



## FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION



Dear Learning & Cognition alumni, current students, and friends,

I wanted to begin by sharing that FSU's College of Education moved up three places to No. 37 in the *U.S. News & World Report's* 2017 edition of "Best Graduate Schools of Education." Better yet, our own Educational Psychology graduate program, which offers the Learning & Cognition and Sport Psychology majors, moved up to #20 in the nation! I credit the wonderful work of our colleagues, alumni, and students in spreading the good word about our program. I firmly believe that the special collaborations we've formed over the years have been instrumental in continuously improving the quality of the work we all do. So congratulations to us all!

Since our last newsletter in 2015, we successfully kicked off our new fully online master's program in Learning & Cognition (<https://distance.fsu.edu/students/learning-and-cognition-ms>). The online courses are popular with other majors as well, and we look forward to growing our online cohort each year. We are also leaving our mark on professional conferences around the country. This spring at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association in Washington, D.C., I saw a number of our current students and alumni presenting their work. It was wonderful to celebrate with so many of you at the FSU College of Education reception at the International Spy Museum as well!

I hope you enjoy reading about what some of your colleagues—including alumni, current students and faculty—are up to in this newsletter. There are so many interesting projects and areas of study and inspirational updates! For instance, this past year, College of Education benefactor Dr. Marvalene Hughes challenged the COE to do research issues related to Black males in education, and provided a generous donation to fund a research award program on the topic. I am proud to say that the two of the three faculty awardees (Dr. Turner and myself) and both graduate student awardees (Lynn Turner and Smriti Jangra) were from L&C!

As you know, resources for conducting research that makes a difference in the lives of all learners can be hard to come by. This is why I am so excited that this spring we were able to fund our first L&C Graduate Student Research Awards from the L&C Student Support Fund established in 2015! Guillermo Farfan, Holly Hunt, and Michelle Peruche will each receive \$100 to help them cover the costs of incentives for recruiting research participants for their preliminary studies. After we have raised \$20,000 (a goal we would hope to meet by 2020), we will convert this fund to an endowment account that will generate interest that we can use to pay for scholarships. This goal is doable—we will have over \$10,000 in our account based on current pledges even after accounting for the planned scholarships of \$500 per year. If you are interested in giving, please let me ([aroehrig@fsu.edu](mailto:aroehrig@fsu.edu)) or Kevin Derryberry ([kderryberry@foundation.fsu.edu](mailto:kderryberry@foundation.fsu.edu)) know. See more details about how to give at the end of this newsletter. Every little bit helps!

Warm regards,  
Alysia



## FACULTY UPDATES

### ***Susan Carol Losh, Ph.D.***

#### **Associate Professor**

I am editor-in-chief of *Bulletin on Science, Technology & Society*, which will shortly post two brand-new science fiction and society issues (<http://bst.sagepub.com>). I also recently collaborated with James Powell (geologist at USC) on a BSTS article on perceived and actual agreement among scientists on climate change. SiSi Dong and I are writing a presentation for AERA on family structure and kindergarten readiness (from her thesis). I am also working to submit a presentation on research experiences and self-perceived collegiate benefits among STEM undergraduates. I completed my second year of teaching Theories of Social Psychology online for our new online master's program, and I am currently in the process of putting Group Processes online as well.

### ***Beth Phillips, Ph.D.***

#### **Associate Professor**

I have continued my work on early childhood projects, including a grant from the Spencer Foundation in which I am investigating the language environment of preschool classrooms serving high-need three and four year old children. I also, with colleagues, just received a new intervention grant award from the Institute of Education Sciences to investigate the benefits of receiving one versus two years of early intervention in language and vocabulary skills. I am also hard at work preparing a new seminar for fall 2016 that will focus on critical thinking and on high quality professional writing

### ***Alysia Roebrig, Ph.D.***

#### **Associate Professor, Educational Psychology Graduate Program Coordinator**

My research is related to effective teaching in general, with primary foci on the professional development of teachers and the literacy learning of students. Following my sabbatical in two elementary schools in nearby Gadsden County, I got involved in doing research at a Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools site in Quincy, FL. Freedom Schools are 6-week summer camps that provide a wonderful, free opportunity for intergenerational mentoring and culturally relevant literacy instruction with the goal of showing children how they can make a difference in the world. Along with other colleagues and COE alumni from both FSU and FAMU, we decided to start our own nonprofit called North Florida Freedom Schools in order to bring the first Freedom Schools camp to Tallahassee this summer and to eventually develop more sites across North Florida. Freedom Schools also provide a wonderful partnership opportunity for colleagues to research topics related to social justice and engaging teaching. We are excited about the numerous opportunities for collaboration going forward. If you are interested in learning more or supporting this effort, please check out [NFFS.wordpress.com](http://NFFS.wordpress.com). I conclude with a shout out to my three most recent Ph.D. graduates, who all started their first faculty positions in fall 2015: so proud of you Meagan Arrastia, Beth Brinkerhoff, and Tim Pressley!

