

# The English Pub: ACTELA Newsletter

Arkansas Council of Teachers of English and Language Arts



## Letter from the President

ACTELA Board members were recently asked to consider the following writing prompt:

Effective teachers are expert at many tried-and-true teaching practices, but successful teachers also experiment with innovations in methodology, strategy, and approach. What innovations are you implementing, and what are you learning from the results?

Let us know how your classroom experiments are going too!

Dear ACTELA Members,

Time, time, time . . . time management is a skill we try and master early on as teachers, but it isn't always an easy task. Splitting our free time between our family and friends and managing our work load at the same time can be daunting. I hope you are all finding time to set those papers aside and enjoy the fall.

What do you do to manage your time? If you have tricks to

make grading, schedules, and extra-curricular activities manageable, please share those with us for our newsletter; I am sure we all would find helpful tips of interest.

The Arkansas Curriculum Conference is right around the corner, and I hope you are all planning on attending. We have some

great sessions lined up, guest authors, and our luncheon! I will see you there!

*Cindy Green*, ACTELA President



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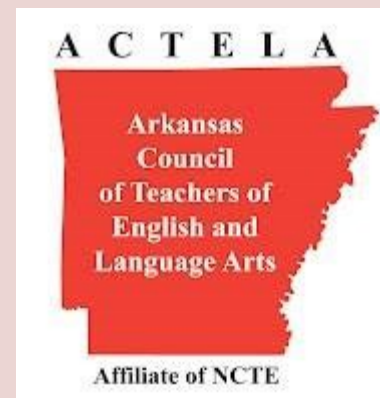
## We Want to Connect!

Visit our website: [www.actela.org](http://www.actela.org)

Email our editor: [walter@uamont.edu](mailto:walter@uamont.edu)

Or Friend us on Facebook:

**Arkansas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts**





# UAM

## Student

is selected as 2016

# Teacher for the Dream

Pamela Jones, a native of Anchorage, Alaska and a junior General Studies major at the University of Arkansas at Monticello, has been awarded a “Teacher for the Dream” grant from the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Pamela is currently completing her Associate of Arts degree at UAM and will continue with further coursework toward a Bachelor of General Studies degree with areas of specialization in education, literature, and psychology. She aspires to a career in literacy education for early childhood learners. She recently undertook a travel seminar to Great Britain where she studied British authors and participated in a service learning project at Brantwood, the Lake District home of John Ruskin. Along with her classmates, she will present highlights of that project at the upcoming Inaugural Showcase celebrating UAM’s new chancellor, Dr. Karla Hughes. Pamela is a member of the Friends of Brantwood, and she serves as a writing consultant in UAM’s Center for Writing and Communication. She recently received a Certificate of Completion for Pre-K Frameworks from Early Care and Education advisors at University of Arkansas. She assists with the education of local youth in the Upward Bound program and is on call as a substitute teacher for Monticello and Drew Central Elementary schools.

The Arkansas Council of Teachers of English and Language Arts (ACTELA), a state affiliate of NCTE, partnered with the national agency to provide Jones with unique opportunities in professional networking and leadership in the field of literacy education. This NCTE fund invites state affiliates to develop initiatives aimed at recruiting or retaining English language arts teachers of color. The grant provides for Jones' participation and service in two major conferences this fall, the Arkansas Curriculum Conference, co-sponsored by ACTELA, and the NCTE annual conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Jones will work with Dr. Kay Walter, Associate Professor of English at UAM, and other mentors from the ACTELA executive board to develop professional presentations. She will continue the work of recruiting minority teachers into the field of English education through work with ACTELA's numerous service initiatives for English teachers and their students.

Pamela is the first pre-service recipient of the "Teacher for the Dream" award in the state. She will be recognized at the Arkansas Curriculum Conference on November 3, 2016 in Little Rock, where she will join last year's Teacher for the Dream, Brycial Williams, and the other ACTELA board members as they facilitate the conference for English and Language Arts teachers.

The Arkansas Council of Teachers of English and Language Arts (ACTELA) provides this award and other initiatives to support English



ACTELA's 2016 Teacher for the Dream, Pamela Jones, with her mentor, Dr. Kay Walter

teachers across the state. Dr. Kay Walter says “We are proud of Pamela and her commitment to joining a strong support group of ELA educators in Arkansas. Her early desire to take part in professional development at the state and national levels demonstrates her devotion to literacy education and predicts a professionally active career. ACTELA celebrates exemplary educators at every phase of their careers and provides them with a network of professional support and encouragement. We are happy to have Pamela as a new member of our board and look forward to designing successful ELA projects with her.” ACTELA offers many initiatives for teachers in Arkansas. Find out more at [www.actela.org](http://www.actela.org) or contact Dr. Kay Walter at [walter@uamont.edu](mailto:walter@uamont.edu) for more information.

## **ACTELA CELEBRATES TEACHER INITIATIVES**

At our luncheon on Thursday, ACTELA will present awards to our Teachers of the Year in the following categories: Preservice, Early Educator, Elementary, Middle Grades, Secondary, and Postsecondary. We will also present a Carolyn Pitman Lifetime Service Award, a Teacher for the Dream Grant, and a Linda Arnold Mini-Grant.

