

**American Reading Forum (ARF) Annual Conference**  
**Wednesday, December 8 - Saturday, December 11, 2021**  
**Sundial Beach and Tennis Resort, Sanibel Island, FL**

**Literacy as Power: Creating Socially Just Communities and Futures in Tumultuous Times**

**Program Chair:** Dr. Jeanne Dyches, Iowa State University

**Program Co-Chair:** Dr. Brandon Sams, Iowa State University

Literacy is never neutral. Indeed, the *who* of literacy -- who has access to literacy, who does not, and for what ends -- has always been politically contested and brandished as a tool of power (Willis & Harris, 2000). Literacy, for instance, has been used to perpetuate systems of oppression such as racism (Croom, 2018; Naseem Rodríguez & Kim, 2018); Whiteness (Haviland, 2008; Morrison, 1992); sexism (Macaluso, 2016); heteronormativity (Blackburn, Clark, & Nemeth, 2015; Johnson, 2017); and linguistic subordination (Lippi-Green, 2012; Reaser, Adger, Wolfram, & Christian, 2017). Our current political moment is rife with divisive rhetoric, abuses of power, and exploitation of vulnerable populations. What is the role of literacy research and education in the violence of the present? What forms might this literacy research and pedagogy take to ensure something beyond survival (Love, 2019)?

With each generation, people have agentively insisted on and reclaimed their right to literacy--through story, community, friendship, determination, subversion, resistance, and will. Stakeholders locate generative ways to push back against static, Eurocentric curricula (Thomas & Stornaiuolo, 2016); dismantle oppressive views of languaging (Baker-Bell, 2013; de los Ríos & Seltzer, 2018); explore critical race pedagogies with their students (de los Ríos, López, & Morrell, 2015); reimagine writing pedagogies that draw from students' funds of knowledge (Rodríguez, 2016); open up conversations around critical literacy (Morrell, 2015); challenge students to confront systems of oppression through literary study (Blackburn & Clark, 2011; Thomas, 2015); and insist on learning that calls into question the historical traditions of the disciplines they teach (Dyches, 2018). In what ways might literacy research, policy, and practice intervene in the tumultuous present to create and sustain more inclusive schools, communities, and worlds?

In an effort to take up this question, the ARF 2021 conference theme acknowledges the power of literacy to intervene and transform the present while engendering new possibilities and directions for the future. The ARF 2021 conference theme challenges stakeholders to explore how literacy research, policy, and practice can work in both conspicuous and subversive ways to provide for more socially just, agentive futures.

This theme will appeal to stakeholders interested in literacy policy, research, and practice in p-20 contexts. Given the theme's conceptual contouring that all literacy research is, to a certain extent, a conversation around power, we hope the conference theme will appeal both to stakeholders who explicitly centralize social justice in their work and challenge other stakeholders to consider generative ways in which they might re-articulate a social justice intent in their research.

We invite and support complicated conversations on the role of literacy research, policy, and practice in creating and sustaining socially just communities and futures.

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## **Focus on Literacy as Power**

This **Focus on Literacy as Power** for ARF 2021 invites stakeholders to consider the ways in which research, practice, and policy create pathways of hope, thriving, and belonging intended to disrupt systems of power. These conversations are intended to compel participants to examine the ways in which their own work, understood broadly, helps create socially just communities and futures in tumultuous times.

## **Intention for Interactive/Continuous Exchange**

At American Reading Forum 2021, we seek to create a space for discussion and exchange among classroom educators, researchers, and policy writers and makers. While papers, open forums, keynotes, and other standard conference attributes are certainly part of that conversation, they constitute merely an opening for discussion. We will offer multiple opportunities throughout the conference for participation online; thus, we will use Twitter to communicate and share ideas during the conference. Further, we will utilize other social media for members to communicate and share impressions, thoughts, and comments. Throughout the week, at various points, the conference chairs and keynote speakers will offer moments to reflect and build on the discussions that are occurring. Finally, ARF will provide an ongoing forum to continue the conversation until we are able to meet again next year.

