



**LITERACY
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Mandy Stewart



Biography:

At the core, I am a language and literacy educator—a teacher, maestra, and co-learner everywhere I go, from a high school ESL classroom, to a shelter for migrant youth, or to a doctoral class. I am also Associate Professor of Multilingual Literacies at Texas Woman’s University, where I direct the Certificate of Biliteracy and Multilingual and Multicultural Studies graduate programs. I also teach courses and mentor students in the M.Ed. and Ph.D. in Reading Education programs. My teaching, research, and service to the profession and my community lie at the intersection of the language and literacy fields. Through my career, I seek to serve the (im)migrant and refugee communities by listening to and learning from them. I adopt ever-growing critical perspectives in my work, as I continually interrogate my methodologies, theoretical perspectives, and reasons for conducting research in the hope that I will develop more humanizing practices and ideologies. This journey is documented in [various books, journal articles, and op-eds](#) I’ve published about literacies and languaging for practitioner, researcher, and public audiences. My commitment to mentoring is evident in three edited books that feature the innovative practices of teachers and graduate students. As the former co-editor of a state literacy journal and incoming co-editor of NCTE’s *English Journal*, I promote marginalized voices, anti-racist teaching, and multilingual ideologies. In LRA, I serve on the Ethnicity, Race, and Multilingualism Committee and as co-chair of Area 7. Formerly, I was co-chair of the Multilingual/Transnational ICG.

Candidate Statement:

As a current member of LRA involved in leadership roles, I believe it is my responsibility to be an ambassador for the organization in a variety of contexts: at my university, in other professional literacy organizations, and through my online presence. I also carry an awareness of the possibilities of new, ever-emerging literacies (digital and otherwise) to promote LRA and its members. In each of these spaces, I am committed to LRA’s mission and strategic plan, particularly vested in the strands “Diversity,



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Equity, & Inclusion” and “Mentoring”. If selected to serve on the LRA Board, there are four areas where I believe I can most contribute: 1) Creating

multilingual spaces to share research, 2) Supporting doctoral students, 3) Championing scholars of color, and 4) Disrupting persistent inequities in and through literacy research. Below, I will outline each area and provide evidence of how I have begun to contribute to these areas.

Creating Multilingual Spaces to Share Research: At the beginning of my career, I felt lost as I tried to find my scholarly identity. Was I a language or literacy researcher? I vacillated between professional organizations, attempting to find my place. I eventually made LRA my scholarly home, due to the influence of the Multilingual/Transnational ICG. Through that group, I found both support and needed challenges to my beliefs to help me grow as an emerging researcher in multilingual communities. As a board member, I want to increase LRA’s awareness and inclusion of multilingual research that occurs in languages other than English in both international and local contexts. In my teaching and mentoring, I pursue language equity by disrupting English-only university spaces, even concerning languages I do not speak. As such, I would like to bring multilingual researchers’ ideas for ongoing consideration to the LRA Board on how we might honor multilingualism through the conference, publications, and website.

Supporting Doctoral Students: For the past three years, I have participated in the Doctoral Student Innovative Community Group Proposal Mentoring Project. I have enjoyed working with doctoral students in different institutions and seeing them present at LRA. Regardless of what responsibilities I might acquire, I am committed to participating in this program and will encourage other scholars to do the same. I think LRA members, and especially leaders, need to be approachable and available to emerging scholars through our actions, not just our words. It is important we attend doctoral students’ sessions, not only those of the most well-known researchers at LRA. Further, I support leadership roles for doctoral students in the organization and affordable conferences for them to attend. When mid-career and senior scholars interact with doctoral students, we show them that their research—their voice—matters to us and to LRA. Therefore, I am committed to making LRA a place where doctoral students feel that they belong and can thrive.

Championing Scholars of Color: As faculty at a Hispanic Serving Institution with a highly diverse student population (racially, ethnically, and linguistically), I have the privilege of learning from and with many emerging literacy and language researchers who identify as people of color. I work alongside them to promote their scholarship through grant writing, presenting, and writing for publication. Further, through serving on the Ethnicity, Race, and Multilingualism (ERM) Committee and chairing the ERM travel awards, I see the need to work together to collectively champion the scholarship of people from underrepresented ethnic and racial groups. As an LRA board member, I will strongly support the STAR (Scholars of color Transitioning into Academic Research institutions) Mentoring Program and seek ways to further its impact in conjunction with the ERM and other standing committees. I also will support LRA to consider other initiatives beyond STAR to honor the research, provide mentorship, and allocate resources for emerging scholars of color. I believe this should be a defining priority for LRA now and in the future.

Disruptive Literacy Research for Change: With respect for the history and tradition of our field and LRA specifically, I want to work in the tensions of bringing LRA’s strategic plan to life in concrete ways so we do not merely state that we are “naming and rejecting injustices in our organization that cut across lines



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of race, language, class, sexual orientation and gender, ethnicity, religion, and ability,” but that we develop concrete actions to do this. As we consider what it means to be a literacy research organization

committed to “excellence, equity, and humanity,” we need to disrupt ideas of colonialism, racism, heteropatriarchy, and nativism that have crept into our thinking. I want LRA’s publications and conferences to continue to be, and increasingly more so, sites where I am challenged to interrogate my own ideologies. To an even greater degree, I want LRA to be a place where we learn from those with lived experiences different from our own, particularly those among us who are the most marginalized in society. As a person who identifies as a white, cisgender woman, I recognize that I always need to learn from my colleagues and be willing to grow, as certain parts of my worldview that need to change are regularly and effectively disrupted. For me, LRA has become my home to develop more humanizing research practices, even when that means I might feel uncomfortable. I believe that if we truly want to see change in education and in our communities, we can use literacy research to achieve this. In the next few years, I want to work to find concrete ways that LRA can show its membership and the greater educational community that we are an organization committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

I would like to thank those that nominated me or supported my nomination to the board. Regardless of the outcome of the election, I am committed to continue serving LRA through the aims described above. The areas of emphasis are both personal and professional passions that I will humbly bring to any area where I am chosen to serve.