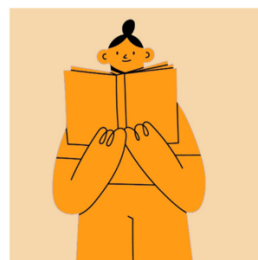
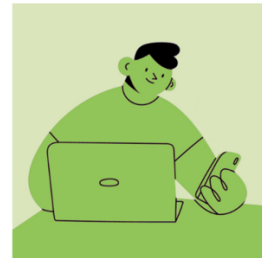




AMERICAN READING FORUM
2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Reassessing 21st Century Literacies at the Quarter-Century Mark



**DECEMBER 10 – 13, 2025
ATLANTIC BEACH, FLORIDA**

Welcome to Atlantic Beach!

Welcome to the 2025 American Reading Forum conference at the One Ocean Resort in beautiful Atlantic Beach, Florida! We are thrilled to be meeting together once again and thankful to everyone who made this conference possible.

This year's conference theme, *"Reassessing 21st Century Literacies at the Quarter-Century Mark,"* arises from an urgent need to examine the shifting terrain of literacy as we approach the midpoint of this century. Since the coining of "21st-century skills" in the early 2000s, scholars and educators have wrestled with evolving definitions of literacy that span digital, cultural, civic, and critical dimensions. Yet, nearly 25 years in, the question remains: What have we collectively meant by "21st-century literacy"—and what do we mean now?

The concept of 21st-century literacy has never been static. It has been molded by waves of technological innovation, educational policy shifts, racial reckoning, public health crises, and the explosion of AI-driven misinformation. As we acknowledged in our call for proposals, the triple pandemic of COVID-19, systemic racial injustice, and information disorder has laid bare the limitations of how we've previously conceptualized literacy. These events have not only disrupted education systems, but they've also redefined what it means to read the word and the world in increasingly complex ways.

We find ourselves at a critical inflection point. Twenty-five years ago, the promise of "future-ready" skills and digitally fluent citizens drove curricular reform and pedagogical innovation. But today, the proliferation of misinformation, algorithmic bias, and socio-political fragmentation demands more than technical proficiency. Literacy in this moment requires critical discernment, ethical reasoning, collaborative problem-solving, and cultural responsiveness, skills not easily measured or universally defined.

Throughout our recent gatherings at the American Reading Forum, conversations have grappled with literacy's intersections with transdisciplinary practice, social justice, global learning ecosystems, and corporate influence. These conversations signal that 21st-century literacies are not merely additive or futuristic. They are present and entangled with power, equity, survival, and hope.

This year, we invite you to critically revisit foundational assumptions and frameworks. We ask: What has become of our early visions of 21st-century literacies? How have global crises, digital platforms, and evolving learner identities reshaped our understanding? What new literacies are emerging, and for whom? What must be reimagined to make literacy truly liberatory for the next 25 years? As we come together over the next few days, we look forward to the difficult and necessary conversations that will help us reassess and rearticulate the literacies that will carry us forward.

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Conference Co-Chair

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WHO WE ARE...

The American Reading Forum is a nonprofit, professional organization composed of individuals who share an interest in the advancement of literacy education. While the American Reading Forum is an organization that facilitates the dissemination of ideas and research, it places highest priority on providing its members opportunities for critical discussion of ideas, issues, research and emerging research interests, and paradigms.

HOW WE SERVE...

The American Reading Forum declares the following to be its reason for existence and the guidelines for its activities:

- To provide a true forum for literacy education where new research can be generated, research in progress can be refined, completed research can be reported, and reported research can be evaluated.
- To provide for the translation of literacy research, theory, and philosophical deliberations into sound practice, but with no research, discussion, or contemplation to be discarded because its implementation is not immediately apparent.
- To conduct a conference at which newly trained scholars and scholars in training can get to know and get assistance from established and distinguished scholars in the field, through a mutual exchange of ideas.
- To provide a yearbook through which scholars of all levels can share viewpoints, resources, and expertise.
- To ensure that in the field of literacy no idea is too bold or new to be given a hearing, and none too old to be given reconsideration.

American Reading Forum Awards

The Gary Moorman Award

The *Gary Moorman Early Career Literacy Scholar Award* is given to junior American Reading Forum (ARF) members at the early stages of their career (generally defined as the first five years post-doctorate). This annual award was established in 2017 and is named after Dr. Gary Moorman, Professor Emeritus, Appalachian State University, in honor of his leadership and mentoring of young scholars. The award includes both a monetary prize and a commemorative plaque. Additional information can be found at: <https://www.americanreadingforum.com/awards>

Criteria for Consideration

The award targets early-career ARF members. The primary criterion is engagement in innovative reading/literacy research that addresses critical questions about policy, theory, and/or instructional practice. Active participation in professional organizations, particularly ARF, will also be considered.

