The Literacy Studies Ph.D. Program celebrated its 1st Annual Research-in-Progress Conference on Jan. 16, 2013. MTSU faculty, graduate students, alumni, and individuals from the community came out to support the program and participate in the activities. A special thank you goes out to Literacy Studies faculty Dr. Fain and Dr. Elleman for overseeing the organization of the conference.

Keynote Speaker Dr. Don Compton spoke with our attendees about Response to Intervention (RTI) research he has completed while at Vanderbilt University and some upcoming research topics. The emphasis was on early intervention and preventing late emerging reading disabilities in the elementary years.

As he began, his demeanor was that of a familiar colleague. He walked us through his history and how he formed his beliefs within the field of education. This key step helped viewers better understand his background and why these issues were of importance to him.

He spoke about how educators have become empowered using RTI. There are many variations of RTI, but each has the same goal: getting students the assistance they need faster than in times past. Dr. Compton’s work highlighted the advances that have been made in early identification of reading disabilities, as well as the limitations of the RTI process. His work suggests that current models may not address the needs of those most at-risk early enough in the RTI process.

Dr. Compton also introduced upcoming research concerning students with late emerging reading disabilities. Strides are being made for better identification of these students prior to them entering middle and high school levels of education. Dr. Compton can be contacted at donald.l.compton@vanderbilt.edu.
Conference Overview

Poster Presentations
The second floor of the education building housed the poster presentations and refreshments for the attendees. Several second and third year doctoral students presented completed research studies while others displayed research in progress. Students from our program as well as the psychology department’s graduate programs participated in this portion of the day’s events.

Spoken Presentations
The next phase of the conference consisted of small group presentations and round table discussions. Sitting in on some of the presentations was enlightening. The variety of ongoing research studies in our program is inspiring. The majority of students in the program participated in the conference, and their presentations ranged from small-scale studies completed as class assignments to completed large dissertation projects.

Thoughts about the conference by Dorian Johnson

The conference was geared toward new researchers and those interested in the Literacy Studies Ph.D. Program at MTSU. There aren’t always safe venues to come present your research if you are new to graduate work and conferences. I, therefore, plan to participate in future conferences. These were sentiments shared by other students in the program, all of whom felt that an event like this for those getting started is extremely valuable.

I thought that the round table discussion gave the conference a “get to know you” feel to the event. While I hadn’t experienced this type of session previously, I had a prior sense of what to expect. It was great to see the number of people in attendance who were asking a range of questions which not only helped clarify concepts but also gave the presenters new research perspectives and questions to consider.

What I loved the most about this conference was meeting individuals who are interested in coming to the program and adding to the knowledge base at the university.
CONFERENCE PROGRAM

POSTER SESSION

A Psychometric Evaluation of the Word Associates Test as a Measure of Native English Speakers’ Vocabulary Knowledge (Dr. Aleka Blackwell, Kyungtae Kim, Dr. Jwa Kim)

Becoming Reading Detectives: A Pilot Study Considering the Impact of Inferential Comprehension Instruction on Textual Understanding and Knowledge Acquisition (Jennifer Cooper, Susan Amundrud, Michelle Hasty, Holly Marshall, Casey Brasher, Danica Booth, Rachel Cornett, Candice Nolan, Dr. Jwa Kim, and Dr. Amy Elleman)

The Importance of Parents’ Understanding the Relationship Between Emerging Literacy and Play (Jo Ann Marx)

Electrophysiological Study of the Impact of Presentation Mode on Recall of Written Pseudowords (Jaymes Durriseau)

Concept Map of Jean Piaget (Esther Clark)

Spatial Configuration of Vertically Related Word Pairs Modulates Brain Activity Related Semantic Processing (Tyler Hubbard)

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

The Effects of Cross-Age Tutoring Upon the Reading Abilities of Elementary School Students (Rachel Anderberg)

Effects of Systematic Error Correction Procedures on Reading Accuracy, Fluency, and Comprehension (Beth Waters)

Exploring Culturally Relevant Texts with Kindergarteners and their Families (Katie Schrodt)

Voice and Choice: Critical Response to Relevant Texts (Michelle Hasty)

Power in Discourse: Fifth Grade Girls Positioning for Power in a Literature Discussion Group (Andrea Milligan)

L2 Chinese Learners’ Belief about Using Translation as a Learning Strategy (Ling Wang)

Connecting through Books: College Reading Students in Literature Circles (Davonna Thomas)

Students’ First Year Success: Should Soft Skills be Taken into Consideration to More Accurately Predict the Academic Achievement of College Freshmen? (Erica Powell)

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS

A Historical View of Headstart (Casey Brasher)

Implementing and Investigating Family Literacy Programs (Rachel Peay Cornett)

A Historical View of Emergent Writing Instruction (Penny Thompson)

Scaffolding Content-Area Vocabulary Instruction for ELL Students (Danica Booth)

The Effectiveness of Vocabulary Intervention on English Language Learners’ Word Knowledge: A Meta-Analysis (Kyungtae Kim)

The Role of Prosody Sensitivity in Reading Development and Performance (Melissa Brock)

Edward Fry and Readability (Sang Hee Jung)

Silent Reading: The Continuous Debate on the Effectiveness of Sustained Silent Reading on Comprehension (Holly Marshall)

The History of Written Critical Response to Text in American Secondary Classrooms (Michelle Hasty)

Historical Trends in Women’s Literacy Practices (Andrea Milligan)
Upcoming Conferences, Calls for Papers, and Workshops

Upcoming Conferences
RISE Conference, April 19, 2013, Farragut, TN.
The 58th Annual IRA Conference, April 19-22, 2013. San Antonio, TX.

Upcoming Workshops

Literacies for All Summer Institute (NCTE), July 18-20, Hempstead, NY.

Calls for Papers (in order of submission deadline)
Getting in Touch with Literacy. Providence, RI, Dec. 4-7. http://www.gettingintouchwithliteracy.org/callforpapersform.php. Note from organizers: We are looking for workshops from professionals just like you, filled with practical solutions, cutting edge information and research, and the tricks, tips and techniques you use every day. Participants should walk away with handouts, techniques, methodologies, and new ideas they can use with their students immediately upon returning home. Submission deadline: May 15.


MSERA. Pensacola Beach, FL, Nov. 6-8. Proposals for (a) Discussion sessions; (b) Display sessions; (c) Symposia; (d) Training sessions; or (e) Research in Progress sessions will be considered. http://dtm10.cep.msstate.edu/call.htm. Submission deadline: July 15.