## **Themes and Subthemes**

Given that literacy has always been a tool of power, we invite participants to reflect on the ways in which literacy research, policy, and practice, speaks to, perpetuates, and/or interrupts systems of power. Considering that the American Reading Forum values the work and perspectives of a diverse array of stakeholders in the literacy field, we encourage practitioners, administrators, literacy coaches, researchers, and scholars to submit proposals that speak to the overall conference theme including but not limited to the following sub-themes:

- Instruction across K-12 and postsecondary settings
- Intervention across disciplines
- Equity in literacy
- Disciplinary literacy and social justice
- Reading and writing connections
- Curriculum analysis
- Teacher preparation around social justice and literacy
- Teacher professional development around social justice and literacy
- Teacher efficacy and motivation regarding social justice and literacy
- Policy regarding social justice and literacy

Participants are encouraged to submit proposals that may not match the theme but address literacy topics.

## About the Chairs



Jeanne Dyches, PhD, an assistant professor at Iowa State University, researches intersections between secondary literacies and social justice. A former high school English teacher and literacy coach, Dr. Dyches's scholarship examines tensions and synergies between canonical curricula and critical pedagogies and applications of critical disciplinary literacies in secondary classrooms. Her work has been published in *Journal of Literacy Research*, *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, *Journal of Teacher Education*, *Urban Review*, and *Harvard Educational Review*.



Brandon Sams, PhD, is an assistant professor of English education at Iowa State University, where he teaches undergraduate and graduate courses on young adult literature and English methods. A former high school English teacher, Brandon focuses his research on the potential of critical, aesthetic, and contemplative reading practices to interrupt and renew “schooled” reading practices shaped by the epistemologies of audit culture. His work has recently been published in *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, *The ALAN Review*, *Changing English*, and *The Journal of Language and Literacy Education*.

## 2021 Keynote Speakers



**Dr. Noreen Naseem Rodríguez, Assistant Professor of Elementary Social Studies, Iowa State University**

Dr. Noreen Naseem Rodríguez is an assistant professor of elementary social studies in the School of Education at Iowa State University. Her research interests include educators of color, culturally sustaining pedagogies, racial literacy, the teaching of difficult histories, and critical uses of diverse children’s literature.

Rodríguez was a bilingual elementary teacher in Texas for nine years, where she supported the development and implementation of K-8 Asian American studies and Mexican American/Tejano studies curriculum. She was the recipient of the 2017 Larry Metcalf Dissertation Award from the National Council of the Social Studies and the 2019 Early Career Award from the Children's Literature Assembly of the National Council of Teachers of English. Her work has been published in *Theory & Research in Social Education*, *Educational Studies*, *The Urban Review*, *The Bilingual Research Journal*, *The Journal of Children’s Literature*, and *Literacy Today*.

**Title:** Engaging in Anti-Racist Pedagogy through Children’s Literature

**Abstract:** Frustratingly little has changed since Nancy Larrick’s 1965 landmark study of the “all-white world of children’s books.” The Children’s Cooperative Book Center at the University of Wisconsin Madison has documented shifts in the representation of Communities of Color in children’s literature for the last two decades, revealing in 2018 that more books are published about animals and non-human characters than Characters of Color. This talk explores the possibilities of children’s literature for anti-racist pedagogy and considers the importance of counternarratives in classroom spaces.

**Dr. Alison Dover, Associate Professor of Secondary Education, California State University, Fullerton**



Dr. Alison G. Dover is an Associate Professor in the Department of Secondary Education at California State University, Fullerton. She holds a doctorate in Social Justice Education from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and has taught secondary English Language Arts and service learning in diverse urban school districts in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Dr. Dover works extensively with local and national students, educators, and school communities to promote equity, multicultural education, and culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy in K-16 contexts. One of Dr. Dover’s most recent projects is the Summer Language Academy, an

innovative, arts-based [multi]literacy program for newcomer and emergent bilingual students. Since its 2016 inception, this project has enrolled more than 500 students throughout Southern California, and received both the Orange County Department of Education’s Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness Award (2018) and the California School Boards Association’s Golden Bell Award (2019).

Dr. Dover’s research examines approaches to teaching for social justice within and despite accountability-driven P–12 and teacher preparatory contexts. She is the author of *Preparing to Teach Social Studies for Social Justice: Becoming a Renegade* (2016, Teachers College Press) and more than 25 articles and chapters related to literacy methods, equity-oriented education policy, and teacher education practice. Dover is currently a section co-chair for Division K (Teaching and Teacher Education) of the American Educational Research Association, a former board member of AERA’s Critical Educators for Social Justice Special Interest Group, and former co-chair of the Research and Scholarship Committee of the NCTE ELATE Commission for Social Justice.

