



NEWSLETTER



LITERACY RESEARCH ASSOCIATION NEWS



TOP NEWS OF THE MONTH

Conference Chair and
Associate Conference
Chair Message



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74th Annual Conference

Award Nominations

Announcements, JLR,
& Job Board



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Dear LRA Community,

By now you have submitted your conference proposal. The Conference Committee is planning several innovative and exciting initiatives this year. We're inviting multilingual presentations for Area 8 as a pilot. The Call for Proposals is out, and you may submit and present in your preferred language (i.e., languages other than English). Multilingual conference proposals will be due on May 1st.

The Board of Directors has established and instituted the President's **Honorable Recognition of a K-12 Teacher**. This will be the first time that LRA's President will choose a teacher who has influenced and/or had a profound impact on their/his/her life to be acknowledged at our annual conference during the President's Address. The teacher's bio and picture will be included in the conference program.

You will have a variety of special sessions from which to choose. One special session is reserved for graduate students with speakers and issues of their choice. Area Chairs for even numbered areas are invited to submit a proposal. We're organizing a special panel session to include educators from colleges/schools of education and State Departments of Education personnel, from diverse geographical regions, to share their partnership journeys. They will address the ways in which agency is centered among all stakeholders doing good research-informed literacy-related work for children, adolescents, and communities. All accepted special sessions will be added to the annual conference program.

We have four brilliant scholars with varying research interests scheduled for the Integrative Research Review Panel, so we hope that you will be able to stay through Saturday.

Regina Ciphrah is the CEO and Principal of Verbalizing Visions, LLC. A former high school chemistry teacher, and a University of South Carolina alumna, her dissertation explored the intricate world of genetics and breast cancer health disparities. Her dissertation illuminated the transformative power of transdisciplinary curriculum. Regina has a special passion for STEM education and is a champion of culturally sustaining STEM pedagogies, anchored within Gullah/Geechee communities.



Kate Kedley is Associate Professor in the College of Education at Rowan University. Kate's research centers on critical literacy and education, public engagement, LGBTQ and young adult literature; language education, and social and educational movements in Honduras. Kate holds graduate certificates in Professional Writing and in Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies. Kate is a former English language arts and driver's education teacher in Iowa, Arizona, and Honduras.



Zhihui Fang is Professor and Head of Reading and Literacy Education, in the School of Teaching and Learning, at the University of Florida. His expertise includes language and literacy learning, reading teacher education, and functional linguistics in education. Zhihui's recent research explores the roles of language and literacy in disciplinary meaning making. He has been active in promoting a linguistically informed, responsive, and embedded pedagogy for literacy instruction across content areas.



Aria Razfar is Professor of Literacy, Language, and Culture and an affiliate with Linguistics and Medical Education at the University of Illinois, Chicago. Aria has established himself as one of the leading scholars in the fields of applied linguistics, education, and learning sciences. The U.S. Department of Education and NSF have provided major funding for his research and he's one of the lead editors of the *Journal of Literacy Research*. Aria's work is anchored in communities whose language practices have been historically marginalized in

many formal and official spaces of society; thus, there is an explicit social justice character to his research.



Finally, we've invited two outstanding scholars to present their research for the Friday Plenary Sessions. They are looking forward to sharing how their work uplifts and empowers students, teachers, families, and communities. The History ICG is working on an Atlanta cultural event that you will not want to miss. And last, but certainly not least, the Conference Committee will engage attendees in **LRA Trivia** and a **Scavenger Hunt**. Please stay tuned for updates on all of these events!

We owe much gratitude to Area Chairs and Reviewers for their dedication, commitment, time, and effort to ensure that we have exceptional sessions at our annual conference. We realize that the quality of our conference depends—in large part—on the expertise and hard work of these LRA members.

If you have not done so, please sign up to review proposals. Your assistance is very much needed and appreciated!

Fenice B. Boyd, Conference Chair
Cynthia H. Brock, Associate Conference Chair

74th Annual CONFERENCE



THE WESTIN PEACHTREE
PLAZA, ATLANTA GA



DECEMBER 4 - DECEMBER 7, 2024

“EMPOWERMENT
LITERACY(IES): MAKING
‘GOOD TROUBLE’ THAT
ACTUATES AGENCY”



STAR MENTORING PROGRAM

APPLICATION PROCESS

The STAR Mentor Program was initiated by the Ethnicity, Race, and Multilingualism Committee (ERM) of the Literacy Research Association (LRA) to promote excellence in literacy-related research and support researchers of color and/or researchers whose first language is not English in the early years of their academic careers. The central goal of the program is to support researchers who promote high-quality, literacy-related research that addresses the issues and opportunities related to diversity.

The program is designed to accept small cohorts of scholars of color who are entering their first year OR within their first two years of their first academic tenure track position. The program will match each scholar with a mentor and support the mentor relationship for two years. The mentoring relationship will consist of at least two communications each semester, participation in STAR program events at two annual [fall] LRA Conferences, and participation in one spring writing retreat (held in conjunction with the AERA conference). STAR fellows and mentors must be LRA members in good standing throughout their participation in the program.