Past Recipients of the Award

2024	Jennifer Van Slander	2020	Jeanne Dyches
2023	Adam Brieske-Ulenski	2019	Emily Howell and Jennifer Van Allen
2022	Jason DeHart	2018	Rachelle Savitz and Carrie Symons
2021	Brittany Adams	2017	Trevor Stewart and Vicky Cardullo

The 2025 Gary Moorman Award recipient will be announced at the Friday luncheon.

The Brenda S. Townsend Service Award

A literacy researcher is awarded the *Brenda S. Townsend Service Award* for their dedicated service to the organization. Additional information can be found at: <https://www.americanreadingforum.com/awards>

Criteria for Consideration

Current ARF Brenda S. Townsend members may nominate a fellow member for this award. Awardees must have been an ARF member for 10 consecutive years, serving the organization in multiple capacities.

Recent Recipients of the Award

2024	Jennifer Van Allen	2020	Vicky Zygouris-Coe
2023	Enrique Puig	2019	Carla K. Meyer
2022	Vicky Cardullo	2018	Lynn Yribarren
2021	----	2017	Mona Matthews

The 2025 Brenda S. Townsend Service Award recipient will be announced at the Friday luncheon.

Graduate Student Scholarship Award

Graduate students presenting at the December conference are eligible for consideration for a scholarship. The amount varies from year to year. The scholarship may only be awarded to a person once. Additional information can be found at:

[https://www.americanreadingforum.com/ awards](https://www.americanreadingforum.com/awards)

Criteria for Consideration

Each graduate student is selected to present at the conference according to the ratings obtained on the blind reviews of his/her session proposal, a PowerPoint, and receipt of a nomination letter from an ARF member.

People who accept the award are expected to consider submitting an article describing their conference session to the American Reading Forum's Annual Yearbook.

Graduate student scholarship recipients will be announced during the business meeting on Friday.

2025 American Reading Forum Conference Program

Wednesday, December 10, 2025

Time	Event	Location
5:00 – 6:00pm	Board Meeting	Conference Room

Thursday, December 11, 2025

Time	Event	Location
8:00 – 8:30am	Registration	Meeting Foyer
8:30 – 9:00am	Welcome and Introduction	Atlantica C
	American Reading Forum President: Brittany Adams, University of Alabama Conference Co-Chairs: Brittany Adams, University of Alabama Michelle Commeret, Bridgewater State University	
9:00 – 10:15am	Keynote Presentation	Atlantica C
	Rethinking Literacy 25 Years into the Digital Age Amy Hutchison, University of Alabama This keynote addresses the significant shifts in literacy practices 25 years into the digital age. Two decades ago, researchers observed that literacy had become deictic—relative to the context in which it is used—and some of the original challenges of the digital age were to provide access to computers and better understand online reading comprehension, media literacy, and the new literacies brought about by the internet. However, the proliferation of Generative AI has rendered these original conceptions insufficient, as they assumed texts were exclusively human-authored. Rapid shifts in how text is generated has created new challenges for teachers and students. This talk provides a solution-oriented look at how researchers can think about the role of AI in reading and writing and how researchers can address some of the challenges brought about by disruptive technologies.	
10:15 – 10:30am	Break	
10:30 – 11:45am	Paper Session	Atlantica A
	Start with a Story: Teaching Kids to Read Between the Lines (and the Lies) Jennifer K. Allen, University of West Georgia; Robert A. Griffin, University of West Georgia; Bethany L. Scullin, University of West Georgia This session demonstrates how children’s picturebooks support critical media literacy (CML) in elementary classrooms. Attendees will gain strategies, prompts, and resources to help students analyze texts, identify bias, and apply CML skills to everyday media messages.	

10:30 – 11:45am	The Mighty Picturebook: Powerful Tools for Learning at the Quarter Century Mark Patricia A. Crawford, University of Pittsburgh; Katrina Bartow Jacobs, University of Pittsburgh; Michelle J. Sobolak, University of Pittsburgh Picturebooks play a powerful role in the lives and learning of children. In this session, we look at picturebooks and related scholarship, asking: Where are we coming from?, Where are we now?, and Where are we going? Then, we consider the implications of this information for supporting learning and engagement. Comprehension Instruction in Kindergarten with Decodable and Other Texts Julie W. Ankrum, Indiana University of Pennsylvania; Maria Genest, Endicott College; Karianne Megard Grønli, University of Stavanger in Norway; Bente R. Walgermo, University of Stavanger in Norway; Chin-Yi Huang, Indiana University of PA; Farheen Mahmood, Indiana University of PA; Kara Ratai, Seton Hill University Research supports the need to teach comprehension alongside foundational skills in the early grades. Current educational policy and legislation calls for a narrow focus on foundational skills, often mandating the use of decodable texts. We will share findings from a case study describing one kindergarten teacher’s comprehension instruction using both decodable and leveled texts. Discussant: Patricia Crawford
	Paper Session Atlantica B
	Reciprocal Teaching Within Literacy Methods Courses Jennie Baumann, Auburn University; Brittany Adams, University of Alabama; Nance S. Wilson, State University of New York at Cortland; Tess Dussling, St. Joseph's University; Elizabeth Stevens, Roberts Wesleyan University; Linda Smetana, CSU East Bay This study explores how reciprocal teaching was implemented in literacy methods courses across four universities. Through reflective practice and content analysis, teacher educators examined preservice teachers’ evolving perceptions and use of reciprocal teaching. Findings highlight benefits to comprehension and pedagogy, while underscoring the importance of explicit modeling and instructional design. Peer Support, Practical Tools, and Professional Growth: Virtual Learning Communities for New Literacy Teachers Kristin Johnson, University of Alabama at Birmingham This presentation examines how a virtual learning community fostered novice literacy teachers’ growth, confidence, and well-being. Findings emphasize the value of peer collaboration, strategy sharing, and community-building for designing sustainable, equity-focused professional learning in literacy education.

