

ECRR

FLORIDA CENTER for READING RESEARCH

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

Annual Report 2025

Advancing Reading Through Science

The Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) is an interdisciplinary research center at Florida State University (FSU) that investigates all aspects of reading and reading-related skills across the lifespan. Through rigorous and robust research, innovation, and engagement, FCRR advances the science of reading to improve learning and achievement from birth through adulthood.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

At the Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR), we improve reading through science. FCRR was founded in partnership with leaders in the university and across the state of Florida to accomplish a singular goal: make sure that more children are reading and succeeding in school. For nearly 25 years, we've stayed true to that mission. The following pages are full of examples, showcasing how we leverage



research, innovation, and engagement to serve children, educators, and families in our state, across the nation, and indeed, around the world. Partnership remains central to our approach. We believe that our discoveries are a public good—one that is realized when others can use them to improve their lives. It's a tall order, but we embrace it whole-heartedly. Our children deserve nothing less.

Join me as we share more about our work alongside countless educators, families, policymakers, and community partners—all dedicated to growing readers. We are grateful for your support, and we look forward to continuing our work together, until every child can read.

With gratitude,

Dr. Nicole Patton Terry

Director, Florida Center for Reading Research

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By the numbers

ECONOMIC IMPACT

\$52M in active grants and contracts

\$1.37M

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

\$1 -> \$7

research funding generated in the state of Florida

FCRR conducts research and provides professional learning in every county in Florida

100%

FSU STUDENT IMPACT



Over 300 undergraduate and graduate students took courses with FCRR faculty*



Over 300 undergraduate and graduate students participated in research apprenticeships with FCRR faculty*

278FSU faculty and staff work at FCRR

*FY 2024

FSU STUDENTS



LEARNING WITH FCRR

STATE & GLOBAL IMPACT



Over 185 school and district leaders trained across 49 FL districts



Reading Foundations and Evidence-Based Instructional Practices

Reading Endorsement Pathway

Over **288 educators** met requirements to earn their reading endorsements across **61 FL districts**



Literacy Coach Professional Learning Series
Florida Literacy Coach
Endorsement

Over **637 educators** met requirements to earn their Florida Literacy Coach endorsements across **68**FL districts



Over **3.5 million** downloads in 2024 from users in over **175 countries**



1200 educators enrolled across 49 states and over 20 countries

LOCAL IMPACT with THE VILLAGE





We **Collaborate** to provide our partners with evidence that helps them learn, tell their story, and act to improve outcomes.

We **Connect** our partners to research- and evidence-based practices, programs, and resources to help them address their most pressing problems of policy and practice.

We **Champion** our partner's programs, activities, and initiatives.

We **Cultivate** our partner's growth by building capacity and fostering continuous learning to advance meaningful and sustainable change.



With over \$50 million in active research grants and contracts in 2025, FCRR remains a leader in the broad, interdisciplinary field of reading research. FCRR faculty led dozens of funded research projects and secured several new grants and contracts in 2025— each continuing our legacy of conducting research that answers complex questions, uses groundbreaking interdisciplinary techniques, and translates evidence into actionable recommendations and practices that impact student learning, development, and achievement.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: DR. SHAYNE PIASTA



What inspired you to pursue your studies with FCRR? My mom was a teacher, and I often joined her at professional learning events. As a psychology major and education minor, I noticed gaps between what I learned and what she learned. This sparked my interest in using data and research to improve educational decisions, leading me to FCRR. The

supportive and innovative environment at FCRR made it the perfect place to pursue my goals.

Can you share a memorable project you worked on during your time at FCRR?

I worked on a longitudinal study examining how reading comprehension develops, which involved early mornings and visits to various schools. A particularly impactful project was the individualizing student instruction initiative, where I helped create the coding scheme. This work led to my first published article on teacher knowledge supporting student reading.

In what ways do you continue to apply the research and methodologies learned at FCRR?

I still use the coding scheme and teacher knowledge measures developed during my time at FCRR. The practical experience of working with teachers and schools, along with grant writing and critical study design skills, has been invaluable. The mentorship I received also influences how I guide my own students today.

