

## Ph.D. In Teaching and Learning, Language and Literacy Frequently Asked Questions

### Important Websites:

College of Education: <http://education.gsu.edu/main/>

Office of Academic Assistance: <http://education.gsu.edu/oa/index.htm>

*One Stop Shop*: One Stop Shop answers all of your enrollment concerns, including questions about student accounts, financial aid, registration, and admission. One Stop Shop Phone: 404-413-2600 *Email*: [onestopshop@gsu.edu](mailto:onestopshop@gsu.edu)

Department of Middle and Secondary Education: <http://msit.gsu.edu>

Ph.D. in Teaching and Learning: <http://msit.gsu.edu/1467.html>

Graduate Catalog: <http://enrollment.gsu.edu/catalogs/> Program of Study Information is located in section 4290.35

### Important Contact Information:

MSIT Receptionist: 404-413-8260

MSIT Office Fax: (404) 413-8063

Ph.D. Coordinator: Peggy Albers, [malbers2@gsu.edu](mailto:malbers2@gsu.edu)

Faculty in Language and Literacy and Areas of Research: [http://msit.gsu.edu/msit\\_faculty.htm](http://msit.gsu.edu/msit_faculty.htm)

Faculty	Research Interests	Email	Phone
Peggy Albers, Ph.D. Coordinator	English Education, visual discourse analysis, children's literature, critical literacy	malbers2@gsu.edu	404-413-8387
Mary Ariail, Associate Dept. Chair	Adolescent literacy; Middle childhood education; Construction of identity	mariaail@gsu.edu	404-413-8382
Jayoung Choi	Adolescent literacy (TESOL); multimodal literacies	Jayoungchoi@gsu.edu	404-413-8380
Dana Fox, Dept. Chair	English education/language and literacy education; process of learning to teach secondary English; Policy in English education; Cultural authenticity and accuracy in children's and young adult literature; Mentoring and scholarly writing in academia; Gender and literacy	dfox@gsu.edu	404-413-8383
Tisha Lewis	Family literacy; digital literacies; multimodal analysis	msttyl@langate.gsu.edu	404-413- 8391
Joyce Many, Associate Dean	Scaffolding; mentoring and scholarly writing in academia; adolescent literacy	jmany@gsu.edu	404-413-8061

Ewa McGrail (L&L Chair)	English Education, new literacies; Socio-cultural epistemic of student teaching	emcgrail@gsu.edu	404-413-8389
Dennis Murphy Odo	Assessment literacy; technology and assessment	demodo@gsu.edu	(404) 413- 8005
Amy Seely Flint	Critical literacy in early childhood literacy; teacher research, Instructional decision-making in literacy development	aflint@gsu.edu	404-413-8388
Gertrude Tinker Sachs	Teaching English to Speakers of other languages (TESOL); teacher education; international studies	gtinkersachs@gsu.edu	404-413-8384
Michelle Zoss	Arts-integration and English education; teacher preparation; novice teacher mentorship; aesthetic experience and experience in education	zoss@gsu.edu	404-413-8415

### ***Ph.D. in Teaching and Learning***

The Language and Literacy Ph.D. in Teaching and Learning offers several concentrations: English education, Literacy Education, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Those who pursue a degree in L&L will find that the majority of their courses will be taken in the College of Education located on the corner of Pryor Street and Decatur Avenue in Downtown Atlanta.

Applicants who consider the Ph.D. in Teaching and Learning, and in particular with the Language and Literacy unit, must carefully consider to what extent they wish to undertake the scholarship necessary to complete a Doctor of Philosophy or a Ph.D.. The Ph.D. is not for everyone. Students who wish to teach at the college or university level, work with state departments of education, conduct research in their classes, schools or county, or assume leadership roles in their counties and/or schools may find the Ph.D. suited to their needs. In general, Language and Literacy faculty look for students who are committed to scholarship in research and teaching, are dedicated to fully engaging in coursework, and desire to carry out and write up original research.

***The Ph.D.*** The *primary* emphasis of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree program is the preparation of students as researchers, scholars, and scientist practitioners. Research experiences will be a continual part of students' learning including completion of substantial coursework focused on research and scholarship as well as participation in research activities. Congruent with this perspective, students will be active participants in ongoing research activities and scholarship with GSU faculty and/or in research teams from the beginning of their enrollment in the doctoral program. Students in College of Education Ph.D. programs will continually participate in such activities throughout their doctoral program resulting in conference presentations and scholarship submitted for publication. While these experiences will be time-

intensive and may overlap with some coursework, these efforts are expected to occur above and beyond doctoral students' coursework. Candidates must submit a dissertation that consists of a suitable body of original academic research, which from this research, several publications may result. If you are interested in working at colleges and universities, state department agencies, and have a strong interest in research and writing up this research, this degree may be more suitable for you.

***General Information, Requirements and Application (see Graduate Catalog:***  
<http://enrollment.gsu.edu/catalogs/>

### ***About the Application Process***

***What are the application requirements for a Ph.D. in Language and Literacy?*** Admission to doctoral programs in the College of Education is competitive and that an applicant meeting the published minimum requirements is not guaranteed admission.

Visit the admissions section of the Office of Academic Assistance and Graduate Admissions website for detailed information on college requirements, program requirements, and deadlines at [education.gsu.edu/oa/](http://education.gsu.edu/oa/).

Admission is based upon a variety of factors among which is the quality of the applicant's graduate record, achievement on required admissions tests, the degree of preparation for the specific academic program to be pursued, and available space in the program. In addition to these general criteria, individual departments may consider additional factors in making admission decisions.

Each applicant must complete and submit the online application for admission to graduate study, required application materials, and the non-refundable \$50.00 application fee.

