



LITERACY™
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Newsletter



Literacy Research Association - April 2019

Congratulations to our Election Winners

Thank you to all of our LRA who participated in the 2019 election for LRA's Vice-President Elect and Board Members.

LRA would like to formally announce and congratulate:

David Yaden as the next **Vice-President Elect**, and **Gina Cervetti**, **Byeong-Young Cho**, and **Cynthia Brock** as incoming **Board Members**. Read more about the winners below.

Also, we want to thank the following for assisting in the nominations process: Betsy Baker (President-Elect), Gwendolyn McMillon (Vice President), and Althier Lazar (Secretary).

About the Election Winners



David Yaden



Gina Cervetti



Byeong-Young Cho



Cynthia Brock

David Yaden

David Yaden was the editor of the Journal of Literacy Research (2013-2016) and has also served as the chair of the Ethics Committee. He is a Professor of Language, Reading and Culture in the Department of Teaching, Learning and Socio-Cultural Studies in the College of Education at the University of Arizona. He is also Affiliate Faculty in two other university units - the Ph.D. Program in Second Language Acquisition and Teaching, an interdisciplinary doctoral program whose mission is dedicated to the development and application of humanistic inquiry for the betterment of the human condition.

Gina Cervetti

Gina Cervetti has been a member of the LRA Research Committee as well as the JLR Editorial Review Board since 2016. She has also served in several LRA annual conferences as a proposal reviewer, presenter, discussant, and chair. Cervetti served as an Area Chair (Area 12) from 2012-2015. She is an Associate Professor of Literacy, Language, and Culture at University of Michigan.

Byeong-Young Cho

Byeong-Yong Cho has been an active LRA member since 2007. He is currently a member of the JLR Editorial Review Board and has served as chair, discussant, and reviewer for LRA's annual conference. Cho is an Associate Professor of Literacy, Language and Culture at the University of Pittsburgh and a Research Scientist at Pitt's Learning Research and Development Center.

Cynthia Brock

Cynthia Brock has been an active LRA member since 1991. She has reviewed proposals for the annual conference and has contributed to the JLR and LR:TMP. She has served as co-chairs for Areas 1 and 8 as well as on the Early Career Award Committee and the Doctoral Student ICG. Brock is a professor at the University of Wyoming where she holds the Wyoming Excellence Endowed Chair in Elementary Literacy Education.

Award Committee Updates

In This Issue...

1. [Election Results](#)
2. [Award Committee Update](#)
3. [Perspectives from Past Presidents](#)
4. [P&L Interview with Advocate](#)
5. [A Historical Note about ARF](#)
6. [Member News](#)
7. [Member Publications](#)
8. [LRA Member Survey](#)
9. [Call for Chapters](#)

Member News

Laura C. Chávez-Moreno, LRA Member, won the [2019 Outstanding Dissertation Award from AERA's Bilingual Education Research SIG](#).

Pat Edwards won an award at AERA: [Scholars of Color Distinguished Career Contribution Award](#)

Arlette Willis won an award at AERA: [John J. Gumperz Memorial Award for Distinguished Lifetime Scholarship from Language and Social Processes SIG of AERA](#)

Member Publications

David K. Dickinson and **Ann B. Morse** have authored, *Connecting Through Talk: Nourishing Children's Development with Language*, published by Brookes Publishing. This book reviews research on attachment, executive functioning/self-regulation, theory of mind and literacy and builds the case that language and the interactions that foster its emergence play a pivotal role in the development of all these interwoven strands of development. Programs designed to enhance parental support for early language are also reviewed.

Joanne Kilgour Dowdy published her 14th book, [Minding their Own Business](#). This book features black women who have created successful businesses in their communities. [A review from the Trinidad Express can be found here](#).

Loh, C. E., Choo, S., & Beavis, C. (Eds.). (2018). *Literature education in the Asia-Pacific: Policies, practices and perspectives in global times* (PP. 245). New York: Routledge

Jennifer Reichenberg and **Mary McVeep** published *When your lesson is bombing: The mediation of perplexity in the development of a reflective stance toward teaching* in the April 2019 issue of Teaching and Teacher Education. This study follows a pre-service literacy clinician into her novice year as a kindergarten teacher and examines how various foci, scaffolds, and stimuli

The following award committees are now accepting nominations! Read below for more information.