How has your connection with FCRR impacted your career development? Oh, it's huge! FCRR was pivotal for my career. The connections I made there continue to support my work, fostering collaborations and extending my professional network. I even continue to collaborate on grants and projects with fellow alumni like Dr. Beth Phillips on Project OPAL and Dr Young-Suk Kim on an randomized controlled trial of the LETRS program. The mentorship and practical experience I gained have been instrumental in my ongoing

Project



Optimizing Phonological Awareness Learning

FCRR alum **Dr. Shayne Piasta** is now a professor of Reading and Literacy in Early and Middle Childhood in the Department of Teaching and Learning at The Ohio State University. She is collaborating with FCRR faculty member **Dr. Beth Phillips** on Project OPAL.

Phonological awareness, the ability to hear and manipulate sound units in speech, is crucial for literacy. Research shows young children with strong phonological awareness are more likely to experience reading success. Project OPAL explores effective teaching methods for preschoolers and kindergarteners, aiming to enhance phonemic awareness and literacy skills.

Funding Agency: National Institutes of Health

success. The network built at FCRR has been a constant source of support and collaboration, extending far beyond my time there.

What advice would you give to current students at FCRR who are aspiring to follow a similar career path? I learned a lot in my doctoral coursework, but even more from taking up opportunities outside of class. Engaging in tasks like classroom observations and trialing coding schemes, writing book chapters, and participating in mock grant reviews were invaluable. While coursework is important, it's the experiences and networks you build that will truly shape your future as a researcher.

FCRR proudly supports students and early career scholars improving reading through science. Are you an FCRR alum? To be added to our Alumni Map, visit:



PORTFOLIO OF RESEARCH

FCRR's research portfolio is extensive and ever-growing. Have you ever wondered why your preschooler enjoys reading the same book countless times every night? Or why teachers might examine children's language skills when they are concerned about dyslexia? Do you ever wonder if autistic children can learn to read? Or what skills to focus on to help your high schooler prepare for their next step in college or career? Discoveries made at FCRR help us answer these questions. Below are just a few of the exciting projects underway at FCRR.

Project Voices II



Project VOICES II aims to better understand the role teachers' language plays in helping preschool children grow their language skills. Researchers will identify which aspects of teachers' language best contribute to children's language development.

FCRR Researchers: Drs. Beth M. Phillips, Sonia Cabell, Carla Wood, Yaacov Petscher, and Lakeisha Johnson

Funded by: The Institute of Education Sciences (\$1.7 million)



Learning Disabilities Translational Science Collective

The Collective includes researchers across nearly a dozen universities working with educators, families, policymakers, and other partners to better understand specific learning disabilities in reading and oral language among young children.

FCRR Researchers: Drs. Nicole Patton Terry, Rick Wagner, Lakeisha Johnson, Callie Little, Chris Schatschneider

Funded by: National Institites of Health (\$8.9 million)



NATPAT

Using the risk-resilience framework, researchers aim to understand COVID-19 impacts on children's reading skills.

FCRR Researchers: Dr. Callie Little

ACHIEVEMENT in TWINS Funded by: National Institutes of Health (\$2.9 million)

Project TRANSLATE



Project TRANSLATE is a doctoral training program focused on translating the science of reading to impact teacher education. FCRR researchers train students who want to be stewards of education research in reading and special education.

FCRR Researchers: Drs. Sonia Cabell, Nicole Patton-Terry, Matt Cooper Borkenhagen, Jenny Root, and Veronica Fleury

Funded by: An Anonymous Family Foundation (\$1.2 million)



The Morphological Analysis Pathway to Reading (MAP-R) Project

In this project, researchers will develop interactive, computerdelivered instructional materials and resources for students in grades 3-5. By focusing instruction on language, vocabulary, and reading comprehension, MAP-R will provide teachers and families with essential tools to grow children's reading.

FCRR Researchers: Drs. Carla Wood, Sana Tibi, Chris Schatschneider, and Fengfeng Ke

Funded by: Stepping Up Technology Research Grant (\$2.5 million)

For more detailed information, visit the website and discover the full scope of our portfolio.

fcrr.org/projects



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: DR. MATTHEW COOPER BORKENHAGEN

Dr. Matthew Cooper Borkenhagen joined FCRR in 2024. His research is reshaping how we understand early reading development. As director of the Learning and Teaching Mechanisms Laboratory, his work bridges cognitive science and education, using computational models to explore how children learn to read.

