



Now More Than Ever: Key Takeaways from TRL's 4th Annual Conference

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November 9, 2020

Last week, I joined over 3,400 members of The Reading League's community at our first virtual annual conference, "The Science of Reading: Now More Than Ever." For one entire day, this group of educators and advocates put our core commitment - to bring the Science of Reading into classrooms - into practice. And the results were both inspiring and humbling.

Despite the unpredictable and challenging conditions facing educators this school year, The Reading League remains committed to supporting educators as they work to improve reading outcomes. That's why we purposefully focused this year's presentations on informative, actionable content that meets educators where they are and offers solutions to keep growing.

With an agenda full of inspiring, growth-focused content, we wanted to be sure that our 2020 conference was also deeply rooted in the foundation of our work as educators: opening more doors for our students.

After a jam-packed day of 20 sessions, and amid an equally jam-packed year that's brought so many of our core values to bear, a few key ideas from this year's conference stuck with me:

- 1.) **It is imperative for school decision-makers to continue leading their districts' transformations to evidence-aligned practices.** While that is very difficult during the complexities of a pandemic and civil unrest, people who attended stressed the importance to keep leading this charge, rather than resort to a management mindset.
- 2.) **Transformation to practices aligned with the science of reading is challenging.** There was a palpable atmosphere at this virtual conference that all of us need to support colleagues who are going through the process of escaping old ideas and prior beliefs and practices. "Unlearning needs to be part of our learning," stated presenter Margaret Goldberg.



3.) **Literacy is a social justice issue.** In Dr. Tracy Weeden’s opening keynote presentation, she made a passion igniting statement, “The science of reading should be available to every child regardless of zip code.” Its sentiment permeated all of the sessions, all the way up to Dr. Pamela Snow’s concluding keynote imploring everyone to never settle for functional literacy.

Of course, this brief overview cannot do justice to the constant flow of learning throughout the day, captured in countless ideas shared, lessons learned, and change inspired. To fully appreciate all the brilliant content and join our ongoing dialogue around these key ideas, you must experience the sessions for yourself.

To keep the conversation going, The Reading League will offer access to all of our conference content indefinitely, at the original pre-event registration price point (\$99). You can browse the content and gain access [here](#).

Too often, we find ourselves focused so deeply on providing the best possible education for our students that we neglect to educate ourselves. As I watched the content from this year’s annual conference, I felt curious, inspired, and motivated to learn and do more to support our mission of ensuring teachers know and have what they need to be successful. And I hope many of you felt the same way.