**American Reading Forum (ARF) Annual Conference**

**Wednesday, December 7 - Saturday, December 10, 2022**

**Sundial Beach and Tennis Resort, Sanibel Island, FL**

**Investing in Literacy: Examining Who Profits from Literacy Curriculum, Research, Policy, and Practice**

**Program Chair:** Dr. Brittany Adams, SUNY Cortland

**Program Co-Chair:** Dr. Angela M. Kohnen, University of Florida

As we approach the quarter point of the 21st century, profit, literacy education, and literacy itself are more entwined than ever before. In 2021, the American Reading Forum grappled with literacy and agency. This year, we invite our community to re-focus those conversations around ideas of profit. The idea that the literate individual automatically profits from literacy learning has been explored in our community for decades (e.g, Gee, 1996; Heath, 1983; Street, 1984). If the “autonomous” model of literacy assumes that all literacy acquisition is value-added and the “ideological” model raises questions of power, we extend Street’s (1984; 2005) inquiry to questions of profit. Considering “profit” as both a noun (a gain) and a verb (deriving benefit), we see questions of who profits from literacy and literacy education swirling around nearly every aspect of our work.

Major corporations, private foundations, and other profit-driven companies have increasingly greater influence over what is taught and learned in public schools (Kohn & Shannon, 2002; Larson, 2014; Moore & Zancanella, 2014), as well as how that learning is measured (Au, 2016; Leistyna, 2007). Alternative teacher certification pathways actively compete with traditional college and university teacher preparation programs (Pasternak et al., 2018; Zeichner, 2016). For university faculty, the potential to generate external funding is a factor in hiring and promotion decisions at many institutions, often to the detriment of those whose research does not require funding and/or appeal to funding agencies (Gallup & Svare, 2016). As literacy scholars, we are challenged to examine who profits from our research and its dissemination, particularly when our work engages underrepresented populations as research participants (Fine, 2017). Furthermore, online experiences are increasingly advertiser- and algorithmically-controlled, with hidden forces shaping what we see and read (Noble, 2018). Yet, simultaneously, we see a push for open learning, open access to publications and teaching resources, and the democratization of communication (e.g., Albers et al., 2015; Beetham & Sharpe, 2019; Lieberman & Mace, 2010; O’Byrne et al., 2015; Roach & Gainer, 2015; Stornaiuolo & Nichols, 2018).

With these tensions in mind, we invite discussions of questions such as: Who profits or benefits from literacy education, research, and policy? What resources are taken up and why? 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 teaching and research is, to a certain extent, a conversation around profit, we hope the conference theme will appeal both to stakeholders who explicitly centralize these issues in their work and challenge other stakeholders to consider the conspicuous and subversive ways in which their work shapes and is shaped by ideas around profit.

We invite and support complicated conversations on the role and influence (dare we say necessity?) of profit in literacy research, policy, and practice.

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**Focus on Profit**

This **Focus on Profit** for ARF 2022 invites stakeholders to consider who benefits in literacy curriculum, research, policy, and practice. As we interrogate capitalistic endeavors within educational contexts, our intent is not to isolate or attack individuals who participate in these systems, but rather to push back the commercialization of education. These conversations are intended to compel participants to examine the ways in which their own work, understood broadly, shapes and is shaped by ideas around profit.

**Intention for Interactive/Continuous Exchange**

At American Reading Forum 2022, 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. 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 the entangled ties that bind literacy and profit together, we invite participants to reflect on the ways in which literacy curriculum, research, policy, and practice prioritize, enable, intersect with, or disrupt profit. 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:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Curriculum | * Instruction across P-20 settings |
| * Disciplinary literacy | * Intervention across disciplines |
| * Diversity and representation | * Policy |
| * Equitable learning opportunities | * Publishing |
| * High stakes standardized testing | * Reading and writing |
| * Information literacy | * Teacher preparation and certification |
| * Institutions of higher education | * Teacher professional development |

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

**About the Chairs**

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Description automatically generatedBrittany Adams, PhD, is an assistant professor of Literacy Education at SUNY Cortland, where she teaches reading and literacy courses to pre- and in-service teachers across educational contexts. Her research interests include critical literacy, children's and young adult literature, content area literacy, and new literacies. Her work has been published in *Journal of Literacy Research*; *The Reading Teacher*; *Literacy Research and Instruction*, and *Literacy Research: Theory, Method, and Practice*.

