

## NATASHA A. THORNTON, Ph.D.

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### EDUCATION

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**Doctorate in Teaching and Learning: Language and Literacy**, Georgia State University, 2014

**Dissertation Title:** *Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Literacy Instruction, and Teacher Decision Making: A Formative Experiment Investigating Shifts in Teachers' Beliefs and Practices*

**Dissertation Chair:** Amy Seely Flint, Ph.D.

**Reading Endorsement**, Georgia State University, 2006

**M.S. in Educational Administration**, Albany State University, 2004

**B.A. in Early Childhood Development**, East Tennessee State University, 2022

### MAJOR FIELDS/RESEARCH INTERESTS

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Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Approaches to Literacy Instruction,  
Teacher Beliefs and Practice, Curriculum Design, Qualitative Research

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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**ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION**

**Jan 2024 – Present**

**Spelman College**

*Department of Education*

**FOUNDER**

**July 2019 – Present**

**Thornton Educational Consulting**

- Develops professional learning sessions and curricular resources that aim to bridge the gap between culturally responsive theory and practice

**ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF LITERACY EDUCATION**

**May 2015 – July 2019**

**Kennesaw State University**

*Department of Elementary and Early Childhood Education*

*Bagwell College of Education*

- Professional Liaison for Diversity
- Co-Advisor, #BlackTeachersMatter, Student Organization
- Co-Director, KSU Literature Conference

***Undergraduate Courses Taught***

ECE 3330: Teaching Reading and Writing in the Grades 3-5 ECE 3360: Reading, Process Writing, and Language Arts

ECE 4404/4410: Teaching Reading and Language Arts Across the Curriculum in Early Childhood Education (Course Coordinator)

ECE: 4475: Designing and Sustaining Classroom Environments EDUC 2130: Educational Psychology

***Online Course Development***

ECE 7705: Trends and Issues in Literacy Education in Elementary Education

ECE 7717: Reading Assessment and Instruction

**LITERACY COACH**

**August 2014 – May 2015**

**Henry County School**

*Red Oak Elementary School May 2015 – July 2019*

## GRADUATE RESEARCH AND TEACHING ASSISTANT

August 2010 – December 2014

Georgia State University

Department of Middle-Secondary Education

- Research Assistantships
  - Teacher Morale Project
  - Digital Literacies, Multimodal Autobiographies
- Teaching Assistantships
  - Taught various undergraduate and graduate-level courses and served as a student teacher supervisor for the Middle Grades Program

## CLASSROOM TEACHER

August 2002 – May 2010

Dekalb County Schools

Browns Mill Elementary Schools

- Served as a kindergarten and 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher.

## SCHOLARSHIP

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### BOOK

Wynter-Hoyte, K., Braden, E.G., Myers, M., Rodriguez, S. & **Thornton, N.A.** (2022) *Revolutionary love: Creating a culturally inclusive literacy classroom*, Scholastic.

### PUBLISHED ARTICLES AND CHAPTERS

Braden, E.G., Myers, M., Rodriguez, S. & **Thornton, N.A.**, Wynter-Hoyte, K. (In progress). *Revolutionary love: Centering the full humanity of children in the literacy curriculum*. Reading Research Quarterly

Wynter-Hoyte, K., **Thornton, N.A.**, Smith, M., & Jones, K. (2021). A revolutionary love story in teacher education and early childhood education. *Theory Into Practice*, 60(3), 265-268.

Dunlap, S. S., Carmouche, M., & **Thornton, N.A.** (2021). “Who You Be?”: Welcoming in the Language of Critical Love. *Language Magazine*.

**Thornton, N.A.**, Adams, M., Bennett, A. Myers, M., Ritchie, S., & Rodriguez, S. (2020) 4 As: A Discussion of How Institutions of Higher Education Respond to Incidents Related to Culture, Diversity, and Equity. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 22(3), 153-158.

**Thornton, N.A.** (2018). “I Want to Protect My Children”: Considerations that Lead to Culturally Relevant Collaborations. *Perspectives and Provocations*.

