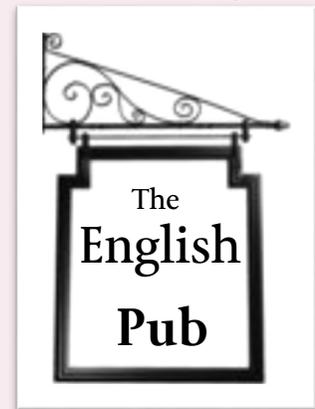


The English Pub

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:

How do writers connect with their physical surroundings? If you could visit one geographic place to deepen your connection to and understanding of a writer, who would you want to learn more about and where would you go?

Their answers begin on page two. Tell us if you have additional ideas about the importance of travel for the students in your school.

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Dear ACTELA Members,

Greetings fellow educators! Since this is my first letter as president, I thought it would be fitting to talk about change. Change is happening all around us, whether we want to be part of it or not. If you are like me, the changing of the seasons has been filled with lots of tissues and sinus medication! If you are in the classroom, you are likely approaching testing season and the end of another school year, both of which bring change to the classroom and our



students. For our organization, change means a new path forward. It was decided by the ACC board that the state conference would not take place this fall. While we are all sad about this news, this is an opportunity for change, to look forward, and to create something different from the past. What we know is that collaboration and participation will be crucial in whatever we decide. So, we welcome your input, your energy, and your ideas for change as we move into this new season of ACTELA!

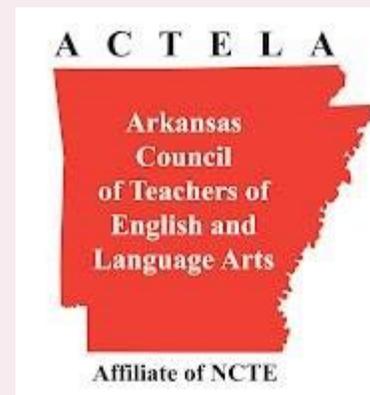
Best,
Sunny Styles-Foster, ACTELA President

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Arkansas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts





- No matter how many times I travel to the United Kingdom, I never get enough of the Lake District. The home of John Ruskin, Brantwood, is situated there near the tiny village of Coniston and just on the shore of Coniston Water. The lake was made famous by the Campbell family when they sought out its calmness and straightness to set the world water speed record in the 1950s and 60s. The story of the *Bluebird* and its tragic end is legendary among racers, and the official speed was measured from the foreshore of Ruskin's home. The house, redolent of the polymath's presence, is enhanced by the views of Coniston Old Man which he wrote about so beautifully in his autobiography, *Praeterita*. Much of his life is illustrated in the displays open to the public including the coach he took to the train station on his many journeys to Venice and the Alps. His numerous agricultural experiments still flourish in the gardens. Rarely does a home open for public exploration so entirely capture a sense of the writer himself. In each room, visitors feel Ruskin's presence and his love of the good and the beautiful rather than the stale embalment of a museum. Each summer when I travel to Europe, I take students to see this house for themselves because I know it gives them a deeper understanding of Ruskin's ideas and intentions as they can be realized in life. Seeing Brantwood gives them a practical view of a Victorian visionary as a human being who sat, ate, slept, and worked just as they do. For all these reasons, I would go again and always to Brantwood to study Ruskin among the people who admire him and surrounded by the sights he

found most inspirational. If you would like to go with me, email me for information about graduate credit for travel seminars available through my university walter@uamont.edu *Dr. Kay J. Walter, University of Arkansas at Monticello*

- I spent the last two days up on Petit Jean Mountain at the Artful Teaching Conference. If you've never been up to Petit Jean, you really need to make time to go. The mountain is truly beautiful, and I always feel a sense of calm and of purpose when I visit. This time was no different. As I sat in sessions learning about how I can better integrate the arts into my instructional practices, I was able to glance out the window at all the new green growth peppered with white blossoms. The site had water features so that the sound of trickling water was prevalent. Something about that combination made me glad simply to be away from my usual routine and locales. And the company and content I was learning inspired me as well. I took a break during the morning to walk outside and sit and breathe deeply. And in that moment, the words came to me. That is rare for me! Usually, I have to beat and cajole and beg the right words to come. So geography matters. Company matters. And space matters. I hope you find that combination that works best for you! *Dr. Donna Wake, University of Central Arkansas*

- Writers have a long history of drawing inspiration from their surroundings, particularly the beauty of nature. Last spring, I had the opportunity to visit Ronda, Spain, a small town where Ernest Hemingway spent much of his time as a writer. Seeing the breathtaking views and experiencing the town, its people, and its unique blend of cultures really gave me a sense of what inspired Hemingway as a writer. It was a truly incredible experience! *Jessica Herring, Benton High School*

- I think it is vital for a writer to be in a place or space, whether physically or mentally, in order to draw on its influence. I've been to Paris one time during a 22-hour lay-over, and that allowed me time just long enough to visit



a few of the more popular tourist attractions. The Arc de Triomphe was such an attraction. I remember the insane trek across multiple lanes of traffic to reach the monument itself and the immediate sense of peace and awe once we had made it. It was an unexpected observation. I would love to return and learn more about George Sand and her influences found in the city and nearby countryside. Her beliefs and actions were some of the earliest examples of feminism, and it is inspiring to think that her connectedness to her surroundings made it possible for her to write beyond a layman's understanding of love and relationships. *Dawn Bessie, Crowley's Ridge Education Cooperative*

- When I think of place in writing, I think of the Eudora Welty quote, "Feelings are bound up in place, and in art, from time to time, place undoubtedly works upon genius." *Jeff Whittingham, University of Central Arkansas*
- I am not sure I would want to research a specific author but rather my own family history. In the space I am in at the moment, having lost both parents in a twelve-month period, I am wanting to write about or research my own grief, as well as our history and wonderful family memories. I would think about visiting places significant to my family and write in those spaces, like the house I lived in as a child that my father built, the 25 acres in Royal where my parents lived before ultimately living with me, places we camped, the businesses my parents retired from, and things of that nature. My nieces and nephews have already started writing poems and stories about their own loss, and it could be a time when they learn about events and places they have never seen and let them express it through writing as well. This prompt has definitely got me thinking! *Cindy Green, Virtual Arkansas*
- When student writers see their peers motivated to write, the productive energy spreads throughout the classroom. This energy is delicate and can

