



2018 Affiliate
Journal of Excellence Award

Oklahoma English Journal

SPRING/SUMMER/FALL 2018, VOLUME 31, 1

THE JOURNAL OF THE OKLAHOMA COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH #OKCTE

HE GOT HIS HANDS ON HER HER HEART BEAT FASTER SHE LOOKED UP AND FOUND HIM STRENGTH IN
WAS HIS
TO HER EYES HE SEEMED
DELICIOUS LIKE
SHE SEES AND FEELS LEATHER
FORWARD PREPARING TO KISS HIM
HER HEART

Table of Contents

Editor’s Introduction: Threading the Needle	
Julianna L. Kershen	p. 3
The Life Giving Power of Literacy Narratives	
Lara Searcy	p. 5
The Power of Care	
Anthony Kunkel	p. 10
Writing Poetry in College Composition	
Justin Yates, Randi Bray, and Sierra Schott	p. 12
From Seeing the Green Light to Hearing the Jazz Play: Teaching The Great Gatsby with the Fives Senses	
Jane Baber	p. 15
“Chicago” Art and Writing by Jason Poudrier	p. 20
Call for Manuscripts	
Winter Newsletter 2018, Spring Newsletter 2019, Fall Journal 2019	p. 23
Identity Narratives: Making Writing Meaningful	
Jennifer Peñaflorida	p. 25
Student Book Review: Still Life with Tornado	
Bryanna Wilson	p. 31
Special Section: Perspectives on the 2018 Oklahoma Teacher Walkout Between a Walk(out) and a Hard Place	
John Walker	p. 32
Book Review: Pablo and Birdy	
Eril Hughes	p. 33
Fatigue While Fighting for Funding	
Jennie L. Hanna	p. 34
Education in a Disinterested State	
Kathryn Garn	p. 35
Being the Change in Oklahoma Education	
Christine Jones	p. 37
Dedications	p. 38

First Thoughts



Threading the Needle

Julianna L. Kershen, editor

Shepherding this issue through the events of Spring 2018 has given me many opportunities to reflect on what it means, in the 2018 moment, to teach and learn in our state. I have seen the bravery of teachers, students, and families in Oklahoma and on the deep commitment of Oklahoma educators, PreK- graduate studies. At every level and across all our schools, conversations about what's most important in education resounded. Feeling the power of these conversations has been inspirational. For many children and families, what happens at school is so much more than simply "academic learning." This issue examines the Oklahoma Teacher Walkout of 2018 from multiple perspectives. In the second half you'll find the writing of Jennie Hanna, John Walker, Christine Jones, and Kathryn Garn. I want to thank these writers for sharing their perspectives on the value of education. When you read across these essays, you'll see a scope of experience – Jennie writes as an experienced teacher committed to her profession and her students' success, John and Christine share their hopes and expectations as pre-service teachers about to enter our profession, and high school student Kathryn Garn provides us a detailed and moving account from inside her public school experience and her experiences in Sumpango, Guatemala. Taken together, these essays remind all of us of the importance that we keep "fighting for funding" – while also taking the time to care for ourselves and our communities in the process.

However, before you get to that inspiring and sobering second half, you'll find a series of essays on teaching infused with art and identity. The articles by Lara Searcy and Jennifer Peñaflorida both grapple with issues of teacher-student learning as a personal writing journey. Dr. Searcy urges us to create opportunities in which our students can experience the transformative power of writing. Ms. Peñaflorida shares her unit of study on writing college admissions essays with high school students. Through close

analysis and discussion of model texts, she tells us, "this [study] led to a small group discussion on what makes writing sing, which eventually morphed into an anchor chart of best writing practices." These authors make convincing the need for personal writing to continue throughout high school, and for students to bring their own expertise and experience to the writing table.

Importantly, this issue also includes ideas for intertwining artistic expression and exploration with literature study and composition. Jane Baber's focus on analyzing *The Great Gatsby* with the five senses in mind invites students and teachers to reimagine Gatsby's life then and now. The collective work of Justin Yates, Sierra Schott, Randi Bray, and Jason Poudrier bring together composition, art, and poetry as ways into and out of process writing.

Teachers, administrators, and families have been involved in conversations about classroom resources and teacher, staff, and administrative pay for years, as we have worked to shield children from the deepest cuts in dwindling school budgets. Educators have grown weary of looking to community organizations to fill in gaps and find grants to rebuild programs. The spring of 2018 brought the challenges of Oklahoma classrooms out into the open, locally and nationally. Anthony Kunkel's essay on caring encourages teachers to be advocates for their students and to "become the teacher that students need."

The need in our classrooms is real, and as English language arts and humanities teachers we have been on the front lines with larger classroom sizes, more papers to grade, fewer supplies, new technology (often without support), and yet we continue to offer children and youth a space to come together to read, write, talk and explore the realms of thinking and knowing that come from social engagement with texts.

For teacher educators - at universities, in districts, and in community organizations - the challenges faced in public school classrooms is also ever-present. Our work to develop and support excellent teachers, to engage in research capable of informing the profession, and to build bridges between public, private, and community-based worlds has been sharpened by the hunger for change and a paucity of necessary funds.

Where do you place yourself amongst these groups? The stage is set, and the script is still being written. What are the roles you will play in the coming school year? I urge you, no matter where you find yourself, to take up as an advocate for our public schools.

There's advocacy in terms of representing your profession with others outside of your profession -- in other words, this is advocacy in the community, within political circles, locally, state-level and nationally, and advocacy that seeks to raise awareness either about the big picture of education policy and practice and/or advocacy aimed to change people's minds about specific issues, policies, prac-

OKCTE 2018 Fall Conference
Saturday, October 13, 2018
Oklahoma State University Campus



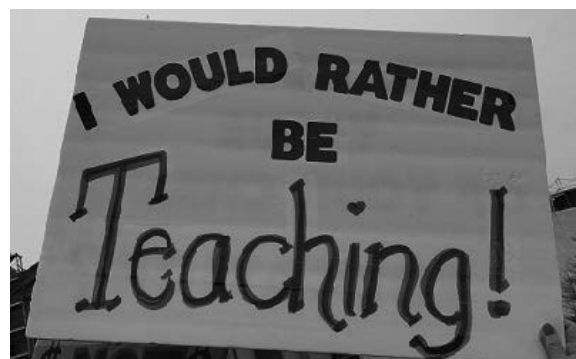
tices. This form of advocacy also includes research from teacher education and educational studies that builds bridges between our profession, other professions, and civic life. This kind of advocacy can be as simple as presenting your students' work at a board meeting or city council session. It is finding public space to celebrate the writing and lives of teachers and students in schools.

There's also advocacy within the profession -- joining professional organizations like OkCTE and NCTE are strong example, and this kind of advocacy also includes finding informal and formal support networks. We all need one another. We all need to be growing in our professional work. This growth encompasses reflection on and responses to instructional decisions, at sharpening our listening for students' voices, and at strengthening our cultural responsiveness within school communities. We need to help one another build and find support groups that provide positive feedback and avenues for deeper content-specific and pedagogical-content professional development and learning. In my teaching life, being a part of professional organizations, formal and informal, has positioned my teaching practice as the center of my professional work. This focus has made all the difference for me. It has been the best way for me to advocate -- by working to be my best in the classroom, and equally important, to be able to articulate why I make the instructional decisions I make, and point to evidence in students' learning as to why those instructional decisions are effective. Being able to explain what we do in the classroom and why we make those decisions -- these are integral parts of professional advocacy.

This spring the confidence and professionalism of Oklahoma teachers catalyzed for a positive change in our

state. As you already know, because everyone has been a student in a classroom, many people falsely believe they understand teaching. It is our job as professionals to dispel these myths and to do this well we must be able to talk about what we do using the language of our profession. This kind of advocacy is important whether you are advocating to change the curriculum used in your department with your principal, rallying for higher pay at the capital, or talking with parents and families about the rationale for a particular assignment and text. I believe that our teaching practice with children and caring passionately about getting better at it, has to be at the heart of advocacy. In many ways, once you become a teacher, you are by default an advocate for children and youth, although perhaps we don't always recognize this responsibility at the beginning of our careers.

I am grateful to been a partner at the capital with my friends, students, and colleagues this spring. I am grateful to be able to learn in classrooms with amazing teachers and children. Keep advocating everyone! And keep writing about it!



The Life Giving Power of Literacy Narratives

Lara Searcy

“When I look back, I am so impressed again
with the life-giving power of literature.

If I were a young person today,
trying to gain a sense of myself in the world,
I would do that again by reading,
just as I did when I was young.”

-Maya Angelou

How does understanding your own literacy narrative aid in your knowledge about the nature of adolescents as readers and writers? This question is essential for English Language Arts teachers because narratives help us understand ourselves, others, ideas, and the world (Fredericksen, Wilhelm, & Smith, 2012). Literacy narratives, specifically, help us explore ourselves as readers and writers, and the significance, or as Maya Angelou claims, “the life-giving power,” of literature in our lives. Literacy is a vehicle for changing the world, and that begins with humans using language to reflect on and name the world so that they claim the power to change it (Yagelski, 2009). Therefore, understanding one’s literacy narrative is a way to reflect on the power of stories, and the experiences, support, and beliefs literacy provides us. For many English Language Arts teachers, our literacy experiences shape our reasons for joining the profession. We teach because if we were adolescents again, “trying to gain a sense of ourselves in the world,” we know the power that reading and writing had on us. This understanding aids in our knowledge about our students because knowing their literacy experiences informs our instruction. It also influences our classroom because narratives develop a connection between the storyteller and their community. Teachers must view their classrooms as a community that allows students to become the storytellers as they explore the world--through reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Fredericksen et al., 2012).

NWAWP

The opportunity for me to explore my literacy narrative happened at the Northwest Arkansas Writing Project (NWAWP) sponsored by the University of

Arkansas. The National Writing Project believes that writing is essential: “Writing helps us convey ideas, solve problems, and understand our changing world. Writing is a bridge to the future” (National Writing Project (NWP), 2017). That future includes accomplished writers, engaged learners, and active participants in the world. Therefore, when I participated in the NWAWP summer institute in 2015, teachers practiced what we teach-- we were given “time to READ and WRITE independently for academic and personal purposes” (OAS- 8RW) and “SHARE our knowledge through written and interactive texts” (OAS- 7). Teachers were invited into the inquiry process to gain knowledge about the teaching of writing from many sources: theory and research, the analysis of practice, and the actual experience of writing (NWP, 2017). And according to Fredericksen et al. (2012), “the best way to understand narrative concepts in to compose narratives” (p. 2). This professional development approach centers on writing innovation, and most innovations can only flourish if they are adopted by engaged participants. Change requires active commitment and participation, not passive tolerance or partial engagement (Evans, 2014).

At NWAWP, I was an active participant in my learning because I was interacting with strategies and assignments that I could apply to my own teaching with pre-service English teachers. It is crucial that teachers engage in writing because we need opportunities to support our personal, interpersonal, educational, and professional growth (Fredericksen, Wilhelm, & Smith, 2012). Teachers also need to analyze and reflect on their practice in order to refine and improve their instruction. When teachers observe and participate in learning that inspires them to reshape their plans, transference happens (Darling-Hammond, 1998). According to Evans (2014, para. 10), “Good teaching is always creative, but is not perpetually innovative; it benefits from regular refreshers and occasional overhauls.” My experience at NWAWP inspired me to “refresh” and “overhaul” my previous teacher preparation coursework because I enhanced my assignments with theory, research, and practice and added the narrative mode.

Marginalization of Narrative Mode

Unfortunately, the narrative mode of writing has become marginalized due to the high-stakes testing emphasis on informative and argumentative writing. Admittedly, I was leery about focusing on this mode with my pre-service teachers because of its marginalization. However, according to Fredericksen, Wilhelm, & Smith (2012, p. 17), “narratives help us set a trajectory for our futures, and they are especially important in helping us explore what is expected of us and how we might want to resist expectation.” Due to this, my expectation in learning about and applying the narrative mode in my literacy narrative was to see how narratives could work in the world, especially in my preparation of pre-service teachers, and to identify the ways narratives complement and serve the other modes of writing (Fredericksen et al., 2012).