The Albert J. Kingston Award

The professional service work we do can sometimes feel thankless. [The Albert J. Kingston Award](#) aims to make sure members of the Literacy Research Association who provide outstanding service to the organization feel appreciated and celebrated!

The committee needs your help by nominating LRA members deserving of this recognition. Nominations for the 2019 Albert J. Kingston Award are now being accepted, and the process involves only two items: 1.) a nomination letter, which may be co-authored with colleagues and 2.) the nominee's CV. Any LRA member may nominate someone for this prestigious award. All nominees must have been an LRA member for at least five years.

Please get your nominations together and submit them today!

The Albert J. Kingston Award is awarded annually to honor an LRA member for distinguished contributions of service to LRA. The notable honor has been presented annually since 1985. [A complete list of past recipients is featured on the LRA website, along with complete nomination guidelines.](#) The Albert J. Kingston Committee encourages you to nominate someone for this honor in 2019.

Early Career Achievement Award

The Early Career Achievement Award is awarded annually to honor the new members of the LRA community who have been actively involved in research, teaching, and service for approximately 3-7 years, and have demonstrated outstanding commitment and accomplishment.

Nominees for the Early Career Achievement Award can be of any rank. However, nominees must: (1) be members of LRA (for at least three years, but not necessarily consecutively) (2) possess a terminal doctoral degree, and (3) have worked in the field seven years or less from the conferral date of their degree to the posted deadline for this competition.

Any LRA member may be nominated by a peer member of LRA through a recommendation letter outlining the candidate's contributions to the field of literacy research and the nominee's participation in LRA. **Please submit nomination letters to [Julia Lopez-Robertson](#) by April 15, 2019.**

For more information, please visit the LRA website [here](#).

P. David Pearson Scholarly Influence Award

The P. David Pearson Scholarly Influence Award began in 2013. This annual award honors, in P. David Pearson's name, the author(s) of an article/chapter/book written at least 5 years prior to the nomination, that has demonstrably and positively influenced/impacted literacy practices and/or policies within district, school and/or classroom settings.

We encourage you to think about influential materials that have affected your professional work and submit nominations by **September 5, 2019**, for consideration in **2019**.

Nominators should demonstrate how the findings or implications of the article/chapter/book have been used directly by educators to craft influential policies and/or initiate and implement innovative classroom practices.

The submission packet should include a letter of nomination outlining the case with supporting evidence (along with the key piece of writing, author CVs and documentation of the influence of the piece on instruction and/or policy). Please submit to [Jung Kim](#). Further information can be found on the [LRA website](#).

So What Did You Learn at LRA? Attending to the Underlife Challenges to Literacy Research Paradigms at LRA Conferences

Perspectives from Past Presidents

Submitted by Richard Beach, Professor Emeritus of Literacy Education, University of Minnesota

Having attended LRA conferences since the 1980s, I recall that these conference sessions were often shaped by adherence to certain prevailing dominant paradigms, topics, or approaches. While I learned a lot from these, I was also often intrigued when attendees or discussants voiced deviant, alternative perspectives challenging the underlying paradigms, topics, or approaches shaping presenters research. Voicing these perspectives represents what Erving Goffman described as expressing underlife challenges to status quo institutional practices.

In this column, I briefly describe my own, subjective sense listening to these percolating underlife expressions since the 1980s. I do so to make the case for creating spaces at LRA for expression of these alternative underlife voices that can lead to challenges and changes in paradigms shaping literacy research. As members

mediate the participant's engagement with perplexity and her reflective stance in both settings.

Chase Young and Evan Ortlieb recently published *Implementing Readers Theater in Secondary Classrooms in Reading Psychology* to address the dearth of research on using RT beyond elementary school.

LRA Governance Member Survey

All LRA members are being asked to take a few minutes to complete a survey on LRA Governance. An email was sent to all members with the link to access the survey. Check your inbox for the email "**We Need your Input: LRA Member Survey.**"

The LRA President has appointed an ad hoc committee to examine the governance of LRA and to make recommendations for improving access, communications, and connections among members. The purpose of LRA (as stated in the by-laws) is: "...to promote the study and dissemination of information about literacy, literacy instruction, and related fields (e.g., literacy in content areas, teacher education, public policy, information studies, and multimedia)."

