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Tennessee Technological University  
Curriculum & Instruction  
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## EDUCATION

- December 2014      Ph.D., Exceptional Learning  
Literacy Concentration  
Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, TN  
Dissertation: *Mind(ful) mothering: A critical poststructural  
exploration of mothers' resistance to dominant discourse on early  
literacy development*
- December 2009      Ed.S., Curriculum & Instruction  
Early Childhood Concentration  
Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, TN
- December 2008      M.A., Curriculum & Instruction  
Reading Specialist Concentration  
Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, TN  
Problem Paper: Traditional vs. Differentiated Instruction: Ability  
and Gender
- May 2005            B.S., Multidisciplinary Studies  
Human Learning (K-8)  
Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, TN

## UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

- 2021–Present      Associate Professor, Literacy  
Department of Curriculum & Instruction  
Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, Tennessee
- 2016–2021      Assistant Professor, Literacy  
Department of Curriculum & Instruction  
Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, Tennessee
- 2009–2016      Instructor, Elementary Education & Literacy Methods  
Department of Curriculum & Instruction  
Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, Tennessee

## SUMMER PROGRAMMING LEADERSHIP

### **Elinor Ross CDF Freedom School, Executive Director (2022–Present)**

A six-week literacy and cultural enrichment program for children in grades K–4 disadvantaged by poverty.

- Responsibilities Include:
  - Chief staff member accountable for the oversight of the program
  - Immediate supervisor
  - Secure adequate funding and space to operate program
  - Oversee all operational aspects for program development & implementation
  - Conduct site visits
  - Fiduciary
  - Recruitment, hiring, and management of staff
  - Data collector
  - Liaison between TTU and Children’s Defense Fund
  - Maintain safety of staff & children

### **Elinor Ross CDF Freedom School, Project Director (2019–2022)**

A six-week literacy and cultural enrichment program for children in grades K–4 disadvantaged by poverty.

- Responsibilities Include:
  - Ensure program quality
  - Recruitment of children & families
  - Maintain community partnerships
  - Facilitate local trainings
  - Maintain safety of staff and scholars
  - Data collection and reporting
  - Oversee program fidelity
  - Develop cultural enrichment programming
  - Plan educational field trips and experiences for scholars
  - Manage volunteers and staff

### **Read to be Ready Summer Literacy Camp, Director (2017–2019)**

A four-week STEM & literacy summer camp for children in grades K–4 disadvantaged by poverty.

- Responsibilities Include:
  - Recruitment of highly qualified public-school teachers
  - Recruitment of children
  - Maintain adequate records
  - Collect literacy data for each child
  - Develop high-quality curriculum
  - Order supplies and materials
  - Coordinate with community members

## K-12 EXPERIENCE

### **Tennessee Teaching Licenses Held**

402: Elementary Education, K–8

467: Early Childhood Education, PK–3

486: Reading Specialist, PK–12

### **Teaching**

2009 White County Middle School, Grade 6 Science Teacher

2008 Homestead Elementary School, Grade 1 Teacher

2005–2008 Cassville Elementary School, Grade 1 Teacher

### **Leadership**

2007–2008 Textbook Adoption Committee Member

2008 Grade Level Team Member

2005–2008 Cheerleading Sponsor

2005–2008 Yearbook Coordinator and Editor

2005–2008 21<sup>st</sup> Century Classroom Partner

2006–2008 Tennessee Education Association (TEA) Representative

## RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

1. *Parent Perspectives on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Retention Law in Tennessee* (co-PI with Dr. Darek Potter, Cassie Brown, & Mary Ann Simcox)
2. *Student Perspectives on Reading and Experiences in a Summer Literacy Program* (co-PIs include Dr. Janet Isbell & Dr. George Chitiyo)

3. *Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning During a Summer Literacy Program* (co-PIs include Dr. Janet Isbell & Dr. George Chitiyo)
4. *STEM Learning During a Summer Literacy Program* (co-PIs include Dr. Janet Isbell & Dr. George Chitiyo)

## GRANTS

### 2023

Cummins Filtration - \$19,000 (Awarded to support the Elinor Ross CDF Freedom School)

Willis, H. S. & Spears, A. (2023). Literacy Association of Tennessee Community Service Project Grant. (\$1000; submitted, pending)

Spears, A. (2023). Fiscal Year Congressional Directed Spending Request to support the Elinor Ross CDF Freedom School. (\$270,886.30, not funded).

Spears, A. (2023). Faculty Academy Grant for Graduate-Level Literacy Certificate Redesign. Joint project with Dr. Melissa Comer. (\$10,000).

Spears, A. (2023). Faculty Academy Grant for PhD-Level Literacy Course Redesign. Joint Project with Dr. Janet Isbell. (\$10,000).

Spears, A. & Thompson, J. T. (2023). Snapdragon Foundation. (\$9,267.37, applied).

Spears, A. (2023). Food Lion Feeds. (\$1,800, not funded).

Spears, A. (2023). Lisa Libraries Book Donation. (\$1,000 value, applied).