In my previous composition assignments, I have attempted to have my students “write narratives embedded in other modes, as appropriate” which is a new objective in the Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS-ELA 12.3.W1.). However, my students resisted the idea of blending modes because many had the stylistic idea that most compositions should be classified as a primary and single text type. This ideology may come from a misunderstanding of how to effectively use narrative elements, such as first-person pronouns, within argumentative and informative/explanatory texts-- especially since English teachers are notorious for treating the use of the pronoun “I” as a grammar mistake of death. (“I” know “I” did.)

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) support the embedding of narrative and blending of modes and even expect it in other content-area writing. For example, in history/social studies, students must be able to incorporate narrative accounts into their analyses of individuals or events of historical import. In science and technical subjects, students must be able to write precise enough descriptions of the step-by-step procedures they use in their investigations or technical work that others can replicate them and (possibly) reach the same results (Pattern Based Writing: Quick & Easy Essay, 2014). This embedding approach is not new because many composition scholars have been advocating for this blending of writing since 1905. Brooks (1905) states “such a description is in effect an enlarged definition, and is exposition and such general narration is really exposition” Scott and Denny (1909) state, “both

description and narrative may be used for expository purposes and between exposition and argument it is often hard to distinguish” and Tanner (1917) wrote, “narration and description, frequently argument, contribute a considerable share to the essay” (qtd. in “Pattern Based Writing: Quick & Easy Essay,” 2014). Therefore, historically, a main reason why text types are blended together is to create original and effective writing. Another reason is because skilled writers are better able to accomplish their purposes when they blend text types, such as description, argument, and narrative (“Pattern Based Writing: Quick & Easy Essay,” 2014).

Regardless of the mode, writing is often understood as a rule-governed procedure, not a vehicle for change or a truth-seeking practice. According to Yagelski (2009), “The most basic lessons of schooling have to do with coming to understand who we are as (intellectual) beings in the world and how we know and relate to the world around us” (p. 11). Coming to know ourselves better should also be the goal for writing instruction-- to help students understand themselves in relation to the world (Yagelski, 2009). I believe that narrative may be the mode that best provides this insight.

Knowledge of Adolescents

When teachers are able to DEMONSTRATE their knowledge of English language arts subject matter content through reading and writing, we also increase our KNOWLEDGE of adolescents as readers and language users. One of the National Council of Teachers of English standards focuses on “knowledge of adolescents as readers and language users” (NCTE I & II). Fredericksen et al. (2012) addresses how composing (and reading) stories can help young people understand the way narrative concepts might help them identify, critique, and ultimately change their world. This is the power of storytelling, and why it must be a focus in teaching. Exploring my own literacy narrative allowed me to recall the moments of my childhood that defined me as a literate person, so, too, for adolescent readers and writers, as “narratives provide a doorway toward possibility and change, toward transformation and justice, toward awareness and empowerment. Composing narratives can lead to hope. There is nothing that our own students seem to want more for themselves. There’s nothing that our world needs more. It’s worth teaching” (Fredericksen, Wilhelm, & Smith, 2012, p. 157). In this way, narra-

tives provide the hope that is the “power of literacy” young people need when they are trying to gain a sense of themselves in the world (Angelou). When we write, we engage in meaning-making that gives us a process for understanding our experiences and the world (Yagelski, 2009).

Literacy Narrative Assignment

Due to my encounter with writing my literacy narrative at NAWWP, I knew a similar assignment could also provide my pre-service teachers with possibilities for awareness, reflection, and inquiry into how literature and writing might have shaped their worlds (and even just their reasons for joining the profession) (Yagelski, 2009). This understanding, I believe, provides a background into who we are as teachers, as well as whom we teach (our students), where we teach (our learning environment), what we teach (our content), and how we teach it (our pedagogy). Therefore, I took the assignment that I completed and adapted it for my pre-service teacher students and their needs. Just as I borrowed ideas from Dr. Vicki Collet and Dr. Chris Goering, Directors of the Northwest Arkansas Writing Project, it is my hope that you will also be able to borrow and adapt ideas for your own classroom and writing community.

In my literacy narrative assignment, I ask the same question I began this article with: How does understanding your own literacy narrative aid in your knowledge about the nature of adolescents as readers and writers? As teachers, we need to realize the impact that writing (and more generally, literacy) has had on our lives and human society because it will make an impact on the adolescents we teach (Yagelski, 2009). Therefore, teachers must provide an assignment that will allow students to become the storytellers of their world-- through reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

First, because reading and writing are integrated components of literacy, it is important to first READ critically, comprehend, evaluate, and respond to narrative writing (OAS- 3R) in order to understand multiple perspectives that aid in understanding of the genre (OAS- 2R). My class first read the article 10 Ways Literacy Narratives Will Rock Your World (or at least your writing classroom) by Deanna Mascle in order to help us develop our understanding of the assignment. Next, we read Sherman Alexie’s Superman and Me in which he recounts how he learned

to read, his memories surrounding literacy, and how he also views literacy as a “life-saving” act. Through this mentor text, we developed our own definition of what of a literacy narrative was, what it wasn’t, and what elements it should include. This activity provided students with their own parameters for the assignment. This discussion also aided us in how we would approach our own “characters, plot, setting, point of view, conflict, dialogue, and sensory details” to convey our experiences with reading and the events that led us to becoming teachers of reading (OAS- 73.W1).

According to Eldred & Mortensen (1992), “The act of reading a text as a literacy narrative is the process of paying attention to how the text constructs a character’s ongoing, social process of language acquisition” (qtd. in Clark & Medina, 2000, p. 65). Therefore, I also included other mentor texts so that my students could have additional models that focused on diversity. I chose the works of Jimmy Antiago Baca and Malcolm X because their stories about resistance and struggle provide critical awareness about their identity (Clark & Medina, 2000). In regard to Baca’s literacy narrative example, “he was simply writing, and it seems clear that his writing led to insights about himself that he might not have come to otherwise. His act of writing became a profound act of self-awareness, a deepening of his understanding of his own being-in-the-world” (Yagelski, 2009, p. 15). This is the goal of the assignment, so it shows how “literacy narratives can enhance students’ understandings of teaching diverse learners in a variety of contexts, and in how their reading and writing of such narratives affect their stance toward literacy, pedagogy, and multiculturalism” (Medina & Clark, 2000, p. 65). For pre-service teachers, especially, literacy narratives can provide a powerful tool for them to understand multiculturalism since it is a complex issue (Medina & Clark, 2000). In addition, I have my students read the aforementioned article from Medina & Clark, How Reading and Writing Literacy Narratives Affect Preservice Teachers’ Understandings of Literacy, Pedagogy, and Multiculturalism, because I want my pre-service teachers to encounter a qualitative study with real students instead of seeing this assignment as just a theoretical approach. This article also provides them with research and application on how to incorporate aspects of multiculturalism into their literacy narratives.

Second, students begin to WRITE for a specific purpose (nonfiction narrative) in order to convey

their experiences (OAS3W). They do that using a recursive process (OAS2W) that follows Fredericksen, Wilhelm, & Smith's "Five Kinds of Knowledge/Composing" Framework (2012). This framework ensures that students can effectively write informational, narrative, and argumentative texts using five kinds of knowledge: declarative, procedural, form, substance, and knowledge of context, audience, and purpose. Students use this framework to name what they know and perform what they know. Students also use the five kinds of composing to model the writing process because writers compose for different purposes at different times (Fredericksen et al., 2012, p. 6). Using this writing process, students are expected to USE critical thinking skills (OAS3), EXPAND vocabulary (OAS4), and APPLY knowledge of grammatical and rhetorical style (OAS5).

However, as Yagelski (2009) addresses, sometimes writing needs to be about the experience and not the technical quality. The focus of the literacy narrative should be on confronting life, not necessarily form and correctness. Teachers need to "focus on the writer writing rather than on the writer's writing. This focus can move us toward an understanding of writing that illuminates the potential impact of the experience of writing on the writer and on all of us" (Yagelski, 2009, p. 25). Often times, the produced text becomes a focus of evaluation rather than communication which is why the knowledge of context, audience, and purpose is key for this assignment. For many writers, creativity happens when their purpose extends beyond the context of the text or assignment, and when their audience has the potential to reach more than just them or the teacher. Writers need to make their own revision decisions based on their needs, so allowing them opportunities to explore their craft, sans correction, broadens their writing experiences.

Third, my students are given very general directions so that they can determine their context, audience, and purpose:

- A. Describe/Narrate how you learned to read (and/or why you want to be a teacher), about the "life-giving power of literature," and about your reading (learning) experiences.
- B. Focus on including aspects of multiculturalism into your narrative: issues of race, ethnicity, gender, culture, and class.
- C. Make sure you: incorporate characters, plot, setting, point of view, conflict, dialogue,

and sensory details (73.W1).

In addition, I explain that there are no strict parameters about word count or structure. Their only requirement is to practice and apply elements of the narrative mode to describe and narrate their experiences of learning how to read and write. As writers, my students determine their own purpose and audience because in this assignment the focus is on the writer writing, not the writer's writing, as Yagelski (2009) affirms.

The fourth step is for my students to find an audience outside of class where they can SHARE their narrative through written and interactive texts (OAS7). Since literacy is an integrated act of reading and writing, I want my students to understand that when they write, they become connected to the potential readers who will connect to them. As Yagelski states, "the moment of writing encompasses that future moment of reading, too" (Yagelski, 2009, p. 17). And those moments needs to be shared since they have shaped us, and they reflect our sense of who we are in relation to each other and the world around us (Yagelski, 2009).

Conclusion

As an English educator, I understand the transformative power of writing and place it at the center of my work with pre-service teachers. I understand that since I am preparing the next generation of secondary English teachers, who will help shape the minds of American children and thus help shape the world we inhabit together, I need them to also experience the transformative power of writing (Yagelski, 2009). I believe in Medina & Clark's (2000) claim that "reading and writing literacy narratives is an important, positive addition to teacher education curricula" (p. 72). When teachers understand their own literacy narrative, they are able to remember the nature of being an adolescent reader and writer and have hope that writing has the power to change, to transform, and move our students toward justice, awareness, and empowerment (Fredericksen et al., 2012).

Overall, writing my literacy narrative allowed me to tell the stories that shaped who I am. Just as scrapbooks archive images and music records mood, books have the power to tell one's story. My narrative begins with a definition, a reflection, and the lessons I have learned that transcend the page. It is a memory about the role reading and writing played in the de-

velopment of my identity. It chronicles my childhood and parallels my journey to becoming a teacher. It is a call and hope that as an educator, I can use my own love for reading and writing to teach others become perpetual learners. May my own students be inspired by the words of Atticus, the journey of Odysseus, the fated warning of Romeo and Juliet, the relevant truth and history of Animal Farm, the internal conflict of Henry during war, the importance of journaling about poetry, and to take the road less traveled... always.

References

Clark, C., & Medina, C. (2000). How reading and writing literacy narratives affect preservice teachers' understandings of literacy, pedagogy, and multiculturalism. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 51(1), 63-76. doi:10.1177/002248710005100107

Darling-Hammond, L. (1998). Teacher learning that supports student learning. *Educational Leadership*, 55(5), 6-11. Retrieved January 25, 2017, from

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/feb98/vol55/num05/Teacher-Learning-That-Supports-Student-Learning.aspx>

Evans, R. (2014). Change is what it means [Abstract]. Retrieved December 20, 2016, from

http://www.rodelfoundationde.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Change-Is-What-It-Means_Dr-Robert-Evans.pdf

Fredricksen, J. E., Wilhelm, J. D., & Smith, M. W. (2012). So, what's the story?: Teaching narrative to understand ourselves, others, and the world. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

National Council of Teachers of English. (2012). NCTE/NCATE Standards for initial preparation of teachers of secondary English language arts, grades 7-12. Retrieved January 4, 2017, from http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Groups/CEE/NCATE/ApprovedStandards_111212.pdf

National Writing Project (NWP). (2017). National Writing Project - About. Retrieved January 23, 2017, from <http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/doc/about.csp>

Pattern Based Writing: Quick & Easy Essay. (2014). Understanding CCSS blended text: Expository, narrative, and argument. Retrieved November 28, 2015, from http://patternbasedwriting.com/elementary_writing_success/teaching-students-about-ccss-blended-text-true-nature-of-writing/

Yagelski, R. P. (2009). A thousand writers writing: Seeking change through the radical practice of writing as a way of being. *English Education*, October(2009), 6-28. Retrieved January 25, 2017

Dr. Lara Searcy is a National Board Certified Teacher (AYA-ELA) and a former secondary English teacher. Currently, she is the English Education Specialist at North-eastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma where she works with pre-service English teachers and is a proud member of OKCTE and supporter of #OKLAED and #ELAOK.

