



**Annual Report**  
**1 July 2014 – 30 June 2015**



## HIGHLIGHTS

### In 2014-2015, Das Centre researchers:

- *Contributed to research and development initiatives that attracted over \$3.6 million in funding from SSHRC, Government of Alberta, National Science Foundation, Finnish Academy of Sciences and private foundations.*
- *Authored or contributed to 11 publications.*
- *Received Order of Canada (Dr. Das)*
- *Received Richard E. Snow award for early career contributions to Educational Psychology (Dr. Georgiou)*
- *Continued to develop multiple professional development programs aimed for Alberta teachers who work with children with developmental, perceptual, or learning difficulties.*
- *Provided training and research opportunities to over 20 graduate and undergraduate students in different projects.*
- *Collaborated with international, national, provincial and local organizations to improve education and lives of children and adults with developmental, perceptual, and learning disabilities.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

J. P. Das Centre on Developmental and Learning Disabilities is a research and training centre located within the Department of Educational Psychology in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta. This year completes the 46<sup>th</sup> year of operation of the Das Centre.

*The **mission** of Das Centre is to provide research, training, and some clinical services to children and adults with developmental, perceptual and learning disabilities. Global developmental disabilities affect all areas of learning while specific developmental, learning, and perceptual disabilities may affect only one or a few areas of learning (e.g., reading or attention disorders).*

## 2. LEADERSHIP AND FUNCTION

Professor Rauno Parrila has served as Director of the Das Centre since 2009. Professor Richard Sobsey, the former director, continues as an Associate Director of the Centre in the area of Developmental Disabilities. Dr. J. P. Das continues to contribute to the Centre as Director Emeritus.

The Das Centre is a collective of researchers and research laboratories. In 2014-2015, it included the **Minerva Deaf Research Lab (MDRL)**, led by Dr. Lynn McQuarrie, and the **Reading Research Lab (RRL)**, lead by Dr. George Georgiou. The MDRL focuses on research and training relevant to deaf and hard of hearing populations, while the RRL focuses on literacy acquisition and acquisition problems across languages. During the 2014-2015 academic year, Dr. Georgiou was on sabbatical leave but continued to direct the Reading Research Lab. Das Centre researchers and the two research labs provide both deaf and hearing students (graduate and undergraduate) with opportunities to grow as researchers and participate in various research projects relevant to the field. They also provide various professional development opportunities to professionals working with children with developmental, learning, or perceptual disabilities. With Dr. McQuarrie assuming the role of the Director of Western Canadian Centre for Deaf Studies in 2015, MDRL will be affiliated with WCCDS in the future with continuing research collaboration with the Das Centre.

As part of the Das Centre's commitment to research and knowledge transfer, the Das Centre maintains a website that links the Centre's research, programs, and knowledge translation initiatives with the wider education community.

### 3. CONTRIBUTIONS TO UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Researchers at the JP Das Developmental Disabilities Centre engage in teaching and supervision of both undergraduate and graduate students at University of Alberta. We also continue to attract academic visitors from around the world for our various projects.

#### ACADEMIC VISITORS

- Dr. Dan Cai, Associate Professor, Shanghai Normal University. Dr. Cai is a Visiting Professor with the Centre working with Dr. Das, Dr. Georgiou, and Dr. Parrila. May 2014-April 2015.
- Dr. Tomohiro Inoue, Assistant Professor, Seigakuin University, Japan. March 2 to 15, 2015.

#### TEACHING

##### Courses Taught by Das Centre Researchers

- EDPY 397 – Mentoring Children and Adolescents (Parrila - Fall 2014)
- EDPY 555 – Advanced Assessment and Intervention for Reading Disabilities (Parrila - Fall 2014)
- EDPY 597 – Word Reading Difficulties (Parrila – Winter 2015)

##### Guest Lectures

- EDPY 458 – Assessment and Programming for Children with a Specific Reading Disability (Georgiou - Fall 2014, 2 guest lectures; Winter 2015, two guest lectures)

