

Ph.D. in Literacy Studies, Middle Tennessee State University

Newsletter

Faculty Profile: Cyrille Magne, Ph.D.

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Dr. Cyrille Magne was born in France. He pursued both his undergraduate and graduate degrees at Université Paul Cézanne in Marseille, a cosmopolitan melting pot at the heart of Provence and probably the oldest city in France (more than 2600-years-old!). He earned a B.S. in Cellular and Molecular Biology, a M.A. in Neuroscience,

and a Ph.D. in Neuroscience. After completion of his doctoral work, he accepted a post-doctoral research fellowship at the Center for Complex Systems and Brain Sciences at Florida Atlantic University, focusing on the changes in brain activity that accompanies the transition from novice to expert during new skill learning. At MTSU, his Brain & Language Lab utilizes neuroimaging techniques to investigate the neural basis of prosody as well as the influence of musical training on linguistic abilities. With the help of Melissa Brock, a current project uses the event-related brain potential (ERP) method to determine how accen-

tuation helps adult and young listeners to interpret spoken utterances in a given discourse context. In collaboration with Ling Wang, another on-going study seeks to determine whether native English speakers who are currently learning Chinese process lexical tones using similar brain areas as those involved in processing pitch in music, or develop specialized brain circuits for processing pitch in a tonal language. In addition to addressing basic cognitive neuroscience issues, this work also touches on some important literacy development issues, particularly in terms of how a person's prosodic sensitivity influences his/her reading skill.

Student Profile: Melissa Brock



We feature Ms. Brock in our first newsletter to recognize her for receiving the *Outstanding Ph.D. Student in Literacy Studies Award* for the academic year 2010-2011.

My interests in teaching and research emerged early in my life. At the age of eight, I set up a "lab" in my bathroom to study rocks. Wearing one of my father's shirts as a lab coat and equipped with various "tools," I used the Mohs scale to assess the hardness of various rocks I had found on my way to and from school. I even compiled my findings in a report and sent it to a geology professor who was a friend of my grandfather's at Tennessee Tech Univer-

sity. His feedback was not what I had hoped and I ended up putting my research dreams on the back burner. However, around that same time, I also discovered the biography of Helen Keller. I still remember the nondescript, brown cover of this book, which I checked out from the library over and over again, at least seven or eight times. I was fascinated by Helen's learning process and the instructional practices her teacher, Annie Sullivan, used to unlock her world.

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DON'T FORGET

PROGRAM PICNIC
October 1, 2011

General Bragg Trailhead
1540 W. College Street
Murfreesboro

11 a.m.—2 p.m.
Families Invited

RSVP by Sept. 23
amorrell@mtsu.edu

Fall Deadlines

November 2, 2011

Last day to drop with a grade of W

November 4, 2011

Last day to file dissertations for December graduation

November 7-18, 2011

Early registration for Spring 2012 Semester

Looking ahead

January 26, 2012

Last day to file Intent to Graduate Form for May 2012 Graduation

Student Profile (continued)

Through reading this book, I realized that I, too, wanted to be a part of others' learning. I knew I wanted to be a teacher.