**Thornton, N.A.** (2018). Opening Up New Perspectives with Literature. *Edutopia*. Retrieved from <https://www.edutopia.org/article/opening-new-perspectives-literature>

Wynter-Hoyte, K., Braden, E.G., Rodriguez, S. & **Thornton, N.A.** (2017). Disrupting the Status Quo: Exploring Culturally Relevant & Sustaining Pedagogies for Young Diverse Learners. *Race Ethnicity and Education*.

**Thornton, N.A.** (2017). Culturally Relevant Teaching: The Impact of Beliefs on Practices. *Culturally Relevant Teaching: Preparing Teachers to Include All Learners*, Palgrave.

- Thornton, N.A.** (2017). Culturally Relevant Literacy Instruction: Promoting Shifts in Teachers' Beliefs and Practices. In C. Martin & D. Polly (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education and Professional Development*, (pp.310-338), PA; IGI Global.
- Silveri, S., Allen, E., Baines, J., Flores-Mays, C., Rodriguez, S. C., **Thornton, N.**, & Wynter-Hoyte, K. (2016). Problematic proclivities. *English Journal*, 105(6), 14-17.
- Flint, A., Allen, E., Nason, M., Rodriguez, S., **Thornton, N.A.**, & Wynter – Hoyte, K. (2015). It happened to me: Third graders writing toward critical perspectives. *Journal of Language and Literacy in Education*, 11(2), 23-43.
- Angay, T., Dukes, N., **Thornton, N. A.**, & Wynter-Hoyte, K. (2014). AUA: Cultivating Leaders and Scholars. *Reading Online*.
- Flint, A., Allen, E., Campbell, T., Fraser, A., Hilaski, D., James, L., Rodriguez, S., & **Thornton, N.A.** (2013). More than graphs and scripted programs: Teachers navigating the educational policy terrain. In P.L. Thomas (Ed.) *Becoming and being a teacher: Confronting traditional norms to create new democratic realities*, (pp.175-188.), New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Thornton, N.** (2012). The 411 on comic books and graphic novels. *Language Arts*, 89(6), 36
- Flint, A., Anderson, N., Allen, E., Campbell, T., Fraser, A., Hilaski, D., James, L., Rodriguez, S., & **Thornton, N.A.** (2011). When policies collide with conviction. *Language Arts Journal of Michigan*, 26(2), 13-17

### CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Braden, E. & **Thornton, N.A.** (2024). *Sankofa, Go Back and Get it: African Diaspora Literacies in Teaching & Scholarship*. Invited Session: American Educational Research Association, Philadelphia, PA.
- N. Thornton**, D. Babrow, Jones, M., Lightfoot, M., Mosely, N., & Prater, N. (February 2023). *Social Justice & Early Education: Lifting the Voices of Black Parents and Educators*. Black Child Development Institute Atlanta: Early Childcare and Leadership Summit. Atlanta, GA.
- Babrow, D. & **Thornton, N.** (October 2022). *Black Women, Black Educators, Black Children: Diversifying the ECE Teacher Career Pathway*. National Black Child Development Institute Conference, Washington, D.C.
- Thornton, N.** & Chrystal, R. (October 2022) *In Revolutionary Love: Using Culturally Responsive Children's Books to Support Family Engagement*. National Black Child Development Institute Conference, Washington, D.C.
- Wynter-Hoyte, K., Braden, E.G., Myers, M., Rodriguez, S. & **Thornton, N.A (July 2022)** Literacies and Language for All Keynote Address: *Revolutionary Love: Creating a culturally inclusive literacy classroom*, Louisville, KY.
- Thornton, N. (February 2021)**. *Reimagining Education through a Culturally Responsive Lens*. Black Child Development Institute Atlanta: Early Childcare and Leadership Summit, Virtual.
- Braden, E.G., Davis, K. Gardner, R., Smith, M. **Thornton, N.A.**, Wynter-Hoyte, K. (Nov 2020) Donald Graves Session: Writing in Confluencia with Students and Families. National Council for Teachers of English, Virtual.

