



# Synergistically Embracing Changes in Education: Juntos logramos mas!

An Online Educational Summit presented by TAMU  
Eco-Synergistic Connections Program

# 2024 TEXAS EDUCATION SUMMIT

MONDAY, AUGUST 5, 2024



**EDUCATION**  
& HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

[HTTPS://ECOSYNERGISTICPROGRAM.COM](https://ecosynergisticprogram.com)





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# SESSIONS

Website Link to Access All Sessions



<https://ecosynergisticprogram.com>

## INTRODUCTION:

Presenter:

- Myrna Reyna

## TOPIC 1 - NEWCOMERS

Presenters:

- Flavia Romero
- Magda Grape
- Monica Smith

## TOPIC 2 - SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Presenters:

- Maria Isela
- Kathleen Tate

## TOPIC 3 - COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

Presenters:

- Edgar Chavez
- Tamara Sanchez



# INTRODUCTION SPEAKER



**MYRNA REYNA**

Myrna Alicia Reyna is a graduate of University of North Texas and continued her education at Southern Methodist University and Lamar University where she received a Master's in Bilingual Education with an emphasis in Gifted and Talented and a Master's in Administration. In her 23 years of service, she has taught in multiple bilingual programs and has been an advocate for the development of effective models that serve English Language Learners.

Myrna began her career as an elementary classroom teacher in Grand Prairie ISD where she found her passion for advocating for the success of students with various language backgrounds. After working in varied grade levels she was able to impact the development of Bilingual and ESL programs via professional development and consultation at the regional level as a consultant at Region 10 Educational Service Center.

Myrna then continued her work as a Program Grant Manager for the Eco-Resilience NPD Program at Texas A&M University College Station where she worked with all levels of stakeholders within the school districts in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex to ultimately impact student success.



# DISTINGUISHED PRESENTERS



FLAVIA ROMERO

Flavia Romero has been an educator for over twenty years. She is currently a Secondary ELL Facilitator with Grand Prairie ISD. Ms. Romero was honored as English as a Second Language Teacher of the Year, Grand Prairie ISD, 2010. She has a Master of Education in Curriculum in Instruction with an emphasis in English as Second Language from the University of Phoenix, Tempe, Arizona and a BS in Political Science from Dallas Baptist University. Furthermore, Mrs. Romero's incitement of sheltered instructional practices and integration techniques help both teacher and student success. The workshops provided by Mrs. Romero help teachers of all subject areas with activities that target language acquisition while simultaneously building academic language with a variety of comprehensible input and comprehensible output techniques.



MAGDA GRAPE

Magda Grape, Retired Executive Director of Bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs PK-12 for the Grand Prairie Independent School District, has championed the cause of equitable academic opportunities for English language learners for over two decades. She began her career as a teacher and coach at GPISD's Newcomer Center at Kennedy Middle School. She was soon promoted to the position of lead teacher for the Newcomer program. In that capacity she was a guiding force in increasing the program's staff and refining its instructional practices. Mrs. Grape then moved to teaching and coaching at the high school level. In 2000, she became the ESL facilitator for GPISD, a position that she held for five years. Ms. Grape continued to be an advocate for English language learners in Arlington ISD, where she served as an instructional specialist and then as the assistant principal for the district's Newcomer Center. Her principal goals have been to ensure that best practices and appropriate second-language acquisition strategies are part of the educational experience of each of the district's 9,000 English language learners. Part of the fulfillment of these goals has been to oversee the implementation and alignment of a Pre-K-5 dual language program for the district's elementary schools. She has also spearheaded efforts to bring best practices to secondary classrooms to ensure that students are prepared to meet the demands of the multicultural society in which they will live and work in the 21st century.

Ms. Grape's passion for equitable educational opportunities comes from her own experiences as an English language learner. She uses this experience to encourage students to attain their highest potential and motivate teachers and administrators to be advocates for English language learners.



# DISTINGUISHED PRESENTERS



MONICA SMITH

Born in Tampico, Tamaulipas, Mexico, and hired to work in Texas in 2003.

Monica has served in various roles in education for over 30 years in two countries:

- Elementary Bilingual teacher
- Middle School and High School teacher
- University ESL teacher for all levels including specialized courses for students of accounting, medicine, and entomology
- Educational Consultant
- ELL Elementary and Secondary Strategist

Monica's professional passion is identifying and implementing strategies that enable teachers to help students, especially ELLs, close learning gaps, achieve educational success, and reach their full potential.

"I am delighted to share this educational journey with you!"



MARIA ISELA

Maria Isela Ventura is a Licensed Professional Counselor she is the owner of MIVentura Counselor, PLLC. She has experienced working with survivors of trauma, including sexual abuse, domestic violence, and incest recovery. She offers individual therapy to children, adolescents, individuals, families, and couples experiencing different difficulties. She provided Counseling services in individual and group formats in English and Spanish. She specializes in treating trauma including childhood trauma, and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. After spending nearly a decade working in the non-profit world as a Community Coordinator, Facilitator, and Director of educational programs in different agencies, she decided to go back to school and to finish her education at University of North Texas Dallas. She knows what truly drives changes, commitment, determination, and family support—and it's not just mastering the skills for your profession. It's how well you connect with the people you're trying to help.



