



# EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

## Department of Early Childhood Education

### Early Childhood Education PhD Program **SPRING & SUMMER 2023 NEWSLETTER**

#### Early Childhood Education Department

## *Vision*

**INSPIRE. ADVOCATE. IMPACT.**

NAEYC Professional  
Preparation Standards

**STANDARD 1.** Promoting Child  
Development and Learning.

**STANDARD 2.** Building Family and  
Community Relationships.

**STANDARD 3.** Observing,  
Documenting and Assessing to  
Support Young Children and Families.

**STANDARD 4.** Using Developmentally  
Effective Approaches.

**STANDARD 5.** Using Content  
Knowledge to Build Meaningful  
Curriculum.

**STANDARD 6.** Becoming a  
Professional.

**STANDARD 7.** Early Childhood  
Field Experiences.



Dr. Facun-Granadozo (5th from left) was promoted to Associate Professor and Dr. Atiles (2nd from right) and Dr. Alissa Lange (5th from the right) were promoted to Professor.



The Gilbreath Literacy Conference was a great success this summer. Gilbreath Team with Early Childhood faculty and students: Dr. Kathryn Sharp, Dr. Ruth Facun-Granadozo, Maria Dias, and Angela Shelton.

Keynote speakers were Lester Laminack and Sarah Cooper. Also pictured are Gilbreath Team members Renee Polson, Brittany Gray, and LaShay Wood.

# SPOTLIGHT ON STUDENTS



## Clara Puni Nyamesem Delivers Keynote Presentation at the 5th Biennial Convention of the Offinsoman Association

Clara Puni Nyamesem, a first-year PhD student in the Department of Early Childhood Education, was invited to be the keynote speaker at the 5th Biennial Convention of the Offinsoman Association, a Ghanaian community living in the U.S. and Canada, in New Jersey. She presented on "Young Children's Screen Media Use and Its Impact on Their Brain Development." The audience comprised parents and experts from various fields. Ms. Puni Nyamesem discussed how the new technological environment and prolonged use of screen media affect children's development, especially executive functioning, motor development, social interaction, and the relationship to mental health-related issues. She suggested alternative approaches parents can adopt to lower the risk of screen media effects. These included setting screen time limits, engaging in co-viewing with children, promoting outdoor activities, creative play, routines and engaging them in daily activities at home.

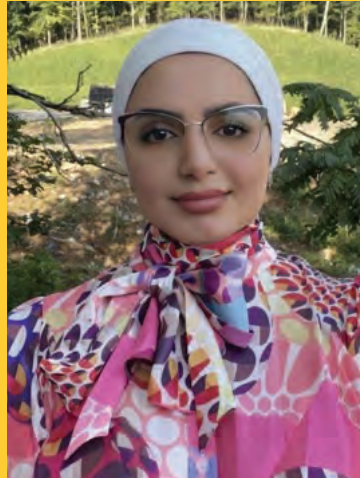
### CONTACT

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Dr. Evanshen, evanshep@etsu.edu

[etsu.edu/coe/eced/](https://etsu.edu/coe/eced/)

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## Amani Alhassan

Amani is an international student from Saudi Arabia. She completed a bachelor's in early childhood education and master's degree in educational administration from her home country. She is a faculty member at King Saud University in the Early Childhood Department in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Her strong desire for a scientific, practical and global experience

motivated her to apply to the PhD program. She hopes to transfer the knowledge and experiences from this program to the larger community and students back home.

Amani experienced many challenges and difficulties that come with studying abroad, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The transition from in-person to online courses and back to in-person has been a journey for her. However, she is grateful for the flexibility in the course design which made the transition easier, enjoyable and effective. An important highlight is the opportunity to expand her core knowledge and broaden her horizon with details in early childhood education theories, methods and best practices. She feels more confident and competent in her area of study. Additionally, she thinks that different experiences in different countries will strengthen her when she returns home as a faculty.

Amani's research interest is STEM integration. She received her education in the traditional sector and considers STEM as a pathway to connect and introduce different curriculum areas and teaching approaches such as project-based learning for experiential and discovery learning for children. STEM is in high demand across the globe, and she hopes exposure for her students will contribute to building their future success as global citizens. Through her dissertation she will dive deeper into STEM implementation to build strong educational models, strategies and practices that support early STEM education. Her dissertation chair is Dr. Lange.

