

ACTELA Newsletter

Arkansas Council of Teachers of English and Language Arts

At a recent meeting, ACTELA members were asked to respond to the following writing prompt:

Peer mentors provide important motivation to inspire inexperienced writers in the process of composition. What opportunities exist in classrooms for peer collaboration that allows such relationships to develop and bear fruit?

Inside this issue:

Visiting Authors	2
Regional Reps	3
ACC Announcement	3
ACTELA CIT link	4
Arkansas Anthology	4
Global Perspective	5
Prompt Replies	7

Letter from the President

Historically, NCTE state affiliates not only work to enhance the mission of ELA

teachers in their states, but we also provide advocacy for teachers and their students in a variety of ways: 1) Through professional networking spaces like the National Center on Literacy Education’s “Literacy in Learning Exchange;

2) Through Intellectual Freedom and “Banned Books Week” resources; 3) Through an legislative input process that brings state or local concerns to the national front, from state representation

in your affiliate to national advocacy efforts; and finally 4) Through offering professional

forums where educators can present, publish, and network with other like-minded educators. Some of our board members have been active in NCTE Twitter-chats, regional Saturday open workshops, and

blogging on professional topics. Join us and keep in tune on our Facebook page for postings on these advocacy ideas and more!



Connect with us!

Find us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Arkansas-Council-of-Teachers-of-English-Language-Arts/749733635091867?ref=bookmarks>

Or visit our website

<http://www.actela.org/home>



ACTELA Board Considers Visiting Authors for 2015

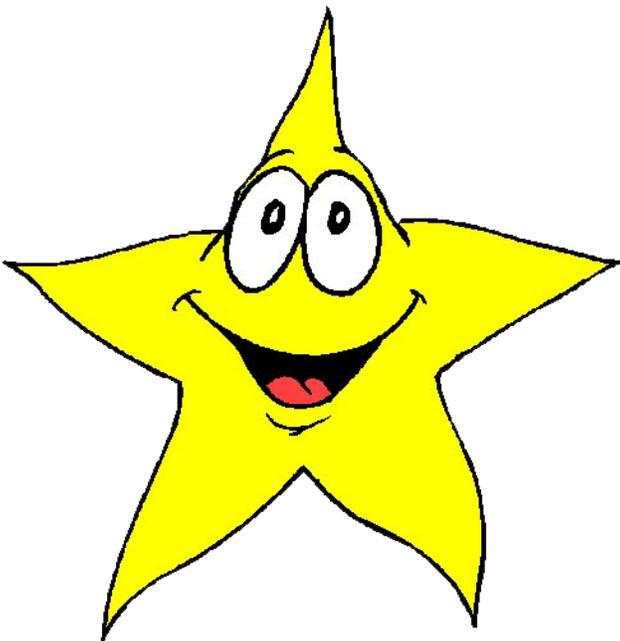
Once again ACTELA will invite a visiting author to join us at the Arkansas Curriculum Conference to deliver the keynote address at our annual luncheon and conduct a breakout session with interested ELA teachers. In addition, schools around Arkansas will host talks and workshops which allow the author to meet with their students. If your school is interested in hosting a visiting author, contact your regional board representative to initiate arrangements. The feedback from school visits by visiting author is always positive. Here is a link to published feedback from last year: <http://thecabin.net/news/local/2015-01-17/local-students-prevail-strikeyriters-conest#.VL7liyvF-CI>



Recent visiting authors at ACC include Crystal Allen, Mike Mullin, Spelile Rivas, and Matthew Quick.



Dr. Rob Lamm smiles proudly with the 2014 Editor's Choice Award Winners from across the state: Maggie Risley, Kristen Smith, Johan Rudkin, Emily Hagberg, Christopher Walters and Abby Sanders.



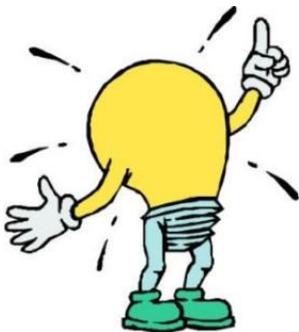
ACTELA's Teacher Initiative Leader, Corey Oliver smiles along with the 2014 Teachers of the Year: Janie Mason, Stephanie Davis, and Dr. Michael Milles

Arkansas Curriculum Conference 2015



Arkansas CURRICULUM CONFERENCE

Make plans now to attend this year's conference with ELA teachers from around the state gather to share ideas, master new techniques, and experiment with new technology. The conference will be held Thursday and Friday, November 5—6 at the Little Rock Statehouse Convention Center and Marriott Hotel.



Have ideas you'd like to share with other teachers? This year's Online Proposal Deadline is April 30th. For information on submitting a session proposal, contact your ACTELA scheduling representative:

Sunny Styles-Foster at sunnyf@uca.edu.

We Represent You!

Northeast Regional Representatives:	Rob Lamm and Grover Welch
Northwest Regional Representatives:	Janine Chitty and Tyler McBride
Southeast Regional Representatives:	Britney Andrews
Southwest Regional Representatives:	Jessica Herring
Central Regional Representatives:	Janie Mason & Corey Oliver



Every area of the state is represented at ACTELA Board meetings. Your regional representatives are your connection. Contact them for information or with any questions about English or Language Arts concerns.

We Want Your Input!

There are about 10,000 ELA teachers in Arkansas, and we want to network and share ideas with all of them. Join our discussions about membership and other ELA topics in the ACTELA CIT here:

<http://www.literacyinlearningexchange.org/group/actela-cit>

Purposes of ACTELA:

To stimulate professional development and to facilitate cooperation among its members.

