

Contextualizing the Science of Reading: Vulnerability as a Framework to Understand and Address Reading Achievement among African American Students

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Abstract: Despite significant advances in reading research, increased availability of evidence-informed reading interventions, and multiple federal and state mandates, one in five African American children are not reading at grade level expectations. In this session, Terry will discuss the evolution of her approach to understanding and addressing reading achievement in this student population, ultimately proposing a new approach that attempts to account for the conditions in which many African American children are growing and learning and the available empirical evidence on reading development and instruction. She will argue that contextualizing the science of reading offers the field of reading research a unique opportunity to shift towards novel and innovative approaches to not only understand why some students are vulnerable to experiencing difficulty in school but also to design and implement instruction and interventions that “stick” in schools.



Bio: *Nicole Patton Terry, PhD.*, is the Olive & Manuel Bordas Professor of Education in the School of Teacher Education, Associate Director of the Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR), and Deputy Director of the Regional Education Lab—Southeast (REL Southeast) at Florida State University. Prior to joining FSU in 2018, she was an Associate Professor of Special Education and Director of the Urban Child Study Center at Georgia State University. She currently serves as an Associate Editor for the *Journal of Learning Disabilities* and a board member for the Society for the Scientific Study of Reading. Terry earned a Ph.D. from Northwestern University's School of Communication Sciences and Disorders, with a specialization in learning disabilities. She was as a learning disabilities resource room teacher in Evanston Public Schools in Evanston, Illinois. Terry's research, teaching, and scholarly activities concern young children with and without disabilities who struggle to acquire language and literacy skills, in particular, children from racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse backgrounds and children growing up in poverty. Her research has been supported by various organizations, including the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the Institute of Education Sciences, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the Spencer Foundation. As an associate director in FCRR, Dr. Terry directs The Village—a division responsible for creating and maintaining research-practice partnerships with diverse community stakeholders. Taking a collective impact, place-based approach, The Village strives to promote reading achievement, school readiness, and school success among vulnerable children and youth.