

## Upcoming Conferences

Mid-South Educational Research  
Association  
November 9-11, 2022  
Proposals Due: July 5, 2022

International Dyslexia  
Association's DyslexiaCon  
November 10-12, 2022

Council for Learning Disabilities  
44<sup>th</sup> International Conference  
October 20-21, 2022

American Association for  
Applied Linguistics  
March 18, 2023

National Elementary and  
Secondary Education Act  
February 1-4, 2023

American Educational Research  
Association  
April 13-16, 2023  
Proposals Due: July 27, 2022

# Literacy Studies Ph.D. Program

Program Director: Amy Elleman, Ph.D. (615) 898-5688 COE 391

Executive Aide: Angela Morrell (615) 904-8434 COE 316



## Farewell, Dr. Kim

After more than three decades of service to MTSU, Dr. Jwa Kim retired August 1, 2021, as Director of the Literacy Studies Ph.D. Program. Under his leadership, the program grew from six students in 2010 to 40 students at the beginning of the 2020-2021 academic year. The program has celebrated 45 graduates! In addition to directing the program, Dr. Kim taught a variety of courses, advised students on both personal and professional matters, pursued university support for the lovely student hub in the College of Education, brought together an outstanding faculty team, oversaw countless research projects, chaired numerous dissertation committees, and supported student presentations.

Upon his retirement, he established a Literacy Studies Ph.D. Program Travel Fund to support students travelling to conferences, domestically and internationally. Dr. Kim has served MTSU and the Literacy Studies Ph.D. Program well and has touched countless lives through his dedication to higher education and commitment to student success. Quantitatively, qualitatively, and in any other ways that count, Dr. Kim has made a lasting impression on all who have had the opportunity to work with and/or learn from him. We certainly wish him all the best. Thank you, Dr. Kim!

## **Dr. Amy Elleman, New LITS Program Director**

Dr. Amy Elleman is the new program director for the Literacy Studies Ph.D. Program. However, she is no stranger to the program. Dr. Elleman joined the Literacy Studies Ph.D. Program and the Elementary and Special Education Department in 2011. Since then, she has served as the chair of 18 dissertations and as a member of more than 25 dissertation committees. She served as the Interim Chair of the Elementary and Special Education Department for the 2020-2021 academic year. She then served as the interim program director for the Literacy Studies Ph.D. Program from August 2021 until she was named as the official program director this spring.

Amy Elleman earned a B.S. in Psychology at the University of Maryland in Heidelberg, Germany. She has worked as a teacher and administrator in programs serving students with learning and behavior difficulties. She earned her M.Ed. and Ph.D. in Special Education at Vanderbilt University where she became interested in the early identification and treatment of reading comprehension difficulties. Dr. Elleman's research focuses on the examination of factors central to reading comprehension including vocabulary acquisition, inference generation, and knowledge development. She has expertise in conducting meta-analyses and examining the efficacy of reading interventions through randomized controlled trials. Her current research includes examining factors related to vocabulary acquisition in adolescents, conducting a meta-analysis of comprehension intervention studies from the last 100 years, and examining the efficacy of a multi-component inference intervention for adolescents with reading comprehension difficulties. Dr. Elleman has published 27 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters. Her publications can be found in highly ranked journals including the *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *Scientific Studies of Reading*, and the *Journal of Learning Disabilities*. Her articles have been featured as the most read and cited in journals such as the *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness* and *Policy Insights from Behavioral and Brain Sciences*.



Dr. Amy Elleman, LITS Program Director

## Awards & Scholarships

LITS Ph.D. Outstanding Student-Spring 2022  
**Susan Porter**

Sawyer-Rudler Research Fellowship-Fall 2021  
**Shonna Phelps**

## MTSU Scholar's Week

Pam Shewalter's poster, titled "Specialized and altered fonts for dyslexia: A meta-analysis", won first place for graduate students in the College of Education.

Ifeoluwa Popoola, Emily Farris, and Timothy Odegard presented "A simple view of reading analysis of reading skills in diverse ethnic ELLs and non-ELLs".



**Jessica Dainty** and **Ifeoluwa Popoola** received research-in-progress awards at the Mid-South Education Research Association conference held in November 2021.

## Recipients of Ethel Bowden Stricklin Scholarship – Spring 2022



Susan Porter & Dr. Amy Elleman



Pamela Shewalter & Dr. Amy Elleman



Ifeoluwa Popoola & Dr. Amy Elleman

## MTSU Literacy Conference 2022

On February 26, 2022, MTSU Literacy Studies Ph.D. program held its 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Literacy Conference virtually. Dr. Amy Elleman, LITS Program Director, hosted the event. Keynote speaker, Dr. Elfrieda "Freddy" Hiebert, is the President and CEO of TextProject, a non-profit aimed at providing open-access resources for teaching beginning and struggling readers, discussed her work: "The Science of Reading and Texts: When, What, How Much". Dr. Hiebert's research in how knowledge, fluency, and vocabulary can be taught through text is available in numerous publications. Thank you, conference committee members for your work leading up to a successful conference. This year's conference brought 219 literacy enthusiasts together online to choose from 26 spoken and 7 poster presentations. Aside from Middle Tennessee State University, presenters represented four area universities and colleges.