To provide opportunity for group study and discussion for improving the quality of instruction of English and Language Arts.

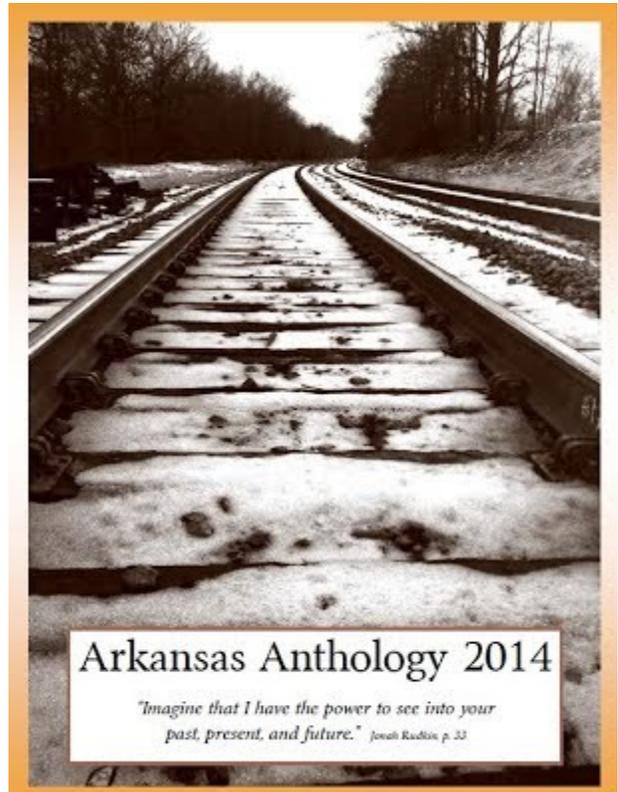
To act as a clearinghouse in circulating pertinent information and in keeping teachers informed as to the latest education movements and findings.

To publish significant findings, if possible, in the form of bulletins, monographs, or newsletters.

To encourage participation in activities designed to promote the teaching of English and Language Arts.

To offer professional presentations in a public forum.

To integrate the efforts of those who are concerned with the improvement of instruction in English and Language Arts at all educational levels



Arkansas Anthology 2015 wants your submissions. Showcase the talents of your students by following this link to a Call for Submissions.

<http://www.actela.org/home/anthology>

Global Perspective

I once taught kindergarten to Spanish-speaking five-year-olds in Honduras for a month. Their facility with English was non-existent, and my Spanish was pocito y malo, but that made me an ideal fit for the job qualifications.

Honduras is a small country in Central America below Mexico and Guatemala. It is the second-poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, and it has the highest murder rate per capita in the world. It also has many five-year-olds eager to learn.

In the month I spent there, I learned the meaning of the term “third world.” In Honduras, every door is locked. Every house is surrounded by a high protective wall. Every wall is topped with a ribbon on concrete in which broken glass and rusty nails are embedded and crowned with a curl of razor wire.

The major crops there are bananas and sugar cane. Harvest is accomplished by backbreaking manual labor. The bananas they harvest are the very ones we buy so cheaply at our local Wal Marts, and the sugar cane is sold in Central American markets. After the harvest, when the fields are burned clean of stubble, the coral snakes cross the roads to find their way into the homes of the children I taught.

The only employment opportunities beyond servile manual labor require fluency in English, and that was the reason I was hired to teach the children. Hondurans treasure their families, and their love for their children and hope for their future is intense. The school where I worked wanted a teacher who could only speak English. They hoped this would force the children to learn English in order to communicate.

In a class with almost no verbal ability to communicate, the children and I learned together the power of language study. We all learned to communicate with one another, even the one child clearly demonstrated symptoms which placed him on the autism spectrum—in a land where no doctor exists who specializes in autism and no educational program exists to train one.



With their adorable five-year-old Honduran trills, the children all practiced saying “I’m hot. Are you hot too?” and “I’m hungry. Is it time to eat lunch yet?” along with appropriate responses. Their parents were proud. Every word, every phrase these children master in English is a tool for their survival. In Honduras, the opposite of despair is the mastery of the English language.

For me, the time with these children was a chance to practice my Spanish; *ahora es un poco mayor*. It was a chance to take in the sunshine and glory of a brilliant tropical climate. It was a chance to learn to count the blessings of being a US citizen and a clear lesson in the power of teaching English and Language Arts.

For me, the time with these children was a chance to practice my Spanish; *ahora es un poco mayor*. It was a chance to take in the sunshine and glory of a brilliant tropical climate. It was a chance to learn to count the blessings of being a US citizen and a clear lesson in the power of teaching English and Language Arts.



Replies to Writing Prompt

The warm, community environment that is necessary for a successful writing workshop classrooms provides the backdrop for strong, respectful peer relationships where mentorship can effectively occur. Students need to feel safe to see models of writing that do not intimidate but that open doors to possibilities and connections. That's what I call "relational magic."

Dixie Keyes

I work best as a collaborator. I like to share ideas with other scholars and grow from the synergistic energy we develop together. Luckily, I have a friend in the School of Education at my university who is very tolerant of my inclinations. She teaches future teachers to embed discipline composition instruction in their lessons, and I teach composition and research skills to college freshman. When her students peer mentor my students through the major research projects for the semester, it is a rich and profitable match. My students have successful role models to encourage their efforts, and her students have inexperienced writers to practice their strategies on.

Kay Walter

Have ideas you'd like to add to this discussion?

Send them to our newsletter editor at walter@uamont.edu

Email Contacts for Questions/Comments

Membership—jeffw@uca.edu

Anthology Submissions— dkeyes@astate.edu

Teacher Initiatives— oliverc@conwayschools.net