Alignment	Narrative (Literacy)	
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does reading and composing narratives help one to understand narrative concepts... which might help you identify, critique, and ultimately change your world? How does understanding your own literacy narrative aid in your knowledge of the nature of adolescents as readers and writers (NCTE I & II)? 	<p>Objectives (Students will...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> READ literary and informational texts from multiple perspectives to aid in their understanding of the NARRATIVE genre (OAS2R). READ critically, comprehend, evaluate, and respond to texts from various genres (OAS3R). WRITE using a recursive process (OAS2W). WRITE for a specific purpose (nonfiction narrative) in order to convey experiences (OAS3W). USE critical thinking skills (OAS3), EXPAND vocabulary (OAS4), and APPLY knowledge of grammatical & rhetorical style (OAS5). SHARE their knowledge through written and interactive texts (OAS8). READ and WRITE independently for academic and personal purposes (OAS8RW). DEMONSTRATE knowledge of English language arts subject matter content that specifically includes literature, language, and writing as well as KNOWLEDGE of adolescent as readers and language users (NCTE I & II). RESPOND to student writing in process and to finished texts in ways that engage students' ideas and encourage their growth as writers over time (NCTE IV.2).
Alignment Links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NARRATIVE_Overview: SLIDES VIDEO TEMPLATE: ENGL4123-Narrative_LastFirst (OPEN : FILE : MAKE A COPY : SAVE AS : ENGL4123- Narrative_LastFirst : ORGANIZE/MOVE TO ENGL4123 GDF) 	<p>Table of Contents</p> <p>STANDARDS DIRECTIONS / WRITING PROCES</p> <p>*PRIOR KNOWLEDGE- Five Kinds of Knowledge/Composing</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TEXTBOOK: Fredricksen, James E., Jeffrey D. Wilhelm, and Michael W. Smith. <i>So, What's the Story?: Teaching Narrative to Understand Ourselves, Others, and the World</i>. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2012. Print. ARTICLES: Masche, Deanna. "10 Ways Literacy Narratives Will Rock Your World (or at Least Your Writing Classroom)." 14 May 2015. metawriting.deannamasche.com/10-ways-literacy-narratives-will-rock-your-world-or-at-least-your-writing-classroom/. Clark, Caroline, and Carmen Medina. "How Reading and Writing Literacy Narratives Affect Preservice Teachers' Understandings of Literacy, Pedagogy, and Multiculturalism." <i>Journal of Teacher Education</i>. N.p., Jan. 2000. Web. 11 Sept. 2016. <NSUOR Library. PDF>. EXEMPLARS: Alexie, Sherman. "Superman and Me." static.schoolrack.com/files/34213/220710/Chapter_4_Part_3.pdf. Baca, Jimmy. <i>Antigone</i>. "Coming into Language." PEN America, 3 Mar. 2014. pen.org/coming-into-language/. X, Malcolm. "Learning to Read." <i>Learning to Teach Reading</i>, pp. 1-6. doi:10.4135/9781446219058.n1. http://daphne.palomar.edu/lchen/Malcolm%20X.pdf SEARCY EXAMPLES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lara Searcy- Literacy Narrative and Teacher Narrative Lara Searcy- OEJ Article (under review) 	<p>I. CRITICAL READING =40pts</p> <p>II. PREWRITING =15pts</p> <p>III. DRAFTING =25pts</p> <p>IV. REVISING/EDITING (Peer Review) =10pts</p> <p>V. PUBLISHING (Final Draft) =50pts</p> <p>VI. PUBLISHING (Multimedia) =20pts</p> <p>REFLECTION =10pts</p> <p>ASSESSMENT =160pts</p> <p>RUBRIC (FINAL DRAFT)</p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The Power of Care

Anthony Kunkel

When I decided to become an English Teacher, I was already older than many entering the profession. It was the early-nineties, and after having done everything from a full stint in the Navy to working as a ranch hand to selling cars, I had gone back to school to pursue a dream to teach. At the time, what I remembered of classroom teachers was mostly awkward middle school moments, and being tormented by Sister Catherine in high school. Granted, I was not a good student, but still, we grow up, and I now had a child of my own with another on the way. Also, somewhere along the way I began to suspect that Sister Catherine had actually cared about me, and I felt I had something to prove.

It was my first major writing assignment that changed how I would view my students for the rest of my career. My first teaching job was at a rural high school in North Florida, and I had little experience with teenagers beyond my student teaching. I was excited to be creative, though. Three weeks into the class I had my ninth-graders writing reflective essays, and working to remember events that they felt were significant in their lives. I encouraged them to write with feeling, and to find moments from their lives that had helped shape who they felt they were becoming. In my mind I imagined I'd be getting the kids to write some amazing personal narratives; something akin to variations of *The Sandlot*. My results were not what I had expected. One girl wouldn't share her essay with her peer group, and when I read it, I saw that she had written about the day she was first raped by her uncle while her drunken father lay passed out a few feet away on the couch. The boy sitting next to her wrote about an amazing summer at a baseball camp in Atlanta that his parents had paid for. Another boy had proudly written about the evening he had finally gotten the courage to hit his father over the head with a beer bottle when his father was "going at his Ma" with her own shoe. The girl sitting next to him wrote about the day she had gotten her first horse, and the love she felt for her parents at that moment.

I did not grow up wealthy, nor did I grow up

poor. For the most part, I had what I consider to be a typical upbringing in Central California. Rural North Florida was a completely different world for me, and I'm not sure anything could have prepared me for the reality I had asked for in that first writing assignment. During the assignment, I went to Counseling and reported what I was required to report, and was then chastised for allowing the students to "write such stuff." After that assignment I began looking at each kid a bit more closely. I learned a great deal by looking at them. Some of these kids, I learned, were getting their only meal of the day at this school. Some of these kids came from families that were generational owners of companies that were the primary employer for many of the parents of their peers. Some of these teens were what I'd call very normal kids with loving parents who weren't rich, but weren't poor either. It wasn't difficult to see who fit in where, but it was difficult to grasp.

Over the years I have worked at, and with, many schools. In truth, the stories I have are not much different from the stories that you'd hear from most teachers in many settings. Recently I was working with a research group and had the opportunity to interview several teachers from different elementary schools in a more urban setting. Listening to them stirred up many memories and emotions. While the stories of neglect and abuse are no longer surprising, hearing such similar stories being told about the little ones affected me. What also affected me was an affirmation of how important a caring teacher can be to a student's life, whether we're talking about kindergarten or high school. For me, being creative, and engaging the students was one way I had of caring for them. In today's environment of increased testing teaching creatively is not always so easy, but I do see teachers caring for kids as best they can. Teaching can be exhausting, but it can also be amazing—more often than not. For the new teacher entering today's classroom, I'd ask you to give it time. Don't give up before the magic happens. To help, I have some rules, or guidelines, for you to keep in mind when caring for your students:

One—Look at your students when they enter the

class. Watch the way they enter, put their packs down, etc. It'll tell you a lot about how they're doing at that moment. And every day is different, so be aware that the kid who came in smiling today, might not come smiling tomorrow.

Two—You aren't their parent, but for some you are just as influential, or even more so. When you talk with them, joke around with them, or ask them to do something, it might matter, for better or worse. Students like teachers who joke around and make them laugh, but sometimes it can be perceived by them that it is at their expense. I'd recommend you consider the first rule in that regard.

Three—All students have good days and bad days, just like teachers. Somedays you'll have them, some days maybe not. Don't stop caring or trying. Sometimes on a bad day it helps just to let them know you're there and paying attention.

Four—Students like you to have high expectations and to challenge them. That is something unique you get to do for them on most days. Typically, a student's day is often filled with underwhelming expectations. Few people can guide a child or teen to see how truly capable they are, to make them feel good about themselves, and you get that privilege. You can be the difference, really.

Five—Not all students will like your class. That doesn't mean you don't have to care for them. Even a student who may not like you, or your class, will appreciate the fact that you care. Many of the students I've stayed in contact with well beyond their schooling years are those students who I felt did not like my class. Some of them didn't, but as time went by, they remembered me as a person who cared for them. That becomes important as time moves on.

Finally, we need good caring teachers more than ever. Don't be afraid to become a teacher that the students need. Teacher preparation enrollments are down significantly across the country, and more and more schools are relying on bringing emergency certified, unvetted individuals into the classrooms to teach. Most of these individuals are not staying longer than a few years, and that in itself is discouraging to an environment of caring. One teacher who enters the profession with the ability to stay and to challenge and care for their students can make a big difference.

In this, I wish you the luck and joy I have been privileged to experience.

Anthony Kunkel has taught High School English for over 20 years and is currently a Doctoral Fellow at the University of Oklahoma's Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education.

What professional texts and voices guide your work in the classroom?

Are there digital texts and applications that shape your work with students?

Write a text review for the OEJ newsletter!

Share your professional practice, recommend innovative applications, as well as tried and true texts that positively shape learning in your classroom.

Check out the OkCTE website at Oklahoma English Journal for writing guidelines.

Writing Poetry in College Composition

She **-- Sierra Schott**

She is spilled ink and stained hands
Some accidental savior
self-proclaimed protector
Conjured up from smoke so miasmic
By sad eyes and biting words
She is softness and self-sacrifice
Her pulse, a memory

Loved by hands gentle and calloused,
Reminiscent of canyons once called 'home'
That flash reminders of ancient words
He reminds her of forests she once knew
Soft and pleasant and bright
In her mind he is philtatos
This is difficult
She has an affinity for broken things
This is difficult

She is myriads of learned mistakes
She is whispered "I'm sorry's"
Nails reduced to nubs
Skin speckled, an inverted night sky
Accompanied by blotchy hues of twilight
Patched and mended, she is as the sun
Some mimicked kintsugi passed down mother to daughter
As if it were a skill to craft beauty from the shards of yourself
Because broken things look better drenched in gold
Because broken things are not beautiful alone
unwanted even by those who broke them unless gilded
This isn't truth

She is those stars scribbling their way about Earth's celestial sphere
Blossoming like flowers
Fading like death
Lightyears away from everything
Unable to love you back for lack of knowing how
Wandering that ever-changing rotunda
Endlessly in search of themselves
Endlessly in search of herself

Writing Poetry in College Composition

Justin Yates, Randi Bray, and Sierra Schott

Poetry isn't something I thought I'd ever really enjoy working on. While I've been writing pretty much all my life, poetry, to me, seemed to have a certain kind of stigma surrounding it. Before this assignment, I had never written poetry, and I was terrified. I chose free verse because it seemed more familiar to me and seemed as though it would offer me more freedom in the sense that I wouldn't have had to rhyme and wouldn't have had a limit to how much I could write. I thought it would be closer to the types of writing I was used to, and it was, surprisingly. Professor Yates said to write what you know when you're struggling to come up with ideas, so I ended up writing about myself. Through this I learned things about myself that I hadn't exactly known. This is what is important about poetry and art, putting it into practice can help you to better understand yourself and the world around you. -- *Sierra Schott*

This piece began as a high school English assignment. The assignment was to create a piece of black-out poetry. I like the idea of black out poetry because you can find the beauty in the story by cutting pages down to the unique words used in a story. The page that I started with was a story about a woman who was embarrassed of her relationship, but I turned it into a story of a woman falling deeply in love. My mother always said "You learn something from every relationship. You either learn something that you want or what you don't want in your relationships." I simply did this with this poem. I turned a page of a story that I didn't want into a poem of what I do want in a relationship.

– *Randi Bray*

Many English teachers are quick to show their love of poetry and even quicker to inflict that love upon their students. Students tend to fight poetry as school assignments because they misunderstand the intent, are taught a rigid form, or they think of poetry as an icky way their parents showed affection so long ago, like in the 1980s. With this in mind, I wanted to introduce poetry to undergraduate, Composition II students as an alternative form of writing, with emphasis placed on poetry as an art form and not as adhering to specific rhyme or structure. My hope was for my students to see poetry as a way to express themselves to help understand and interpret the world around them.