Do you know teachers who should be honored with an award or have an idea you think merits grant funding? Share them with your board member representatives. We welcome nominations for next year’s awards in these categories:

- Teacher of the Year: Preservice, Early Career, Elementary, Middle School, Secondary, and Postsecondary
- Linda Arnold Mini-Grants
- Carolyn Pitman Lifetime Service Award

Find more information under the Teacher Initiatives tab on our website at [actela.org](http://actela.org)

# Innovations

- ◆ I'm replacing several of my "blog" requirements. So if students elect to do something different from writing a blog, they can instead take advantage of several options to include these: sketchnotes, Recap, or Infographics. My only requirement is that they address all the prompts of the blog assignment within whatever product they create. *Donna Wake*
- ◆ Very simply, over the course of my time teaching public schools (14 years), I learned to put the students, their ways of thinking, and their lives at the center of my curricular choices. As a writing and reading teacher, this allowed me to encourage individuality in the students' choices of what to write and what books they wanted to read. On a deeper level, though, once I became more familiar with their family cultures, their interests, and their experiences as teens, connections in class to literary characters and specific scenes for writing came more easily. Using scenes, stories, and memories from their lives in this way made our class time magical. Students were excited to come to class, were engaged in their writing, and were more understanding of one another. I can't imagine teaching ELA classes without that as top priority. Everything else, all the standards, all the specific techniques was secondary. *Dixie Keyes*



- ◆ One thing that I am trying is really all about self-reflection. For every task I approach, I am asking myself, "what are my core beliefs about \_\_\_\_\_?" Whether it be regarding writing instruction or reading practices, I am finding that careful analysis of my beliefs is a first step in knowing how to address the issue. It's a slow process, but it is helping me grow. *Dawn Beese*

- ◆ This year I'm using a badge system for student independent reading. I've adapted the 40 Book Challenge from Donalyn Miller's *The Book Whisperer* into my own 20 Book Challenge, and once a student reads a book from a genre on the list she receives a "badge" (really just an address label printed to look like a badge) in her reading notebook to show the progress she has made. The badges aren't tied to any kind of external reward at all; they are simply a motivator for each student to keep track of his reading and how many books he has finished. I've noticed that this is a concrete way to engage their intrinsic drive to excel, instead of motivating them using extrinsic rewards (like a pizza party or a prize from a box). Research shows that external rewards for reading can actually decrease motivation to read in the long run, so using the 20 Book Challenge and reading badges gives students both recognition for achieving goals and a scaffold

for developing their own intrinsic motivation. The whole thing is pretty low-tech (and there are a lot of ways to use badges in your classroom using technology as well), but this approach has worked for me so far. *Tyler McBride*

20 Book Challenge		20
Realistic Fiction	Realistic Fiction	Fr
Nonfiction	Non fiction	Fr
Action/Adventure Fiction	Action/Adventure Fiction	Fr
Science Fiction	Science Fiction	
Fantasy	Fantasy	
Mystery	Historical Fiction	
Graphic Novel (any genre)	Poetry / Drama	

Here's a picture of the blank **20 Book Challenge** page that all Tyler's students glued into their reader's notebooks. They have to fill in the fourteen spots shown with specific genres, and then they have six spots that are free choice books. They can choose from any genre they want to fill the free choice spaces.

Here's a student notebook from Tyler's class with some of the "badges" already earned. This scholar is well on her way to success in the **20 Book Challenge!**

20 Book Challenge	
Realistic Fiction Book Title: <i>On the run 5</i>	Realistic Fiction Book Title: <i>On the run 6</i>
Nonfiction	Non fiction
Action/Adventure Book Title: <i>On the run 1</i>	Action/Adventure Book Title: <i>On the run 2</i>
Science Fiction Book Title: _____	Science Fiction Book Title: _____
Fantasy Book Title: _____	Fantasy Book Title: _____
Mystery	Historical Fiction
Graphic Novel (any genre)	Poetry / Drama

Editor's Note: Tyler has promised to share more about this adventure with us in his session at ACC about Student Engagement.

- ◆ I am a distance learning teacher, so my students are from many different districts and skill levels. Differentiating can be challenging, but it is fun at the same time. I am teaching an English 10 course with embedded oral communications. With my pre-AP students, I am working on having them create tutorials and class tips videos for my other students. This challenges my Pre-AP students and in turn assists all of my students. I also want to use this as evidence in the higher levels of my TESS evaluation this year. *Cindy Green*
- ◆ When I graded my students' first essays this term, I made extensive editorial comments, as usual, and wrote a few sentences on each one about the overall strengths and weakness, as I always do, but I did not include a grade. Over the years I have found that students tend to pay most attention to the grade and ignore the comments I spend so much energy and effort writing. They overestimate their own work on the essay and underappreciate my response. When I returned these papers, my students were not distracted by the grade, so they were able to look more carefully at the comments I made. As a result, I find them overly sensitive to my comments and underappreciating their own words. I still must assign grades and give the papers back to them, but without a grade in the way to distract our attention we have a clearer line of communication about their writing and how to improve it. *Kay Walter*
- ◆ This semester I began teaching undergraduates for the first time. It has been a wonderful experience, and I have been pleased with their enthusiasm for the profession. The course I teach is Disciplinary Literacy, and this is the first semester for the course to have an embedded early-field experience. One section is based out of a local middle school, while the other section is working in our BearsRead Camp at UCA. Organizing the sessions and teaching my students how to write lessons that they will actually implement has been amazing! They are seeing what it is like to work with kids, and I am learning so much about best field practices and how to become a better instructor. It is a win-win for everyone involved! *Sunny Styles-Foster*

# AEJ Update

The second issue of our new peer-reviewed publication is in process. Selections have been made, and authors are currently making final revisions for the journal's production. Be on the lookout for the new issue to appear before December.

