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 46th 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 tranfer, 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)

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  

Virgina 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**


**Articles in Peer-Reviewed Journals**

FUNDING FOR RESEARCH

Continuing


FUNDING FOR UNIVERSITY WORK OTHER THAN RESEARCH


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.
- 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.
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.


- 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.


- **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


Local Presentations


RESEARCH COLLABORATION

- Aarhus University, Literacy Counseling Centre. Project: Identification of University Students with Learning Disabilities (Parrila)
- 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 Jyvaskyla (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
- Sobsey, R: Web Administration
  - Facebook MECP2 Duplication Syndrome Family Talk Group. Connecting 662 family members of children and adults with MECP2 Duplication Syndrome.

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.
- **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