For the lesson, students were first shown examples of free verse and shape/concrete poems, and then they discussed the differences in these poems from the traditional poetry they were used to. Through these discussions they were able to dissect what constitutes a poem, understand its parts, and then reconstruct their version of what poetry should look like, sound like, feel like, etc. The free verse poets they read included Helen Chasin, Nikki Giovanni, Walt Whitman, Carl Sandburg, among others, while examples of shape poetry were retrieved from my trusty teaching assistant, Google. The examples allowed students to model and write (or draw) their poems to explore poetry as an open art form. Several students were even surprised at how much they enjoyed writing poetry when they weren't confined to specifics and allowed to just create. Two such students were Randi Bray of Wetumka, OK, and Sierra Schott of Seminole, OK.

HE GOT HIS HANDS ON HER HER HEART BEAT FASTER SHE LOOKED UP AND FOUND HIM STYRING IN
WAS HIS
TO HER EYES HE SMILED
DELICIOUS LIKE
SHE SAID FINE LEATHER
HE WAS IN A TRANCE SHE LEANED
FORWARD PREPARING TO KISS HIM
HER HEART

Randi Bray

From Seeing the Green Light to Hearing Jazz Play: Teaching The Great Gatsby with the Five Senses

Jane Baber

In 2014 Terry Gross interviewed Maureen Corrigan, journalist, author, and book critic, for NPR's *Fresh Air* about F. Scott Fitzgerald's classic, *The Great Gatsby*. Here is an excerpt from that interview:

GROSS: ... So I will ask you to confess something that you confess in the book, which is that you didn't especially like "The Great Gatsby" when you were assigned to read it in high school. Why didn't you like it then?

CORRIGAN: As far as I remember, I didn't like it because I thought it was boring. Not a lot happens in *Gatsby*.

Corrigan explained to Gross that while she now loves the novel, initially as a high-schooler she did not see herself in what she was reading.

It can seem sometimes that classics like *The Great Gatsby* are still taught with methods as old as the novel's 1925 publication date, and these methods rarely encourage students to exercise their voice or experience immersion in the experiences of others, either similar or dissimilar to their own.

For students who love to read, simply experiencing the book through the traditional means of reading the text then participating in discussions in class may be enough to remain engaged. Alternatively, though, for other students who enjoy reading, the traditional way of teaching a novel can dampen the rich experience that comes with being fully immersed in a novel. For students who are self-professed "non-readers," it can be a whole different ball game. Rather than traditional methods frequently used to teach the canon, a multisensory approach might be implemented. As English Language Arts teachers, we can and should teach in the energizing way that enchants students in elementary school and the way that is so often lost by the time students reach the secondary grades where they are introduced to great classic novels.

Proposed here is a way to incorporate a multisensory approach to teaching a classic novel like *The Great Gatsby* by implementing lessons that coincide with each of the five senses.

Teaching the Great Gatsby with the Five Senses

Vital to teaching all students and making it possible for them to participate fully in the English classroom is to find ways to listen to them. A multisensory approach may provide multiple languages to express emotions, understanding, and pose questions. In the English classroom, incorporating classic oil paintings and contemporary abstracts to discuss artists' purpose and aid in compositions (Elkins, 2008; Serafini, 2014) and to visualize literary devices in literature (Staunton, 2008), using film and music to practice critical viewing and reading multiliteracies (Burke, 2008), and using dance to express ideas or messages where verbal language is not readily accessible or needed (Lawrence-Brown, 2004) are not necessarily exceedingly innovative ways to tap into students' senses, but they might yield quality educative, aesthetic, and sensory experiences. By incorporating these languages, the teacher can be in tune with the various ways that students speak and can hear or see what they have to say.

Multisensory learning incorporates the use of visual, kinesthetic, and auditory approaches either in isolation or in tandem (Srivastava & Saxena, 2017). In a study of the benefits of multisensory learning for the brain, Sham et al. (2008) found that multisensory stimulation is key for the brain to extract new information as well as promoting "more effective learning of the information than unisensory training" (p. 412). According to Kelly et al. (2011), multisensory learning increases the plasticity of the brain and develops new and strengthens exiting neural pathways that can aid reading fluency (p. 17). Particularly for students with special learning needs, the benefits of multisensory learning go beyond engagement and into long lasting skill sets. Baines (2008) contends that "in general, human beings find it difficult to remember information only by hearing it" (p. 29) and Treichler (1967) said, "people generally remember 10 percent of what they read, 20 percent of what they hear, 30 percent of what they see, and 50 percent of what they see and hear" (p. 15). The same could be said of the other senses;

by simply hearing, seeing, or feeling the texture of an object, we cannot fully understand it. However, by using all our senses, an object becomes much clearer. Language Arts teachers can approach the teaching of novels like *The Great Gatsby* in this way, through immersing students into the world created by F. Scott Fitzgerald by involving each of the five senses.

Lesson Framework

Each of the five attached lessons for teaching *The Great Gatsby* were created in conjunction with the University of Oklahoma's K20 Center for Educational and Community Renewal. The K20 Center is a branch of the university that conducts education research statewide to develop innovative learning. Part of the K20 Center's mission is to provide innovative lessons and strategies to teachers through making these resources available online for educators to download and integrate into their own classrooms. Each lesson developed for teachers by the K20 Center follows the BSCS 5E Instructional Model, developed as a constructivist approach to learning in 1987 by Biological Sciences Curriculum Study ("BSCS 5E Instructional Model," 2016).

The five lessons proposed can easily be adapted into any existing *Gatsby* unit or be used as a basis for a new way to teach the novel, from visualizing the green light at the end of Daisy's dock, to connecting the sounds of jazz, to the development of character, these lessons will pull in readers and self-professed non-readers.

TOUCH: Textural Poetry

In this lesson, students will explore how the sense of touch functions in *The Great Gatsby* by composing poetry that makes connections between character and an associated object's texture.

SMELL: Memory Haiku

In this lesson, students will compose haiku inspired by an analysis of the connection between smell and memory in *The Great Gatsby*.

HEARING: Gatsby's Party Playlists

This lesson is to be taught after reading Chapter II where *Gatsby* throws another one of his famous parties, this time with Daisy in attendance. In this lesson, students will explore the essential question, "How can music help establish mood and tone?" to create a playlist that explores the sense of sound in *The Great Gatsby*.

TASTE: Character Recipe Cards

In this lesson, students will explore how the sense of taste functions in *The Great Gatsby* by composing recipes that make connections between culinary creations and character.

SIGHT: The Eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg

This lesson is to be taught as a culminating project after the novel *The Great Gatsby* has been read completely. In this lesson, students will explore the essential question, "What can one's observations about a person reveal about their character?" to create a multimodal composition that explores the sense of sight in the novel.

Full versions of the lessons, including handouts and guiding PowerPoint presentations, can be accessed at www.learn.k20center.ou.edu

References

- Baines, L. (2008). *A teachers' guide to multisensory learning: Improving literacy by engaging the senses*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- BSCS 5E Instructional Model. (2016). Retrieved from <http://bscs.org>
- Burke, J. (2008). *The English teacher's companion*. Portsmouth, Heinemann.
- Elkins, J. (Ed.). (2008). *Visual literacy*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Fitzgerald, F. S. (1925/1995). *The Great Gatsby*. New York: Scribner Paperback Fiction.
- How *Gatsby* went from a moldering flop to a great American novel [Interview by T. Gross, Transcript]. (2014, September). In NPR.
- K20 lessons and engaging activity repository and network. (2016) Retrieved from <http://learn.k20center.ou.edu>
- Kelly, K. S., & Phillips, S. (2011). *Teaching literacy to learners with dyslexia: A multisensory approach*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Lawrence-Brown, D. (2004). Differentiated instruction: Inclusive strategies for standards-based learning that benefit the whole class. *American Secondary Education*, 32(3), 34-62.
- Serafini, F. (2014). *Reading the visual*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Shams, L. & Seitz, A. (2008). Benefits of multisensory learning. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 12(11), 411-417.
- Staunton, J. A. (2009). *Deranging English education*. National Council of Teachers of English.
- Treichler, D. G. (1967). Are you missing the boat in training aid? *Film AV Commun.* 1, 14-16.

Jane Baber is the current president of the Oklahoma Council of Teachers of English. She is a curriculum specialist at the K20 Center, an advanced doctoral student at the University of Oklahoma Rainbolt College of Education, and a former classroom

THE GREAT GATSBY AND THE SENSE OF SMELL

"Memory Haiku"

By Jane Fisher



SUMMARY

In this lesson, students will compose haiku inspired by an analysis of the connection between smell and memory in *The Great Gatsby*.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What can one's sense of smell reveal about their memories and emotions?

DURATION

55 Minutes

TIME FRAME

1 - Class Period(s)

SUBJECT(S)

English/Language Arts

GRADE LEVEL(S)

9th, 10th, 11th

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. ENGAGE:

Students will begin this lesson by watching a video of the connection between smell and memory.

2. EXPLORE:

Using the Jigsaw strategy, students will read portions of an article about the connection between smell and memory. Once students have an understanding about the connection between smell and memory, they will look for these connections through text evidence in *The Great Gatsby*.

3. EXPLAIN:

Using the brainstorming connections between smell and memory in *The Great Gatsby*, students will compose haiku based on supporting text evidence found in the novel.

4. EXTEND:

Students will arrange their haiku into visual concrete poems.

5. EVALUATE:

This project can be evaluated using the attached rubric in the "The Great Gatsby and the Sense of Smell" handout packet.

THE GREAT GATSBY AND THE SENSE OF SMELL

"Memory Haiku"

By Jane Fisher

LESSON PROCEDURES

1. ENGAGE

First, display Slide #2 and present the essential question "What can one's sense of smell reveal about their memories and emotions?"

TEACHER'S NOTE

Since this lesson is focused on one of the five senses, consider having a short whole class discussion about what the five senses are. Who can name them all? What can be said about each? Why are they important when reading a novel?

Then, moving to Slide #3, engage students in the Think-Pair-Share strategy. For the first step in this strategy, ask student to think about the Quickwrite prompt on Slide #3, "**Choose ONE of the events below and describe how that event SMELLS. What scents are conjured in your mind when you visualize this event? 1. The first day of school 2. Winter holidays 3. Summer vacation**

Give students a few minutes to complete this Quickwrite, then move through Slides 4 and 5 to have students read what they wrote to an elbow partner and then share whole class.

TEACHER'S NOTE

As students are sharing their ideas with the whole class, ask students questions like "Why do you think smell helps us remember things a certain way?" and "What other smells bring up certain memories for you?"

On Slide #5 is a link to a video called "How Smell Triggers Memories". Play this sixteen-second video for students and ask them both what they found new and interesting from the clip and what connections they could make between the video and their Quickwrite.

TEACHER'S NOTE

As students are sharing their ideas with the whole class, ask students questions like "Why do you think smell helps us remember things a certain way?" and "What other smells bring up certain memories for you?"

On Slide #5 is a link to a video called "How Smell Triggers Memories". Play this sixteen-second video for students and ask them both what they found new and interesting from the clip and what connections they could make between the video and their Quickwrite.

2. EXPLORE

Now that students have begun thinking about the connection between memory and smell, they will work together in groups to read an article written on the subject.

Divide students into five groups. Once they are in groups, pass out a copy of the Smell and Memory Handout. This handout has an excerpt from an online article called "Why Smells Can Trigger Strong Memories" by Dr. Joseph Mercola. The handout is divided into five different sections and can be read by students using the Jigsaw strategy.

To use the Jigsaw strategy for this article, assign each group a different section (they are numbered on the handout) to read. Groups are only responsible for reading the section assigned to them. This is a modified version of Jigsaw; instead of remixing the groups again, students will share what they learned with the whole class.

After students have completed reading their assigned sections, display Slide #6. This slide holds the quote "Nothing revives the past so completely as a smell that was once associated with it" by Vladimir Nabokov. Once students have had the chance to read and think about the quote, ask "**What is the connection between your assigned passage and this quote? What did you learn from your reading that gives you perspective on this quote?**"

Find more information on this lesson and others at K20 <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/lessons>

THE GREAT GATSBY AND THE SENSE OF SMELL

"Memory Haiku"

By Jane Fisher

STANDARDS

- imagery
- figurative language
- Students will engage in collaborative discussions about appropriate topics and texts, expressing their own ideas clearly while building on the ideas of others in pairs, diverse groups, and whole class settings.
- Students will apply components of a recursive writing process for multiple purposes to create a focused, organized, and coherent piece of writing.

