



8th Annual



Hosted by

The University of Texas – Rio Grande Valley



February 25, 2023

UTRGV Campus

Presented in collaboration with and support from the Texas Workforce Commission

Dear Participants!

On behalf of the **South Texas Literacy Coalition, Literacy Texas, FESTIBA and the Texas Workforce Commission** welcome to the **South Texas Literacy Symposium**. Many thanks to the University of Texas – Rio Grande Valley for hosting our event this year.

Adult success in the twenty-first century is dependent on advanced literacy skills; that is, the ability to use reading to access knowledge, synthesize information, evaluate this information from a variety of sources, and to learn brand new information. There is much debate about the source of the gaps in literacy skills among different age groups in our population. However, today's economy and the complexity and challenges of our political and social situations facing our nation demand more advanced skills. From learning to read to reading to learn, literacy has taken on new meanings that relate to life success, including numeracy and learning how to manage our money, to digital literacy and understanding how to stay healthy to environmental literacy and civic literacy – understanding our democratic system. Educational research verifies that art **“helps children with the development of motor skills, language skills, social skills, decision-making, risk-taking, and inventiveness**. Visual arts teach learners about color, layout, perspective, and balance: all techniques that are necessary in presentations (visual, digital) of academic work.

We hope that today's professional development sessions will help you expand your knowledge and skills as you reach out to your clientele helping to make a difference in their lives.



¡Queridos Participantes!

De parte de la Coalición de Alfabetismo del Sur de Tejas, la coalición estatal -Literacy Texas, y la Comisión Estatal de Empleos bienvenidos a este simposio. Muchísimas gracias a la Universidad de Tejas - del valle del Rio Grande por ser co-patrocinadores.

El éxito como adulto en el siglo veinte y uno depende en capacidades avanzadas de lectura y escritura; ya sea la habilidad de utilizar la lectura para acceder conocimientos, sintetizar información, evaluar la información de una variedad de fuentes, y de aprender algo nuevo y distinto. Hay mucho discusión sobre la fuente de las disparidades en lectura y escritura entre varios segmentos de la población. Sin embargo, la economía y la complejidad y los retos de nuestras situaciones políticas y sociales enfrentando a nuestra nación exigen habilidades más avanzadas para leer, comprender, y escribir. Desde la habilidad de aprender a leer hasta la habilidad de leer para aprender, el alfabetismo ha requerido el conocimiento de nuevas definiciones relacionadas al éxito en la vida, incluyendo matemática y comprendiendo como administrar nuestros ingresos, conocimiento digital, comprendiendo como mantenernos saludables y educación cívica – y conocimiento del sistema demócrata. La investigación educativa verifica que el arte **"ayuda a los niños con el desarrollo de habilidades motoras, habilidades lingüísticas, habilidades sociales, toma de decisiones, toma de riesgos e inventiva**. Las artes visuales enseñan a los estudiantes sobre el color, el diseño, la perspectiva y el equilibrio: todas las técnicas que son necesarias en las presentaciones (visuales, digitales) del trabajo académico.

Esperamos que las sesiones educativas de este día les ayuden a extender su capacitación mientras extiende su alcance de hacer una diferencia en sus vidas.

2023 South Texas Literacy Symposium

AGENDA

- 8:00 – 8:45 a.m. Registration/Continental Breakfast/Visit Exhibits and Author tables
- 8:45 – 9:30 a.m. **General Session - Ballroom**
- Greetings and Introductions
- Remarks –
- Welcome – Dr. Dahlia Guerra**, Special Assistant to the Dean
 - Dr. Jeffrey Ward**, Dean of College of Fine Arts
Community Relations, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
 - Kendra de la Garza**, President, South Texas Literacy Coalition
 - Steve Banta**, Executive Director, Literacy Texas
- 9:30 – 10:15 **Panel Discussion:**
- Katelyn Renteria, Moderator and Panelist, Local Author
Panelists: Dr. Jeffrey Ward, Dean, College of Fine Arts
Daniel Garcia Ordaz, TEDx Speaker, and 2023 McAllen Poet Laureate
Letty Leija, Director, Dustin Michael Sekula Memorial Library
- 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. Concurrent sessions – STAC Building
- A. On-line and Mobile Learning: Creating Classroom Publicaitons Using Common Apps and Sites – Mark Esperanza
 - B. The Transformation of Adult Education: From Social Issues to Job Orientation – Jackie Aguilera
 - C. Grant Writing – You’ve Got This – Laura Lyles Reagan
 - D. Family Literacy Activates: Promoting School Success – Viviana Caballero
- 11:30 – 12:00 noon Viewing of Exhibits and Author Tables
- 12:00 noon – 1:15 p.m. Luncheon – Ballroom – Networking Session – Trending Issues in Literacy
- 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Afternoon Current Sessions –
- A. Cultural Competence, Challenges, and Social Support Factors Linked to Poor Literacy in the RGV – Dr. Aaron Salinas
 - B. Promoting Collaborations and Partnerships – Jackie Aguilera
 - C. Getting Your Volunteers Started to Meet Your Program Goals – Martin Loa
 - D. Career Planning for Youth: Consider Where the Jobs Are – David Gutierrez, Workforce Solutions
- 2:40 p.m. – 3:40 p.m. Afternoon Current Sessions

