

READING, LANGUAGE, & LITERACY (RLL)

Teaching for Tomorrow

Today's students are preparing for a world shaped by artificial intelligence, rapid innovation, and global connection. K-12 educators play a vital role in helping them thrive. Beyond learning how to use AI tools, students need curiosity, creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and digital responsibility.

Classrooms can build these skills through inquiry, real-world problem solving, cross-cultural projects, and thoughtful use of emerging technologies. The goal isn't to predict every future job or tool—it's to develop adaptable, ethical learners who can ask good questions, evaluate information, create new ideas, and collaborate across cultures. Teaching for tomorrow starts in today's classroom, and RLL alumni are at the forefront of this work!

What are we reading? We're glad you asked! We loved *How to Age Disgracefully* by Clare Pooley this summer.



**Be a rainbow in
someone else's
cloud.**

~ Maya Angelou



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Lyla Chisholm

Lyla's Culminating Project highlights the great work her school is doing to help all students, and especially English learners, strengthen their discourse skills. Speaking and listening are the foundation of strong literacy skills, so we encourage everyone to check out Lyla's project. We hope you will find some resources to use as the new academic year gets underway.



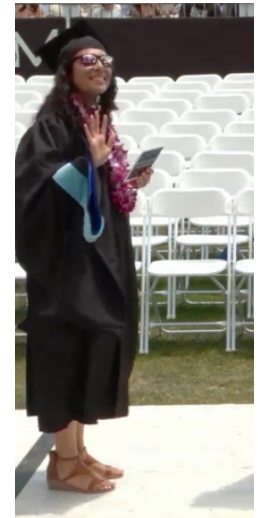
After 15 years of teaching English as well as English Learners (ELs), my questions and frustrations around reading and writing became tremendous. My students were struggling, and the strategies I was using helped but not significantly. My students' gaps were wide and deep. I did not feel equipped or understand how to begin this work. I searched for a master's program to help. CSUSM's RLL program took me all the way back to the origin story of how we develop these skills and how they are all intertwined with speaking and listening as well. I realized that I had not understood the science behind language and literacy, especially in terms of how they were developed and were dependent on each other.

The program filled me with research and information to help me address the issues I saw in my classroom. The professors are creative and supportive. The classes felt relevant. I was encouraged to try these new ideas in real time and reflect on them. This helped me feel safe to try, fail, and try again. When I administered reading assessments and drafted improvement plans for individual students in real time, my confidence grew. RLL classes made it easier to work through any challenges. My students were improving. They felt proud of and encouraged by their progress, fueling my journey.

Through this work, I began to work with colleagues at my high school on ways to improve literacy campus-wide. We collaborated on ways to support teachers and staff with listening and speaking. After collecting data, we saw how little listening and speaking was happening. Through the knowledge I had acquired through the RLL program, I knew those skills were more important than I had initially understood. This became and is still a group that I work with to this day. The group and the work has evolved but my foundational understanding of literacy stems from the RLL program.

Lyla's story is continued from page 2.

My Culminating Experience was centered on this campus-wide effort to improve literacy through using speaking and listening more intentionally and effectively in the classroom. The program helped me to find an area that I am passionate about and the confidence to continue the work after earning my masters. The future is exciting with more collaboration with colleagues and working to improve literacy in the students campus-wide. My leadership in these areas has stemmed from the nurturing environment of RLL as well as the quality education I received. Our work as educators is hard and never-ending, but having the right gear helps us to thrive as well as our students.



California is offering incentive grants to encourage school districts to support teachers in earning the RLAA and RLLSC. [More details are here.](#) If you think your district/system would be interested, Chris and Erika would love to help with the application.

Information sessions for the next application cycle begin on November 4.

Are you interested in sharing your love for the RLL program? [Click here](#) to sign up to join a session!

