



International Reading Association

A membership organization of literacy professionals

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Timothy Shanahan

Timothy Shanahan, professor of urban education at the University of Illinois at Chicago and director of the UIC Center for Literacy, is president of the International Reading Association and will serve until May 2007. His other contributions to IRA include Board of Directors; Illinois Reading Council (IRC) Board of Directors; coeditor, *IRC Journal*; editorial boards of *The Reading Teacher*, *Thinking Classroom*, *Reading Research Quarterly*; chair of the assessment committee, and member of publications, government relations, and family literacy committees; coauthor of *Informal Reading Assessment*; volunteer, IRA-RWCT Program; recipient, Albert J. Harris Award; participant in National Language Arts Standards Project.



Shanahan received his B.A. and M.A.T. from Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan and his Ph.D. from the University of Delaware. He was executive director of the Chicago Reading Initiative, a public school improvement project serving 437,000 children in 2001-2002. He received the Albert J. Harris Award for outstanding research on reading disability from IRA and was inducted into the Illinois Reading Council Hall of Fame in 2002. He also received the Milton D. Jacobson Readability Research Award.

Shanahan served on the White House Assembly on Reading and the National Reading Panel, a group convened by the National Institute of Child Health and Development at the request of Congress to evaluate research on successful methods of teaching reading. Recently, the US Senate confirmed Shanahan's appointment to the advisory board to the National Institute for Literacy. He has written or edited six books, including *Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Literacy*, and more than 100 articles and research studies.

Shanahan's research focuses on the relationship of reading and writing, school improvement, the assessment of reading ability, and family literacy. He chaired the National Literacy Panel on Language and Minority Children and Youth and chairs the National Early Literacy Panel.

Statement of philosophy

"Nothing could be nobler than helping children and adults to become literate, as reading is the key to economic success, full social and civic participation, and personal fulfillment," Shanahan says. "The International Reading Association remains the world's major professional organization devoted to helping teachers to accomplish this noble goal."

“We must extend the ability to read at higher levels to more people than ever before. This can best be accomplished by investing in the quality of our teachers through expanded professional development opportunities and research. To provide such opportunities, we will need more reading specialists. IRA should continue to encourage the development of a broad array of qualified reading professionals, and it should seek federal support to help districts hire reading specialists (K-12). We should use our new capacity for influencing public policy to improve reading and expand our professional community. Further, policymakers have shown great interest in using reading research as the basis of policy. This is a good idea, but it won't work without a sufficient amount of rigorous research. IRA should encourage expanded research funding, including support for literacy research fellowships.”

Presentation topics

How to improve reading achievement

The teaching of reading fluency

Making sense of research: The National Reading Panels

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