### ***Jeannine Turner, Ph.D.***

#### **Associate Professor**

My research continues to focus on issues related to students' motivation, emotions, and learning. Along these lines, this past year several of my students and I have continued our investigations into engineering students who are in our FAMU-FSU joint engineering programs. In particular, we are trying to understand the reasons why our FAMU African American male students drop out of the program at alarmingly high rates. Two master's students (Connie Barroso and Jinjushang Chen) have been looking at students' epistemological beliefs and we should know their findings this summer. Michelle Peruche will be collecting data on successful seniors this summer. As part of my Marvalene Hughes grant, both Michelle and Andria Cole will be conducting interviews with junior-level FAMU students this summer. In the near future, we anticipate providing the engineering programs with information that can help retain all students, but particularly our African American males. In a similar, but different vein of research, Holly Hunt will be interviewing FSU student veterans to better understand their thinking processes regarding finding an academic major and trying to determine how their past experiences affect their current decision-making and approaches to studying. *(continued...)*

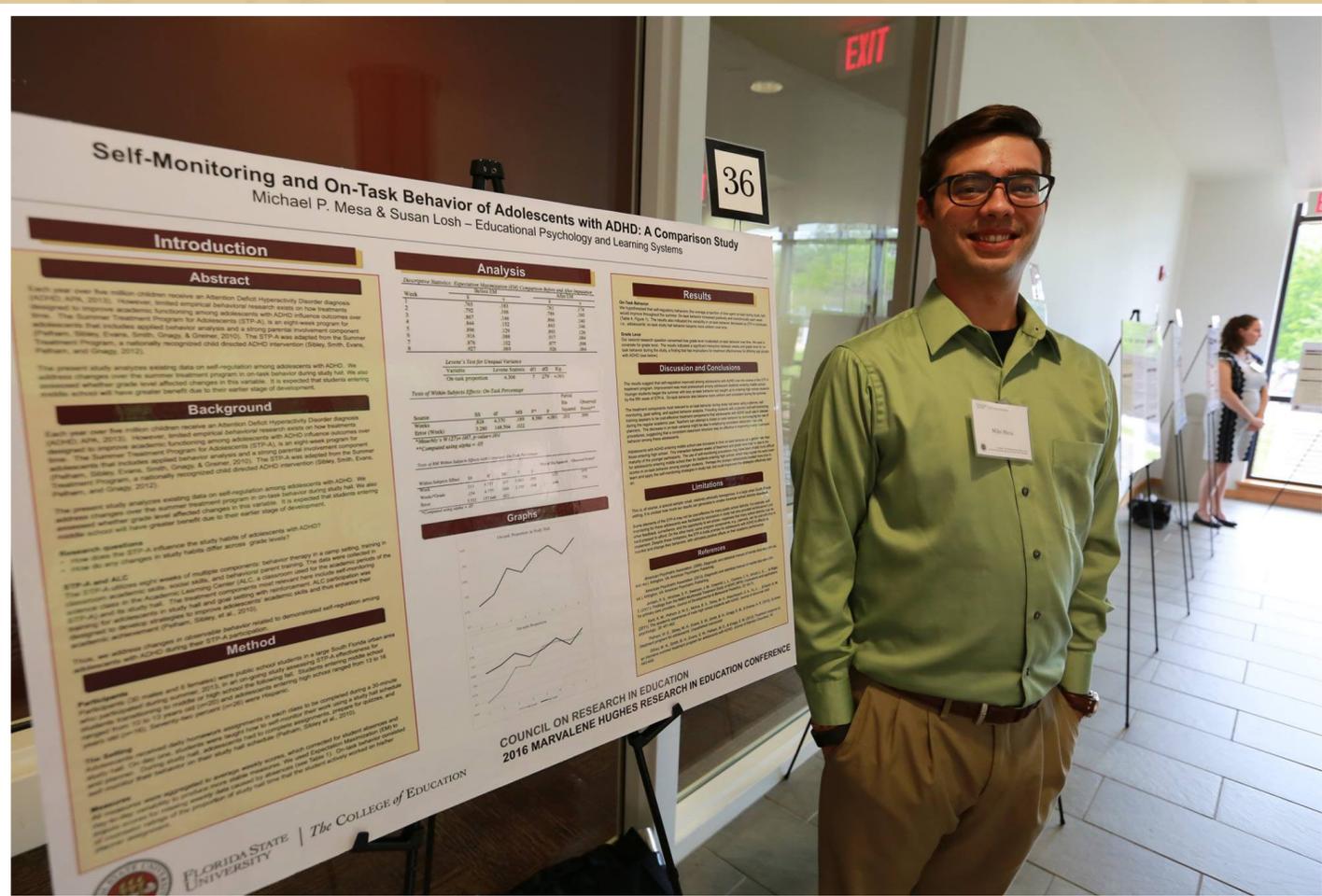


(continued)

My second research focus concerns students' motivation, emotions, and learning of foreign or second language skills—i.e., speaking, reading, listening, and writing. Several of my students and I are focused on different aspects of this issue. Fei Xing recently spent time in China observing and interviewing both teachers and students in an English program that purports to focus on integrating communicative strategies. She learned a great deal about what these strategies look like and how the implementation affects both teachers and students. Yanyan Chan will be interviewing students in China very soon about their reasons and cognitive processes regarding choosing English as an undergraduate major. Stephan Cooley will be surveying international students within centers for intensive English programs to see if their motivation variables interact in ways that have been shown with ordinary foreign language students. Next semester, Darcey (Fang Liang) will be interviewing international graduate students about their writing anxiety and ways they cope with their anxiety, while Maipeng Wei will be investigating English students' efficacy and motivation for learning uncommon foreign languages (such as Arabic or Japanese). Finally, my research group is developing a study that is focused on Chinese students' motivation and efficacy for learning all skills of English and how they use multiple media to facilitate their learning.

