

LEARNING & COGNITION NEWSLETTER 2017



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION



MISSION STATEMENT

As a graduate-level program, Learning and Cognition's mission is to provide cutting-edge, individualized training for those who wish to earn graduate degrees focused on theory, research, and application in the areas of cognition, learning, and human development. We serve students who come from many backgrounds to apply Learning and Cognition in research, classroom, government, or organizational settings. Our program is highly flexible, allowing students to select the training that meets their needs. Through close mentorship and apprenticeship, we provide an excellent grounding in research to support evidence-based practice and contribute to the free, open-access of innovative research that informs teaching and learning wherever it happens.

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

This year, we engaged faculty and students in discussion concerning our core departmental values. In the course of the discussions, students expressed a sense of being valued and supported by faculty as whole persons. They also emphasized the highly cooperative climate that de-emphasizes the competitiveness that can often exist in higher education. They wanted these aspects of the program to be reflected in the core values. The core values that were decided upon are ethics, community of practice, critical thinking & lifelong learning, and inclusiveness. These were added to the updated handbook, along with other changes and clarifications. We are proud of the community that we have built and continue to build as we forge ahead together. Alumni, we would love your feedback on the values of the L&C program, as you are important members of our community, too. Please email me (aroehrig@fsu.edu) if you have any comments or suggestions!

Since our last newsletter in 2016, our new fully online master's program in Learning & Cognition (<https://distance.fsu.edu/students/learning-and-cognition-ms>) continues to expand. Our online courses are gaining popularity with students in 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., some of our students and faculty presented on diverse topics. SiSi Dong and Susan Losh presented a paper titled *Parental Involvement and School Readiness in Preschoolers*. Laura Jakiel and I presented two papers: *An Experimental Study of Reading Online Consent Forms and Participant Honesty in a Self-Report Survey* and *A Mixed Methods Approach to Understanding Self-Reliance, Help-Seeking, and 'Giving Up' in Postsecondary Math Classes*. Guillermo Farfan and Aki Murata presented their paper, *Teachers' Learning of Multiple Strategies: Understanding Challenges to the Mathematics Florida Standards*. Angelina Kuleshova, Aki Murata, Cassie Howard, Guillermo Farfan, and Motoko Akiba presented their paper, titled *Teacher Leaders' Facilitation of Lesson Study Discussions: Taking Up and Building on Participants' Ideas*.

Another exciting development is a partnership between Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) and Florida

State University (FSU) to implement *Partners United for Research Pathways Oriented to Social Justice in Education* or PURPOSE. It will be funded for \$1,020,699 by the Research Training Programs in the Education Sciences: Pathways Training Program competition. PURPOSE will serve junior and beginning master's students from education-related majors/minors at FAMU and FSU, providing 56 local fellows with financial support during a year-long research training and apprenticeship program, across four cohorts. Fellows will participate in mentoring regarding preparing for and applying to doctoral programs related to education, with the goal of increasing the diversity of the doctorate in education. They will also do volunteer work and research apprenticeship at Freedom Schools! Alysia Roehrig will serve as PI with the support of Drs. Jeannine Turner and Tamara Bertrand Jones, both in the College of Education at FSU, and Dr. Peggy Auman of the FAMU College of Education, who is an FSU COE Instructional Systems alumna.

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! 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 thrilled to announce that our L&C Student Support Fund, for the second year, was able to provide L&C Graduate Student Research Awards to Fei Xing, who will receive \$120 to help cover costs of printing of surveys for project entitled "Teachers' supports for students' autonomy in communicative language teaching in China: From self-determination to self-regulation" and to Shiyi Chen who will receive \$380 to assist with incentives for teachers completing surveys for a project entitled "Exploring Teacher and Child Factors that Influence Teacher-Child Relational Qualities in Head Start." 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. If you are interested in giving, please let me (aroehrig@fsu.edu) or Kevin Derryberry (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 Losh

I just stepped down as editor-in-chief of *Bulletin on Science, Technology & Society* (BSTS), but am finishing up some of the manuscripts I began working with last year. I recently collaborated with James Powell (environmental scientist at USC) on a BSTS article on perceived and actual agreement among scientists on climate change. SiSi Dong and I just presented at AERA on family structure and kindergarten readiness (from her thesis). With the help of a grant from the National Science Foundation, I am creating a large database on civic science literacy that ranges from 1979 to 2016. I just completed my third year of teaching Theories of Social Psychology online for our new online master's program, and my first semester teaching Group Processes online as well. It's a lot of fun. I am also proud to announce that my student Brandon Nzekwe just received his Learning and Cognition doctorate!

