

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

# Literacy Studies Ph.D. Program

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**MIDDLE  
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STATE UNIVERSITY.

## Literacy Studies Ph.D.

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## 7th Annual LITERACY RESEARCH CONFERENCE

The Literacy Studies Ph.D. Program's 7th Annual Literacy Research Conference welcomed Nancy Hennessy M.Ed., LDT-C as keynote speaker to usher in this year's conference. Ms. Hennessy has served as the past president of the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) and received the International Dyslexia Association's Margaret Byrd Rawson Lifetime Achievement Award in 2011. Ms. Hennessy's keynote address, *The Comprehension Challenge: Connecting Research to Practice*, presented research on the various processes involved in reading, provided strategies for practitioners who work with struggling readers, and encouraged the continued use of research to inform reading practices.

The Literacy Research Conference continues to attract an increasing number of participants representing a variety of interdisciplinary fields and academic institutions. With nearly 200 attendees and more than 40 presenters, participants selected from a wide range of presentation topics, including research on quantitative measures related to reading comprehension, writing supports for young students as well as ELLs, and the use of technology in reading instruction.

**Call for proposals will open in late fall,  
2019 for the 2020 conference.**



Nancy Hennessy



Conference attendees at the keynote address

## Student Awards & Accomplishments



*Dr. Lana Seivers (Dean, College of Education) Natalie Griffin, Collin Olson, Ping Wang, and Dr. Jwa Kim (Program Director, Literacy Studies Ph.D. Program) at the COE Awards Ceremony on April 22, 2019.*

**Qian Wang** successfully completed the preliminary exam this semester and earned the Research in Progress Award at the 2018 Mid-South Educational Research Association's annual conference.

This spring, **Melissa McMahan** was selected to receive the Sawyer-Rudler Research Fellowship in Literacy Scholarship Award.

**Collin Olson, Ping Wang, and Natalie Griffin** received the Ethel Bowden Stricklin Scholarship and Outstanding Students in the Literacy Studies Ph.D. Program Awards for Spring 2019.

## Upcoming Conferences & Proposal Deadlines

American Educational Research Association (AERA) April 17-21, 2020 San Francisco, CA	<b>July 10, 2019</b>
Mid-South Educational Research Association (MSERA) November 6 - 8, 2019 New Orleans, LA	<b>July 15, 2019</b>
National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME) Date/location TBA	<b>August 1, 2019</b>
Association for the Advancement of Educational Research November 5 - 8, 2019 Sanibel Island, Florida	<b>August 15, 2019</b>
National ESEA Conference (formerly Title 1 Conference) February 4 - 7, 2020 Atlanta, GA	<b>mid June, 2019</b>
Adult Education Research Conference June, 2020 (days and location TBA)	<b>October 30, 2019</b>
Society for the Scientific Study of Reading (SSSR) Date/location TBA	<b>December, 2019</b>

## Publications

- Albakry, M. (In press). Beyond assimilation and othering: Theater translation and the translator's agency, in *Routledge Handbook of Arabic Translation*, S. F. Hanna, H. El-Farahaty & A. W. Khalifa (Eds.). London & New York: Routledge.
- Elleman, A. M., & Oslund, E. L. (2019). Reading comprehension research: Implications for practice and policy. *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 6(1), 3-11.
- Fotidzis, T. S., Moon, H.**, Steele, J. R., Magne, C. L. (2018). Cross-modal priming effect of rhythm on visual word recognition and its relationships to music aptitude and reading achievement. *Brain Sciences*, 8(12), 210.
- McMahan, M.**, Oslund, E., & Odegard, T. (2019). Characterizing the knowledge of educators receiving training in systematic literacy instruction. *Annals of Dyslexia*, 69, 21-33.
- Oslund, E. L., Simmons, D.C., & Clemens, N.H., & Simmons, L.E. (2018). The direct and indirect effects of word reading and vocabulary on adolescents' reading comprehension: Comparing struggling and adequate comprehenders. *Reading and Writing*, 31, 355-379.
- Schrodt, K.**, Elleman, A. M., FitzPatrick, E. R., **Hasty, M. M.**, Kim, J. K., Tharp, T. J., & Rector, H. S. (in press). An examination of mindset instruction, self-regulation, and writer's workshop on kindergartener's writing performance and motivation: A mixed methods study. *Reading & Writing Quarterly: Overcoming Learning Difficulties*.