All applicants must submit the following items and meet stated college minimum criteria:

1. Two transcripts from each college or university, domestic or overseas, from which they received a degree, or where they were enrolled in a degree program. This may include courses taken in non-degree status, in transient status, or in post-baccalaureate status and is regardless of whether or not the courses led to a degree or are listed on another institution's transcript.
2. Applicants must hold an master's degree from a regionally accredited college or university with a major in or with coursework that meets prerequisites for the planned graduate field of study.
  - a. Applicants must have earned a grade point average of no less than a 3.30 GPA calculated on all graduate work attempted in which letter grades were awarded.
  - b. Applicants for the Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph.D.) programs must have a grade point average of no less than 3.30 on all graduate coursework for which letter grades were awarded.
  - c. A letter of intent
  - d. Three years of teaching experience
  - e. A writing sample

- f. Two letters of recommendation
  - g. A successful interview with faculty
  - h. A timed writing sample (sent to applicants before notification of interviews)
3. Copies of scores on the General Test of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). Test scores must be from an examination taken within the last five years prior to the term of admission of the program. In addition to these copies, the applicant must have records of the scores directed specifically to Georgia State University from their testing agencies. Some departments also require a minimum score on the Graduate Record Examination..

### **GRE® revised General Test (tests taken on or after August 1, 2011)**

Measure	Scores Reported
Verbal Reasoning	130 – 170, in 1 point increments
Quantitative Reasoning	130 – 170, in 1 point increments
Analytical Writing	0 – 6, in half point increments

If no questions are answered for a specific measure (e.g., Verbal Reasoning), then you will receive a No Score (NS) for that measure.

### **GRE® General Test (tests taken prior to August 1, 2011)**

Measure	Scores Reported*
Verbal Reasoning	200 – 800, in 10-point increments
Quantitative Reasoning	200 – 800, in 10-point increments
Analytical Writing	0 – 6, in half-point increments

Visit the Office of Academic Assistance and Graduate Admissions web site at [education.gsu.edu/oa/](http://education.gsu.edu/oa/) and the individual websites of the department/program of interest to discover the full list of materials required.

***What are the deadlines for the program?*** Applications and all supporting materials must reach the Office of Academic Assistance by March 1 for a summer or fall entrance or Oct. 1 for a spring entrance. [http://education.gsu.edu/oa/App\\_Deadlines.htm](http://education.gsu.edu/oa/App_Deadlines.htm)

***For Spring 2012 Applicants:*** Scores for GRE tests taken August 1, 2011 or later will not be reported to Georgia State University until mid-November. This is past all deadlines for Spring admission. However, departments will review all application files for Spring admission as long as all other required materials have been submitted by the Spring application deadline. If admitted, students will need to report their scores by

January 15, 2012 or a registration hold will be placed on their summer and fall course registration.

***International Applicants:*** Applicants whose native language is not English should also submit scores from the **Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)**.

*Exception:* This is not required of international applicants who have received an accredited bachelor's degree or a higher degree from a U.S. institution. In addition, if your degree was awarded by a non-U.S. institution, you will need to submit a University course-by-course evaluation from a translation service -- Joseph SILNY, ECE, or WES.

### ***Are there general guidelines for admission?***

All documents and other materials submitted by or for persons in connection with their interest in consideration for admission to a program become the property of this institution and cannot be returned at any time. It is the responsibility of each applicant to follow the application procedures completely and correctly and to be certain that all materials have been submitted to the Office of Academic Assistance and Graduate Admissions by the application deadline. Incomplete applications will not be processed and will be withdrawn from consideration after the application deadline.

Admission is for entry in a specific major and concentration, when appropriate. Students who have been admitted to a graduate degree program may not change to a different major without receiving formal approval of an application for the new major. The applicant must meet all College of Education and departmental minimum criteria and all prerequisites for the new major. <http://www2.gsu.edu/~catalogs/2011-2012/graduate/>

Applications for graduate study are available online at [education.gsu.edu/oa/4427.html](http://education.gsu.edu/oa/4427.html).

Applications and supporting materials must be filed with the Office of Academic Assistance and Graduate Admissions at the addresses listed at [education.gsu.edu/oa/oa\\_contact.htm](http://education.gsu.edu/oa/oa_contact.htm) well in advance of the desired term of entry. Each applicant must allow adequate lead-time for admissions processing. International students should see the "Admissions for Special Categories" section of this chapter for additional admissions information.

Application deadlines vary by program. Please check the application completion date for your program of interest at [education.gsu.edu/oa/4427.html](http://education.gsu.edu/oa/4427.html). The closing dates for receipt of applications and all supporting documents for each of the academic terms are listed in the information about each degree program. Materials submitted are not returned to the applicant and are not transferable to other institutions.

### ***If I have hours that I have earned in my Ed.S., how many can I transfer into the Ph.D.?***

Doctoral students must take a minimum of 36 hours (once admitted) excluding dissertation hours at GSU (45 hours with dissertation). All coursework that transfers must abide by the content of the GSU course for which it is substituted and the program to which you have applied. Education coursework must be at the 8000 level. Not all coursework may transfer. It is important that you contact faculty in this program who will offer you advice on these transfer hours. If admitted and

you choose to transfer hours into the program, your Ph.D. timeline starts the earliest course. For example, if you bring in a course that you took in 2006, your PhD timeline starts with that 2006 course, and you will have only two years to complete the program.

***What kind of writing sample are you looking for in the application?*** We expect that those who apply for the doctoral degree in Teaching and Learning will have a strong background in writing academically. The writing sample should be from a course that you have taken previously (perhaps from your master's or Ed.S. program) in which you demonstrate the following: 1) a clear and defined focus; 2) a strong sense of synthesis of professional readings; 3) strong conclusions or hypothesis; and 4) strong conclusions.

***If I do not meet these requirements, what do I do next?*** If you do not meet the basic requirements, you may wish to appeal or request an exception. Please complete the Petition for Admission Form. This form can be found on the Office of Academic Assistance and Graduate Admissions web site at [education.gsu.edu/oa/](http://education.gsu.edu/oa/). You will be asked to write a letter that describes why you have not met this requirement or are excepted from the requirements. You will also be asked to provide documentation/evidence that you are able to do the work expected of a doctoral student.

***When I apply to the Ph.D. program, will I automatically be admitted to the program if I meet all of the requirements?*** Admission to doctoral programs in the College of Education is competitive and that an applicant meeting the published minimum requirements is not guaranteed admission. Entry into the L&L program is based upon the applicant's commitment to undertake this time-consuming and challenging coursework and writing. The applicant must demonstrate in his or her letter of intent and in an interview with faculty her or his desire to do research, work with teachers, and/or work in other institutions that require this degree.