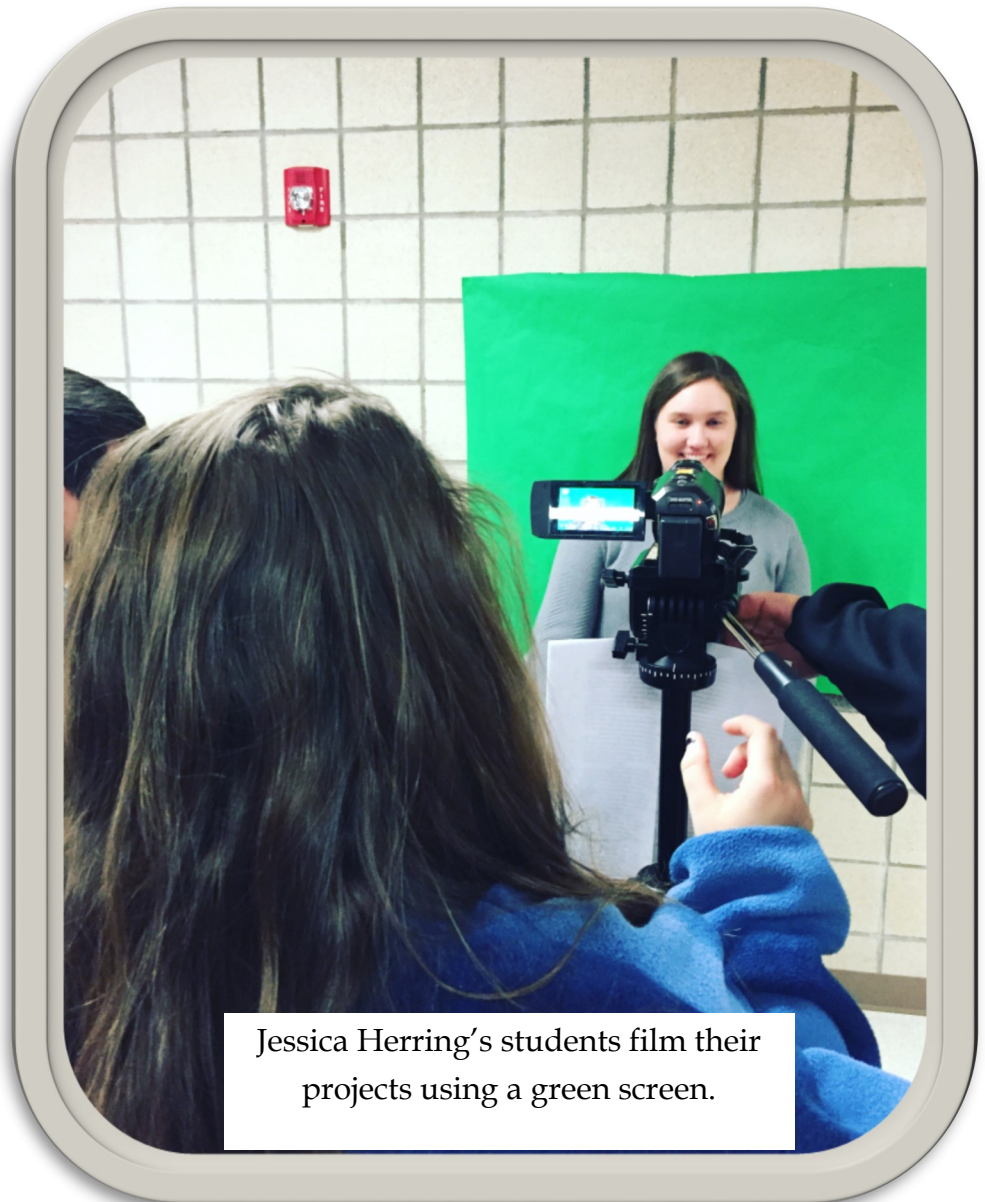
<http://arkansas-english-journal.weebly.com/>

# Real World Exposures in the Classroom

by Jessica Herring

One way I have attempted to change my approach to teaching literature in the past couple of years is to provide more real world applicability and context for my high school students. Last year, I focused on real world commentary. We see commentary all around us, whether it be online in editorials and blog posts, or on TV. Even ESPN's Sportscenter is a form of commentary. We applied these real world commentary formats to writing and speaking about Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* by writing commentaries in the form of scripts and filming them using a green screen. This allowed students to sit in a real "news room" and gain a more authentic experience in formulating and delivering literary commentary.

This year, my real world focus has been on research. Instead of the research paper being the end event, I wanted my students to see research as a means to an end. We do research to gain the knowledge necessary to complete some task. That can be as

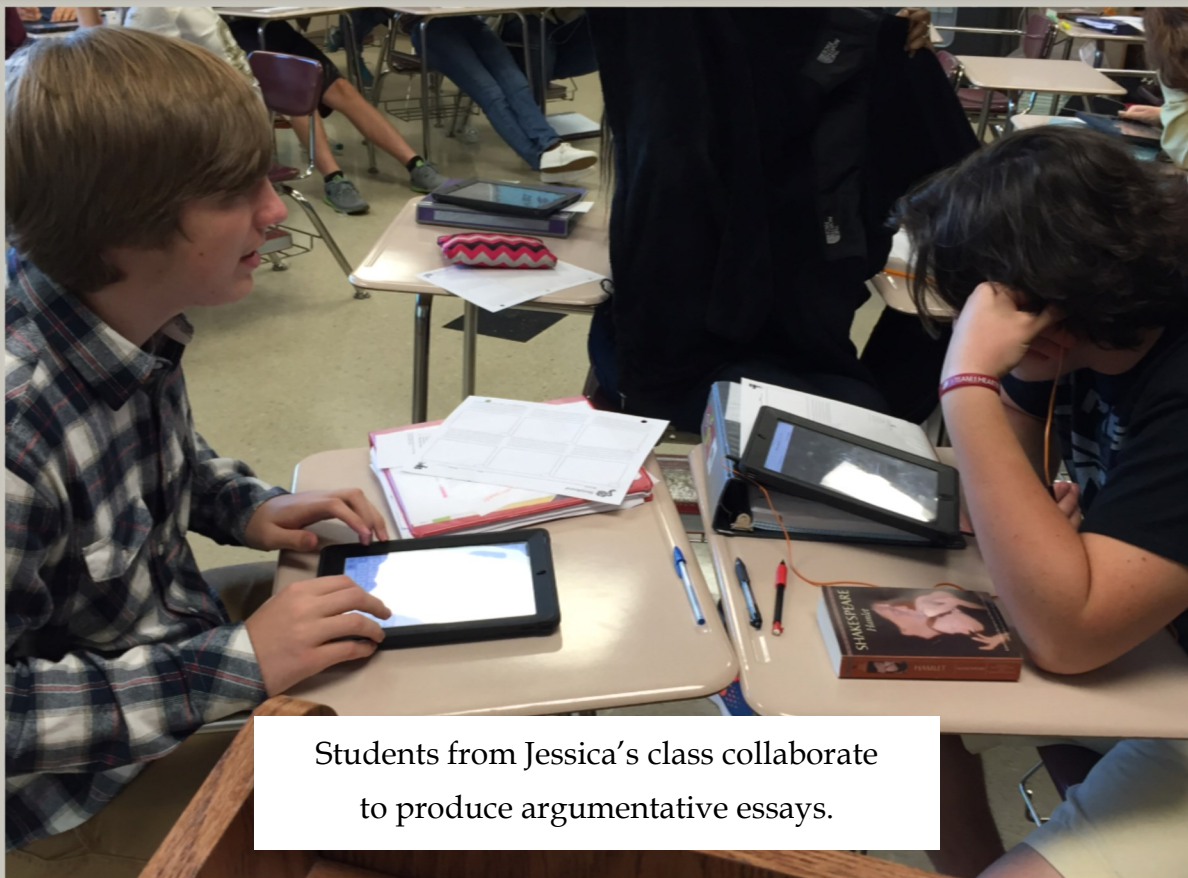


Jessica Herring's students film their projects using a green screen.