Across these different learning endeavors, self-regulation of learning, motivation, and emotions is at the core of success. Shawna Durtschi is conducting an interesting study with school librarians to understand how they believe they promote and regulate students' motivation for reading. Shawna, Michelle, Holly, Courtney Barry (a recent graduate), and I are working on turning our previous research with Hispanic FSU-CARE students into a publication and Kelly Torres, Stephan, Yanyan, Yanyu Pan, and I are working on turning our previous research with Chinese Heritage Language learners into a publication manuscript.

As you can see, we have a lot of cool investigations going on!





## STUDENT PROFILES



### **Connie Barroso**

My name is Connie Barroso and I am a master's student in the Learning & Cognition program. My research interests include examining cognitive and motivational factors that influence students of all races, gender, and ages to be interested and pursue a career in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields. I am currently working on collecting my thesis data. My thesis focuses on two main topics: students in engineering programs, and their intelligence mindset, or student's beliefs about the malleability of their intelligence. There is an abundance of research on the implications of intelligence beliefs on educational outcomes (i.e., fixed versus growth mindset); however, there is not much research investigating factors that can change these beliefs, particularly on how academic feedback relates longitudinally to student's intelligence mindset. Using upper-level engineering courses, I am investigating changes in engineering students' intelligence mindset over the course of a semester as related to exam performance. In my spare time, I like to play ultimate frisbee and hang out with my dog, Lola.

My name is Fang Yang and I am currently a 3rd year master's student in our program. Given my previous work experience in a scientific institution in China, I am particularly interested in areas of study that are related to science education and science literacy. In a similar vein, I am concerned about the notable underrepresentation of women in STEM fields and I hold positive expectations that the gap can be bridged through science education. In the meantime, as an international student from China, I am also interested in studies relevant to international students, e.g., acculturation, stress coping strategies, etc. While enjoying my graduate life here at FSU, I am keenly aware of the shortage of background knowledge of American education in general and try to make it up by taking courses and interacting with local students. Currently, I am taking a history class on American higher education in the hope that I can get better informed of the higher education system in the U.S. through a historical lens.