10:30 – 11:45am	Collaborative Impact: A Professor in Practice and Teacher’s Transformative Journey in Building Teacher Efficacy at a Community School E.J. Whitfield, University of Central Florida; Lisa Taylor, Orange County Public Schools This self-study explores a Professor in Practice and 1st-grade teacher's collaborative journey in fostering teacher efficacy at a community school. By bridging theory and practice, this work highlights how university expertise can enhance K-12 instructional quality and student outcomes, emphasizing the crucial collaborative connection developed between the professor and the teacher. Discussant: Kelly Bjalobok
	Paper Session Atlantica C
	Insights and Perspectives from Educators on the Science of Reading for Teaching Early Literacy to English Learners in VPK through Grade 3 Vicky Zygouris-Coe, University of Central Florida; Laila Noor, University of Central Florida; Marjorie Ceballos, University of Central Florida; Florin Mihai, University of Central Florida; Leslie Dugger Carvajal, University of Central Florida This proposal shares Year 1 findings from a federally funded project preparing early childhood educators to support English Learners (ELs) with evidence-based literacy instruction. It examines how participants applied Science of Reading knowledge to diverse EL proficiency levels. “My Hands Are Tied”: A Case Study Exploring Elementary Teachers’ Experiences with Reading Policies Shelley Therien, University of Florida Public school teachers are the agents for implementing educational policy in their classrooms, regardless of how they think or feel. This case study lends a voice to five Florida elementary teachers, exploring their experiences with policies affecting them, including censorship, standardized testing, science of reading, and Multi-Tiered System of Supports. Beach Combing for the Future in the Twilight of the Science of Reading George Hruby, University of Kentucky; Nance S. Wilson, SUNY Cortland Is the Science of Reading already on its way out? Is this the result of a long asserted pendulum swing in literacy education? And if so, given the past, what might we anticipate—and what might we advocate for—in our future literacy education policies? Five suggestions for discussion. Discussant: Jennifer Van Allen

10:30 – 11:45am	Advancing Literacy	Conference Room
	Humanizing Literacy Intervention: Tutors’ Reflections on Trauma-Infused Practices in an After-School Program Valerie Gresser, Duquesne University; Carla Meyer, Duquesne University This study investigates how teachers in an after school reading intervention program in a high needs school educate the whole child by blending reading intervention with trauma informed care. The study probes into how teachers feel about the knowledge they gain, their struggles, and where they might need more support. Literacy Across Borders: Pre- and In-Service Educators Reflect on Transformative Experiences in a Rural Study Abroad Program Bethney Bergh, Northern Michigan University; Kristen White, Central Michigan University; Laura Kennedy, Northern Michigan University In this presentation, we discuss how pre- and in-service teachers defined pivotal learning experiences during a 10-day faculty-led study abroad program in San Ignacio, Belize. Using phenomenological methodology, we will examine data generated during and after the study abroad experience. Discussant: Ana Prado	
11:45 – 1:15pm	Lunch	On Your Own
1:15 – 2:30pm	Paper Presentations	Atlantica A
	Teaching Spelling in the 21st Century: The Utility of Etymology and Morphology in Learning to Spell English Words Serafima Mintz, University of Florida This presentation examines how explicit morphology and etymology instruction supports English spelling. Using four variable spelling patterns, it explores how such instruction addresses orthographic irregularities and evaluates its strengths and limitations in developing orthographic knowledge. Motivated to Teach, Yet Not a Reader: Analyzing Teacher Candidates’ Reading Dispositions Vickie Johnston, Florida Gulf Coast University; Cynthia Dawn Martelli, Florida Gulf Coast University; Michele Byrne, Florida Gulf Coast University This study examined teacher candidates’ reading habits, attitudes, and values, revealing limited pleasure reading but strong preferences for relatable, diverse literature. Using a transformative framework, findings emphasized the role of teacher preparation programs in fostering inclusive literacy instruction. Candidates valued texts that reflect diverse identities and expand cultural understanding. Discussant: Michelle Commeret	