Mentoring/support activities that might occur throughout the fellowship include: (a) reviewing manuscripts, (b) providing logistical advice about how to balance work/life in an academic career; (c) offering information about grant-getting and publishing venues; (d) creating venues for data analysis workshops; and (e) providing access to useful information for navigating the complex sociopolitical culture of the academy. Like any relationship, the mentor relationship will grow and evolve over time; therefore, the program is designed to be flexible and responsive to participants' needs.

Scholars of color applying to the STAR mentoring program must be entering their first year OR second year of their first tenure-track academic appointment. A committee made up of the STAR program director, the ERM committee chair, a former STAR fellow, a former STAR mentor, and the STAR program liaison [to the LRA Board] will review applications and nominate mentors for each accepted scholar. Nominated mentors will be invited to participate by the STAR program director. All STAR program participants must agree to commit two years to the mentoring relationship.

[Click Here to Apply!](#)



EARLY CAREER AWARD

NOMINATIONS

To be eligible for consideration for the Award, an individual must:

- Have been a member of LRA for at least three (but not necessarily consecutive) years; and
- Have graduated with a doctoral degree no more than seven years from the date of nomination.

Eligible members may either self-nominate or be nominated by another LRA member. Nominations are in the form of a letter describing the nominee's qualifications for the Award, with priority given to the nominee's achievements in: 1) research; 2) publication and impact of contributions to the field; 3) service; and 4) teaching.

All nominated members who meet the eligibility requirement will be contacted by the committee chair and asked to submit:

- A letter of support from their home institutions;
- A current curriculum vita, including all publications, degrees, honors and awards, and service on editorial boards of research journals; and
- A written statement by the nominee that describes their professional growth and research agenda.

Nominations should be sent to Kristin Conradi Smith at conradi@wm.edu.

Nominations are due May 15th. Nominees will then be contacted and asked to submit a packet for review by the committee (due June 15th).

Announcements

2024 Positioning Theory Research Conference

July 28 to August 1, 2024

University of Eastern Finland, Kuopio (On-site and in-person only)

2024 Positioning Theory Conference Call for Proposals with dates: [Call for Proposals Link](#)

2024 Positioning Theory Virtual Talk Series:
[Registration Link](#)

Member Book Releases

Composing Print, Digital, and Multimodal Texts in Classrooms

By: Dorian L. Harrison and Tiffany A. Flowers

Please follow this [link](#) to order an advance copy of the text.

Beyond the Basics

By: Tiffany A. Flowers and Hiawatha Smith

Please follow this [link](#) to order a copy of the text.

Have an article for the newsletter? Email us at:
lrahq@literacyresearchassociation.org

Journal of Literacy Research (JLR)
CALL FOR EDITORS

The *Journal of Literacy Research*, a publication of the Literacy Research Association, seeks applications for a new editorial team to begin their term with Volume 57(1).

- Editors shall serve a four-year term with no more than two served consecutively.
- Editors serve as action editors overseeing the review process for individual manuscripts and make publication decisions about these manuscripts.
- Key qualities sought for the position of editorial team include a record of scholarship conducting original research; editorial experience among members of the team; prior professional collaboration among members; organizational skills to oversee the editorial process and meet deadlines; a commitment to equity and diversity of theories, literacies, and practices across their work; and an ability to work effectively with reviewers, the publisher, and the LRA Publications Committee.
- A strength of the editorial team is one that is composed of different theoretical, methodological, and topical areas of expertise among members.
- The editorial team must submit a detailed annual report to the Board of Directors at least two weeks before the annual conference each year. The report must include data from that year and the impact factor of the journal.
- Limited funds are available to support the editorial team. Funding is contingent upon yearly Board approval after review of the annual report.
- The new editorial team will work with the current *JLR* editorial team and the LRA Publications Committee during the transition period, beginning Summer/Fall 2024.
- The new editorial team will be responsible for completing the publication process for issues that may have been filled prior to the commencement of their term.

Application Procedures

Send an electronic letter of intent and supporting materials to the LRA Publications Chair: Melody Zoch, mzoch@uncg.edu, no later than **May 31st, 2024, by midnight EST**. Applications will be reviewed by a search committee composed of members of the LRA Publications Committee and a current *JLR* editor, which will make a recommendation to the LRA Board of Directors for approval. Applicants will be told of the decision about the new editorial team by August 1, 2024.