### 2022

Trent, K (PI). & Co-PIs Baker, J.; Comer, M.; Grimes, R.; Jones, A.; McMillan, E.; Richards, S.; & **Spears, A.** Enhanced Discovery Through Guided Exploration (EDGE) grant sponsored by Tennessee Tech University's QEP Curriculum Grant Initiative for Two Course Proposal (READ 3311 & FOED 3810). (\$21,000, funded).

Spears, A. (2022). Nissan Neighbors. (\$42,045, applied).

Spears, A. (2022). Sustainable Campus Grant (\$17,371.22, funded).

Spears, A. (2022). A Healthy Start: Freedom School Nutrition Program. Publix Charitable Grants. (\$7,500, not funded).

Spears, A. (2022). Insure Teacher Grant. Funding for Elinor Ross CDF Music Enrichment. (\$500, applied).

Spears, A. (2022). QEP Faculty Development Funds. (\$1,000).

Spears, A. (2022). UCCEMC Cares Grant. Funding for Elinor Ross CDF STEM Enrichment. (\$1,250, not funded).

Isbell, J. K., & **Spears, A.** (2022). Food Lion Feeds grant via IMPACT Cookeville for Elinor Ross CDF Freedom School nightly nutrition project (\$5,100, funded).

**Spears, A.** & Isbell, J. K. (2022) Literacy Association of Tennessee Studies and Research grant to fund *Student Outcomes for Literacy and STEM in a Summer Program* (\$1,500).

Isbell, J. K., **Spears, A.**, & Langford, E. (2022). Believe in Reading grant to fund Elinor Ross CDF Freedom School STEM literacy initiative, (\$3880; submitted, pending).

Isbell, J. K., & **Spears, A.** (2022) Nora Roberts Foundation grant to fund Elinor Ross CDF Freedom School literacy and art activities, (\$1740).

Hinkle, S., Ponomarenko, A., Willis, H. S., & **Spears, A.** (2022). Literacy Association of Tennessee Family Literacy Grant. (\$600)

Ponomarenko, A., Willis, H. S., Hinkle, S., **Spears, A.**, & Isbell, J. K. (2022). Wal-Mart Local Community Grant. (TBA; submitted, pending)

Willis, H. S., **Spears, A.**, Hinkle, S., & Ponomarenko, A. (2022). Literacy Association of Tennessee Diversity Committee Book Grant. (\$300)

**Spears, A.** (2022). Rally to Read 100-book Sweepstakes Recipient. Reading is Fundamental. (\$400)

## **2020: \$12,520**

Spears, A., Isbell, J. K., Stepp, J., Potter, D., Sukowski, D., & Galindo, C. (2020). *CORE: Change through Open Resources in Education* (Not funded; \$99,000).

Spears, A., Schmitt-Matzen, C., Braisted, L., Qualls, C., Enix, J., Rector, L., & Sukowski, D. (2020). Dollar General Family Literacy Grant. (\$8,000).

Spears, A. & Braisted, L. (2020). Literacy Association of Tennessee's Family Literacy Grant. (\$600).

Spears, A., Isbell, J. K., & Schmitt-Matzen, C. (2020). US Bank (via TN NAME) for Jere Whitson Freedom School field trips (\$1,520).

Spears, A., & Braisted, L. (2020). Literacy Association of Tennessee's Reading Improvement Grant. (\$400).

**2019: \$91,500**

Isbell, J. K., & Spears, A. (2019). *Literacy empowerment for civic engagement*. Faculty research grant to fund Freedom School research (\$10,000).

Spears, A. (2019). Literacy Association of Tennessee's Community Service Project Grant (\$1,500)

Spears, A. (2019). EDGE QEP Faculty Development Grant Recipient (\$1,000).

Spears, A. (2019). EDGE QEP Sustainability Grant Recipient (\$1,000).

Spears, A. (2019). (Director). Tennessee Department of Education Read to be Ready Summer Grant Program. (\$78,000).

**2018: \$183,002**

Spears, A. (2018). EDGE QEP Sustainability Grant Recipient (\$1,000).

Spears, A. (2018). (Director). Tennessee Department of Education Read to be Ready Summer Grant Program. (\$104,500).

Isbell, J., Spears, A., Laffoon, A., & Smith, T. (2018). (Co-Director). *It's a Working Life: Building Social Studies Content Knowledge by Accessing and Thinking Critically about Primary Sources Related to Work in Tennessee and Beyond*. Tennessee Higher Education Commission Improving Teacher Quality Grant. (\$74,548).

Spears, A. (2018). EDGE QEP Sustainability Grant Recipient (\$1,000).

Spears, A. (2017). EDGE QEP Faculty Development Grant Recipient (\$1,954).

**2017: \$67,424.00**

Baker, J. C. Principal Investigator. (2017). RTI2 Professional Development: Improving RTI2 at Putnam County and TTU. Tennessee Innovation in Preparation grant, facilitated by the Tennessee State Department of Education. Co-PIs: Lisa

Zagumny, Amber Spears, Amy Rogers, Cephas Ablakwa, and Ginger Thomas.  
(not funded; \$41,097)

Spears, A., & Baker, J. (2017). (Director). Tennessee Department of Education Read to be Ready Summer Grant Program. (\$62,925).