- Brown, P., Cooper, C., Ford, J., Lott, W., Mofett, J., Taylor, B., Tillman, T., & **Thornton, N.** (2018, Oct.). *#BlackTeachersMatter: A Call for Collective Learning and Liberatory Pedagogy*. Sources of Urban Educational Excellence Conference, Atlanta, GA.
- Jean-Sigur, R., Johnson, M., **Thornton, N.** (2018, Oct.). *Strategies for Including Stories of Black Children and Families in Early Childhood Classrooms*. National Black Child Development Institute, Dallas, TX.
- Rodriguez, S. C. & **Thornton, N. A.** (2018, Apr.) American Educational Research Association, "What Does It Mean to be a Latinx Immigrant in Children's literature? A Critical Content Analysis of the Representation of Immigrants and Immigration", International Conference, New York, NY.
- Rodriguez, S. C., Adams, M. G. Allen, J., Braden, E. **Thornton, N. A.**, Wynter-Hoyte, K. (Annual Convention, Literacy Research Association, Tampa, FL, "Moving from Deficit-Based to Meaningful Literacies: Five Case Studies", Panel, (December 1, 2017).
- Rodriguez, S. C. & **Thornton, N. A.**, Annual Convention, National Council for Teachers of English, St. Louis, MO, "Preparing Preservice Teachers for a Diverse Society: Using Multimodal Projects for Cultural Awareness", Panel, National, (November 18, 2017).
- Thornton, N. A.**, Jackson, V., Carillo, F., Georgia Educational Research Association (GERA) 2017, Augusta, Georgia, "Brick by Brick: Building Literacy Curriculum around Students' Lives", Conference, State, published in proceedings, (October 6, 2017).
- Rodriguez, S., **Thornton, N.A.**, Wynter-Hoyte, K. (2017, Apr.). American Educational Research Association, "Multicultural Literature Circles: Promoting Teacher Candidates' Cultural Awareness and Understanding", International Conference, Atlanta, GA
- Rodriguez, S. C., **Thornton, N. A.**, (2016, Dec.). American Reading Forum, "Examining Teacher Candidates Perspectives About Multicultural Literature", National Conference, Sanibel Island, FL.
- Thornton, N.A.**, (2016, Nov.). National Council of Teachers of English, "Critical Conversations: An Exploration of Shifting Beliefs and Practices During Professional Learning", National Conference, Atlanta, GA.
- Rodriguez, S., **Thornton, N.A.**, Wynter-Hoyte, K. (2016, Nov.). National Council of Teachers of English, "Preparing Preservice Teachers for Diverse Classrooms: Critical Encounters with Multicultural Literature", National Conference, Atlanta, GA.
- Thornton, N. A.**, Ritchie, J. S., Rodriguez, S. C. (2016, Mar.). National edTPA Implementation Conference, "Disrupting Deficit Thinking in Elementary edTPA: Strategies for Getting to Know Students' Personal, Cultural, and Community Assets", National Conference, Savannah, GA.
- Allen, E., Rodriguez, S., Jones, S.P., **Thornton, N.A.**, Wynter-Hoyte, K. (2015, Dec.). *Emerging Scholars of Color: Navigating Researcher Positionalities & Subjectivities*. Panel presentation at the Literacy Research Association Annual Conference, Carlsbad, CA.
- Allen, E., Rodriguez, S., **Thornton, N.A.**, Wynter-Hoyte, K. (2015, Nov.). *Spaces and possibilities: Promoting the art of language with diverse teachers and students*. Panel presentation at the National Council of Teachers of English Annual Convention, Minneapolis, MN.
- Thornton, N.A.** (2015, July). "Is That How We Write From Now On?": *The Collision of Instructional Mandates and Meaningful Literacy Instruction*. Teacher-to-Teacher Conversation, at the Whole Language Umbrella Summer Institute, Atlanta, GA.