Beth Philips

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, am finishing the first year of a four-year 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 proud to say that I was able to hood at graduation newly minted Dr. Galiya Tabulda and am looking forward to graduating several other doctoral students this coming year. I am also welcoming several new students to my research group in the fall. I continue to collaborate with the State of Florida Office of Early Learning on early childhood standards and on professional development materials.



Alysia Roehrig



I am continuing in my role as North Florida Freedom Schools' Research Director. For summer 2017, we are expanding to have three locations for Freedom Schools summer camps serving K-8 children in the North Florida region: two in Leon County (at [Downtown Community Church](#) and at [FAMU Developmental Research School](#)) and one in Gadsden County (at the [Shadetree Group](#) in Gretna). This means 165 students from low-income families in North Florida will receive six weeks of reading fun and education, as well as healthy meals to nurture both mind and body, all at no cost to them. NFFS is partnering with [FAMU](#), [FSU](#), as well as [Downtown Community Church](#) and others in the community, to provide quality afternoon activities. In 2016, NFFS had many productive community partnerships that we hope to continue.

Last summer, the Institute for Research in Music and Entertainment Industry Studies ([IRMEIS](#)) at FAMU provided the necessary resources to train the SLIs on how to teach afternoon courses in the field of documentary arts, spoken word, music production, visual arts, dance and 'zines/editorial writing. The scholars learned many different skills related to digital audio and music industry studies. NFFS scholars produced a music soundtrack and documentary based on their experiences interrogating critical issues in American society. Florida State University's Center for Sport, Health, and Equitable Development ([SHED](#)) at FSU

provided the necessary resources to train the SLIs on how to teach afternoon courses on the importance of nutritious diets and physical fitness. This program, supported in part by a research grant from FSU alumna Marvalene Hughes, was entitled *The Healthy Habits Project*. The scholars learned many different skills related to the prevention of diseases such as coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, overweight/obesity, as well as risky behaviors associated with school dropout. The NFFS also partnered with Titus Sports Academy and “Get Real” Live the Life Student Programs. The aim of the Titus program was to get students moving, experience the benefits of regular exercise, and develop healthy lifestyle habits to improve the health and fitness of our community’s youth. The “Get Real” program was a high-risk behavior avoidance curriculum that is geared toward 3rd-12th grade and is taught by trained coaches.

Most children (78%), who participated in the two North Florida Freedom Schools’ original Gadsden and Leon County sites in 2016, maintained or gained in reading level, and on average made more gain in reading level than would be expected over 6 weeks. Surveys administered in summer 2016 also showed gains in children’s beliefs that they can act in prosocial ways, which is aligned with our community building and social action focus.

If you are interested in learning more or supporting this effort, please check out NFFS.wordpress.com.



Jeannine Turner

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) completed their thesis this year, exploring students’ epistemological beliefs. We found that engineering students don’t think like other students! Several students are planning on interviewing the engineering students to find out what’s in their heads. In the near future, we anticipate providing the engineering programs with information that can help retain all students, but particularly our African American males. This past February, I submitted an NSF grant proposal to train some of the engineering faculty to conduct educational research.

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 students’ motivation. 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 impacts both teachers and students. Yanyan Chan interviewed students in China 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. 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’ speaking efficacy, speaking anxiety, and willingness to communicate in their classes. Students who are focused on motivation for learning a second language is in the middle of a very large data collection endeavor with Chinese students learning English. We hope to learn a great deal about Chinese students’ motivation!

Across these different learning endeavors, self-regulation of learning, motivation, and emotions is at the core of success. Shawna Durtschi completed an interesting thesis with school librarians to understand how they promote and regulate students’ motivation for reading.

All of my students and I are doing really interesting things!

STUDENT PROFILES



Addy Reekes

Hello, my name is Addy Reekes and I am a master's student in the Learning and Cognition program. This year, I started working on my thesis, which is related to Global Education and Intercultural Competence. My research interests are focused on international development, critical pedagogy and constructivist practices in education. Ultimately, it is my dream to work with teachers and students in developing nations.

Currently, I am a research assistant for Dr. Losh, and I also work at a local animal hospital. I serve on the College's Student Leadership Council as our Ed. Psych. Representative, and I am also the Graduate Student Representative for the University Teaching and Awards Committee. I am a part of the Comparative and International Education Society and a member of their Latin American Education special interest group.