***If I am an international student, what are the general admission requirements?*** It is the policy of Georgia State University to encourage the enrollment of students from other countries. We welcome international students to our campus because we believe such a cultural exchange will be beneficial to our entire student body, to our international students in particular, and to metropolitan Atlanta. *International students applying from abroad must have application, fees, and supporting documentation on file in the Office of Admissions approximately six months prior to the beginning date of the academic term for which they seek admission.*

As a competitively academic unit, we admit only those international applicants who are academically qualified. You will need a student visa and are required to document the availability of funds equal to the estimated cost of the first academic year at Georgia State before a certificate of eligibility. In addition to meeting the regular admission requirements, prospective international applicants must demonstrate proficiency in the English language by taking the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The TOEFL is not required for an applicant holding a degree from a U.S. college or university or whose native language is English.

***As an international student, are there other activities I must do prior to starting my coursework at GSU?*** Prior to registration for the first term, each international student is required to attend an international student orientation offered through International Student and Scholar

Services. Further, the College of Education reserves the right to test international applicants with regard to their skills in English. Accepted applicants will be notified if any testing is required.

***As an international student, what credentials must I submit and what do these look like?***

Academic credentials must be original documents with authoritative signatures, seals, and/or stamps. Whenever possible, these should be sent by the institution responsible for issuing such documents. In cases where it is impossible for an applicant to have those credentials sent from such institutions, the applicant should forward a duly "notarized" or "attested to" copy. The notarization should be done by the proper institutional officer or by the Ministry of Education in the home country. Documents in a language other than English must be accompanied by translations. The home country embassy or an appropriate official should make translations, and the original copies of the translations, acceptably notarized as described above, must be provided. As a general rule, documents translated by the Office of the American Friends of the Middle East (AFME) or the Institute of International Education (IHE) will be acceptable.

***As an international student, who evaluates my application materials?*** The application materials must be evaluated and judged equivalent by an independent evaluation service. Georgia State University accepts evaluations from the Joseph Silny Company, ECE, and WES. The evaluations must come directly from the service.

***After I submit my application in March 1 or October 1, when will I hear about the status of my application?*** The current deadline for Ph.D. program applications is March 1 and October 1. The L&L unit usually receives applications in early to mid-November or early or mid-March. The Ph.D. coordinator will contact you once she or he has received and reviewed your application. She or he will then invite you to interview on a date and time specified by L&L faculty. If you have not heard from the L&L Ph.D. coordinator, please call the Office of Academic Assistance (404-413-8000) to find out the status of your application.

***What should I expect in my interview with L&L faculty?*** The interview with L&L faculty is designed to get to know you, your research interests, and whether you are a good fit for us. During the interview, we will ask you to talk about why you want to pursue a Ph.D., research interests that bring you to this degree, and how this degree will help you towards your professional career goals. This is also a time for applicants to ask questions about our program. If you wish to bring additional materials to the interview to support your application, please do.

***How are decisions made about acceptance into the L&L Ph.D. program?*** Faculty make decisions about doctoral students based upon the student's research interests, if faculty can support these interests, how many doctoral students each faculty member has (faculty are limited in the number they can advise), how the applicant presents him or herself in the interview, the commitment to finishing this degree program, the applicant's writing ability, and the applicant's ability to articulate her or his ideas clearly.

***What certification do I earn with the Ph.D. degree?*** Once you have completed the program, you will earn a T7.

***When does the program start for me once I am accepted?*** Once you have been accepted into the Ph.D. program, you can begin your work the following semester. If you applied in October, were

accepted, and have received formal acceptance from the Office of Academic Assistance (OAA), you may start your program in January. If you applied in February, were accepted, and have received formal acceptance from the Office of Academic Assistance (OAA), you may start your program in the Maymester. Please be mindful that it does take the admissions office time to process your information and you may not be able to register until late in the semester in which you applied.

### ***About the L&L Teaching and Learning Doctoral Program***

#### ***What is the overview of the coursework that I will need to take as a Ph.D. student?***

The College of Education has recommended that a minimum of 36 semester hours (18 core, 18 major) be required in each student's doctoral program. In addition, a minimum of 15 semester hours of dissertation credit is required. A minimum of 24 semester hours must be earned in the doctoral program of study at Georgia State University. However, each unit may ask students to complete additional hours.

A minimum of 30 semester units of research be completed to including 15 semester units of dissertation and 15 units of coursework as identified by the Doctoral Advisory Committee.

#### ***How many hours are in the LL Ph.D. program and how long will it take to complete this degree?***

Our Ph.D. program has a total of 66 hours in three areas: The Professional Core, the Major, and the Cognate. The length of time it takes to complete this degree varies. For full-time students, it may take up to four to five years, and for part-time students up to five to seven years. The time it takes to complete a dissertation will vary, and depends upon time in the field, time for analysis and write-up.

In this Ph.D. program, the College of Education recommends that a minimum of 30 semester units of research be completed to including 15 semester units of dissertation and 15 units of coursework as identified by the Doctoral Advisory Committee. The research Core requiring 15 units of research methods is to include the following:

1. EPRS 8500 Qualitative/Interpretive Research in Education I (3) or EPRS 8530 Quantitative Methods and Analysis in Education I (3)
2. A two course sequence (6 units) in research methodology such as Quantitative Methods, Qualitative Methods, Single-Case Methods, Historical/Philosophical Methods, or Measurement Methods (see below for specific tracks/courses).
3. Two courses (6 units) in advanced research methods as identified by the Doctoral Advisory Committee.

A 3-unit Social Foundations of Education and Psychology of Learning Core is required.

***As an international student, how many semester hours must I carry?*** International students with a student visa are required to carry a full course of study in each academic term excluding summer. A full course of study at Georgia State is nine semester hours for graduate students.