MATERIALS LIST

- The Great Gatsby and the Sense of Smell Handout
- The Great Gatsby and the Sense of Smell Powerpoint
- Smell and Memory Jigsaw Article
- Paper and writing materials

ATTACHMENTS

- [Smell and Memory Jigsaw Article.docx](#)
- [Smell and Memory Jigsaw Article.pdf](#)
- [The Great Gatsby and the Sense of Smell.docx](#)
- [The Great Gatsby and the Sense of Smell.pdf](#)
- [The Great Gatsby and the Sense of Smell.pptx](#)

RESOURCES

- "How Smells Trigger Memories": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vY-HbcPlnXw>
- Concrete poetry examples: https://www.google.com/search?q=concrete+poems&espv=2&biw=1338&bih=680&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi63Y-VrOLQAhUO6mMKHSVCCyoQ_AUIBigB&dpr=2



Welcome to the new NCTE Affiliate

Oklahoma Student Council for Teachers of English

As pre-service teachers, we want to create a group that provides professional development and networking opportunities, as well as time to get to know our peers better. OSCTE's main goal is to connect students to our national affiliate, educators in our community, and ultimately, to each other. We hope that this group will continue to grow and that students will invest in creating relationships with fellow ELA students, who will soon become their colleagues. We also hope that students will feel better equipped to succeed as professionals because of the experiences they had in our organization.

Find out more at osctesooners@gmail.com and [@osctesooners](https://www.instagram.com/osctesooners)

Creativity in Composition
Creations from a Paint+Write Workshop

Jason Poudrier

“Chicago” was created as an assignment for Jane Baber’s Creativity in Composition course, a paint-write workshop course connecting visual and verbal art. Through the completion of the assignment, I learned that sometimes the best way to start writing a story is painting a picture.

Excerpt from “Chicago”

Next to Klamath Lake where my brother and I grew up, there was a wooden harbor bench just off the road. We would ride our bikes there in the middle of the night with our friends. We would talk in the shadows of streetlights that reflected off the lake about asking girls out and getting turned down. About feelings of rejection. It was before the time we realized that, to get a girlfriend, a crucial first step is getting to know who she is. We were learning without realizing it what it took to learn about people, about society, by learning about each other. Almost two decades after I graduated from high school, I met up with my brother in Chicago. I had flown in from Oklahoma, he had flown in from Idaho. I was there to attend a scholarship summit hosted by the Pat Tillman foundation, and he was there to attend court and meet with his lawyer, trying to stay out of jail. We walked twenty minutes from Grand Central Station to Lake Michigan, and just past Buckingham Fountain, we ended up sitting on a pier under the city lights with our legs dangling over black water lapping against cement. We talked about our kids. His three, my two. How they each have their own personalities. He had tried to get his eldest son into sports, signing him up for camps, buying him expensive gear, but it never worked, and his youngest, also a boy, is always asking him when the next summer camp is, baseball, basketball, football. I told him how my daughter is obsessed with Super Mario, and my wife and I threw her a Mario-themed birthday party, turning my backyard into a Power Wheels Mario Kart course. Then I bought him a hotel room, gave him a twenty, and I returned to my dorm. He flew home the next day, his court date delayed, and I went to scholarship seminars and learned about how other scholars are changing the world.

Jason Poudrier is a Pat Tillman Scholar and Ph.D. student at the University of Oklahoma studying English Education. He is the author of the poetry collection *Red Fields* and holds an MFA in creative writing from Oklahoma City University. He currently teaches at Cameron University in Lawton, Oklahoma.





Paintings by
Jason Poudrier

Announcement!

Future Publications of Oklahoma English Journal & OkCTE Newsletter

The *Oklahoma English Journal* and the Executive Board of the Oklahoma Council of Teachers of English are excited to announce changes to the publishing of the OEJ, the creation of the OkCTE newsletter, and the joint OkCTE-OSCTE newsletter. Due to shifts in digital literacies access, shared NCTE affiliate practices, publication costs, and reader feedback, OkCTE is moving to publishing one long form print and digital journal a year, to be published in Fall, coinciding with our annual fall conference. Readers have seen examples of this long form journal in our 2016, 2017, and 2018 publications. Additionally, OkCTE will publish two digital newsletters a year, scheduled to be published in the Winter (deadline for manuscripts December 1st) and Spring/Summer (deadline for manuscripts April 1st). These newsletters will be sent via email to our membership and accessible online at okcte.org. The Winter newsletter for 2019 will be a shared publication with the newly established and growing Oklahoma Student Council of English affiliate organization. This affiliate group is made up of undergraduate and graduate students interested in connecting across Oklahoma universities to share professional resources, best practices, research, and celebrate literacy expression.

Upcoming Deadlines

Deadline for manuscript submission to the Fall 2019 full journal publication: March 1, 2019

Deadline for manuscript submissions to the Winter 2018/2019 newsletter: December 1, 2018

Deadline for manuscript submissions to the Spring/Summer 2019 newsletter: April 1, 2019

All submissions must clearly indicate whether the manuscript is a submission to the journal or the newsletter. Please identify in the title of your email. Send submissions to jekershen@ou.edu

To submit manuscripts to the Fall 2019 long form print & digital journal:

The *Oklahoma English Journal* invites research articles and practitioner essays, as well as student writing and art, and reflections on teaching English language arts and the humanities from several perspectives. The yearly journal aims to first focus on current research into ELA and literacy, as well as manuscripts focused on theory development of literacy instruction and epistemologies. Second, the journal aims to highlight exemplary student and teacher classroom work from PreK-16 classrooms. These manuscripts should include brief theory/re-

search-based descriptions of the learning and teaching involved, as well as copies of student work (including high quality photographs, PDFs, or word documents) that illustrate the learning and teaching in action. We seek to celebrate what is happening in today's classrooms and engage in conversations around instructional practices at the intersections of literacy learning, artistic expression, and human development.

The Fall 2019 long form journal is not themed, and we welcome all manuscripts that adhere to the guidelines. The Fall journal is a peer-reviewed journal and ALL manuscripts to the annual Fall journal must be blind-review formatted for the purposes of peer review, meaning, there should be no attribution or authorship mentioned in the body of the paper. Submissions must include a separate title page that includes author details. References should be included in the full document but need not count towards the final word count.

Submissions of original work should be submitted as Word Documents in a blinded format, with no identifying information about the author within the manuscript. In the need of citing your own work please cite within text and in the references as (Author, Date).

Please include a separate title page with the following:

Submitting Author Full Name

Additional Authors' Names

Contact address, phone, and email information of submitting author

Professional biography for each author, 2-3 sentences

Student Names as connected to images of student work, etc.

Word count of manuscript

Additional Guidelines for manuscripts to yearly Fall journal review and publication:

Practitioner Articles should be focused on specific units, lessons or classroom experiences in which students have created products illustrating their literate understandings. These manuscripts are theoretically based yet pedagogically applicable, possibly including lesson plans or summaries, photos/examples of student work, reflections on the success (or lack of) the instruction, and explanation of classroom procedures used to facilitate the learning experience.

Research Articles should focus on the explanation and discussion of active research in literacy. These man-

uscripts should be organized to include the following categories, as applicable:

Introduction/rationale, Theoretical framing, Methods, Findings, Discussion, and Implications for future research, practice, and policy.

Theoretical Articles should focus on identifying, exploring, and explaining important concepts in literacy learning and expression. These articles aim to stimulate thinking and conversation in our professional communities, include rich explanations and examples, as well as detailed references to educational theorists, theoretical frameworks, and/or philosophical constructs.

Research, Theoretical, and Practitioner Articles, including references and appendices, should be less than 4,000 words.

All other manuscripts for the Fall journal, such as, **Teaching Reflections**, **Expert Voices**, and **Geographical Views**, should be less than 2,000 words. These shorter essays take up a specific perspective (such as rural schools or a retired teacher's view) and present an issue from that perspective in a professional, detailed manuscript.

Authors are also invited to submit creative, multimodal submissions as well as traditional texts to the Fall journal. OEJ encourages many forms of communication including poetry, prose, narrative, graphic stories, art, and photography.

Please remember: All FALL journal manuscript submissions should be submitted electronically as word documents. Photographs and images may be sent as high-quality PDF or jpeg images to the editor at jekersh@ou.edu

General Submission Guidelines for the Winter and Spring/Summer Newsletters

The OkCTE and OSCTE Newsletters aim to share current events, professional learning opportunities, share teaching tips and student work, include a focus on Oklahoma poetry and poets, as well as highlight materials used in classrooms through Book Reviews and text/materials reviews of all kinds. All submissions to the newsletter are peer-reviewed for editing and publication. Submissions to the newsletter *do not* have to be blind-review formatted.

Teaching Tips should focus on the description of discreet lessons or classroom procedures aimed at learning outcomes. These descriptions may include reflections from the practitioner about how a particular lesson or procedure did or didn't work in the classroom. These descriptive-reflective essays should be less than 1,500 words.

Text/Book Reviews should be between 250-750 words. We welcome student/teacher, student/student, and student/caregiver book reviews exploring two perspec-

tives on the same young adult or children's literature text. We also welcome reviews of professional texts, as well as film/digital media/digital applications and other materials appropriate for classroom use.

When submitting a "book/text review" please clearly identify (1) what you are reviewing (in both title and media format), (2) the kind of text reviewed (e.g., professional or classroom use), and (3) the authorship (e.g., student review, caregiver review, practitioner review, shared review).

Oklahoma Poetry Submissions. This new feature aims to celebrate Oklahoma poets and poetry, past and present. We have a rich literary heritage, and we want to share it. Please submit you and your students' poetry, as well as Oklahoma poems of historical importance for publication.

For all newsletter submissions, please include a separate title page with the following:

Submitting Author Full Name

Additional Authors' Names

Contact address, phone, and email information of submitting author

Professional biography for each author, 2-3 sentences

Word count of manuscript

Student Names as connected to images of student work, etc.

Include clear authorship and publication attributions as needed.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS FOR ALL SUBMISSIONS FOR JOURNAL AND NEWSLETTER

All submissions should follow APA citation guidelines and must also adhere to the NCTE Guidelines for Gender-Fair Use of Language. <http://www2.ncte.org/statement/genderfairuseoflang/>

All submissions are peer-reviewed.

Submissions of original work should be submitted as Word Documents when applicable. All submissions should include a separate title page.

Oklahoma English Journal and newsletters are peer reviewed and rely on colleagues for timely, constructive reviews of manuscripts.

If you would like to serve as a reviewer for OEJ please contact the editor at jekersh@ou.edu

You can contact OSCTE at OSCTE newsletter editor: Alex Ruggiers, aruggiers@ou.edu and OSCTE President Brody Smith, brodyk15@ou.edu and Vice President Catlin Gardner, catlin.a.gardner-1@ou.edu

Identity Narratives: Making Writing Meaningful

Jennifer Peñaflorida

Identity Narratives: Making Writing Meaningful

My first rejection came in the form of a letter. I ripped open the envelope and tossed it to the ground. Butterflies danced in my stomach as I gripped the paper; inside, six words held my fate. Tears singed the corners of my eyes when I read, “We are sorry to inform you...”. For the first time in 18 years, my heart broke.

Twenty years later I find myself in the position to lessen the blow of college admission rejection. Back in high school I was on my own, navigating the murky waters of the college admissions process, but here, as a teacher, I can help. I can bridge the gap. I can be the light.

Sounds naïve, yes, but that college admissions essay could make or break a young person’s college trajectory. It’s the essay that could potentially mean the most. It can get one in; it can leave one out. But more importantly, this piece of writing—of selling oneself to a faceless audience—is about self-discovery and about identity.

The college application essay is a short narrative, a memoir, of a young writer’s life. How the writer constructs language to tell that story effectively is the ingredient for success. Peter Elbow (2012) asserts it nicely when he writes that “language ... involves movement or change through time ... [and] stories tend to help us experience a meaning better—even a conceptual meaning—than purely conceptual language” (p. 99). In other words, embedded deep into the bowels of a moving essay lays a story.

I want my students to tell those stories.

As a writer and a teacher of writing, I help my students find their writing voice and practice honing this craft. No matter what they write, I want to hear who they are within the sentences they shape. I want to see them.

