

**DATE:** July 26, 2007**SUBJECT:** Middle Tennessee State University, Ph.D. in Literacy Studies**ACTION RECOMMENDED:** Approval

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** The two (2) external evaluators of the proposal judged the proposed Ph.D. in Literacy Studies unique with no other similar programs in the United States. They found its distinctiveness to lie in its innovative interdisciplinary approach to literacy studies and to its connection with the established MTSU Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia. Literacy Studies is broadly defined as integrated knowledge about the biological, cognitive, linguistic, social, and cultural bases for giving meaning to language in reading, writing, and speaking.

The doctoral program is proposed as an opportunity for persons who hold Master's degrees from a variety of academic backgrounds to complete an interdisciplinary preparation for scholarship, practice, and administration in professional careers dedicated to literacy studies. The program intends to bridge theory to practice, equipping graduates to apply research to solve real-world problems. Graduates are expected to practice in a variety of school and clinical settings and perform a variety of professional services, from the diagnosis and treatment of dyslexia and other literacy-related difficulties to the design and implementation of language instruction models. The interdisciplinary program will be cooperatively supported by the MTSU Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia and two colleges: Education and Behavioral Sciences and Liberal Arts.

**PROPOSED START-UP DATE:** Fall 2008

Commission staff reviewed this program proposal according to the academic standards adopted by the Commission on January 29, 1997. Each relevant standard is referenced below.

**1.1.20A MISSION:** The proposed program supports the Middle Tennessee State University mission to provide interdisciplinary graduate programming within an area of competitive advantage that addresses demonstrated need.

**1.1.20B CURRICULUM:** The proposed interdisciplinary curriculum requires completion of 60 semester hours (post Master's) and two consecutive semesters of residency. A 36-hour foundational core will provide the platform upon which students construct their own frameworks for understanding the interrelatedness of knowledge drawn from the four broad domains: biology/neuroscience, psychology, language and sociology/culture. The experience of the interdisciplinary core will help candidates build on prior experience in selecting a specialty path for future employment.

<u>Curriculum Requirements</u>	<u>Credit Hours</u>
Literacy Studies Core	36
Foundations of Literacy	6
Language & Literacy	9
Pedagogy	9
Research Design and Analysis	9
Practicum	3
Specialization	9
Electives	3
Dissertation	<u>12</u>
TOTAL:	<u>60</u>

Nine new courses (27 semester hours) will be required.

Students will complete four field experiences as embedded course requirements in addition to an extended practicum. These service field experiences will provide all candidates practical experience in assessment, consultation, and curriculum evaluation. A required research forum, with participation by students and faculty, will unify the interdisciplinary strands of Literacy Studies as students select a specialty from one of four options:

(1) **Literacy Instruction and Staff Development.** This specialty is intended primarily for individuals who hold licensure or certification in a profession (e.g., school psychologists, speech-language pathologists) or are credentialed in specialized areas of education (e.g., reading education, special education, educational administration). Graduates will be equipped to hold teacher training positions, model classroom interventions for learning disabilities, and provide effective literacy instruction that is based on scientific evidence.

(2) **Reading Disabilities/Dyslexia.** This option is designed for Master's prepared professionals who seek additional training in diagnosing and teaching children with reading disabilities as they prepare for careers in professional consultation. Graduates will be prepared for research-based assessment and intervention methods that support effective instruction for learners with special needs.

(3) **Literacy Measurement and Analysis.** This specialization is intended for those who are interested in a career related to development of assessment tools and curriculum materials through school systems, state and national government agencies, or assessment vendors. Graduates will be prepared to construct testing models, analyze data, and interpret results.

(4) **Administration/Policy.** Licensed school administrators, curriculum supervisors, superintendents, and state agency employees may seek this preparation for advancement in administration. Graduates will be prepared to provide effective guidance to various agencies based on their knowledge of scientific research in literacy.

**1.1.20C ACADEMIC STANDARDS:** Applicants for the program must meet the following criteria in order to be considered for admission: a combined GRE score of 1100; a minimum 3.5 GPA in master’s course work; a completed application form declaring a primary research interest selected from a list of areas reflecting the expertise of program faculty; a current curriculum vitae; a 700-1,000 word essay explaining how the applicant’s background and objectives relate to the program’s purpose; and three letters of recommendations from professionals who can address the applicant’s interest in literacy and potential for success in the doctoral program and in subsequent professional practice. A program faculty committee will screen applicants and determine a qualified applicant pool. The program coordinating committee will serve as the admissions committee, rank ordering applicants and making admissions decisions based on eligibility criteria. Students will be required to pass a comprehensive examination after completion of course work to be admitted to candidacy and to enroll in dissertation hours.