##### Supervision of Students

##### *Continuing Graduate Students*

Abdullah Albagiah	Ph.D. Educational Psychology Supervisor – Parrila
Angeliki Altani	Ph.D. Educational Psychology Supervisor – Georgiou
Kristy Dunn	M.Ed. Educational Psychology Supervisor – Georgiou
Argyro Fella	Ph.D. University of Cyprus, Cyprus Supervisory Committee Member – Georgiou
Megan Hebert	Ph.D. Educational Psychology Supervisor – Parrila

Jeongsuk Jang	Ph.D. Educational Psychology Supervisor – Parrila
Alikistis Kyriacou	Ph.D. University of Crete, Greece Supervisory Committee Member – Georgiou
Sandy Lai	Ph.D. Educational Psychology Supervisor – Parrila
Linjie Tang	Ph.D. Educational Psychology Supervisor – Parrila
Krystle-Lee Turgeon	Ph.D. Educational Psychology Supervisor – Parrila Supervisory Committee Member – Georgiou
Deepani Wijaythilake	Ph.D. Educational Psychology Supervisor – Parrila Supervisory Committee Member – Georgiou
Wei Wei	Ph.D. East China Normal University Project Advisor - Georgiou

***Finished this Year***

Riikka Heikkila	Ph.D. University of Jyvaskyla External Examiner – Georgiou
Jane Khaemba	Ph.D. Educational Psychology Supervisor – Parrila
Virginia Tze	Ph.D. Educational Psychology Supervisory Committee Member – Parrila

***Undergraduate Students***

- 2014-2015 - Supervision of the research experiences of 5 undergraduate students (Education (3) and Computing Science (2) in the Minerva Deaf Research Lab (MDRL) (McQuarrie).
- 2014-2015 - Supervision and mentorship of the research experiences of the following undergraduate students who volunteered in the Reading Research Lab: Raabia Ghazyani, Juliane Bell, Megan Boonstra and Tieghan Baird. Juliane Bell also completed an independent study course EDPY 499 in Winter 2015 that was co-supervised with Dr. Lynn McQuarrie (Georgiou).

**RESEARCH**

The Das Centre researchers and students engage in original research and disseminate the results to academic audiences through books, books chapters, peer-reviewed journals, proceedings, and reports.

### **Books and Book Chapters**

- Sideridis, G., **Georgiou, G.**, Simos, A., Mouzaki, A., & Stamovlasis, D. (2015). *The role of rapid automatized naming in reading disruption: An application of the Cusp catastrophe*. In P. McCardle & C. Connor (Eds.), *Reading Intervention: From Research to Practice* (pp. 4960).

### **Articles in Peer-Reviewed Journals**

- Bergey, B., Deacon, H., & **Parrila, R.** (in press). Metacognitive reading and study strategies and academic achievement of university students with and without a history of reading difficulties. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*.
- Chevalier, T., **Parrila, R.**, Ritchie, K., & Deacon, H. (in press). The role of metacognitive study and learning strategies, and behavioural study and learning strategies in predicting academic success in students with and without a history of reading difficulties. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*.
- Cummine, J., Szepesvari, E., Chouinard, B., & **Georgiou, G.** (2014). A functional investigation of RAN Letters, Digits, and Objects: How similar are they? *Behavioural Brain Research*, 275, 157-165.
- Deng, C., Silinskas, G., Wei, W., & **Georgiou, G.** (2015). Cross-lagged relationships between home literacy/numeracy environment and academic achievement in Chinese. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 33, 12-20.
- **Georgiou, G.**, Aro, M., Liao, C-H., & **Parrila, R.** (in press). The contribution of RAN pause time and articulation time to reading across languages: Evidence from a more representative sample of children. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 135-144 pages.
- **Georgiou, G.**, & **Das, J.P.** (2015). University students with poor reading comprehension: The hidden cognitive processing deficit. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 48, 535-545.
- Liao, C.H., Deng, C., Hamilton, J., Lee, S.H., Wei, W., & **Georgiou, G.** (2015). The role of RAN in reading development and dyslexia in Chinese. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 130, 106-122.
- McConnell, D., Savage, A., **Sobsey, D.** & Uditsky, B. (2014). Benefit-finding or finding benefits? The positive impact of children with disabilities. *Disability & Society*, 30 (1), 29-45.
- **McQuarrie, L.**, & **Parrila, R.** (2014). Literacy and linguistic development in bilingual deaf children: Implications of the 'and' for phonological processing. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 159, 372-384.
- Protopapas, A., **Parrila, R.**, & Simos, A. (in press). In search of Matthew effects in reading. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*.

