

2015 Southeastern Conference (SEC) Professor of the Year Dr. Isabel Gauthier, Vanderbilt University



Isabel Gauthier is the David K. Wilson Chair of Psychology and Professor of Radiology and Radiological Sciences at Vanderbilt University. Dr. Gauthier received her doctoral degree from Yale in 1998, followed by concurrent post-doctoral fellowships at Yale and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

Dr. Gauthier's research interests include the behavioral and neural study of visual object recognition, especially in domains of perceptual expertise such as faces, letters and musical notation, with implications for disorders like autism and congenital face blindness. Her dissertation research was the first to demonstrate that the behavioral and neural underpinnings of perceptual expertise could be studied in the laboratory using short term training protocols. Dr. Gauthier's work has demonstrated that the brain area believed to be specialized for face recognition also responds to other object categories, such as birds, planes or cars, in people who have expertise with those categories.

Her research has been funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the James S. McDonnell Foundation. In 2000, she founded the Perceptual Expertise Network (PEN), which comprises more than ten laboratories across North America and is now part of the NSF-funded Temporal Dynamics of Learning Center. With 30 workshops held in the past 15 years and hundreds of collaborative projects, PEN offers a new model of interdisciplinary collaboration centered on graduate student and post-doctoral fellow participation.

Dr. Gauthier has authored more than 110 peer-reviewed scientific articles, with 50 of these cited at least 50 times. In addition, her publications in many of the most prestigious journals in psychology and neuroscience have been cited more than 12,300 times.

She received the American Psychological Association (APA) Distinguished Scientific Award for Early Career Contribution to Psychology in the area of Behavioral/Cognitive Neuroscience in 2003. She was elected Fellow of the Association for Psychological Science in 2010 and Fellow of the Society of Experimental Psychologists in 2012. In 2014, she received the Chancellor's Award for Research from Vanderbilt University.

Dr. Gauthier has served as chief editor of the *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, one of the top empirical journals in psychology, since 2011. Under her direction, the journal now receives three times as many submissions, has become more interdisciplinary and grown in impact.

She teaches undergraduate Introductory Psychology and Brain Damage and Cognition, and has taught Research Methods in Psychology. She has mentored several students in honors projects in her laboratory and has also received an award for excellence in mentoring. [Read more about Dr. Gauthier.](#)