Include the following materials:

1. A letter of intent including the following information:
 - a. Professional information for each member of the applicant team
 - i. Full name
 - ii. Professional title
 - iii. Academic affiliation
 - iv. Contact information
 - b. Detailed description of prior editing experience for each member of the applicant team
 - c. Description of how the institution for each member of the applicant team will support the editorship (e.g., course release, financial support, reduction of committee work, graduate assistantship, office space, technology)
 - d. An explanation of the diversity represented in the proposed editorial team (e.g., theoretical, methodological, and topical areas of expertise among members).
 - e. Description of the applicant team's prior professional collaborations

Journal of Literacy Research (JLR)
CALL FOR EDITORS

- f. Description of the applicant team's assessment of the journal's current strengths and areas of improvement
 - g. Description of the applicant team's editorial policy statement, including their proposed manuscript review procedures
 - h. A plan for transitioning *JLR* from the current editorial board to the new one
 - i. A detailed budget for costs associated with editing the journal
2. Full curriculum vitae for each member of the applicant team
 3. Letter from each team member's institution, indicating the level of support for devoting time and resources to the editorial team should the team be chosen (a single letter is sufficient if all applicants are from the same institution)

Deadline for Applications is: May 31st, 2024, by midnight EST.



LITERACY
RESEARCH
ASSOCIATION

SPECIAL ISSUE CALL “CRITICAL RELIGIOUS LITERACY”

Biases against religious and ethnonational groups have been an unfortunate historical truth around the world. The latest Israel-Hamas conflict has once again brought this issue to the forefront on a global scale and its impact in schools and non-school learning spaces is evident. Recent increases in oppressive discrimination, hate speech, and violence are rooted in negative attitudes toward Muslim and Jewish communities, and in turn have perpetuated strong sentiments of Islamophobia and antisemitism (Katz, 2018; Zempi & Awan, 2019). While the current moment inspires this call, religion and literacy have always been intertwined (Sarroub & Schroeder, 2023; Skerrett, 2014) and this special issue seeks to highlight this point.

Given these facts, there is a growing need for literacy scholars to examine how prejudices impact literacy practices in K-12 contexts and beyond. More broadly, the role of religion, religious literacy, and critical religious literacy cannot be underscored enough in how it shapes public and private discourses. According to the American Academy of Religion’s *Religious Literacy Guidelines*, religion, like every other socially organized human activity, provides frameworks for “interpreting human purpose, action, and self-understanding. Religious traditions have functioned throughout human history to inspire and justify the full range of acts and attitudes from the heroic to the heinous.” (Moore, 2007). The role of religion and religious literacy in society, especially public spaces, has been a contentious issue for centuries, especially in the Western world. While many thought the role of religion would be decreasing with the rise of democracies, secularization, and liberalization, paradoxically, the opposite has happened, especially in the United States (McGraw, 2010; Schuck, 2011). Rather than ignoring the role of religion, it is imperative for literacy scholars to critically engage the topic in their scholarship, teaching, and advocacy.

As stated by the American Academy of Religion, we also recognize the need to integrate scholarship that foregrounds religious literacy and critical religious literacies (Moore 2007; Moore & Pandith, 2018). This includes incorporating strategies that have been developed through research within diverse school populations (e.g., public schools and private religious schools) and have proven to successfully diminish the frequency of discriminatory incidents.

In this special issue, we call on literacy scholars to submit *Insights* essays and/or empirical research that speak to the role of religion in literacy education “from the heroic to the heinous” and everything in between from a broad range of perspectives (i.e., non-Western, Western, Indigenous) and contexts (private religious to public secular schools, as well as out-of-school

contexts). We invite critical religious perspectives that examine the role of religion, religious symbolism, religious texts, and religious hegemony in shaping local, national, and global events and understandings. We are particularly interested in articles that 1) support literacy researchers and educators to discern accurate and credible texts about diverse religious traditions, expressions, and movements; 2) help literacy researchers recognize the internal diversity, variation, and contestations within religious traditions; 3) show how religions have shaped literacy practices across diverse disciplines, domains of knowledge, and epistemologies; and 4) critically examine how literacy has been shaped by religion and the histories of individuals, communities, nations, and regions ranging from conflict to cooperation.

Please submit manuscripts by April 30th, 2024.

Submit your manuscript to the *Journal of Literacy Research* (JLR) through SAGE Track here: <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jlr>

For specific questions please contact the JLR editorial team at JLRUSC@mailbox.sc.edu

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The Journal of Literacy Research (JLR) is an interdisciplinary peer-reviewed journal that publishes research related to literacy and literacy education from preschool through adulthood. JLR publishes research and scholarly papers, including original research and essays in its Insights column. Articles represent diverse research paradigms and theoretical orientations, and they employ a variety of methodologies and modes of inquiry. JLR serves as a forum for sharing innovative areas of research and pedagogy and encourages papers that disrupt traditional notions of literacy and literacy instruction. It has contributed to the advancement of literacy and literacy education research for over 50 years. *JLR* is a forum for sharing innovative research and pedagogy that considers a broad range of topics encompassing instruction and assessment, policy development. This journal is a member of the [Committee on Publication Ethics \(COPE\)](#).

Impact Factor: **2.6** /_5-Year Impact Factor: **3.2**

<https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jlr>

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