simple as watching a YouTube video to learn how to tie a necktie or as complicated as reading scholarly articles to better understanding of a piece of literature. My students started by reading two articles about how historians and cultural anthropologists are using 3D printing and virtual reality to digitize historically and culturally significant sites that are at risk of destruction due to war, natural disaster, or general deterioration due to age. Now, my students are selecting their own landmarks to preserve digitally, using either our school's 3D printer or MinecraftEDU. Students' research papers will be argumentative essays arguing why a particular site should be preserved and what the best form of digital preservation will be. Finally, they will complete the preservation project and share their work through social media.

My hope is that by providing these real world contexts, students will see the importance of literature class as a form of preservation. We study literature to learn from it and preserve our cultural heritage.



Students from Jessica's class collaborate to produce argumentative essays.

# Service Learning as Collaboration

This year all my upperclassmen are participating in projects that take place outside the classroom. They are either making conference presentations at the Preservice Roundtable session at ACC or developing Service Learning projects or both. A group of them presented a dramatic reading of a short Halloween-themed play to a remedial reading class recently to give voice to characters for the at-risk students. They presented a brief lesson about tone, vocal variations, and the unique qualities of drama as a literary genre before they read a second play about Shakespeare to the students. The students followed along with printed copies of both texts. Throughout the readings, the audience remained engaged and attentive. After the performance, they demonstrated an enhanced ability to discuss the texts and to write about the experience. I am excited about the opportunity to share more pictures and more details on this adventure during my Service Learning Success session at ACC. *Kay Walter*



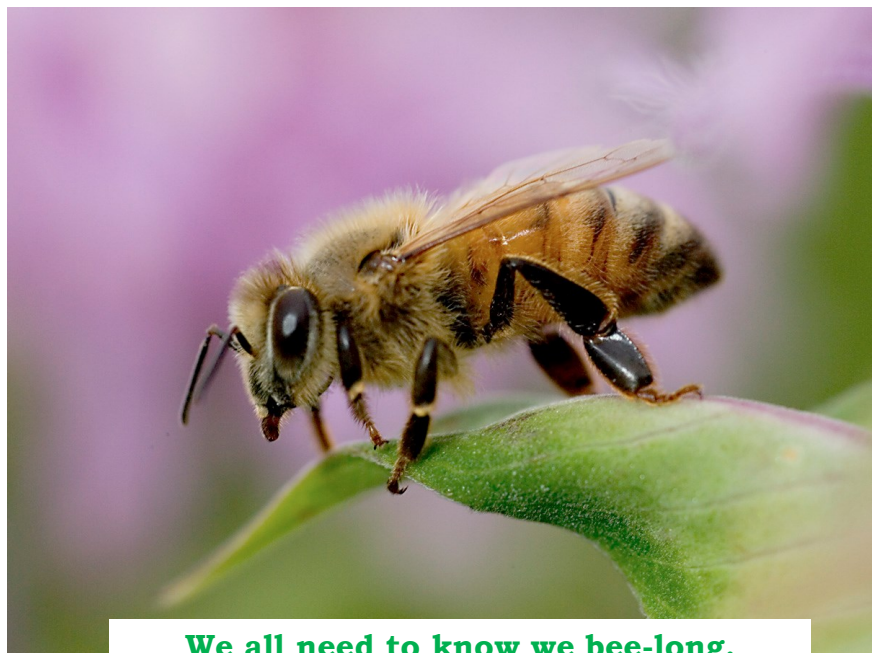
Dr. Kay Walter (L) and her service learners from British Literature I and Shakespeare classes present a dramatic reading to the Critical Reading Skills class of her colleague, Kathy Anderson (R).

# Belonging: A Cultural Approach to School Enrichment

by Grover Welch

What is it about bees? They band together in colonies, and each bee is vital to the daily success of the organization. More to the point, each bee is integral to the prolonged success of the hive. From worker bee to queen, each bee has a meticulous attention to duty and the welfare of the job she is designed to complete. That level of commitment is hardly ever visible in human organizations, and even when it is attempted it is never fully realized. Why? The very thing that makes bees components of a larger organization is often denied to humans in organizational structures seeking to become better. The notion of belonging, the idea of social identity and one person's role in that identity, is integral to bee success. Every bee knows the value of her contribution, and therefore each one supports the ultimate goal of the colony. Unfortunately, in human organizations the identity and contribution of Everyman is often the last concern of large, intricate plans for outcome-based production. In all honesty, attention to belonging on the individual level is difficult to achieve. It is almost impossible to conceive a plan which encompasses every person's viewpoint in a world of multi-cultural identities as vast and varied as snowflakes. Nowhere is this more evident than the culturally responsive world of education. The very nature of the work educators do requires varied approaches that appreciate open minds and talents. This world of varied approaches and techniques presents the greatest challenge for institutional belonging, and ultimately it provides the greatest rewards for the investment.

How can we plan for schools to function with the precision of a bee colony? A solution to this quandary is more an investment in cultural exchange than a plan. Leaders who approach the individual as integral are more likely to ask for perspective, influence, and explanation. Just as the queen knows the hive is functioning through communicative pheromones, leaders must stay abreast of changes within the organizational structure by being present and involved. Localized references to "buy in" are commonly seen as an ad hoc concession to stakeholders. However, this investment



**We all need to know we bee-long.**

mindset can greatly enrich the school system by presenting leveled equity exchanges among all levels of the faculty. This cultural approach, an approach with special attention to the belonging of the participants, can be promoted through three implementation strategies.

