



Literacy
Network of
Kansas

Suzanne Myers, Ph.D.



**Kansas State Department
of Education**
Literacy Network of Kansas,
Project Director

Suzanne “Suzy” Myers currently serves as Project Director for the Literacy Network of Kansas (LiNK), as well as Coordinator for assessed and non-assessed standards at the Kansas State Department of Education. She also recently served as the state’s Language Arts and Literacy Consultant.

She has worked as a high school English teacher and Curriculum Coordinator for two Kansas school districts, where she also took on leadership roles in the area of professional learning. She currently serves on the Executive Boards for the Kansas Masonic Literacy Center and the Kansas Association of Teachers of English (KATE), and is active with the Writing Conference, which hosts writing competitions and a literature festival each year for students and teachers.

Suzy is a Flint Hills Writing Project fellow (2006) and is National Board Certified in Adolescent/Young Adult English Language Arts. She holds bachelor’s degrees in Journalism and English Education, a Master’s in Curriculum and Instruction, and a Doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction.

Tiffany Blevins



**Kansas State Department
of Education**
Assistant Director of Early
Childhood, Special Education
and Title

Tiffany Blevins is currently the Assistant Director of Early Childhood, Special Education and Title at the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) and the Lead for Kindergarten Readiness. She previously was employed at the University of Kansas as the Early Childhood Mental Health Coordinator and is endorsed with the Kansas Association of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (KAIMH) as Infant Mental Health Mentor IMH-E® IV (Policy). She has also served as the Infant Toddler Part C Coordinator at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) and the Early Childhood Special Education Program Consultant at KSDE.

Tiffany has a Masters degree from the University of Kansas in Social Welfare Administration and is a Licensed Masters Social Worker. She has worked with children and families experiencing trauma, mental health issues, disabilities and disabilities. She currently serves on the Board of Families Together Inc.

Barbara Bradley, Ph.D.



University of Kansas
Department of Curriculum &
Teaching
Professor in Reading Education

Barbara A. Bradley, PhD, is a Professor in Reading Education in the Department of Curriculum & Teaching at the University of Kansas. Her research focuses on early literacy and book sharing, and she is co-author on the book *Revitalizing Read Alouds: Interactive Talk About Books With Young Children, PreK-2* (Teachers College Press, 2016).

Barbara teaches courses related to emergent literacy and beginning reading, reading comprehension, reading coordination and supervision, and reading research. She also has co-directed a study abroad for education majors in Italy since 2001. She is an active member of and has chaired or served on several committees for the Literacy Research Association. Finally, Barbara taught young children with disabilities in diverse settings for 14 years.

Irma Brasseur-Hock, Ph.D.



University of Kansas
Department of Curriculum &
Teaching
Professor in Reading Education

Irma Brasseur-Hock, PhD, is the Academic Program Associate for the Online High Incidence Disabilities Teacher Education Program in the Department of Special Education and Assistant Research Professor in the Center for Research on Learning. Dr. Brasseur-Hock served as a secondary classroom teacher of general and special education students for fifteen years.

Her research interests include adolescent literacy, personalized/blended learning, instructional coaching, reading instructional interventions, and instructional sustainability. She is highly regarded for her skills as a professional development specialist in adolescent literacy and secondary school change.

Dr. Brasseur has served as Co-PI and project manager on several IES grants including a reading intervention development grant, a Striving Readers efficacy study, a teacher quality development grant, and an IES measurement grant. In these leadership roles, Dr. Brasseur's work has focused on systems change, instructional delivery, and adolescent literacy. She has co-authored dissemination work from these studies in numerous peer-reviewed, scholarly works and presentations, including publications found in *Learning Disability Quarterly*, the *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, and the *Journal of Learning and Individual Difference*.

Mary Beth Calhoon, Ph.D.