## FUNDING FOR RESEARCH

### *Continuing*

- 2014-2018. Finnish Academy of Sciences. *Problems in reading and calculation fluency: Comorbidity, cognitive background, and neural mechanisms*. **G. Georgiou**, collaborator. Funded for \$880,000.
- 2014-2015. RISE Catalyst Grant. *Tracing reading fluency development: An eye-movement study*. **G. Georgiou**, principal investigator. Funded for \$9,109.
- 2014-2015. Alberta Advisory Committee for Educational Research. *How is reading fluency achieved?* **G. Georgiou**, principal investigator, Funded for \$6,000.
- 2014-2015. RISE Catalyst Grant. *Multimedia, learner characteristics, and interest*. **R. Parrila**, principal investigator. Funded for \$9,324.
- 2013 – 2015. Alberta Education. *Literacy Leadership for School Administrator's*. **L. McQuarrie**, principal investigator; **R. Parrila** & N. Nocente, co-applicants. Funded for \$95,000.
- 2012-2016. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. *Supporting student success: Identifying and supporting at-risk post-secondary students*. Principal investigator S. Helene Deacon, Dalhousie University; **R. Parrila** and J. Metsala, Mount St. Vincent University, co-applicants. Funded for \$373,109.
- 2012-2014. Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. *Partnership for student success: identifying and supporting at-risk university students*. Partnership Development Grant, Principal investigator S. Helene Deacon, Dalhousie University; **R. Parrila** co-investigator. Funded for \$199,721.
- 2010-2015. Alberta Education. *Advancing Adolescent Reading Initiative*. **L. McQuarrie**, principal investigator; **R. Parrila**, co-applicant. Funded for \$1,220,900.
- 2011-2014. Finnish Academy of Sciences. *Development of student's academic performance and adjustment in three interpersonal contexts: Classrooms, homes, and peer groups*. Dr. Jari-Erik Nurmi, principal investigator, **R. Parrila** and **G. Georgiou** (collaborators). Funded for \$814,000.

## FUNDING FOR UNIVERSITY WORK OTHER THAN RESEARCH

- 2014-2015. Alberta Mentoring Partnership. *Online mentoring course module development*. **R. Parrila** & N. Nocente, co-applicants. Funded for \$62,500.

## SERVICE (UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA)

- Director of the Reading Research Laboratory (Georgiou)
- Director of the Minerva Deaf Research Lab (McQuarrie)
- Director of J.P. Das Centre (Parrila)
- Selection and Interviewing Committee Member for the Special Education position (Parrila)
- Selection Committee Member for the Educational Technology position (Parrila)



## 4. CONTRIBUTIONS TO NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

### GUEST LECTURES AND ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

#### *Invited Talks*

- Denmark, January 2015, invited talk at Aarhus University (Parrila)
- Finland, March 2015, invited talk for University of Helsinki (Georgiou)
- Edmonton, November 2014, invited talk for Suzuki Charter School (Georgiou)
- China, October 2014, invited for Shanghai Normal University (Georgiou)
- China, October 2014, invited for East China Normal University (Georgiou)
- China, October 2014, three invited for Shaanxi Normal University (Georgiou)

