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## Cynthia Leung : I am USF St. Petersburg

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## I AM USF St. Petersburg: Dr. Cynthia Lueng

By: [John Husfield](#) | Source: Sonia Helton - Phone: 3-4537  
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### I AM USF ST. PETERSBURG!

[Cynthia Lueng](#) Thanks to **Cynthia Lueng's** enthusiasm and interest in early childhood literacy and learning, preschoolers at the YWCA/USF Family Village Child Development Center were involved in a project to explore how young children learn scientific vocabulary when their teachers read aloud children's informational books. This particular project was partially funded by the Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County through the USF Collaborative for Children, Families and communities. Cynthia is an Assistant Professor in the College of Education and teaches graduate and undergraduate literacy courses. Her work at Family Village Child Development Center demonstrated the power of reading aloud to young children and showed that 3 and 4 year olds can learn and talk about scientific concepts that are usually taught to older children.

Cynthia taught at universities in Delaware, Hong Kong, and North Dakota before coming to USF St. Petersburg. She worked in American Indian and multicultural education in North Dakota and educated elementary English teachers in Hong Kong where English is taught beginning in first grade. From working with students from diverse cultural backgrounds, Cynthia has developed an interest in the effects of students' ethnic identity on their responses to literature. Her findings indicate that literary experiences are influenced by the complex interaction of age, gender, personality traits, ethnic identity, and knowledge of other cultures. Her research has been published in journals in Canada, Hong Kong, and the United States.

Her hopes are to continue building relationships with the community and to promote partnerships whereby parents, care takers, and children will become active readers so they can build their vocabularies and develop critical thinking skills. Out of this, it is hoped that an appropriate curriculum will be developed that can be used with ethnically diverse groups of children in the school system.

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Please address your questions to Sonia Helton, BAY 204 Phone: 3-4537

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