

## Opportunities for Engaging CSD Scholars in Interdisciplinary Work in the Literacy Arena

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## Two challenges & a proposed solution

- *The challenges:*
  - How can we gain greater research capacity for improving the reading, writing, & general academic achievement of at-risk children in today's schools?
  - How can we reverse the declining “voice” for SLPs in meeting the needs of students in the later grades?

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## Two challenges & a proposed solution

- *A possible solution:*
  - *Productive collaboration between CSD and literacy/special education scholars*
    - *Research collaborations*
    - *Joint training of new scholars*
    - *Cross-fertilization of professional preparation programs*

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## Potential advantages of such collaboration

- *Bidirectional connections between language & literacy*
- *Mutual learning about key dynamics*

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## *Bidirectional connections between language & literacy*

- Oral language is foundational for reading fluency & comprehension
  - Poor comprehension not just a matter of poor word recognition & non-strategic reading
- Literacy acquisition transforms oral discourse
  - Language development is not best viewed as a modular unfolding

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## *Mutual learning about key dynamics*

- **CSD → Literacy**
  - Role of language in fluency & comprehension
  - Role of phonological processing & distinctness of representations in vocabulary acquisition
  - Emphasis on real-time language processing

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### *Mutual learning (cont'd)*

- Literacy → CSD
  - Role of context & cultural practices
  - Role of instruction & disciplinary context
  - Emphasis on classroom discourse dynamics & unique disciplinary discourses

### Barriers to collaboration

- *Differing epistemological & methodological perspectives*
- *Institutional walls & canyons*
- *Inertia*



### Barrier #1: Differing epistemological perspectives

- *CSD & literacy professionals use different lenses to view phenomena*
- *A concrete example (vignette & responses)*



### What's behind these different responses?

- *Two epistemological perspectives*
  - *CSD: Cognitivist perspective*
  - *Literacy: Situative perspective*



### *CSD: Cognitivist perspective*

- The primacy of the de-contextualized individual
- Emphasis on information flow & processing constraints
- Literacy as skill & instruction as training
- Importance of objective measurement
- Poor readers as skill deficient

### *Literacy: Situative perspective*

- The primacy of the social network
- Emphasis on cultural practices
- Literacy as activity & instruction as guided apprenticeship
- Importance of rich description
- Poor readers as peripheral participants

## Barrier #2: Institutional walls & canyons

- Separate colleges or departments
- Reluctance to cross-hire
- No institutional incentives for crossing the divide



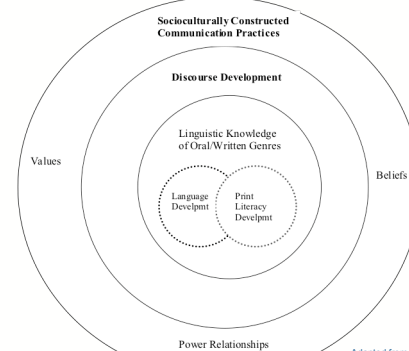
## Breaking down the barriers: Fostering interdisciplinarity

- **Research collaborations**
- **Doctoral training initiatives**
- **Public relations initiatives**



## Research collaborations

- Coordinating perspectives (e.g., [Purcell-Gates model](#))
- Multiple lenses on the same dataset



## Research collaborations (cont'd)

- Focus on complementary barriers to learning opportunities
  - Linguistic limitations prevent entrée to social communities
  - Community of membership shapes opportunities for language exposure & practice
  - Linguistic demands of disciplinary discourse & of text genres

## Research collaborations (cont'd)

- Focus on complementary approaches to intervention
  - Target both vocabulary enrichment & social facilitation
  - Target new syntactic constructions within disciplinary learning contexts

### ***Doctoral training initiatives***

- **Cross-departmental intellectual communities**
  - Example of NU Language & Cognition program
  - Example of SDSU/UCSD program
  - Interdisciplinary fellowships/research rotations
- **Mixed marriages**
  - UM SOE recruits SLP MAs
  - Encourage SLP MAs to pursue PhDs elsewhere

### ***Doctoral training initiatives (cont'd)***

- **Broaden perspectives within CSD**
  - Interdisciplinary faculty within CSD (example of NU)
  - Recruit PhD candidates without CSD backgrounds
  - Require cognate coursework in Education

### ***Public relations initiatives***

- **Planting information in the enemy camp**
  - Attend IRA/NRC
  - Invite literacy folks to ASHA
- **Encourage cross-marketing of information**
  - Recent catalog of CSD books from major publisher
  - Guilford *Challenges* series



### ***The pay-off***

- Richer grounding of literacy scholarship in language processing
- Broader array of research initiatives in CSD
- More job possibilities for CSD doctoral graduates
- More applications to CSD doctoral programs