And so, too, does the college admissions officer. On their “Essays That Worked” webpage, Johns Hopkins University asserts that “we want to know more than just how well you work. We want to see

how you actually think.” In teaching writing, Vygotsky (1979) says it best: “Writing should be meaningful for children, that an intrinsic need should be aroused in them, and that writing should be incorporated into a task that is necessary and relevant for life” (p. 118). And what is a more intrinsic and relevant need to high school students than the genre of the college admission essay? Not only is it one need many will experience, it also affords a place for young writers to see how “writing shapes and reflects our sense of who we are in relation to each other and the world around us” (Yagalski 2009, p. 8). Yagalski’s concept of writing is what universities, like Johns Hopkins, want to see from their potential students as they read their essay.

I created this unit for high school students in hopes to demystify this genre, and to get students writing about ideas and stories meaningful to them, stories that shaped who they are now and who they will become. Also, I created this unit in hopes that the act of writing will afford my students space to “work through dead ends, unproductive approaches, and ineffective strategies” (Rowlands, 2016, p. 54) and emerge from this experience learning more about who they are as writers. Most importantly – because this genre of writing is personal and high stakes – it offers the space needed to introduce specific rhetorical moves that can elevate a piece of writing from good to great. These moves can make a piece sing. And, when taught in the right moment and within the right context, I can guide students into transference: to understand that rhetorical moves can be used in other genres of their writing life.

A Writing Workshop Unit of Study on the College Admissions Essay

Unit Step I: Using Mentor Texts

Deborah Cuerden (1990) writes, “To be truly meaningful, reading and writing must be real; that is, they must have authentic purposes and authentic audiences” (p. 358). Writing to an audience outside of the teacher is an important aspect in authentic writing. The University of Central Arkansas, two hours south from my high school, has an honors program that offers 100 full-ride scholarships to incoming freshman. Because quite a few of my students apply to this university, I

chose their prompt to begin the unit.

I started by creating an Understanding by Design unit plan, narrowing my essential questions to these four: (1) What do good writers look for when reading closely? (2) How do effective writers write stylistically? (3) How do effective writers write persuasively? and (4) How do I find my writer's voice?

Utilizing Johns Hopkin's website "Essays that Worked" <https://apply.jhu.edu/application-process/essays-that-worked/> for mentor texts, we spent two class periods reading through two, Joanna's "String Theory" and Stephen's "Breaking into Cars." For the first reading, I read aloud while my students sat and listened, no text on table. After reading, I asked my students to reflect on what they heard. Using the See-Think-Wonder chart, they scrawled their thoughts on the first column. We partnered and shared, then I brought the class together, and we talked as a group. My seniors noted the rhythm of how Joanna used diction and imagery to create her metaphor of the bakery strings being tied; they sensed Stephen's moment of awakening through his use of sentence variation. When I asked why we read it this way, one student piped up, "because you wanted us to hear the writing sing." This led to a small group discussion on what makes writing sing, which eventually morphed into an anchor chart of best writing practices. Charles Bazerman (2017) writes, "An understanding of genres and activity systems helps in making those judgments and in identifying how to write effective texts in those situations that meet the criteria and expectations of the readers" (p. 18). Because the college admissions essay is audience-specific and genre specific, knowing the activity systems at play and its writerly moves can help high school writers navigate their way into the university. One of these activity systems is reading like a writer.

For the third class period we focused on the second reading, dividing into small groups where students annotated places in the essays where they saw effective writing occurring. I asked them to name the moves and discuss what makes it effective. After 15 minutes of work, we shared our findings as a whole class. We then reflected on how we can employ these moves into our own admission essays. For the third and final reading, we paired, and I asked them to annotate how each writer organizes his/her essay. The goal was to understand the power of paragraph and sentence variation. Using a similar structure as the second reading, my students worked together, then we

shared as a whole class. Finally, each student reflected on how they can mimic the effective organizing into their own essay.

The next day, before moving into drafting our essays, we ended this part of our inquiry creating three anchor charts of best writing practices: effective diction, effective rhetorical moves, and effective organization. We hung it on our wall, which was then referenced throughout the writing process.

Unit Step 2: The Down Draft

Each student chose one prompt from the Common or Universal application prompt. But before writing our first draft, we read an essay from Annie Lamott deconstructing her writing process. Lamott (2005) writes, "The first draft is the child's draft, where you let it all pour out and then let it romp all over the place, knowing that no one is going to see it and that you can shape it later" (p. 94). After reading, we shared our ideas about the first draft and talked our way through the fear of just getting it down on paper. Then we spent one class period writing our first draft. Students had the option of writing an outline, writing a draft, or drawing conceptually. It didn't matter as long as they wrote something down. During that time, I conferred with students. They read what they had aloud, and I asked questions or offered suggestions.

I believe in the power of writing workshops. It's frightening, yes, but when utilized effectively and purposefully workshop can become a transformative tool for empowering young writers to think deeply about a text, not just for content but also for craft. Penny Kittle (2008) says this about the writing workshops, "Students need response to their choices. They need encouragement to follow passions and hauntings and how they might write about them ... Writing depends on talk" (p. 86).

In my classroom, writing workshops take time. For this unit, we spent one class period workshoping. I asked my students to print three copies of their draft without their names. I passed out Post-Its and asked each student to jot down one open-ended question (for each essay) he hoped his reader could answer. For those who didn't know what to ask, I provided a list of possible questions. Once all the students wrote their question, I mixed the papers and asked each student to take three essays to closely read.

Here's what I asked them to do: 1) read each

I could be the guiding voice for someone like me. I could live through my life knowing that I had helped many good souls live. So many creative, intelligent people suffer through their life, sometimes ending it themselves. Most people don't seek help themselves, they have to be pushed to. I know this because I and many of my friends were pushed to the breaking point. I don't want to see people have to reach that point. I want to catch them before they fall. Then the world would be filled with creative minds that would help the next generation, and the cycle would continue on.

BEFORE

I dream to be the guiding voice for other Simones. Teenagers — creative, intelligent, kind — suffer in silence through life, and when the tunnel they travel through remains dark, the end is never good. Most people avoid seeking help themselves; most people need a gentle push. I know. I've been there. The unseen hand pushed me to my breaking point and I refuse to allow others to feel what I felt. I dream to catch them before they fall into the abyss. I dream to hold them during their darkest hour. I dream to be their safety net. And when they are ready, I will release them and they will fly.

AFTER

Student Reflection Questions

What did you learn about yourself as a reader?

What did you learn about yourself as a writer?

What do you still need to work on in your essay?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)

One thing I liked about this writer's workshop...

Other things I would change...

Common Application + UCA Honor College

	5	4	3	2	0-1
THINKING	Final draft exceeds expectations.	Writing clearly demonstrates effort in thinking; does not read like it was revised hastily. The writer spent significant time/effort revising for content and/or style.	Writing demonstrates efforts in thinking; does not read like it was revised hastily. The writer spent time/effort revising for content and/or style.	The writing attempts at thinking; however, reads like it was written hastily. The writers spent little time/effort revising for content and/or style.	Not demonstrated or missing.
CONTENT	Final draft exceeds expectations.	The content is clear, purposeful, focused, and completely addresses what the prompt is asking.	The content still needs a bit of <u>revising</u> so it is clear, purposeful, and addresses prompt.	The content still needs a lot of <u>revising</u> so it is clear, purposeful, and addresses prompt.	Not demonstrated or missing.
MOVES	Final draft exceeds expectations.	The rhetorical choices make the essay come alive; these choices allow for the writing to sing.	The rhetorical choices help make the essay come alive; these choices help the writing to sing.	The rhetorical choices attempt at making the essay come alive; these choices attempt at helping the writing to sing.	Not demonstrated or missing.

Post-It; 2) read the entire down draft, paying close attention to what the writer is asking in the note (if they could comment on the side, I encouraged it); and once finished, 3) take another Post-It and write a response to how they first reacted to the essay. This first feedback affords the writer immediate feedback on his reader's initial reaction: were they bored? —captivated? —confused? If the reaction does not match the writer's intention, then he must revise in order to capture his purpose more clearly.

I then asked students to take one more Post-It and respond to the writer's question. There were caveats to their to how they responded. First, they are to write specifically, avoiding "yes" or "no" responses. Second, they are to be constructive of the piece itself; we never attack the writer. Third, because we are studying the writer's craft and ideas, we focus solely on those two moves.

As we began reading and writing, I would sporadically lift my head from the essay I was reading and take a cursory glance around the room. This is what I saw: heads down, pens in hand, eyes moving. The room was silent and still.

Once everyone finished, I handed back the essays to the original writer. We then moved to meta-writing. Because writing workshops are also about reflection -- thinking about what we wrote and why it matters, I asked them to read all the Post-Its, then I passed out the reflection handout. I asked them to respond these questions: what did you learn about yourself as a reader? What did you learn about yourself as a writer? What do you still need to work on in your essay? To end class, students completed a 2+2 exit ticket: two things they liked about the writing workshop, and two things they would change.

Reading through their reflections, I noticed how some of my students were beginning to think about how they write, how they construct meaning within their diction choices, how they need to invest in time to write. It was time to move to craft.

Unit Step 3: Mini-lessons

I love grammar. I love how it functions in a sentence, in a paragraph, in an essay. I also love teaching it, but I most enjoy teaching it within a context. For this next step in the unit I created two mini-lessons I hoped would shape students' writing as they move their drafts from the down draft to the up draft.

Taking one of my students' down drafts, I created a "before and after" PowerPoint, demonstrating the power of diction. I unpacked the rules of verbs and adjectives, of verbs and nouns, and of syntax variation. Then, I asked my students to take their draft and revise the weakest paragraph using these three moves. After revising, we paired and shared. Finally, one student from each group shared their before and after paragraph to the class. We then took the rest of the class period to revise the rest of the essay.

Another mini lesson I incorporated into this unit was a lesson focused on six rhetorical skills I believed would elevate their writing and transfer into other facets of their writing lives. We spent one class period unpacking how participles, absolutes, appositives, adjectives shifted out of order, vivid verbs, similes, and metaphors can elevate one's writing. We unpacked these six rhetorical moves, reading more college application essays and annotating how authors use the moves effectively. The next two class periods, students had space to take their working draft and revise sentences to practice a few of these moves to enhance the writing and their readers' experience. While revising, I conferred with students, listening to and helping them deconstruct and reconstruct their paragraphs.

Unit Step 4: Writing Workshop II

Before our second writing workshop, a student suggested we play the speed dating game she learned while taking an English class at the local community college. I adapted it to tenth graders and for one class period. In speed dating, the women would sit at a table, and the men would change seats. When the whistle blew, the men would get up, move to the right, sit down, and the date would begin. They have two minutes to talk. When the whistle blew again, the men would move to clockwise, face their new partner, and begin a new conversation. We arranged our room by moving the tables into two long rows. Men sat on one side of the table; woman on the other. Based on our mini-lessons and anchor charts, I created a handout with questions for each chunk of their essay: opening, body, closing, and entire essay. For our first date, the women gave their essay to their partner and read one chunk—the opening paragraph—of their essay. The men would follow along silently and annotate on the essay. Once the reading stops, they talked about the chunk read, using the questions on the smartboard to guide their thinking aloud. While conversations ranged from syntax choices to author's purpose, I noticed

students were engaged in this process, listening intently and offering solid comments on what they heard.

Each time the whistle blew, the men would give back the essay, move clockwise, and repeat the process—opening paragraph, body paragraphs, closing paragraph, entire essay—until the essay was read by four different people. We then switched to the women’s essay and started all over.

Like with the first writing workshop I carved out space at the end of the class for reflection. Using the same questions from the previous reflection, students reflected on themselves as readers and as writers. I read their responses and took note of each students’ focus on their final revisions. As students moved their updraft into their final draft, I conferred individually with each writer, focusing on one rhetorical move they wrote in their reflection.

Unit Step 5: The Admissions Council

After revising and polishing their final drafts, I created three Google docs and uploaded students’ essays onto it, one doc for each of my three English 10 classes. We then simulated the college admissions board and—using the guidelines of the Common Application writing prompt—read the essays, rejecting or accepting the student solely based on how their thinking translates onto paper.

We read the essays aloud and scored them using the rubrics created from the anchor charts we established at the beginning of the unit. For each class, the students could accept only two essays. I was surprised during the voting process when I discovered that my nominees were the same essays selected by majority of my students. Listening to them argue for their choices and validate the reasons why they chose particular writers, I witnessed my students’ ability to transfer the skills we practiced in our own writing to the reading of others.