Spears, A. (2017). *Supporting cross-curricular literacy instruction in an outdoor learning environment*. Quality Enhancement Program (\$4,499).

## **2016: \$81,996.72**

Spears, A. (2016). EDGE QEP Sustainability Grant Recipient (\$1,000).

Spears, A. (2016). *Beyond reading: Literacy in an evolving educational setting*. Quality Enhancement Program (\$5,999.72).

Baker, J., Meadows, J., Spears, A., & Fromke, K. (2015–2016). (Instructor). Tennessee Higher Education Commission Improving Teacher Quality Grant, *Talking Sense: Math Talk and Number Sense for K–2*. (\$74,997).

Spears, A. (2015). *Impacting early literacy: Designing and implementing intervention for K–2 students*. Quality Enhancement Program (\$5,998.62).

Spears, A. (2014). *Engaging Readers in the Writer's Toolbox*. Tennessee Technological University Chapter of International Literacy Association (\$500).

Isbell, J., Camuti, A., Zagumny, L., Baker, J., & Spears, A. (2013). *Beyond (yet related to) schooling: Deficit constructions of government-funded healthcare recipients*. Tennessee Board of Regents Research Grant (Not funded; \$35,000).

## **PUBLICATIONS**

### **Book Chapters**

Spears, A., & Anderson, S. L. (2023). *The Nightingale: Discovering who we are and who we want to be*. In P. Greathouse (Ed.), *Exploring History through Young Adult Literature*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishing. (accepted for publication, in process).

Meadows, J., & Spears, A. (2022). *All of the Above: Building community and self-confidence one tetrahedron at a time*. In P. Greathouse, H. Anthony, & B. Eisenbach (Eds.), *Developing Mathematics Literacy through Adolescent Literature*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing.

- Spears, A., & Pittman, C. (2020). Using feminist pedagogy to explore the depiction of female characters in *Jane Eyre* and *Dark Companion*. In P. Greathouse & V. Malo-Juvera (Eds.), *Young adult and canonical literature: Pairing and teaching* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing.
- Spears, A., & Reagan, K. (2018). Better Nate Than Ever: Boy Meets Broadway! In P. Greathouse & B. Eisenbach (Eds.), *Queer Adolescent Literature as a Complement to the English Language Arts Curriculum* (pp. 109–118). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing.
- Wendt, S., & Spears, A. (2017). Hold your breath! Using *Code Orange* to teach the history, nature, and threat of infectious disease in the middle school classroom. In P. Greathouse & B. Eisenbach (Eds.), *Using young adult literature as a compliment to the content area* (pp. 39–49). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing.

### Journal Articles

- Rector, L., & Spears, A. (2023). “Blended” learning: How virtual book clubs strengthened community in a remote middle school classroom. *Tennessee Literacy Journal*. (accepted, awaiting publication).
- Spears, A., & Isbell, J. K. (2023). Reflection on a summer literacy program: Why traditional school models may not work for all children (Research manuscript being prepared for submission to the *International Journal of Childhood Education*).
- Spears, A., Isbell, J. K., Chitiyo, G., Braisted, L., Langford, E., & Espinosa, C. (2022). Elementary children’s perspectives on experiences during a summer literacy program. *Reading Horizons*. (not accepted).
- Spears, A., Meadows, J., Rogers, A. L., & Qualls, C. (2020). Featured Article: Using growth mindset literature to increase confidence and motivation with young readers. *Tennessee Literacy Journal*, 1(2), 6–16.
- Isbell, J. K., Spears, A., Schmitt-Matzen, C., & Braisted, L. (2020). “Everyone off the ship”: Children becoming civic minded in a summer literacy program. *Journal of Multicultural Affairs*.
- Spears, A., & Isbell, J. (2020). Challenging early literacy discourse: Why mothers can skip their 20 minutes of reading tonight. *Journal of Mother Studies*, 5.
- Spears, A., & Baker, J. (2019). Using Writing Mentor Texts in Elementary Science to Support Comprehension. *Mid-South Literacy Journal*, 3(2), 58–63.



- Wendt, S., Spears, A., & Fidan, P. (2018). Using Children's Nonfiction Trade Books to Address Scientific Misconceptions. *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Educational Studies*, 12(3), 31-43. doi:10.18848/2327-011X/CGP/v12i03/31-43.
- Isbell, J. K., Baker, J. C., Zagumny, L., Spears, A., & Camuti, A. (2017). Maintaining the myth: How Tennessee perpetuates deficit ideology about recipients of government funded healthcare. *Journal of Poverty*. doi:10.1080/10875549.2017.1348424.
- Spears, A. (2015). Mothers' resistance to the 20-minute commitment. *Tennessee Educational Leadership*, 42(1), 37-39.
- Spears, A. (2014). Reaching out to families: The need for literacy training programs for families of preschoolers. *Tennessee's Children*, 55(1), 4-5.
- Kirby, A. (2009). How does your garden grow? Steps to ensure you are fostering differentiated instruction in your classroom. *Tennessee Reading Teacher*, 36(2), 13-18.