1:15 – 2:30pm	Problems Court	Conference Room
	Rethinking the Whole Reader: Practitioner Reflections on Motivation, Self-Efficacy, and Early Literacy Kelly Bjalobok, University of Florida; Shelley Therien, University of Florida This presentation explores how early literacy instruction can better support identity, motivation, and emotional growth by drawing on practitioner-led case studies grounded in theories of self-efficacy and sociocultural learning. It calls for discussion on developmentally responsive, emotionally supportive practices that honor the whole child and challenge deficit-based approaches to reading.	
	Advancing Literacy	Atlantica B
	Empowering Teachers: Developing an Ecosystem of Literacy Leaders Courtney Shimek, West Virginia University; Aimee Morewood, West Virginia University; Allison Swan Dagen, West Virginia University We share how faculty of a Masters in Literacy Education with a Reading Specialist Certification program have implemented supports for literacy leaders at various levels. We hope to inspire others to consider the impacts their research, teaching, and service have throughout their respective contexts. Exploring the Contextual Factors that Influence the Tasks Performed by Literacy Leaders in the United States Adam Brieske-Ulenski, Bridgewater State University; Jacy Ippolito, Salem State University; Aimee Morewood, West Virginia University; Diane Kern, University of Rhode Island This session explores how school culture and contextual barriers influence the work of literacy leaders. Drawing on national survey data, presenters examine which factors most impact leadership activities and coaching effectiveness, sparking discussion on how to better align systems to support impactful literacy leadership across varied educational settings. Exploring Transformative Practices in State Literacy Plans for 21st Century Outcomes E.J. Whitfield, University of Central Florida This research examines state literacy plans in high-poverty, high-literacy states, using Sociocognitive Theory to identify effective strategies. It analyzes core reading components, interventions, progress monitoring, professional development, cultural considerations, and family engagement to promote equitable literacy outcomes and reduce disparities. Discussant: Tierney Hinman	

1:15 – 2:30pm	Paper Presentation Atlantica C Enactment in Action: Supporting Preservice Teachers' Use of Literacy Strategies through Structured Rehearsal and Feedback During Professional Development Jennie Baumann, Auburn University This study examines how structured professional development—featuring explicit instruction, peer collaboration, and feedback—supports preservice teachers in enacting literacy strategies during fieldwork. Grounded in situated learning, the ten-session series improved instructional confidence and readiness, highlighting the value of rehearsal, expert modeling, and feedback in bridging coursework and classroom practice. Exploring Disciplinary Literacy in Secondary Science Teacher Preparation Education: Findings from a Literature Review Vicky Zygouris-Coe, University of Central Florida; Kelsey Ginori, California Polytechnic State University; Su Gao, University of Central Florida Recent educational standards for literacy and science necessitate the integration of literacy in science. This conceptual literature review explored how disciplinary literacy (DL) has conceptualized in recent studies that focused on secondary science teacher preparation. Findings revealed diverse DL conceptualizations and applications, highlighting benefits and challenges associated with the integration. Supporting Readers, Healing Hearts: A Mixed Methods Case Study of Trauma-Infused Literacy Intervention for Children in an After-School Program Carla K. Meyer, Duquesne University; Valerie Gresser, Duquesne University This mixed methods case study explores the integration of trauma-informed care with structured reading intervention in an after-school tutoring program. Preliminary findings suggest potential benefits for students' reading development and tutor-student relationships in underserved communities. Discussant: Nance Wilson
2:30 – 2:45pm	Break

2:45 – 4:00pm	Problems Court	Conference Room
	Is Teacher Education Ready for an AI World? Michelle Kelley, University of Central Florida; Taylor Wenzel, University of Central Florida; Lee-Anne Spalding, University of Central Florida; Elizabeth Hoffman, University of Central Florida; Sherron Robert, University of Central Florida AI has permeated our personal and professional lives. This session describes how our interdisciplinary Special Interest Group (SIG) addressed this question. We will share topics explored, challenges identified, collaborations, and resources created and curated. SIG members will facilitate small group discussions to identify partnership opportunities and future directions.	
	Paper Presentations	Atlantica A
	Expert Reading of Literary Texts Suzanne Chapman, University of Florida; Zhihui Fang, University of Florida This study examined how a literary scholar engaged with a disciplinary text through think-alouds, interviews, and video discussions. Findings highlight expert reading strategies—such as sourcing, contextualizing, annotating, and engaging with paratext—that support interpretation and comprehension. Insights inform English teachers aiming to foster authentic disciplinary literacy in literature classrooms. A Dialogic Approach to (Re)Conceptualizing Literacy in the Content Areas Using a Dilemmatic Tensions Framework Tierney Hinman, Auburn University; Chris Kirkman, University of North Carolina at Greensboro This case study explores how middle grades teacher candidates navigate dilemmatic tensions that surface as they are introduced to new ideologies about literacies, illustrating the kinds of discourses they resist, reframe, or adopt as authoritative and internally persuasive. Discussant: Valerie Gresser	
	Advancing Literacy	Atlantica B
	How Literacy Educators Navigate Instructional Policies in the Science of Reading Era Jennifer Van Allen, Lehman College, CUNY; Niki Fayne, Lehman College, CUNY Currently, 40 states have established laws or policies focused on evidence-based literacy curricula and instruction. In this roundtable, the presenters will share an ongoing study seeking to understand the lived experiences of teacher educators, pre-service teachers, and in-service educators as they implement and navigate literacy education policy and curriculum mandates.	