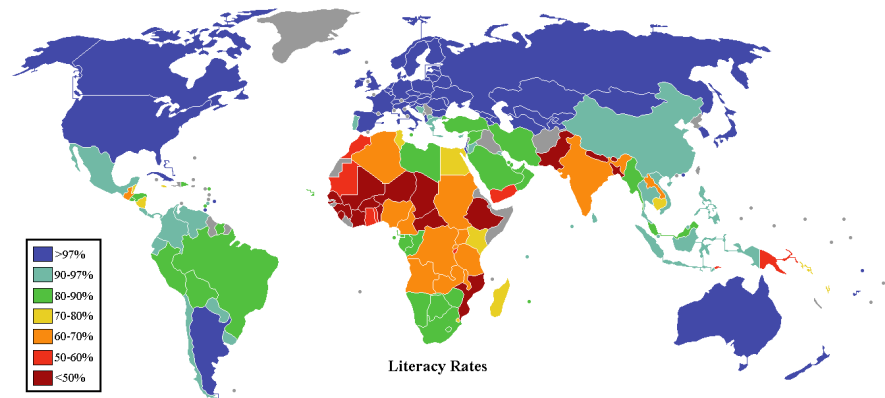
After receiving my Bachelor's degree in special education from Vanderbilt University, I began my career as a middle school special education teacher in the Sumner County Public Schools. Frustrated by the fact that so few of my students could read even the most basic texts, I decided to return to Vanderbilt to pursue a Master's degree in reading education and to complete coursework for an endorsement in English secondary education. I remained at Vanderbilt for several years after completing my degree, working as a Research Associate at the university's Learning Technology Center and coordinating, of all things, a math grant. I enjoyed my work and learned a lot, but I still had the itch to be in the classroom. I joined the Metro Nashville Public Schools as a second grade classroom teacher and was later offered the opportunity to teach a reading intervention program to first graders. This position led to my most recent job as my school's Reading First literacy leader. I loved

this job because I was able to work with both students and teachers. I planned professional development, coordinated our school's reading intervention program, collaborated with teachers on classroom instruction, delivered reading instruction to struggling students, and managed the grant budget.

The training I received for this role reignited the interest in research I had developed as a young child. Wanting to learn as much as I could about the biological and cognitive foundations of reading problems, I enrolled in the Certificate in Dyslexic Studies program here at MTSU. I heard about the Ph.D. in Literacy Studies program while it was still in development and knew that it would be the program for me. I enrolled in my first Ph.D. class in January 2009 as a part-time student. When the Reading First grant ended in 2010, I decided to enroll as a full-time student to focus more on my coursework and to increase my hands-on experience with the research process. Last year, I had the opportunity to work as a graduate assistant with Dr. Blackwell on her study of vocabulary assessment. This year, I

will work with Dr. Magne to increase my understanding of neuroscientific research methodology and electroencephalogram (EEG) recording technology. Although the past two and a half years have been rigorous and demanding, the time has passed surprisingly quickly and I can hardly believe that I am now at the dissertation phase of my journey. I will spend the next year investigating the relationship between students' prosodic processing at the sentence level (as measured through event-related potentials) and their performance on behavioral measures of reading comprehension and fluency. Upon completing my doctorate, I hope to return to the public schools and contribute to closing the gap between scientific research and instructional practice. So at this point in my life, I find that I have come full circle, from a kid who conducted primitive experiments in her makeshift "lab" and aspired to be a teacher to an adult who has found a way to continue her passion for both research and teaching. I consider myself very lucky.

World map of literacy, UNHD 2007/2008 report. <http://en.wikipedia.org>.



Source: UN Human Development Report 2007/2008

Fall Conferences

The 37th Annual Tennessee Reading Association Fall Conference, December 4-6, 2011. Murfreesboro.

Deadline for submitting proposals to TRA for student poster presentations is September 15, 2011.

The International Dyslexia Association Annual Conference, November 9-12, 2011. Chicago, Illinois.

Literacy Research Association 2011 Conference, November 30-December 3, 2011. Jacksonville, Florida.

The 36th Annual Boston University Conference on Language Development, November 4-6, 2011.

The 52nd Annual Meeting of the Psychonomic Society, November 3-6, 2011. Seattle, Washington.

The 3rd Annual Neurobiology of Language Conference, November 10-11 2011. Annapolis, Maryland.

Call for graduate student posters

The National Council on Measurement in Education is accepting proposals for its graduate student poster session at this year's Annual Meeting to be held in Vancouver, British Columbia, April 12-16, 2012. Deadline for poster proposal submission is **October 1, 2011**. For more information, go to <http://www.ncme.org/about/gsic/posterCall.cfm>.