## Presentations

- Albakry, M., & Caudill, K. (March, 2019). "You have an opportunity to change lives": Analyzing the discourse of email and direct mail fundraising letters. Paper presented at the American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL) Conference, Atlanta, GA.
- Mahmoodi-Shahrehabaki, M.**, & Oslund, E. L. (March, 2019). Evidence-based guidelines for novice English language teachers. Paper presented at TESOL International Convention, Atlanta, GA.
- Odegard, T. (January, 2019). Understanding developmental dyslexia. Presentation at the Texas Dyslexia Summit, Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children, Dallas, TX.
- Oslund, E. L., Elleman, A. M., **Wallace, K.**, & Kim, J. (February, 2019). The impact of pre-service training, professional development, and experience on teachers' graph literacy. Presentation at the Pacific Coast Research Conference, San Diego, CA.
- Wang, Q.**, Kim, J., & Oslund, E. (November, 2018): Relationship between English language arts skills and math achievement among third-grade students. A research in progress session presented at the 2018 Annual Meeting of Mid-South Educational Research Association, Pensacola, FL.

\*Students in bold

## **Dissertation Defenses**

### **Daren Li**

Impacts of Socioeconomic and ELL Status  
on English Language Arts

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Jwa K. Kim, Co-Chair

Dr. Eric L. Oslund, Co-Chair

Dr. Amy M. Elleman

Dr. Ying Jin

### **Tim Nelson**

Building a Corpus-Based Instructional  
Vocabulary Model: Interdisciplinary Academic Words  
In University Reading Support Courses

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Mohammed Albakry, Chair

Dr. Cyrille L. Magne

Dr. Terry Tharp

### **Kelli Wallace**

Teachers' Knowledge and Implementation of  
Response to Intervention Practices:  
Graph Literacy and Data-based Decision Making

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Eric L. Oslund, Chair

Dr. Amy M. Elleman

Dr. Jwa K. Kim

### **Summer Talbert**

The Relationship of Reading Strategies  
and Content Knowledge in  
Models of Integrated Instruction

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Amy M. Elleman, Chair

Dr. Eric L. Oslund

Dr. Katherine Mangione

### **Perry Loudon**

Morphological Word Chunking Versus  
Syllable Types: Understanding the Effectiveness  
of Two Approaches to Polysyllabic Word Reading  
Instruction for Middle School Struggling Readers

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Cyrille L. Magne, Chair

Dr. Amy M. Elleman

Dr. Timothy N. Odegard

### **Victoria Gay**

Examining the Effectiveness of a  
Sentence-Combining Intervention on the  
Writing Quality of College Freshmen

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Eric L. Oslund, Chair

Dr. Amy M. Elleman

Dr. Jwa K. Kim

Dr. Charles D. Milligan

## Important Reminders for Students

- Annual self-evaluations are due by the **end of May**.
- **Mark your calendars!** Orientation will be on **Saturday, August 24 from 10-2**. All Literacy Studies Ph.D. Program students are **required** to attend.
- Sawyer-Rudler Research Fellowship Application - **Next Deadline: August 31**
- Students wanting to complete the preliminary exam must complete the registration form during the **first two weeks** of the semester.
- For students planning on working on their residency requirements, be sure to complete and return the residency contract.
- Beginning Fall 2019, the Literacy Studies Ph.D. program will be a post-bachelor's Ph.D. program. The deadline for application for the 2019-2020 academic year is **June 1**.