# DISTINGUISHED PRESENTERS



KATHLEEN TATE

Kathleen Tate, CCC-SLP uses innovative platforms and strategy-based trainings to support social growth. With a background in speech-language pathology, she is especially passionate in supporting neurodiverse individuals with social challenges. Kathleen uses a personalized, strengths-based approach to partner with individuals to define their version of social success and transform how they see themselves socially.



EDGAR CHAVEZ

Edgar is an educator with over 25 years of experience in the field of education. He has experience as a bilingual, ESL, inclusion classroom teacher, bilingual coach and supervisor, assistant principal, translator, and college professor. He has served bilingual, ESL teachers and ELL students all his educational career.

As a Bilingual Instructional Supervisor with a focus on Campus Support, he currently specializes in implementing effective research-based instructional strategies with a focus on second language acquisition. His goal is to work with elementary teachers of ELL students to improve instruction and positively impact student performance. He holds a master's degree in education from University of Texas at El Paso and Master of Spanish from Universidad de Granada.



TAMARA SANCHEZ

Entering her 20th year in education, Tami's experience focuses on serving students of special populations. She has served as an elementary bilingual teacher, secondary LOTE Spanish teacher, bilingual diagnostician, and central office administrator for both Bilingual/ESL and Special Education programs and services.

She holds a bachelor's degree from South Dakota State University in Spanish/Education and a master's degree from Texas A&M Commerce in Educational Administration.

Tami is passionate about advocating for students and creating access to instruction for all. She serves on the board for the bilingual education association at the local level, BEAM. In her spare time enjoys spending time with her family and friends.







# ECO-SYNERGISTIC CONNECTIONS **TEAM**



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# SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

1

## **SHELTERED INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE EMERGENT BILINGUAL'S LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

Participants will explore sheltered instructional strategies to increase content and language support in the classroom.

Additionally, participants will view newcomer students as they take part in an oral expression activity to determine the areas of language to modify during instruction.

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2

## **READING, WRITING AND REINFORCEMENT FOR THE NEWCOMER SECONDARY STUDENT**

We invite you to join us for an engaging session focused on supporting secondary newcomer students as they navigate their content areas and develop their English language skills. This workshop will provide insights into creating an inclusive and stimulating classroom environment tailored to the needs of these learners. Participants will explore effective strategies for reinforcing students' strengths and fostering their academic growth. Attendees can expect to leave with a variety of practical ideas, resources, and useful websites to enhance their instructional toolkit. Don't miss this opportunity to enrich your teaching practices and better support your newcomer students.

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3

## **NEWCOMERS: BEST PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT THEM**

Welcoming newcomers into any educational community or organization can be a transformative experience for both the newcomers and the existing members. This session will delve into some of the best practices and strategies to support newcomers and their families in the school setting.



# SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

4

## **BUILDING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN RESILIENCE AND EMOTIONAL REGULATION IN THE CLASSROOM**

This presentation will provide educators with some strategies on how to create a classroom environment that supports both emotional regulation and resilience, helping students to thrive in learning and balance emotional well-being. Educators would learn some skills in easy and practical ways that can help them to support the students with emotional regulation, foster a growth mindset (Resilience), social skills, and problem solving. Furthermore, educators will be provided with some tips on how to team up with parents and leaders, and monitor progress of the students.

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5

## **BELONGING MATTERS: HARNESSING THE NEUROSCIENCE OF CONNECTION TO COMBAT LONELINESS AND FOSTER RESILIENCE IN THE DIGITAL AGE**

Humans need social interaction to feel good. This presentation will show the importance of being there for your students and the importance of being aware of stress both in educators and students. Taking care of yourself is just as important as attending to your students. Join us to FEEL good!

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6

## **NURTURING THE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS**

Educators would learn about the importance in creating a comprehensive system that nurtures social and emotional development. Educators would gain more understanding about supporting the social and emotional needs of students which is a team effort that requires strong collaboration between schools (Teachers and Leaders) and families by acknowledging diverse needs of the students like having social competence, having a consistent and positive support system, and continuity. Educators would review the benefits of working together in creating the right conditions within the collaboration with parents and the community, the benefits for shared responsibility, and having a meaningful purpose aiming for overall well-being and better academics of the students.



# SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

7

## **ENHANCING EMERGENT BILINGUAL SUCCESS!**

The best way to support our newcomer students is to ensure they are in the correct language program. In this session we will review the guidelines from the Texas Education Agency and help educators navigate the requirements set by the state for Texas Districts. Being informed allows us to properly advocate and support newcomer success and final outcome.

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8

## **PREPARING FOR BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL**

CCMR is an acronym we hear around secondary campuses but what does it really mean? This session will provide resources and information on College, Career and Military Readiness. Join us as we learn how to support our EBs in being successful beyond our classroom walls.

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9

## **PREPARING TO APPLY AND ATTEND COLLEGE**

Walk through the various information and resources to prepare your child for the journey of researching for colleges and ensure that you have all the tools required to achieve success in the process.



# Our Partners



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