- A. Enhancing Reading Skills and Building Content Knowledge – Ann Beeson
- B. Connecting the Dots – Using Creative Writing to Teach Literacy Skills – Thomas Ray Garcia
- C. Motivating and Recognizing Volunteers – Martin Loa
- D. Families Rock Together – Engaging in Your Child’s Academic Achievement Without a Helicopter! – Laura Lyles Reagan

3:40 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.–

Closing General Session – Ballroom

Evaluation and Wrap-up, Door Prizes, Book Distribution Event

4:00 p.m.

Dismissal

Many thanks to the 2023 South Texas Literacy Symposium Planning Committee

Katelyn Renteria, *Chair, STLC Board Member and local author*

Maria Elena Ovalle, *Treasurer, South Texas Literacy Coalition*

Dr. Dahlia Guerra, *Assistant Vice-President for Public Art, UTRGV and Past President of the South Texas Literacy Coalition, Board Member – South Texas Literacy Coalition*

Kathryn Bauchelle, *Program Coordinator, Literacy Texas*

Steve Banta, *Executive Director, Literacy Texas*

Dr. Ida Acuña-Garza, *CEO-Emeritus, South Texas Literacy Coalition*

Letty Leija, *Library Director, Dustin Michael Sekula Memorial Library, Edinburg*



2023 South Texas Literacy Symposium Schedule and Concurrent Sessions

9:00 – 9:30 a.m. – Welcome and Introductions – STLC and Literacy Texas

9:30 – 10:15 a.m. – Opening General Session – Connecting the Dots in Adult Literacy: The Role of Authors and Teachers of Literacy and the Arts – Panel Discussion

10:30 - 11:30 a.m. – Morning Concurrent Sessions – Academic Building

OUTREACH TRACK: TEACHING TECHNIQUES	EMERGING TRENDS IN LITERACY	ADMINISTRATOR TRAINING TRACK/VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT	FAMILY LITERACY TRACK
On-line and Mobile Learning – Creating Classroom Publications Using Common Apps and Sites <i>Mark Esperanza, Educator</i>	The Transformation of Adult Education: From Social Issues to Job Orientation <i>Jackie Aguilera,</i>	Grant Writing: You've Got This! <i>Laura Lyles Reagan, Nonprofit Consultant And ED for the STLC</i>	Games and Family Time Through Literacy <i>Viviana Caballero, Dustin Michael Sekula Memorial Library – Children's Department</i>

11:30-12 Noon – Viewing of Exhibits – Ballroom – Take this opportunity to visit with local authors and exhibitors providing educational information and resources.

12:30-1:15 – Luncheon– Ballroom – “Challenges and Potential Solutions for Literacy Providers” - Networking Luncheon with Table Discussions

1:30-2:30 p.m. – Afternoon Concurrent Sessions – Academic Building

Cultural Competence, challenges and social support factors that are linked to poor literacy rates in the Rio Grande Valley. <i>Dr. Aaron Salinas, Assistant Professor, UTRGV School of Nursing</i>	Promoting Collaborations and Partnerships: Students/Teachers/Employers <i>Jackie Aguilera</i>	Getting Your Volunteers Started to Help Meet Your Program Goals <i>Martin Loa, TCALL and Customer Manager for Burlington English</i>	Career Planning for Youth: Consider Where the Jobs Are. <i>David Gutierrez, Workforce Solutions</i>
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2:40-3:40 p.m. – Afternoon Sessions

Enhancing Reading Skills and Building Content Knowledge <i>Ann Beeson, Reader's Press</i>	Adult Education, the Arts, and Creativity (Using Creative Writing to Teach Literacy Skills) <i>Thomas Ray Garcia, Educator and ED for CSLAP</i>	Motivating and Recognizing Volunteers: Helping Your Volunteers Feel More Appreciated? <i>Martin Loa, TCALL</i>	Families Rock Together! Engaging In Your Child's Academic Achievement without a Helicopter! <i>Laura Lyles Reagan, Nonprofit Consultant and ED for the STLC</i>
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3:40 – 4:00 p.m.- ENDING GENERAL SESSION