Projected Program Productivity:

Year	Full-time Headcount	Part-time Headcount	FTE	Graduates
1	5	8	7.6	
2	7	12	11.0	
3	9	16	14.3	
4	11	20	17.6	4
5	13	24	20.9	5

Five graduate assistants will be funded in Year 1 with an additional 2 every year to eventually reach 13. The full-time projections are conservative, as the program anticipates other full-time students that do not require an assistantship.

**1.1.20D FACULTY:** Existing faculty in the two colleges that will be involved in this program will be able to absorb the teaching and advising responsibilities required. Internal reallocation of faculty positions and new faculty hires in contributing academic departments for the coming year will add to the instructional capacity to serve the core courses in the proposed program. Existing faculty resources will also absorb the time release for the .5 FTE program coordinator. The institution makes the case that collaboration can increase productivity without having a negative impact to quality. Faculty are hired and evaluated in their base departments. Faculty teaching in the proposed program will be given “affiliate” status which may serve to enhance performance review for promotion and tenure, but these decisions will be made at the department level.

**1.1.20E LIBRARY RESOURCES:** Library expenditures (\$5,000 in Year 3, \$5,600 in Year 4, and \$6,270 in Year 5) are projected for books, journals, and software licenses. Library administration has augmented the primary collections across the collaborating disciplines by providing online access to books and journals. Students have access to the Middle Tennessee Consortium, which includes Vanderbilt University Library, and to interlibrary loan.

**1.1.20F ADMINISTRATION/ORGANIZATION:** Establishment of the degree program will not require establishment of a new academic unit. In keeping with its interdisciplinary mission, the doctoral program will not be housed within a single existing academic department but will instead be located within the College of Behavioral Science as a cooperative among eight departments from two colleges. One half-time (12 months) program coordinator will oversee recruitment, admissions, and program coordination, with this position filled by an existing faculty member in the College of Education and Behavioral Science who will also teach in the program. The MTSU College of Graduate Studies will support the program coordinator on matters of admissions, retention, and eligibility for graduation. The program coordinator will chair the Program Faculty Committee, which will include all faculty who are teaching core and specialty courses. The primary function of this committee will be to facilitate collaboration among faculty on instructional content decisions and provide input on components of the program (e.g., scheduling of courses, design of the colloquium and field placements, thesis supervision, teaching assistantships, and recruitment of faculty and students). The primary budget responsibility for the proposed program will reside with the Dean of Education and Behavioral Science.

**1.1.20G SUPPORT RESOURCES:** The interdisciplinary program design will involve faculty and resources from several disciplines and administrative units at Middle Tennessee State University. Research and service learning placements for students include the Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia; the research resources of the Psychology department's extensive experimental research facility and centrally coordinated subject pool; MTSU's Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic run by the Communication Disorders program which provides diagnostic and therapeutic services to children and adults; and the University Writing Center, which offers the opportunity for research on the range of factors that limit oral and written language proficiency.

In addition to campus resources, the proposed program will draw on affiliations with school systems, state and local education agencies, and advocacy and policy agencies. Clinical service collaborations will include student placements with hospital-based assessment centers and private clinical practices related to assessments for language development and communication disorders. The proposal cites research collaborations with specialized research units and projects, such as Vanderbilt University's Kennedy Center research on literacy development; the University of Memphis's management of the Memphis Striving Readers Project; the Tennessee Department of Education's Reading First Program; Curry Ingram Academy field placements; and Read to Succeed, a local nonprofit literacy organization.

**1.1.20H FACILITIES/INSTRUCTIONAL EQUIPMENT:** The physical home for the program will be the Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia, a unit administratively positioned within the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences. The Center occupies its own facility located on the main University campus. The facility will offer dedicated classrooms, Internet2 access, wireless access, two seminar rooms, and space for five graduate assistants as well as the program coordinator. Students in the program will have access to a variety of research facilities on campus. The program equipment budget proposes an expenditure of \$90,000 in Year 1 for a

geodesic electroencephalogram (EEG) system supporting studies of brain activity in language development and \$12,000 in Year 3 for six computers.

**1.1.20I STUDENT/EMPLOYER DEMANDS:** Middle Tennessee State University cites student enrollments in its existing graduate Certificate (18 credit hours) in Dyslexic studies as an indicator of student interest in literacy and learning intervention preparation and a projection of student demand for the Ph.D. in Literacy Studies. The University's rationale for proposing the program is that it will meet changing educational needs partially driven by federal legislation, such as the No Child Left Behind Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act. MTSU asserts that these policy initiatives are reformulating the roles of teachers, clinical practitioners, and administrators to require interdisciplinary capabilities in assessment and development of specialized classroom practices.