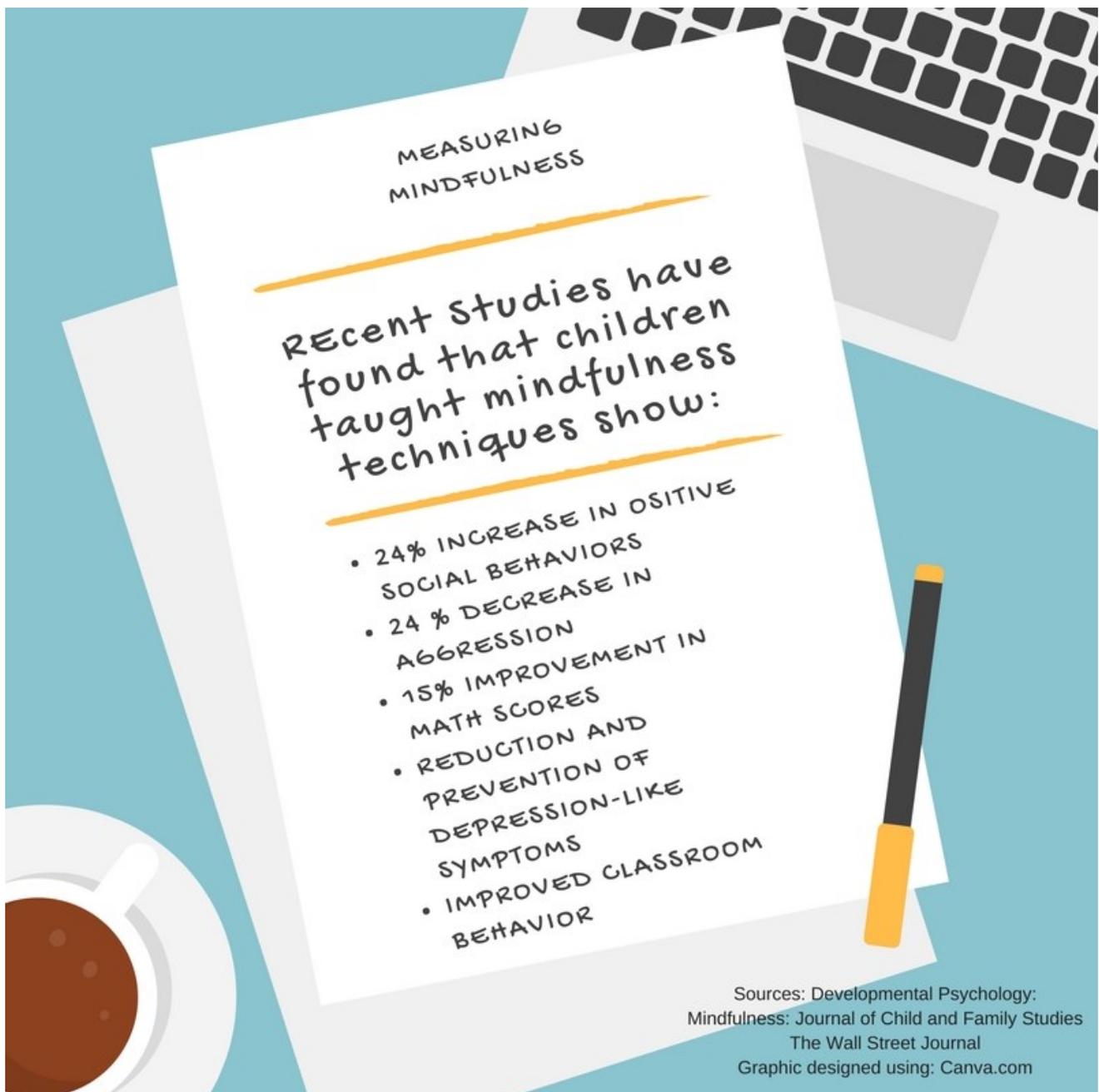


easily be disrupted, but it can also be powerful and peaceful. I myself would like to backpack and camp for an extended amount of time in a national park like Cheryl Strayed and to be able to write about nature like Bonnie Jo Campbell does in *Once Upon A River*. *Liza Vammen, Bentonville School District*

Approaches to a Mindful Culture of Learning

by Grover Welch

Newport Special School District



Some classes are deliberate spaces for learning. You feel at peace on entering, part of a community gaining a sense of clarity, and an active part of the learning happening there. That is the classroom you want to be in, the classroom where you feel you belong, a classroom with deliberate approaches to learning and a focus on being present. Mindfulness for educators begins in daily moments in each class that transform the classroom culture and nurture elements of this atmosphere.

How is this achieved? It begins with a dedicated educator committed to focusing on mindfulness from the beginning of the year to the end. Students see through faking and posturing, and this can immediately affect engagement. So, the dedicated educator must invest in himself and develop the focus on these practices through consideration of the mindfulness of the classroom.

I began this dedication to mindfulness with a decision to research mindfulness and its practice. I addressed the students and parents early in the school year and introduced them to the idea we would be practicing daily reminders of our mindfulness. I wanted them to know why we would do this and what it would look like from the outset.

I introduced simple practices of breathing, listening, relaxing, and affirming gratitude. Breathing was focused on becoming aware of our own selves, noticing how we are bringing air into our bodies and most importantly how we are putting that same air out. This focuses the students' attention on their own physical presence and the space they inhabit. It makes them aware of their impact on the surroundings with something as small as a breath.

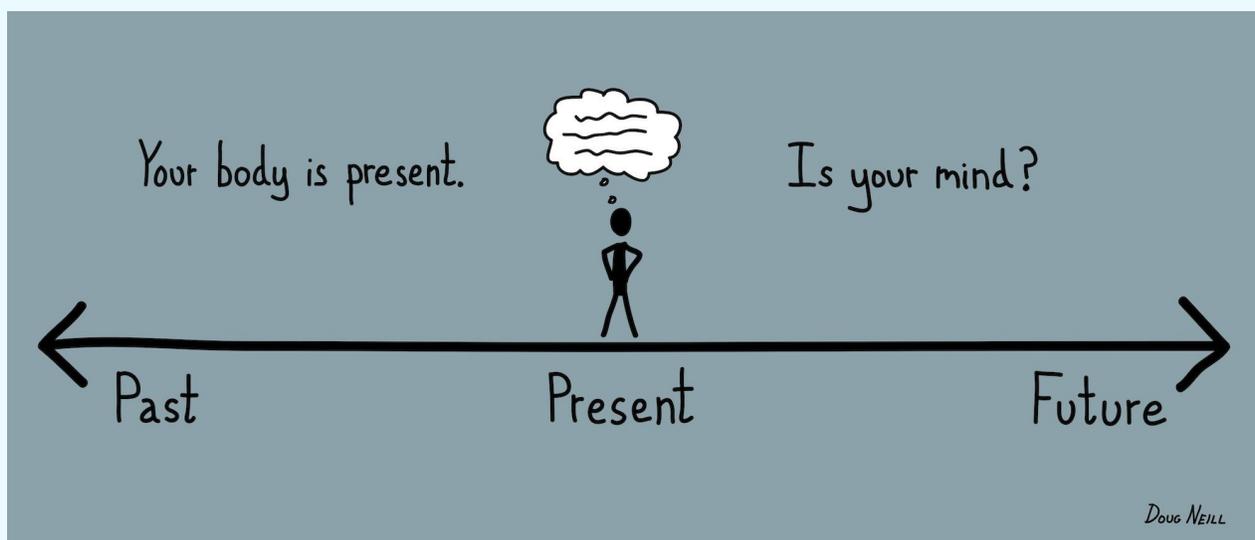
Then I remind my students to listen to the class as it breathes together. We notice how they create interactions with each other. I elicit this listening practice knowing it will carry over into learning and discussion. This activity reinforces the concept that active listening enables us to respond fully and understand fully. In this quiet space, I can help students understand that the practice of hearing is only one element of listening. I point out the role each physical person must play for interaction to happen.



After breathing and listening I ask students to relax into their spaces, inhabiting their own real estate with ownership and guidance. This appeal to relax into comfort and accommodation helps students release the stresses of competition for a place. They immediately take ownership of their domain and that ownership buttresses their desire to coexist. This concept is the hardest for my students to understand and uphold. They have tendencies to flow out of their spaces and intrude on others, a situation that I typically address by bringing the awareness back to their own space and the issues they would have if someone encroached on their domain.

After all this we begin a practice of gratitude, acknowledging partnered spaces and accepting neighbors with kindness. This opens the dialogues between students and creates a space where equity is shared within the classroom. In my English classroom the focus is often on discussion and argument, but the mutual respect the shared practices encourage creates spaces where students can communicate disagreement and gratitude equally and simultaneously. They practice common manners like “thank you” and “excuse me” acknowledging each as a part of the greater whole. Mannerly behavior is easier when they have their stakes mapped out and can feel confident that the space is their own.

The entire processes to beginning dialogue takes roughly five to ten minutes, and it is time well spent. Students create a focused engagement post exercise. Once the practice has been taught and students see the validity in its outcomes, they share ownership of the whole class. On more than one occasion I have had my class begin to veer into discord only to see students stopping and breathing, coming back to center. If they do not recognize the



need to re-center, I can interrupt the lesson and take a moment or two to bring us back to our own real estates within the classroom.

No practice is one hundred percent effective. I do not always take the time to begin class with my practiced mindfulness and upon reflection often see the adverse effects of this mistake. It is also not something I will ever expect to have every student engaged in. I accept this as part of the experience. My students are eleventh-graders, and within the context of any classroom there will always be one or two renegades or naysayers. I approach those students individually and acknowledge their desire not to participate. I hope that after countless classroom engagements they may be swayed, but that is the idealist in me. I know what every experienced teacher knows. Some practices are beneficial even without complete compliance. With the students who do engage in the practice, I see profound influence with buy-in and sense of belonging. The classroom becomes more of a community around the mindfulness exercise.