Evaluation and Wrap-Up, Door Prizes, Book Distribution Event – Ballroom

Symposium Speakers

Opening General Session – Speakers Panel

Katelyn Renteria, Moderator and Panelist, Local award- winning author, native of the Rio Grande Valley and the 2017 recipient of the Literary Classic Book Award – Silver Award. Wrote her first manuscript at the age of 14 and published her first book, “The Other Side of the Law” at age 16. She is a member of the STLC Board of Directors.

Panelists: Dr. Jeffrey Ward, Dean, College of Fine Arts
Daniel Garcia Ordaz, TEDx Speaker, and 2023 McAllen Poet Laureate
Letty Leija, Director, Dustin Michael Sekula Memorial Library

Concurrent Session Speakers:

10:30-11:30 a.m.

On-Line and Mobile Learning – Creating Classroom Publications Using Common Apps and Sites

Mark Esperanza, MFA, is a writer from Edcouch-Elsa. He currently lives in Edinburg, Texas and teaches World History at Achieve Early College High School. He has published poetry, short stories, and educational research in multiple anthologies and collections.

The Transformation of Adult Education: From Social Issues to Job Orientation

Jackie Aguilera, Learning Futurist/Advocate/Consultant works for the Mayor’s Office for Adult Literacy. Over 30 years of service that includes financial education, workforce readiness, mobile and computer-based learning, and literacy provider training. Motto: “Helping build the Economy through Adult Education.”

Grant-writing: You’ve Got This!

Laura Lyles Reagan, Nonprofit Consultant and ED for the STLC. Sociologist, #1 Best Selling Author, Grant Writing Coach & Researcher; strengthening families by helping agencies/authors/coaches/artists secure funding for social change; \$66,000,000 career win record in program grants; Creative Alignment Consulting.

Family Literacy Activities that Promote School Success

Viviana Caballero, Children’s Librarian, Dustin Michael Sekula Memorial Library, Edinburg, TX.

1:30-2:30 p.m.

Cultural Competence, Challenges and Social Support Factors Linked to Poor Literacy Rates in the RGV.

Dr. Aaron Salinas, Assistant Professor, UTRGV School of Nursing, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, PMHNP-BC, NRP; Clinical Assistant Professor/ Traditional BSN Program Coordinator.

Promoting Collaborations and Partnerships: Students/Teachers/Employers

Jackie Aguilera, Learning Futurist/Advocate/Consultant works for the Mayor's Office for Adult Literacy. Over 30 years of service that includes financial education, workforce readiness, mobile and computer-based learning, and literacy provider training. Motto: "Helping build the Economy through Adult Education."

Getting Your Volunteers Started to Help Meet Your Program Goals

Martin Loa, Adult Educator and presenter for Texas Center for Adult Literacy and Learning, Texas A&M University and Customer Manager for Burlington English.

Career Planning for Youth: Consider Where the Jobs Are.

David Gutierrez, Workforce Solutions

2:30-3:30 p.m.

Enhancing Reading Skills and Building Content Knowledge

Ann Beeson, Reader's Press

Adult Education, The Arts, and Creativity: Using Creative Writing to Teach Literacy Skills

Thomas Ray Garcia is a writer, educator, and entrepreneur from Pharr, Texas. At Princeton University, he received the Ward Mathis Short Story Prize for his U.S.-Mexico borderlands fiction. He is the author of the award-winning short story volume, *The River Runs*. He is also the co-author of the forthcoming historical memoir, *El Curso de la Raza: The Education of Aurelio Manuel Montemayor*, from Texas A&M University Press. He is also the founder and executive director of the College Scholarship Leadership

Access Program (CSLAP) nonprofit focusing on increasing high school graduation rates and college enrollment in Hidalgo County.

Motivating and Recognizing Volunteers: Helping Your Volunteers Feel More Appreciated.

Martin Loa, Adult Educator and presenter for Texas Center for Adult Literacy and Learning, Texas A&M University.

Families Rock Together! Engaging in Your Child's Academic Achievement Without a Helicopter!

Laura Lyles Reagan, Nonprofit Consultant and ED for the STLC. Sociologist, #1 Best Selling Author, Grant Writing Coach & Researcher; strengthening families by helping agencies/authors/coaches/artists secure funding for social change; \$66,000,000 career win record in program grants; Creative Alignment Consulting.





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