University of Miami
Department of Teaching & Learning
Associate Professor in Special Education

Mary Beth Calhoon joined the University of Miami faculty in 2014. She is principal investigator of “Reading Achievement Multi-Component Program (RAMP-UP),” a five-year study funded by the federal Institute of Educational Sciences. She earned her Ph.D. in Education and Human Development Special Education at Vanderbilt University in 1999. She was a special education teacher for 6th-12th grade students in Oklahoma before joining the New Mexico State University, Department of Special Education and Communications Disorders as an assistant professor. She was an associate professor at Georgia State University’s Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education, and Lehigh University’s Department of Education and Human Services. She serves on the editorial boards of *Annals of Dyslexia*, *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice* and *Learning Disability Quarterly*.

Her professional publications include “Rethinking adolescent literacy instruction,” “Individual and group sensitivity to remedial reading program design: Examining reading gains across three middle school investigations,” and “What is the best choice for scheduling remedial reading classes at the middle school level?”

Judith Carta, Ph.D.



University of Kansas
Senior Scientist, Professor
Interim Director, Juniper Gardens Children’s Project
Co-Director, Bridging the Word Gap Research Network

Dr. Carta is a Senior Scientist in the Institute for Life Span Studies, Professor of Special Education, and the Interim Director of the Juniper Gardens Children’s Project at the University of Kansas. Her science focuses on developing strategies to minimize the effects of poverty on children’s language and social outcomes and developing practices that teachers and parents can use to promote children’s early learning particularly in vulnerable populations. Her key research and policy interests include advancing the quality of children’s caregiving environments, methods for monitoring the communication skills and social-emotional growth of infants and toddlers, and strategies for promoting family engagement in early intervention programs. She has been the Principal Investigator of several multi-site research projects and centers funded by the National Institutes of Health, the Institute of Educational Sciences, and the Administration on Children and Families. She currently co-directs the Bridging the Word Gap Research Network. She was a member of the Federal Advisory Panel on Head Start Research and Evaluation, Division of Early Childhood’s Commission on Recommended Practices, and served as the Editor of *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education* as well as the boards of numerous scientific journals. She was the recipient of the 2016 Irvin Youngberg Research Award given to recognize an individual whose applied research has had significant impact and relevance to the state of Kansas.

Heather Caswell, Ph.D., NBCT



Emporia State University
The Teachers College
Assistant Professor

Heather Caswell, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Elementary/Early Childhood/Special Education. She is a National Board Certified Teacher in Early and Middle Childhood Literacy: Reading-Language Arts. For the past six years, Caswell has taught graduate courses the Early Childhood Unified Masters and Licensure graduate program specifically pertaining to early childhood inclusive environments, assessment, collaboration (working with families and professionals), teaching in an inclusive environment birth-3rd grade, home-based clinical experience, center-based clinical experience and capstone coursework.

Dr. Caswell's teaching experiences ranges from preschool age to graduate level learning experiences, both online and face-to-face. As a National Writing Project Teacher Consultant and co-site director, she has presented at the international, national, state, and district levels focusing on visual culture, image-based research, emerging literacy, visual literacy, family literacy, writing process, workshop approach, assessment, creativity, and developmentally appropriate practices. Dr. Caswell was recognized as a Teacher of Promise, Horizon Award Recipient, and Accomplished Teacher as a National Board Renewed Teacher by the Kansas Department of Education.

Sharon R. Dorsey, Ph.D.



Wexford Inc.
Senior Researcher

Sharon Dorsey, PhD, serves as Senior Researcher at Wexford, Inc. She has been the evaluator for the Ohio Ready Schools Initiative, which seeks to align the curriculum, assessment, and instruction across pre-K and K-3. For 30 years, Dr. Dorsey worked for the Columbus (Ohio) City Schools serving in several different positions: Director of a three-year U.S. Secretary of Education's Innovation in Education Fund grant on writing standards; Testing and Assessment Specialist; District Language Arts and Reading Resource Teacher; and language arts classroom teacher. She assisted in the development of the Primary Level Assessment System (PLAS) in Ohio sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). Dr. Dorsey served as an instructor at Harvard University Graduate School of Education's Institute on Diverse Systems of Assessment, the University of Dayton, and The Ohio State University. Dr. Dorsey was a longitudinal researcher for Apple (Computers) Classrooms of Tomorrow and has held leadership positions in a variety of school district, state and national literacy, reading, arts and technology organizations. In her position as President of the Ohio Literacy Educators and Advocates Forum (LEAF), she implemented the first Ohio Literacy Summit bringing together Ohio literacy researchers with Ohio legislators. For her work in support of Ohio literacy education, she received a Special Distinction Award from the Ohio Council of Teachers of English Language Arts (OCTELA).

