

A Joint Statement From the ILA Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of the International Literacy Association (ILA) is pleased to announce the release of the first of two special issues of *Reading Research Quarterly (RRQ)*, ILA's top-rated journal, dedicated exclusively to examining the oft-polarizing topic of science of reading (SOR).

This *RRQ* special issue, which will be released this month, is available only online and features 26 peer-reviewed articles authored by a total of 77 literacy researchers who examine the science of reading instruction from a multiplicity of research perspectives, pedagogies, instructional components, and student knowledge and language profiles.

Background of the Project

In February 2020, Amanda P. Goodwin and Robert T. Jiménez, editors of *RRQ*, issued a call for abstracts of articles dealing with all aspects of SOR. The response was simply overwhelming. More than 70 abstracts were submitted, indicating the intense interest of the literacy research field in engaging upon a topic of immediate and practical urgency to the broad spectrum of literacy education stakeholders, including teachers, teacher educators, administrators, policy advocates, families and caregivers, education media, and the public at large.

When scope of submissions vastly exceeded the limits of a single issue of the journal, ILA decided to release two special issues, with the first released September 2020 and the second slated for publication in spring 2021. Together, they offer the field the most ambitious treatment to date of research-driven insights into the claims, promises, limitations, and extensions of science as applied to literacy acquisition and pedagogy, noting what remains unknown and offering thoughts to inform a new agenda for ongoing research.

Where We Stand

Where does ILA stand on SOR? Right here, fulfilling our mission to bring rigorous research to bear on the complex underpinnings of effective classroom literacy instruction, fostering sustained interactions between researchers and practitioners, respecting the diversity of student backgrounds and cultural endowments, and addressing the harsh realities of resource disparity and embedded racism.

As the *RRQ* editors made clear to prospective authors, the goal of the special issues was to highlight how bridging perspectives via accurate and meaningful information can move us forward. ILA is pleased that the editors of *RRQ* are bringing multiple voices to the discussion. It is our hope that the readers of the various contributions find the collection provocative and broadening. We also hope that resulting discussions support educators in developing a range of knowledge and perspectives that address different needs in different situations. Indeed, we urge you to think more broadly about this issue's topic as "sciences of reading" befitting the multiple lens, frames, and perspectives offered.

The sciences of our readings are complex, dynamic, and multidimensional. Reading educators, in their efforts to support diverse literacy learners, need to adroitly, discerningly, and adeptly support reading development attuned to different circumstances. In our classrooms, it would be amiss not to draw upon multiple sciences—psychological, sociological, and others. Educators must navigate different circumstances from an embrace of offerings from all of the sciences.

Hence, it is essential that educators operate fluidly as reading is neither fixed nor standardized but variable. To do so, vigilant, conscientious, and responsive teachers should be questioning other professionals, advocates, intervenors, critical consumers, and creative entrepreneurs. To attend to learners as they learn to read their words, their worlds, and those of others, educators need to be informed by the arts and sciences.

Join Us

We are committed to engaging stakeholders and researchers on the topics at the heart of the SOR conversation. ILA has developed two digital events designed to drive further discovery and inquiry and enhance classroom literacy instruction.

The first, "[Unpacking the Science of Reading](#)," is a free digital event scheduled for September 15, 2020, 6:30 p.m.–8:00 p.m. ET. Liisa Moilanen Potts of Edreports.org will facilitate a conversation with the *RRQ* editors about the special issue, its key findings, and discoveries that surprised the editorial team along the way.

The second, "[Making Sense of the Science of Reading](#)," is scheduled for September 17, 2020, 1:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m. ET. P. David Pearson, founding chair of ILA's Literacy Research Panel, will open the event. He will be joined by a prestigious list of speakers that includes James S. Kim, Nicole Patton Terry, Timothy Shanahan, Timothy Rasinski, Kymyona Burk, Gina Cervetti, and more.

So, please, accept our personal invitation to get involved in this extraordinary engagement that will expand and challenge your understandings of this critical and timely topic. [Subscribe to *RRQ*](#). Attend our [digital events](#). [Become a member of ILA](#).

We welcome you and look forward to engaging with you.

On behalf of the ILA Board of Directors,

Stephen G. Peters

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