The National Assessment of Adult Literacy reports that 43% of adults nationally lack the most basic literacy skills necessary to perform most entry-level jobs. In Tennessee, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 2005 report shows 41% of fourth graders and 29% of eighth graders scoring below basic reading level. Recent federal legislation highlights the need for an approach to teacher preparation that departs from the current model in order to ensure that student achievement in reading and writing is substantially improved. Middle Tennessee State University's needs analysis maintains that teacher preparation programs are hiring Ph.D. graduates with a broad-based and systematic education in the disciplines related to literacy. For example, in three months of 2006 *Chronicle of Higher Education* job listings, higher education position announcements appropriate for graduates of an interdisciplinary doctoral program in literacy studies numbered 1 of every 4 for jobs in reading and special education. In addition to university hiring, applied research institutes, like the American Institute for Research, advertise for candidates with solid backgrounds in Reading instruction who also have strong qualitative and quantitative research skills, broad knowledge of reading theory, knowledge of instructional theory, and classroom experience. Further, administrators and supervisors must be well-versed in the management of teachers skilled in the art of diagnostic teaching, reading, special education, and assessment with a research base.

**1.1.20J NO UNNECESSARY DULICATION:** Other public and private universities in Tennessee offer doctoral studies related to literacy; however, these studies are concentrations or portions of curricula under a more broadly defined major. For example, The University of Memphis offers a concentration in reading in the interdisciplinary Ed.D. in Instruction and Curriculum Leadership. A similar presence of interdisciplinary literacy studies as a concentration or focused area within doctoral programs in education exists at Tennessee Technological University, Tennessee State University, University of Tennessee-Knoxville, and Vanderbilt.

**1.1.20K COOPERATIVE INSTITUTIONS:** None indicated.

**1.1.20L ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION:** The doctoral program evaluation will be integrated into the institutional effectiveness plan of the university. Program effectiveness will be measured by favorable external review, favorable exit interviews with program graduates, favorable employment and career

patterns and production of scholarly work by program graduates. The establishment of the program will not affect MTSU’s accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. There are no specialized accrediting agencies from which MTSU could seek program accreditation.

**1.1.2M ARTICULATION:** N/A

**1.1.20N EXTERNAL JUDGMENT:** Dr. R. Malatesha Joshi, Professor of Reading, Texas A & M University, and current editor of *Reading and Writing: an Interdisciplinary Journal*, and Dr. Diane Dean, Organization and Leadership in Higher Education specialist in the College of Education, Illinois State University, served as consultants to provide external assessment of the proposed program. The evaluators provided a detailed set of recommendations which MTSU followed in improving proposal clarity and design. These recommendations included modifications to the structure of colloquia, eliminating one proposed specialty area, and revising enrollment projections regarding full-time and part-time mix. They found the projected budget adequate to support the proposed program and sustain its development over the first five years. They noted that the program enjoys strong support from the MTSU Center for Dyslexic Studies and strong evidence of cooperation among the three sponsoring colleges. The two external evaluators found the proposed program distinctive and innovative in its interdisciplinary nature and highly appropriate for the growing need for educational professionals with the range of knowledge and skills demanded in the field. They found enrollment projections in accord with the growing need for professionals in this field.

**1.1.20O COST/BENEFIT/SOURCE:**

**THEC Financial Estimate Form  
Middle Tennessee State University  
Ph.D. in Literacy Studies**

Five-year projections are required for baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate programs and certificates. Three-year projections are required for associate degrees and undergraduate certificates. Projections should include cost of living increases per year.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>I. Expenditures</b>					
<b>A. One-time Expenditures</b>					
New/Renovated Space	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Equipment <sup>a</sup>	90,000	-	12,000	-	-
Library	15,000	10,000	-	-	-
Travel	-	-	-	-	-
Other (software & site licenses)	1,400	3,600	1,000	-	-
<b>Sub-Total One-time</b>	<b>\$ 106,400</b>	<b>\$ 13,600</b>	<b>\$ 13,000</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>B. Recurring Expenditures</b>					
<b>Personnel</b>					
<b>Administration<sup>b</sup></b>					