Mindfulness in the classroom is a completely customizable experience that looks different in every classroom. Teachers begin explaining the practice, but it is when students take the steps to engage in the practice that efficacy begins to grow. Learning through practice is beneficial, and this is often the most effective approach. The very act of doing the mindfulness exercises creates questions from students that go deeper into motivation and understanding of place that is authentic and relevant.

I also find that the insight the students gather for themselves translates into deeper meaning assignments. Writing takes on a more self-aware tone as



Students in Mr. Welch's fourth period class find time at the beginning of class to practice mindfulness techniques.

the students are primed to think through learning and outcomes. Improved listening creates deeper engagement with lessons and reading assignments. I also like to approach students with the opportunity to reflect on what their thinking is after centering at the beginning of class. A sample bell ringing activity can often be made deeper and more meaningful by the awareness created.

The students' response is generally very positive. They often

report less stress, better relationships, better communication, and sharper focus. Mindfulness creates the classroom environment I feel is conducive to learning, but it also gives students skills they can use throughout their lives to deal with stressful jobs and competitive environments. Though there can be affects on discipline in mindful classrooms, I have chosen not to focus on discipline as an aim. Instead, the mindfulness students experience in my classroom is designed to encourage student development and learning. My own reflection on mindfulness is that it helps, and that is good practice.



Jeff Whittingham reports the following two session proposals have been approved for presentation at NCTE 2018:

**The Watson Chapel Scholars Go to Writing Camp
Raising Their Voices in Search of
Equity and Social Justice**

Friday, November 16, 2018 9:30-10:45 a.m.

Book Insecurity: Listening to Our Students' Voices

Sunday, November 18, 2018 10:30-11:45 a.m.

Conference Reports

by Dr. Kay J. Walter

Professor of English, University of Arkansas at Monticello

English students from the University of Arkansas at Monticello have been on the go since ACC. They have attended numerous professional conferences devoted to a variety of subjects. They have bolstered their burgeoning CVs by making preservice presentations at several of these meetings, and they have acted as honorable ambassadors representing their university as well as their own scholarship in the state, across the region, and around the world.

Now, more than ever, gaining admission to study in graduate programs is competitive, and UAM scholars and their teachers are determined to find ways to build credentials during undergraduate years which will lead to funding for graduate studies. The students have made professional presentations on research they are doing for their coursework at Open Mic sessions, at graduate conferences, and in Student Research Forums. Their network of professional connections has spread rapidly. The very act of travel itself has increased the likelihood of graduate success as it opens geographical boundaries, making the unknown familiar and accessible.

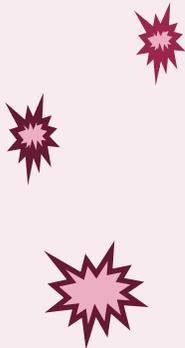
Here are descriptions of some of the gatherings UAM students have recently attended:

- **TexMoot: Stories for the Refreshment of the Spirit** This meeting was the first Moot held in Texas. “Moot” is a word describing a gathering or assembly as well as the place wherein such a meeting is held. It can serve

as a suffix, as it famously does in the “Entmoots” of Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*. Clearly a gathering of JRR Tolkien and Inklings fans, this conference bridged the gap between a fandom and an academic network. Its theme was Stories for the Refreshment of the Spirit, focusing on healing and recovery. While many of the presentations concerned the genre of speculative fiction, other sessions presented ideas on canonical works of literature. Dr. Corey Olsen, The Tolkien Professor of Signum University, gave the keynote address. Further information about him and about the conference can be found on page fourteen and by following this link: <http://texmoot.org/>

- **Authority: Questioning Power Structures Within the Humanities and Beyond** This conference is an annual interdisciplinary meeting in Fayetteville sponsored by U of A’s organization of graduate students in English. The varied approaches to the conference theme were reflected in interdisciplinary perspectives. The keynote address by Dr. Lisa Corrigan offered a historical and sociological view of authority and how it is established, exploring the power it wields and its relation to racial and political current news topics and questions. Further information about this conference and the group hosting it starts on page sixteen and is also available here: <https://fulbright.uark.edu/departments/english/graduate/ma-phd-english/graduate-students-in-english-organization.php>
- **John Ruskin: Le Pietre di Venezia** Six students from Arkansas toured this exhibition of Ruskin’s work at the [Palazzo Ducale](#) in Venice over their spring break. They attended a joint symposium of the [Scuola Grande di San Rocco](#) and the [Guild of St George](#) as well as a colloquy between the two groups. More information about these events begins on page twenty-three and is available by following the links highlighted above.
- In addition to journeys with students, there have been journeys exclusive to faculty. A **Teaching Shakespeare** conference in Tuscaloosa, Alabama yields this link to staged readings of Renaissance plays: [Improbable Fictions](#) as well as this link to the website of two feisty young scholars exploring the Bard’s dramas (PG warning for language): [The Hurly Burly Shakespeare Show!](#)
- The Inaugural **South Arkansas Literary Festival** was held at the El Dorado Conference Center. The two-day event was cut short by one day when a lightning strike started a fire in a nearby building, and the university had to evacuate the area. Dr. Kay Walter was scheduled to give a presentation, as were other of her colleagues, but she has declared the orphaned paper a head start on her next conference responsibility!

- The **UAM Student Research and Scholarship Forum** offers a chance for students from every discipline to showcase their research and its findings. The sciences are always well represented at this event by elaborate charts and lists of figures, but the arts too were on display this year. Preservice members of ACTELA including Katie Willett, Will Leggett, and Grace Nash used slideshows to demonstrate the outcome of their research on canonical British authors and the means by which they challenged authority. Kaitlyn Carrico made her presentation about the artwork she saw in Venice, comparing great Renaissance masters such as Titian, Bellini, and Tintoretto with modern artists.



Will Leggett presents information about John Ruskin and William Morris.



Grace Nash displays her findings on Robert Browning.

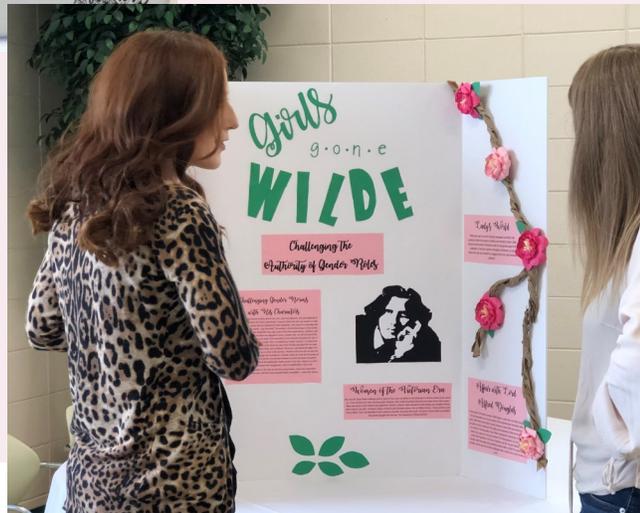




Katie Willett's research explores Alfred, Lord Tennyson.



Mary Trammell presents research on Oscar Wilde.



Kaitlyn Carrico demonstrates her findings about art history from her travels to Venice.



First Annual North Texas Literature and Language Symposium

TexMoot: Stories for the Refreshment of the Spirit

13 January 2018

Three students and I travelled to Fort Worth, Texas to take part in this literary event. The symposium began with opening comments by Sorina Higgins of Baylor University. The Flash-Paper session which followed concerned Speculative Fiction and included presentations on an Agatha Christie novel, a Robert Heinlein novel, Stephen R. Donaldson novels, and contemporary fantasy novels as they portray feminine trauma.

The next session considered responses to literature. The first paper discussed Owen Barfield's idea of participation. This was followed by a paper about lynching literature, and the final presentation of the session was a proxy speaker for "Rich." Rich is a man recently released from prison, currently restricted to his home by court order, who shared personal experiences with literature that taught him endurance and acceptance during his incarceration.

Lunch included a book launch and the release party of *Inklings and King Arthur*. The authors of this new book spoke, as did the artist selected to design the cover.

