



LITERACY™  
RESEARCH  
ASSOCIATION

# Newsletter



Literacy Research Association - March 2019

## Cast your Vote: Elections Now Live

The 2019-2020 Vice President and Board of Directors Election is now open to all LRA members.

LRA uses an online ballot to gather votes. Each member will be allowed to vote once and all votes will be anonymous.

Current/active LRA members received an email with voting instructions including a personal link and login to cast your vote. **If you did not receive this email, please email [kytner@asginfo.net](mailto:kytner@asginfo.net).**

This election will run from March 1, 2019 - March 10, 2019, 11:59 PM Eastern Time (US & Canada).

Review all of the nominees and their candidate statements on our [website](#).

## Mark your Calendars: Upcoming Conference Items!



The deadline to submit proposals has officially closed - thank you to everyone that submitted! Please mark your calendars for future conference deadlines and announcements.

- **July 25, 2019:** Registration and hotel reservations open. You may make hotel reservations after registering for the conference
- **July 25, 2019:** Notification of all proposal review decisions will be sent out via email.

### Reviewers and Session Chairs Needed!

Volunteer to review proposals and/or be a session Chair or Discussant via All Academic. You must create a login in [All Academic](#) to do this.

## Small Steps on the Pathway to Progress

### Perspectives from Past Presidents

Submitted by P. David Pearson, 1985-86

I attended my first LRA (then NRC) meeting as a grad student at the University of Minnesota in 1969 in St Petersburg Beach (during those days we only met in St Petersburg), and I have not missed a single meeting since (have I really been to 50 straight meetings!!!!????). Throughout the years, LRA has been a part of my scholarly DNA, not to mention my collegial and community identity. I come because I get to wrestle with new ideas and old friends. I come because LRA's openness to inclusion of every sort—including who we are (in terms of gender, sexual orientation, culture, language, and race), and how we practice literacy research (in terms of theory, method, epistemology, and consequence) fits my model of community. I come because I always learn something I didn't know before.

## In This Issue...

1. [Cast your Vote: Elections Live](#)
2. [Mark your Calendars: Conference Items](#)
3. [Perspectives from Past Presidents](#)
4. [P&L Interview with Advocate](#)
5. [Seeking Members Input](#)
6. [Member Publications](#)
7. [Award News](#)
8. [UKLA 55th Annual Conference](#)

### Seeking Members' Input on Advocacy

In order to advance policy making that is informed by research in our states and communities, the Policy and Legislative Committee is working to provide resources to support members in advocacy. We want to know: What issues are you working on? What issues are challenges in your state?

We invite you to [click this link](#) to complete a survey asking you about key issues and your interests and needs.

### Member Publications

**Richard Beach** and **David Bloome** edited the volume *Languaging Relations for Transforming the Literacy and Language Arts Classroom*, Routledge Press, that applies a languaging perspective to analyses of literacy instruction and research.

**Bessie Dernikos, Daniel Ferguson,** and **Marjorie Siegel** recently published *The Possibilities for "Humanizing" Posthumanist Inquiries: An Intra-Active Conversation in Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*. This article explores the potential ethical challenges of engaging with posthumanist theories, and the implications this has for doing/teaching qualitative inquiry. The authors call for more openness about the limits as well as the possibilities of posthumanisms, and more attention to ethics for justice.

**Kevin Leander**, published *Affect in Literacy Teaching and Learning: Pedagogies, Politics, and Coming to Know*; Editors: Kevin M. Leander & Christian Ehret Expanding Literacies in Education; Series Editors: Cynthia Lewis & Jennifer Rowsell; Publisher: Routledge

**Lindsey Moses** and **Laura Kelly** recently documented how to support successful independent reading in large classes of young children: [Are they really reading? A descriptive study of first graders during](#)

I served as president in 1985-86, sandwiched in between Lenore Ringler and Jerry Harste. A big issue for us was getting more members involved in the “business” of the organization. One way of accomplishing that, the board and the membership at that time thought, was to reduce presidential terms from two years to one and create an orderly succession within the presidential sequence. In the new plan a president would have a 3-year cycle of participation with mentoring built in (one year before becoming president—can’t remember the title—and one year after being president) rather than a two-year, unmentored term as president (with two conferences to plan and implement, but **without** a management service). So, in 1983, Lenore was elected to serve a two-year term as president from 1984-1986, but with the understanding that she would serve only one year of that term. I was elected in 1984 to be president in 85-86. That’s how we made the transition. This was but a small step we took in the spirit of expanding participation in making LRA happen. Just look at our current governance structure and how far we have come in engaging the membership.

It was in this period—starting with Lenore, through my term and into Jerry’s, Trika Smith-Burke’s term, and even into Jim Hoffman’s term—that we bit the bullet and hired a management organization to run NRC. We finally realized that we had become so large and complex an organization and conference that we could no longer run things out of Gordon Grey’s (Gordon was the lifetime treasurer for years) basement in Clemson, SC. With the constant guidance of Trika over this entire period, we managed that transition. And no longer would or did any president elect and one quarter time grad assistant (mine was Linda Fielding, now retired from the University of Iowa) have to piece together the program out of their hides and basements. That transition was also monumental for the organization—in both positive and negative terms. But it was also inevitable given our growth in this period.