## PRESENTATIONS

### **International**

- Spears, A., & Isbell, J. K. (2023, May). *Elementary Children's Perspectives on Experiences During a Summer Literacy Program*. International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, Urbana-Champaign, Illinois.
- Spears, A.; Rector, L., & Isbell, J. (2022, May). *Hiding behind tradition: How posthumanism challenged onto-epistemological presumptions about children's literacy learning*. International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, Urbana-Champaign, Illinois.
- Isbell, J. & Spears, A. (2021, May). *Focusing on the now: Rethinking Literacy and Learning with Posthumanism*. International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, Urbana-Champaign Illinois.
- Spears, A., Schmitt-Matzen, C., Braisted, L., & Beach, N. (2020, October). *Taking Literacy Outside: Outcomes from a year-long observational study*. International Literacy Association. Columbus, OH. (Canceled due to COVID-19).
- Pittman, C. & Spears, A. (2019, October). *Words on Wheels: How effective community/school/family partnerships brought to life a vision to bring children's books into rural neighborhoods*. International Literacy Association. New Orleans, LA.

- Spears, A., Meadows, J.; & Rogers, A. L. (2018, July). *Using Growth Mindset Literature to Increase Confidence and Motivation with Resilient Readers*. International Literacy Association. Austin, TX.
- Spears, A. (2017, July). *Cultivating kindergarten students' use of scientific argumentation using outstanding science trade books: Increasing student comprehension and achievement*. International Literacy Association. Orlando, FL.
- Wendt, S., Spears, A., & Fidan, P. (2016, August). *The Interrelationship between children's scientific misconceptions and nonfiction children's trade books*. Eleventh International Conference on Interdisciplinary Social Sciences, Imperial College London, UK.
- Spears, A., & Wendt, S. (2016, May). *Scientific argumentation in the kindergarten classroom: Supporting understanding of scientific knowledge using outstanding children's literature*. International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, Urbana-Champaign Illinois.
- Spears, A. (2015, May). *Alarming admonitions: A poetic representation of mothers' experiences with early literacy advice*. International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, Urbana-Champaign Illinois.
- Spears, A. (2015, January). *The mind(ful) mother: An interpretivist examination of early literacy practices of mothers of preschoolers*. Hawaii International Conference on Education, Honolulu, HI.
- Howard, M., Spears, A., Al Sager, A., Baggett, A., Cochrane, S., Smith, E., & Majors, T. (2013, May). *Tell me more about that: Meaningful cohort relationships in PhD programs*. International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, Urbana-Champaign Illinois.

### **National**

- Spears, A., Potter, D., Brown, C. & Simcox, M. A. (2023). *Rethinking Retention: Unveiling Perceptions about TN's 3rd Grade Retention Law on Suburban and Rural Families*. The National Association for Multicultural Education 2023 Conference. Montgomery, Alabama (*accepted*).
- Spears, A., Rector, L., & Isbell, J. (2021). *Graffiti Sparks Community Activism: Children's Democratic Engagement Through a Posthuman Lens*. American Educational Studies Association Annual Conference. Portland, Oregon.
- Rector, L., Spears, A., & Isbell, J. (2021). *Cultural Capital, Classism, & Lived Experiences: Teachers' Decision-Making in Literacy Education*. National Association of Multicultural Education. California. (*submitted*).

- Spears, A., Schmitt-Matzen, C., Braisted, L., Beach, N. (2020, April). *Lessons from a Year in Wonderland Woods: How Nature-Based Lessons Supported Students' Interdisciplinary Content Knowledge*. 2020 NSTA National Conference. Boston, MA.
- Spears, A. & Isbell, J. (2019, November) *Enhancing Children's Literacy, Learning, and Civic Engagement through a Summer Enrichment Program*. National Association for Multicultural Education. Tucson, Arizona.
- Meadows, J. R., Spears, A., Suters, L., Lloyd, Mindy. (2017, November). *Engineering Engagement: Leveraging Formative Assessment Practices to Motivate and Enlighten*. Poster session at the Association of American Colleges and Universities Network for Academic Renewal Transforming STEM Higher Education: Discovery, Innovation, and the Value of Evidence Conference, San Francisco, California.
- Wendt, S., Spears, A., Rogers, A., & Fidan, P. (2017, March). *Newton's Nightmare*. 2017 NSTA National Conference: Sun, Surf, & Science. Los Angeles, CA.
- Spears, A. & Isbell, J. (2015, December). *Imagining new possibilities: Mothers challenging dominant discourses on early literacy teaching*. Paper presented at the Literacy Research Association's 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, Carlsbad, CA.
- Spears, A., Rogers, A., & Manginelli, A. (2015, November). *Holy guacamole! A critical poststructural visual content analysis of Skippyjon Jones*. Presented at the National Association for Multicultural Education Conference, Tucson, AZ.
- Spears, A., Rogers, A., & Manginelli, A. (2015, October). *The lasting power of a story: Representation of multicultural children's literature in elementary literacy texts*. Accepted to National Association for Multicultural Education Conference, New Orleans, LA. (lacked funding; did not present)
- Isbell, J. K., Baker, J., Zagumny, L., Camuti, A., & Spears, A. (2014, November). *Dismantling deficit thinking fronteras: How healthcare hierarchies mimic education theory*. Paper presented at 2014 Annual Conference of the National Association of Multicultural Education, Oakland, CA.
- Isbell, J. K., Baker, J., Zagumny, L., Camuti, A., & Spears, A. (2014, April). *Beyond (yet related to) schooling: Interrogating deficit constructions of government funded healthcare recipients*. Paper presented at 2014 Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Philadelphia, PA.
- Isbell, J. K., Baker, J., Zagumny, L., Camuti, A., & Spears, A. (2013, November). *From education to healthcare: How deficit thinking permeates services to the economically disadvantaged*. Panel presented at the 2013 Annual Conference of the National Association of Multicultural Education, Oakland, CA.

