



George Hruby

LRA Vice President Nominee

Biography

George G. Hruby (Ph.D. Reading Education, 2002, University of Georgia) was executive director of the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development (2010-2023) and research title associate professor of literacy education at the University of Kentucky's College of Education (2010-2024). He managed annual, multi-million-dollar state appropriations, large grants, and was a member and Vice Chair of UK's non-medical Institutional Review Board. Previous, he was an assistant professor of literacy education at Utah State University (2003-2010; Utah Board of Regents approved for promotion to tenured associate, 2010), and post-doc research assistant and instructor at the University of Georgia (2002-2003). Hruby's scholarship centers on theoretical foundations, syntheses of neuro- and developmental science literatures relatable to literacy, and critical reviews of literacy education policy. His work has appeared in peer-reviewed journals (e.g., *Reading Research Quarterly*, *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, *Review of Research in Education*) and noted research handbooks and reference works (e.g., *Handbook of Research on Reading Comprehension*, *Handbook of Research on the Teaching of the English Language Arts*, *Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading/Literacy*, *International Encyclopedia of Education*). He has been a member of LRA since 1998.

Candidate Statement

I am a dedicated literacy bon vivant, recently retired from academe. I am ardently committed to advocating for generative and honest research about literacy, its development, instruction, and variance. Summer of 2024, I left University of Kentucky where I had been research title series associate professor of literacy education and executive director of the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development since 2010. I have since embarked on an international fact sharing tour of professional conferences and personal meetings with fellow teachers and researchers.

I have had the privilege of a love of literacy throughout my life, from parental storybook readings and guided home access to a broad array of advanced texts, to being a proud product of the New York City public schools back in the day when writing journals and challenging novels were integral to the ELA curriculum. I enjoyed a broad-based liberal arts education across the humanities and sciences leading to a BA in English with a dual degree in Public Communications from Syracuse University (class of 1976).

Public relations, multimedia and video production, print journalism, freelance writing and editing, creative writing, and political advocacy have been among my preacademic literacy devotions. My work designing employee training systems for major hospitality companies led me to vocational instruction, then to substitute teaching and quickly fulltime, if non-credentialed, teaching in Metro Atlanta's burgeoning school systems. I belatedly received my M.Ed. in Language Education and secondary teaching credentials in 1994 and taught high school English in Gwinnett and Barrow Counties, Georgia.

My scholarship has centered on theoretical analyses, syntheses of neuro- and developmental science literatures relatable to literacy, and critical reviews of literacy education policy, published in peer-reviewed journals and respected research handbooks and encyclopedias. I take a cohesive and comprehensive view of literacy research, one where the cognitive-behavioral and sociocultural traditions enjoin analytic, critical, and generative methodologies to mutually inter-inform scholarship on the unique capacity of human beings to employ symbolic representations to configure their lifeworlds. For this, I think, a bioecological developmental framing for language and literacy is most supportive. Drawing on what the neuro and life sciences tell us about human learning and development redirects scholarly focus on the growing literate as natural kind.

As the executive director of the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development: Early Childhood through Adulthood (CCLD), I managed large state-level annual appropriations and was PI on several notable grants for CCLD's statewide work advancing high quality teacher professional

development. That work was professionally gratifying for many reasons, but most notably in the way it kept me in regular contact with the literacy faculty of Kentucky's eight state universities, the educators in their service regions, the good people at the National Center for Families Learning, and other literacy advocates. I have longstanding experience working with Kentucky's Department of Education and advocating for honest and coherent legislation to support literacy education. I was a member of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce's education and workforce advisory committee from 2011-2023. Additionally, I was for many years a member, and Vice Chair, of UK's non-medical IRB. I was twice program chair and president of AERA's Brain, Neuroscience, and Education SIG during the early 2000s, have been program chair of the American Reading Forum, and was awarded ARF's Townsend Service Award in 2016.

I have been a member in good standing of the Literacy Research Association for 27 years. In addition to my annual paper presentations, I have been an LRA area chair, regional chair, member of its publications committee, its research committee, a regular conference proposal reviewer (and recent "Super Reviewer"), and have regularly stood as an invited discussant and/or chair of numerous sessions over the years (including keynote and special sessions). I have also been a regular reviewer and editorial review board member for the Journal of Literacy Research, as well as for several other literacy and education journals. I have been program chair, task force chair, publications editor, and reviewer for other literacy research associations and publications as well.

We at LRA have done a good job of enriching our intellectual community with diverse theoretical frames, methodologies, foci, and intentions over the decades. But we have been less attentive to our need for the support of a constituency beyond ourselves and our academic identities. Given current political shifts and challenges to funding for higher education, this is imperative.

As the Literacy Research Association, we have both an inward facing and on outward facing

institutional persona to groom. We cannot be only an association concerned with our professional self-interest, in all its variety and register. We ought to do more to offer needed literacy-relevant guidance to teacher educators, teachers, and educational administrators, as well as caregivers, families, and communities dependent on the empowerment and enrichment that effective literacy education provides.

Our potential constituents cannot be expected to necessarily enjoy scholarly finesse or academic fashion. It is likely that their assumptions about literacy reduce to “basic reading,” and perhaps, with gentle prompting, writing, multimedia, and language development for advanced communication, learning, and thought. Clearly articulating our guidance regarding these central objectives is key to an effective branding for an academic literacy association worthy of the public’s support. Defaulting to tradition, moderation, grace, and dignity are ready and dependable stratagems for avoiding academic overreach.

Similarly, it would do us well to consider priority of relevance in our outward reaching appeals. A public image too varied and cacophonous—as much as we enjoy this in-house—will strike the average citizen as motley, ambiguous, unfocused, and therefore dissuasive. Worse, it may yield the playing field to aggressive advocacy groups and disciplined commercial interests less attentive to veracity or efficacy.

I remain an ardent advocate of educational systems that advance literacy for its vital role in a pluralistic democracy. I think it imperative we do not restrict our advocacy to only our professional interests as scholars but extend it to the literacy interests of the schools, communities, and children. And I would be honored to serve.