***I understand that this is a research degree. Can you help me understand what this means?*** The primary emphasis of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree program is the preparation of students as researchers, scholars, and scientist practitioners. Research experiences will be a continual part of students' learning including completion of substantial coursework focused on research and scholarship as well as participation in research activities. In compliance with the College of Education recommendations, a research Core requiring 15 units of research methods to include:

4. EPRS 8500 Qualitative/Interpretive Research in Education I (3) or EPRS 8530 Quantitative Methods and Analysis in Education I (3)
5. A two course sequence (6 units) in research methodology such as Quantitative Methods, Qualitative Methods, Single-Case Methods, Historical/Philosophical Methods, or Measurement Methods (see below for specific tracks/courses).
6. Two courses (6 units) in advanced research methods as identified by the Doctoral Advisory Committee.

***Can I work towards my Ph.D. while holding a full-time position as a teacher?*** We do have a number of teachers enrolled in our program, and it is possible to earn a Ph.D. while teaching. We strongly encourage our doctoral students to engage in their studies for at least a year full-time to experience the doctoral program fully, but if that is not possible, we try to engage part-time students in as many writing, research, and service activities as we can.

***What courses comprise the Professional Core?*** The Professional Core is 18 hours and comprises the coursework required of all College of Education students. Students must take four research courses (at least one statistics and one qualitative course; the other two in consult with advisor); one course in sociology, and one course in psychology.

***What courses comprise the Major?*** The major area is Language and Literacy and is comprised of 21 hours. There are three required courses for all students in this program: EDCI 9660 Internship (teaching or research); EDCI 9850 Research Seminar (prospectus writing class); and EDCI 9900 Critique of Educational Research (study of methodologies and studies associated with the major). In L&L, students must also take courses that address theoretical models of reading, writing, and language (each is 3 hours). Students must also complete 3 one-hour courses called Writing Support Seminar; these hours do not apply to the major. These courses are designed to support doctoral students as they write publications, prospectus, dissertation, and other writings.

***What courses comprise the Cognate?*** The cognate is 18 hours and is designed by the doctoral student and his or her Doctoral Program chairperson, and based upon the student's interest. There is one required course, EDCI 8970 Seminar in Teaching and Learning, an introduction to the Ph.D. degree.

### ***Housing, Financial Aid and Parking***

A number of our students come from outside the Atlanta area and need housing and financial aid to complete their studies. Housing information for GSU students can be found at <http://www.gsu.edu/housing/> or you may call (404) 413-2000. This website offers information on

various housing options that GSU offers as well as how to secure off-campus housing. Faculty do not have information on financial aid or how to secure it. Please contact the financial aid website to secure this information ([http://www.gsu.edu/es/financial\\_aid.html](http://www.gsu.edu/es/financial_aid.html)) or call (404) 413-2000. Parking options at GSU are quite costly but if you wish to pursue these options, please access this website for information: <http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwaux/parking/students.htm>. The MARTA is a wonderful option for those of you who wish to take public transit. The MARTA train has two GSU stops: Five Points and Georgia State University.

***Georgia State is in downtown Atlanta, how safe is it to take classes there?*** Faculty make every attempt to discuss safety with their students. If students would like, a police escort can be requested by the student after her or his class, and the police will drive you to your car or to Little Five Points or GSU Marta station.

### ***Program of Study, Advising, and Advisors***

When you are admitted to the Ph.D. program in Teaching and Learning, you will be assigned a temporary advisor who will work with you until you complete your first year and/or 12-18 hours, whichever comes first. After this time, you and your temporary advisor will talk about inviting a faculty member to serve as the chairperson of your Doctoral Committee, a committee that oversees your program of study, comprehensive exams, and oral exams. Remember, it is your responsibility to set bi-annual appointments with your advisor/chairperson to ensure that you are taking the appropriate courses, completing requirements of the program, and in a sequence that will meet your timetable. Further, if you choose to change advisors, you must discuss this with your advisor and inform her/him in writing.

***I will need some financial assistance. What doctoral assistantships, instructorships, and fellowships are available and how do I apply for them?*** Graduate teaching assistantships (GTAs) and graduate research assistantships (GRAs) are available to selected doctoral students who demonstrate outstanding academic skills and expertise. Assistantships are made available through the students' department. The number of GTA and GRA positions available depends on current class loads and research needs. You will need to contact individual faculty and departments to see if there are assistantships available.

***As a new doctoral student, I will need advising right away. What advising is available?*** Each semester, L&L faculty set aside a week to advise all of its students from undergraduate through doctoral. This week is called Professional Advising Week or PAW. A schedule is sent out to all students with times and dates of sessions that are designed especially for them. You will be expected to attend the session developed and designed for Ph.D. students. A range of workshops in various aspects of doctoral studies are conducted from finding jobs, developing job talks, to developing a CV, and others are part of this advising session. You also will have time to talk with your advisor about your individual questions and needs.

***What other advising opportunities are there for me as a Ph.D. student?*** Each semester, doctoral students in the program offer doctoral mentoring sessions on line. Approximately four one-hour seminars are offered each semester and range in topics from designing a program of study, preparing for comprehensive exams, preparing the prospectus/dissertation, among others. Please

access <http://globalconversationsindoctoralpreparation.wordpress.com/> for the doctoral mentoring sessions offered each semester.

***Can I talk with my advisor outside of PAW?*** Of course! It is important that you keep in close contact with your advisor throughout your program. We recommend that you meet with her or him at least once a semester, whether it is by phone or in person. If you have a question about your program, always consult your major advisor.

***I understand I have to file a Program of Study. What is a Program of Study?*** Each student must file a program of study, or a plan that identifies the coursework that you intend to take and when, within the first year or 27 hours (whichever comes first) of their doctoral program. Failure to do so may result in your inability to register for classes. In consult with your temporary advisor or Doctoral Committee chairperson, you will select coursework that you believe will support your research interests and will benefit you as you conduct research. In the spring of each year, you will update your program of study form (see Appendix), annotate it, and meet with your temporary advisor or Doctoral Committee chairperson to discuss your progress in the program.