**Title:** Preparing Truth Tellers: Emergent Curriculum, Critical Literacy, and Professional Agency in Complex Times

**Abstract:** In 2016, the Oxford English Dictionary declared “post-truth” its word of the year. Defined as an adjective “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief,” the concept of a post-truth highlights the tremendous dilemma facing contemporary literacy educators. We find ourselves trying to prepare students – and teachers – to evaluate and build evidence-based arguments in a world where “truth” is not only subjective, but also both politicized and propagandized. In this session, I consider imperative to, and implications of, preparing K-12 and teacher candidates to be truth tellers within and beyond the classroom. Throughout, I highlight how emergent, inquiry-driven pedagogies can amplify historically marginalized voices, nourish critical and disciplinary literacy, and prepare students – and teachers – to speak the truth and work for justice, within and beyond the classroom.

**Dr. Caroline Clark, Professor of Adolescent Literacies and English Education, Ohio State University**

Dr. Caroline T. Clark is a Professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning at the Ohio State University. She specializes in English education, adolescent literacies, community engagement, and supporting diverse people in schools, especially LGBTQ and gender creative students. She is the Faculty Lead for the English Language Arts AYA 7-12 licensure program and advises all of the M.Ed. candidates, along with teaching both graduate and undergraduate courses on methods of teaching literature to middle and high school students. Her scholarship focuses on language and literacy practices (Street, 1995) across formal/school and informal settings and collaborative research with teachers, young people, and families for social action. She does this work through the frameworks of collaborative and practitioner inquiry and through the use of ethnographic methods and critical discourse analysis. For over 12 years, she co-led a teacher-inquiry group whose purposes have ranged from using literature, film, and other media to combat homophobia and heterosexism in classrooms, to examining how LGBTQIA+ youth and families experience support and non-support in schools; and what factors enable or inhibit adults' willingness to provide support to these young people and families. Echoing the themes of collaboration, outlined above, she continues to support collaborative-research efforts throughout the Columbus City Schools and the Graham Family of Schools aimed at supporting place-based approaches to working in and with teachers, students, families, and communities. Her research has been published in the *American Educational Research Journal*, *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Journal of Literacy Research*, and *English Journal*, among other scholarly outlets, and she has co-edited three books, including *Acting Out: Combating Homophobia Through Teacher Activism*, which received both the Philip C. Chinn Book Award from the National Association of Multicultural Education as well as the Richard A. Meade Award from the National Council of Teachers of English. In 2018, she co-authored *Stepping Up!: Teachers Advocating for Sexual and Gender Diversity in Schools*. Dr. Clark has served as the President of the National Council of Research on Language and Literacy (NCRL); as chair of the National Council of Teachers of English Assembly for Research (NCTEAR); as member of the NCTE Standing Committee on Research; and as a member of the NCTE Commission on Composition, among other leadership roles. Her research has been funded by the American Educational Research Association and the Spencer Foundation. She earned her bachelor's degree from Indiana University, Bloomington, in English and Education, and both her MA (Reading) and PhD (Language and Literacy) from the University of Michigan.



**Title:** Cultivating Powerful Literacies Through Community-Based Partnerships

**Abstract:** For the past decade, my research and teaching have focused on ways to broaden and redefine what literacy learning, teacher education, and family involvement can look like in schools when that work is radically inclusive, “safe” enough, and driven by school- and community-based questions and concerns rather than university research initiatives solely. Working out of frameworks that include practitioner and collaborative inquiry and research-practice partnerships, I have spent the last 5 years teaching my university courses in a local school; inviting parents to serve as paid, co-teachers of a university course on family participation in two local schools; and collaborating with a teacher-colleague in her cultural-studies and English Language Arts classroom in a third local high school. In each of these spaces, the goal was to flip the relationship so that parents, teachers, and K-12 students were positioned as co-teachers/co-learners, alongside of pre- and in-service teachers, not the objects of study. In this presentation, I will share the powerful literacies that emerged, and the new ways of reading, writing, talking and interacting that developed among participants as a result of these community-based partnerships. These include digital stories created by parents and teachers sharing their biases and fears about students and their families, often based on race and class, in ways that were risky, generous, and courageous; and students sharing their understandings of discriminatory experiences rooted in race, class, language, and sexual identity as part of a literacy practice called “Open Mic.”