## State

- Beach, N., & Spears, A. (2023, February). *From Inside Schools: Retention, Disabilities, Supports, High Quality Teachers*. Presentation to the 113<sup>th</sup> General Assembly House of Representatives Education Instruction Subcommittee. Nashville, TN.
- Spears, A., Thompson, J. T., & Braisted, L. (2022). *Elinor Ross CDF Freedom School: How a Summer Program Transformed a Community*. Literacy Association of Tennessee's 51<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference. Murfreesboro, TN.
- Spears, A., Beach, N., Schmitt-Matzen, C., and Braisted, L. (2021). *Rediscovering Learning Spaces: Supporting Scientific Inquiry in an Outdoor Classroom*. Tennessee Science Teacher's Association. Murfreesboro, TN.
- Isbell, J., Spears, A., Schmitt-Matzen, C., & Braisted, L. (2020). *Knowing/Becoming/Doing: Civic-Minded Children in a Summer Literacy Program*. TN National Association for Multicultural Education Conference. Cookeville, TN.
- Spears, A., Rogers, A. L., & Moore, K. (2019, July). *Defying the Gendered Norm: The Depiction of Women in Contemporary Children's Literature*. TN National Association for Multicultural Education Conference. Cookeville, TN.
- Laffoon, A., Spears, A., Isbell, J. K. (2019, March). *Launch, explore summarize! 20 powerful strategies for source work*. Tennessee Council for the Social Studies, Gatlinburg, TN.
- Spears, A., Isbell, J., Laffoon, A., & Smith, T. (2018, December). *Social Studies teachers are reading teachers too: Innovative strategies for critically examining primary and secondary sources*. Literacy Association of Tennessee Conference. Murfreesboro, TN.
- Spears, A., Rogers, A. L.; & Moore, K. (2018, December). *Defying the gendered norm: The depiction of women in contemporary children's literature*. Literacy Association of Tennessee Conference. Murfreesboro, TN.
- Spears, A., & Rogers, A. L. (2017, December). *Legos, Literacy, and Learning*. Tennessee Reading Association Conference. Murfreesboro, TN.
- Spears, A., & Baker, J. (2017, December). *Using Mentor Texts in the Elementary Science Classroom to Support Comprehension through Writing*. Tennessee Science Teachers' Association (TSTA) Professional Development Conference. Murfreesboro, TN.
- Zamer, K., & Spears, A. (2016, December). *Phonics or no phonics: That is the question*. 2016 Tennessee Reading Association Conference. Murfreesboro, TN.

- Wendt, S., Fidan, P., Rogers, A., Spears, A., Lowe, T., & Barnes, Z. (2016, December). *Magic of science: Building conceptual understanding through discrepant events*. Tennessee Science Teachers' Association (TSTA) Professional Development Conference. Murfreesboro, TN.
- Spears, A. (2013, December). *Flourishing in the flipped classroom*. Tennessee Reading Association Conference. Murfreesboro, TN.
- Meadows, J., Spears, A., & Taylor, L. (2013, September). *Rollercoasters in literacy*. Tennessee Council of Teachers of English, Sevierville, TN.
- Lloyd, M., & Spears, A. (2012, December). *Common Core in a crowded curriculum: Embracing instructional shifts*. Tennessee Reading Association, Murfreesboro, TN.
- Spears, A. (2011, December). *Traditional versus differentiated instruction*. Tennessee Reading Association, Murfreesboro, TN.
- Baker, J., & Spears, A. (2011, December). *Effectiveness of an electronic teacher observation app*. Tennessee Education Technology Conference (TETC), Nashville, TN.
- Spears, A. (2011, December). *Blogging to promote critical literacy*. Tennessee Education Technology Conference (TETC), Nashville, TN.
- Spears, A. (2010, November). *Using digital literacy to enhance literacy instruction*. Tennessee Reading Association, Murfreesboro, TN.