The VIP Panel included a group discussion of the symposium theme from an interdisciplinary approach. Keith Loftin, a theologian, Dr. Corey Olsen, an English professor, Pat Miersma, an expert in clinical mental health and global trauma healing, and Dr. Peter Unseth, a linguist, took turns explaining their views of healing and recovery and answering questions from the audience.

The final Flash-Paper session considered classics of Western literature. Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Mary Sidney Herbert's dedication, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and C. S. Lewis's *That Hideous Strength* were all subjects of papers that accompanied my own, a



Dr. Kay Walter presents her paper at TexMoot.

consideration of Alfred, Lord Tennyson's *In Memoriam AHH* as the quintessential example of healing and recovery in canonical literature.

The Keynote Address by Dr. Corey Olsen discussed death as a "release from bondage" in Tolkien's storytelling, and it was followed by an After-Party where UAM students took part in "food, fellowship, conversation, trivia, games, and open mic." In response to their participation, a member of the TexMoot team spoke with each one individually and encouraged them all to consider Signum University, the conference host, for their graduate studies.

Ana Rodriguez-Mesa describes the experience in these terms:

This weekend my peers and I attended the first ever TexMoot Conference sponsored by Signum University in Fort Worth, Texas. The trip there was just as enjoyable as the conference itself. On the way to Fort Worth we stopped to visit the Armstrong Browning Library in Waco, Texas. The library was a beautiful place filled with a collection of Victorian works and personal artifacts. One of my favorite rooms there was the Treasure Room, where we got to see a first edition written by Samuel Coleridge and William Wordsworth. Our next stop was the Kimbell Art Museum where we got to see the breathtaking works of artists such as Pablo Picasso, Edvard Munch, and J.M.W. Turner. At the conference we witnessed interesting and insightful presentations by people from around the country. The "Tolkien Professor" presented a thought-provoking presentation, but I also deeply enjoyed the VIP presentations and the creative writing panel. We presented at an open mic session where we discussed research topics that we have been working on for a couple of months now. The session was a success, and later one of the Chairs of Signum University approached us to discuss recruitment into their graduate programs. Overall, it was an exciting and educational trip.

Will Leggett describes the conference in this way:

The trip to Fort Worth was a very enjoyable and insightful trip. Our journey to the conference consisted of visiting the Baylor campus library and examining the various artifacts and collections of the Barrett-Browning couple. Dr. Walter's insight into the couple's history and about various other nineteenth-century poets that had works on display truly illuminated the information we were gaining. The actual conference itself was very interesting, with panels that managed to merge a variety of healing processes in different forms that can be found in literature. The papers presented at the conference provided me with an idea of how to construct and further organize my future conference papers.

Caleb Hayes has this to say about the adventure:

Our trip was filled with spectacles and thrills throughout. I was excited to see all of the beauties Texas has to offer with the architecture of SMU, the Armstrong Browning Library, and the works of art within the Kimbell Art Museum. I was floored at not only being able to see my first Monet and Picasso paintings, but I was also able to see one of J.M.W Turner's later pieces. It was fascinating to see something of the sort housed here in the U.S. when the only other place I've personally seen such works was at the National Gallery in London. However, this was not the extent of my amazement. I found the Texmoot Symposium to be a clever cross between fandoms and academia. I found new depths and ways to interpret the writings of the Inklings. Since the symposium, I have been inspired to read the works of C. S. Lewis in order to grapple with the topics discussed at Texmoot. This experience would not have been complete, however, without good laughs made by a set of good friends/colleagues. With which, there was many a memorable moment to be had.



AUTHORity: An Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Conference

Sponsored by U of A Graduate Students in English

Fayetteville, Arkansas

3 March 2018

I drove to Fayetteville with a group of students to present a panel of Flash Papers at the 2018 GSE conference. Because I am a faculty member and they are undergraduates, we required special consideration by the conference director to receive permission to attend and make presentations. It was a great honor for my UAM undergraduates to be selected to present at this graduate student conference, and our panel, Influence of Authority in Canonical British Literature: A Panel in Flash Papers, inspired much excitement. The Flash Paper format was an innovation to the conference as a whole.

I was delighted with the success of our presentations. My own presentation on John Ruskin provided a context for the student papers. Each student spoke well and responded cleverly to the questions posed during the Q and A which followed. The students were universally pleased with themselves and felt the experience of attending a professional conference was beneficial. The faculty sponsors of GSE were so impressed that they have already indicated UAM students will be welcome to attend the conference again next year.

Here are some thoughts from the student presenters:

Ana Rodriguez-Mesa: A group of students and I were invited to attend and present at the 2017 GSE Conference at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. I was ecstatic when Dr. Walter informed us that the graduate students in charge of the conference had invited us to go back this year too. As a second year attendee, the conference was a great experience—even more so since I was not as nervous as I was last year. This conference was a great academic event, and we got to attend many scholarly presentations that covered a wide range of academic disciplines. Those of us who attended did an outstanding job. We even had a discussion with our audience well after our presentation time was up. The graduate students who greeted us last year were excited to see us there again and were impressed with all of our papers. They even encouraged us to come back next year and to bring even more students from UAM along as well. It was a great academic conference.

Pamela Jones: For myself, it was a privilege to take part in this conference. It was enjoyable, educational, and helpful with an experience of speaking in public. I believe this experience was a way to take a close look at canonical British authors in a light we had never explored before. I sincerely appreciate the invitation to participate in this conference. I'm very grateful to have gone. The speakers were informative and entertaining. I am very glad they took part and allowed us to listen as they presented their papers.

Katie Willett: Since being in college, this was my first conference to attend. I expected it to be stuffy and super formal, but it turned out to be a relaxed group of people just passionate about literature. The company, “exotic” food, and the experience I gained from the trip was priceless. I really feel like our group made an impression at the conference. I can't wait for the next one!

Emily Smith: Attending the Fayetteville Conference is an experience that I am glad to have been a part of. Preparing for the conference and developing a pa-

per to present to others was not an easy task, but in the end the adventure was worth all my effort. This was my first conference to attend. I enjoyed all the presentations that I saw, especially when my fellow students read their papers. The conference was a great opportunity to have intellectual discussions with other attendees over the ideas in my paper. I was exposed to many new ideas and am thankful for that. One of the best things about the conference was learning and bonding with my professor and peers in a way that cannot be done inside a classroom. Attending a professional conference is something I would be interested in doing again.

Will Leggett: I have often considered authors and their authority with literature. I never considered, though, a paper centered around the relationship between an author and the authority they either have or challenge to write their works. This conference expanded my concept of what authority means from just literary authority with these authors to include challenging social constructs and society in and of itself.

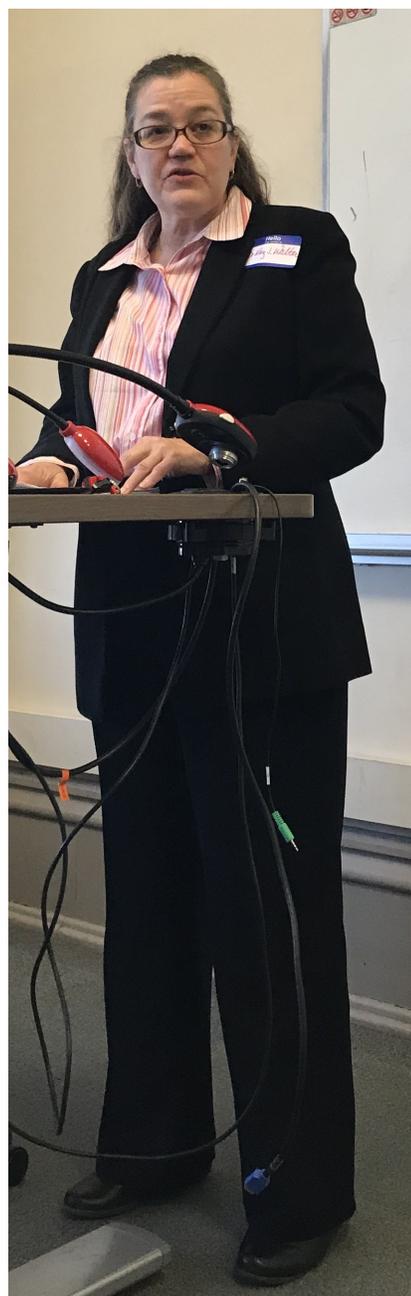
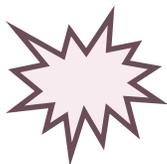


Katie Willett, Emily Smith, Pamela Jones, Ana Rodriguez-Mesa, and Dr. Kay Walter made flashpaper presentations on canonical British authors at the Fayetteville conference this year.