**Important Dates**

August 1, 2021 – Deadline: proposals for papers, panels, and problems courts due

September 1, 2021 – Feedback on proposals will be sent out via email

October 1, 2021 – Graduate student proposals must be submitted

October 15, 2021 – Early bird conference registration ends

November 1, 2021 – Feedback on graduate student proposals will be sent out

November 15, 2021 -- Graduate Student early bird conference registration ends

November 2021 – Attendees must make reservations at the Sundial

December 8-11, 2021 – Conference @ Sundial Resort, Sanibel Island, FL

Types of Proposals

- Papers
- Symposia
- Problems Court
- Advancing Literacy

## **General Information**

Proposals for papers, symposia, problems court, and advancing literacy sessions will be considered for inclusion in the 2021 American Reading Forum Annual Conference Program if they are received by August 1, 2021. Conference proposals are peer-reviewed and all presenters are expected to register and attend the conference to present. The membership of the American Reading Forum has consistently requested that people submit proposals only if they fully believe presentation obligations can be met. Generally, a person will appear only once as a presenter in the program, but could also appear as a discussant for one of the various sessions. It is our hope that all presenters will become active conferees. All presenters are invited to submit their papers for consideration for publication in the Yearbook of the American Reading Forum. Discussants and members of the audience are invited to write reactions for such consideration. However, if the original paper is not accepted in the peer review process, related reaction papers will be dropped from consideration.

### **Guidelines for Submitting Proposals (All sessions will run for 75 minutes total.)**

**Paper sessions.** The program committee will schedule two to four papers on related topics in a session. If individuals submitting the proposal have not named a discussant, the program committee may appoint a discussant who will start the session and facilitate a 15-minute discussion about the papers, including comments and questions from the audience. The timing of sessions may be adjusted based on the number of presentations scheduled for the session.

**Symposia.** Those proposing a symposium should assemble a session on one topic or multiple but related topics focused on the conference theme. Symposium proposers should name their own chairs, discussants, and any others who may have a specific role in the program. Novel approaches, ways of presenting, and/or ways of involving the audience are welcome in the symposium sessions. If additional time is needed, please request additional time on the proposal cover sheet.

**Problems Court.** In the first 20-30 minutes of an open forum, the presenters should pose a persistent problem of practice or opportunity for growth in the field of literacy research and instruction, supported by theoretical and/or empirical evidence and connected to the conference theme. The next 20-30 minutes should be reserved for a facilitated, critical conversation with the audience about the ways in which this problem or opportunity has been treated in the past, what has advanced our progress, and what has hindered it. In the final 20-30 minutes, the emphasis of the discussion should move toward developing concrete actions items that individuals or small groups can continue to pursue in their own contexts. These might include directions for research, research-practice partnerships, or other steps to be initiated once the conference is completed.

The session should close with a 5-10 minute wrap-up of the discussion by the presenters. Problem Court proposals should identify how many presenters will be involved in the session and their specific roles (e.g., presenters, discussion facilitators, timekeepers).

**Advancing Literacy.** Advancing Literacy presentations should describe an ongoing study, work in the planning stages, or theoretical work. The program committee will organize the papers into groups of three so that related topics will share a space. Presenters will share for 15 minutes with 10 minutes for follow-up discussion.

### **Materials to be Submitted with a Proposal**

**PLEASE, NO NAMES ON PROPOSAL DESCRIPTIONS. NAMES SHOULD APPEAR ONLY ON THE COVER SHEET.**

All proposals must be submitted electronically by August 1, 2021 to Drs. Dyches and Sams at [arf2021proposal@gmail.com](mailto:arf2021proposal@gmail.com) and must include the following:

1. One cover sheet (include name, institutional affiliation, mailing address, cell/office telephone(s), additional presenter name(s) and their institutional affiliation, email address, mailing address, cell/office telephone).
2. Description of proposal (including proposal type) following specific session guidelines (see next page).

Submissions should be made to [arf2021proposal@gmail.com](mailto:arf2021proposal@gmail.com)

**NOTE 1:** Graduate Students interested in a Graduate Student Scholarship should submit their proposals by October 1, 2021 to Nance Wilson (nance.wilson@cortland.edu). Information about this scholarship can be found under Graduate Student Award at <http://www.americanreadingforum.org/>.

**NOTE 2:** If you are interested to serve as a proposal reviewer, please indicate that in the body of your email when you submit your proposal.

Receipt of the proposal and notification of the program committee's decision will be sent electronically to the first author.

