Results showed a consistent advantage of iconicity across all countries, with better performance in the congruent condition. Although a linear mixed model found no overall significant effect of AQ on bouba–kiki scores, a country-specific analysis revealed a weak yet significant positive correlation between AQ scores and bouba–kiki performance among Japanese participants. This should be interpreted with caution and requires further investigation. Overall, the findings support the universality of the bouba–kiki effect in word learning across both Western and Eastern cultures. However, the relationship between autistic traits and iconicity varies by country and may be influenced by cultural factors. The implications of these findings for speech-language pathologists will also be discussed.