The first strategy is the “Concentric Circles of Influence” approach. A well-known social learning theory has been developed by Albert Bandura, who works within both cognitive and behavioural frameworks that embrace attention, memory, and motivation. His theory of learning suggests that people learn within a social context and that learning is facilitated through concepts such as modeling, observational learning, and imitation. Bandura posits “reciprocal determinism” which holds the view that a person’s behavior, environment, and personal qualities all reciprocally influence each other. The importance of positive role modeling on learning is well documented, so an organization that promotes mentoring and cross pollination within its own population can sow seeds of positive growth. This is healthy to the overall success of the organization because it breeds its own never ending supply of investors. This strategy can also be implemented in both top down and bottom up relationships. Leaders can seek out highly talented teachers and promote their efficacy, pedagogy, and structures for others within the system to emulate. A struggling third year teacher within this system may seek out a tenured voice to mentor their practice and shape their approaches. In this way the institution as a whole benefits as both teachers grow within the com-



**Grover’s seventh-grade students interact collaboratively in class so that each student feels a sense of belonging to the group.**

munity, trusting each other more as an outcome. This internal promotion creates shared belief in the efficacy of approaches and cements educator trust that the approach is sound and future investment in differing directions will be met with support and possible adoption in the roles of mentors.

The second strategy is “Collaborative Grouping,” and it offers micro development features that can promote growth. Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger discuss this in terms of “situated learning theory” and “community of practice” theories. Situated learning theory recognizes that there is no learning which is not situated, and it emphasizes the relational and negotiated character of knowledge and learning as well as the engaged nature of activity for the individuals involved. It is within communities that learning occurs most effectively. Interactions taking place within a community of practice--e.g. cooperation, problem solving, building trust, understanding, and relations--have the potential to foster community social capital that enhances the community. Thomas Sergiovanni reinforces the idea that learning is most effective when it takes place in communities. Utilizing these theories small group teacher collaborators can focus on the specific needs of the organization. These groups of teachers can delve into specific pedagogical areas with precision and develop unique, culturally responsive approaches. For example, a department chair can approach members of her discipline area in the role of queen bee. She can identify high need areas, listen as teachers offer valid options, and oversee members of her group as they pursue individual initiatives and investigations. As a group the members own the outcomes. Belonging becomes less a skill and more a result of the approach as these problem solving groups see themselves as essential elements of the whole with little to no oversight from administrators. As long as the groupings are kept deliberative and focused many institutional improvements can happen without the reticent apprehension of foisted mandates and edicts. Teachers see the investment as productive to the whole, and the rewards are self-motivating.

A third strategy is the “Social Identity” approach. It focuses on the six key social identities in which people most frequently anchor their sense of belonging. These identities are family, friendship, lifestyle choices, nationality, professional identity, and shared interests. Each of these identity layers incorporate intricate needs and concerns, but on an institutional level these identities can be orchestrated to fulfill functional approaches to enriching school culture. As each identity layer is highlighted and given attention, the school culture begins to reflect deeper growth and investment. Howard Gardner elaborated his theory of



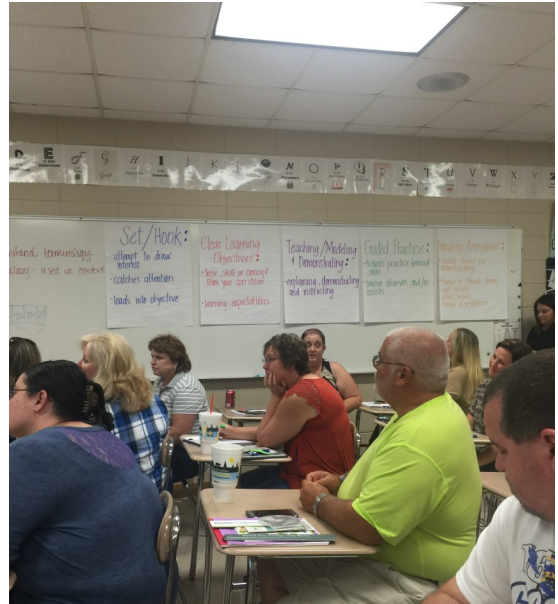
**When groups work well, all the ideas fit together and each member values the whole.**

*multiple intelligences* in 1983. Gardner argues that every person's level of intelligence actually consists of many distinct "intelligences." These intelligences include: (1) logical-mathematical, (2) linguistic, (3) spatial, (4) musical, (5) bodily-kinesthetic, (6) interpersonal, and (7) intrapersonal. Although his work is speculative, his theory is appreciated by teachers in broadening their conceptual framework beyond the traditional confines of skilling, curriculum, and testing. These intelligences can be seen reflected in social identity and suggest that allowing these to grow can create a self gratification for those operating efficiently within the school culture. Each recognized identity responds to recognition with positive investment. Positivity in turn lifts the organization as a whole, establishing a culture that is accepting, uplifting, and positive. The added benefit is that as teachers reflect the investment dividends downward students begin to gain a sense of self, identity, and true belonging. A school can include many identities, each with specific needs and concerns. Creating specific identity approaches such as family friendly planning, paired outings for close friends, and professional growth opportunities allows a school to promote this identity and bring the teacher into a more sustainable relationship with the institution. An administrator's knowledge of a shared interest can bridge the gap between him and a teacher who is reticent about buying into the school enrichment. These personal level interactions can do more to grow teacher belonging than weeks of observations and interventions.