***What is a Doctoral Program Advisory Committee (DPAC; Program of Study Committee)?*** When you file your program of study, you must also determine a group of three faculty who will serve to guide your coursework and who will write your comprehensive exam questions, read your responses to these questions, and conduct an oral examination based upon the responses to these comprehensive exams. This committee consists of your Doctoral Committee chairperson (if different from your temporary advisor), a faculty member who has expertise in methodology or in your field of study (L&L), and a faculty member outside of the L&L unit who has the expertise to guide your coursework and studies. Committee members often include faculty with whom you have studied and/or worked, and those whom you believe will support and extend your research interests.

***When do I invite a faculty member to serve as the chairperson of my Doctoral Program Advisory Committee?*** After you have taken a few courses at GSU (around 12-18), you will invite a tenure-track faculty member from L&L whose work closely aligns with your own research interests to act as your Doctoral Committee chairperson. Throughout your program of study, your chairperson will work closely with you to choose the courses that will support your scholarship in your area of interest. She or he will also be responsible for ensuring that you follow a strong program of study that will lead to your successful completion of your coursework and comprehensive exams.

***Can my temporary advisor serve as my Doctoral Program Advisory Committee chairperson?*** Yes. L&L faculty try to initially set you up with a faculty member who has similar interests to your own.

***Do all members of my Doctoral Program Advisory Committee have to be tenure-track faculty?*** No. You may invite clinical faculty to serve on your committee. Clinical faculty cannot serve as your chairperson, but they can serve as co-chair of your committee.

***What if I want to change faculty members on my Doctoral Program Advisory Committee after I have filed my program?*** Because your interests and research questions may change as you study with various faculty in various areas, you may find it important to make changes to your Doctoral Committee. Before you make any changes to this committee, you must fill out a Change of Committee form which your current advisor will have. It is also important that you discuss reasons why this change is important to your studies and research. Once your chairperson is aware of your desire to make a change in committee member(s), you must meet with the faculty member(s) whom you wish to remove from your committee and discuss reasons for this change of committee. After this process, you may then invite other faculty members to serve on your Doctoral Program Advisory Committee, and begin the process of filing an amendment to your program of study.

***If I want to substitute an elective for a required course, can I do this?*** No. All courses required by the college and the department must be taken and no courses may be substituted.

***What are Directed Readings and how do I arrange to take this course?*** Directed readings courses are designed for doctoral students who wish to study in-depth an area of interest not addressed in university coursework. Before you can register for this course, you must make arrangements with a faculty member who will oversee this independent study, develop a rationale for why you want to study independently, develop a plan of study and projects that demonstrate your work in this area, and submit this to the department chairperson for approval.

***How long do I have to complete my Program of Study?*** You have seven years from the time you start your program to finish your coursework. You have two additional years to complete your dissertation.

***Can I transfer in coursework taken at another university?*** Yes. You may transfer up to 27 hours from another university; however, in consult with your Doctoral Committee chairperson, you may choose not to transfer in this many hours so that you get to know faculty in different departments, choose courses that address your research interests, and engage in coursework that offer research experiences. Remember that 36 hours must be taken in the Ph.D. program at GSU.

***What happens if I transfer in coursework taken at another university? Is my time clock for finishing my Program of Study the same?*** No. Your time clock for finishing your program of study starts with the earliest course you transfer in. For example, if you transfer in a course that you took in 2005 and you are admitted to our Ph.D. program in 2009, you have until 2011 to finish your coursework. Be very mindful of this time clock especially when considering the course transfers.

***If I started an Ed.S. at GSU or at another institution, can I transfer in hours from that program?*** Yes. You may transfer up to twelve hours from another Ed.S. to apply towards the Ph.D. However, the Office of Academic Assistance must verify that the courses that are brought in do meet the Ed.S. requirements. All students must take 36 hours in the Ph.D. program, excluding dissertation hours. Remember also that if a course is brought into the Ph.D. program, the time clock for finishing the degree starts with the semester and year during which that course was taken. For example, if a course was taken in fall 2005, you have seven years to complete the coursework for the Ph.D.

***There is a recent change in the L&L Ph.D. program regarding prequalifying work. What is this and how do I prepare for it?*** There are two stages to working within your program of study: prequalifying work and comprehensive exams. Prequalifying work is designed to help faculty understand your progress in the Ph.D., to find out how to support you and your research, and to determine future plans for coursework, reading, and research that will benefit you as you continue towards the completion of the degree. The prequalifying work, evaluated after you have completed between 18 -24 hours, consists of the following: 1) an academic paper that has been submitted for a course and revised using the notes from the faculty member who taught this course; 2) an annotated program of study in which you describe what you have learned in each of the courses that you have taken, important readings in light of your research, and other professional readings that you intend to undertake to develop a breadth of knowledge in your field of study; 3) a list of questions that you have regarding the future development of your research questions and how you intend to pursue answers to these questions; and 4) an oral discussion with your Doctoral Committee chairperson.

The second stage is the coursework and requirements that lead up to your comprehensive exams or comps. The semester before comps, you must write a Memo of Intent to your major advisor and during which you will generate a list of readings to prepare you for writing the comps. Ten days before Professional Advising Week (PAW), you will be sent questions to which you must write; these will be your comps questions. Your responses must be turned in at the start of PAW. Also, during the semester of comps, you will be expected to prepare an annotated syllabus around a course that you have designed or wish to teach as well as a manuscript written for publication. These two documents must be turned in during Professional Advising Week. (See Appendix)

***What are Comprehensive Exams and Orals?*** At the end (or very near end) of your coursework, you will be asked to comprehensively articulate your breadth of knowledge through a set of questions developed and designed by your Doctoral Program Advisory Committee. They will develop a set of questions that addresses your knowledge in your major area, the core area (including research methodology), and your cognate. You will be asked to write to these questions and, approximately two to three weeks after the written exams, you will be asked to talk about your responses to these questions with your committee members who may ask you to clarify, extend, and/or defend your responses in an oral examination. The research questions will be written as part of the coursework for EDCI 9900 or Critique of Educational Research.