Housed within FSU's School of Teacher Education and FCRR, researchers in the lab investigate how environmental factors—like spoken language, print exposure, and meaning—shape literacy skills. Through this research, we will learn more about how best to teach reading to all learners.

"We're interested in how the structure of a child's environment supports learning," says Cooper Borkenhagen. "By modeling these processes, we can better understand what helps children become successful readers."

Using artificial neural networks and other computational tools, Cooper Borkenhagen's team explores questions such as: What language structures are most helpful for early readers? And, how do different teaching methods engage the brain's learning systems?

With a focus on both theory and application, Cooper Borkenhagen's work is helping educators design more effective, evidence-based reading instruction—ensuring that every child has the tools to unlock the power of print.



ting to Know You

What inspired you to choose academia and your field of study? I fell in love with the process of creating new knowledge, and doing so for topics that are important to me. This has become very fulfilling for me.

Tell us about your current projects. I have a project where I am looking at simulations of reading programs to determine the effectiveness of different approaches to selecting texts in early development (collaboration with Devin Kearns at University of Connecticut/North Carolina State University, Jay Rueckl at University of Connecticut, Elfrieda Hiebert at Text Project, and Nathan Crock at Florida State University/ Emelex). I'm also working on some more basic modeling of the cognitive processes of reading long words. This is with Christopher Cox at Louisiana State University. Those are a few that I am particularly excited about.

Are there any specific courses you're excited to teach, and why? I teach Foundations in Reading to teachers in training in the School of Teacher Education, and I have a graduate course on learning and environmental factors. I'd like to also teach a methods course on studying properties of language and related computational methods for reading science. I've yet to develop that one, but it is something for the future.

Could you share some insights into any upcoming collaborations or partnerships you're pursuing? I'd really like to do research closely pairing simulations of early reading development with behavioral observations of readers learning in similar environments (e.g., learning to read similar words to those that the simulations are trained on). This is the type of collaboration I hope to develop in the coming years. •



FCRR partners with organizations internal and external to FSU to create unique tools, activities, and resources for educators, families, leaders, communities, and researchers. FCRR's three divisions—Quantitative Methodology and Innovation, The Village, and the Innovative Research Dissemination Lab—are critical to our success. Together, we used cuttingedge methodologies and state-of-the-art multimedia approaches to engage with our stakeholders in 2025.

MEASURING WHAT MATTERS: FCRR'S IMPACT ON LITERACY ASSESSMENT

Dr. Rick Wagner has spent his career transforming how we understand—and measure—reading development. As the Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Research Professor of Psychology and W. Russell and Eugenia Morcom Chair at Florida State University, Wagner is also a co-founder and Associate Director of FCRR, where his work continues to shape the future of reading science.

Among Wagner's most influential contributions is the development of cutting-edge assessments that have become foundational tools in identifying reading difficulties, particularly dyslexia.

His approach blends rigorous cognitive science with practical application. As one of the principal investigators of the Learning Disabilities Translational Science Collective funded by National Institutes for Health, Wagner leads research that not only deepens our understanding of how reading skills devel-

op but also improves how we detect and support struggling readers.

Wagner's expertise has also guided state-level policy, including dyslexia legislation in Arkansas and California. His work exemplifies the FCRR mission: advancing literacy through science—and en-



suring that every child's learning is measured with precision and care.



Dr. Yaacov Petscher is an Associate Director of FCRR and Director of the Quantitative Methodology and Innovation Division. His work intersects social work, educational psychology, and advanced quantitative methods, making significant strides in literacy and educational assessment. He

also serves as the Deputy Director and Co-Leader of the Screening and Assessment Strand at the National Center on Improving Literacy funded by the United States Department of Education.

An avid creator, Petscher is a co-inventor on four patents. For example, he is collaborating with Cambium Learning Group to create assessment systems that have the potential to benefit more than 18 million students across the U.S..

Dr. Petscher also developed the Adolescent

Assessment of Literacy (AAL) app, a free, computeradaptive screener for assessing literacy skills of students from grades 3-12. The app uses advanced algorithms and speech recognition technology to offer a personalized learning experience, ensuring educators can identify and address individual student needs effectively.

Dr. Petscher's work exemplifies the fusion of cutting-edge technology with educational research, enhancing learning experiences and outcomes for students worldwide.