As a faculty in Saudi Arabia, Amani hopes to return home and implement her newly acquired skills. There is a massive development in the area of education in her country and she wants to have a voice regarding changes in curriculum and teaching strategies, particularly in early childhood. She advises the current students in the program to be optimistic as much as they can and enjoy this journey. Further, they should take advantage of opportunities available through the diverse relationships with peers and faculty.

# STUDENT PRESENTATIONS AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY

**Nyamesem, C. P.** (2023). *Unlocking Adventures in Literacy: Exploring the Power of Read Aloud Beyond the Classroom Walls*. Gilbreath Literacy Conference.

**We are proud to see our PhD graduates engaged in collaborative research together and with colleagues in the field.**

Beisly, A., Swartz, R., **Nyabando, T.** and Taylor N. (2023). *Learning together: Reflections from a Community of Practice on Anti Bias Education, Part 2*. NAECTE virtual summer conference.

**Nyabando, T., Sareh, N., Tian, Q., Edokhamhen, E. and Mensah-Bonsu, P.** (2023) *An early career teacher educators support group: A collaboration to develop best practices for training early childhood teacher educators*. National Association for Early Childhood Teacher Educators virtual summer institute.



Maria Dias and Angela Shelton at the Gilbreath Literacy Conference at ETSU.



Maria Dias virtually presented “Bilingual education in today’s world” at the Universidad Latina de Costa Rica. Attendees were students and professors in the preschool bilingual education program. She explained “I talked about what bilingual education is and what it means to be bilingual in the 21st century, and briefly compared bilingual education in the US and Latin America. I also shared some strategies to use in the classroom such as book selection, reading aloud, and creating.”

Maria is also a recipient of the 2023 NAECTE Foundation Doctoral Grant. Her NAECTE colleagues will recognize and honor her at the NAECTE 2023 Awards and Recognition Reception, to be held Wednesday evening, Nov. 15. This funding supports Maria’s dissertation research, providing funds as an incentive for recruiting participants and for her use of Dedoose software to code data. Maria’s dissertation title is, “Understanding Teachers’ Beliefs and Practices in Supporting Multilingual Children in Early Childhood Education.”



Dr. Atilas sharing a meal with 2022 PhD cohort students during our summer on-campus weekend. From left to right: Dr. Atilas, Clara Nyamesem, Amie Perry, Candi Clevinger, and Christian Lee.

# FACULTY PRESENTATIONS AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY

## Dr. Atilés

Chroust, A. J., **Atilés, J. T.**, Chavarría Vargas, A., & Zúñiga León, I. (2023). Sense of efficacy of Costa Rican early childhood teachers in face-to-face and distance education instructional settings. [Manuscript accepted for publication]. Department of Psychology, East Tennessee State University. (International Journal of Early Childhood, July 17, 2023).

**Atilés, J. T.**, & Chavarría Vargas, A. (2023, July 13). Sentido de eficacia, expresiones de afecto y actitudes de las personas docentes hacia la enseñanza del Inglés como lengua extranjera, que atienden niños de 4 hasta 6 años, en ambientes de enseñanza presenciales y a distancia, en instituciones públicas costarricenses [Sense of efficacy, expressions of affection, and attitudes of teachers serving children ranging in age from 4 to 6 towards the teaching of English as a foreign language, in face-to-face and distance learning environments, in Costa Rican public institutions]. Virtual presentation, Ministry of Public Education of Costa Rica.

## Dr. Broderick

**Broderick, J. T.** & Hong, S. B. (2023). Undergraduates use of materials explorations and documentation to study re-representation and multi-symbolic representation in learning processes. NAECTE summer virtual conference.

## Dr. Evanshen

**Evanshen, P.**, Isik-Ercan, Z., & Parnell, W. (June, 2023). National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators (NAECTE) Session: Who are we and what are our intentions as an organization?