### ***Developing a Professional Identity, Professional Relationships, and Colleagues***

***I hear that the doctoral program is a time during which one makes lifelong friends. What can I expect in this program?*** The doctoral program is indeed an exciting time for you! You will study with and become colleagues and friends with others who have similar interests in literacy, language or English education. As you work through your courses, make a point to reach out to those to whom you feel close and develop strong research relationships. Get to know your professors by stopping by their office and talking, active and thoughtful participation in classes, social functions involving the L&L unit, and attending professional functions that they attend. It is your responsibility to be proactive in your own learning and your own sense of professional self by engaging actively with those who are in the program and those who teach in the program.

***Why are professional relationships important?*** Regardless of your career choices after the Ph.D., you may find that you want to teach at a research or teaching institution, both of which may require that you join the faculty in a tenure-track position. If this is the case, professional relationships with colleagues become extraordinarily important as these may be the very colleagues that you call upon to serve as external reviewers for your promotion and tenure. Without these relationships, developing a list of external reviewers will be challenging at best. Professional relationships, if you decide to remain in the classroom, at a job at the state, county or district level, continue to be significant. These are your colleagues who can help you think through challenging issues such as censorship of texts, high-stakes testing, or working with other teachers, administrators, and other education professionals. These lifetime professional relationships support your own professional and personal growth.

***What about professional organizations?*** It is especially important that you begin your scholarly life by joining professional organizations. It is through these organizations that you will begin to network with faculty, scholars, teachers and doctoral students like yourself and develop world- and/or nation-wide friends and colleagues. These relationships are extremely important to cultivate, especially if you plan to work at a college and university, especially in light of promotion and tenure. You will need to call upon these colleagues for support and recommendations.

***Yes, but I'm a doctoral student of limited means. How can I afford membership in professional organizations?*** All national and state organizations offer a huge discount for student members in their organization. Often, membership is much less than a textbook for a course. Often included in membership is a professional journal which keeps you updated on trends and issues in your area of research. Further, many professional organizations offer website support and conversations through blogs, social networks where you can talk with others across the world about issues that you concern you. In short, memberships are worth every penny.

***Which professional organizations should I consider joining?*** There are a number of significant organizations that allow you to network and form colleagues from across the nation and the world. Our faculty are very active and have strong ties in these organizations, many of which will support your research interests. The ***National Council of Teachers of English*** (NCTE) ([www.ncte.org](http://www.ncte.org)) addresses issues of interest to all aspects of the English language arts. Members cut across English education, early childhood education, literacy, ESOL, policy, and research. ***National Reading Conference*** (NRC) ([www.nrconline.org](http://www.nrconline.org)). This is the professional organization that features the most current research in English education, early childhood education, literacy, ESOL, and policy. ***Whole Language Umbrella*** (WLU) (<http://www.ncte.org/groups/wlu>) is an organization committed to holistic and critical education. The organization is small, teacher-friendly and has a strong research and pedagogical focus in literacy and language education. ***Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages*** (TESOL) ([http://www.tesol.org/s\\_tesol/index.asp](http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/index.asp)) address research and teaching of language, language arts, literacy, and policy as they apply to English learners. The ***International Reading Association*** (IRA) ([www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org)). This organization focuses on pedagogy and research in language, language arts, and policy, especially as it relates to literacy learning. The ***American Educational Research Association*** (AERA) (<http://www.aera.net>) is an extremely large organization that is much broader than literacy and language education. Scholars and researchers from all disciplines present their research on all aspects of education. AERA has a number of

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) that allow you to develop professional relationships with others who have more specific interests. *National Association for the Education of Young Children* (NAEYC) (<http://www.naeyc.org/>) focuses on research and teaching of young children and across disciplines.

***What about state professional organizations?*** The state of Georgia has a number of professional organizations that are subsidiaries of the national groups. These organizations will afford you the opportunity to meet up with and develop professional relationships with others more geographically close to you. The organizations host their own annual conferences that feature strong presentations aimed both at research and pedagogy.

***What other professional development opportunities are there for doctoral students to network and present their work?*** Each year, the L&L unit sponsors a conference that addresses issues related to urban education, especially in the areas of literacy and social studies called the *Conference on Literacy, Urban and Social Studies Education (CLUES)*. This conference always features internationally recognized literacy and social studies scholars and authors of children's literature as keynote speakers. The CLUES also provides opportunity for many of our doctoral students to gain experience in conference presentations, affording them an opportunity to present their research. It is also a space at which doctoral students can network with faculty and teachers across the metro-Atlanta area.

***How do I begin to network with other scholars within our area and across the nation?*** In 2009, we designed and developed Doctoral Webinars, online interactive presentations for doctoral students and recently appointed assistant professors to present their work to other doctoral students. These webinars are intended to support doctoral networking as well as offer opportunities for presentations and response from other doctoral students. Each year, we host approximately six webinars by doctoral students and recently appointed assistant professors from around the country and internationally. These webinars offer great spaces for networking and learning about research conducted in a variety of universities.

### ***Assistantships, Residency Plans***

***I'm required to do a teaching and/or research internship. What does this mean and how do I go about organizing this?*** Since many students who pursue a Ph.D. wish to teach at the college or university level, L&L faculty believe it is important to have experience teaching undergraduates and/or graduate students as well as work directly with faculty on research projects. The teaching internship is a course in which you work directly with faculty to design, develop and teach a course in the undergraduate or master's program. You will be expected to attend each class session, help with grading, help with preparing materials, and the various work associated with teaching. In the research internship, you will have opportunities to collect, read, analyze, and/or present and write-up research. During PAW, faculty identify courses for which they would like to have teaching assistants or research projects for which they would like to have doctoral students work with them. Both of these internships prepare you to develop the skills that faculty must have as they engage in scholarly activity and work with undergraduates and graduates in the academy.

***What is the difference between a teaching or research internship and Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) and Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs)?*** The primary difference between these two teaching and research experiences is whether or not you get paid for your work. Students often supplement the cost of graduate school through assistantships available in their unit, department, college or university. Graduate teaching assistants are those who are hired by a department to teach one of the courses in a program. Graduate research assistants are those who are hired to work with faculty on research projects. These assistantships pay according to the student's experience and expertise in an area, and come with tuition remission and a stipend. The number of hours students must work each week depends on the level of the assistantship.