Julie Ewing



Julie Ewing holds a Master's degree in school counseling and building leadership. Currently she is the Coordinator for Kindergarten Readiness with the Kansas State Department of Education on the Early Childhood, Special Education, Title Services team. She focuses her work on English language learners, early childhood, and professional development.

Her experiences range from Kindergarten to high school where she has taught and served as school counselor and a virtual director. She has had many roles in the school including district test coordinator, school improvement coordinator and curriculum leader.

Kansas State Department of Education

Early Childhood, Special Education, & Title Services

Michael Fragale



Michael Fragale is Vice President, Education and Children's Content, at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. He leads CPB's strategic education initiatives and content investments and connects CPB efforts with public media stakeholders and national educational organizations. He oversees a multi-year, multi-million dollar Ready To Learn grant from the U.S. Department of Education, providing strategic counsel to the management team on operations, compliance, policy, and engagement. He has developed public media grant projects on topics such as early learning, distance learning, dropout prevention, STEM education, and adult literacy.

Fragale is the former Director of Content and Strategy for the PBS Adult Learning Service (ALS), where he managed several initiatives including the successful launch of PBSCampus.org. He was part of the team that secured a \$15 million grant from the U. S. Department of Education that seeded PBS's GED and adult literacy initiatives. Prior to his work at CPB, he was an academic program manager for SAS Institute, a leading business intelligence and predictive analytics software company.

A veteran of public broadcasting, Fragale began his career as a news writer and associate producer for WHY-FM, the public radio station in Philadelphia. He is a proud graduate of Temple University, College of Arts and Sciences.

Corporation for Public Broadcasting

Vice President, Education & Children's Content

Jana Craig-Hare, Ph.D.



Jana Craig Hare, PhD, is an Assistant Research Professor at the Center for Research on Learning, University of Kansas. She is a former secondary teacher, Technology Integration Facilitator, District Technology Coordinator, State Educational Technology Director and University Instructor. With 20+ years experience in education, she brings a classroom perspective to school improvement models, including best practices in research-based instructional strategies and technology integration.

As an academic researcher, Dr. Craig-Hare is interested in the implementation of technology into formal and informal learning environments. Through a variety of research methods, Jana explores topics such as teaching and learning strategies utilizing educational technologies, technology-rich learning environments, mobile learning in education, instructional coaching to facilitate technology integration, and educational game design. In addition, the evaluation of educational technology programs is a focus of her research.

University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning

Assistant Research Professor
Associate Director of Research
& Evaluation - ALTEC

Michael Hock, Ph.D.



Michael Hock, Ph.D. is Director of the Center for Research on Learning and Senior Research Scientist at the University of Kansas. His research involves the development and validation of adolescent reading and student motivation interventions that respond to the needs of districts or agencies as well as the needs of academically underprepared adolescents and adults.

His interests include the design and validation of instructional strategies and practices for improving student outcomes for adolescents who struggle with learning. His interests also include professional development, instructional coaching, and the change process related to getting research to practice.

Currently, Michael serves as the PI for the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning's contract for the Kansas Department of Education's Literacy Network of Kansas grant (2017 to 2021).

University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning

Director, KUCRL
Senior Scientist

Joan Houghton, Ed.D.