Commission on Professional Excellence in Early Childhood Education. (May, 2023). Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession [webinar]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N3EijVlrgn4>

## Dr. Facun-Granadozo

Kumar, A., **Facun-Granadozo, R.**, Espinosa Cordoba, T., Nyabando, T., Swartz, R., Taylor, N., & Beisley, A. (2023, June). Learning together: Reflections from a community of practice on anti-bias education. National Association for Early Childhood Teacher Educators (NAECTE). Virtual

Kumar, A., **Facun-Granadozo, R.**, Nyabando, T. (2023, June). Tensions, tussles, and uncertainties in nurturing anti-bias early childhood educators. National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Professional Learning Institute. Portland, OR

**Facun-Granadozo, R.** (2023, February). Supporting literacy in the primary grades through after-school programs. A presentation to the ETSU Public Service Corps Scholarship Recipients. Johnson City, TN

## Dr. Lange

Robertson, L., **Lange, A. A.**, Price, J., Lowery, A., Lester, L., Tian, Q., & Nivens, R. (2023). Making Stone Soup: A Collaborative Approach to Integrated STEM. Science and Children.

**Lange, A. A.**, Atkins, E., Tian, Q., Bullen, K., & Lodien, L. (2023). I need to make it taller! Engineering to solve wind challenges in preschool. Teaching Young Children.

**Lange, A.A.** (2023). We Borrowed That? Bringing biomimicry to life in the early childhood classroom. Early Years Column, Science & Children—July/August 2023 (Volume 60, Issue 6). Washington, DC: National Science Teachers Association.

## Dr. Sharp

Shelton, A. M. & **Sharp, L. K.** (2023). Residency Boot camp. IDG grant. (\$1,500).

Zhao, H. & **Sharp, L. K.** (Spring, 2023). Predictors of preschoolers' classroom engagement: Teacher-child interaction, teacher-child relationships, and children's self-control. Submitted and under revision.

**Sharp, L. K.** & Shelton, A. M. (August, 2023). Phonological Awareness, Phonemic Awareness and Phonics. Oh my! Presentation to the Scott County Head Start.

**Sharp, L. K.** (April, 2023). Literacy Today. Presentation at Northwest Missouri University.



Clara Puni Nyamesem and Maria Dias celebrating Dr. Atilés' promotion to Professor.

## Conferences of Interest to Students and Faculty

**ASSOCIATION FOR CHILDHOOD EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL (ACEI): DR. SHARP IS A MEMBER OF ACEI** and serves in a leadership position. ACEI website: [ceinternational1892.org](http://ceinternational1892.org)  
The TN ACEI site: [tacei.org/](http://tacei.org/)

**ASSOCIATION FOR CONSTRUCTIVIST TEACHING (ACT):** October conference each year. Oct 21 & 22, 2023 Boone, NC. Proposals are due late spring, early summer. Dr. Broderick is a past board member of ACT and newsletter editor. ACT's online journal, *The Constructivist*, is now a proceedings journal that also accepts outside submissions. Kelly A. Russell is the editor for the journal. [krussell@bsc.edu](mailto:krussell@bsc.edu)  
ACT website: [acteducators.com](http://acteducators.com)

**ASSOCIATION FOR TEACHER EDUCATORS (ATE):** There is an annual conference in the summer July 28-August 1, 2023 Washington DC and an annual meeting in the spring March 27-30, 2024 Anaheim, CA. [ate1.org/annual-events](http://ate1.org/annual-events)

**DIVISION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD (DEC):** Conference will be held on Nov 28-Dec 1, 2023 Minneapolis, MN. DEC website: [deconference.org/](http://deconference.org/)

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER EDUCATORS (NAECTE):** This conference is always held in conjunction with NAEYC. Fall 2023 conference will be in Nashville, TN, November 15, 2023. Contact Dr. Evanshen for more information on NAECTE. NAECTE website: [naecte.org/](http://naecte.org/)

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN (NAEYC):** Annual conference will be held November 15-18, 2023 in Nashville, TN. [naeyc.org/events/annual](http://naeyc.org/events/annual)

**SOCIETY FOR RESEARCH IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SRCD)** Biennial meetings, next April 30-May 3, 2025 Minneapolis, MN. [srcd.org/events](http://srcd.org/events)

**SOUTHERN EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION (SECA):** Annual conference March 7-9, 2024 Atlanta, GA. SECA website: [seca.info/conference](http://seca.info/conference)

**TENNESSEE ASSOCIATION FOR CHILDREN'S EARLY EDUCATION (TACEE):** Annual conference Sept 8-9, 2023 Murfreesboro, TN. TACEE website: [tacee.org](http://tacee.org)

# FACULTY & STUDENT SCHOLARLY HIGHLIGHTS



Students from the 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023 PhD cohorts at a social gathering during the summer 2023 on-campus weekend.