2:45 – 4:00pm	SOR-ing Educator Preparation: The Joys and Complexities of Mandated Literacy Coursework Chad H. Waldron, Central Michigan University This proposal investigates how undergraduate teacher preparation programs in a Midwestern state implement the Science of Reading (SOR) through a mixed methods case study. Building Onto 21st Century Literacy: Bringing Together Literacy and Engineering Aimee Morewood, West Virginia University; Leslie Hopkinson, West Virginia University This content analysis describes how engineering students are supported in building their understanding of engineering literacy and professional identities. Discussant: Jennifer Van Allen	
5:00 – 6:30pm	Advancing Literacy	Atlantica C
	Benefits of Multimodal Writing on K-5 Students' Conceptual Knowledge and Writing Engagement in Today's Classrooms: A Sample Literature Review Abbie Bracelin, University of Central Florida; Laura Snyder, University of Central Florida This presentation examines how multimodal writing enhances elementary students' conceptual knowledge and engagement. Drawing on sample literature and classroom experience across K–5, presenters discuss key affordances, research insights, and implications for multimodal writing instruction and future literacy practice. Rethinking Writing Competencies in the Age of Generative AI Jihane Amayou, University of Alabama; Parastoo Abedini, University of Alabama This presentation examines essential writing competencies for ethical and effective use of generative AI in academic contexts. It explores cognitive and ethical differences from traditional writing and identifies theoretical frameworks guiding competency development with large language models. Developing Vital Artificial Intelligence Literacy Standards (VAILS) Michael J. Hockwater, SUNY Cortland; Sara Lilley, University of South Carolina This presentation will engage teachers and researchers in a meaningful discussion about AI literacy and what types of AI literacy standards would be beneficial for K-12 schools. Discussant: Jennie Baumann	

Friday, December 12, 2025

Time	Event	Location
8:30 – 9:00am	Registration	Meeting Foyer
8:30 – 9:00am	Graduate Student Meeting	Conference Room
9:00 – 10:15am	Keynote Presentation	Atlantica C
	What Does It Mean to Be A “Literacy” Teacher in Contemporary Times? Angela M. Kohnen, University of Florida Recently I asked Microsoft’s AI chatbot “Copilot” (the chatbot approved by my employer for work use), “What are 21st Century Literacies?” Copilot quickly replied, “21st century literacies refer to the skills and competencies people need to effectively navigate, understand, and contribute to the modern world—especially in a digital, global, and information-rich society. These go beyond traditional reading and writing to include a broad range of literacies.” This definition was followed by a bullet point list of ten different “literacies” and their definitions: digital, media, information, visual, cultural, data, environmental, financial, health, civic. In this talk, I discuss the challenges we (as teachers, researchers, and citizens) face in addressing such a complex array of literacies, all of which are in the process of being redefined by a combination of technological and sociopolitical forces. I draw upon two projects from my current research agenda, one of which looks at a group of English teachers grappling with the possibilities of AI for their practice and the other involving a Professional Learning Community of content area teachers attempting to create digital, media, and information literacy instruction that meets the needs of their students. These projects illustrate the messy work of being a literacy teacher today and invite us to think beyond skills and competencies to consider the kind of people we hope our students will become.	
10:15 – 10:30am	Break	
10:30 – 11:45am	Advancing Literacy	Atlantica A
	Language Ideologies and Identity in College Composition Classrooms: Student Perceptions of Linguaging Spaces Ana Prado, Florida International University This presentation reviews the methodology and rationale for a pending study of student experiences in college writing courses. This study focuses on data to be collected from college undergraduates who have already completed both required college writing courses and inquire about their language and writing ideologies. This presentation is for a proposed study in progress for a dissertation. Integrating Subjectivity Through Feminist Pedagogy: Transforming Literary Analysis in the College Classroom C. Leigh Bancroft, University of Florida This presentation explores how integrating feminist pedagogy transforms literary analysis by centering subjectivity in reading and writing. It examines assignment design, student experiences, and the extent to which learners integrate subjective perspectives into their literary analyses.	