FROM LEARNING TO INNOVATION: SOWING THE SEEDS OF DISCOVERY FOR IMPACT

The discoveries made at FCRR don't just happen by chance. We work hard to create a diverse, interdisciplinary community that cultivates curiosity, celebrates collaboration, and embraces challenges. It's how we move from identifying problems to creating solutions. And it all starts with learning.

Learning is essential to innovation. New discoveries emerge when we question our current ways of doing and thinking; when we test new ideas; when we consult with trusted sources and invite new colleagues to join the conversation; and when we reflect on the present and the future. Just like children learning to read, we learn best when we learn together—in structured and supportive environments that allow us to grow and do.

At FCRR, we take our learning seriously, and in 2025, over 100 researchers, students, and faculty joined us on our journey. Together, with over 20 unique disciplines across 9 universities and research organizations, we explored a variety of topics central to current and future reading research. For instance, FCRR's Innovation Committee collaborated with the College of Social Work to host the Exploring GenAl in Research colloquium series during the spring semester. This series illuminated the transformative potential of Generative AI (GenAI) and showcased its diverse applications within Florida State University, Each session featured expert-led presentations and discussions, covering a wide range of topics such as GenAl as a teaching assistant, Al detection methods, and the integration of AI in K-12 education.

FCRR also hosted its annual Education Sciences Colloquia for doctoral students. FCRR is home to several doctoral training grants, each preparing students to be stewards of reading and education research. This year, students learned about advances in mixed methods for conducting qualitative and quantitative research with faculty from University of Virginia. They also visited with the Research Institute for Implementation Science in Education Research, learning about methods to study evidence-based practices in schools with faculty from the University of Washington, University of Virginia, and University of Michigan.

Faculty are learners too! So FCRR hosted a 3-day workshop for faculty interested in Creating, Sustaining, and Leading Research Practice Partnerships. The workshop was developed and delivered with the National Network of Education Research-Practice Partnerships and focused on how to create lasting, meaningful research partnerships with schools, community partners, and public agencies. Faculty at Florida State University and Florida A&M University learned about various tools and resources available to support their work in Tallahassee, across Florida, and across the nation.

At FCRR, we advance reading through science. By equipping our faculty, students, and staff with the knowledge and tools necessary to engage, share insights, ask questions, and explore new ideas, we foster innovation that can change the world. •

Collectively, over 100 students and faculty, representing 20 unique disciplines across 9 universities and research organizations joined us to learn with FCRR in May 2025!







Decoding the Difficult:

The Quest to Understand English Spelling

English spelling is a fascinating puzzle, often described as quasi-regular. This means that while there is a systematic relationship between how words are written (orthography) and how they sound (phonology), there are many inconsistencies—those pesky exceptions that make English particularly challenging for some readers.

For children learning to read, these inconsistencies demand a set of decoding strategies. Words like "suede" and "yacht" can be especially tricky, and despite various strategies, some words remain difficult to master. But what makes certain words harder to read than others? This is a question that researchers are eager to answer.





teachers and interventionists—each critical role to growing proficient readers. •



developmental English Lexicon Project (d-ELP)

An Interdisciplinary Research Hub

Enter the Developmental English Lexicon Project (d-ELP), a groundbreaking initiative funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. This project aims to uncover the factors that influence word reading development in children from grades 1-5. By focusing on typically developing students as well as those with or at risk for reading disabilities, the d-ELP seeks to shed light on the complexities of learning to read.

The d-ELP will estimate the reading difficulty of the 10,000 most frequent English words. This large-scale dataset will expand the scientific infrastructure for reading research and offer insights into children's reading behaviors.

By analyzing both group and individual differences, the d-ELP aims to create a comprehensive picture of word reading development. This dataset has the potential to be a resource for developing customized reading curricula and interventions, informing educational policy decisions, and assisting school leadership in their support of

unnaturally Morpheme -al nature -ly /al/ /nat/ /ly)**Syllable** nat ral ly /nat/ /ral/ /li) **Onset-Rime** Graphemeu ch ur Phoneme Grapheme Phoneme parr /u/ /æ/ /tj/ /r/



FCRR was founded, in part, on the premise that partnerships between researchers and key stakeholders could maximize the impact of research on student outcomes. Whether focused across the nation, the state, or in our own backyard in Florida's panhandle region, FCRR remains committed to engaging directly with teachers, leaders, families, and other education stakeholders in meaningful ways. FCRR continued to create and sustain several key alliances to support student achievement, school readiness, and school success among children and youth this past year.