Salary	\$ 13,400	\$ 13,650	\$ 13,913	\$ 14,188	\$ 14,478
Benefits					
<b>Sub-Total Administration</b>	<b>13,400</b>	<b>13,650</b>	<b>13,913</b>	<b>14,188</b>	<b>14,478</b>
<b>Faculty</b>					
Salary	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Benefits	-	-	-	-	-
Sub-Total Faculty	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Graduate Assistantships<sup>c</sup></b>					
Stipend	\$ 70,000	\$ 98,000	\$126,000	\$154,000	\$ 182,000
Tuition & Fees	42,805	62,923	84,947	109,015	135,277
<b>Sub-Total Grad Assistants</b>	<b>\$ 112,805</b>	<b>\$160,923</b>	<b>\$210,947</b>	<b>\$263,015</b>	<b>\$ 317,277</b>
<b>Support Staff<sup>d</sup></b>					
Salary	\$ 12,835	\$ 13,477	\$ 20,536	\$ 25,670	\$ 26,954
Benefits	982	1,031	4,929	6,161	6,469
<b>Sub-Total Support Staff</b>	<b>\$ 13,817</b>	<b>\$ 14,508</b>	<b>\$ 25,465</b>	<b>\$ 31,831</b>	<b>\$ 33,423</b>
<b>Operating</b>					
Library	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,600	\$ 6,272
Travel	2,000	2,000	2,500	2,500	3,000
Software & Site Licenses	490	490	840	840	840
Office Supplies	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
Recruitment Expenses	3,500	3,500	3,000	2,500	2,000
Colloquia	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
<b>Sub-Total Operating</b>	<b>\$ 9,990</b>	<b>\$ 9,990</b>	<b>\$ 15,340</b>	<b>\$ 15,440</b>	<b>\$ 16,112</b>
Total Recurring	\$ 150,012	199,071	\$265,665	\$324,474	\$ 381,290
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES (A+B)</b>	<b>\$ 256,412</b>	<b>\$212,671</b>	<b>\$278,665</b>	<b>\$324,474</b>	<b>\$ 381,290</b>
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>II. Revenue</b>					
State Appropriations (new)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
State Appropriations (existing)	37,683	38,967	40,316	41,731	43,218
Tuition and Fees <sup>1</sup>	50,853	75,595	102,695	132,310	164,630
Institutional Reallocations <sup>2</sup>	166,376	96,609	134,154	148,933	171,942
Private Grants or Gifts <sup>4</sup>	-	-	-	-	-
Other <sup>5</sup>	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$256,412</b>	<b>\$212,671</b>	<b>\$278,665</b>	<b>\$324,474</b>	<b>\$381,290</b>

**Notes:**

Source(s) of the institutional reallocations, and grant matching requirements:

State Appropriations (existing). Tuition/Fees for three graduate assistants (8,561x3) and stipend for two graduate assistants (6,000x2) now working in the Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia will be

collected back into the University budget and applied toward doctoral-level assistantships. Estimates provided are based upon an assumed 5% annual increase in tuition and fees.

Institutional Reallocations. This amount has been committed by the university from reallocation of existing resources, revenue from future tuition increases, and indirect collected on grants and contracts. As external funding is obtained, institutional support will be accordingly reduced.

*Other sources of funding:*

MTSU Foundation Support for Colloquia. This amount, \$1,500, is available annually in an MTSU foundation interest bearing account.

*Expenses:*

a. The equipment budget for year 1 consists of \$90,000 for a 128 channel geodesic electroencephalogram (EEG) system. This equipment will be used by developmental cognitive neuroscientists performing event related potential (ERP) studies of how language and memory development relates to brain activation.

b. The cost for program coordinator, listed under administration, includes only expenses for an adjunct faculty member to teach classes (adjuncts teaching two classes do not receive benefits). One half-time (6 credit hours) appointment (4,200) per semester (4,200x2 = 8,400) plus one half-time (3 credit hours) appointment for summer (5,000). Summer salary is estimated at 5% annual increase. MTSU raises have reached or exceeded 4.5% for 4 of the previous 6 years.

c. The number of Graduate Assistantships is 5 in the first year and 2 added each year thereafter. The first year cost per projected GA is 22,561 (14,000 for stipend and 8,561 for projected 2008 tuition and fees). While stipend may remain the same, tuition and fees are estimated at 5% annual increase. The amount of doctoral stipends at MTSU is set by the Graduate College and is based on the results of a regional market survey in 2004-2005.

d. For the first two years, a half-time secretary (Secretary II, Skill Level 4) will be hired (12,835). For year 3, employment will increase to 80% (20,536). For Year 4, employment will increase to full-time (25,670).

**1.1.30 POST APPROVAL MONITORING:** An annual performance review of the proposed program will be conducted for the first five years following approval. The review will be based on benchmarks established in the approved program proposal. At the end of this period, campus, governing board, and Commission staff will perform a summative evaluation. The benchmarks include, but are not limited to, enrollment and graduation, program cost, progress toward accreditation, library acquisitions, student performance, and others set by the institution and agreed upon by governing board and Commission staff. As a result of this evaluation, if benchmarks are not met during the monitoring period, the Commission may recommend that the governing board terminate the program. The Commission may choose to extend the period, if additional time is needed and requested by the governing board.