Once the votes were taken, I took the accepted essays from each class and compiled them into another Google doc and shared it with all three classes. On our final class period, we celebrated effective writing with each accepted student reading his or her essays aloud.

Finally, to close this three-week unit, we wrote a reflection piece, taking one of the four essential questions and answering it in response to our experience with writing the college application essay. As I read their reflections, I could see places where I could improve in facilitating, I was confirmed with what worked

for student writers, and I saw how this unit positively shaped many of my students’ ideas about writing.

Closing Thoughts

Many of my students saw— for the first time— the practicality of the revision process, of the nuances in craft that moves an essay from good to great, from ineffective to effective. Their thoughts remind me of what Vygotsky (1978) asserts about development, “[It] proceeds here not in a circle but in a spiral, passing through the same point at each new revolution while advancing to a higher level” (p. 56). From the onset of this unit to its ending point, I see how—with each purposeful activity, whether it be a mini-lesson, a writing workshop, or small group discussion—these scaffolded moves afforded students experience to continue spiraling upwards. It is my hope that with each new revolution in their writing lives they will continue to climb higher.

References

- Bazerman, C. (2017). What do sociocultural studies of writing tell us about learning to write? In C. A. MacArthur, S. Graham, & J. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Handbook of writing research* (pp. 11-23). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Cuerdon, D. L. (1990). In the classroom: Real audiences for real writing. *The Reading Teacher*, 44(3), 358.
- Essays that worked. (2017). Retrieved August 6, 2017, from Johns Hopkins University, Undergraduate Admissions Web site: <https://applyjhu.edu/application-process/essays-that-worked/>
- Elbow, P. (2002). The role of publication in the democratization of writing. In C. Weber (Ed.), *Publishing with students: A comprehensive guide* (pp.1-8). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Kelley, K. S. (2009). Practice what you preach: A teacher educator is reminded of important lessons. *The Clearing House*, 82(3), 145-151.
- Kittle, P. (2008). *Write beside them: Risk, voice, and clarity in high school writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Lamott, A. (2005). Shitty first drafts. In P. Eshiholz, A. Rosa, & V. Clark (Eds.), *Language awareness: Readings for college writers* (pp. 93-96). Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin’s.
- Rowlands, K. R. (2016). Slay the monster! Replacing form-first pedagogy with effective writing instruction. *English Journal*, 105(6), 52-58.
- Vygotsky, Lev. (1978) *Mind in society*. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Yagalski, R. P. (2009). A thousand writers writing: Seeking change through the radical practice of writing as a way of being. *English Education*, 42(1), 6-28.

Before *Jennifer Penaflorida* transitioned into the role of doctoral student at the University of Arkansas, she taught 6th-12th grade English for 10 years. Her current research interest focuses on the intersection of sociocultural and composition theory.

Student Book Review: *Still Life with Tornado*

Bryanna Wilson

Student at Emerson High School, Oklahoma City Public Schools

Still Life with Tornado

by A. S. King

Still Life with Tornado is about a girl named Sarah who is having trouble facing some of the things happening in her life. She finds out family drama she never knew, and it makes her rethink her entire life and everything she has ever been told. This book did justice to its name. Sarah's life is a tornado of emotions she cannot figure out how to control. She spends the entirety of the book trying to figure out why her life is the way it is. She seeks answers in some unconventional ways, eventually finding the answers to her questions. The theme of this story is consistent and is established toward the end of the book when Sarah remembers some memories she repressed from when she was a child, and she goes seeking answers to why her family is the way it is.

My favorite part about this book is that the theme was something I could relate to. As humans we all go through family drama in different ways. My family is kind of like Sarah's in many ways, and I have struggled with similar things as she has. Just knowing how it is to have to find yourself on that road discovering things you did not know about your family or yourself made this story realistic and relatable to me. The points of view of different characters featured in this book help the story along. Seeing things from Helen's point of view when it came to her feelings toward Chet definitely helped with details throughout the story. Being able to read from younger Sarah's point of view definitely gave us quite a few important details to keep in mind through the rest of the book. My initial thoughts about this story was that it was extremely confusing, but in reality the different points of view were just used to tell the story. By writing it that way we get to know a little about how Sarah felt since it was primarily from her point of view. I found it interesting that the author included Helen's point of view. I thought that was an excellent touch because by doing so she helped us better under-

stand the relationship Helen and Chet had. I would have liked to have seen the story through Bruce's or Chet's points of view, too, especially towards the end, but at the same time I understand why that was not included. By adding Chet's point of view, the book would have had an even more angry feel to it. If the author had added Bruce's point of view, it would not make sense because Bruce is more of a supporting character. I also would have liked to see how the parents' communication changed toward the end of the book, especially when it came to the father moving out. I do feel having the story from the perspective of one of the parents would have been a lot more beneficial toward the storyline.

I would rate this book a four out of five stars. I really enjoyed the book, and how easily I could relate to it, but it also confused me a lot. The main character's thoughts didn't seem completed at some points, which confused me. As a recurring theme throughout the story the author used versions of Sarah that were different ages that popped up randomly. Being able to read the story from ten year old Sarah's point of view helped the story along, whereas when the younger and older Sarah's popped up in Sarah's real life, it did not make sense. It just seems unnecessary. It is definitely a book I will read again. I actually plan on purchasing it. I would recommend this book to anyone who struggles with family or bullying issues. It accurately depicts some of the feelings people have in these situations, so I feel people could relate to it. I would also recommend this as a read for everyone because the situations within could happen to anyone. Everyone should have some form of knowledge on the topic of bullying and domestic abuse. This could change some people's point of view on things, like bullying, which is a widely spread phenomenon. Bullying is so widespread that has become a social norm, and that isn't right. I think this book could influence people to have the courage to leave these bad situations.

Special Section: Perspectives on the 2018 Oklahoma Teacher Walkout

Between A Walk(out) and A Hard Place

John Walker

Small tidbit of background information – I am a lifelong Oklahoman, and an Elementary Education undergraduate with a family that is well-rooted in education. I moved from my hometown of Oklahoma City to reside a few minutes from the university's campus in Norman. My father has been in the field of education for over 30 years, ranging from teacher and principal, to coordinator and information technology director. He will close his chapter in a few months as his eyes gaze toward retirement. My mother worked for the Sam Noble Museum of Natural History over two decades before retiring. Her immaculate work ethic and penchant for busyness led my mother out of retirement, positioning herself at a secondary school in Oklahoma City.

Oklahoma's two-week teacher walkout in April was a culmination of my family background into one impactful event. Teachers, students, and activists coming together at the steps of the state capitol marching to overhaul the many fallacies of our state's educational system. The most polarizing reasons were the salary wages for teachers.

My father wears multiple hats. In addition to his middle school assistant principal role, he is a real estate broker and the pastor of his church. He works multiple jobs to make ends meet and elevate the Walker family into the middle class. Just enough to own a reasonable one-story house in a decent neighborhood – despite recent efforts to downsize into a HUD home. Just enough to rub a few pennies together to make sure my tuition is paid, even when brushed against the university's payment deadline. But not much more. Financial talks with my family have not been pleasant lately. I remember announcing my decision to double major in Elementary Education to my parents. The reaction was a mixture of uncertainty and hesitation drizzled with a coating of implicit disapproval. I have strong conviction that if I expressed my desire to follow my father's footsteps in the line of real estate, it would be well-received. Even better if I inherited the church ministry. But being a teacher in Oklahoma? Uncertain. Uncertain about how much longer they could support their child's tuition with the state's lowly, education-funded wages. Uncertain about

how their son could make a decent wage with unsupportive state legislators. Uncertain about the probability of financing a quality life on my expected salary without the pressures of needing to wear multiple hats like my father. I have a large, closely-knit family that predominately reside in Oklahoma. But with my ideal future aspirations, I would be driven further away from them than before. This includes moving south to Texas where things are a bit more supportive and stable condition for educators. It is a harsh, but near-certain reality that I will have to move away from my loved ones to ensure myself a chance at a better life.

And that's just my perspective.

Beyond the talks of teacher wages and support, there are the children. I spent most of my childhood in Northeast Oklahoma City, one of the most populated areas for African-Americans in the state. Administrative turnover, budget cuts, and low resources have recently highlighted the area's tumultuous school district. On a national scale, low achievement scores have correlated with minority students and children living in low socioeconomic standing. However, studies also show a connection between these students and underfunded schools, underqualified or non-traditionally certified teachers, disproportionately large class sizes, and limited access to resources. These factors are further intensified compared to Caucasian students and students living in high-income areas. And then there is Oklahoma's last-place standing in funding per pupil.

In other words, times are tough for students in Oklahoma and nearly impossible for those of color. I will spare the details of my personal encounters of the school system engulfing the dreams and aspirations of young black individuals. But know that I have seen students of color – family members, in fact – who possessed the natural intellect and potential to positively change the course of the world -- succumb to the systematic hindrance of low support within the schools. Combined with their external factors outside the classroom, these once-young and gifted students proceeded to become that dreaded "statistic" or numerical uptick in the count of incarcerated males,

Book Review: Pablo and Birdy

Eril Hughes

Pablo and Birdy by Alison McGhee. Illustration by Ana Juan.
288 pages. Middle school fiction. New York: Atheneum, 2017.

A small plastic kiddie pool keeps Pablo, a very young baby, and Birdy, a lavender-colored parrot, afloat during a horrible storm! They wash up a bit battered but safe on the shore of a small sparsely populated island off the south coast of the United States.

At first, this opening made me sigh and think, “Oh, this is just another variation on the stranded-on-a-desert-island theme.” But, as I continued to read, I discovered many strengths that made the book thoughtful and colorful, not prosaic. The plot quickly turns into a mystery. (And who doesn’t like a good mystery?!) Almost ten years after being washed up on the island, Pablo still doesn’t know the story of how this sea journey came to be, nor does he know who put the necklace that reads *Deos te bendiga* around his neck as a baby. But Pablo does know that he has a constant and loyal companion in Birdy the parrot, and Pablo has many other friends on the island.

One of the biggest strengths in the novel is the interesting feathered friends that Pablo has. Birdy is an odd parrot, for she doesn’t talk: she only mumbles every once in a while during her sleep, and she doesn’t fly either!

It’s also hard to ignore the other colorful characters who play a humorous role in the story: Peaches (an African gray parrot), Mr. Chuckles (a budgie), Sugar Baby (a monk parrot), and Rhody (a Rhode Island Red rooster who is a parrot wanna-be). Let me tell you, these characters almost steal the show with their humorous squawks of greeting to the tourists! Pablo calls these birds the “Committee” since they perform so well as greeters, and although the Committee’s greeting to the reporter Elmira Toledo is just a bit less than friendly, this scene is still quite funny!

The illustrations are humorous, too! My favorite is a drawing of the Committee on page 252 that shows one wonderfully feathered bird looking directly up at a helicopter carrying Elmira to the island. The other illustrations are just as detailed and striking.

All this, and I haven’t even gotten to the interesting main conflict yet! Elmira is searching for a rare Seafarer parrot, a mythical bird that flies continuously and can hear and reproduce all the sounds ever made (page 26). Pablo suspects that Birdy is a rare Seafarer despite his flightless and soundless state, and Elmira is determined to capture, cage, and study the parrot.

Pablo knows he must find a way to save Birdy from capture and a cage. Will the Committee find a way to help? Will Birdy escape Elmira? Is Birdy even a Seafarer parrot?

The imaginative ending includes some humor with a bit of sadness, but is a fitting end to this story for young people and adults of all ages. In fact, I advise you to read this novel especially if you’re an adult! Your imagination will be stretched with the magical realism, and everyone will love the dog as well as the birds! (By the way, the dog is a quite proficient pastry-stealer!)

teenage pregnancy, or school dropouts.

The walkout was a stand against it all. It marks a visual challenging of the status quo where educators were treated as second-rate professionals, students as afterthoughts, and minority students as impending statistics. The helicopters overseeing the masses, catching a glimpse of cleverly constructed phrases on starch white paper plastered to cardboard captured a moment of history. Regardless of outcome, it was a moment of history. Many of the teachers in attendance were not looking for a cheap salary spike (especially one without stable financial guarantees or the assurance of funding for salary payment beyond one year). They were battling for the children they care for daily

and searching for the earned support in the field they honorably acceptance amid its unfair, politically-driven blemishes. The field that, if supported, could keep qualified teachers from jumping state lines in order to nurture and guide Oklahoma’s students toward a better chance of success.