## Dissertation Defense

**Karilena S. Yount**

“Dual Language Writing  
Assessment and Analysis for  
Upper Elementary Spanish-  
Speaking English Language  
Learners”

Dissertation Committee:  
Dr. Mohammed Albakry, Chair  
Dr. Jwa K. Kim  
Dr. Stacy Fields

## Passed Preliminary Exam

Summer 2021  
Bingshi Zhang

Fall 2021  
Susan Porter

Summer 2022  
Claudia Russell

## Practicum Completed

Summer 2021  
Claudia Russell  
Holly Cunningham

Fall 2021  
Pam Shewalter

Spring 2022  
Ife Popoola  
Kirsten Clark

## Praxis Completed

Reading Specialist  
Pam Shewalter

## Publications

Barksdale, B. A., **Schrodt, K.**, **Fields, R. S.**, & **Grow, J.** (2021). We read as one: Strategies for empowering a community of intergenerational readers. *The Dragon Lode*, 40(1), 17-24.

**Barnes, Z. T.** & Peltier, T. K. (2022). Translating the science of reading screening into practice: Policies and their implications. *Perspectives on Language and Literacy*, 48(1), 42-48.

**Barnes, Z. T.**, Boedecker, P., Cartwright, K. B., **Zhang, B.** (Accepted), SES and early reading achievement: How working memory and cognitive flexibility mediate the relation in low-achieving and typically developing K to first grade students. *Journal of Research in Reading*.

**McClain, J. B.**, Mancilla-Martinez, J., Flores, I. & Buckley, L. E. (2021). Translanguaging to support emergent bilingual students in English dominant preschools: An explanatory sequential mixed-method study. *Bilingual Research Journal* 44(2), 158-173.

**McClain, J. B.** & **Schrodt, K.** (2021). Making space for multilingualism: Using translanguaging pedagogies to disrupt monolingual language ideologies within a culturally responsive kindergarten curriculum. *The Reading Teacher*, 75(3), 385-388.

**McClain, J. B.**, Harmon, M., & Phillips Galloway, E. (2021). Eliminating prerequisites for personhood: A framework for antiracist language instruction. *Language Arts* 99(1), 25-35.

**McClain, J. B.**, Oh, M., & Mancilla-Martinez, J. (2021). Questioning the monolingual norm with conceptually scored vocabulary assessments: Findings from a researcher-practitioner partnership. *TESOL Journal* 12(3), 585-590.

**McClain, J. B.** & **Schrodt, K.** (2021). Making space for multilingualism: Using translanguaging pedagogies to disrupt monolingual language ideologies within a culturally responsive kindergarten curriculum. *The Reading Teacher*.

Nayak, S., Coleman, P. L., Ladanyi, E., Nitin, R., Gustavson, D. E., Fisher, S., **Magne, C. L.**, & Gordon, R. L. (2021). The musical abilities, pleiotropy, language, and environment (MAPLE) framework for understanding musicality-language links across the lifespan. PsyArXiv. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/nrge6>

Nayak, S., Gustavson, D. E., Wang, Y., Below, J. E., Gordon, R. L., & **Magne, C. L.** (2022). Test of prosody via syllable emphasis ("TOPsy"): psychometric validation of a brief scalable test of lexical stress perception. *Frontiers in Neuroscience*, 16, 765945. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnins.2022.765945>

**Porter, S. B.**, **Odegard, T. N.**, **McMahan, M.**, & Farris, E. A. (2021). Characterizing the knowledge of educators across the tiers of instructional support. *Annals of Dyslexia*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11881-021-00242-0>

**Schrodt, K.**, Barksdale, B. A., **Fields, R. S.** (2022). Self-directed kindergarten writers. *Texas Journal of Literacy Education*.

**Schrodt, K.**, FitzPatrick, E. (2021). The power of sharing: when kindergarten students write the mentor texts. *Dimensions of Early Childhood*, 49(3), 30-37.

**Schrodt, K.**, FitzPatrick, E. R., Barksdale, B., Nunnery, B., **Hasty, M. M.** (2021). Teaching writing with mentor texts in kindergarten. *Young Children*.

## Media Appearances

"[MTSU On the Record](#)" buzzed around integrated units of study in education on September 28, 2021. Dr. Tracey Huddleston, Dr. Jeremy Winters, and **Dr. Katie Schrod**t talk to Gina Louge about taking MTSU students to Discovery School to implement a unit of study on Bees with their 2nd grade classes.

**Dr. Katie Schrod**t, a professor in MTSU, College of Education, recently received a grant to engage community schools in literacy events and works to underscore how high-quality, culturally sustaining books can make a big difference in the development of children. Schrod

t has worked to connect MTSU with area schools in this important work. Please see [her interview](#) with host, Andrew Opman on, "Out of the Blue."