#### *Presentations in International Conferences*

- Altani, A., Protopapas, A., & **Georgiou, G.** (July 2014). *Executive control in rapid naming and reading*. Presented at the Society for the Scientific Studies of Reading (SSSR) meeting in Santa Fe, USA.
- Bergey, B. W., Deacon, S. H., Horne-Robinson, H., Laroche, A., **Parrila, R.** (April 2015). *Reading challenges and strategies of university students with a history of reading difficulties*. Presented at the American Educational Research Association meeting in Chicago, USA.
- Cummine, J., Cribben, I., Hanif, W., Bahktiari, R., **Georgiou, G.**, & Boliek, C.A. (August 2014). *Exploring neural networks associated with reading and speech production*. Presented at the Society for the Neurobiology of Language meeting in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.
- Cummine, J., **Georgiou, G.**, & Cribben, I. (June 2015). *Exploring the neural networks associated with rapid naming: A graphical model approach*. Presented at the Organization for Human Brain Mapping meeting in Hawaii, USA.
- Deng, C., Wu, Q., Hang, Y., Tavouktsoglou, T., & **Georgiou, G.** (July 2014). *The effect of home learning environment on academic achievement in Chinese is moderated by socioeconomic status*. Presented at the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development meeting in Shanghai, China.
- Deng, C., Das, J. P., Papadopoulos, T. C., & **Georgiou, G.** (July 2014). *What cognitive processes are influenced by slow processing speed?* Presented at the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development meeting in Shanghai, China.
- **Georgiou, G.**, & **Parrila, R.** (July 2014). *Is phonology in the route between RAN and reading?* Presented at the Society for the Scientific Studies of Reading (SSSR) meeting, Santa Fe, USA.
- **Georgiou, G.**, Papadopoulos, T. C., Deng, C., & **Das, J. P.** (July 2014). *Does executive functioning have a place within cognitive planning?* Presented at the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development meeting in Shanghai, China.
- **Georgiou, G.**, Manolitsis, G., Zhang, X., **Parrila, R.**, & Nurmi, J.E. (July 2014). *Examining the developmental dynamics between achievement strategies and different literacy skills*.

Presented at the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development meeting in Shanghai, China.

- **Georgiou, G.** (March 2015). *The cognitive underpinnings of reading, math, and comorbid disabilities*. Presented at the conference on Comorbidity in Learning Disabilities in Jyvaskyla, Finland.
- **Georgiou, G.,** Deng, C., Wei, W., & **Das, J. P.** (May 2015). *Cognitive Assessment System: Does it work the same way across cultures?* Presented at the Hellenic Psychological Research Association meeting in Nicosia, Cyprus.
- **Georgiou, G.,** & Manolitsis, G. (May 2015). *The role of intelligence in early reading and math skills*. Presented at the Hellenic Psychological Research Association meeting in Nicosia, Cyprus.
- Liao, C.H., Altani, A., & **Georgiou, G.** (July 2014). *Rapid automatized naming and reading in Chinese: A highly specific and stable relationship*. Presented at the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development meeting in Shanghai, China.
- Manolitsis, G., & **Georgiou, G.** (July 2014). *Does the assessment of cognitive skills in early childhood predict reading comprehension from Grade 2 to Grade 5?* Presented at the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development meeting in Shanghai, China.
- Manolitsis, G., & **Georgiou, G.** (September 2014). *Home literacy environment and early literacy acquisition across languages*. Presented at the European Early Childhood Education Research Association meeting in Crete, Greece.
- Manolitsis, G., & **Georgiou, G.** (May 2015). *Examining the role of phonological processing and morphological processing in reading acquisition: Does orthographic consistency matter?* Presented at the Hellenic Psychological Research Association meeting in Nicosia, Cyprus.
- Papadopoulos, T. C., **Georgiou, G.,** Deng, C., & **Das, J. P.** (July 2014). *Investigating the factor structure of processing speed as an intelligence measure across languages*. Presented at the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development meeting in Shanghai, China.
- Papadopoulos, T. C., **Georgiou, G.,** Kendeou, P., & Spanoudis, G. (May 2015). *PASS theory of intelligence in Greek: The standardization of CAS and a review of relevant studies*. Presented at the Hellenic Psychological Research Association meeting in Nicosia, Cyprus.
- **Parrila, R., Georgiou, G.,** Papadopoulos, T. (July 2015). *Dyslexia in a consistent orthography: Why can't we find a cause?* Presented at the Society for the Scientific Studies of Reading (SSSR) meeting in Santa Fe, USA.
- Protopapas, A., Altani, A., & **Georgiou, G.** (July 2014). *Suppression of individual item naming variance in the RAN-reading relationship*. Presented at the Society for the Scientific Studies of Reading (SSSR) meeting in Santa Fe, USA.
- Wei, W., Deng, C., & **Georgiou, G.** (July 2014). *The role of PASS processing skills in Chinese reading acquisition*. Presented at the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development meeting in Shanghai, China.