Alex Austin: I appreciated the extension of thanks that I received from the U of A for my research piece on Charles Lamb and challenging the authority of the mental health industry. I am truly grateful for the opportunity.

Grace Nash: The Fayetteville Conference presented a new challenge for me. I enjoyed the research and learned so much about Robert Browning. The concept of challenging authority was something I hadn't considered much within the realm of British Literature. However many canonical writers challenged the authorities they faced and they did it in their craft of writing.

Caleb Hayes: My researching for this conference was a profound experience. Thomas Gray is inspiring in his role as a teacher and scholar. He is a shining example of the notion that the world needs people of all types to work. His untraditional approach to the classroom did not diminish his success or accolades as a prominent member of the literary community. I think this speaks volumes for the type of scholars UAM produces. We may be from a variety of backgrounds, and our approach as scholars might be untraditional, but we still can make a huge impact on our surroundings.



Dr. Kay Walter's presentation on John Ruskin provided context for the presentations her undergraduates made.

Following this link will take you to a clever video about the dangers of inaccurate analysis produced by a student of Shakespeare studies:

Inaccurate Analysis (Hamilton Mixtape)

Katie's View

by Katie Willett

I remember almost breaking down into tears on the ride back home from my last high school EAST convention. The trip always consisted of eight students and our EAST facilitator, and the same students went every year. We were chosen for our similar interests in the program, and because of this we became close, with each trip knitting the bond closer and closer. The conference became a highlight in my year. Leaving that hotel knowing that I would never take a school-related trip like this again struck my heart with sadness, as if a major chapter in my life had finished for good. My naïve high school self never fathomed that those same experiences could be revived while in college. The only difference? I am no longer a high school kid; I'm a college kid, which makes school trips immensely more entertaining.

The opportunity for my first college field trip arrived on my first day of Dr. Walter's British Literature II class. I'm a transfer student, and it was my first time wandering into the English department. One thing I did not expect was to be roped into a conference, especially because I knew no one in the course and had never even met the professor until that day. Stunned by the very offer, I agreed, though I did not anticipate the work and research the journey would entail. Five page essay? I could handle that. The next two months would be dedicated to perfecting this paper about a dead guy whom I knew virtually nothing about.

Alfred Tennyson: some poet guy we've all heard of, right? Unfortunately for myself, I received a poor English education in my high school days. I literally had a new English teacher every year because the old one would either leave in horror or be fired. It was your basic Defense Against the Dark Arts professor scenario, except no one died. That being said, my knowledge on Tennyson was greatly lacking. This paper was supposed to be a breeze, but the wind was stiff. Trips to the library were frequent, and wikipedia pages were exhausted. A month later, an outline was formed, and little by little a paper developed, sort of.

Sooner than I had anticipated, the day before leaving for the conference had arrived. I had felt so intimidated by other potential writers involved in the conference. The words that I included in my paper had to be perfect, but almost every word I added I had to scrap. It wasn't good enough. We were leaving in the morning and my paper still wasn't com-

plete. I packed up my laptop, determined to finish it in the hotel room the next day. I fell asleep that night feeling anxious, not sure what to expect.

Dr. Walter pulled into my driveway at noon. Opening the door to the backseat, I gulped when I saw my seating arrangement: three girls squished together in a small SUV. These weren't just any girls, they were strangers. One I had spoken maybe five words to, and the others none. This was going to be interesting.

The great thing about being in a car full of English majors is that you're all passionate about the same things. Not a few miles down the road and we were chatting it up. An hour into the journey and we were best friends. No longer were we stiff and uncomfortable, terrified of our close proximities. We were just a car full of girls pumped about spending the weekend at a writing conference; your typical literature fangirls. Four short hours later and we had arrived in Fayetteville, just in time for dinner.

I never realized how uncultured I was until I went on this trip. When talk of dinner began to arise, everyone quickly agreed on Thai food. Wearing a fake smile, my petrified little Southern heart began the race. What in tarnation was I going to do? My anxiety was all for nothing though, because with a little help from the gang and a lot of time scanning the menu, I was pleasantly surprised with a delightful Thai dinner. Let's just say I left that restaurant feeling cultured as all get out. Aside from the food, the conversation was just as pleasing. I couldn't believe how much in common I had with this group of strangers!

The night continued later in the hotel room, where my roommate and I talked for hours on end. I was fascinated as she told me all about the trip to England she had previously taken with Dr. Walter. Through sleepy stories of her overseas adventures and the darkness of the night, we finally fell asleep, well, she did. My night had only begun.



Katie Willett

The pressure to perfect my paper was on. This was my first college field trip and I had no idea what to expect. In my mind, the day would consist of readings from brilliant graduate students with masterfully written papers. I would of course get up there and flop. I didn't want to flop. Gathering up all the perseverance I could muster, I wrapped up my paper, crossed my fingers, and went to sleep. For all I knew it could be my last night alive, because I would probably die of embarrassment the next day.

It's conference day and the whole gang is looking good. All dressed up in our fancy clothes, we desperately search for parking at the overcrowded university. We had to park a good distance away, and it was quite chilly.

When your professor recommends that you wear a jacket, you should probably take that advice. I didn't, and I suffered. The sharp, cold air beating against me attempted to numb the sick anxiety that had begun to plague me. I really hoped I didn't screw this up.

When we were all seated and the readings began, something came over me: not fear, nervousness, or panic, but comfort. As the passionate writers began to share their work, I realized that we were all the same. Everyone in the room loved literature and chose to be there for the sake of that love. There was no judgement from each other, just genuine interest in the presenters' topics that led to insightful discussions afterward. After each of my classmates presented their paper, we were asked questions that I was delighted to answer. All the studying and research that was done to prepare for the paper came bubbling to the surface, and I suddenly became passionate about a man I hadn't realized I was passionate about.

After the conference concluded, we enjoyed the real highlight of the trip. There was this **bookshop on Dickson Street** unlike any bookshop I had visited before. Books and books just as far as the eye could see stacked tightly into countless cases! Our parking meter allowed us one hour of browsing, and trust me, it was well spent. We all left that store with a purchase, and I believe one student even spent close to a hundred dollars. Can I blame her? Not at all.

I returned home from the conference grateful for the experience. Not only did I get a glimpse into grad school, but I also got the chance to bond with my classmates and professor. I realized that school trips were not over for me yet, and I will relish each one. There is something wonderful about going away with people that share the same interests as you, and the connections made on such trips can be very valuable. I can't wait for the next one.



Literacy Links

Articles co-authored by Dr. Kay Walter appear in the Fall/Winter 2017 and the Spring 2018 issues of *Arkansas Libraries*.

Another appears in the 2017/2018 issue of *CEAMAG Journal*.

Literary Journeys

Instead of a spring break this year, I taught a travel seminar on John Ruskin. Six student and I traveled to Venice to see the new exhibition at the Palazzo Ducale—John Ruskin: Le Pietre di Venezia. While I was there, I learned about a lot more than just Ruskin.

With a student, I found the house where Ezra Pound lived. I visited Titian's grave. Most importantly, I came away with a new understanding of *Othello, the Moor of Venice*—particularly the opening scene.

I've taught that play many, many times without a clear understanding of what it means for Iago and Roderigo to stand beneath Brabantio's window and yell to him. When the officers came in the night with torches to call Othello to the Duke's council, I didn't realize the implications. I had never connected the elected Doge with the Duke, and I missed the realization of the Doge's Palace with the war council which went forward.

Very much of that play has opened to me for the first time, and I can't wait to teach it again in the fall!



