# Blaine E. Smith



## Biography:

Blaine Smith is an Associate Professor in the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Sociocultural Studies at the University of Arizona. She is also the Co-Director of the Digital Innovation and Learning Lab (DIALL) in the College of Education and teaches courses on digital literacies, multimodality, sociocultural theories, and qualitative methods. Blaine's research examines bi/multilingual adolescents' digital literacies across contexts, with special attention to their multimodal composing processes. The main goals of her work are to understand how collaborative multimodal composing can foster literacy and content learning, and be an empowering means of expression for youth. Additionally, her work focuses on developing scaffolded instructional strategies for supporting teachers' integration of technology in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. Blaine's research has been funded by the National Science Foundation and appeared in *Reading Research Quarterly, Journal of Literacy Research, Research in the Teaching of English, Written Communication, TESOL Quarterly, Journal of Second Language Writing*, and *Computers & Education.* She received a National Academy of Education/Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship, LRA's Outstanding Student Research Award, and an Emerging Scholars Fellowship by the Reading Hall of Fame. Blaine serves on the editorial review board of *Reading Research Quarterly*. She earned her doctorate in Language, Literacy and Culture at Vanderbilt University and was previously an Assistant Professor at the University of Miami.

**Candidate Statement:**

I am honored to be among the nominees for the Literacy Research Association's Board of Directors. Since attending my first NRC conference as a doctoral student in 2009, I have considered LRA my scholarly home. LRA has been instrumental to my continued development as a scholar—from being mentored into the research community as a graduate student to building new friendships and collaborations on research and service projects. I am inspired by colleagues' innovative work and leave the conference each year energized by the thoughtful and equity-centered scholarship shared across the LRA community.

As an Associate Professor at the University of Arizona, my scholarship and teaching focuses on the digital literacies of bi/multilingual adolescents and developing scaffolded instructional strategies for supporting teachers' integration of technology. In particular, my research draws upon sociocultural and multimodal theoretical frameworks to understand students' multimodal composing processes, design perspectives, and collaborations with digital tools. This work employs qualitative and multimodal methods to understand adolescents' complex meaning-making across modes and languages in digital environments. My goal for this research is to promote equity by showing how multimodal composing can offer culturally and linguistically diverse students multiple points of entry to express their ideas, (re)present agentive identities, and leverage the full range of their linguistic repertoires in empowering ways. My scholarship also centers on developing instructional strategies to support the integration of digital literacies in diverse classrooms so that all students have equitable access to use of these literacies. This research investigates teachers' experiences with incorporating digital tools and effective scaffolds to promote literacy and content learning in culturally sustaining ways. I also work to design innovative multimodal research methods for capturing, analyzing, and representing youth's complex digital literacies.

For the past 13 years, I have enjoyed regularly presenting at the annual conference and serving LRA in various capacities. I am currently a program co-chair for Area 10 (2021-2023) and a new member of the Policy and Legislative Committee (2022-2024). Recently, I served a three-year term on the Student Outstanding Research Award Committee (2019-2021) and the Technology Committee (2014-2016). I have also frequently reviewed for the *Journal of Literacy Research*, *Literacy Research: Theory, Method, and Practice,* and LRA conference proposals. Finally, I served as an editorial assistant for the *NRC Yearbook* as a graduate student at Vanderbilt University.

Each of these roles has provided valuable insights into the strengths and opportunities of the LRA community. As a potential LRA Board member, my vision includes collaborating with members on the following priorities:

First, I would prioritize building upon efforts to make LRA a more welcoming and inclusive community for all members. To this end, I believe it is crucial that we develop additional opportunities to support scholars of color and the important anti-racist scholarship many members are currently advancing. I also believe that LRA should be a space for all members to participate in critical dialogue across a wide range of theoretical perspectives and methodologies. To increase inclusivity, it is essential to examine and rectify any LRA policies that may be exclusionary, provide additional support for current programs and ICGs committed to equity and diversity, increase mentoring opportunities for BIPOC and new scholars, and create meaningful opportunities for historically marginalized voices to be heard and represented at every level of participation and leadership of the organization.

Second, I would work to expand LRA's influence as the leading international literacy research organization. This priority includes strengthening the organization's capacity to translate research into policy and working to positively impact the communities and classrooms in which our work is situated. We can make progress toward this goal by continuing to advocate through timely position statements, commissioning research briefs with recommendations for policymakers, increasing international membership, and strategically collaborating with other educational organizations at the state, national, and international levels. To amplify LRA's impact, it is also necessary to discover effective means for making literacy research more accessible to diverse audiences (e.g., teachers, administrators, families, and the media).

Relatedly, I believe we should continue leveraging new and innovative approaches to connect LRA members and disseminate information. This vision includes digitally expanding programming offerings throughout the year, integrating various social media tools for members to exchange ideas and collaborate, and sharing research through different multimodal formats and digital platforms. Related to the shift to hybrid conferences, the past couple of years have revealed new opportunities for integrating technology to enhance the conference that are worth exploring. I would be eager to work with LRA members and the Technology Committee on fresh approaches to help the organization nimbly adapt to our rapidly changing and digital world.

As a member of the Board of Directors, I would be committed to listening to and collaborating with members to help us continue working toward the LRA mission of promoting ethical literacy research that is "rigorous, methodologically diverse, and socially responsible." I believe LRA has an important role to play in providing leadership during these difficult times, and I would be honored to contribute to these efforts.