Survey responses must be completed by today, April 10th.

Call for Chapters: Handbook of Research on Cultivating Literacy in Diverse and Multilingual Classrooms

Georgios Neokleous together with colleagues Anna Krulatz and Raichle Farrelly are in the process of editing a volume titled *Handbook of Research on Cultivating Literacy in Diverse and Multilingual Classrooms* and are requesting chapter proposals. [More information and instruction can be found here.](#)

Submit Your News!

Have news you want to submit? News submissions from members are due the 15th of every month! You can submit your news on our website! [Submit your News!](#)



began to take these critiques seriously, they began to rethink and revise their theories about literacy research, resulting in adoption of new paradigms over time.

While one may assume that LRA members are always open to honoring expression of these alternative perspectives, as a former Board member and President in 2013, I believe that it's critical that we continually attend to expressions of these perspectives so that we don't become stuck with adhering to a status quo paradigm resulting in not breaking new ground in our research. Here are some of my recollections of these underlife challenges for the past four decades:

1980s. Much of the research presented in the 1980s reflected a cognitive-processing model of literacy instruction, focusing on reading or composing cognitive strategies, often through use of experimental study designs. This included research on effects of prior knowledge/schema on comprehension, as well as attention on writers use of cognitive strategies to engage audiences.

As someone whose qualitative research built on a reader-response/transactional perspective that challenges some of the assumptions associated with this cognitive-processing paradigm, I recall being an outlier at many sessions in the 1980s, although my composition research was based primarily on a cognitive-processing model. So I perked up in listening to alternative reactions from a socio-cultural perspective calling for the need for more attention to contextual aspects of students' experiences, attitudes/engagement, or classroom contexts shaping reading and composing processes, suggesting the need for more qualitative research capturing those elements, resulting in changing my approach to composition research. And, at the many sessions on comprehension research on focusing on decoding of letters/words, I heard voices noting to need to focus more on whole texts also from the perspective of based on social-cultural literacies theories.

1990s. In attending sessions in the 1990s, the nascent alternative voices of the 1980s led to the increasing adoption of socio-cultural/social literacies perspectives on responding to and creating texts as well as increased use of qualitative, ethnographic, discourse analysis, and case-study research. Some of this shift reflected application of multidisciplinary perspectives as well as use of ethnographic methods to study literacy learning in different communities/contexts. Given reactions to decoding letters/word from the 1980s, there was also more attention to whole-language instruction, as well as increases in multicultural education topics.

At the same time, I recall new voices challenging the lack of attention to the effects of differences in race, class, gender, and sexuality in this research as well as the need to attend to cultural differences in language(s) related to the growing diversity of student populations.

2000s. The alternative voices from the 1990s led to increased attention to multicultural instruction and second-language instruction, with a recognition of the need for effective instruction for non-dominant students. There was also a continuation of a focus on qualitative research methods associated related to how literary practices are enacted within specific social and cultural spaces, as well as a focus on use of digital literacies and more complex discourse analysis methods for examining classroom interactions.

The increased involvement of federal government in literacy instruction associated with the National Reading Panel report issued in 2000, Reading First grants, and No Child Left Behind testing mandates, led to more focus on research on teacher education/professional development related to these policy initiatives. The alternative voices during this decade posed questions about these increased federal mandates related to issues of validity in the use of standardized literacy assessments in literacy research, particularly when employed with students from non-dominant communities, leading calls for more research on the use of formative assessments methods.

2010s. Sessions from 2010-2018 drew on alternative voices from previous decades with an increased focus on social and cultural contexts shaping literacy learning and instruction based on race, class, and gender from a wider set of transdisciplinary perspectives, as well as a focus on issues of teacher education and assessment. For example, Areas for the 2017 Tampa conference receiving the highest number of proposals included not only pre-service and in-service teacher education, but also Social, Cultural, and Political Issues of Literacy Practices in and Out of School and Literacy Learning and Practice in Multilingual/ Multicultural Settings.

New alternative voices called for more attention to affect/emotions and new-materialism shaping literacy practices, as well as expressions in the 2017 and 2018 Town Hall Meetings of the need LRA itself as an organization to continue to support diversity efforts.