### **Fang Yang**



### **Julieth Diaz**

My name is Julieth Diaz, and I am finishing my first year as a master's student in the Learning & Cognition program. I am really interested in researching different variables involved in the setting of positive educational environments, particularly within highly vulnerable contexts, such as those characterized by poverty, violence, and inequality. I think the value of research is on its application; every finding needs to be analyzed through the lens of the surrounding reality. This is the only way social scientists can become actual activists, contributing from academia to the generation of meaningful changes in the status quo. In places like Latin America (where I come from), schools need to turn into places that elicit and cultivate individuals' critical thinking about their own reality, giving them proper tools to construct new individual and collective paradigms.



**Laura M. Jakiel**

Hi, my name is Laura M. Jakiel and I am a second year doctoral student in Learning & Cognition. I received my B.S. in Psychology from The University of Florida in 2009, and received my M.S. degree in Educational Psychology from our own program in 2014. Along the way, I completed certificates in Measurement & Statistics as well as Institutional Research, and recently enrolled in a second M.S. degree in Information Technology.



I presently teach Classroom Assessment and work part time as the Education Projects Assistant for the Association for Institutional Research. I build and manage the curriculum and testing for their online courses. I am also working on my preliminary study, researching a revised factor structure of the Future Time Perspective Scale as well as the validity of the measure. My doctoral research will be in the creation of educational technology that combines motivation, persuasive design, time management, reading, and note taking into an online application (hence my pursuit of the MSIT degree). I hope to work on that research for years to come and hopefully integrate it into mainstream education. Wish me luck!

**Mengmeng Yin**



This is my first semester; I transferred from another major. I am interested in the Learning & Cognition very much. The topic of motivation attracts me and I prefer to be an educator in school. So this semester in my Research Methods class, I will try to develop my paper about “Impact of Instructor Feedbacks on Chinese Students’ Motivation in American Universities.” Currently there are a lot of research studies on the different styles of feedback and their results on students’ motivation and performance in the west; however, the effects of differential feedback on motivation may be different to students with various cultural backgrounds. Currently, motivational changes in different cultures have not been fully explored (Lau, 2009). The purpose of my study is to test different styles of feedback relating to motivation for students who are from different cultural backgrounds, especially Chinese students in American universities. If anyone is interested in this topic, I would like to discuss it with you.

**Michael P. Mesa**

My name is Michael P. Mesa and I am a first year doctoral student in the Learning & Cognition program at Florida State University. I am currently an instructor for a section of the undergraduate course Classroom Assessment. I completed my master’s degree in this program and my bachelor’s degree in Psychology with a minor in Statistics at Florida International University. My master’s thesis was titled “Improving the Study Habits of Adolescents with ADHD” and focused on assessing the impact of participation in an eight-week treatment program on the on-task behavior, homework completion, and academic achievement of adolescent participants. I worked in both academic and clinical settings prior to entering the master’s program at FSU. Specifically, I worked as a tutor for a private tutoring company and participated in multiple clinical treatment programs for children and adolescents with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.



My research interests include the self-regulatory behaviors of children and adolescents, especially those with ADHD or at-risk of academic failure. I am especially interested in small-group academic interventions that may improve the self-regulatory behaviors and academic achievement of students. I am also interested in the bidirectional relationship between self-regulatory behaviors and academic achievement. I am currently working on studies that explore the relationship between teacher behaviors and the self-regulatory behaviors and academic achievement of students.



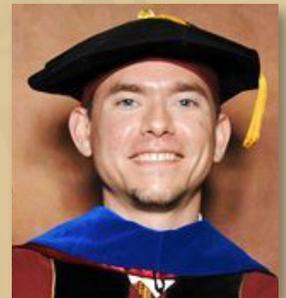
### **Yanyu Pan**

My name is Yanyu Pan and I am a second year doctoral student in Learning & Cognition. I have taught English as a foreign language in China for several years, and I have earned my master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction with a specialization in Foreign and Second Language Education at FSU.

I currently serve as an instructor teaching an undergraduate course in Education Psychology. My research interests include learner motivation and anxiety and teacher motivation and practice in the classroom. In the context of globalization, understanding other languages and cultures has become one of the most imperative needs for liberal education and higher education. I am currently focusing on studying college students' foreign language learning motivation, efforts to engage in the foreign language classroom and attitude toward instructor's teaching practice. I hope to see the relationships between learning motivation, classroom instruction and rate of enrollment in different foreign language courses.