I am pursuing certification in Measurement and Statistics, and upon completing my degree, I plan to pursue a doctorate in the field. In my spare time, I like to play volleyball or relax with my perfect dog, Copper.

Guillermo Farfan

I'm a third year doctoral student in the Learning & Cognition program. My recent research interests include teachers' beliefs and their relationship to instruction, mathematics/science education standards, and embodiment cognition and mathematical thinking. I'm currently working on my preliminary prospectus, hoping to defend before the fall.

As a GRA, I'm also assisting with the creation of a translational online database of faculty and students' work at the COE using FSU's digital repository, DigiNole. The idea is to have research briefs that can be accessible to practitioners, policymakers, and other persons of interest (<http://education.fsu.edu/education-equity-global-citizenship>).



In the past, I worked as a GRA on a NSF-sponsored project on lesson study (a professional development program). The project, which is led by Dr. Motoko Akiba, included collecting written and audiovisual data from teachers, schools, and school district offices across the state of Florida.

Apart from managing data and transcription, I conducted qualitative and quantitative analyses, wrote literature reviews, and reported research findings as needed. Some of the findings are still being published... It was fun!



Finally, I happen to also work at the office of the Association for Institutional Research here in Tallahassee. I report on assessments, help develop online courses, and do other cool stuff with the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) sample surveys, and other Federal datasets that support research on post-secondary education.

Chelsea Funari

I am Chelsea Funari, a master's student in the Learning and Cognition program. My primary research interests include enhancing early elementary general education teacher practice through factors inside and outside of the classroom, classroom environment and instruction, and building connections between research, schools, and staff involved in early elementary students' education. One of the main goals of my research is to address the question of how schools' and community resources can be maximized to enhance teacher practice and student learning.

One of my current projects specifically addresses the student component of teacher practice by asking how students' off-task behaviors vary across the literacy block and how classroom context relates to students' off-task behaviors. Another of my current projects specifically addresses teachers' contribution to their classroom instructional environment by how teachers react to student off-task behavior. My master's thesis examines the contribution of support staff on teacher practice by the presence and association of teacher aides on teacher instructional practices in kindergarten and first grade classrooms.



Fei Xing

I am Fei Xing, a doctoral candidate majoring in Learning and Cognition. I have been learning about a wide variety of areas during the past five years of studying in the program, such as Educational Psychology, Program Evaluation, Second Language Acquisition and Education, etc. My goal after graduating from the program is to try to apply the theories I learned to English education in China to help Chinese students learn English in a more meaningful and fruitful way.

In order to contribute what I learned to the community, I spent one month in summer 2016 helping immigrants learn English in the Immigrant Learning Center in Malden, Massachusetts. I worked as a classroom tutor, helping the teacher engage students in group activities. Although the work I did was not complicated, I learned in

practice how to scaffold students based on their English-proficiency levels and incorporate their different cultures into the lesson. By talking with the classroom teachers and interacting with students, I started to understand students' real needs and their dream of pursuing a happy and stable life through hard work in the United States. I am now working on my dissertation, which also focuses on English education in China and helps me move forward on my way to support English education in China.

Cathryn Lokey

I am in my first year of my doctoral program in Learning and Cognition. For the past twelve years, I have been working as the School Counselor at the School of Arts and Sciences in Tallahassee, a high-performing, community-run public charter school. My main area of interest is mindful awareness practices in educational settings, especially with children. I had the opportunity to present a review of some applicable literature and examples of implementation at the annual EECERA conference in Dublin, Ireland last fall. In March of this year, I also had the honor of being one of the speakers for the TEDxFSU Conference, in which I spoke about the need for willingness to "take the road less traveled" when it comes to improving our educational systems, the ways we work with our children, and how we treat ourselves. I have a son who is seventeen years old and will be spending his senior year of high school in Estonia. I enjoy yoga, rock climbing, singing, and spending time with my fiancé, Julie.





Min Tang

I am a first-year doctoral student in the Learning and Cognition program. I am an instructor in Educational Psychology and believe that teaching is marvelous. I also serve as a volunteer in PAEC Migrant Education working with young children with dyslexia. I have worked with adult English language learners in the Center for Intensive English Studies at FSU. My current area of interest is trying to relate music to educational psychology. I was nominated for the 2016 FSU Student Employee of the Year Award. Some of my other skills and pastimes are piano performing, tea making, and computer programming.