10:30 – 11:45am	Email Communication as a Social Literacy Practice Jing Lyu, University of Florida This study investigates how Chinese graduate students in the U.S. use email to navigate cross-cultural academic interactions and the hidden curriculum. Guided by social literacy theory, it examines email communication as a key academic literacy practice. Discussant: E.J. Whitfield	
	Advancing Literacy	Atlantica B
	Little Engines: On The Right Track for Early Literacy Constance Beecher, Iowa State University; Zachary Stier, Erickson Public Library Little Engines is community-based early literacy program designed to enhance family engagement and support kindergarten readiness for preschool children. It leverages community partnerships and the Beanstack reading tracking program to deliver developmentally appropriate reading kits and activities at no cost to families, promoting equitable early learning opportunities. Literacy, Criticality, and Resilience Among Chinese Rural-to-Urban Students: A Trauma-Informed Approach Xuanya “Amy” Zhou, University of Florida This study examines how rural-to-urban Chinese students make sense of and respond to systemic trauma through literacy practices, fostering both coping and critical engagement in their educational and everyday lives. Enhancing Literacy Skills Acquisition in the 21st Century ESL Classroom through Project-Based Learning Joyce Animah, University of Alabama This proposal explores Project-Based Learning (PBL) as a method for developing 21st-century literacy—critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication—in Ghanaian ESL classrooms. Findings highlight PBL’s effectiveness in enhancing students’ digital competencies, autonomy, and cross-cultural communication. Discussant: Jan Lacina	

10:30 – 11:45am	Problems Court	Conference Room
	Developing Stackable Credentials in Literacy Education: Involving Whole Communities in Educating the Whole Child Megan Adams, Kennesaw State University; Melissa Driver, Kennesaw State University; Doug Bell, Kennesaw State University; Denise Ross, Kennesaw State University; Comer Yates, Atlanta Speech School; Yolanda Marroquin, Learn4Life; Ken Zeff, Learn4Life; Rebecca Parshall, Learn4Life Join this discussion of a problem of practice: developing micro-credentials for professionals wanting to read to children and those who find a passion doing so for educating children. The session will provide an overview of the problem and the historical context. Our team will briefly describe the scientific importance of micro-credentialing in literacy as well as involving community members in schools. We will then engage the audience in discussion.	
11:45 – 1:15pm	Luncheon	Atlantica C
	Join us for a buffet lunch and the presentation of: Gary Moorman Early Career Literacy Scholar Award and Brenda S. Townsend Service Award	
1:15 – 1:30pm	Break	
1:30 – 2:45pm	Paper Presentations	Atlantica A
	Examining Shifts in Elementary Teacher Identities: A Mixed-Method Study of Transdisciplinary Literacy with Equity Lens JoAnna Arnold, Auburn University The research reported in this paper discusses insightful results about teacher identity shifts with the implementation of elementary PBL units using transdisciplinary literacy with an equity lens. The research employed a convergent parallel mixed methods design and explored how teacher participation in communities of practice (CoP) evolved and influenced shifts in teaching perspectives and positionality. Understanding Rural-to-Urban Chinese Students' Identity Negotiation in Digital Spaces Xuanya (Amy) Zhou University of Florida This study explores how rural-to-urban Chinese students use self-sponsored digital media literacies to challenge imposed “rural” identities and construct new, agentive self-representations, illuminating literacy’s role in identity negotiation and social transformation. Discussant: Michelle Sobolak	

1:30 – 2:45pm	Paper Presentations	Atlantica B
	Help! It's a Disaster!: Picturebooks as Pathways for Addressing and Coping with 21st Century Crises Patricia A. Crawford, University of Pittsburgh; Sherron Killingsworth Roberts, University of Central Florida The 21st century has been hallmarked by a series of natural disasters and human crises with which children must cope. This session offers an examination of recent, high quality picturebooks that can be used as springboards to help young readers develop understanding, coping skills, and empathy even in the midst of life's challenges. Digital Anxieties and Caution-Fairy Tales: How Children's Picture Books Frame the Internet Gillian Mertens, SUNY Cortland; Brittany Adams, University of Alabama Picture books are important mediums to introduce children to the Internet, particularly as this utility becomes embedded in everyday life. This presentation discusses results from a critical content analysis of 14 picture books addressing the Internet, focusing on digital anxieties towards and digital agency within our online society. What's Hot in 21st-Century Literacy: A State-Level Perspective Aimee Morewood, West Virginia University; Canyon Lohnas, West Virginia University, Allison Dagen, West Virginia University For decades, the "What's Hot in Literacy" survey has given the international temperature of literacy education. In 2025, researchers have adapted this methodology to identify priorities in their state. This presentation compares and contrasts state and international survey results and discusses how the findings align to policy and philanthropic efforts. Discussant: Katrina Bartow Jacobs	
	Advancing Literacy	Conference Room
	Bear CLAWS: Portable Literacy Studio Kits for Advancing 21st Century Writing Instruction Annemarie Kaczmarczyk, Mercer University The Bear CLAWS project explores how portable literacy kits co-designed with teachers can bridge research-based writing pedagogy, equity, and 21st-century literacies. Re-igniting The Love of Literacy in the 21st Century Classroom Tiatasha Brown, University of Central Florida This presentation explores how secondary ELA teachers can leverage popular culture and technology to reengage 9th and 10th grade students with reading and writing. Discussant: Geoffrey Kellogg	