All of these recollections represent my own subjective experiences; other LRA members may recall totally different, even opposing experiences. For a more valid analysis of shifts in LRA conferences across time, I invite LRA researchers to do a systematic content analysis of session topics to document and contextualize shifts across time based on certain historical factors. I also invite future LRA conference attendees to attend to these alternative voices as crystal balls for potential future developments your own and others' literacy research for the next four decades.

Given the need to include voices expressing these emerging alternative perspectives on the program leading to the evolutions noted above, LRA leaders, Area Chairs, and proposal reviewers to consider a number of policy issues. In formulating a conference theme, it's important that use of that the theme be applied in inclusive rather than exclusive ways for review of proposals, for example, as in giving certain proposals higher ratings for conforming to a theme, ratings that could exclude alternative voices. Given that proposals are assigned to particular Areas, it's important that the categories defining assignments of proposals to these Areas serve to invite and not limit consideration of alternative voices, as well as the need to establish new Areas as

evident in the creation of the International Research on Literacy Teaching and Learning Area. It's also important to invite plenary speakers who provide us with outsider, alternative perspectives.

All of this represents a balancing act between being open to entertaining idiosyncratic, novel perspectives and while also preserving certain time-honored perspectives so that both perspectives support the evolution of our literary research.

P&L Interview with Advocate

Each month in 2019, the LRA Policy and Legislative Committee will interview an LRA member who is active in policy and advocacy. This month, we share a short conversation between Amy Broemmel, P&L committee member, and Renita Schmidt, LRA member from Iowa.

Broemmel: What is the policy issue you have been working on?

Schmidt: The issue I have been working on is one related to high-stakes reading assessments with young children in Iowa. Our state uses a CBM testing system called FAST (Formative Assessment System for Teachers) published at the University of Minnesota. At the beginning of the study, FAST scores determined whether or not students were promoted to fourth grade. By the time the article was published, that part of the law was ignored because the legislature did not want to pay the extra money it would cost to provide an intensive summer reading program for students who were at risk. So essentially, they wanted to retain children although there is no research that supports retention, but they didn't want to offer any extra money to provide support for children who did not score at the proficient level on the test.



Broemmel: What have you done to work on the issue and what has been successful?

Schmidt: I've done a research study about teachers talk related to the implementation of this high stakes testing regime in our state. The article can be found [here](#). We argue that this efficient way of testing students is harmful and likely to move into secondary classroom settings in the near future.

Broemmel: What advice do you have for LRA members working on policy and advocacy?

Schmidt: Speak up and against practices like this. Volunteer to sit on literacy advising boards or your state Department of Education committees. The literacy world is being overrun by educational psychology and special education research that is more about surface level reading and more consistent with quantitative research privileged by the National Reading Panel and No Child Left Behind. Sociopolitical topics like the ones we discuss in this article are too often considered a "soft" topic to experimental/science of reading researchers and one that is not really related to student reading while many of us know the importance of considering sociocultural theories of reading when it comes to reading success.

Professional Organizations Looking at the Past to Envision a Future: A Historical Note About the American Reading Forum (ARF)

Submitted by:

Vicky Cardullo, Auburn University
LRA Member and Chair of the American Reading Forum

Norman Stahl, University of Northern Illinois, Emeritus
LRA member and Past-President, Past-Chair of the America Reading Forum,
and Former NRC Historian

Nance Wilson, SUNY Courtland
LRA member, Past-Chair of the American Reading Forum

David Reinking, University of Georgia
LRA member and Past-President, Member of the American Reading Forum

Gary Moorman, Appalachian State, Emeritus
Past-Chair American Reading Forum and Former LRA Member

Literacy professionals join professional organizations to engage and share with colleagues about their work. Those organizations bring professionals together to advance knowledge about and the practice of literacy instruction and research. Yet,

each professional organization offers a unique focus, mission, and culture, which prompts some professionals to join more than one organization. For instance, many Literacy Research Association (LRA) members are also members of the American Reading Forum (ARF). Dual membership in both organizations has been common for decades, long before the National Reading Conference (NRC) became LRA in 2010-11. The two organizations share an interesting, overlapping history dating to the late 1970s when ARF was founded, and that history may offer some insights into challenges facing LRA today. However, longtime members of both organizations may not be fully informed about that history. Many have inaccurate or incomplete understandings of how ARF came into existence, which may lead to misunderstandings and misconceptions about the formation of ARF and about what insights might be learned from their entwined histories.