- Allen, E., Rodriguez, S., **Thornton, N.A.**, & Wynter-Hoyte, K., (2014, Dec.). *Literacy and Identity: Exploring Teaching and Learning for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*. Paper presentation at Literacy Research Association Annual Conference, San Marcos, FL.
- Thornton, N.A.**, Manly, O., & Yarbrough, G. (2013, April). *Bridging the Gap: Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Literacy Instruction, and Teacher Decision Making*. Sources of Urban Educational Excellence Conference, Atlanta, GA.
- Manly, O., & Yarbrough, G., & **Thornton, N.A.** (2013, April) *Helping African American Students Improve their Literacy Skills using the 5-8-8-8-5 Writing Method and Graphic Novels*. Sources of Urban Educational Excellence Conference, Atlanta, GA.
- Allen, E., Flint, A.S., Nason, M., Rodriguez, S., **Thornton, N.A.**, & Wynter-Hoyte, K. (2012, December). “*It Happened to Me*”: *Third Graders Write Towards Critical Perspectives*. Panel Presentation at the Literacy Research Association Annual Conference, San Diego, CA.
- Allen, E. & **Thornton, N.A.** (2012, July). *Going Beyond the Text: Critical Literacy in a Third Grade Classroom*. Round Table Discussion at the Whole Language Umbrella, Summer Institute, St. Louis, MO.
- Angay, T., Dukes, N., **Thornton, N. A.**, & Wynter-Hoyte, K. (2012, May). *Alpha Upsilon Alpha: Cultivating Scholars and Developing Leaders*. Panel Presentation at the International Reading Association, Chicago, IL.
- Carmouche, M., Parker, P., & **Thornton, N. A.** (2012, Mar.). *Graduate Students Perspective on Facilitating College Learning: What McKeachie says in a nut-shell*. Panel presentation at the 2012 GTA Pedagogy Conference, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA.
- Flint, A., Allen, E., Campbell, T., Fraser, A., Hilaski, D., James, L., Rodriguez, S., & **Thornton, N.A.** (2011, Nov.). *When policies collide with conviction*. Paper presentation at the National Council for Teachers of English Annual Convention, Chicago, Illinois.
- Wynter-Hoyte, K., Sullivan-White, T., & **Thornton, N.** (2011, Sept.). Preparing the Program of Study and Pre-qualifying phase (online presentation). Conversations in Doctoral Presentations, <http://globalconversationsindoctoralpreparation.wordpress.com/>. September 8, 2011.
- Sluss, D.J. & **Thornton, N.A.** (2001, July). *The effects of the environment on upper and lower gross and fine motor movement of toddlers during play*. Powerpoint presentation at East Tennessee State University’s 41st Annual Early Childhood Conference, Johnson City, Tennessee.

## **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING SESSIONS**

- Thornton, N. A.** (July 2022) *How to Develop, Foster, and Maintain Relationships with Black & Brown Students*. Freedom Schools Literacy Academy, Philadelphia, PA, (virtual session).
- Thornton, N. A.** (Feb 2021) *Reimagining Leadership Through a Culturally Responsive Lens*. Culturally Responsive Early Education and Care Summit, BCDI-Atlanta, Atlanta, GA.
- Thornton, N.A.** (Jan 2021). *Culturally Relevant Teaching: The Impact of Beliefs on Practice*. A.Z. Kelsely Academy, Griffin, GA.
- Thornton, N.A.** (Jan - Feb 2021) *Reimagining Education Through a Culturally Responsive Lens: 4-part Series*. Baldwin County 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers, Milledgeville, GA.

- Thornton, N.A.** (Dec 2020). *Transforming Education Through a Culturally Responsive Lens*. Building Anti-Racist Educators, Philadelphia, PA.
- Thornton, N.A.** (July 2020 – Jan 2021) Reimagining Education Through a Culturally Responsive Lens: 2-Part Series. Red Oak Elementary, Stockbridge, GA.
- Thornton, N.A.** (June 2019). *Writing for Real*. Georgia Department of Education Summer Literacy Institute, Macon, GA.
- Thornton, N.A.** (June 2018). Cultivating Academic Language for All Learners. Georgia Department of Education Summer Literacy Institute, Savannah, GA.
- Thornton, N.A.** (March 19, 2018). *Where's the Rigor in Culturally Relevant Classrooms?* Atlanta Public Schools Professional Learning Day, Atlanta, GA.
- Thornton, N.A.** & Rodriguez, S. (July 27, 2017). *Teaching the Reading Not the Text*. Atlanta Public Schools Professional Learning Day, Atlanta, GA.
- Thornton, N.A.** (June 20, 2017). *Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Connecting to Students' Lives to Literacy Instruction*. Atlanta Public Schools Professional Learning Day, Atlanta, GA.
- Thornton, N.A.** (June 6, 2017). *Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Connecting to Students' Lives to Literacy Instruction*. Atlanta Public Schools Professional Learning Day, Atlanta, GA.
- Thornton, N.A.** & Rodriguez, S. (April 12, 2017). *Culturally Relevant Teaching: Valuing and Building on Students' Cultural Resources*. Atlanta Public Schools Professional Learning Day, Atlanta, GA.
- Thornton, N.A.** & Rodriguez, S. (February 17, 2017). *Teaching the Reader, Not Just the Text*. Atlanta Public Schools Professional Learning Day, Atlanta, GA.
- Thornton, N.A.** (July 29, 2016) *Creating Spaces in ELA Classrooms to Discuss Issues of Race and Equity*. Atlanta Public Schools Professional Learning Day, Atlanta, GA.