***What are Residency Plans and how do I go about working towards finishing my residency?*** At many universities, students must complete what is called "residency," or a year in which they live on campus and devote their time and energy into the three areas of scholarship that define the Ph.D.: research, teaching and service. Many of our GSU students are residents of Atlanta, and do not live on campus. However, they must complete a residency plan to demonstrate their commitment to working towards the three areas of scholarship. After approximately 27 hours, in consult with your Doctoral Committee chairperson, you should begin to develop a residency plan, or a plan in which you demonstrate that you have experience in areas defined by L&L faculty as significant in your development as a scholar and teacher (see Appendix). Once you believe that you have completed the requirements of the residency plan, your Doctoral Committee chairperson will sign off on this part of your program.

The College of Education recommends that the Residency Program Plan require 5 of the following 6 elements for each doctoral student:

1. Participate in ongoing research and scholarly experiences
2. Submit a research/scholarly manuscript to a peer-reviewed journal as primary or lead author (or as an author with substantial contribution to the research study and manuscript)
3. Participate in identifying and applying for a grant/fellowship
4. Present at a research/scholarly conference
5. Engage in university teaching internship
6. Serve the institution and/or profession

***Once I have successfully completed my Program of Study, my Comprehensive Exams, and my Oral exams, what happens next?*** If you have successfully completed your coursework and exams, congratulations! You are now well on your way to working towards your dissertation! At this stage of your program, you and your Doctoral Committee will sign a form (See Appendix) stating that you have successfully completed this part of the program. It is now that you will begin your journey towards finishing your dissertation and the Ph.D. degree.

### ***The Prospectus and Dissertation***

In partial fulfillment of the Ph.D., each student must complete original research, or the dissertation, the culminating experience in this degree. As part of the support for writing the dissertation, each student will form a Dissertation Advisory Committee, write a prospectus, write a dissertation, and defend the dissertation.



***What is a Dissertation Advisory Committee (DAC) and how is it different (or is it?) from the Doctoral Program Advisory Committee?*** Once you have successfully completed the Program of Study, Comprehensive Exams and Oral exams, you will begin to more carefully and thoughtfully consider the research that you undertake. You will assemble a Dissertation Advisory Committee, composed of four faculty members, whose charge is to support you in your efforts to complete the dissertation. The Dissertation Advisory Committee is different from the Doctoral Committee in that its focus is on supporting and assessing your ability to conduct a scholarly research study: developing research questions, designing a research study, conducting the study, analyzing data, and writing up the results of this study. The Dissertation Advisory Committee will read your prospectus, your dissertation, conduct an oral defense of your dissertation, and determine if the research that you have conducted merits the degree of Ph.D. It is your responsibility to assemble a committee of four faculty members, one of whom must be outside the L&L unit, willing to serve on your committee. You will invite one tenure-track faculty member from L&L to act in the role of Dissertation Advisory Committee chair. This faculty member will work closely with you to develop and design a study around research questions that you wish to investigate. The other three faculty members should have interest and expertise in your research area, with at least one faculty member who has expertise in the methodology around which you design your study. Your dissertation chair is your first stop when you have questions about your study and when you wish her or him to review your writing. Always consult with your chair before sending any writing to other committee members.

***The dissertation is a very weighty writing experience. I understand that before I start this process, I must write a prospectus. What is this document?*** The prospectus is a document that outlines the research that you intend to undertake for your dissertation. The L&L unit has a course, EDCI 9850, especially designed to help you develop this prospectus. In this course, and in consult with your Dissertation Advisory Committee chairperson, you will be asked to consider and develop your research questions, rationale for your study, your theoretical framework, and your methodology. The College of Education has prepared a *Guidelines for Completing the Dissertation*; a handbook which will guide you through the writing of the prospectus and one which you must follow carefully. (See Appendix)

***If I finish my prospectus in EDCI 9850 and get an “A,” do I still need to defend this prospectus?*** Yes. Although you may successfully complete the requirements for your prospectus for this course, faculty on your Dissertation Advisory Committee are the only ones who can sign off on the form that indicates that you have successfully completed this prospectus. As you work on your prospectus, make sure that you follow the College of Education guidelines for writing dissertations

***What do I do when I finish my prospectus?*** When you have finished writing your prospectus and your chairperson believes that it is “defendable,” you will be asked to defend it to your Dissertation Advisory Committee; this is called your prospectus defense. At this defense, faculty will ask you to talk about your study and also guide you as you continue with this research. If the Dissertation Advisory Committee determines that your prospectus is strong and you are ready to start your research, they will pass this prospectus. You are then recommended to be a doctoral candidate, the penultimate stage before the final dissertation. Your committee will sign the Doctoral Candidacy form (see Appendix), and you are then given formal permission from the

department to start the process of conducting your research. You are now officially ABD (All but dissertation).

***What is A.B.D.?*** This acronym stands for “all but dissertation,” which in essence means that you have successfully completed the course requirements for the Ph.D. To earn a Ph.D., you must carry out the original research and write the dissertation.

***When can I apply for my T-6 and how do I go about doing this?*** Students who wish to apply for a pay raise with their schools should consult the directions from their county. However, in general, once students have completed and successfully defended their prospectus, they can apply for their T-6.

***I understand I will need to complete a human subjects review. What does this entail?*** Once you have passed your prospectus, you will begin to work on securing institutional permission to conduct your research. You will complete a review that includes a description of your research, how and to what extent human subjects are involved, and how this research serves the field. Since you are a doctoral student, your chairperson will be automatically identified as the Primary Investigator. Your chairperson will be instrumental in helping you develop this IRB. Before you can start your research, you must get approval from the Institutional Review Board or IRB.

***After I receive permission from IRB to conduct my research, what happens next?*** In consult with your dissertation chairperson, you will then begin your research study as written in your prospectus, also taking into consideration the comments of the other committee members.

***How long do I need to be in the field for my study?*** This depends on what you and your Dissertation Advisory Committee, and especially your chairperson, have discussed, and which methodology you have chosen to design your study.

