

# How do hot and cool executive skills contribute to the development of reading comprehension in skilled and less skilled comprehenders across the lifespan?

**Kelly Cartwright, PhD**  
**Tuesday, December 5, 2017**  
**1:30 – 2:30**  
**1220 Benjamin Building**



Reading comprehension undergirds academic success for students across the lifespan. Students cannot succeed in any content area if they do not understand what they read. Although much is known about contributions of word reading and language processes to successful reading comprehension, these do not explain comprehension difficulties for all students. Thus, across the last decade, researchers have begun to look beyond traditional predictors of reading comprehension to higher order cognitive skills like executive functions, that may also underlie successful reading comprehension. Executive functions are higher order cognitive processes that support goal-directed behavior, such as the parallel goals of understanding and learning from text. My work has focused on the role of cool executive functions (i.e., purely cognitive skills, such as cognitive flexibility) and hot executive functions (i.e. socially- or emotionally-motivated skills, such as theory of mind). I will share findings on the contributions of hot and cool executive functions to language and reading comprehension from preschool to adulthood. These findings have implications for the development of interventions to foster successful comprehension in typical and special needs student populations.

**Kelly Cartwright** is Professor of Psychology, Neuroscience, and Teacher Preparation at Christopher Newport University. Kelly's research focuses on the nature of skilled reading comprehension and the neurocognitive and affective factors that underlie comprehension difficulties from preschool through adulthood in order to find appropriate interventions to serve those who struggle to understand text. Kelly works regularly with teachers in public and private schools throughout the US to better understand and improve comprehension instruction for struggling readers, and these experiences inform her research. Kelly's articles have appeared in journals such as *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *Journal of Child Language*, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *Journal of Literacy Research*, and *Journal of Research in Reading*. Her most recent book, *Executive Skills and Reading Comprehension*, was published with Guilford in 2015.

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