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## EVALUATION

A.L. Burruss Institute of Public Service (Kennesaw State University), *21st Century Community Learning Centers*, Qualitative Program Evaluator, Jan – Mar 2016

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## AWARDS/GRANTS/FELLOWSHIPS

2021-2022	START:ME Atlanta, Small Business Fellowship
2021	redefinED Atlanta, <i>Innovation Fund Grant</i> , \$7,100.00
2019	Teachers of Atlanta, <i>Recognition Award</i>
2018	National Council for Teachers of English, <i>Professional Dyads for Culturally Relevant Teaching</i> .
2016	Kennesaw State University, <i>Bagwell College of Education Research/Scholarship Grant</i>
2016 – 2017	Kennesaw State University, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, <i>Faculty Learning Community Grant</i>
2013	Georgia State University College of Education, <i>Dissertation Support Grant</i>
2011 – 2014	Southern Regional Education Board, <i>Doctoral Scholars Fellowship</i>
2001 – 2002	Ronald McNair Fellow at East Tennessee State University

## **SERVICE**

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Jan 2023 – Present	Public Language Award Committee, National Council for Teachers of English
Aug 2019 – 2022	Executive Board Member – Literacies and Languages for All, National Council for Teachers of English
March 2018 - 2019	L4GA Grant Reviewer – Georgia Department of Education
January 2018	Co-Founder of #BlackTeachersMatter, Student Organization, Kennesaw State University
2017 – 2019	Professional Liaison for Diversity – Bagwell College of Education, Kennesaw State University
2016 – Present	ELA Advisory Board – Georgia Department of Education
2016 – Present	Literacy Think Tank– Georgia Department of Education
2016 – 2017	Education Abroad Faculty Standing Committee – Kennesaw State University
2016 – 2019	Course Coordinator, ECE 4475: Designing and Sustaining Classroom Environments
Aug 2016 – Dec 2016	General Education Committee – Kennesaw State University
Sept 2016	Invited Presentation, “Focus on Climate: Cultural Relevance”. (Sep.2016). L4 Planning Retreat, GA, Department of Education, Cordele, GA.
Aug 2016	Invited Presentation, “Culturally Relevant Teaching: Valuing and Building on Students’ Cultural Resources”. (Aug. 2016). Pre-Planning Meeting, Red Oak Elementary, Stockbridge, GA.
Feb 2016	Invited Presentation, “Cultural Diversity”. (Feb. 2016). Title I Parent Workshop, Red Oak Elementary, Stockbridge, GA.
Aug 2016	Proposal Reviewer, Literacy Research Association (August)
2015 – Present	Proposal Reviewer, National Council for Teachers of English (February)
2015-2019	Co-Chair of KSU Conference on Literature for Children and Young Adults, Kennesaw State University
Fall 2013	Invited Roundtable Presentation, “Writing for Publications and Grants/Awards”. (Oct. 2013). Language and Literacy Professional Advising Week, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA
Fall 2013	Invited Presentation, “Culturally Relevant Pedagogy”. (Aug. 2013). Net-Q Grant International Student Session, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA
Spring 2012	Invited Roundtable Presentation; “Collaborative Writing Experiences”. (Mar. 2012). Language and Literacy, Professional Advising Week, Georgia State University, University, Atlanta, GA
2011 – 2012	President, Alpha Upsilon Alpha, Alpha Gamma Chapter

## **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

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- American Educational Research Association
- Black Child Development Institute- Atlanta
- Early Childhood Education Assembly (NCTE)
- Literacy Research Association
- Literacies and Language for ALL (NCTE)
- National Council for Teachers of English
- National Black Child Development Institute