**In Grover's classroom, group projects are used to develop discussion skills which empower their sense of belonging.**

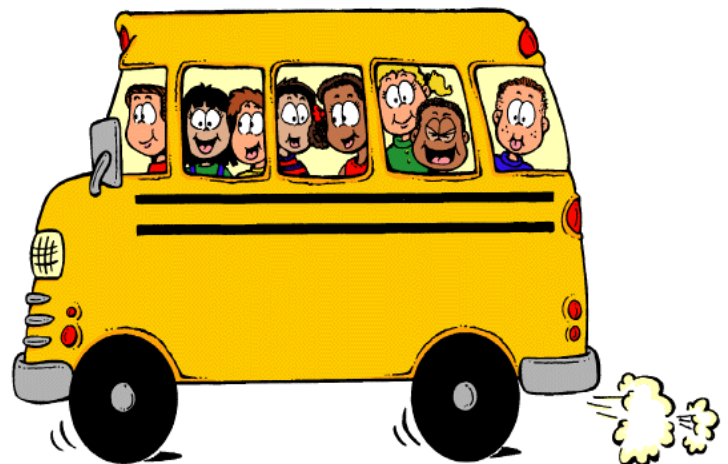
So how do we begin? The strategies listed above are not mutually exclusive. Instead, the institution as a whole has to step forward and commit to seeing the belonging of its members as vital to success. Unfortunately, many modern reforms discount those who belong in the organization as implementers of grand plans and overlook them as participants in mutually beneficial equity agreements. This top-down, edict driven system of changing education creates a muddled mess that produces very little honey. Just as bees are facing the catastrophes of hive collapse, institutions of learning are crumbling under the weight of complex implementation strategies that remake the role of educators without their permission. As educational institutions seek to turn this era of reform from tragedy to triumph, they must realize investment in all those who belong is the catalyst for positive change. Creating cultures of growth that produce collaborative outcomes is preferable to lone teachers hoping to survive the next round of imposed “improvements.” Honey reflects the tastes and flavors of the pollination maps of the bees who create it. Strategies like those above will create students who reflect the positive cultures of belonging which supported their learning.



The faculty at Grover's school work collaboratively to develop skills and techniques that encourage a shared sense of belonging.

## UCA is sending a van!

Members of ACTELA who plan to attend the national conference when NCTE meets in Atlanta, Georgia November 17-20 are making plans to travel. University of Central Arkansas faculty Dona Wake and Jeff Wittingham will be driving a multi-passenger van which leaves Arkansas that Thursday and returns on Sunday.



# NCTE News



Mid-November will see us off to HOT-lanta! ACTELA is winning several awards, so be sure to get Breakfast Tickets for the Affiliate Breakfast on Sunday morning. Be there to cheer as we receive the following:

Multicultural Award

Affiliate of Excellence Award

Teacher for the Dream Grant

Don't miss the mixers! These are arranged to provide time for networking among professionals of your own ilk. NCTE is a large family of English and Language Arts teachers. The mixers are a chance to make new contacts.

Be ready to walk! Hotels are centrally located, but sessions may be spread out. Pack some comfortable shoes.

S. E. Hinton will be there!

Several of our board members will be making presentations this year. Look for names you know among the session presenters, and show we support our affiliate.

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## Arkansas Anthology Update

The latest issue of *Arkansas Anthology* is available online in a digital version and in limited quantities of print versions at the Membership Table. Editor's Choice winners will be announced at the ACTELA Luncheon this year.

Exciting changes are in store for *Arkansas Anthology 2017*. Next year's online edition will be fully interactive with additional elements accessible from the website. Student submissions are currently invited for the 2017 issue. Send your best creative efforts

to [ARAnthology@gmail.com](mailto:ARAnthology@gmail.com).



# Make plans to join your colleagues at ACC.



## The 2016 Arkansas Curriculum Conference

The Little Rock Marriott and Statehouse Convention Center

More than 200 Teacher-led professional sessions-- interactive and engaging!

Multiple Social Events—Come Network and Meet Other Educators!

Exhibit Hall, Door Prizes, & Organization Luncheons

## NOVEMBER 3-4

### TRANSFORMING STUDENT-FOCUSED EDUCATION

**This conference is special....**

The unique intention of this conference is to bring together educators from the different content areas to explore new teaching ideas and deepen content knowledge, but to also interact and network with teachers from other areas. This opens the space to talk about integration, collaboration, service learning, and inquiry-driven projects. The leaders of ACSS, ACTELA, ACTM, ASTA, and their executive boards know how important this is! Join us!

The registration link is on **Facebook**. Just search for "Arkansas Curriculum Conference."



Conference Partners

[ACSS](#), [ACTELA](#), [ACTM](#), [ASTA](#),  
[Arkansas Department of Education](#), [Arkansas State Teachers Association](#),  
and the [STEM Centers for Math and Science Education](#)

# ACC 2016

## Highlights

- ◆ **ACTELA Luncheon:** Door prizes will include books, gift cards, *Arkansas Anthology 2016*, autographed copies of featured authors' books, and more.
- ◆ **Preservice Roundtable** at 9:10 Friday morning will be in Marriott Salon A.
- ◆ **Lindsey Griffin** is ACTELA's Arnold Mini-Grant winner.
- ◆ **Pamela Jones** is 2016 Teacher for the Dream.
- ◆ **Sonia Gensler** will speak at the ACTELA Luncheon.
- ◆ New ACTELA **t-shirts and magnets** will be available at the Membership Table.
- ◆ The Second Great ACTELA **Writing Marathon** from 1:50 to 4 occurs on Friday.
- ◆ Thursday night **social event** at the Butler Center: Free tickets for this event are available at the ACTELA Membership Table.
- ◆ Sonia Gensler will be available to sign books at the **Membership Table**.
- ◆ ACTELA will celebrate the **Teachers of the Year** at our Luncheon on Thursday.
- ◆ **Board Meeting** is Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.

## Website Improvements

Our webmaster, Tyler McBride, has completed the improvements to our website as we move to a Weebly format. Visitors now link automatically to our ACTELA.ORG url when they search for ACTELA.WEEBLY.COM. Our next improvement will be to get the company who owns our domain name to direct traffic to our current content. Arrangements with our old domain server to facilitate this change are ongoing, so stay tuned for an exciting new look!