2:45 – 3:00pm	Break	
3:00 – 4:15pm	Paper Presentations	Atlantica A
	Resisting Technocracy Through Digital Hygiene: An Internet Person Autoethnography Gillian Mertens, SUNY Cortland As the Internet is increasingly co-opted by corporate interests, maintaining healthy boundaries with digital tools can be positioned as an individual hygienic responsibility rather than resistance to corporate interests. Play, Prompt, and Possibility: Preservice Teachers’ Creative Processes with Generative AI Emily Pendergrass, Vanderbilt University This study explores how 21 preservice teachers engaged in multimodal composing with generative AI shaped their understanding of authorship, engagement, and ethical classroom integration. Dreaming into Being: Utilizing Online and In-Person Simulations to Support ELA Elementary Pre-Service Teachers' Professional Development Katrina Bartow Jacobs, University of Pittsburgh; Michelle Sobolak, University of Pittsburgh This session shares how we integrated traditional coursework, computer-based simulations, and in-person simulations to help our pre-service teachers imagine and experience parent interactions as part of a PreK-4 ELA methods course. Discussant: Courtney Shimek	
	Paper Presentations	Atlantica B
	Teachers’ Conceptions of “Good Teaching” of Literature Geoffrey Kellogg, Eastern New Mexico University This study draws on questionnaire and focus group data to explore in-service and pre-service teachers' ideas of a "good teacher" of literature and the obstacles they perceive as preventing them from achieving this vision. Holocaust Children’s Literature as a Lens for 21st Century Peace Literacies Jan Lacina, Texas Christian University This qualitative study analyzes 30 international Holocaust children’s books for representation, historical authenticity, and peace dimensions fostering empathy, justice, and democratic citizenship through literature. Discussant: Chad Waldron	

3:00 – 4:15pm	Problems Court	Conference Room
	Ghost Writing with the Ghost in the Machine: Integrating AI into Writing to Better Serve Students Michael J. Hockwater, SUNY Cortland This session will engage attendees in a critical discussion on the integration of AI into the writing process and the potential implications for students who are historically underserved.	
	Paper Presentations	Atlantica C
	Patterns of Theory Use: A Systematic Literature Review of Studies Drawing from Rosenblatt Kristina Bell, Columbia College The purpose of this systematic literature review is to examine, utilizing Dressman's (2007) four patterns of theory use, empirical studies' uses of Rosenblatt's Theory of Literary Transaction. Seeing Beyond the Standard: Co-Designing ELA Curriculum for Identity Literacy through Photovoice in Politicized Times Michelle Commeret, Bridgewater State University In an era of politicized mandates and surveilled curricula, this arts-based participatory study examines how collaborative mentorship and photovoice-infused, standards-aligned ELA design nurture identity literacy. Situated within a seventh-grade classroom, co-designed, artful practices model resistance and renewal while inviting a reassessment of what 21st-century literacies mean in constrained educational landscapes. Discussant: Patricia Crawford	
4:15 – 6:00pm	Business Meeting	Conference Room
	● Business Report ● Presentation of Graduate Student Scholarship Awards ● Raffle winners announced	

Saturday, December 13, 2025

Time	Event	Location
8:30 – 9:00am	Registration	Meeting Foyer
9:00 – 10:15am	Keynote Presentation	Atlantica C
	Textured Teaching for This Moment Lorena Germán, Multicultural Classroom While literacy has always been essential, it has not always been accessible. The movement for 21st-century skills has added both opportunity and complexity to this reality. As we integrate technology into teaching and learning, we must remember that innovation without humanity is incomplete. In this keynote, I am calling for a human-focused pedagogy—one rooted in care, justice, and authentic skill-building for life beyond the classroom.	
10:15 – 10:30am	Break	
10:30 – 11:45am	Teaching Bursts	Atlantica A
	Literacy Lesson Planning with Pre-Service Teachers Traci Johnson, Auburn University at Montgomery Presents a lesson plan template with graphic organizers, set around literacy strategies, classroom management, Universal Design for Learning, formative assessment, direct instruction, inquiry, and reflection and still gives allowance for innovative or original ideas in their planning. Coaching Rounds: Intentionally Scaffolding Teacher Practices Adam Brieske-Ulenski, Bridgewater State University; Michelle Kelley, University of Central Florida This session introduces literacy coaching rounds that bridge professional development with authentic classroom practice. Attendees will explore how this model supports instructional alignment, fosters collaborative reflection, and strengthens teacher-administrator feedback grounded in shared, real-time learning. Teaching Social Justice Through Picture Book Text Sets Susan Flis, Bridgewater State University This activity, grounded in critical literacy theory and culturally sustaining pedagogy, presents a framework for teaching with inclusive children's literature text sets from elementary through high school with the aim of developing the social consciousness of all students.	