Caleb Hayes idles beneath the sign marking the tiny street where Ezra Pound lived in Venice.



Venetian Influences on Victorian Literature travel seminar instructor, Dr. Kay Walter (center), poses in the Dallas airport with her world travelers (on left, L to R) Mauri Armstrong, Will Leggett, Jaye Pace, (to right, L to R) Blake Martinez, Kaitlyn Carrico, and Caleb Hayes as they prepare to fly to Italy and explore the wonders of Venezia.



Basilica di San Marco in St Mark's Square is a Byzantine relic of medieval Christianity.

VENICE



Titian's marble monument in Basilica di Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari marks the artist's grave.



Brave Saint George slays the dragon in bas relief atop Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni.

ENGLISH FESTIVAL 2018



DAY AND EVENING EVENTS
MARCH 12 - MARCH 15

-----READING SCHEDULE-----

MAR 12 **UAM'S FINEST**
MARK SPENCER, KATE STEWART, BOB MOORE
READING AND DISCUSSION

MUSIC RECITAL HALL 7:00-8:30 PM

MAR 13 **CREATIVE WRITERS**
DAYANA STETCO AND RITA COSTELLO
READING AND DISCUSSION

TNRS
7:00 PM BESSY'S

MUSIC RECITAL HALL 4:00-5:30 PM

MAR 14 **LITERARY SCHOLARS**
PAUL DAWSON AND TERRELL TEBBETS
READING AND DISCUSSION

PUBLISHING TALK
7:00-8:30
THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

MUSIC RECITAL HALL 4:00-5:30 PM

MAR 15 **UAM ALUMNI**
ADAM CLEMONS, JASON HIGGINS
BRONTË PEARSON, HOLLY MCDONALD
ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

OPEN MIC
7:00-8:30
THE ALLEN HOUSE

MCB 105 12:40-2:00 PM

FOR A LIST OF CLASSROOM PRESENTATIONS CHECK OUR FB EVENT
UAM ENGLISH FESTIVAL 2018



UAM ENGLISH FESTIVAL

This four-day event celebrated study in the field of English and the career prospects for its graduates. The inaugural year set a high mark for future festivals to follow. It included visiting speakers from other universities in Arkansas and Louisiana as well as an independent scholar from Great Britain. They represented Creative Writing, Professional Writing, Editing, American Literature, British Literature, and other studies associated with English. A variety of venues on campus and around town hosted author readings of original works, writing workshops, class visits, and lectures. Visiting scholars included Dr. Dayana Stetco from University of Louisiana at Lafayette and Dr. Rita Costello from McNeese State University, Mr. Paul Dawson from the United Kingdom, and Dr. Terrell Tebbetts from Lyon College.

A panel of recent graduates met with current undergraduates and faculty members to talk about their graduate studies. They answered questions about the benefits of studying for a degree from UAM. Jason Higgins is currently studying for a PhD in history at University of Massachusetts Amherst. Brontë Pearson is currently studying in a low-residency program at Johns Hopkins for an MA degree in Science Writing. Holly McDonald completed an MAT degree and teaches at Monticello High School. Adam Clemons completed an MA degree in history at UCA and an MLS in Library Science as well as an MAAS in African Studies at Indiana University. He is currently the African and African American Studies Librarian at University of California Berkeley.



Dr. Terrell Tebbetts discusses a life of literary research at the Inaugural UAM English Festival.



If you're interested in hosting a similar event at your own school and want help with planning or spreading the word, write and let us know: walter@uamont.edu

ENGLISH FESTIVAL

UAM



Mr. Paul Dawson from Sussex visited UAM to speak about John Ruskin and his pupils at the UAM English Festival.



UAM students spend their lunch breaks listening to guest lecturers speak on topics of concern to the English profession.



Festival Feedback

Mr. Paul Dawson, Friends of Ruskin's Brantwood Newsletter Editor:

The English Festival at UAM was a great success. Apart from the usual classroom visits and talks, I gave two 'formal' lectures as part of the event: 'John Thomas Hobbs' and 'John Ruskin.' The students had already read the 'Benjamin Creswick' and 'George Allen' books and although 'Hobbs' was the third, he was, of course, Ruskin's first 'pupil' and his earliest experience of offering any benevolent or philanthropic help. It was useful to explain the Victorian class system and set out both Hobbs's and Ruskin's backgrounds as part of the story.

The third talk was a joint presentation on stage in the Music Department building with readings with an American Lit specialist, Dr. Terrell Tebbetts. He spoke of research and his work on American writers. I told the story of how my research on George Allen began and where it has taken me, and I gave readings from two chapters of my book in progress about Allen. I have to say that it went very well, and I had a great response both during and in the days after the event.

Dr. Terrell Tebbetts, Brown Professor of English at Lyon College:

UAM's English Festival was a rewarding experience. I was able to share my scholarship on postmodernism with students in UAM's American Literature class and my scholarship in Faulkner with faculty attending the afternoon panel discussion. In addition, I found my informal discussions with UAM English faculty enriching. I very much appreciate the invitation to participate in the festival.

Mr. Andrew Nelson, Instructor of English at UAM

As a member of the UAM English Festival organizing committee, I believe the First Annual Festival was a success on several levels. My colleagues, with whom I worked, came together in a team effort to make sure every event was properly promoted, and each panel began on time. These events can often be a challenge, but the collegiality displayed by my fellow faculty members—Dr. Jessica Hylton, and Dr. Kay Walter—played a major part in keeping the

organizing aspects of the festival on track. The guidance from Dean Mark Spencer proved to be a huge help as well.

I was very encouraged by the participation of students, as they asked informed, intelligent questions of the panelists in several events. One event in particular was memorable. Dr. Walter organized a Skype conference with one of her former students, and we also had two other English graduates in attendance, Brontë Pearson and Holly McDonald. They shared their goals for post-graduate life and answered questions about graduate school, professional opportunities, and making the most of undergraduate studies in English.

On a personal note, I found the panelists nothing short of inspiring. Paul Dawson sojourned all the way from England to give a presentation on John Ruskin, and Dr. Terrell Tebbetts shared, in an English class, interpretations from a literary text, which broadened my understanding of post-modernism. My hopes for the future are that we can continue the UAM English Festival. The event promoted critical engagement by students, encouraged collegiality from faculty members, and showcased UAM in a positive light. From that perspective, it was a win-win-win.

Holly McDonald, Communication Teacher and Debate Coach at Monticello High School

I was excited to be a part of this event. It was great to see so many viable career paths for students who hold a degree in English. This event was supportive and eye opening.

Brontë Pearson, MA Student in Science Writing at Johns Hopkins

While participating at the UAM English Festival, I was asked questions regarding my academic and professional success and how my involvement at UAM enhanced that success. I attributed much of that to the passion and dedication of the faculty in the English department, as well as the opportunities they present to get involved in conferences, journal editing and publication, and academic research. Because UAM's class sizes are so small, I was able to form personal relationships with my professors and mentors and had the opportunity to make myself stand out so that I could take advantage of those opportunities. It was so nice to hear that Jason and Holly had similar experiences while at UAM, and I think our success stories not only provided hopeful fuel for the students in attendance but the faculty as well. The ultimate takeaway from the event was that UAM can compete with anywhere else, and the sky is the limit.

Mark Spencer, Dean of School of Arts and Humanities at UAM

It really was a successful series of events—a great foundation upon which we can build and increase the educational opportunities we offer our students.

Dr. Rita Costello, Director of Freshman and Sophomore English at McNeese State University

I had such an enjoyable time at the UAM English Festival. Talking to students about creative writing, literature and academic pursuits, as well as presenting to individual courses throughout the day, was very rewarding. The UAM Music Recital Hall, where our creative presentation took place, was a beautiful space that gave the impression of reverence for the literary arts. The event definitely promoted the multifaceted life and interests of English enthusiasts.

Jason Higgins, PhD student and Oral Historian at University of Massachusetts Amherst

I was honored and privileged to participate in an alumni panel at the UAM English Festival. I discussed the importance of developing professional relationships with mentors and making the most of opportunities. The English Department enables its students to compete with undergraduates across the country by encouraging them to present original research at national conferences. These formative experiences provided me a unique advantage in graduate school. I carry the lessons I learned at UAM into my own classrooms and extend this model of mentorship to my own students.