Laura Jakiel

It's been a while since I last wrote an update. For those of you who don't know, I am in my third year of doctoral studies and have recently passed a milestone. As you may know, I am interested in Educational Technology, and toward the end of my first of year of doctoral studies, I (with the blessing of my Qualifying Exam Committee) undertook a second master's degree in Information Technology. I am happy to report that I earned that IT degree this past spring, also earning an award: Best Team Performance Achievement in Information Systems Management.

Continuing that theme, I am also pleased to announce that I earned an award for excellence in scholarship from the American Education Research Association significant interest group on Survey Research in Education. This award was presented to me for my experimental study on online consent forms and participant self-report honesty.

It's been a busy spring; however, I look forward to the upcoming semesters as I work to complete my preliminary study on the reliability and validity of the Future Time Perspective Scale. This work, while a departure from my future interests, closes the loop on an issue I uncovered during my Educational Psychology master's thesis.

I look forward to reporting on my future interests, combining persuasive technology with educational psychology concepts to further time management and scaffold learning strategy interventions, in my next update.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS

Wayne Thompson

Wayne Thompson attended FSU from 1958 to 1962 for his bachelor's and master's degrees. He came to FSU on a gymnastics scholarship. Wayne remembers going to FSU when there were only about 8,000 students. The undergraduate student housing building was the tallest building on campus. There was no mighty and spacious Stone building, just a moderately sized building housing the entire education department.

His coach, Jack Miles, wrote an article about him in 1968 for the magazine *Boys Life* telling the amazing story of how Wayne became an award-winning gymnast on the FSU gymnastics team while living with cerebral palsy. The full article can be accessed here: <http://www.fsugymnastics.org/Wane%20Thompson.html>.

Wayne recalled attending gymnastics meets in Pensacola, Florida, and being quite well-known on campus as the gymnastics team was, as Wayne put it, "a big deal." He expressed that the FSU program was one of the largest in the country while he was there.

After graduating from FSU with his bachelor's in general psychology in 1960 and his master's degree in counseling in 1962, Wayne went to work for The Association for the Help of Retarded Citizens for the next three years in New York City. He eventually earned his Ph.D. and worked for many years as a psychologist in two different prisons for the Department of Corrections. Wayne now resides in Virginia. He has been married for over 40 years and has two children and two grandchildren.

Courtney Barry

Courtney started in the L&C program in fall 2008 as a part-time student while working full-time in the Division of Student Affairs at FSU. While completing her coursework, she was blessed with two little girls, Grace (8) and Ansley (4), and learned to balance many spinning plates as a mother, higher education administrator, student, and wife. Fortunately, she successfully defended her dissertation in April 2015.

Upon graduating from the Learning and Cognition program, Courtney accepted a Visiting Teaching Faculty I position in the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) at Florida State University where she was provided the unique and rewarding opportunity to teach an academic strategies course to undergraduate students (the same course she researched to conduct her pilot study and dissertation). She now serves as director of this learning center and leads several initiatives to provide undergraduate students with free academic support.

Although she is not currently involved in research, her research interests include motivation, failure, as well as first-year retention and transition.

As a three-time Florida State alumna, Dr. Barry earned her Bachelor of Science in Communication, her Master of Science in Higher Education, and Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Psychology. She has been in college administration for more than 15 years serving in leadership positions at The George Washington University and Vassar College. Additionally, she also has experience teaching both undergraduate and graduate courses.

Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her family, which includes her husband, Mike, and two daughters.



Andrew Dentzau

Andrew oversees the appointment-based tutoring services for the Academic Center for Excellent at Florida State University. He currently supervises 24 student employees as peer-tutors in over 40 different subjects. He is also responsible for co-designing CRLA complaint training and is currently working towards the application for CRLA Level 2 and Level 3 certification. Andrew is also responsible for assisting the Director in numerous duties, including the collection and analysis of data for internal program evaluation and outcome reporting. Andrew successfully defended his thesis, entitled "How the onset of bipolar disorder impacts students' motivation and ability to engage in self-regulated learning". He plans to continue working in academic support within higher education and may one day return for his Ph.D.

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.

GIVE BACK TO L&C

We are working very hard to build an endowment that can be self-sustaining. With your help, we will be able to accomplish this goal and make it possible to more significantly support an increased number of deserving students. 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 <http://fla.st/2ssRD2l>. 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.