Social gathering during the 2023 summer on-campus session. Left to right: Erin Cameron, Dr. Facun-Granadozo, Karen Dumas, Jess Carter and Savannah Partin.



Diagramming and discussing constructivist theories during the on-campus meeting of ECE 6630 Paradigms of Constructivist Theory Course with instructor Dr. Broderick. On the left, Christian Lee, Clara Puni Nyamesem, Candi Clevinger. On the right, Christian Lee, Amie Perry, Clara Puni Nyamesem and Candi Clevinger.

# SPOTLIGHT ON STUDENTS

## ADA HATCHER



Ada Hatcher's passion for creativity and the arts led her to a dance and costume design concentration for her bachelor's degree at Middle Tennessee State University. In a master's program at Mills College, she sharpened her skills with a dance and choreography performance concentration. She was inspired by a professor in her master's program whose works are primarily

exploring fundamentals of body movement with children in a developmentally appropriate way. Her perspective shifted more toward children after learning about the Reggio Emilia approach through a class and interaction with Dr. Broderick. Her quest to gain more understanding of children's education led her to the PhD program.

A favorite aspect of the PhD program is the emphasis on independent thinking and critical analysis, encouragement for students to develop their own perspectives, and synthesize information in ways that personally resonate. The hybrid format of blending both in-person and online interactions, and blending of cohorts in some courses, is a major highlight for her. The in-person classes, discussions and presentations fostered personal connections and facilitated deeper engagement. She acknowledges the freedom to nurture her creativity and highlights how fellow students have found their unique paths.

Ada's dissertation focuses on challenges teachers face with compassion fatigue and secondary trauma, and the crucial role of self-care. Her committee chair is Dr. Malkus. She plans to graduate within the next year and a half. Ada envisions different paths for her future, as a professor collaborating with others in research and writing, and contributing to nonprofits. She believes in using plain language that resonates with diverse audiences such as policymakers, parents or educators. She aspires to establish a Reggio-inspired forest school, blending nature and education to provide a unique and transformative experience for children and families, especially low-income families.

## Student Resources

- **BOOT CAMP:** Thesis and dissertation writing and editing support, workshops, time to write. Four weekend sessions per semester at Sherrod Library. Emily Frances Redd, REDD@mail.etsu.edu
- **GRADUATE STUDENT SUCCESS:** Assistance with setting and maintaining personal and academic goals when experiencing stress. Ivy Buerkle; Sherrod Library, Room 462; (423) 439-7062; gradsucces@etsu.edu; etsu.edu/gradschool/successservice.php
- **SHERROD LIBRARY**
  - *Graduate Student Support:* libraries.etsu.edu/home#\_ga=2.103795331.2064551261.16321486791036422071.1611438336
  - Dr. Wendy Doucette, Graduate Services librarian, doucettew@etsu.edu
  - *Workshops:* etsu.edu/gradschool/events.php

Dissertation scholarships for final semester:  
etsu.edu/gradschool/funding/scholarships.php

## Admission Process

Applicants for the PhD in Early Childhood Education program are evaluated once each year for admission in the fall semester. Application information deadline is March 15th. This deadline is flexible until enrollment is filled. The program has a number of fellowships, awarded on a competitive basis, to support full-time doctoral students. Admission to the program has the same requirements as existing graduate school requirements plus additional specific requirements:

- Application form.
- Application fee (\$35 U.S. or \$45 international).
- One official transcript from each institution attended (undergraduate and graduate).
- Personal resume.
- Personal essay including a written statement of career and ethical goals, professional experience, and area of interest for a dissertation.
- Official Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores taken within the past five years. Preferred scores are 50th percentile or higher.
- Four letters of recommendation.
- Master's degree in early childhood or a related field from a regionally accredited university.
- An interview with the admissions committee.

Certification of English proficiency for international students. A minimum official Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score of 550 (paper), 213 (computer based), or 79 (internet based), taken within the past two years; a score of 6.5 on the International English Testing System (IELTS); or have received a degree from an accredited U.S. institution.