Dr. Rebecca Fischer was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Dr. Fischer attended Trinity College for her undergraduate degree and she majored in Deaf Education. She later returned to academia to earn a master’s degree in Aural Habilitation and Education of the Hearing Impaired from McGill College. She obtained her doctoral degree in Hearing and Speech Sciences with an emphasis in Audiology from Vanderbilt University. After completing her doctoral work, she worked at the Bill Wilkerson Center to complete her certification by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association and was later offered a position in Communication Disorders at MTSU. Dr. Fischer has taught for the last 16 years at MTSU and previously worked at Tennessee State University. She is by profession an audiologist and is interested in auditory processing disorders. Her research hinges on studying these processing disorders, looking at critical reading, and the hearing impaired.

Dr. Fischer has been with the Literacy Studies Ph.D. program since its inception and played a part in its development. She teaches the CDIS 6000 course which looks at communication disorders in children and reviews current studies of communication disorders within the field of education. Dr. Fischer is passionate about teaching auditory processes because the literature connects it to dyslexia and other language processing disorders. She believes that the communication portion of this program is essential because there is a lack of knowledge in the field regarding communication disorders and how children learn to read and write. This feeds into instructional strategies, certain areas of the balanced literacy framework, and mis-labeled students in special education. More recently Dr. Fischer has been working with graduate students and staff on a project which explores clinical training for undergraduate students. Additionally, she is working with a graduate student on investigating the writing abilities of college students at MTSU.

I was born in Shandong Province of China, the hometown of the world-renowned educator and philosopher, Confucius, where teaching is known as one of the most glorious and respectable professions. I was so lucky to find and be admitted by our interdisciplinary Literacy Studies Ph.D. program at MTSU. This is my third year in the Literacy Studies Ph.D. program. I have completed all the course work and passed the preliminary exam guided by Dr. Blackwell, Dr. Kim, and Dr. Magne. I took the research format of this exam, which is also the
pilot study of my dissertation research that is related to Chinese vocabulary acquisition by adult English speakers. It not only enabled me to utilize the multi-area knowledge I learned through the course work in the program, but it is also a perfect match with my current and future career goals. Specifically, the research investigates the effects of single and dual coded instructional methods using computer-based multimedia on Chinese character learning.

I was told it is never too early to start thinking of a potential dissertation topic, so when taking the required courses and reading book chapters and journal articles, I always considered how what I learn and read could be connected to my career field. When I found a potential topic, I searched to see how much this area had been explored and in what ways I could make my original contribution to this area. I was also told that on the journey to a Ph.D., the dissertation phase is like a rollercoaster ride — you may feel excited and ambitious at one time, but anxious, depressed and exhausted at other times. Only your genuine interest in your topic can beat all the negative moods.

My strong interest in this topic comes from my daily teaching practice: the difficulty of college students whose native language is English learning Chinese, especially at the vocabulary level, due to the significant differences between the two writing systems. As a member of the Chinese Language Teachers Association as well as the International Reading Association, I read journal papers regularly to help me locate the unaddressed “holes” in the literature. By conducting research and submitting papers to peer-reviewed journals, and by presenting at professional conferences, I received professional feedback and comments on my work. Now I have found my topic, and I am ready for this rollercoaster” ride.
Publications and Presentations

“Defining Moments: An Examination of Using Definition-Supported Authentic Texts to Improve Reading Comprehension and Increase Vocabulary Acquisition”; Jennifer Cooper; Amy Elleman (Faculty Sponsor), Literacy Studies. *Scholars Week* 2013. April 1-5, 2013

“Kindergarten Family Responses to Culturally Relevant Texts”; Katie Schrodt; Jeanne Fain (Faculty Sponsor), Literacy Studies. *IRA Annual Conference*, San Antonio, TX, April 19-22, 2013.


“Becoming Reading Detectives: A Pilot Study Considering the Impact of Inferential Comprehension Instruction on Textual Understanding and Knowledge Acquisition”; Penny Thompson; Jennifer Cooper; Holly Marshall; Michelle Hasty; Amy Elleman (Faculty Sponsor) Literacy Studies. *Scholars Week* 2013. April 1-5, 2013 **2nd Place Honors**

“Voice and Choice: Critical Response to Relevant Texts”; Michelle Hasty; Jeanne Fain (Faculty Sponsor), Elementary and Special Education and Literacy Studies. *MTSU Scholars Week* 2013. April 1-5, 2013 **2nd Place Honors**

Announcements

**Literacy Studies Graduate Student Association**

The organization is looking for two representatives to attend the monthly meetings held by the SGA. Please contact Rachel Cornett if you are interested in representing the program at rl2j@mtmail.mtsu.edu.

Faculty News

**NSF Grant Awarded to Dr. Cyrille Magne**

Dr. Cyrille Magne was awarded a $121,338 two-year grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) entitled "Examining Neural Markers of Implicit Speech Rhythm during Silent Reading". Dr. Magne will investigate how linguistic rhythm affects the processing of both structure and meaning of written sentences in English. Dr. Magne will use electro-physiological methods to measure how linguistic rhythm influences brain activity during reading. He expects to answer the question whether rhythmic information is actively used to constrain reading and whether a regular rhythm may be used as a mean to facilitate reading comprehension. The full abstract and information regarding the grant can be found at [http://www.nsf.gov/awardsearch/showAward?AWD_ID=1261460&HistoricalAwards=false](http://www.nsf.gov/awardsearch/showAward?AWD_ID=1261460&HistoricalAwards=false)

**LITS PhD. Program visits Korea**

Dr. Jwa Kim organized a summer trip to Korea for the students in the program this past summer. The students were able to use the time to learn about how literacy is taught in another country and use what they have learned thus far in the program to better understand how theory transforms into practice.

“Serving over 100 children with motor differences, this school was like nothing I had ever seen. I am definitely a better person and teacher for having experienced this.” ~Katie

“What fascinates me about doing this has to do with how it connects with and impacts literacy.” ~Esther
Ph.D. in Literacy Studies

Looking ahead...

Be part of our community’s annual literacy event

Reading in the Schools Day
September 20, 2013
Organized by Read to Succeed

Program News

Eleven new students joined the program in fall 2013.

The following students successfully completed the 60-hour practicum: Casey Brasher and Kyungtae Kim (spring 2013); Danica Booth, Jennifer Cooper, Holly Marshall, Bebe Marx, Andrea Milligan, Penny Thompson (summer 2013).

The program congratulates the following students for passing the preliminary examination: Danica Booth, Rachel Peay Cornett, Michelle Hasty, Missie Stugart.

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http://www.mtsu.edu/literacy/

Reading in the Schools Day is an annual event. Rutherford County elementary schools, private schools, and Murfreesboro City Schools participate in this annual event. Over 1,000 classrooms and 20,000 children have volunteer readers in their classrooms sometime during the day. For coordinator contact information, please go to http://readtosucceed.org/coordinators.html.

Fall Semester Information Session

Writing the Dissertation Proposal

Presented by Dr. Elleman

October 7, 2013
7:30 p.m.
COE 140

If you are approaching or have reached the proposal stage of the program, please make plans to attend.