For submissions please complete ALL of part A and select one of the submission types from Part B. If a proposal lacks the Part A information, it will not be considered for review. You will be submitting two documents. One with PART A and one with PART B. **PART B should not include your information as proposals undergo double blind review.**

## Part A

- a) provide a title and a **100 word description** of your presentation,
- b) provide a list of **three keywords** that best address your proposal,
- c) provide your contact information (name, institutional affiliation, mailing address, cell/office telephone(s), additional presenter name(s) and their institutional affiliation, mailing address, cell/office telephone, and email address), and
- d) include on the subject line the type of proposal (e.g., Paper\_Dr. Charles\_Wright)

## Part B

Select one of the following forms for your submission

**Paper** proposals must include a two-to-three-page, double-spaced summary of the proposal including:

- Objectives
- Perspectives or theoretical framework
- Methods and/or techniques
- Data source(s)
- Results, conclusions, point of view
- Educational or scientific importance

**Symposium** proposals should be outlined in a two-to-three-page, double-spaced summary including:

- Objectives
- Perspectives or theoretical framework
- Educational or scientific importance
- Key questions for discussion (or other methods of audience participation, when relevant)

**Problems Court** proposals should be outlined in a two-to-three-page, double-spaced summary including:

- Statement of problem/opportunity for growth in the field of literacy
- Historical context including perspectives or theoretical framework
- Educational or scientific importance
- Key questions for discussion/ ideas for facilitation
- Initial ideas on “next steps”

**Advancing Literacy** proposals should be outlined in a two-to-three-page, double-spaced summary including:

- Objectives for presenting the work
- Developing Perspectives or theoretical framework
- Developing methods and/or techniques
- Key questions for discussion

### **Audio Visual Equipment**

Data projectors will be provided; however, laptops, dongles, or other computer equipment will not be provided. Presenters are responsible for additional equipment, including adapters unique to their laptops. NOTE: Audiovisual equipment (i.e., LCD projectors, screens, speakers) are NOT provided for the Advancing Literacy sessions.

### **Promotion Process**

We encourage applicants, ARF members, and conference attendees to promote the conference and the research presented using social media via **#ARF20**.

### ***Tentative Program Schedule***

#### **Wednesday, Dec 8th:**

- 5pm - 6:30pm Board Meeting
- 7pm - 9pm Registration and Welcome Reception

#### **Thursday, Dec 9th:**

- 8:00am - 8:30am Registration
- 8:30am - 9:00am General Session: Welcome; Introductions
- 9:00am - 10:00am Opening Address, Keynote Speaker 1
- 10:00 - 10:15am Break
- 10:15am - 11:30am Paper/ Symposia/Roundtable Sessions A
- 11:30am - 1:00pm lunch (on your own)
- 1:15pm - 2:30pm Paper/Symposia/Roundtable Sessions B
- 2:30pm - 2:45pm Break
- 2:45pm - 4:00pm Paper/Symposia/Roundtable Sessions
- 2:45pm - 4:00pm Open Forum
- 5:00pm - 6:30pm Reception at pool

#### **Friday, Dec 10th:**

- 8:00am – 5:00 pm Registration
- 7:30am – 8:30am Graduate Student Meeting
- 9:00am - 10:00am Keynote Speaker 2
- 10:00 - 10:15 Break
- 10:15 - 11:30 Paper/Symposia/Roundtable Sessions C
- 11:30am - 1:00pm Lunch and General Session with Keynote Speaker

- 1:15pm - 2:30pm Paper/Symposia/Roundtable Sessions D
- 2:30pm – 2:45 Break
- 2:45pm - 4:00pm Paper/Symposia/Roundtable Sessions
- 4:15pm - 6:00pm Business Meeting

**Saturday, Dec 11th:**

- 6:00am-12:00pm Registration
- 9:00am - 10:00am Closing Keynote Speaker 3
- 10:00 - 10:15 Break
- 10:15am - 11:30am Paper/ Symposium/ Roundtable Sessions E
- 11:45am - 12:00pm - Closing Remarks & Adjournment

*The Gary Moorman Early Career Literacy Scholar Award* is given to junior American Reading Forum (ARF) members who are 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.

**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.

Applications will be reviewed by the ARF Awards Committee.

Chair: Vassiliki Zygouris-Coe, University of Central Florida  
Committee Members

- Mona Matthews, Georgia State University
- Zoi A. Philippakos, University of Tennessee
- Nance Wilson, State University of New York, Cortland

Application materials include:

- (1) A nomination letter (maximum 1000 words) submitted by a current ARF member (self- nomination letters will not be accepted)
- (2) A statement about the importance of the applicant’s research for the reading/ literacy field (maximum of 1000 words)
- (3) A current curriculum vitae
- (4) Sample publications (maximum 2).