# Representing YOU!

All ACTELA members are represented by a board from geographical regions which cover the entire state. Get to know your representative board members. They are available to share your concerns and victories with the affiliate as a whole. Email contact with your representative is linked to our webpage. These are some of your ACTELA officers:

Cindy Green, President

Sunny Styles-Foster, Vice President

Janine Chitty, Treasurer

Jeff Wittingham, Membership Chairman

Kay Walter, Newsletter Editor

Dixie Keyes, Past President

Donna Wake, Past President

## **We're Excellent.**

ACTELA has been honored with an NCTE Affiliate of Excellence Award. We are recognized for "high standards of performance for affiliate programming" which include regular publication of our newsletter, community involvement, advocacy, curriculum development, increase of membership, publication of our journal, co-sponsorship of ACC, celebration of cultural diversity, leadership training, and development of a strategic plan among other criteria. Congratulation to us for being

# great!

# Welcome

ACTELA extends warm greetings to the following new student members, all of whom will make poster presentations of their ongoing research at the Preservice Roundtable at ACC Friday morning at 9:10 in Marriott Salon A:



**Ricky Addington**

**Emily Allen**

**Erika Barnett**

**Ashton Free**

**Alex Grubbs**

**Alannah Hensley**

**Pamela Jones**

**Christa McDaniel**

**Brandi Mize**

**Leanna Morris**

**Mika Perkins**

**Timothy Rushing**

**Mark Sullivan**

**Lori Threet**

**Alex Treat**

**Haley Tucker**

**Well done, Scholars!**

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**Our ACTELA family extends sympathetic condolences to Grover Welch on the loss of his mother. Please keep Grover and his family in your thoughts and prayers.**

# Global Perspective

The artist and literacy activist who told the story of his work with immigrant populations in the last issue of our newsletter here tells a further tale of his work on behalf of young EAL pupils. His efforts to assist them in school along with his insistence on successful approaches to literacy education reveal striking parallels between England and Arkansas.

Dr. Kay Walter

## Some History of the Provision for Pupils at School in England for Whom English is an Additional Language

by

**Paul Jackson**

In 1997 and for a period of almost ten years I worked for the Department for Education in London, England. I was appointed to a team with the responsibility for developing the educational policy to raise the attainment of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds in state-maintained schools. This also included those pupils for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL).

The United Kingdom comprises of four semi-autonomous countries: England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. Education is a responsibility which is devolved to each of the four countries, and so my experience relates to policy for schools in my country of residence, England.

I should stress that I am not an English teacher--or even a teacher. My skills developed more from a lifetime of providing counselling, advice, and guidance to people living in inner cities. To some extent my experience working with minority ethnic communities also informed my work in education.

As teachers often attest in despair, the education system in England is in a constant state of flux as different governments often wish to review and change the policies and priorities of previous governments. Much of what I say here has moved on since the ten years or so that I left the Education Department. Nevertheless, some of the issues we faced may well chime with educationalists in Arkansas.

The United Kingdom as a whole, while relatively small in area geographically, has a popula-



tion of some 65.5 million people, and for a number of historical reasons it has a very diverse population ethnically, culturally, and in terms of first language. There are approximately 8.4 million school pupils in England in state funded and independent schools, and recent statistics show that 15% of these pupils are exposed at home to a language other than English.

In some areas, often urban areas but increasingly rural areas now too, this percentage is much higher. For instance, in London in the inner city boroughs of central London, at least 50% of children in school have a first language other than English and there are probably more than 200 dialects and languages spoken by children in their homes. This does not necessarily mean that these children are not fluent in English, although clearly many recent arrivals may not be.

During the period I am writing about (1997-2005), most state-maintained schools came under the administrative responsibility of their Local Education Authority (LEA). These were generally an adjunct to the Local Authority which is a

County or Shire administrative unit which, while funded by central government, had a great deal of autonomy in the governance of the schools within their borders. However, they had to abide by the Government's guidelines on curriculum and other key educational requirements.

At the time I took up my job I was given the responsibility of examining the provision for pupils for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL). At the time the Government offered a grant to every Local Education Authority to help support activities that would benefit minority ethnic pupils, including those for whom English was an Additional Language. One of the issues we had to look at was that the provision for EAL pupils had developed in many Local Edu-



*Latest Self Portrait Oil on Board by Paul Jackson*

cation Authorities independently of any direct guidance from central government. This independence had arisen partly because of the post war (WW2) immigration patterns to the UK which had come in quite distinct phases, first from the Caribbean and secondly from Pakistan and Bangladesh as well as from East Africa when many people of Asian origin were expelled and came to Britain.

The entry of these new immigrants was not uniform throughout the country as many people settled in areas where there was either work in certain industries or there had been some historical link with their homeland. In short, this meant that some Local Educational Authorities had to develop a response quickly to provide for these new children while others had few or no new arrivals.