***While I'm collecting data for my research in the field and not taking classes at GSU, how do I maintain relationships to ensure that I complete this project?*** This is indeed a very important question. Conducting a study can be a very lonely process; however, it is important that you develop relationships with colleagues while taking classes who can support you in this endeavor. When you are in the field, keep in close contact with your dissertation chairperson and other doctoral students whom you have come to know in the L&L unit. Keep your chairperson up-to-date on where you are in your process, make appointments to discuss your data, and have your chairperson help you think through what you data are saying. It is important that you do not isolate yourself while conducting research, an easy practice to fall into.

***What happens if I wish to reconstitute my Dissertation Advisory Committee?*** If for some reason you want to reconstitute your Dissertation Advisory Committee after you have defended your prospectus and started your dissertation, it is important that you talk in person with the faculty member whom you wish to remove from the committee, and explain the reasons for this change. You must also fill out a Change of Committee form. When informing faculty of your wish to remove them onto your committee, it is essential that you do not email her or him about this change; this must be done in person. Following this conversation, you may begin the process of amending the Dissertation Advisory Committee form, inviting faculty to your committee, and securing theirs, your chair, and the chair of the department signatures.

***What is continuous enrollment and how does this work in the dissertation stage?*** Graduate students must register for at least a total of six semester hours of course work during any period of three consecutive terms (fall, spring, summer) until completion of degree. In order to graduate, students must be actively enrolled in the program of study during the semester they finish degree requirements for graduation.

***Once I've collected my data and written it up, what happens then?*** Once you have completed a draft of your dissertation, it is important that you and the chairperson of your Dissertation Advisory Committee spend time together to ensure that this is a well-done study, that the data support your findings, and that you offer the field pedagogical and research issues to consider (implications for research and practice). Once your chairperson thinks that your dissertation is ready to defend, you will set a defense date with your committee. The College of Education has strict deadlines for when you can defend in a semester; please be aware of these dates before you set a date with your committee.

***Can I ask any of my committee members to read chapters of my dissertation before I set the defense date?*** Yes. The charge of your Dissertation Advisory Committee is to support you in your analysis and writing of this study. However, always consult your chairperson before sending off chapters to other committee members. Your Dissertation Advisory Committee chairperson must be aware of what you are doing and what you are sending off to committees.

***Who edits my dissertation?*** One thing that many doctoral students believe is that their dissertation chairperson should edit their dissertation; this is not the case. It is your responsibility to present your chairperson with drafts that contain few to no errors and is the best writing that you have done at this point in the writing. Your chairperson's role is to offer expertise and guidance in the conceptual and intellectual thinking behind your research, not looking for and/or correcting mechanical errors. If she or he must spend time editing, the time of your chairperson is not well spent. If needed, bargain with one of your colleagues to be your editor and you theirs. You might also ask a number of colleagues to read your work, each reading a single chapter, a distribution of labor. In this way, editing is less burdensome for all involved.

***What other documents must I prepare for my dissertation defense?*** All students must write a Dissertation Abstract. The guidelines for writing this document are located at <http://education.gsu.edu/oa/4058.html>. Be very mindful of the directions; the Office of Academic Assistance will not hesitate to return your document to you for revision. Your dissertation abstract is announced, and anyone who wants to attend your defense may. You also may invite anyone whom you would like to attend. Your announcement is made public by the College of Education and posted on their website and on the bulletin boards of the MSIT department hallway.

***When do I turn in my dissertation and what is the usual timeframe?*** The Office of Academic Assistance will require 10 working days to process your dissertation. The Chair of MSIT will need at least an additional seven days to read and approve your dissertation. Your Dissertation Advisory Committee should be given no less than two weeks to read and study your dissertation. However, it is often better if you can offer them more time. Talk with your dissertation

chairperson regarding this timetable. When considering defense dates and times, be aware of all of these time constraints.

***What is a dissertation defense and what should I expect?*** The dissertation defense is one of the very last parts of the process in earning a Ph.D. Once the Dissertation Advisory Committee and Chair of the MSIT department have read your study, they will agree to set a defense date. Often, your chairperson will ask you to prepare a 20-minute presentation, an overview of your study. This is done in the case that there are people who attend your dissertation defense and have not read your study. After your presentation, your Chairperson invites questions from the committee about your study. You respond to these questions. Invited guest may not ask questions nor may they comment on your dissertation until after the defense. Once the committee has exhausted its questions, you (and other guests) are asked to leave the room while the committee discusses the merit of your study, your responses, and decide on whether your dissertation passes or not. During this short meeting, the committee also presents to the dissertation chairperson any revisions that may need to be done before you can submit the final draft of your dissertation. After this discussion, you are brought back into the defense room and notified of the committee's decision.

***I've heard that everyone has to do revisions. Is this true and what should I expect?*** Often, doctoral candidates are asked to revise parts of their dissertation before the committee signs off on the Dissertation signature page (see Appendix). The Chairperson is in charge of seeing that these revisions are carried out, and submitted to the committee, if requested. Once these revisions are made, you ensure that your dissertation is formatted to the specifications of the College of Education guidelines, that you have all of the required signatures, and that you submit the number of copies required to the College. You will also need to submit your dissertation to Dissertation Abstracts.

***How do I submit my dissertation?*** Unlike students in the past, you now have the option to submit your dissertation as a pdf. However, many students like the feel of a real book in their hand and make arrangements to have their dissertation bound with raised gold-lettering.

***When do I register to graduate?*** All candidates for a degree must file a formal application for graduation with the Graduation Office (231 Sparks Hall). Graduate degree candidates must apply at least two semesters in advance of the expected semester of graduation. Students must submit forms two semesters before they plan to graduate. Please see [http://www.gsu.edu/es/applying\\_for\\_graduation.html](http://www.gsu.edu/es/applying_for_graduation.html).

***When I successfully finish and defend my dissertation and want to participate in the graduation ceremony, what should I do?*** Please notify the director of your dissertation that you will or will not attend the graduation ceremony. Please do not assume that your director can attend the ceremony. If your advisor cannot attend, please consult with her or him in finding a faculty member who can hood you during the ceremony. You will need to order your graduation regalia; the bookstore will be able to help you.

***What's next?*** After successful completion of your dissertation, you have now earned a Ph.D. and you have a number of options to pursue. The world is now your proverbial oyster! Best of luck!