## Alumni News

*Zachary Barnes (2018) has accepted a position of Assistant Professor in the Teaching and Learning Department at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, TN.*

*Stacy Fields (2018) has accepted a position of Assistant Professor in the Department of Elementary & Special Education at MTSU.*

### GOT NEWS?

We would like to publish your news in our newsletters. Please let us know if you have published, presented, or performed other newsworthy events!

Also, if you have questions regarding the program, please email us and we will try to provide the answers in the next newsletter.

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[Angela.Morrell@mtsu.edu](mailto:Angela.Morrell@mtsu.edu)

## Dyslexia Center Writing Workshop

### Registration Is Now Open:

**June 10, 2019**

Liven up your students' writing! Word, sentence, and "microdiscourse" strategies to support struggling writers presented by: Dr. Charles Haynes

**For teachers who support K-6 students in general education, special education, and ELL settings, as well as 7th-12th grade struggling writers in Tier 3 setting**

**6 hrs professional development  
\$140 registration fee includes book, handouts, lunch, and parking**

### Newsletter Editors

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## Student Corner: A Student's Reflection

It has been a long 6-year journey to get a Ph.D. in Literacy Studies. Thank you to my professors, class peers, my committee (Dr. Magne, Dr. Elleman, and Dr. Odegard), Dr. Kim, and Angela for helping and encouraging me all along this journey! It's also been a long 33-year educational journey from dropout to doctorate, and I have felt like the poster child of a nontraditional student the entire time – veteran, hearing impaired, learning disabled, middle aged, and high school dropout – but step by step, through all the setbacks and roadblocks along the way, the good Lord has put my feet on the highest of educational ground.

Here are 7 things that have helped me through school over the years and maybe they will help and encourage someone else.

1. **Set achievable goals**, and do something towards achieving those goals every day. In July 1986 when I passed my GED test, I did NOT say to myself, "I'm on my way to that Ph.D.!" No! I said, "Let's knock this Associates Degree out. I can do it in less than 2 years!"

2. **Know your strengths and weaknesses**, and compensate for your weaknesses by excelling on your strengths. This technique got me through 5 pre-doctorate college degrees. I can go back and look at the grades for each class: I did not do well in those with a heavy emphasis on test taking and a lot of reading. However, I excelled in the classes with lots of projects.

3. **Don't be afraid to fail**. I can't count the times in my life that I have failed, but I always picked myself up and moved on. It helps tremendously when you have a support system of family, friends, and coworkers like I do. I would have liked to be a theology professor, but I would need to pass biblical Hebrew. When I took this class at Lipscomb University, I knew going in it would be a struggle. I studied hard, did my best on the tests, but still fell short and failed the class. Scratch theology professor from future endeavors. I still got the M.A. and will continue to enjoy being a teacher, which I'm quite satisfied with anyway.

4. **Do whatever it takes**, even when it's tough. The decision to accept my learning disability was a crucial decision. I would have failed in the Ph.D. program without some classroom accommodations in statistics. While that was a big decision, doing whatever it takes could be as simple as getting up early after going to bed a couple of hours before.

5. **Be flexible** because God may have another direction for you to go. I made that decision in my late 20s to change from a dead end criminal justice corrections career to a career in education working with young people. It wasn't easy going back to school, but it was worth it!

6. **Be a lifetime learner**. You don't always have to have academic goals, but learning will keep your brain sharp and give you better understanding and confidence. Find what you enjoy and go for it. I enjoy religion and history and will never stop learning about those. That's how I got a M.A. in biblical studies.

7. **Never give up on God**. There have been many dark times in my life, but one of the darkest was probably during Desert Storm when I was miserable in the desert and feeling alone, but He was always there working for my good even when I didn't see Him. So, my long 33-year (30 years since starting at MTSU) education journey ends with the excitement and fulfillment of obtaining a terminal degree. And again, thank you to all the Literacy Studies faculty, staff, students, and alumni who helped and encouraged me all along the way.

—Perry Loudon successfully defended his dissertation and will graduate Spring 2019.