

Commission on RTI Presenters, Webinar Sessions February – June 2010

Barbara J. Ehren, Ed.D. is professor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders and Director of the Doctoral Program at the University of Central Florida, which focuses on language and literacy. Formerly she was a research scientist with the University of Kansas, Center for Research on Learning (KUCRL), involved in research and development in adolescent literacy, including effective approaches to professional development of educators in this area. Dr. Ehren has been a Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) professional developer for over 20 years in both Learning Strategies and Content Enhancement Routines and is a co-developer of the Content Literacy Continuum (CLC), a schoolwide adolescent literacy framework. She maintains close research and development ties to KUCRL, related especially to the CLC. A special area of interest has been literacy instruction for diverse learners in inclusive settings. She was a consultant to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in their formulation of the national research agenda in adolescent literacy. She was an editor of the Guilford series on Challenges in Language and Literacy. She also assists school districts to build capacity at the school level for more effective literacy programs for diverse learners. A recurrent theme of her work is shared responsibility for student success, highlighting the role of collaborative efforts in the schools.

Carol McDonald Connor, Ph.D., is Associate Professor at Florida State University, College of Education, Reading and Language Arts, and a research faculty member of the Florida Center for Reading Research. Recently awarded the President's Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE) and the 2007 APA Richard Snow Award, she completed her Ph.D and was an assistant research scientist in Psychology at University of Michigan just prior to coming to Florida State. Her research interests focus on children's learning in the classroom from preschool through third grade and the complex relation between children's language and literacy skill development. She is the principal investigator of two randomized control field trials funded by the US Department of Education, Institute for Education Sciences and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. These studies examine the effects of individualizing literacy instruction for first, second, and third grade students based on their entering language and reading skills. The intervention combines the use of Assessment-to-instruction (A2i) software with intensive professional development. A2i, which is web based, supports teachers' efforts to individualize reading instruction using assessment to guide instruction and effective planning of small group instruction.

Karen Costello, Ph.D., is the Administrator for Program Improvement, East Lyme (CT) Schools and a member of the Connecticut State Department of Education Advisory Committee on SRBI/RTI. She was formerly the Reading/Language Arts consultant for the

state of Connecticut and, subsequently, the Assistant Superintendent of Schools for the Madison (CT) School System. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Connecticut (with a concentration in reading, curriculum and administration). Dr. Costello is past-president of the New England Reading Association and is currently the Legislative Chair of the Connecticut Association for Reading Research (CARR).

Sandra Goetze, Ph.D., is an associate professor of literacy education and coordinator of the reading clinic (practica) at Oklahoma State University. She is a 1999 graduate of the University of Oklahoma and her undergraduate degree is in elementary education from Michigan State University. Prior to her university experience she was a first and fifth grade teacher and a reading specialist at the elementary and secondary levels from 1987-1997. She currently teaches course in reading practicum, literacy coaching, and the integration of literacy and technology. Her research includes the study of struggling readers and technology use, assessment for struggling readers and response to intervention. Recent research has centered on RTI models focused on literacy in two rural districts in Oklahoma. This project focuses on progress monitoring and the change from paper pencil assessments to all electronic assessments. Professional development communities were established to better understand the role of the classroom teacher instructing diverse learners and matching instruction with progress monitoring. Current data analysis is exploring the use of running records for standardized practice as it compares to CBM oral reading fluency data. This current project, Teach for Achievement, is a school-wide RTI project utilizing a three-tier model based on the recommendations of IDEA 2004.

Janette Klingner, Ph.D., is a Professor at the University of Colorado in the School of Education, Educational Equity and Cultural Diversity. Her expertise is in special education, reading, cultural and linguistic diversity, and English language learners. Before earning her doctorate in reading and learning disabilities from the University of Miami, she was a bilingual special education teacher for ten years. Currently, she is a co-Principal Investigator for The National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems (NCCRESt), a Technical Assistance Center funded to address the disproportionate representation of culturally and linguistically diverse students in special education, and a co-Principal Investigator on the Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) Project, an IES funded efficacy study. Of her more than 80 published works, one article, three chapters, and two books are on the topic of Response to Intervention (RtI). An additional book on RtI for practitioners is under contract and in preparation. She has presented at numerous local, national, and international conferences, and conducted several professional development workshops, many on the topic of RtI. She is past Co-Editor of the Review of Educational Research, an Associate Editor for the Journal of Learning Disabilities, and on the editorial boards of 8 additional journals. She is a member of numerous professional organizations in special education, literacy, bilingual education, and multicultural education. In 2004 she was honored with AERA's Early Career Award for outstanding research.

Barbara P. Laster, Ed.D., attempts to touch students, teachers, and language as the Director of the Graduate Reading Programs at Towson University. As a professor in the Department of Educational Technology and Literacy, she teaches courses in language diversity, new literacies, adolescent literacy, content reading and writing, and literacy interventions for special populations. Dr. Laster has been a reading specialist in public schools in four states at every grade level. Her publications include work on aspects of comprehension, teacher development and family literacy in reading clinics, service learning, emergent writing, and religious diversity in public school classrooms. Dr. Laster serves on the International Reading Association's 2010 Standards Committee and the RTI Commission. She also is active on the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities. A special area of interest has been adolescent literacy, especially for striving learners.