### **Jeff Bray**

My name is Jeff Bray. I successfully defended my dissertation in the spring 2016 semester. My research interests are primarily in the realm of cognitive educational psychology, and my dissertation research focused on an examination of ease-of-processing as a predictor of study choice in reading comprehension, as well as an examination of the extent to which self-efficacy beliefs in reading and situational judgments of learning serve to moderate the relationship between ease-of-processing and study choice in reading comprehension. I am now beginning the search for teaching and research positions in my field, and plan to continue studying self-regulated learning.



### **Addy Reekes**

I am a first year student in the Learning and Cognition Master's Program. My interests are centered around education related to low-economic settings. I am particularly interested in the education of developing nations, educational reform within these contexts and American educators' understanding of international education.

I believe that education is the most instrumental tool one can possess to peacefully change their reality and the world at large. In order for students of all contexts to succeed, education must be restructured in a manner that allows for a more meaningful and culturally aware curriculum. This reform would manifest in numerous ways across the globe, but would be continuously rooted in constructivist ideals, cultural awareness and advocacy. American educators and instructors abroad must begin to teach for cultural understanding and awareness. By doing so, I believe a more harmonious and accepting world will result. Furthermore, I feel that once Americans begin to actively advocate for the education of students in developing nations, reform will gain political momentum and international change will commence. The first step in this large process is to assess American educators' understanding of international development. For my thesis I am planning to do so by evaluating American instructors' incorporation of global awareness and cultural acceptance within their classrooms.

Upon graduating I am hoping to teach in developing nations to gain a greater understanding of the situational and systematic problems students of The Third World face. This experience will provide me with greater insight so that I can pursue a Doctoral Degree in the field, and ultimately become an educator and advocate for international students and educational reform.



## HELP WANTED

### *A Call for Current Students & Alumni*

Please help us analyze and publish from a large dataset encompassing topics such as feedback, assessment, motivation, help-seeking strategies, etc. in postsecondary classes. We are looking for individuals to both help out in coding and/or analysis and individuals who are interested in leading projects.

**Project Name:** College Students' Perceptions of Goals and Assessments

**Project Type:** Mixed-methods study where students responded online to written vignettes and completed survey measures

- Vignette scenarios encompassed anxiety producing situations in: math classes, group work, large writing projects with multiple drafts, and a class with a foreign language instructor/TA
  - o Participants responded with strategies to manage these situations, if they had ever experienced his situation before, and what they actually did in the situation (if applicable).
  - o Sample size within vignettes: math (n=131), group work (n=130), writing (n=67), foreign language (n=85).
  - o Sample size between vignettes varies

**Survey Measures:** goal instability, future time perspective, grit-consistency of interests, knowledge building, assessment for learning, clicker questions, and many demographic variables.

Sample size (survey measures): n=353

**Authorship:** Negotiable (by scope of work). We want to get this data published and presented!

Please contact the PI, Laura Jakiel ([lmj09c@my.fsu.edu](mailto:lmj09c@my.fsu.edu)), if you are interested.



## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



***Ying Guo, Ph.D.***

**Assistant Professor**  
School of Education  
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I was recently awarded a research grant funded by Institute of Education Sciences (IES), U.S Department of Education for \$1,396,632 (2016-2020). This four-year Goal One study will conduct primary data collection to identify the malleable variables related to classroom instruction that are positively associated with writing gains in kindergarten children. I am also co-Principal Investigator of a Goal Two research grant funded by IES (\$1,496,956, 2013-2017). The goal of this research is to develop and test an expository book reading program.

I would love to collaborate with anyone who is interested in the research related to:

- Examining how various aspects of teacher and classroom quality and home environment affect children's reading and writing development
- Testing the effects of interventions, curricular, or instructional approaches on children's reading and writing development



***Margareta Maria Thomson, Ph.D.***

**Associate Professor of Educational Psychology**  
North Carolina State University  
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I was recently named the Consultant Editor for *Educational Psychology: An International Journal of Experimental Educational Psychology*.

I'm currently pursuing research in the area of teacher development. I am a co-PI on Project ATOMS: Accomplished Elementary Teachers of Mathematics and Science, which is an NSF Program (5 year, \$3,200,000 Research project). This longitudinal study investigated the development of STEM elementary teachers examining their growth/change in mathematics and science content knowledge, teaching efficacy, pedagogical knowledge and STEM teaching practices.