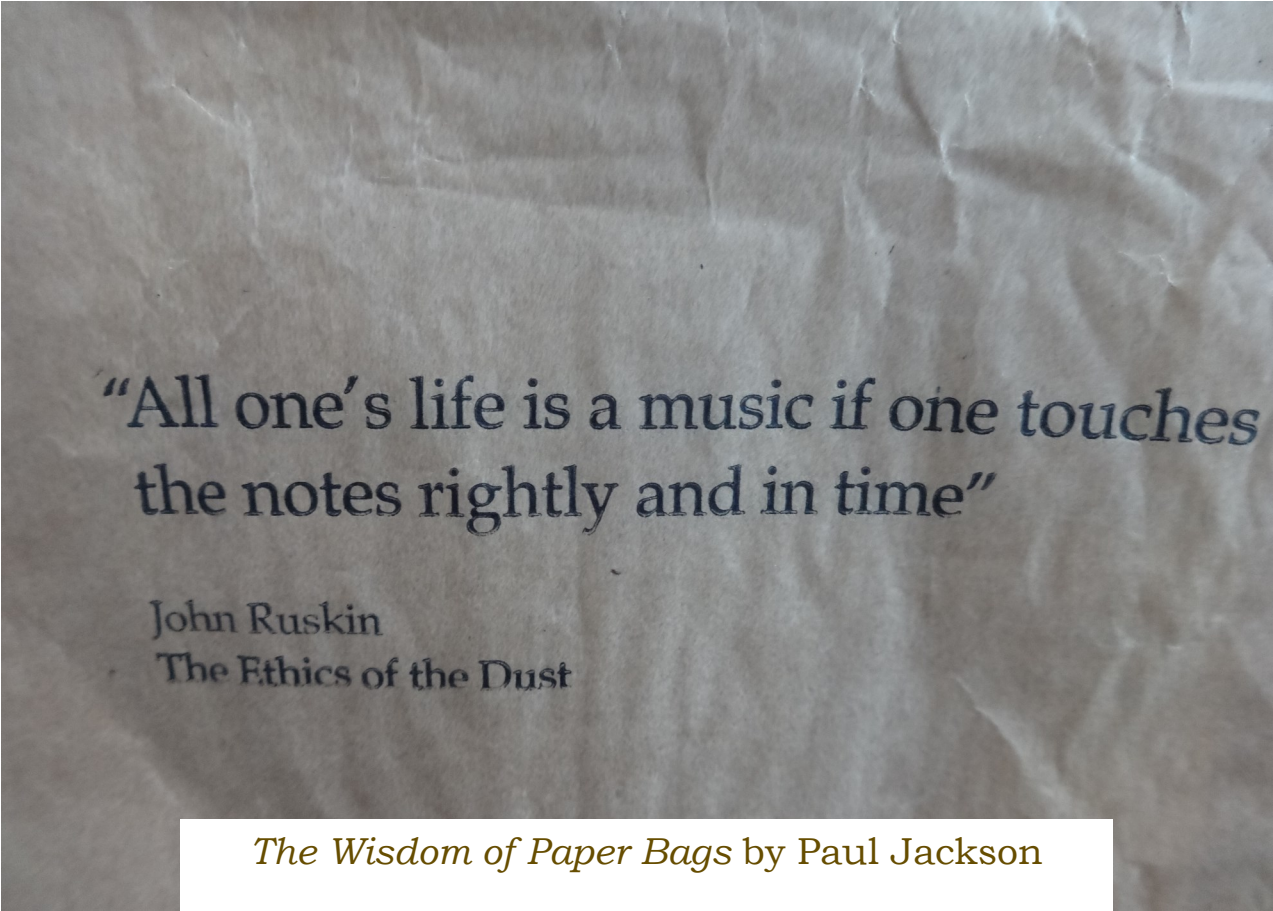
There was therefore a wide range of different provision for pupils within different schools and Local Authorities. Initially some Local Authorities had removed all their EAL pupils to “Language Centres” with the expectation that these pupils would return to mainstream school once their English language ability had improved sufficiently. In practice this system failed. This failure was partly because it impacted more the children of Asian origin. Often European non-English speakers were allowed to remain in mainstream school. The removal of children to language centres was soon discredited, partly because it was deemed discriminatory but also because all the evidence showed that children learned English faster in mainstream schools while surrounded by their English-speaking contemporaries where they were allowed to access the full curriculum and normal school life.

The Department for Education had one primary and unshakeable guideline: For all pupils in all schools, English was to be the medium of instruction. No school was allowed to teach children in their mother tongue.

The Government at the time I refer to had a specific grant to help Local Education Authorities called the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant. This grant was offered to Local Education Authorities through a fairly complex funding formula based on pupil numbers and need. Schools had a great deal of freedom as to how to spend this money. Many used it to employ classroom assistants to support the teacher and pupils, many of whom also spoke some of the languages of the pupils. Other schools used it to buy specific teaching materials or to train teachers in various techniques. Much of this money was well spent and many Local Authorities had exemplary practices to support their pupils. From the Government’s perspective, a major issue is that the provision was inconsistent. Some schools had excellent provisions for their EAL students, and others had little or no real ex-



The building in the background of this photo is the Department for Education.



“All one’s life is a music if one touches  
the notes rightly and in time”

John Ruskin  
The Ethics of the Dust

*The Wisdom of Paper Bags by Paul Jackson*

expertise to help their pupils.

During my time with the department, a key part of the work we tried to put in place was to bring the provision for EAL pupils into line with mainstream school practice. In order to do this we recruited many experts from the most effective Local Education Authorities and schools to help design teaching practice and materials. These developments would be included as part of all the teaching materials in what was then the National Literacy Strategy, the key vehicle to teach all children to read and write effectively in English.

One of the benefits that arose from this effort is that it encouraged regular local and national seminars which helped share best practices, and it moved the issues relating to EAL pupils into the mainstream concern of every school. It also allowed the development of innovative thinking. For instance, one school found that the techniques they used to help pupils learn English language vocabulary in a science context worked very well with their pupils whose first language was English. They found that many English speaking pupils also struggled with vocabulary which went beyond day-to-day English.

All of this coincided with the introduction of an effective ethnic monitoring system in schools which allowed pupil level data on achievement to be linked to ethnic background data. This allowed schools, Local Education Authorities, and the Government to examine all provisions and to see if they impact differently on pupils of some ethnic groups. This data can also be linked to a relative poverty indicator which is whether pupils receive free school



meals (a means-tested allowance).

In recent years, since I retired, the Government has been keen to give schools more independence. Many schools have opted to be self-governing and out of Local Education Authority control. Now, as an interested observer, I have some concerns that schools working outside the support of their Local Authority may lose some of the best practices that have been developed and reintroduce techniques, such as removal of pupils for remedial language teaching, that have been largely discredited. I am sure that EAL learners will continue to be an issue for schools and future Governments in England and, perhaps, even in Arkansas.



Paul Jackson is an artist who champions literacy education in England.



**More views of Paul Jackson's artwork are available on flickr here:**

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/92943860@N00/>

# What Makes You Proud?

Our next issue of the newsletter will feature points of pride from our programs and schools. What should we know about your school? Send ideas to our newsletter editor at [walter@uamont.edu](mailto:walter@uamont.edu)



## Bright Ideas Wanted

Have ideas you'd like to discuss in our newsletter? Send them to our newsletter editor at [walter@uamont.edu](mailto:walter@uamont.edu)

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