Nonie K. Lesaux is Marie and Max Kargman Associate Professor in Human Development and Urban Education Advancement at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Lesaux leads a research program that focuses on reading development and prevention of reading difficulties of children from linguistically diverse backgrounds; her developmental and instructional research has implications for practitioners, researchers, and policy-makers. Lesaux's program of research is supported by research grants from several organizations, including National Institute for Child Health and Human Development, William T. Grant Foundation, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Spencer Foundation. From 2002-2006, Lesaux was Senior Research Associate of the National Literacy Panel on Language Minority Youth and contributing author to three chapters in that national report. She has also published her research in several peer-reviewed journals, including *Developmental Psychology*, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *Journal of Learning Disabilities* and *The Reading Teacher*. In 2007, Lesaux was named one of five WT Grant scholars, earning a \$350,000 five-year award from the WT Grant Foundation in support of her research on English-language learners in urban public schools. Lesaux is a member of the Society for the Scientific Study of Reading, International Academy for Research in Learning Disabilities, Society for Research in Child Development. She is also a member of the Reading First Advisory Committee for the Secretary of Education, U.S. Department of Education. A native of Canada, Lesaux earned her doctorate at the University of British Columbia.

Marjorie Lipson, Ph.D., Professor of Education at the University of Vermont, is known nationally and internationally for her research in the areas of reading and literacy. Her work focuses on topics related to reading comprehension and testing, analysis of reading and writing difficulties, and methods of literacy instruction, with particular attention towards the literacy learning of elementary and middle school-aged children. She is a prolific writer, and has authored or co-authored many scholarly papers and chapters, nine books, 16 monographs, and numerous sets of teacher training materials. Her research

projects focused on whole-school change have been involved in more than 20 (mostly) high-poverty schools to help improve literacy instruction.

Barbara Marinak, Ph.D., is assistant professor of reading in the School of Behavioral Sciences and Education. Prior to joining the faculty at Penn State Harrisburg, Dr. Marinak served as assistant professor of literacy at Millersville University. Dr. Marinak has over two decades of experience in public schools. During her last fifteen years in public education, she held a variety of leadership positions including reading supervisor, elementary curriculum supervisor, and acting superintendent. Dr. Marinak has also consulted to the Pennsylvania Department of Education on a number of projects including co-authoring the PSSA Reading Instructional Handbook and co-editing the Pennsylvania Literacy Framework. Dr. Marinak's research interests include the observation of reading and writing, reading engagement, intervention practices, and the use of informational text. Her work can be found in *The Reading Teacher*, *Reading Research and Instruction*, and in various edited volumes and yearbooks.

Sheila Valencia, Ph.D., of University of Washington specializes in areas of teaching and research including reading and writing instruction, literacy assessment, and professional development of teachers. She is the author of *Literacy Portfolios in Action* (1998) and contributing editor of *Authentic Reading Assessment: Practices and Possibilities* (1994). She also serves on several national and state advisory panels focused on large-scale and classroom-based reading assessment. Education: Ph.D., University of Colorado, 1978 M.Ed., Reading - State University of New York, 1976 B.S., Elementary and Remedial Reading - State University of New York, 1971

Karen K. Wixson, Ph.D., professor in the School of Education at the University of Michigan—Ann Arbor, where she served as dean from 1998-2005, was a member of the Board of Directors of the International Reading Association until 2008. She has served on various IRA committees including Comprehension and Learning, Research and Professional Studies, and Literacy Assessment, which she chaired. Most recently, she served as an IRA consultant to USAID in Ghana. Wixson received her Ph.D. from Syracuse University. Prior to receiving her doctorate, she worked as a learning disabilities teacher and reading specialist. Wixson is the author or co-author of numerous publications including articles in *The Reading Teacher*, *Journal of Reading*, *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Language Arts*, and *Educational Leadership*. She has served on the editorial advisory board of several journals including *Reading Research Quarterly* and *Journal of Literacy Research*, and worked as a Principal Investigator in the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA). In addition, she is the co-author of a *Assessment and Instruction of Reading and Writing Difficulties*, a text on reading and writing difficulties. Wixson also has long-term involvement with the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading assessments including service on the 2009 Reading Framework Committee and served on the advisory committee for the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS).

Doris Walker-Dalhouse, Ph.D., Doris Walker-Dalhouse, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Literacy at Marquette University, is foremost a teacher educator who has taught both graduate and undergraduate courses in foundations of literacy, elementary reading methods, analysis of reading, trends and issues in reading, reading in the content areas, developmental reading, language arts, history of reading, and children's literature. Her experiences as an elementary teacher, working in a developmental reading laboratory, reading clinic for struggling readers, and organizing and operating a community-based reading clinic for refugee students are central to her research and writing about sociocultural aspects of literacy development.

Susan Watts-Taffe, Ph.D., Dr. Susan Watts-Taffe holds a B.S. in Exceptional and Elementary Education from the State University College of New York at Buffalo and an Ed.M. and Ph.D. in Reading Education from the State University of New York at Buffalo. She has experience as a special education teacher and a reading diagnostician. She has written numerous articles for journals such as *The Reading Teacher*, *Language Arts*, *Journal of Literacy Research*, and *Reading Research Quarterly* and is the co-author of two books. Her research is characterized by long-term collaborations with teachers and administrators working with students experiencing difficulty with reading and writing in urban schools. Dr. Watts-Taffe is Associate Professor of Literacy, and Coordinator of the Literacy and Second Language Studies Program, at the University of Cincinnati