I am interested in working in research projects related to teacher motivational beliefs (i.e., efficacy, values), or epistemological beliefs and how these constructs are related to teacher content knowledge and classroom practices, especially in STEM areas. Also, another line of research I am interested in is teacher motivation in the context of their professional development, and teacher motivation and resilience.

I am trying to pursue research or teaching projects focused on international collaborations. I have taught in the past summer study abroad classes in Educational Psychology in Prague, and I am currently working in research projects with K-5 schools in Romania. I would like to collaborate with anyone interested in developing/teaching study abroad courses or working on international research projects.



***Meagan C. Arrastia, Ph.D.***

**Assistant Professor of Educational Psychology**

Valdosta State University

[mcarrastia@valdosta.edu](mailto:mcarrastia@valdosta.edu)

I am currently working on course development for preservice teachers and other professionals (e.g., speech language pathologists, coaches, American Sign Language Interpreters). I was awarded a \$4,000 grant to create and evaluate case studies and hands-on activities to make educational psychology more relevant to these undergraduate students during a required early field experience at Valdosta State University. I'll be presenting preliminary research (see below) at APA August 2016!

I'm looking for collaborators that work with college students and/or are interested in examining the effects of parental incarceration on academic development in college students. I will be needing more college students as participants for an online survey, as well as help analyzing some follow-up interviews.

I just got married to Patrick Chisholm in March 2016! I also play clarinet in a few community bands in South Georgia. The Rose City Symphonic band is looking for players all the time. Contact me if you are interested.

***Jeanne O'Kon, Ph.D.***  
**Flagler College-Tallahassee**  
[okonj@tcc.fl.edu](mailto:okonj@tcc.fl.edu)



I graduated with my Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from FSU in 1994. My major professor was Dr. Hal Fletcher. I am a college professor at Flagler College on the Tallahassee Community College campus, where I work in Teacher Education, focused on Elementary Education and Exceptional Student Education. Previously, I was the Program Chair in Behavioral Sciences at Tallahassee Community College. I currently serve on the Tallahassee/Leon County Commission on the Status of Women, and my research interests are in gender issues and cognitive psychology/memory.



***Kamau Oginga Siwatu, Ph.D.***

**Professor of Educational Psychology**

Texas Tech University

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I received my master's from FSU's Learning & Cognition program in 2002 and my Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2005. I recently learned that I am being promoted to full professor, effective September 1, 2016. My primary research agenda is focused on issues related to teaching, learning, and diversity in K-12 educational settings. Within this general area of interest, I have four distinct, yet interrelated strands: (1) preservice teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs and the factors that influence the formation of self-efficacy beliefs, (2) the context specificity of preservice teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy beliefs, (3) the practice of culturally responsive teaching and its noted positive student and teaching outcomes, and (4) preparing prospective teachers to become culturally responsive and the role of educational psychology in preparing culturally responsive teachers.



## Please share photos, personal & professional updates, and more!

Please consider sharing your own update for the next newsletter. By sharing and making connections through information submitted by members of our community, we will be able to help graduates identify career tracks, job openings, research collaborators, and even funding.

**Alumni:** title/current position, major/degree, major professor/year of graduation, contact info, any particular research or professional interests you would like to share/get assistance with, any personal news, any opportunities or requests for current students or faculty in terms of collaboration, etc.

**Current students:** major/degree, major professor, ongoing or future research projects, assistance needed, etc.

Send your information to Dr. Alysia Roehrig at [aroehrig@fsu.edu](mailto:aroehrig@fsu.edu).

## Giving Back to L&C

Please consider making a donation to support current and future Learning & Cognition graduate students' research and conference travel!

You can make secure donations online at <https://one.fsu.edu/foundation/donate/college/education/donation-form>. Checks may be mailed to the College of Education (1114 West Call St.; Tallahassee, FL 32306-4450) or the University Foundation Office (2010 Levy Ave # 300, Tallahassee, FL 32310). You can pay online or by check, just be sure to specify "Learning & Cognition Student Support Fund" or "Fund # F08101" in the memo/tribute line. You can also contact our foundation officer, Kevin Derryberry, at (850) 228- 5021 or [kderryberry@foundation.fsu.edu](mailto:kderryberry@foundation.fsu.edu).