

When I began attending LRA (then NRC) as a doctoral student in 2005, I could not have imagined the ways it would positively shape my scholarly identity. I am so fortunate, or maybe just plain lucky, that my doctoral advisor was so insistent about the benefits of attending LRA and left me little choice about whether to attend throughout my doctoral program. Being part of the LRA community has been a significant part of what has led to a satisfying career in which I fight for both innovation and balance. I am currently an Associate Professor at George Mason University in the Washington DC area where I serve as Director of the Division of Elementary, Literacy and Secondary Education. In addition to being part of the LRA community, my scholarly identity has been shaped by becoming a mother. As any parent can tell you, becoming a parent can profoundly change the way you view and understand the world, especially education. Becoming the mother of two adopted children with autism spectrum disorder has challenged every notion I have ever had about schooling, fairness, equity, inclusion, ability, the role of social-emotional wellness and what it takes to become a reader. Most importantly, it has significantly shaped who I am as a scholar and is why I fight for better teaching methods and schooling approaches of those who are often ignored, and it is why I am committed to the work of organizations such as LRA.

My scholarship is centered around two primary areas of inquiry: (1) Understanding how digital technology can be used equitably and to support diverse readers and writers; and (2) Understanding how to support and prepare preservice and inservice teachers to effectively integrate digital technology into literacy and language arts instruction to support students who have not traditionally been well-served by schools (e.g., students with disabilities, English learners).

Focused on these areas of interest, I have conducted research across the PK-20 spectrum, across disciplines, in formal and informal learning environments, and with pre-service and practicing teachers using a variety of inquiry tools and methodologies. Through my work, I have constructed and examined innovative instructional approaches and practices that are facilitated by the integration of digital technology. The most recent evidence of my desire to use innovative instructional approaches to support students with diverse needs can be found in the three funded projects I currently lead as a Principal Investigator. Through the first project, funded by the *National Science Foundation*, I am working with a stellar team of scholars to explore how to prepare K-5 teachers to integrate coding and computational thinking into literacy instruction in inclusive classrooms to support students with high incidence disabilities. Through a second project, funded by the *Education Bureau of Hong Kong*, I am working with an international team to explore coding as an approach for learning English as a second language. In a third project, funded by the *U.S. Department of Education*, I am working with an outstanding team to further develop a digital graphic organizer app aimed at supporting students with disabilities in multiple genres of writing and helping teachers use digital data to design effective writing instruction. Though all of this work, I spend extensive time in classrooms with teachers and students with the goal of not only expanding ideas about the boundaries of text and what it means to be literate, but also helping all students, regardless of ability, develop new competencies, motivation, interest, and persistence to participate in the activities that will help them becoming increasingly literate citizens.

For my collective work in the field, I was honored to be awarded the 2014 Early Career Achievement Award from LRA, along with Early Career awards from AERA and Iowa State University, and have secured over \$4,000,000 to support my research activities. None of my work would be possible without the LRA community, through which I have gathered many supporters and collaborators. I have been delighted to be actively involved in many aspects of LRA throughout my career. For example, I am currently serving a three-year term as Chair of the Technology Committee (2018-2021), and also served a term as a member of the Technology Committee (2011-2014). I have served as a member of the Field Council (2010-2011), as a member of the Publications Committee (2016-2017), as a proposal reviewer, and as a reviewer for Literacy Research: Theory, Method, and Practice (LR:TMP). Finally, one of the toughest roles in which I have served LRA was as Co-Chair for Area 10 (2015-2017). In that role I learned of the extreme dedication it takes for LRA members and leadership to establish the conference program each year.

My service to LRA has illuminated several areas of interest where I think we can enhance the work of the organization. If elected to the Board of Directors, I would advocate for increasing awareness and impact of our organization through digital platforms and believe that my experience as Chair of the Technology Committee will be helpful in moving this work forward. Similar to other academic organizations we are primed to have meaningful impact through social media, but we need appropriate policies to ensure that this work is consistent and consequential.

As a member of the Board of Directors, I would also continue advocating for dialogue and scholarship that embraces expanded notions of text and literacy, which in turn would create space for expanded notions about literacy instruction, who participates and how, and innovative thinking about how to support students who are not traditionally well-served by schools.

Finally, I would advocate for ways to promote continued robust scholarship among future generations. I believe this work can be done by both continuing and expanding our mentoring of doctoral students and early career scholars. I think our organization would also be enhanced by promoting opportunities and mentoring for mid-career scholars. Whatever work is undertaken by LRA, as a member of the Board of Directors, I would serve enthusiastically, ethically, and with the goal of promoting the greater good of the organization.