Kansas State Department of Education

Early Childhood, Special
Education, and Title Services
Education Program Consultant

Joan Houghton, EdD, is an Education Program Consultant for the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE), supporting students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Blind/Low Vision, Deaf-Blind, Low Incidence. She is also the Kansas Integrated Accountability Systems Lead, Local Consolidated Plan Lead for Area 2, Interpreter Training Lead, and administers the Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund, Social Emotional Work Group. Prior to her employment at KSDE in 2006, Dr. Houghton was an Assistant Research Professor for The Schiefelbusch Life Span Institute, and Lecturer for the Department of Special Education at the University of Kansas. She, along with noted researchers received a 1.5 million dollar grant over three years to study a single subject design on the Increased Communication in Children who are Deaf-Blind after Adapted Pre-Linguistic Milieu Therapy. Dr. Houghton has a wide range of experiences in a variety of settings including a preschool director for a private non-profit noncategorical preschool, a program in New Mexico, an educator for school districts in Kansas as a certified orientation and mobility specialist (COMS), a hospital homebound teacher, and a fourth grade teacher. Joan has presented on the local, state, and national levels. She has been a reviewer and evaluator for OSEP and ESEA. She authored and co-authored publications in peer-reviewed journals, book chapters, and co-authored online modules relating to Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and online coursework for students who are deaf.

Jayne W. James, Ed.D.



University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning

Jayne enjoys teaming with others to innovate and improve learning and teaching. She has led a number of federal grants and contracts, and has experience serving local, state, regional, national and international initiatives. As Senior Director of Education Leadership for ISTE, Jayne and her teams developed technology-enhanced coaching standards and delivered professional development services to teachers across the globe.

She is a firm believer in the power of partnerships to leverage results, which can only be achieved by working collaboratively; a belief reinforced by leading high performing teams as the Executive Director of the Ready to Learn Initiative at the Corporation of Public Broadcasting, with state technology directors in her role as Team Lead for the EETT program at the U.S. Department of Education, and as a technical assistant consultant for personalized learning and digital equity initiatives.

Previously, Jayne served as State Education Technology Director in Kansas, and has taught at all levels of education; pre-school through graduate studies. She holds a doctorate in Technology Leadership from Kansas State University with an emphasis in online professional development.

Sally Kingston, Ph.D.



Buck Institute for Education

Senior Director of Research &
Evaluation

Sally Kingston has 30 years of experience teaching and leading programs that promote improved outcomes for all students, and particularly those farthest from opportunity, at the national, regional, and local levels. Sally currently serves as senior director of research and evaluation at the Buck Institute for Education.

As senior education analyst for AEM, she provided technical assistance to State education agencies and districts to support US Department of Education funded programs focused on equity, literacy, personalized learning, early childhood education, and evidence-based practices. In this capacity, Sally led the technical assistance for Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy. She has served as a principal consultant at McRELL International, the director of College Bound Programs in the Carpinteria Unified School District (CA), a principal in the Santa Barbara Unified School District (SBUSD), a teacher in SBUSD and Santa Ana Unified School District (SAUSD), and a principal at the Harding University Partnership School. Sally has co-authored a variety of articles published nationally and internationally and, most recently, *Transforming Schools: Using Project Based Learning, Performance Assessment, and Common Core Standards*.

Sally speaks, reads, and writes Spanish fluently. When not working, she enjoys travel, sailing, and writing.

Jennifer Kotler, Ph.D.



Sesame Workshop Vice President of Content Research & Evaluation

Dr. Jennifer Kotler Clarke is the Vice President of Content Research & Evaluation at Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit educational organization behind *Sesame Street* and other educational initiatives for children. Jennifer leads a team that conducts research projects across the globe focused on a variety of curricular areas (e.g. literacy, STEM, social-emotional well-being, executive function, health) across media platforms (television, web, apps, print materials). She also spearheads Sesame Workshop studies designed to illuminate issues important for children's positive development. Using an array of methodologies to support projects from conception to completion and working with academic and research institutions to evaluate efficacy, Jennifer and her team translate data into recommendations that maximize the impact of Sesame's content around the world.

Jennifer has been interviewed on numerous occasions in the national media (e.g. NPR, The Washington Post, The New York Times, NBC, C-Span, CNN) and has been the keynote speaker at conferences and events in several countries. She writes frequent opinion pieces and articles for lay audiences as well as papers and presentations for academic journals and conferences. Jennifer is on a life-long mission to visit all units of the National Park Service and is an avid bird photographer.