### ***Presentations in National Conferences***

- Bergey, B. W., Deacon, S. H., Horne-Robinson, H., Laroche, A., & **Parrila, R.** (May 2015). *Struggles and strategies: The reading challenges and strategies of university students with a history of reading difficulties*. Presented at the Atlantic Conference for Reading and Language Acquisition, Halifax, Canada.
- Cai, D., **Georgiou, G.**, Wen, M., & Das, J. P. (April 2015). *The role of cognitive planning in mathematics ability*. Presented at the Joseph R. Royce psychology research conference in Edmonton, Canada.
- Tsantali, A., Altani, A., & **Georgiou, G.** (July 2014). Examining the relationship between rapid naming and orthographic processing. Presented at the Canadian Society for Brain, Behaviour and Cognitive Science meeting in Toronto, Canada.

### ***Local Presentations***

- **Georgiou, G.** (March 2015). *Literacy acquisition across languages*. Presented at the English Language Arts Research Symposium for Edmonton Public Schools in Edmonton.
- **Parrila, R.** (April, 2015). Advancing adolescent literacy: A better high school for all students. Alberta Teacher's Association's Invitational Symposium "Reaching the Vision: Building Inclusive Education Together," Edmonton.

## **RESEARCH COLLABORATION**

- Aarhus University, Literacy Counseling Centre. Project: Identification of University Students with Learning Disabilities (**Parrila**)
- Rett Consortium: Rett syndrome, MECP2 Duplication, and Rett-Related Disorders (RTT) Consortium. Natural History Study. Funded for five years by (US) National Institute of Health, Office of Rare Disease Research & National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences. Consortium includes 11 participating Clinical Research Centres ([www.rarediseasesnetwork.org/cms/rett/Learn-More/Participating-Clinical-Centers](http://www.rarediseasesnetwork.org/cms/rett/Learn-More/Participating-Clinical-Centers)). **Dr. Sobsey** serves as member of the Patient Advocacy Group.
- Dr. Shu Hua, Beijing Normal University (China). Project: The neural networks involved in naming speed and reading. (**Georgiou**)
- Dr. Ciping Deng, East China Normal University (China). Project: Developmental dynamics between intelligence and achievement. (**Georgiou**)
- Dr. Timothy Papadopoulos, University of Cyprus (Cyprus). Project: The relationship of rapid naming with reading across ages. (**Georgiou**)
- Dr. Mikko Aro, University of Jyväskylä (Finland). Project: The cognitive underpinning of comorbidity in learning disabilities. (**Georgiou**)
- Dr. Peter de Jong, University of Amsterdam (Netherlands). Project: What discrete and serial rapid naming can reveal about word reading? (**Georgiou**)

- Dr. Athanassios Protopapas (University of Athens, Greece), Dr. Ciping Deng (East China Normal University, China), and Dr. Jeung-Ryeul Cho (Kyungnam University, South Korea). Project: How is reading fluency achieved? (**Georgiou**)
- Dr. Jacqueline Cummine, University of Alberta (Canada). Project: Refining models of reading impairment using rapid automatized naming. (**Georgiou**)
- Dr. George Manolitsis, University of Crete (Greece). Project: Developmental dynamics between home literacy environment and reading across languages varying in orthographic consistency. (**Georgiou**)
- Dr. Tomohiro Inoue, Seigakuin University (Japan). Project: Learning to read in two orthographies. (**Georgiou, Parrila**)
- Dr. Helene Deacon & Dr. Bradley Bergey (Dalhousie University). Project: Supporting student success: Identifying and supporting at-risk post-secondary students. (**Parrila**)