10:30 – 11:45am	Teaching Bursts	Atlantica B
	Teaching Carter Knox and the Lost Legacy to Deepen Vocabulary, Comprehension, & Literary Analysis Skills Michael J. Hockwater, SUNY Cortland This session will provide attendees with a teacher toolkit and other resources to effectively teach and engage middle school students in improving their vocabulary, comprehension, and literary analysis skills in the historical fantasy novel, "Carter Knox and the Lost Legacy." From Scrap to Story: Junk Journaling & Photovoice as Tools for Multimodal Literacy & Identity Expression Jillian Miley, PK Yonge Developmental Research School at the University of Florida; Michelle Commeret, Bridgewater State University When life gives you junk, make stories! In this session, a middle school ELA teacher and a teacher educator demonstrate how junk journaling and photovoice can be used as tactile, multimodal approaches to empower student voice, build essential literacy skills, and encourage personal connection through hands-on creativity. Don't Forget about Writing Instruction! Tammie Sherry, Northern Kentucky University This session will include instructional strategies that support learning to write and the application of writing to learn in the SoR era. We will target strategies for intermediate grades related to sentence structure and paragraph organization using mentor texts.	
11:45 – 12:00pm	Closing Remarks & Adjournment	Atlantica C
	American Reading Forum President Brittany Adams, University of Alabama	

About the Keynote Speakers



Dr. Amy Hutchinson is the Fayard Endowed Chair in Literacy Education at the University of Alabama, where she focuses on the critical intersection of digital technologies, equity, and literacy instruction. She is the director of the Digital, Computational, and Data (DCoAD) Literacies Lab. The Lab's mission is to advance understanding of how digital innovations can be leveraged to provide equitable literacy learning opportunities for diverse students, ensure all learners are prepared for success in a world where digital literacy is essential to well-being, and inform K-6 teacher preparation for integrating literacy and digital technologies. Dr. Hutchinson's research has been supported by over \$12 million in competitive funding. Her scholarly contributions are documented in numerous peer-reviewed articles and books, and she has held key leadership positions within professional organizations, including the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and the Literacy Research Association. Her impact has been recognized through multiple awards, including the Digital Literacy Game Changer Award from the International Literacy Association and the Thomas N. Urban Award for outstanding scholarly contributions to educational research.



Dr. Angela M. Kohnen is an Associate Professor of Literacy and English Education at the University of Florida. Her research is unified by an interest in the connections between literacy and identity, particularly for teachers and students in school settings. Outside of K-12 schools, we are in the midst of what some have called a literacy revolution, a time when young people read, write, and create at rates never before seen. The internet makes it easier for young people to consume content and connect with people from nearly anywhere on the planet; technological tools make it possible for many adolescents to create and publish their own compositions in a variety of modes. Through her research, Dr. Kohnen seeks to understand how literacy instruction within K-12 schools addresses (or could address) these realities. More specifically, she asks questions about how teachers across content areas can teach writing in ways that promote thinking and identity development; she is interested in what written genres support student learning and development; and she researches effective ways to encourage curiosity in young people and support their information-seeking endeavors. She is currently leading efforts to create and study an interdisciplinary information literacy curriculum for eighth graders.



Lorena Germán is a Dominican American educator focused on culturally sustaining teaching. She earned her master's degree at Middlebury College's Bread Loaf School of English. Lorena is a three-time nationally awarded educator whose work has been featured in newspapers and journals including The New York Times, NCTE journals, EdWeek, Edutopia, National Writing Project, and others. She is author of *The Anti Racist Teacher: Reading Instruction Workbook* and *Textured Teaching: A Framework for Culturally Sustaining Practices*. She is a co-founder of #DisruptTexts, former Chair of NCTE's Committee Against Racism and Bias in the Teaching of English, and currently Academic Director at Multicultural Classroom.

About the Conference Chairs



Dr. Brittany Adams is an Assistant Professor of Literacy Education at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, AL. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in reading education and curriculum theory. Her research interests include critical literacy, children's and young adult literature, new literacies, and the preparation of culturally sustaining teachers. She is the co-editor of *Disrupting Silence: Teaching and Learning about Rape Culture through Youth Texts* and has published in journals such as *Journal of Literacy Research*; *Literacy Research: Theory, Method, & Practice*; and *The Reading Teacher*.



Dr. Michelle Commeret is an Assistant Professor of Elementary and Early Childhood Education at Bridgewater State University, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate literacy courses that invite pre- and in-service teachers to view literacy as both a cognitive and creative act. Her scholarship explores how identity, story, and art intersect in classroom life, and how inclusive, participatory approaches can make literacy instruction more responsive and humanizing. Through school–university partnerships and collaborative curriculum design, she studies how teachers and students co-create equitable spaces for learning that bridge theory and lived experience.