Tonnie Martinez, Ph.D.



Kansas State University
College of Education
Department of Curriculum &
Instruction
Assistant Professor

Tonnie Martinez, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education at Kansas State University. In her career at Kansas State, she has served as an Assistant Director of the Center for Intercultural and Multilingual Advocacy (CIMA), National Origins Coordinator for the Midwest Equity Assistance Center and she currently coordinates the Office of Innovation and Collaboration. Along with teaching and researching innovative educational practices, she provides supervision of pre-service teachers in iPDS Cohorts, an innovative professional development school model with Shawnee Mission School District, iPDS. Tonnie taught secondary English Language Arts before transitioning to higher education. Her course load has included both undergraduate and graduate teaching of ESL and multicultural courses. Her research includes teacher readiness for accommodating English learners, equity and access for all learners, and the impact of mindfulness on student office referrals. As an educational consultant, Tonnie works with state departments and school districts on Office of Civil Rights compliance and equity audits. Her professional development topics include teaching strategies for diverse learners, paraprofessional educator development, and evaluation of curriculum and instruction for bias and sensitivity. Tonnie's service to education includes being a part of the KSDE ESL Standards writing team and she is a national examiner for the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation.

Diane Nielson, Ph.D.



University of Kansas
Professor Emerita

Diane Corcoran Nielsen, Ph.D. is Professor Emerita of Education at the University of Kansas. Dr. Nielsen's research and publications focus on teacher education and issues related to the literacy development and instruction of young children (preschool-primary grades) typically developing as well as students with special needs, particularly children with hearing-impairments.

Professor Nielsen has worked extensively with teachers and schools and led or co-led several large-scale literacy-related projects. Most recently she served as one of the investigators on the *Language and Reading Research Consortium*, a multi-university collaborative, 5-year research project focused on the reading comprehension development of children in prekindergarten through grade 3. The recipient of several awards for teaching at the University of Kansas,

Professor Nielsen taught preservice elementary education majors, graduate students preparing to be reading specialists and doctoral students studying reading research. Prior to teaching at the university level, Dr. Nielsen taught in the public schools of five different states as an elementary teacher, special education teacher and reading specialist (K-12).

Deborah Reed Ph.D.

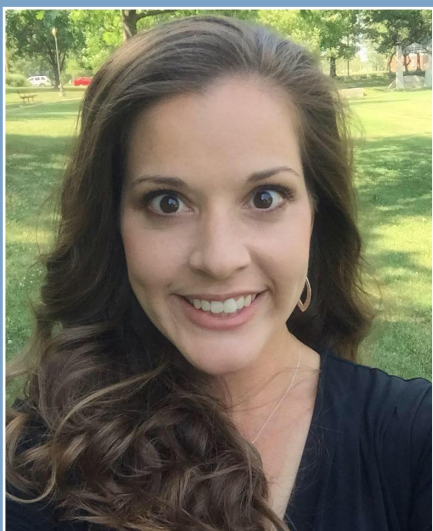


**University of Iowa
College of Education**
Director, Iowa Reading
Research Center
Associate Professor

Dr. Reed spent the first 10 years of her career as an English language arts and reading teacher as well as a reading specialist. Since 2003, she has been a researcher and technical assistance provider in numerous states.

Dr. Reed currently serves as the Director of the Iowa Reading Research Center and is an Associate Professor at the University of Iowa College of Education. She has published extensively and continues to research methods for improving reading instruction and assessment, particularly for vulnerable populations.

Amber Rowland, Ph.D.



**University of Kansas
Center for Research on
Learning**
Assistant Research Professor

Amber Rowland, PhD, is an Assistant Research Professor with the Center for Research on Learning and Assistant Director of Professional Learning for the Advanced Learning Technologies (ALTEC) Division. She specializes in collaborative, practical and engaging adult professional learning with an emphasis on current instructional practices and the powerful integration of technology. She is particularly interested in the power of conversation in teacher learning and is constantly pursuing methods for tapping into the collaborative capacity of local faculty and staff.

