

## Embracing Literacy Conference designed for teachers, parents

If you teach or parent a child who is learning to read, the Embracing Literacy conference was designed with you in mind. The conference is being sponsored by the Wyoming Department of Education and the University of Wyoming. WY Lit is honored to have recommended 15 of the 18 speakers. The conference started on Tuesday, July 21, and will continue every Tuesday and Thursday through August 11, 2020. All sessions are being recorded. You may register until Aug 11.

The conference opened on Tuesday July 21 with three titans of literacy: Dr. Anita Archer, Dr. Louisa Moats, and Dr. David Kilpatrick.

Dr. Archer opened the conference by discussing and modeling explicit reading instruction. Instruction is considered explicit instruction when a skill or concept is introduced, modeled for students, practiced with students and then by students over time until it is mastered. Dr. Archer emphasized that the most powerful reading instruction is at the intersection of teacher knowledge and a well implemented strong curriculum. She reminded us that reading difficulties emerge early and that we need to use valid and reliable reading assessment tools to identify children at risk.

Dr. Louisa Moats spoke about her updated publication titled, “Reading IS Rocket Science: What Expert Teachers of Reading Should Know and Be Able to Do.” Dr. Moats offered an overview of the body of cross-disciplinary research referred to as the Science of Reading and the importance of closing the gap between reading research and educational practices.

Dr. David Kilpatrick discussed the role that oral language plays in the acquisition of reading skills. He emphasized that learning to read is not based on visual memory and that the three cueing system

approach to reading, the foundation of balanced literacy programs like Reading Recovery, Leveled Literacy (LLI), and Fountas & Pinnell, has no evidence to support its use with weaker readers.

Dr. Moats will speak again today, July 23. She will continue Dr. Kilpatrick's discussion about the connection between language development and reading. Dr. Steve Dykstra will then discuss the role that language and literacy can play for students who experience trauma in their lives. Dr. Julie Washington will discuss her work on the impact that dialect can have on language and literacy. The day will close with conference favorite, American Public Media Senior Producer and Correspondent, Emily Hanford, who has covered the problems with reading instruction in the United States extensively since 2017.

On July 28, Dr. Sharon Vaughn will discuss what reading comprehension is and what research says about how to improve it. Dr. Anita Archer will then expand on her initial topic with a talk about explicit vocabulary instruction. Dr. Tim Shanahan will discuss how to teach reading using complex text, and Dr. Tim Rasinski will empower us with tools related to reading fluency.

July 30 opens with a lesson about structured literacy from Dr. Louise Spear-Swerling. Lynn Kuhn, the President of the International Dyslexia Association Rocky Mountain Branch will discuss how to implement structured literacy in the classroom. Neurobiologist Dr. Jason Yeatman will educate us about the neurobiology of dyslexia.

Dr. Steve Dykstra opens August 4 with a discussion about how to use research to make better assessment and curricular choices (a must attend session for administrators!). Valerie Chism from the May Center in Santa Fe, New Mexico will empower educators and parents with an understanding of the often confusing educational evaluation. Wyoming's very own Erin Swilling, Executive Director of the Parent Information Center, will present an IEP case study.

August 6 is a day with William Van Cleave! Anyone who knows him knows how engaging and informative his presentations are! He will begin by explaining the importance of teaching handwriting, followed by a talk about using base words, prefixes and suffixes to build vocabulary, and closing with a lesson about the important role sentence structure plays in reading and writing.

The final day of the conference is August 11. Dr. Stephanie Stoller will provide teachers, administrators and parents a clear understanding about screening and progress monitoring assessment tools and how to use data to guide instruction and measure response to intervention. Dr. Amy Murdoch from Mount St. Joseph University will offer tools for teachers, parents and caregivers to support Kindergarten readiness. We are thrilled that Dr. Jane Bernstein, Associate Professors at Harvard Medical School, will close the conference with a talk about the whole child as a reader.

We hope you will consider registering for this event! It costs hundreds of dollars to hear these speakers at national or international conferences. You can attend for only \$50 per person. Legislators may attend for free. Get in touch with us at [info@wylit.org](mailto:info@wylit.org) if you are a legislator and would like more information.

Tickets can be found by searching for the Wyoming Department of Education Embracing Literacy Conference or at <https://edu.wyoming.gov/educators/conferences/embracing-literacy/>. —

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