Sustaining Literacy in a Digital Age

*An exploratory symposium sponsored by SIL's
Literacy and Education Department and the
Pike Center for Integrative Scholarship to be held online
September 13-15, 2023.*

Call for participation

Theme: Sustaining Literacy in a Digital Age

SIL's corporate vision states: "We long to see people flourishing in community using the languages they value most." Among these languages is the first language or community language. However, the community language of minority or marginalized people is frequently not valued by dominant language speakers, nor included in the educational system. As such sustaining local language literacy is often not supported systematically (Simons and Lewis, 2017).

Yet UNESCO (2023) refers to literacy as empowering and liberating, improving lives by expanding capabilities and thus reducing poverty and resulting in positive improvement in health and sustainable development. Additionally, literacy, as part of education, is considered to be a fundamental human right. Literacy in one's dominant, usually first, language is crucial for comprehension in learning while also supporting learning of and in other languages. First language literacy is often also a component in developing strong confident identities that allow minority and marginalized communities to participate well in the wider society (Trudell & Klaas, 2010).

SIL has prioritized L1 literacy programs for marginalized people since its inception, initiating hundreds if not thousands of literacy programs over the decades. Some of those programs have thrived and resulted in communities that value literacy in multiple languages, including their L1, over generations. Other programs have faded away for a variety of reasons. While we understand fairly well what is required for individuals to learn to read and write, we need to understand better how literacy programs are sustained across generations. In general terms, in this symposium we would like to explore what factors in today's world, including digital access and motivation for literacy in oral cultures, contribute to sustaining literacy. Contributions that explore situations in which literacy has not been sustained are also in scope.

Submissions from both single authors and multiple co-authors or panels are welcome. As well as English, submissions may also be made in Spanish, French, Portuguese, or

other languages as long as an English translation of the concept note and presentation is provided for the review team.

Specification for concept papers

In a Pike Center exploratory symposium, would-be participants submit brief concept papers to describe their potential contributions to the research effort. A concept paper is <u>not</u> a full academic paper, but a summary of a potential research contribution; it may be as short as one page. These concept papers help to set the agenda for the symposium event and to provide initial building material for constructing the eventual outputs.

With regard to the series on Sustaining Literacy in a Digital Age, we suggest that concept papers focus on case studies that illustrate the practical challenges connected to building motivation for literacy, sustaining L1 literacy across generations, or how digital literacy impacts that. While the focus of the exploratory symposium is the practical challenges of field projects, we are also open to concept papers of a more theoretical nature, namely: (1) defining or describing a model for Building Motivation for Literacy, Sustaining Literacy or for Digital Literacy among minority language speakers, (2) clarifying issues which end up contributing to our knowledge of how to sustain literacy, and (3) how the digital age impacts the sustaining of local L1 literacy or multiliteracies.

For further suggestion of topics around the theme of the symposium, please see: [Sustaining Literacy in a Digital Age - Questions to consider as you prepare your concept paper](#)

A concept paper may be as short as a typical conference paper abstract (e.g. 250 words), though this is not meant as a limit. You are welcome to submit something longer. A bibliography is not mandatory, but is highly encouraged, especially as it provides a means of sharing references to published research that are relevant to the theme of the symposium. We will compile the bibliographies as a resource for those who will develop papers for the Working Symposium. If you have multiple potential contributions, you are welcome to submit multiple concept papers, so that each concept paper can be treated as a separate building block in putting together the agenda for the event.

Format of the symposium

The symposium will be conducted through Zoom sessions to be held September 13-15, 2023 from 12:00 - 15:00 UTC and also from 20:00 to 23:00 UTC.

How: Each presenter will be given 10 minutes to present their concept paper, followed by 5 minutes of Q&A. After a number of papers on a theme, we will have breakout sessions to further consider and discuss how the concept papers might merit further

development. The focus of these breakout sessions is to be creative and brainstorm about how best to develop ideas within the theme. The goal is to form a critical mass of ideas and people around which a subsequent Working Symposium early in 2024 can be planned. For the Working Symposium, participants will submit full papers that will undergo the rigors of peer review to produce a volume of publishable papers.The revised versions of those paper with an ebook of proceedings will be presented in an online Public Symposium in June 2024, which will serve as input to the discussions at the Global Forum in July 2024.

Note: Acceptance to the exploratory symposium in September 2023 does not guarantee acceptance to subsequent Symposia in this Series.

Instructions for authors

Your concept note may be as short as 250 words or as long as 1,000 words. Give your contribution a title and identify yourself as author (with your role and affiliation). The organizers will review the submissions for relevance to the theme; every concept paper that is deemed relevant will be accepted. The accepted concept papers will be assembled into a Google Drive folder that will be open to all participants. The organizers may copy edit your concept paper or provide written feedback on the content and ask you to submit a revision.

We encourage submissions from teams of collaborators. Please submit your proposal to Diane_Dekker@sil.org or JeDene_Reeder@sil.org.

Timeline:

Deadline for submission of concept note: August 18, 2023
Notification of acceptance: September 1, 2023
Online presentation of concept note: September 13-15, 2023
Notification of acceptance for full paper development: September 28, 2023

Program Committee:

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