Call for papers and posters

The 34th Language Testing Research Colloquium is an appropriate venue for proposals on topics related to language testing theories and practice. Deadline for submission for the 2012 LTRC Colloquium is **October 15, 2011**. For more information, go to <http://www.ets.org/c/16734/papers.html>. The colloquium will be held in Princeton, NJ, April 3-5, 2012 (with pre-conference workshops April 1-2, 2012).

Keep in mind for the future...

IRA Outstanding Dissertation of the Year Award

The International Reading Association Outstanding Dissertation of the Year Award is a \$1,000 award supported by a grant from SchoolRise LLC. Summaries of winning dissertations are published each year in *Reading Research Quarterly*.

Dissertations in reading or related fields are eligible for the competition. Studies using any research approach

(ethnographic, experimental, historical, survey, etc.) are encouraged. Each study is assessed in the light of this approach, the scholarly qualification of its report, and its significant contributions to knowledge within the reading field.

Eligibility for the 2012 Award:

The competition is open to those who have completed dissertations in any aspect of

the field of reading or literacy between May 15, 2010, and May 14, 2011 and approved by the committee. Applicants must be current members of the International Reading Association. The submission deadline for this year's competition is October 1.



*Please attend the
Fall Colloquia*

7-8 p.m.

*September 21
October 19
November 16*

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Program News

*Congratulations to **Danielle Thompson** for successfully completing the program and being the first MTSU graduate with a Ph.D. in Literacy Studies.*

***Dissertation Title:** Contributions of Prosodic Sensitivity and Morphological Awareness to Word Level Reading: A Perceptual Task Development Study*

***Dissertation Committee:** Dr. Jwa K. Kim (chair)*

Dr. Stuart Bernstein

Dr. Cyrille Magne

Dr. Dana Fuller

Answers to your questions & helpful information

QUESTION: What courses should students make sure to complete during their first year in the program?

ANSWER: The following core courses are good to take early in the program:

- CDIS 6000 Speech, Language, and Literacy Development (Summer)
- ENGL 7520 Essentials of Linguistics (Fall)
- LITS 7210 Evidence-Based Methods of Literacy Development (Fall)
- LITS 7011 Neurobiology of Language and Literacy (Spring)
- LITS 7130 Literacy in Socio-Cultural Contexts (Spring)

WONDERFUL ONLINE RESOURCE

Encyclopedia of Language and Literacy Development
(<http://literacyencyclopedia.ca/>)

SERVICE LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

Read To Succeed is recruiting literacy students for its Family Literacy Program. Family Literacy Nights occur throughout the year at local Elementary Schools. Students are given the opportunity to create curriculum for a small class based on an age-appropriate book for either 1 or 4 nights. Parents and children attend this event to encourage family literacy. The children get to take a copy of this book home with them. The family also enjoys a healthy meal together. If you would like to participate, or get more information, please contact Sarah Porterfield at rtsprograms@readtosucceed.org or 615-995-9535.

RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH

All human research authorized and conducted under the jurisdiction of Middle Tennessee State University is subject to review by the Institutional Review Board for risk, benefit, and informed consent without regard to the source of financial, physical (facilities), or logistical support. This review must be conducted before a project is started.

Middle Tennessee State University is responsible for any research activity that involves physical, behavioral, or social welfare of human subjects that is:

- conducted at Middle Tennessee State University;
- conducted by Middle Tennessee State University faculty, staff, or students.

The IRB shall have the authority to disapprove, discontinue, suspend, or limit research involving human subjects and, by its recommendations, can effect action that withholds or withdraws financial support from projects involving human subjects that are not in compliance with University policies or federal regulations.

How do I get IRB approval?

First make sure you have documentation of completion of Human Subjects Training. You can obtain training from the Collaborative Institute of Training Initiative at their web site: www.citiprogram.org. Register your name and affiliate yourself to Middle Tennessee State University.

Make sure you have a detailed plan for your research process. You should have already conducted a literature review, decided on your research methods, and your plan for analyzing data. This information will be asked for in your IRB application.