Specifically, a common belief is that the reason ARF emerged as a separate organization was a disagreement among NRC members about Florida's failure to pass the proposed Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the US Constitution. NRC did pass a resolution in December, 1977¹ to no longer hold the conference in Florida and to meet only in states that had passed the ERA. The resolution was to take effect in 1979 with the 1978 conference held in Florida "under protest." An interesting footnote is that, although Florida did not pass the ERA, its house of representatives overwhelming voted in favor of it four times (1972, with a vote of 91 to 4; and again in 1975, 1979, and 1980). However, on all 4 occasions, the vote in Florida's Senate did not reach the threshold for passage. Further, NRC's resolution was short lived with the conference returning in 1984 to the well-liked Don Caesar Hotel in Florida, after conferences in Texas and California, and subsequently in other non-ERA states.

Nonetheless, both primary and secondary sources demonstrate that the situation created by the actions of the Florida legislature and the policy adopted by the NRC Board of Directors did not prompt the formation of ARF. Documents in the LRA archives and oral data offer a degree of proof that ARF was not founded by a group of NRC members who thought meeting in Florida was more important than the ERA. Historical documents available in LRA's current archives reveal a more accurate and more complex, interesting, and informative picture. Those documents include a published history of ARF's origins authored by Bob Jerrolds, then a professor at the University of Georgia. Another is a 1980 memo written by Harry Singer, then NRC president, and a letter to him from Albert Kingston. Both were luminaries in the field, with the latter still honored and remembered today within LRA through the annual award of the Albert Kingston Award for lifetime service to a deserving LRA member.

The correspondence touches on the formation of the American Reading Conference (the first name for ARF). The letters indicate that the formation of ARF and the consequent threat of losing many disgruntled NRC members to another organization was only a problematic and unwelcome complicating factor for NRC. The real issue for NRC was the expected decline in attendance at the annual meeting for logistical and financial reasons created by moving the conference to San Diego in 1980. The formation of ARF only exacerbated that decision and created an existential threat to NRC. As the memo from President Singer to the NRC Board of Directors clearly indicates, he believed that the decision to move NRC out of Florida to the West Coast was a mistake and that the Board should reconsider that decision. Perhaps ironically, given the dominant narrative about the formation of ARF as a reaction to the ERA issue, Estes, on NRC Letterhead, stated: "the issues of ERA and Florida vs not Florida are surely not the problem."

So, if it was not the ERA and consequent move out of Florida, what were the reasons ARF formed as an alternative to NRC at the time? The answer to that question is evident in these documents. For several years prior to 1980, dissatisfaction with and concern about the direction of NRC was percolating among its members, including many of its founders, leaders, and past presidents (e.g, George and Evelyn Spache, Wayne Otto, Betty, and Al Raygor, and Gordon Gray). Even Kingston, one of the founders and stalwarts of NRC, acknowledged in his letter to Singer the essence and reasonableness of those concerns and his ambivalence about them when he stated, "I certainly have done a great deal to help NRC develop to be the viable organization it is today. [But,] I find myself agreeing with both the NRC leadership and those who hope to create an organization like NRC used to be." His memo also refers to his discussions with those who had decided to form their own organization and their own conference. He pointed out their frustration that their concerns had been ignored by the leadership and that they rejected the notion that they had "stabbed NRC in the back." Jerrolds claimed that there were even some threats of professional retaliation against those who did not remain loyal to NRC.

But, what were the specific concerns? The answer to that question, too, can be found in these documents. Those who were dissatisfied thought NRC was becoming too large and too much like other organizations, such as AERA where the program was packed with presentations with little time for extended dialog. They thought NRC was moving away from its roots aimed at creating a relaxing venue and atmosphere where professors interested in reading and their doctoral students could informally have serious discussion and dialog. According to Smith in his letter to Jerrolds and Dinnan, students and younger scholars wanted "to present their research and ideas . . . in a forum that could be helpful and rigorous without . . . savage attacks . . . and to meet and talk with some of the leaders in the field without being cast as sycophants. Further, the more senior NRC members saw the original intent of NRC was to get away from the stresses of a university environment "where administrators and tenure, promotion, and merit-pay committees counted products in terms of instructional hours generated, number of scholarly publications made, and number of articles published." There was also a concern that NRC leadership at the time had not been well-managed financially. These themes emerge within and across the archived documents.