A person standing in front of a building

Description automatically generated

Angela M. Kohnen, PhD, is an associate professor of English Language Arts Education at the University of Florida, where she coordinates the English Education and Media Literacy programs and teaches courses on literacy and literacy education for students at all levels, undergraduate through doctoral. Her research interests include digital and media literacy, teacher preparation, and the intersections of literacy and identity. Her work has appeared in *Reading Research Quarterly, Literacy Research: Theory, Method, Practice, English Journal,* and the *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*.

**2022 Keynote Speakers**

A person with the arms crossed

Description automatically generated with medium confidence**Dr. Rebecca Rogers, E. Desmond Lee Endowed Professor in Tutorial Education and Curators’ Distinguished Research Professor, University of Missouri-St. Louis**

Dr. Rebecca Rogers is an educational researcher who specializes in literacy studies, teacher learning, and critical discourse studies. She is the author of eight books including the 2018 book “Reclaiming Powerful Literacies: New Horizons for Critical Discourse Analysis.” Her publications have appeared in national and international journals such as *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, *Linguistics & Education*, *Journal of Literacy Research*, *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*, and *Urban Education*. Rebecca is the Past-President of the *Literacy Research Association* and a Fulbright Fellow. She is a publicly engaged scholar and former elected school board member, co-founder of a social justice group for educators, anti-racist facilitator, and involved with parent organizing for racial justice.

**Title**: Centering Community in Literacy Studies during an Era of COVID-19

**Abstract**: We are living through an era of a global pandemic, unprecedented climate change, ongoing wars, and continued racial violence worldwide. It is no surprise that the scholarship of English Language Arts continues to be at the forefront of ongoing debates – from the role of critical race theory to the proliferation of corporate-infused digital technologies and the continued commodification of scholarly publishing. These tensions reflect longstanding chasms mirroring the racial political economies of society fueled by profit making motive during times of crises. Indeed, children, youth, families, and educators are on the frontlines and there is a very real struggle being waged for our time, energy, attention, and lives.

Yet, we are not without hope. These intersecting crises have revealed an opportunity to be more hopefully critical and to imagine a futurity for educational literacies focused on community and human liberation. Rhonda MaGee (2021), social analyst, asks us to center the “solidarity dividend” which refers to the gains made when people work together for human liberation. I will draw on scholarship in family literacy studies, teacher education, children’s literature, and research methodologies to emphasize efforts to resist and reconstruct a cultural ecology of literacy studies grounded in human solidarity. These examples, I argue, resist the commodification of educational literacies and human lives and provide examples rooted in collaboration, community, and compassion.

A person with blonde hair

Description automatically generated with low confidence**Dr. Amy Stornaiuolo, Associate Professor of Literacy, Culture, and International Education, University of Pennsylvania**

Dr. Amy Stornaiuolo is an associate professor of literacy education at the University of Pennsylvania and director of undergraduate education programs. Her research examines people’s digital literacy practices, particularly adolescents’ multimodal writing online and people’s uses of digital technologies for cross-cultural collaboration. She has led several large-scale research projects related to the integration of digital technologies in schools, studying school makerspaces, online composing tools and student-facing analytics, adolescents’ data literacy practices, and teachers’ facilitation of literature discussions online. With an explicit focus on designing equitable and humanizing conditions for learning, Dr. Stornaiuolo centers her work around building sustainable, long-term partnerships, collaborating with communities and partners to enact meaningful change for educational justice, and designing and engaging in participatory and innovative digital methodologies. She is currently the past chair of AERA’s Writing and Literacies Special Interest Group and co-editor of NCTE’s flagship research journal, *Research in the Teaching of English*. She has received numerous grants and awards for her research on digital literacies, including a 2017 National Academy of Education/Spencer postdoctoral fellowship and a 2020 Teachers As Learners grant from the McDonnell Foundation. Her peer-reviewed work has been published in leading education, literacy, and media journals, such as *Harvard Educational Review*, *Teachers College Record, Teaching and Teacher Education, Educational Researcher, Journal of Literacy Research, Language Arts, Media & Communication,* and *Learning, Media & Technology*.