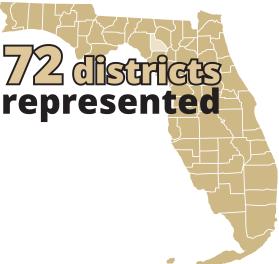
FCRR'S PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

For more than 20 years, FCRR has been partnering with Just Read, Florida! and the Florida Department of Education. Together we strive to make sure that every student in every school in every district has teachers and leaders who can support their reading and literacy development and achievement. In 2025, we continued to:

- develop and deliver state approved programs that districts can use to increase the number of teachers providing evidence-based reading instruction across the state
- develop and deliver state-approved programs that districts can use to increase the number of effective literacy coaches across the state
- develop and deliver state-approved programs to increase the number of principals and instructional leaders supporting evidencebased reading instruction across the state

Thank you to all the teachers and leaders who choose to spend their time learning with FCRR. We're so proud of you! •











Over

200

teachers have met the requirements to earn their reading endorsements



185

principals and district leaders trained

Over

637

instructional coaches have met the requirements to earn their literacy coach endorsements

Two FREE Innovative Learning Platforms from FCRR



Teachers Providers



Instructional Coaches



Free Mini-Lessons and Courses



Feeling overwhelmed by all that's out there? Access a variety of **brief lessons** and **longer courses** designed to help you use the many **free**, **evidence-based materials** highlighted on **fcrr.org**. Each resource was made with you in mind. The Academy will help you use them.



Principals School Leaders



Families Communities

Mini-Lessons: Quick Tips for Busy Educators

Looking for small nuggets of information to share? The Academy offers brief 15-minute lessons that can be completed at one's own pace. Literacy coaches, school leaders, and providers can also use these lessons in their own coaching and professional learning sessions with their teachers or literacy events with families and community members. Whether individually or in groups, these lessons provide practical tips to support ongoing learning.



academy.fcrr.org

Long Courses: Job-Embedded Professional Learning

Looking for a deeper dive? The Academy houses everything you need to provide face-to-face professional learning opportunities in your school, district, and community. These long courses are designed to foster expertise in reading instruction, literacy coaching, and literacy leadership, and may even contribute towards endorsements or recertification (training and state approval may be required to access some courses).

The Academy serves as a central hub for **educators**, **school leaders**, **families**, and **community partners** seeking practical, user-friendly materials. The goal is simple - to encourage widespread use of these **free** valuable tools in classrooms, schools, homes, and other settings-anywhere that children are learning.



ADOLESCENT .ITERACY ALLIANCE

The Adolescent Literacy Alliance was created to facilitate collaboration, prompt meaningful discussions and conversations, and to share evidence-based literacy practices that support adolescent readers throughout the country.

Visit our web page https://fcrr.org/adolescent-literacy-alliance to learn more!



A RESEARCH-PRACTICE PARTNERSHIP

Founded in 2019, this university partnership focuses on reading achievement, early learning, students with disabilities, and college and career pathways for students in Leon County COUNTY Schools.



Goals



2020-22: Develop actionable research plans based on school and district policy and practice needs.





2023 & Beyond: Build capacity, share practices, sustain outcomes, and expand support.



of schools participating in communities of practice maintained or improved their school grades since 2018.





School Grades

School	2018	2024
Pineview Elementary School*	F	A
Oak Ridge Elementary School*	D	С
Springwood Elementary School*	D	С
WT Moore Elementary School	В	В
Woodville School*	C	C
Nims Middle School*	С	В

*Title 1 School

Our research together supports student achievement because it informs:

Targeted, evidence-based professional learning for teachers, coaches, and principals.

Aligned family and community engagement activities and events.

Facilitated communities of practice for researchers and partners.



Celebrate our success, but expand our scope locally.

Expansion allows the opportunity to broaden collaborative efforts, invite more stakeholders, and use research to address more diverse, educational challenges.



Amplify the results and share our story.