## **SERVICE (OUTSIDE THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA)**

### **Contributions to Other Universities and Research Organizations**

- Department of Psychology, University of Jyväskylä, Finland. Docent of Applied Cognitive Psychology (Parrila)
- Center for Applied Neuroscience, University of Cyprus, Cyprus. Member of Advisory Board (Parrila)
- Centre for Teaching Development and Digital Media, Aarhus University, Denmark. Collaboration with Literacy Counseling Team to develop a research program on learning disabilities in higher education (Parrila)

### **Editorial Work & Manuscript Review**

- Editorial Board memberships:
  - Member of the editorial board of 4 journals (Georgiou):
    - Canadian Journal of School Psychology,
    - Alberta Journal of Educational Research,
    - Preschool and Primary Education
    - Annals of Dyslexia
  - Journal of Adult Protection, International Editorial Board member (Sobsey)
- Reviews:
  - Dr. Parrila and Dr. Georgiou reviewed 28 articles for different scientific journals

### **Reviews (not related to publications)**

- Sobsey, R: Web Authoring

- MECP2 Duplication Blog. (Sole-authored Blog). 72,113 pageviews since inception. <http://mecp2.wordpress.com/>
- Sobsey, R: Web Administration
  - Facebook MECP2 Duplication Syndrome Family Talk Group. Connecting 662 family members of children and adults with MECP2 Duplication Syndrome.
- **Parrila, R.:** Review of research proposal #G065616N submitted to Fonds Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek - Vlaanderen, Belgium.

## 5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In 2014-2015, the Das Centre continued to demonstrate its commitment to Community Outreach and Engagement. Core members of the Das Centre were actively involved in public policy consultation, professional development for educators, and capacity building initiatives supporting families and other stakeholders.

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### Advancing Adolescent Reading Initiative (<http://aari.educ.ualberta.ca/>)

The Advancing Adolescent Reading Initiative (AARI) is a four-year research and capacity building initiative funded by Alberta Education to support the goals of the High School Completion Strategic Framework.

#### Workshops and Presentations

- **Georgiou, G.** (2015, March). Online workshop in reading intervention presented to a group of special education teachers in Alexandroupolis, Greece.
- **Georgiou, G.** (March 2015). *The cognitive profiles of gifted children*. Presented at the New Horizons Charter School in Edmonton
- **Georgiou, G.** (2014-2015). Presented 10 workshops on reading assessment and interventions to teachers at Johnny Bright (3), Esther Starkman (3), Glendale (1), Lymburn (1), Hardisty (1), and Brander Gardens (1) schools in Edmonton.
- **Parrila, R.,** Altani, A. & Turgeon, K.-L. (March, 2015). Learning to read (and then using those skills to learn). Hardisty School, Edmonton.

### COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND INVOLVEMENT

#### Knowledge Translation for Parents and Community

- International Rett Syndrome Foundation, Professional Advisor (Sobsey)

#### Media

- AARI was featured on Edmonton Sun with an interview of Dr. Parrila

### Consultative Work

- Alberta Mentoring Partnership (Parrila)
- Alberta Education (Parrila)
- Alberta Foundation for Individuals with Dyslexia (Parrila)

## PUBLIC POLICY AND LEGAL CONSULTATION

- **Alberta Education. Dr. Parrila and Dr. McQuarrie** have been working with Inclusive Learning Supports Branch of Alberta Education in developing better intervention supports for students with learning, sensory and low incidence disabilities. They continue to work with the FNMI & Field Services Branch on the Adolescent Reading initiative as part of Alberta Education's High-school Completion Strategic Framework.
- Expert Witness retained by Koskie Minsky LLP, Toronto, ON, Seed v HMQ, 2015 (**Sobsey**)

## 6. HONOURS AND AWARDS

- In 2015, Dr. JP Das was inducted into the **Order of Canada** for his outstanding scientific achievements and contributions to the community.
- Dr. Georgiou received American Psychological Association's Richard E. Snow award for early career contributions to Educational Psychology