Host Gina Logue of "MTSU on the Record" interviewed **Dr. Tim Odegard**, a professor of psychology and holder of MTSU's Murfee Chair of Excellence in Dyslexic Studies and **Susan Porter**, a doctoral candidate majoring in literacy studies, about their recent co-authored study of educators' literacy knowledge in a variety of specialities in primary grades. The report, "Characterizing the knowledge of educators across the tiers of instructional support," was published in August 2021 in the academic journal *Annals of Dyslexia* and was first aired March 1, 2022 on WMOT-FM Roots Radio 89.5 and [www.wmot.org](http://www.wmot.org). You can find Odegard and Porter's interview with Gina Logue at [this link](#).

## Presentations

Barksdale, B., **Schrod**t, K., **Fields**, S., **McClain**, J., (December 2021). 71st LRA Annual Conference 2021, "Culturally Responsive Book Club Experiences for Preservice Teachers," Literacy Research Association, Westin Peachtree Plaza, Atlanta, GA.

**DaSilva**, A., **Oslund**, E. L. (April 4-5, 2022). "*The effects of affinity groups on motivation and writing outcomes*". College Board Prepárate [Conference session]. New York, NY, United States.

**DaSilva**, A. (November 19-21, 2021). "*The power of inclusive rubrics to promote diversity*". American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Virtual Conference.

**Griffin**, N. M., **Elleman**, A. M., & **Oslund**, E. L. (July, 2021). "The impact of growth mindset intervention on vocabulary, comprehension, persistence, and self-perception". Poster Presentation at Society for the Scientific Study of Reading Twenty-Eighth Annual Meeting, Virtual Conference.

**Grow**, J. L. & **Elleman**, A. M. (2021, November). "Towards a reading motivation progress monitor for young elementary students". Presented at Mid-South Educational Research Association Conference, November 10, 2021, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Kojima, K., Oganian, Y., Nayak, S., Korsnack, K., Lense, M., Gordon, R. L., & **Magne**, C. "Neural responses when listening to rhythmically varied stories". Talk presented at the 13th Annual Meeting of the Society for the Neurobiology of Language, virtual conference, October 5-8, 2021.

Kojima, K., Oganian, Y., Nayak, S., Korsnack, K., Lense, M., Gordon, R., & **Magne**, C. "Theta-band EEG differentiates neural entrainment to metrically regular versus irregular speech." Poster presented at the 7th Annual BRAIN Initiative Investigators Meeting, virtual conference, June 15-17, 2021.

Nayak, S., Gustavson, D., Wang, Y., Below, J., Gordon, R., & **Magne**, C. "Validation of a novel speech rhythm perception test: convergence with musical rhythm and language and reading difficulties". Talk presented at the 18th Rhythm Production and Perception Workshop, virtual conference, June 22- 25, 2021.

**Schrod**t, K., FitzPatrick, E., **Elleman**, A., (November 2021) MSERA 2021 Annual Convention, "Examining the validity of the writing challenge task: an assessment tool for measuring growth mindset in kindergarteners," MidSouth Educational Research Association, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Zhang, B. & Kim, J. (November 2021). "Influences of teacher-student background characteristics on students' literacy outcomes." Mid-South Educational Research Association Annual Conference in New Orleans, LA.

## Alumni News

**Dr. Danielle 'Nell' Thompson** is currently located in Bozeman, Montana. She is chair of The Big Sky Literacy Summit, The Transformative Reading Teacher Group and is hosting The Big Sky Literacy Summit. In the [link](#) you might find some names you know on the speaker list. Dr. Thompson welcomes alumni, faculty, and students to join her in Montana!

In addition, she just took on the role of president of the first The Reading League Montana chapter which is the 20th chapter in the nation.

**Dr. Davonna Thomas** has produced and emceed her college's 6th annual Storytelling Showcase (an event she founded) on April 7. It's a "story slam" featuring students in pre- and co-requisite English support courses.

She presented at the North Carolina Organization for Student Success (NCOSS) on April 1, 2022 on how she has designed Coastal's prerequisite English "transition" course.

**Dr. Rachel Peay Cornett** was selected to train educators for TDOE's early literacy trainings and presented at their READ360 conference in the fall.

**Dr. Natalie Griffin** is an assistant early childhood professor at MTSU and served as one of the event organizers for, "Reading the Black Experience" held weekly during the month of February. This [link](#) provides additional information about the event.

## Important Reminders for Students

- **Mark your calendars!** Orientation will be on **Saturday, August 20 from 10-2**. All Literacy Studies Ph.D. Program students are **required** to attend.
- Sawyer-Rudler Research Fellowship Application – **Next Deadline: September 1, 2022**.
- Students wanting to complete the preliminary exam must complete the registration form during the **first two weeks** of the semester.
- Students planning to graduate must file their **Intent to Graduate** during the **first two weeks of the semester they plan to graduate**.
- Fall 2022 semester begins **August 22, 2023**.