UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

19th Annual ESL Symposium

Pathways to Multilingual Learner Success: Literacy, Language, and Belonging

February 27, 2027

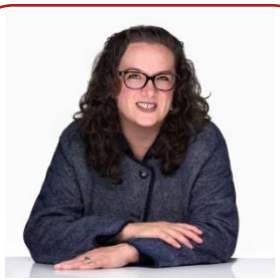
8:30 – 3:00 p.m. CT
Grad Ed Building
751 W. Maple Ave
Fayetteville, AR

Eligible for 6 hours of PD!

Online Registration | $35 Professionals; $20 Students | Meals Included

Keynote: From Text to Possibility: How Rigorous Literacy Builds Language and Belonging
Multilingual learners are capable of engaging with rich texts, complex ideas, and consequential questions. Dr. Jennifer Mann explores how rigorous, text-centered learning helps students develop language and literacy through curiosity, dialogue, critical inquiry, and purposeful contribution—while cultivating voice, agency, belonging, and wellbeing.

Hands-on Workshop: Opening the Text: Creating Meaningful Entry Points for Multilingual Learners
In this hands-on workshop, participants will explore two practices: helping students enter rich texts with openness, curiosity, and confidence and inviting their languages, experiences, and community knowledge into the process of making meaning and contributions to make changes. Educators will practice strategies for creating intellectually inviting, language-rich beginnings to text-based learning.



Jennifer C. Mann, Ph.D., is an Education Research Scientist at Duke University's Center for Child and Family Policy. With 20 years of experience in education, she began her career as a classroom teacher, teaching high school English and ESL to children and adults. She later prepared future educators and now partners with schools and teachers to strengthen literacy instruction for multilingual learners. Dr. Mann's research examines how rigorous, asset-based literacy practices and high-quality professional learning can support language and literacy development and wellbeing among immigrant- and refugee-background adolescents.



Alison M. Turner, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) at North Carolina State University. Her teaching and research are informed by extensive experience working alongside multilingual learners and their families in schools and community settings and by her background in Spanish language education. Her research centers on fostering meaningful connections among schools, community-based organizations, and multilingual families. Grounded in an asset-based perspective, her work builds upon students' funds of knowledge and community cultural wealth to better support immigrant, refugee, and multilingual learners and their families.

Agenda

8:30-9:00	:	Check-in and coffee
9:00-9:15	:	Welcome and opening remarks, Dr. Karen Henery, Ed.D., Director MLL/ESOL Services, Little Rock School District
9:15-10:15	:	Keynote, Dr. Jennifer Mann, Ph.D.
10:15-11:35	:	Hands-on workshop, Drs. Jennifer Mann, Ph.D. & Alison Turner, Ph.D.
11:35-12:35	:	Lunch and student research "Lightning Presentations" gallery walk
12:35-1:35	:	Roundtable conversations
1:35-2:40	:	Community resource panel
2:40-3:00	:	Closing

Space is limited! First come, first served!

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Current and Past ESL Symposia Website