Her experiences range from Kindergarten to the college classroom where she has taught at multiple levels, both face-to-face and online. She has served as an instructional coach, technology integration specialist, media and on line course developer, project manager for the Technology Rich Classroom, Title IID initiative in Kansas, and an instructor in the School of Education at the University of Kansas.

Dr. Rowland travels to local, state and national venues and conferences including ISTE, NSDC and CEC, working with educators on professional learning, digital-age instruction, Project Based Learning, distance education, and the general integration of technology. Amber was recognized as one of the 20 emerging leaders in education technology by the National School Boards Association “20 to Watch” initiative and as a University of Kansas, Woman of Distinction.

Sean Smith, Ph.D.



University of Kansas
School of Education
Special Education Professor

Sean J. Smith holds the rank of Professor of Special Education at the University of Kansas. Dr. Smith has a background in the area of special education and technology, specifically towards the integration of technology across teacher preparation programs. He has authored and presented a number of articles and papers dealing with special education technology and is currently a Project Director on several US Department of Education program initiatives seeking to further the integration of technology components across teacher preparation programs and into the lives of students with disabilities as well as the development of a virtual social skill training experience for students with Autism. Dr. Smith has served as an associate editor for the *Journal of Special Education Technology* and currently serves as an Associate Editor for *Teaching Exceptional Children*. He is the proud parent of four young children, one having an intellectual disability.

Dr. Smith specializes in the integration of instructional/assistive technology into the lives of individuals with disabilities and their respective educational professionals; e-mentoring to enhance teacher education/induction; online learning; and addressing the needs of individuals with Down syndrome.

Dale Walker, Ph.D.



University of Kansas
Schiefelbusch Institute for
Life Span Studies
Associate Research Professor
& Scientist

Dale Walker, Ph.D. is Associate Research Professor and Scientist in the Schiefelbusch Institute for Life Span Studies, Juniper Gardens Children's Project. Dr. Walker has an extensive record of work in early childhood and special education having directed/co-directed IES, OSEP, HHS and NIH projects among others. Her research has focused on identifying the effects of early experience on language development and school readiness to develop interventions and assessment and observation methodology aimed at informing intervention with infants and young children. Dr. Walker directs a small RCT with early learning child care schools across three states to document the use of an intervention to increase teacher-child interactions and co-directs a project using cell phone technology to increase parent engagement in using naturalistic language strategies. Dr. Walker co-directs the national Bridging the Word Gap Research Network with Drs. Carta and Greenwood. She also directs a measurement project for progress monitoring with infants and toddlers and co-directs two IES-funded projects addressing the utility and feasibility of an intervention decision making with the IGDI progress monitoring measures for language and cognitive problem-solving. Along with Dr. Carta, she directs a new collaborative project to implement an MTSS in a statewide project for infants and toddlers receiving Part C, early intervention services. She is active in state-level advocacy, an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Early Intervention*, and consulting editor for *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* and *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education and Child Development*.

Laurie Winter



**Language & Literacy
Consulting, Inc.**

Literacy Consultant

Ms. Winter has worked in the field of education for more than 25 years. Since receiving her master's degree in education and reading specialist license from the University of Kansas, she has developed literacy as her primary area of expertise. For more than a decade she has been an independent literacy consultant working with many districts in Kansas to improve literacy instruction. In addition, she works with KSDE on special projects including the development of a statewide literacy plan titled *The Kansas Guide to Learning: Literacy*.

Ms. Winter previously worked for the University of Kansas to lead the effort to design a statewide professional development in reading called the Kansas Reading Academy. Prior to her time at the University of Kansas, Ms. Winter worked for the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools as a district literacy leader, writing and coordinating grants including Reading Excellence and No Child Left Behind. She focused on district-wide literacy professional development which included Kansas Accelerated Literacy Learning (K.A.L.L.) training, an early intervention program in reading for primary teachers.