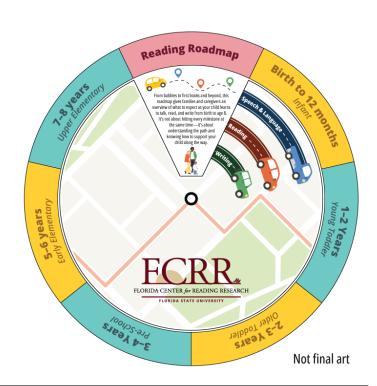
By sharing our findings, we increase the impact of our research and partnership at home and around the nation.

FCRR'S 2025 GREAT GIVE: THE READING ROADMAP WHEEL

FCRR is thrilled to unveil the Reading Roadmap Wheel, a tool designed to empower families and educators working with children from birth through age 8. This resource spans six age bands and is available in both English and Spanish.

Dr. Lakeisha Johnson, Director of The Village at FCRR, emphasizes the significance of this resource: "This tool will provide a valuable resource to anyone, helping to build strong literacy foundations for children in our community."

The Reading Roadmap Wheel was developed thanks to generous support during FSU's Great Give, the university's annual giving day. In 2025, FCRR continued its tradition of raising funds to support local schools and communities. An impressive \$2,800 was raised, underscoring our shared commitment to fostering literacy development. •



AN INCREDIBLE LEGACY: 20 YEARS OF STUDENT CENTER ACTIVITIES

FCRR has long been dedicated to enhancing literacy through its Student Center Activities (SCAs). These activities, designed for pre-kindergarten through 5th grade, cover essential components of reading instruction such as phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. They provide structured, engaging ways for students to practice and extend their learning, whether working individually, in pairs, or in small groups. Over 350 SCAs are available to download for free.

FCRR has also translated over 30 SCAs into Spanish. Plans are underway to create adaptations for students with disabilities, further expanding access. Families, afterschool programs, and other providers can also use them. Find demo videos #AtHomeWithFCRR on FCRR's Youtube channel.

With these translations, FCRR continues to champion literacy development for all students, ensuring that every child has the tools they need to succeed in reading and beyond. •



Student Center Activities are just a click away! Visit our website or scan the QR code to download and start using them today.

fcrr.org/student-center-activities



AWARDS, HONORS, & RECOGNITION

Dr. Yaacov Petscher received the 2024 Meaningful Impact in Education Award from The Reading League.

Dr. Yaacov Petscher was selected as a 2025 Senior Member of the National Academy of Innovators.

Dr. Jenny Root was awarded the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists & Engineers (PECASE).

Dr. Jenny Root was named the Anne and John Daves Endowed Professor in the Anne Spencer Daves College of Education, Health, and Human Services.

Dr. Sonia Cabell was named the R. Keith and Patricia Duggins Sigmond Endowed Professor in the Anne Spencer Daves College of Education, Health, and Human Services.

Dr. Sonia Cabell received the 2025 Editor's Choice Recognition from the Journal of Educational Psychology, for her article: Cabell et al. (2025), Impact of a content-rich literacy curriculum on kindergarteners' vocabulary, listening comprehension, and content knowledge.

Dr. Sonia Cabell participated in the FSU Leadership Development Program for Emerging Leaders.

Dr. Nicole Patton Terry was selected as a 2024 American **Educational Research Association** Fellow.

Dr. Nicole Patton Terry served as President of the Society for the Scientific Study of Reading in 2024 and 2025.

Dr. Shannon Hall-Mills received the FSU College of Communication and Information Faculty Builder/Leader Award in 2024.

Anne Reed, doctoral student in the Communication Science and Disorders program, received the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CAPCSD) Dissertation Scholarship.

Monique Harris, Jenny Passalacqua, and Nancy Marencin, doctoral students in the Reading Education program, received Dissertation Awards from the Anne Spencer Daves College of Education, Health, and Human Services.

Dr. Donald Compton received the 2024 Outstanding Reviewer Award from the journal, Scientific Studies of Reading.

Honoring a Legacy of Scientific Leadership

Dr. Joe Torgesen, an FSU emeritus professor of psychology and education and founder of FCRR, received the Vires Torch Award for his groundbreaking research in literacy and reading disabilities.



Dr. Joe Torgesen, FSU emeritus professor of psychology and education; and Provost Jim Clark. (FSU Photography/Bill Lax)

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FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

Discover activities and other helpful resources for educators, leaders, families, and communities at

FCRR.ORG

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- inkedin.com/company/florida-center-for-reading-research