#### **Local**

- Spears, A., & Rogers, A. (2017, June). *Legos & literacy: Using Legos to boost spelling and reading comprehension during small group instructional time*. Tennessee Tech University–International Reading Association, Cookeville, TN.
- Spears, A., & Wendt, S. (2016, June). *The next time you see: Using nonfiction texts to explore the natural world*. Tennessee Tech University–International Reading Association, Cookeville, TN.
- Spears, A. (2014, June). *The little engineer that could: Incorporating STEM into the early childhood classroom*. Tennessee Tech University–International Reading Association, Cookeville, TN.
- Spears, A. (2014, June). *Engaging readers in the writer's toolbox*. Tennessee Tech University–International Reading Association, Cookeville, TN.

Spears, A. (2013, June). *Surviving the shift*. Tennessee Tech University–International Reading Association, Cookeville, TN.

Lloyd, M., & Spears, A. (2012, June). *Common core in a crowded curriculum: Embracing informational reading and writing*. Tennessee Tech University–International Reading Association, Cookeville, TN.

### **Professional Development Presentations**

2016 *Route 66 Workshop: Creating Community Through Active Learning Techniques*. With members of the TTU College of Engineering’s Implementation of Renaissance Educations Model (IREM) Team, Cookeville, TN. (November)

2016 *Assessing Critical Thinking and Conceptual Understanding with the use of Technology*. With members of the TTU COE IREM Team, Cookeville, TN. (July)

2016 *Formative Assessment Workshop*. With members of the TTU College of Engineering’s IREM Team, Cookeville, TN. (April)

2015 Provided half-day literacy professional development for teachers at Upperman High School, with Amy Leigh Rogers

2015 Instructor, Core 2 College Teacher Ambassadors Grant, Full day TTU, Cookeville, TN.

2014 Common Core Writing Professional Development for Macon County Teachers, Grades K–12, 3 full day workshops

2013 Parent Training Facilitator for 2 sessions during Cane Creek Elementary School’s Children’s Book Week. *25 ways to turn spelling into play*. Session 1 for K–1st families; Session 2 for 2nd–4th families Cookeville, TN.

2011 Provided staff development for early childhood educators with ECED 7210. *Making Developmentally Appropriate Practice the STANDARD*. TTU STEM Center, Cookeville, TN.

2008 Presenter at an in-service meeting for K–2 teachers at Cassville Elementary School. *Using literacy centers in the early childhood classroom*. Sparta, TN.

### **AWARDS**

International Literacy Association’s Celebrate Literacy Award Recipient for the Elinor Ross CDF Freedom School (2023).

Delta Upsilon Chapter of Kappa Delta Professor of the Week (March 2023).

Tennessee Tech University Outstanding Faculty Award for Teaching Nominee (2022)

Tennessee Tech University Outstanding Faculty Award for Professional Service Nominee (2022).

LAT Hoyte Snow Literacy Leadership Award (2021)

QEP Award for Excellence in Creative Inquiry Instruction (2019)

LAT Distinguished Literacy Professor of Tennessee Award (2018)

QEP Award for Excellence in Innovation Instruction (2017)

Praxis Recognition of Excellence, Principles of Learning and Teaching (2005)

## SERVICE

### **Professional Service (Literacy Education)**

2023	LEGO & Literacy Family Engagement Night, Partner
2022	Literacy Association of Tennessee Co-Chair (Vice-President)
2022	Literacy Association of Tennessee Conference Co-Chair
2021–22	Secretary, Literacy Association of Tennessee
2021–22	Board of Directors, Literacy Association of Tennessee
2021	Literacy Association of Tennessee Annual Conference Chair (December)
2021	Literacy Association of Tennessee Annual Conference Chair (April)
2020	Literacy Association of Tennessee Annual Conference Chair
2016–2022	Manuscript Reviewer: <i>The Reading Teacher</i> , International Literacy Association
2016–2021	Chair, Upper Cumberland Literacy Association
2019	Literacy Association of Tennessee Annual Conference Steering Committee

- 2019 Legos & Literacy Family Engagement Night with Prescott South Elementary School and READ 3311 students.
- 2018 Legos & Literacy Family Engagement Night with Prescott South Elementary School and READ 3311 students.
- 2017 Cat in the Hat Family Literacy Engagement Volunteer, Prescott South Elementary School, with READ 3311 & READ 3312
- 2016–2017 Refereed Article Reviewer, Common Ground Publishing
- 2016 Lego & Literacy Night, Coordinator, Prescott South Elementary School
- 2016 Conference proposal reviewer, Literacy Research Association
- 2016 Reviewer: *Journal of Literacy, Research: Theory, Methods, and Practice*
- 2016 TTU-IRA Summer Literacy Conference Volunteer
- 2016 Volunteer reader for Read Across America Day with READ 3312 Prescott South Elementary, Cookeville, TN
- 2015–2016 Volunteer Reading Group Teacher, Weekly, Prescott South Elementary School, Kindergarten, Cookeville, Tennessee
- 2014 Editorial Review Board, *Tennessee's Children*
- 2011–2012 Treasurer, TTU-IRA
- 2012 Upper Cumberland Association for the Education of Young Children (UCAEYC), Week of the Young Child, Server