**Title**: The New Sponsors of Literacy: Digital Platforms as Literacy Intermediaries

**Abstract**: Even as educators and youth are increasingly digitally connected, a trend highlighted and amplified during the pandemic, researchers have not yet adequately examined how digital platforms shape people’s literacy practices. While platforms like Zoom, Slack, and Google Drive are now ubiquitous for managing and supporting networked activity, they are often perceived as neutral content moderators rather than tools with particular agendas and ideologies. By operating in the background of our awareness and analysis, these apps and services serve as intermediaries (Gillespie, 2010) in people’s literacy practices, often eliding tensions around raced/classed surveillance, commercialization, and datafication. This talk critically explores how digital platforms serve as literacy sponsors in the sense Brandt (1998, 2015) theorized them, as agents that not only support or control literacy practices but directly benefit from them. The talk will consider how a range of educational and social platforms (e.g., Flipgrid, Wattpad, Canvas, Twitter) materially and conceptually benefit from people’s literacy practices, not only shaping what people do with literacy in these spaces but constructing particular kinds of literate users in order to gain power and advantage. The talk will suggest how critical examination of digital platforms as literacy intermediaries can offer important insights for teaching and learning.

**Dr. Lisa Scherff, English and AP Research Teacher, Community School of Naples**

Dr. Lisa Scherff teaches English and Advanced Placement Research at the Community School of Naples (FL). Lisa began her teaching career in 1996, and after earning her Ph.D. she moved to the college level, working 11 years as an English educator at the University of Tennessee, the University of Alabama, and the Florida State University. In 2013, she returned to her hometown of Fort Myers to teach full time. Lisa has been active in the literacy community, mostly through NCTE: co-editor of *English Education*, a member of several Standing Committees, Chair of the Amelia Elizabeth Walden Book Award, and most recently as Chair of the Secondary Section Steering Committee. Her research interests include teacher preparation and mentoring, classroom discussions of young adult literature, and opportunity to learn. She has co-authored/co-edited numerous books including *Teaching YA Lit Through Differentiated Instruction, International Perspectives on Teaching English in a Globalised World,* and *New Directions in Teaching English: Reimagining Teaching, Teacher Education, and Research.* Her work has appeared in journals such as *Journal of Literacy Research, Research in the Teaching of English, Journal of Teacher Education,* and *Teaching and Teaching Education.*

**Title**: Benefits and Consequences—A Historical Journey Through Literacy Curriculum, Instruction, and Testing in Florida (although it could be your state too)

**Abstract:** Recently, debates over the phrase “learning loss” and its connection to the Covid-19 pandemic have flooded news and social media. True losses or not, some critics are, rightly, focusing their attention on what could result: another example of vague language and exaggerated claims about education that test companies could use to insert themselves in the conversation (and increase their profits). In this talk, I chronicle my 25-year historical journey in English language arts as a public-school teacher (before and during NCLB) turned faculty member/ researcher who left academia to return to full-time high school teaching (Common Core and beyond). Throughout, I consider the external forces that have shaped my work, my colleagues’ work, and the students we teach.

**A person smiling for the camera

Description automatically generated with low confidenceDr. Gillian E. Mertens, Postdoctoral Associate, STEM Translational Communication Center, University of Florida**

Dr. Gillian Mertens is an experienced educator and literacy researcher passionate about educational equity, information literacies, and innovative methodologies. As an interdisciplinary literacy researcher, her primary research foci are new and critical literacies, credibility assessment, and intervention design. Her past research projects include explorations of credibility evaluations, historical analysis of community trauma resulting from desegregation, and practice-based identity curriculum development. Her current research centers health literacies and cancer prevention. Her work has appeared in journals such as *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Research in the Teaching of English*, *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, and *The Reading Teacher*.

**Title:** Media Literacy During an Infodemic: Lessons, Challenges, and Opportunities

**Abstract:** Misinformation, disinformation, and other forms of informational bunk aren’t new— they’re established parts of American history. Yet the contemporary information landscape is also suffering through what the WHO calls an “infodemic.” Information platforms host divisive rhetoric, astroturf nonprofit organizations use data visualization to mislead readers, and a distrust of science calls expertise into question. As educators, it’s more complicated than ever to teach our students how to sort fact from fiction. In this talk, Dr. Mertens will share insights from her interdisciplinary research on health communications to highlight how the infodemic complicates information literacy instruction, as well as the potential of critical media literacy approaches to empower students’ information evaluation.

