

Professional Affiliation & Background

I am deeply honored to be one of the nominees for the Board of Directors of the Literacy Research Association. LRA has been my academic home since 1991. I am currently a professor at the University of Wyoming (UW) where I hold the Wyoming Excellence Endowed Chair in Elementary Literacy Education. A primary responsibility in my current position is to serve the children in the state of Wyoming by collaborating with principals and teachers to provide professional development so that Wyoming children receive high-quality literacy instruction.

I began my doctoral work in educational psychology and literacy at Michigan State University (MSU) in the early 1990s when many scholars in the field, in general, and at MSU, in particular, were working on sociocultural theory as a way to understand learning. Using this theoretical lens, my work has centered on exploring ways to foster students' literacy learning opportunities in collaborative communities of practice. I have explored three general areas that inform the development of literacy learning opportunities in socially, culturally and historically situated contexts: knowledge of students and their worlds as learners, knowledge of ourselves and our worlds as teachers, and knowledge of literacy. Although all three of these areas have been interwoven throughout my career, during different phases of my career I have foregrounded some areas more than others.

These three general areas of study are embedded within, and have been constituted through, my own life experiences that have shaped and influenced the manner in which I have studied them. For example, I started teaching sixth grade in 1981 in a very small predominantly white community in Oregon. During my first few years of teaching, I had children in my classroom from countries such as Cambodia and Vietnam. When I started teaching, I had no prior training or experience working with children whose first languages and cultures differed from my own white, lower-middle-class, monolingual English-speaking background. Over the next decade, I went on to teach in a number of different communities such as East Los Angeles and the School Board of Palm Beach County in Florida where I had many students from a wide variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Thus, my own early public-school teaching experiences fostered my interest in studying the literacy learning opportunities of children from non-dominant backgrounds. (I borrow the term 'non-dominant' from Kris Gutierrez who emphasizes the political nature of the term in her work.)

Examples of publications foregrounding students' literacy learning opportunities include papers published in venues such as *Urban Education*, *Language Arts*, *Bilingual Research Journal*, and *Elementary School Journal*. My colleagues and I have also written books that address children's literacy learning opportunities such as a book co-written with Taffy Raphael entitled *Windows to language, literacy, and culture: Insights from an English-language learner* that was published as part of The International Reading Association's Kids InSight Series. Most recently, several Australian colleagues and I have completed a book (forthcoming from Springer) based on a research project in Fiji entitled, *In children's words: Fostering children's literacy through their voices in home languages and English*.

My early work exploring students' literacy learning opportunities left me wondering more about the role that teachers play in fostering students' literacy learning opportunities. Consequently, I have collaborated with various colleagues to study how we, as teacher educators, work with both pre- and in-service teachers to positively cultivate teachers' beliefs, attitudes and dispositions towards fostering children's literacy learning opportunities in their classrooms—focusing especially on issues of equity and diversity in sociocultural contexts. Work in this

category ‘knowledge of ourselves and our worlds as teachers’ has also included an examination and critique of my beliefs, dispositions, and practices as a teacher educator. Examples of publications foregrounding teachers’ roles in fostering students’ literacy learning opportunities include articles published in journals such as *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, *Studying Teacher Education*, *Curriculum Inquiry*, and the *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*. One of several books related to this aspect of my research agenda includes *Social diversities within multiliteracies: Complexity in teaching and learning*, co-edited with Fenice Boyd and published by Routledge.

Although our attitudes and dispositions towards our students clearly play a role in the literacy learning opportunities that we construct with them, so, too, does our subject matter knowledge. Consequently, I have collaborated with colleagues to explore teachers’ knowledge of literacy and the role that this knowledge plays in fostering students’ literacy learning opportunities. Moreover, my colleagues and I have studied literacy subject matter knowledge in terms of both the content and processes by which literacy is taught and learned. In particular, our work has focused on the role of literature-based instruction and disciplinary literacy in elementary classrooms. Examples of publications foregrounding teachers’ knowledge of literacy in fostering students’ literacy learning opportunities includes work published in *Reading Research Quarterly* and *The Reading Teacher* as well as a book entitled *Engaging elementary students in disciplinary learning and literacy* co-written with Virginia Goatley, Taffy Raphael, Elisabeth Trost-Shahata, and Kate Weber and published by Teachers College Press.

LRA Service and Future Plans

I have contributed to LRA since I joined the organization in 1991. For example, as a doctoral student, I worked with my colleagues Virginia Goatley and Fenice Boyd on the Graduate Student Study Group that was newly formed in the early 1990s. I have reviewed proposals for the annual LRA meeting during most of the time I have been a member of the organization. As well, I have served as a reviewer for the *Journal of Literacy Research* and for *Literacy Research: Theory, Method, and Practice*. I have served as a co-chair for Areas 1 and Area 8. I have also served on LRA’s Early Career Award Committee. I was an early supporter of the Gender and Sexualities Committee, and I have served as a faculty mentor for the Proposal Mentoring Project that is part of the Doctoral Student ICG.

Across my career, I have been privileged to work with, and learn from, children and colleagues from a host of cultural and linguistic backgrounds in contexts including the U.S., Australia, Chile, Costa Rica, Fiji, Spain, Mexico, and England. I would bring this rich and varied background to my work on the LRA Board of Directors that includes (a) decades of experience as a contributing member of LRA, (b) a deep desire to work collaboratively, positively, and productively with others serving LRA, (c) rich background knowledge and experiences interacting and collaborating across languages and cultures in U.S. and in international contexts, and (d) a belief in the importance of working together across divergent perspectives in the service of fostering students’ literacy learning.