Emily Smith, UAM undergraduate English student

The UAM English Festival was a wonderful chance to listen to many speakers on varying topics. One guest speaker, Paul Dawson, gave a presentation on John Ruskin. Dawson discussed many facets of Ruskin's life through an oral and visual presentation. Learning about Ruskin's love of architecture and how his works have helped preserve many building inspires a sense of awe. Dawson displayed Ruskin as a man for the people who worked day in and day out to accomplish so much. The English Festival remains not only a fun experience but an educational one.

Dr. Kay J. Walter, English Professor at UAM

Chairing the committee which organized the English Festival was an honor. The results of our efforts were richly positive. Students were encouraged. Guests were impressed. Faculty members were inspired. Teaching English and Language Arts in Arkansas is rewarding work indeed.

ACC News

The ACC Board has met and determined that our best option is to cancel our conference for 2018, but our story isn't over. Stay tuned for further information about a possible 2019 gathering as plans develop.



NCTE News

Raising Student Voice

Speaking Out for Equity and Justice

We're all looking forward to the national convention in November. What can ACTELA do to help you make plans? If you are looking for a ride or a roommate, let us know. We can pass along information to help carpool, share lodging, or split expenses.

The convention website is here: [NCTE 2018](#).

The following students are graduating in May 2018 from the University of Arkansas–Fort Smith with a BS in English with Teacher Licensure (7-12):

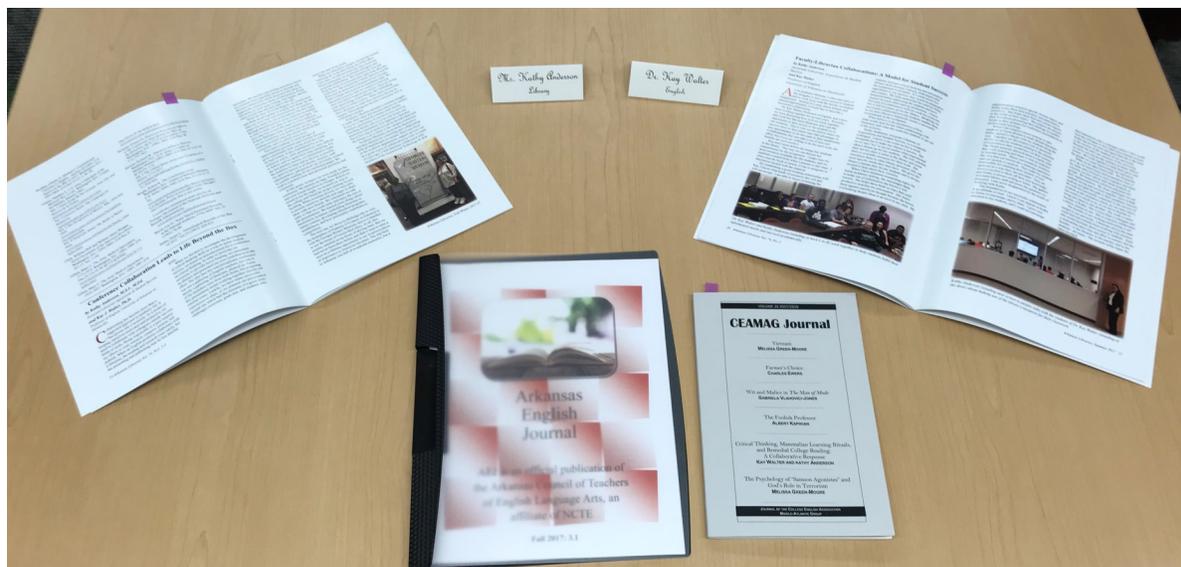
Casey Stamps, Nolan Ramirez, Kara Autrey, Nichole Dapson, Alyssa Bean, Kristen Mootry, Ashley Capes, and Nicole Huff.

Welcome to a career of ELA teaching!

ANNOUNCEMENTS, AWARDS, NEWS, AND NOTES

- **Our fellow teachers are on strike!** Let's remember those in other states who are struggling to make a difference for their students as well as for our profession. The teachers of West Virginia, Arizona, Kentucky, and Oklahoma are demanding their state governments value the teaching profession, education, and students. Providing young learners the educational tools and training necessary to shape a better future for us all deserves attention and prioritization. Those who champion these goals need our support.
- **U of A Tenure Revisions** Many see recent efforts as an attack on professionalism in Arkansas. Tenure and evaluation policies, which were part of the contract of employment, have now been rewritten. Tenure is a concept often mistaken for a *carte blanche* for professional misbehavior. On the contrary, tenure is a dual commitment. It is a commitment on the part of a university to job permanence for an instructor. As long as students and classes are available, the teacher is assured of work at an honest wage. In return, tenure is a commitment by a teacher to honor the contract of employment. As long as students and classes are available, the teacher vows to be ready and willing to teach them. Both sides are ethically bound by such an agreement, and professionalism dictates that both honor the spirit as well as the letter of responsibilities of tenure. The recent revisions demand faculty members defend their efforts at teaching and scholarship and seem suspicious of teacher intent. The trouble may not so much lie in vague tenure policy as in irresponsible tenure decisions. Tenure wisely awarded is the honorable reward for work well begun, not a cunningly-sought excuse for a teacher's work to end.
- This month the **Third Annual Taylor Library Celebration of Faculty Scholarship and Imagination** takes place in Monticello. This event showcases the published work of teachers outside of their classrooms.

TAYLOR LIBRARY CELEBRATION OF FACULTY SCHOLARSHIP AND IMAGINATION



Collaborative publications by Librarian Kathy Anderson and English Professor Dr. Kay Walter are on display.

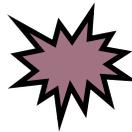
Successful collaborating has many benefits. It provides an opportunity to increase scholarly activities such as research and publication. Additional opportunities to present at conferences and workshops may also appear. Most importantly, successful collaborating increases relationship building and networking opportunities. Don't be shy! Find opportunities to share and involve others in our goal to encourage and teach our students!

