

## *LRA Board of Directors Election Position Statement*

January 15, 2019

### **Byeong-Young Cho, University of Pittsburgh**

It is a distinct honor to be nominated for the LRA Board of Directors. I am an Associate Professor in Language, Literacy and Culture at the University of Pittsburgh and a Research Scientist at Pitt's Learning Research and Development Center. I received my Ph.D. in Reading Education from the University of Maryland-College Park in 2011. Prior to my doctoral program, I worked as a research fellow at Korea University's Center for Subject Matter Education, while teaching language arts for middle and high school students in Seoul, Korea.

I have been an active member of LRA since my first attendance at the 2007 National Reading Conference meeting in Austin, Texas. LRA is a primary scholarly community where I have grown from a doctoral student into a literacy scholar. I value the privileges and learning opportunities I have gained from my membership, particularly what I have learned from the rigorous research and critical engagement of LRA scholars. I have chaired LRA sessions, served as a discussant, and reviewed conference proposals. I am currently a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Literacy Research*. Recently, I have especially enjoyed the opportunity of interacting with LRA's doctoral students, offering assistance in writing their conference proposals and feedback on their presentations.

My scholarship connects areas of research in text comprehension, situated cognition, and new literacies. Currently, I am co-leading two classroom-based research projects situated in diverse school settings in the Pittsburgh area. In one project, my colleagues and I are conducting a design-based study in an urban middle school to examine how learners work with multiple texts to generate and investigate questions on a historical problem that is culturally relevant and meaningful to them. I am examining how our instructional design of multisource text inquiries may engage students in epistemic practices, through which learners eagerly activate their own perspectives, take others' into account, and engage in the analysis of these epistemic resources. In another project, using a quasi-experimental design, my research team is collaborating with high school teachers in designing and implementing a metacognitively oriented digital literacy intervention in ELA. I am looking for the effects of focused intervention on adolescents' use of strategic knowledge and processes when learning from internet sources with a goal of generating compelling questions on a social controversy. My work has appeared in high-impact research journals such as *Reading Research Quarterly*, *American Educational Research Journal*, *Cognition and Instruction*, and *Urban Education*, as well as in leading practitioner journals such as *The Reading Teacher*, *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, and *The Social Studies*.

I aim to contribute to the growth of LRA in three ways. First, I want to add to the continuing efforts to foster our organization as a "conceptually rich learning environment" that builds upon the life experiences of the members and offers a space for dialogue and inquiry. The research-informed knowledge and perspectives of our members are a community product,

and we thus are collectively accountable for the standards that inform our work in this scholarly community. For research to flourish, community members need vibrant discussions in which tensions and disparities are recognized and reconceived as new opportunities to learn.

Second, I want to contribute to our diligence and thoroughness in the construction of “evidence” that we can confidently offer to stakeholders in responding to unsubstantiated discourses on public education. LRA is a research organization, and what others most expect from us is meticulously examined evidence and detailed reasoning that provide support for socially just practices in literacy education. Through bold initiatives and the accompanying efforts, we must continue to reevaluate what we know now, identify what we need to know more about, and update our translation of knowledge to pressing issues in literacy and literacy education. This work requires critical self-assessment in which we squarely face our preconceptions and potential misconceptions.

Last, I want to contribute my thoughts and ideas to help LRA become a truly “international organization.” LRA is a nationally leading professional community, which has sought to represent our knowledge and advocate for our voices in the practices and policies of literacy, mostly in the context of the United States. Recently, we have increasingly interacted with literacy researchers and educators from other societies and cultures across the world, and we have taken important steps to initiate successful international connections. I call for continuing attention to an international focus to help us conceive of different opportunities and challenges that we might not otherwise notice. There are educators and researchers seeking our knowledge and insights, but these practitioners and scholars also have much to teach us as well.