**University, College, and Department Service**

- 2022–23 Faculty Senate Member
- 2022–23 Academic Council Member
- 2021–23 College of Education: Recruitment, Retention, & Diversity Committee Member
- 2018–2022 TN NAME Nominating Committee Chair
- 2017–2020 TTU EDGE QEP Curriculum Grant Committee Member
- 2016–2019 College of Education Academic Misconduct Committee Member



- 2015–2019 TTU College of Engineering’s Implementing Renaissance Engineering Model (IREM) Team; Member of a 9-person team seeking to improve teaching and learning with the College of Engineering
- 2009–2019 Praxis Tutoring Session Leader
- 2015–2017 College of Education Assessment Team Member
- 2015–2016 Counselor for Kappa Delta Pi, Eta Nu Chapter, TTU
- 2015–2016 Interviewer for the Office of Teacher Education
- 2014–2016 Rural Development Institute, TTU Startup Committee Member
- 2012–2015 Honor Association of Exceptional Learning PhD Students, President-Elect
- 2014 Academic Advisor Search Committee
- 2011–2012 Habitat for Humanity
- 2011 Using the iPad as a Teacher Observation Tool  
Participant of the pilot program

**Community Service/Outreach**

- 2022 Community Book Walk Planning Team (April)
- 2020 Cookeville Strong Tornado Book Drive Coordinator
- 2018–2020 Tennessee Chapter for the National Association for Multicultural Education, Board of Directors
- 2015–2020 Scholastic Book Fair Volunteer  
Prescott South Elementary School, Cookeville, Tennessee
- 2016–2018 After School Tutor, Capshaw Elementary, Cookeville, Tennessee
- 2016 Moderator for TED Talk: *Education Revolution*, Putnam County Library, Cookeville, TN. (September 16)
- 2015 Volunteer at the Heart of the City Community Playground with READ 3311, Dogwood Park, Cookeville, Tennessee
- 2015 Volunteer Speaker at Career Day (with Dr. Stephanie Wendt)  
Prescott South Elementary School, Cookeville, Tennessee

- 2013-2015 Board of Directors, Jacob’s Ladder Preschool
- 2010–2011 Volunteer for *Kids Like You, Kids Like Me* at the Creative Discovery Museum, Chattanooga, TN

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- International Literacy Association (2006–present)
- Literacy Association of Tennessee (2006– present)
- Upper Cumberland Literacy Association (2006– present)
- National Association for Multicultural Education (2013–2015; 2018–present)
- Tennessee Chapter for the National Association for Multicultural Education (2019–present)
- Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society for Educators (2016–2019)
- National Science Teachers Association (2016–2020)
- Honors Association of Exceptional Learning for Ph.D. Students (2012–2015)
- National Association of the Education of the Young Child (NAEYC) (2009–2015)
- Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society (2008–2009)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY

- 2023 Reading 360 Reading Summit (February 9–10)
- 2023 ILA, Ringing in the New Year with Read Aloud
- 2023 CITL, Rubrics (with certificate)
- 2023 CITL, iLearn Features You Might Not Know Existed (with certificate)
- 2022 CITL, Tools for Interactive Digital Learning (with certificate)
- 2022 App Design (with certificate)
- 2021 edTPA Webinar Deep Dives (x5)
- 2021 NIET TEAM Training, full-day, 9/2/21

2021	CITI Behavioral & Social Research Refresher Course
2021	TTU Diversity & Inclusion Program Course (with certificate)
2021	CITL Learning Course Evaluations
2021	Literacy Association of Tennessee Virtual Conference
2020	Literacy Association of Tennessee Virtual Conference
2020	Arkansas Literacy Association Annual Conference
2020	ILA Next
2020	ILA Intensive: Making Sense of the Science of Reading
2020	UCLA Member's Monthly: Coffee with Cory
2020	UCLA Member's Monthly: Bitmoji Classrooms & Bookshelves
2020	UCLA Member's Monthly: Increase Student Engagement with Interactive Design
2020	SCORE Early Literacy Summit
2019	Nature Explore Leadership Institute (4 days)
2019	National Science Teaching Association Conference Attendee
2019	Read to be Ready Training (2 days)
2018	Read to be Ready Training (2 days)
2018	National Council for Teachers of Mathematics Conference Attendee
2018	Tennessee STEM Innovation Network Attendee
2018	Leader U: Ensuring Equity and Excellence in Education Attendee
2017	Read to be Ready Training (2 days)
2017	Tennessee Tech University: Best Practices for Acculturating Students to Blended Courses. Webinar. February 28.
2017	Classroom Observation Protocol for Undergraduate STEM (COPUS) Training, TTU, Prescott 225, February 10.