Another question that might be asked, is 'What does the decision of NRC to move out of Florida for the sake of the ERA, and its timing, say about the role women played in

our professional organizations of that era?' There is little doubt that the gender balance of the professoriate in our field (and most others) of that era favored males. However, despite that imbalance, a number of women were directly involved with both NRC and the formation of ARF in the late 1970s and early 1980s. For example, Jerrolds recounts, "as best I remember" an informal dinner at NRC, attended by "three women and four men," as the start of the conversation about forming ARF. And, Sylvia Hutchinson, a faculty member at the University of Georgia, served on its first Board. Harry Singer's 1980 memo on letterhead lists NRC's officers, including Trika Smith-Burke as Treasurer and Jane Larson as Secretary. Irene Athey was a member of the board, and Priscilla Drum was Publications Chair. And, NRC had elected 3 women Presidents before the end of the 1980s (Irene Athey, Lenore Ringler, and Trika Smith-Burke). More importantly, the fact that a decision was made in 1977 to move out of Florida in support of the ERA suggests either a rising voice of women in NRC at the time, greater enlightenment among their male colleagues, or both.

There may be more general lessons or reminders for us today as LRA members looking back at the historical events surrounding ARF's origins. Foremost, to us, it makes clear the fragility of professional organizations in achieving a delicate balance between honoring the past, accepting the present, and moving toward an uncertain future. When profound shifts in that balance occur quickly, there is potential for tensions and frustration, which can escalate to turmoil, personal stress, divisiveness, and conflict. That escalation may be more likely when tensions and frustrations are ignored or sublimated.

The antidote may be open and respectful dialog. Without it, there is a risk of backdoor politics, disenfranchisement, and, in extreme cases, a separating of ways. What might have happened if the individuals who felt the need to form ARF and those who remained faithful to NRC had engaged in more dialog with a commitment to bridging the ambivalence that Kingston expressed? What if both groups had been more reflective about the limitations of their own views and more willing to see the viewpoints of others. Winning arguments, with the winners imposing their views on others, is not a formula for an open and welcoming, indeed viable, organization.

Another lesson is that a balance needs to be carefully maintained between our passionate commitments and strongly held views and the pragmatics of acting on them and bringing them to fruition. A well-intentioned move to support the ERA amendment created existential threats to the organization, while being essentially symbolic, and was soon abandoned. Perhaps there were means, less disruptive to the organization and more effective in a larger sense, to show that support. Put more colloquially, we have to think equally with our hearts and our heads.

Although both NRC/LRA and ARF have evolved to be much different today, reflecting important changes in the socio-cultural context and vast changes in virtually all aspects of our field and its work, some vestiges of these historical differences remain today. For example, ARF still meets every year in Florida. It has a Chair of an elected Board, not an elected President. The ARF program, although much more formalized and typical than its founders envisioned, still has a session format labeled "Problems Court," which allows for extended discussion, and there is an "Advancing Literacies" format to create critical dialogue between participants and audience. ARF has remained a smaller, more intimate group, with fewer sessions, all of which never start before 9am and are finished precisely at 5pm, followed by much time for socializing, networking, and informal discussion, as well as a leisurely walk on the beach to watch the morning sunrise. In a sense, ARF is a time capsule of NRC/LRA's origins.

As members of both LRA and ARF, we find those respective memberships to fulfill somewhat different, but essentially complementary needs in our professional lives. Both organizations address and serve a commitment to advancing literacy as a means to better and to enrich the lives of all people. We think the field is well served by having both organizations.

¹Minutes and all other documents referred to in this article are available in LRA's online historical archives. The authors wish to thank Dixie Massey, LRA's current historian, for providing access to the archives. We also thank all members past and present who have contributed to this valuable resource. Readers interested in examining the documents we cite, as well as other interesting historical documents, should contact Professor Massey.