Kathy Anderson, UAM Librarian

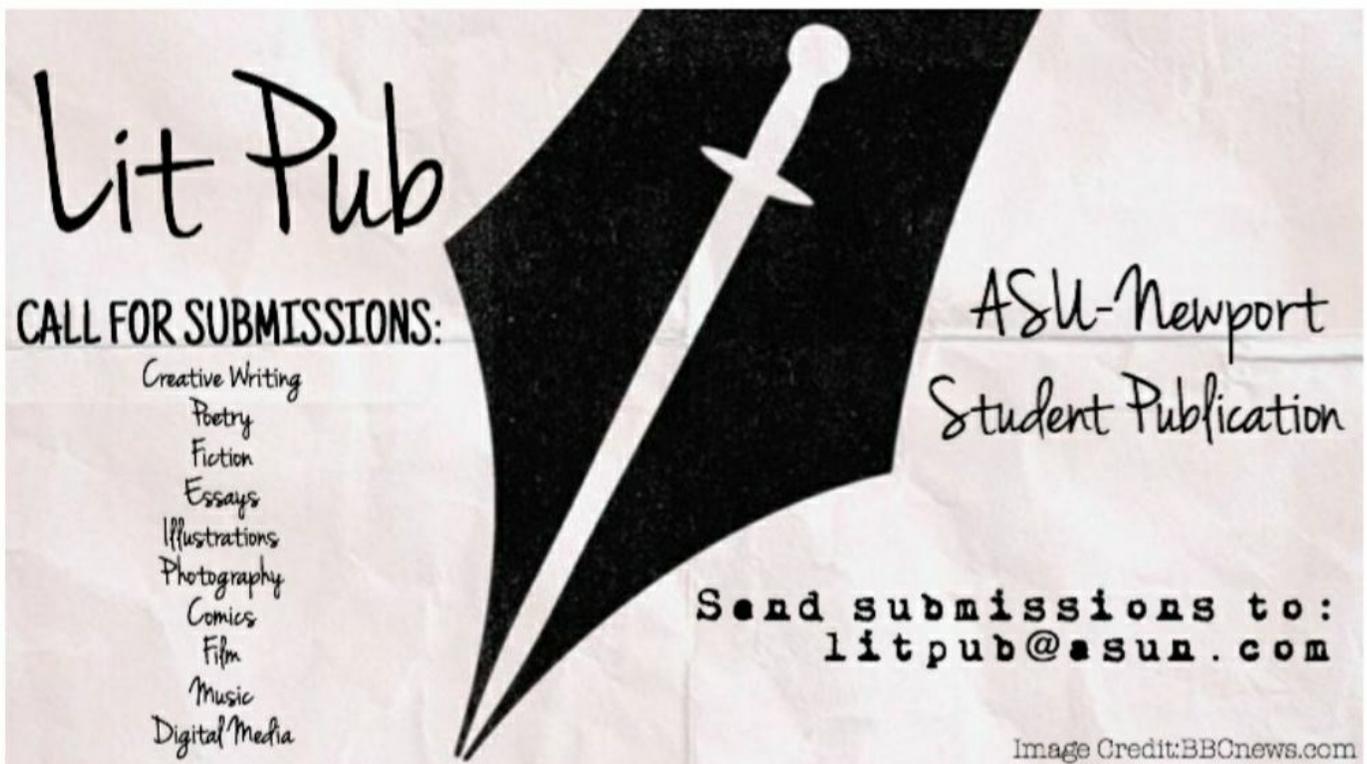


Works on display by Dr. Kay Walter promote ACTELA by including issues of our newsletter and journal.

- **Jeff Whittingham** announces a new publication: Wake, D. G., Miller, R.G., & Whittingham, J. L. (2018). "Permission to teach: Program evaluation of the A+ schools model" in *Pedagogies: An International Journal*.
- ACTELA has applied for national Newsletter of Excellence Award. Keep your fingers crossed that we'll have reason to attend the **NCTE Affiliate Breakfast** at the annual convention in Houston to receive the honors that result from national recognition of our excellence!
- Our president **Sunny Styles-Foster** is attending the American Education Research Associate conference. We look forward to a report from this event in our next issue!

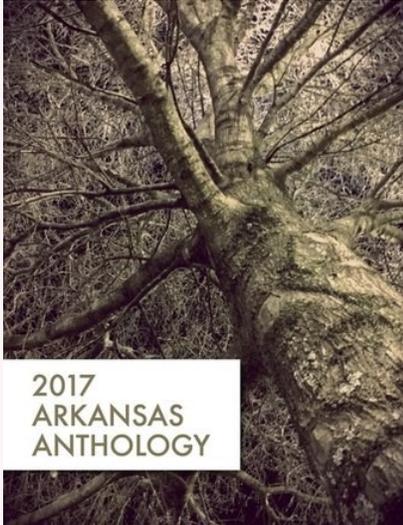


Does your school have a literary magazine for student publication like this one from ASU-Newport? If so, write and tell us about it. Send us your Call for Submissions, and we'll help you spread the word.



Arkansas Anthology

The interactive *Arkansas Anthology 2017* is available as a downloadable pdf here:



http://actela.weebly.com/uploads/2/4/7/4/24748280/2017_arkansas_anthology.pdf

The current call for submissions as well as other past issues are available here:

<http://actela.weebly.com/arkansas-anthology.html>

Contact Aaron Hall for further information about access or submissions.

ARAnthology@gmail.com



AEJ

Teaching for Tomorrow

AEJ Volume 3.1 is available online here:

<http://arkansas-english-journal.weebly.com/current-aej-issue.html>

A call for manuscripts and submission guidelines are available here:

<http://arkansas-english-journal.weebly.com/call-for-manuscript-submission.html>

Support this journal by sending us your scholarship and encouraging your friends and colleagues to send theirs for review too. Submit your documents to

ACTELA123@gmail.com

Global Perspective

Our global glimpse into the study of English and Language Arts for this issue comes from Tianai Ye, a twelve-year-old girl who lives in the city of Nanjing, the capital of Jiangsu Province, China. She is a 6th grader in the Fang Cao Yuan Elementary School and has been studying English at school for almost three years. Her mother, who is a fluent speaker of English, encourages her language study, and Ningning is very advanced in her English class. She likes to read Harry Potter novels and watch Star Wars movies. She recently enjoyed a story many American children read at school, and she has agreed to share her essay about it with us.

I have retained her original wording as much as possible and intervened only when necessary to clarify her meaning. The ideas are entirely her own.

THE STORYLINE OF *CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY*

by Ningning

Yesterday I watched the movie *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, and I read the book too! It is really awesome! The story was about a little boy named Charlie Bucket. [His] family is very poor. Charlie loves chocolate, and there is a chocolate factory in the city where Charlie lives. The chocolate maker, Willy Wonka, was the owner of the amazing factory. One day Mr. Willy Wonka put 5 golden ticket[s] into 5 chocolate[s], so 5 lucky children will have a chance to visit his factory. And one of them will win a big [prize].

The first kid who find[s] the golden ticket is a fat fat fat boy named Augustus



Gloop. The second kid's name is Veruca Salt who is born in a super rich family in UK. She is being [spoiled] by her family. She want[s] every thing she likes. The third kid is also a girl, [and] her name is Violet Beauregarde. She is very proud of herself. She thought she is the winner of everything and she has a[n] awful mom who want[s] Violet to be better than anyone [else]. The fourth kid is also not nice at all. His name is Mike Teavee. His thought himself is the cleverest kid in the whole world so he don't really like Willy Wonka, and he don't even like[] chocolate! Then why did he wanted to go to the chocolate factory? The fifth and the last kid is Charlie, the only good kid in the movie.

The first four kids in the movie were all super selfish, and think [themselves] the best in the world. So they all have being kicked out of the game. The reason why Augustus is being kicked out is that he wanted to drink the chocolate in the chocolate river and [fell] into the water. Violet is being kicked out too. It is because she thought she could chew the gum that is not ready yet and ignore Willy Wonka's [warning] so she turned into a big blueberry. The reason for Veruca to be kicked out is because she wanted to have one of the squirrel[s] that can peel nut shell. While trying she [fell] into the garbage burning place. And at last the little boy named Mike is out of the game too. He turn[s] himself into the TV, and when he comes out he was a little tiny person.

The boy who will win the big [prize] is Charlie now! And the big [prize] is actually the whole chocolate factory! Willy Wonka invited Charlie [to] come and work with him in the factory, but Charlie can't take his family with him so Charlie didn't want the big [prize]. [He] told Willy family is more important than chocolate. Sometimes our family is very annoying [to] us but remember they just love us! Willy didn't b[e]lieve that. Because his dad was a famous dentist and when Willy was a little boy his dad don't a[l]low him to eat any candy. So little Willy Wonka ran



Ningning enjoys writing essays in English.

away from home and never turns back. So to [prove] that Charlie was right about this, they went to Willy's dad's house and they find hundreds and thousand[s] of newspapers about the chocolate factory hanging on the wall. And Willy finally understand[s] what Charlie mean[s]. At last Charlie got the factory, but Willy has got something even better--a family who loves him.



Questions or comments for Ningning may be passed along through the editor. Send them to walter@uamont.edu.

Ningning's mother shares this picture taken during a Chinese class staged for 2000 teachers in a concert hall this month.



Greetings from the happy and busy office of your humble editor where future plans to travel with students are swirling even now.

Developing Connections



Literacy and NCTE is the official blog of the National Council of Teachers of English:

<http://blog.ncte.org/>

What genres and authors do you enjoy reading for pleasure? Our next issue will reveal what your board members read for fun. If you have suggestions for what we should be reading, send your ideas to the newsletter editor: walter@uamont.edu

Email Contacts for Ideas and Input

Membership	jeffw@uca.edu
Anthology Submissions	ARAnthology@gmail.com
Teacher Initiatives	oliverc@conwayschools.net
Newsletter	walter@uamont.edu

Have photos you'd like to see published in our newsletter?
Send them to our newsletter editor at walter@uamont.edu