**Important Dates**

August 1, 2022 – Deadline for session proposals

September 1, 2022 – Feedback on proposals will be sent out via email

October 1, 2022 – Deadline for graduate student proposals

October 15, 2022 – Early bird conference registration ends

November 1, 2022 – Feedback on graduate student proposals will be sent out

November 15, 2022 – Graduate Student early bird conference registration ends

December 7-10, 2022 – Conference @ Sundial Resort, Sanibel Island, FL

**Proposals**

Proposals for papers, symposia, problems court, and advancing literacy sessions will be considered for inclusion in the 2022 American Reading Forum Annual Conference Program if they are received by August 1, 2022. 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.

**Session Types (all sessions 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**

All proposals must be submitted electronically by **August 1, 2022 via** **Qualtrics:** <https://ufl.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9ReH166SFwMX5HM>

Prior to accessing Qualtrics, please prepare the following as two separate files:

1. One cover sheet with author information
2. One anonymous proposal (see details below)

Graduate students interested in a Graduate Student Scholarship should submit their proposals by October 1, 2022 to Nance Wilson (nance.wilson@cortland.edu). Information about this scholarship can be found under Graduate Student Award at [http://www.americanreadingforum.org/.](http://www.americanreadingforum.org/)

As part of the submission process, you will be asked if you would like to serve as a proposal reviewer.

**Cover Sheet**

The cover sheet must include:

1. 100 word description of your presentation
2. a list of three keywords that best address your proposal
3. contact information for the corresponding author (name, institutional affiliation, mailing address, cell/office telelphone, email address)
4. names and institutional affiliations for any additional authors

**Proposal**

All proposals should be 2-3 double-spaced pages. Please ensure that proposals do **not include author names or identifying information**. See the previous section for descriptions of the types of sessions.

***Paper Proposal***

Paper proposals should be 2-3 double spaced pages and must include:

1. Objectives and/or research questions
2. Perspectives or theoretical framework
3. Methods and/or techniques
4. Data source(s)
5. Results, findings, or interpretations
6. Educational or scientific importance

***Symposium Proposal***

Symposium proposals should be 2-3 double-spaced pages and include:

1. Overall description of the symposium
2. Objectives and/or research questions (for the full symposium OR for each paper within)
3. Perspectives or theoretical framework (for the full symposium OR for each paper within)
4. Educational or scientific importance (for the full symposium OR for each paper within)
5. Questions for discussion or other method of audience involvement that ties the symposium together

As noted above, your proposal may present the symposium as a series of connected papers, each with its own objectives, perspectives, and significance OR you may choose to present an overall set of objectives, perspectives, and significance that applies to the entire session. 

***Problems Court Proposal***

Problems Court Proposals should be 2-3 double-spaced pages and must include:

1. Statement of the problem/opportunity for growth in the field of literacy
2. Historical context, including perspectives or theoretical framework
3. Educational or scientific importance
4. Key questions for discussion or ideas for facilitation
5. Initial ideas for "next steps"

***Advancing Literacy Proposal***

Advancing Literacy Proposals should be 2-3 double-spaced pages and must include:

1. Objectives or research questions
2. Perspectives or theoretical framework
3. Methods and/or techniques
4. Questions for discussion

Advancing literacy sessions are designed for presenting ongoing studies, work in the planning stages, or theoretical work. As such, any of the above items may be tentative or developing.

**NOTE:** 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. Audiovisual equipment is NOT provided for the Advancing Literacy sessions.

**Tentative Program Schedule**

**Wednesday, December 7th**

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

**Thursday, December 8th**

* 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, December 9th**

* 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 3
* 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, December 10th**

* 6:00am - 12:00pm Registration
* 9:00am - 10:00am Closing Keynote Speaker 4
* 10:00 - 10:15 Break
* 10:15am - 11:30am Paper/ Symposium/ Roundtable Sessions E
* 11:45am - 12:00pm - Closing Remarks & Adjournment

**Award Opportunity**

**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 (Vicky) Zygouris-Coe, University of Central Florida

Committee Members:

* Victoria Cardullo, Auburn University
* Patricia Crawford, University of Pittsburgh
* Sherron Killingsworth Roberts, University of Central Florida
* 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)