I want to touch briefly on three research issues that were dominant during my three-year succession. We were far enough into the cognitive revolution (it started at NRC in 1976 when a dozen or so researchers from the newly funded Center for the Study of Reading, led by Dick Anderson, came to NRC in Atlanta) that a social turn (represented within the membership by folks like Judith Green and Jerry Harste) had taken root and was spreading rhizomatically in NRC. To acknowledge this trend, I invited a key Vygotskian scholar, Vera John Steiner, as one keynote speaker. She was brilliant! We were also in the process of shifting from the process-product orientation in teacher education to a more constructivist perspective that focused on pedagogical content knowledge. Hence, I invited Lee Shulman, who had, in his 1985 AERA presidential address, used that term to describe where we were headed in teacher education. He was brilliant! A third looming issue was reading assessment, in particular whether we had assessments to match our models of reading comprehension as either a cognitive or a pedagogical process. Not surprisingly, my presidential address focused on assessment, accountability, and teacher prerogative (whether assessments leave teachers with any). The jury is still out on the question of that speaker’s brilliance!

It was an important era in the field and the organization, and we grew as both. In substance and practice, our horizons as a field broadened greatly during that era. And our umbrella as an organization took some baby steps toward the much more inclusive community we are today. They were good times. But better times are coming.

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## 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 Devon Brenner, LRA member from Mississippi.**

**Broemmel: What are you working on in Mississippi?**

**Brenner:** One of the ways that I am working in Mississippi is that I am the coordinator of our state’s chapter of the Education Policy Fellowship

Program. <https://epfp.iel.org/default.aspx> EPFP provides training to education leaders including K-12 teachers and administrators, higher education folks, non-profits, and other education advocates. This year-long program provides participants with a better understanding of policy and policies issues, support for engaging in advocacy, and important networking across sectors so we can stand together about important issues.

**Broemmel: What are some of the policy issues you are working on?**

**Brenner:** Our EPFP fellows have worked to understand state and national accountability requirements, teacher shortages and teacher retention (big



[independent reading](#). Reading and Writing Quarterly: Overcoming Learning Difficulties.

**Dr. Alex Spichtig** of Taylor Associates Communications, and **Dr. Kristin Gehsmann** of East Carolina University, along with their research team, recently published an article, *The impact of adaptive, web-based, scaffolded silent reading instruction on the reading achievement of students in grades 4 and 5*, in the March issue of The Elementary School Journal.

**Jon M. Wargo** has published: *Be(com)ing 'In-Resonance-With' Research: Improvising a Post-Intentional Phenomenology through Sound and Sonic Composition*. Qualitative Inquiry. doi:10.1177/1077800418819612

**David Yaden, Mileidis Gort, Camille Martinez** and **Robert Rueda** are authors of the chapter "The education of young emergent bilingual children: An update and call to action" to appear in the forthcoming Handbook of Research on the Education of Young Children (4th ed.). The authors suggest that a reconceptualizing of traditional research categories is needed as these categories are socially constructed and descriptive, rather than theoretical or explanatory in terms of language learning. The authors advocate for a “contrapuntal” theoretical approach for studying young emergent bilinguals in hopes of generating improved research designs that result in deeper insights into bilingual children’s language learning abilities.

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## Award News

### Honoring Service to LRA: The Albert J. Kingston Award

*Submitted by Jennifer Jones Powell, Committee Chair*

Do you know a member of the Literacy Research Association who is an exemplar of outstanding service to the organization? Nominations for the 2019 Albert J. Kingston Award are now being accepted! 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. **The deadline for nominations is August 15, 2019.**

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.

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## Literacy Across the Pond: UKLA 55th International Conference

Booking for the United Kingdom Literacy Association (UKLA) 55th International Conference 2019 is now open!

Join our friends across the pond for three days of inspirational lectures, seminars and workshops around the conference

challenges in Mississippi) and funding for early childhood education. We will soon travel to DC to advocate for federal funding for after-school programs, career and technical education programs, and teacher professional development.

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

**Brenner:** One of the most important things that advocates can do is to understand which body has power to impact a particular issue. For example, teacher licensure requirements are set almost exclusively at the state level—and might be set by state statute or by the state department of education or another body. Financial aid requirements and funding for education research are generally federal issues. School nutrition requirements are a component of the US Farm Bill and are therefore under the purview of the agriculture committees in Congress, and not part of the work of education committees in the Senate or the House of Representatives or the US Department of Education. Understanding who has power over the issues you care most about can be an important first step to building relationships with the policymakers who are most able to make a difference for your cause.

theme: **Literacy and Play for All: Improvisation, possibility and imagination**

Confirmed speakers include: Chris Riddell, Writer and Illustrator; Anne Haas Dyson, University of Illinois, USA; Andrew Burn, University College London; Lalitha Vasudevan, Columbia University, USA.

The conference is in Sheffield, UK from July 12th to 14th.

More information can be found [here](#).

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**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!](#)