- 2017 Tennessee Revised ELA & Math Standards Training, Cookeville, TN, Leslie Town Center, January 27
- 2017 Reading Horizons Training, online
- 2016 International Literacy Association Conference, Boston Massachusetts
- 2015 Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) training & Certification, Online
- 2013-2014 Distributed edTPA scorer for Pearson and associated training
- 2013 Common Core Training, Nashville, TN, August
- 2013 Designing online and blended courses for significant learning workshop, TTU Nursing Building February 22–23
- 2013 SMART Board Training, TTU, February 19
- 2012 Upper Cumberland Early Childhood Education Association: Creating SAFE Environments, Sparta, TN November 3
- 2012 PARCC Assessment Informational Meeting
- 2012 Battelle for Kids Informational Meeting
- 2011 Tennessee Teacher Evaluation Model Training Workshop  
Obtained certification as an evaluator of Tennessee teacher
- 2011 Upper Cumberland Early Childhood Education Association (UCAEYC) Literacy Make and Take, Cookeville, TN, February 12

**ADVISEMENT**

- 2022–2023
  - Dissertation Chair, 3
  - Dissertation Committee Member, 5
  - Graduate Committee Chair, 12
  - Graduate Committee Member, 26
- 2021–2022
  - Dissertation Chair**  
Thomas, G. T. (ABD)  
Sukowski, D.
  - Dissertation Committee Member**  
Rector, L. (ABD)  
Enix, J. (completing coursework)

## **Graduate Advisement**

2020–2021

### **Dissertation Chair**

Thomas, G. T. (ABD)

Sukowski, D. (ABD)

### **Dissertation Committee Member**

Rector, L. (ABD)

Enix, J. (completing coursework)

## **Graduate Advisement**

2019–2020

### **Dissertation Chair**

Thomas, G. T. (ABD)

Sukowski, D. (Completing Coursework)

### **Dissertation Co-Chair**

Pittman, C. D.

Schmitt-Matzen, C.

### **Dissertation Committee Member**

Enix, J. (Completing Coursework)

Rector, L. (Completing Coursework)

## **Graduate Advisement**

Advisor, 12 students

Committee Member, 21 Students

2018–2019

### **Dissertation Co-Chair**

Pittman, C. D.

### **Dissertation Committee Member**

Thomas, G. T.

Schmitt-Matzen, C. D.

Enix, J.

## **Graduate Advisement**

Advisor for 8 graduate students

Committee Member for 15 graduate students

2017–2018

Advisor for 7 graduate students

Committee member for 25 graduate students

2016–2017	Advisor for 12 graduate students Committee member for 20 graduate students
2015–2016	Advisor for 6 graduate students Committee member for 16 graduate students
2014–2015	Advisor for 2 graduate students Committee member for 4 graduate students
2013–2014	Advisor for 1 graduate student Committee member for 1 graduate student

## COURSES TAUGHT

### Graduate

EDU 7900:	Research and Dissertation
EDU 7950:	Topics: Doctoral Seminar: Special Topics/Ed-Freedom School
CUED 6920:	Topics: Summer Literacy Conference
CUED 6920:	Topics: Read to be Ready
CUED 6921:	Topics: Adolescent Development
ECED 7220:	Early Childhood Instruction and Materials
ECED 7210:	Early Childhood Curriculum
EDUL 7600:	The Literacy Professional
EDUL 7900:	Community Literacy
READ 6200:	Foundations of Literacy
READ 6340:	Elementary and Middle School Reading Program
READ 6920:	Topics in Reading: Linguistics for Reading Specialists

### Undergraduate

CFS 3600:	Family, Community, and Professional Partnerships
CUED 4800:	Student Engagement
CUED 4850:	Workshop in Education
CUED 4850:	Workshop in Education: Summer Literacy Conference
CUED 4851:	Workshop in Education: Adolescent Development
ECSP 3001:	Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers
ECSP 4000:	Developmentally Appropriate Practices: Birth to Preschool
ECSP 4100:	Developmentally Appropriate Practices: K–4
EDPY 3300:	Evaluation and Guidance
ELED 3140:	Teaching of Social Studies
ELED 3151:	Teaching Language Arts/Writing
ELED 4870:	Student Teaching I
ELED 4872:	Residency I Seminar
ELED 4880:	Student Teaching II
ELED 4881:	Residency I
ELED 4882:	Residency II

ESLP 4100: ESL Pedagogy: Methodology and Materials for PK–12  
FOED 3800: Field Experience in Education  
FOED 3810: Field Experience in Education  
READ 3311: Literacy I  
READ 3312: Literacy II: Middle School Reading Program  
SPED 3000: Teaching Persons with Disabilities in the Regular Classroom

**COURSES DEVELOPED**

EDU 7950: Special Topics: Freedom School  
CUED 6920: Topics: Read to be Ready  
EDUL 7600: The Literacy Professional  
EDUL 7900: Community Literacy