And support that could keep an aspiring teacher together with his family.

John Walker earned a degree in Journalism at the University of Oklahoma and is currently in his final year of studies for a second degree in Elementary Education. John aspires to teach upper-elementary and middle school students with a specialized focus in English and Social Studies.

Special Section: Perspectives on the 2018 Oklahoma Teacher Walkout

Fatigue While Fighting for Funding

Jennie L. Hanna

4/9/2018

"Seeing students of all ages up there with us has been the lifeblood that keeps me going and I know that my fellow educators feel the same way. It's one thing for us to say that this fight is about them but it's another thing for them to see it in themselves."



From left: MacArthur High School teachers Kathy Sauders, Jennie Hanna, and Loren Steele

Looking back on the past 5 days of work stoppage, which is what we have labeled the "Great Teacher Walkout of 2018," where "no work" was supposed to be occurring, I find I am more tired than at the end of the first week of the new year. The past week spent at the Oklahoma State Capitol fighting for education funding, fighting for respect for this profession, and fighting for the future of the children in our classrooms has been one of the most fulfilling and draining experiences of my career.

As a high school American Literature teacher, every year I get 150 or more new Juniors to teach. We spend the year looking at great works from Arthur Miller, JD Salinger, Lorraine Hansberry and many others, yet my favorite lesson always comes in the spring. As we move into

the Post-Modernism literary period, I frame the reading of President John F. Kennedy's 1961 Inaugural Speech and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. 1963 "Letter from Birmingham Jail" around the idea of using voice and action to affect change. To culminate the reading of these two powerful pieces, I have my students select their own perceived injustice and use Dr. King's four steps of a non-violent protest – the "collection of the facts to determine whether injustices are alive, negotiation, self-purification, and direct action" – to develop their own solution for their chosen injustice. In fact, the last day I was in class with my students was spent watching them share their non-violent presentations. To say that I was proud of not only how seriously they took this assignment but what they were able to come up with as solutions to an injustice that plagues our world wouldn't be enough to convey just how proud I am of them.

Little did I know last August, while putting together my master calendar for the year, my favorite lesson would arrive in the middle of two important movements that would directly impact my students: the March for Our Lives, spurred by their very own generation in response to gun violence and school shootings, and the current teacher work stoppage, something my fellow colleagues and I were beginning to see more as an eventuality as we approached that April 1st deadline. Little did I know how much this lesson would help them realize Kennedy and King's words and actions were never more relevant to them as they are today.

Modeling is a strategy that I've implored in my classroom. My students know that I don't ask them to do something I'm not willing to do myself. Every essay, every speech, and every poem I ask them to write or memorize for our class, they know I will always do one alongside them.

This teaching strategy, which I have always relied upon more than others, has perhaps led to this very moment where, as one of my students put it, I have been given an opportunity to not just talk about it or teach about it, but to be about it. This movement at the state capitol has been and continues to be just that – a chance to model for my students the very thing that I asked them to learn through my lesson: that voices banded together can inspire hope and can affect change.

To say that standing amid a sea of educators in front of the state capitol last Monday was inspiring is an understatement. To express how much this one moment has defined me as an educator and will impact the philos-

ophy that I have about teaching from this day forward is not enough. However, one of the most inspiring things this week has been the daily increase in the number of youth to get involved. On Monday, the smattering of students sprinkled in amongst the adults outside of the capital was relatively small, but each day their number grows. I've even been lucky enough to take a few of my students up to the capital this week, including my very own son who will graduate and go to college next year.

On Thursday, I came across a teenage girl holding a very simple sign walking with the crowd outside the capitol. Written on plain cardboard with a simple black marker was the phrase "I've had 5 science teachers in 6 months. The class is now taught by a history teacher. We have a problem." While the crowds have been filled with some of the most creative signs that I have seen, this one speaks the loudest to me. There is a problem in our education system here in Oklahoma and while securing funding may not fix everything, it is a good place to start.



Our students deserve better. They deserve better teachers; they deserve better supplies; they deserve better buildings; they deserve a chance at a better future. The sooner our lawmakers can see funding education not through the lens of it being a burden or a bill they must pay, but as an investment in future Oklahomans, the easier I think it will be for them to do what's right. As for me, I know I will continue to be up there at that state capitol until this is solved or until my body simply gives out because my students are worth it. Seeing students of all ages up there with us has been the lifeblood that keeps me going and I know that my fellow educators feel the same way. It's one thing for us to say that this fight is about them, but it's another thing for them to see it in themselves.

Jennie L. Hanna is a doctoral candidate at the University of Oklahoma and teaches in Lawton Public Schools.

From left: Chris Hanna, Jennie Hanna,
and Keshawn Watson

Special Section: Perspectives on the 2018 Oklahoma Teacher Walkout

Education in a Disinterested State

Kathryn Garn

Walking into McKinley Elementary on my first day of fifth grade, I felt overjoyed. The grass sprouts had used the summer to recover and were ready for recess soccer games. The rubber turf bits were freshly scattered around the playground equipment, promising a greater cushion than the wood chips we had previously known. I had always loved learning and could feel that this was going to be a great year. All I wanted to do was see my teachers from years past, tell them about my summer and thank them for helping me grow into the big fifth grader that I was. But my heart fell when I realized that I wouldn't be able to see them, not then, and most likely not ever. It was then, looking

around for them, that I realized that every single one of my teachers was gone. Of course, I remembered conversations with Mrs. Gathright about her heading to a private school in Tulsa and Ms. Rojas telling our first grade class that she would be heading down to Texas for different teaching opportunities. At that moment it really hit me the importance of having great teachers, and now looking back I can see that they wanted to be in places that would invest in the educational system they saw to be so important.

We say that education gives people the freedom to make decisions and pursue all of life's opportunities, yet still expect our communities and states to thrive un-

der the continued disinvestment in education. Growing up in Oklahoma, I've watched our state legislators continually decrease funding for public education and have seen the consequences of those actions. The state gave more money to K12 education in 2008, when I was a fourth grader, than it does today in my senior year of high school; even though there are 50,000 more students being educated today. The education system is so stressed with the additional students and increased costs of materials that many students are finding their opportunities to be severely limited. This is such a pivotal issue because I know for a fact that without a solid educational system supporting me, there are many things I would be unable to accomplish. While this issue does not worry many, I have seen firsthand the damage that can occur in a community that places a low value on education.

On a mission trip to Sumpango, Guatemala I saw what a great impact the lack of educational opportunities can have on an entire community and how necessary an education is in modern society to support oneself. In Guatemala, many children are unable to go to the school because of the costs and travel associated with it. While an education there is advertised as free, the costs for uniforms and textbooks are prohibitive to many families. Furthermore, the cities have no form of transportation to bring in children from rural communities, leaving them without an education or any semblance of hope. In the small community of Sumpango, the jobless and most likely uneducated are forced to dig through the dumps to find food for their hungry families, as they are unable to find a job that will bring the income they need to survive. Communities like this will only begin thriving once all children have access to schools willing to help them build the knowledge and awareness they need to improve their situations. Although it is not on quite the same scale, it saddens me to see this happening in my home as well.

In Oklahoma, education is currently undervalued, and I fear that if it continues on its downward trend that serious drawbacks will become painstakingly obvious. Oklahoma state legislators clearly have difficult decisions to make when it comes to limited resources, but their decisions to cut personal and corporate taxes have only created large deficits resulting in much less funding for schools. The knowledge that they will be among the lowest-paid teachers in the country, has prompted many of the key teachers from Oklahoma to move to states that pay them enough to support a

family. Last year the State Teacher of the Year and one of the finalists for National Teacher of the Year came from my school, Norman High. Knowing that they would have the ability to increase in their family income by \$40,000, he and his wife decided to move to Texas with their newborn. This was a great loss to both the Norman High community and the state. It makes me think about how they probably wanted to have the income needed to raise a baby, and also that they probably wanted to give her better educational opportunities than those available in Oklahoma. When I look at the teachers still in Oklahoma, I see the ties that are keeping them from leaving. For my English teacher this is her stepson, a high-schooler who should not be uprooted in his final years. While I am so grateful that I have the opportunity to have her as a teacher, I wish that she would be given the same support by the State of Oklahoma as teachers are given in states such as Texas.

The consequences of the decrease in funding for education have been devastating. I continue to see teachers in schools like mine with class sizes of thirty-five to forty students, frazzled by the workload placed upon them once their fellow teachers have left. Moreover, the high quality experienced teachers leaving for other states are being replaced with "emergency certified teachers." These are people with no educational experience but can pass a background check and have a college degree. The number one area of placement for these emergency certified teachers is in elementary classrooms. This may seem like an unimportant issue, as it is just the younger children who are getting the short end of the stick for the time being, but if this issue is seen on a long-term scale, the effects on those elementary students are detrimental. They are being taught the foundations of reading and math by untrained and underprepared teachers. These children are the future, and the state is disinterested in investing what is necessary in order to give them a solid educational foundation.

Although I am living in a state that doesn't appear to value education, I value it very much. In overcoming these challenges, I have realized that I want Oklahoma to be a place that values community and gives its people the knowledge, skills, and network to become leaders who can make a difference for others; and I wholeheartedly believe that McKinley Elementary gave me these values. While my teachers did leave, at least I was given the opportunity to have the veteran

teachers I had. When I look at the other students at the top of my senior class, I see familiar faces, faces I met back in elementary school. This community experience was so important for me, but it saddens me that my siblings will struggle to have the same experiences. Currently my younger sister is in fifth grade at McKinley and I know that her teachers have less resources and experience, yet are expected to provide the same educational foundation that I was so fortunate to receive. While my sister does have the sprouting grass, the school has gone back to the cheaper wood chips, and she is not having the classroom experiences that

instill the importance of community in her. To instill that sense of community, our state needs to invest more money into education, and as a result of that investment we would see a much more successful generation.

Kathryn Garn graduated in May 2018 from Norman High School. Kathryn is grateful to her English teacher, Mrs. Sara Doolittle, for giving her the opportunity to develop her writing technique and explore the important issue of education in our state. This fall Kathryn will be heading off to The University of Iowa in Iowa City.

Special Section: Perspectives on the 2018 Oklahoma Teacher Walkout

Being the Change in Oklahoma Education

Christine Jones

The Why

This is the question that I get every time someone asks me what my major is. “Why would you want to do that?” or “Wow, I could never spend every day with a classroom of elementary students...that sounds miserable.” See here’s the problem-education has become so normalized over the decades that people don’t appreciate the beauty of it anymore. From the eyes of an outsider, schools are too often seen simply as a place where kids are dropped off everyday with hopes that the teacher will work magic and make the child smart and well behaved. School has become a routine pattern full of discipline, worksheets, and testing which has created a negative stigma for all students in America. Whether you are a parent, or student; I think we can all agree that the universal answer to the question “what did you do at school today” is without fail always “nothing”. THAT IS A PROBLEM.

Why has it become okay for children to be learning “nothing” at school. Students should be bouncing off the bus in excitement to tell their parents the mind boggling information that they learned at school. They should be ecstatic to try new things and participate in hands on activities. They should be allowed opportunities to do “real life” projects that will help them become a better citizen in their community. They should be taught to voice their opinions and participate in meaningful conversation with their classmates. They should be challenged to think out of the box and *dream BIG*. This is why I want to teach. I believe in the next generation of students and know

that they are capable of whatever they set their minds to. If classrooms can be transformed from the monotonous routine and set-up to a space where students are taught to *change the world*, I think we would all have a lot more faith in the upcoming generation of students. Who knows, maybe students would be happier and more motivated instead of so anxious and depressed.

Change is Coming

For too many years’ teachers have been putting up with the conditions of the schools, simply because they are expected to. Teachers are physically and emotionally drained from the way they have been treated for far too long. This Spring 2018 a Stillwater teacher decided that something had to change. Something had to be done. The conditions of schools in Oklahoma, and frankly all of America, are unacceptable. Teachers from all over the state banded together to stand for their students and say that education should be priority in our state. As a collective group the teachers created a plan that they would walkout of their classrooms in hopes of receiving better pay and funding for education. After many personal testimonies both made by teachers and students, many school boards around the state approved for their schools to be closed so the teachers could voice their deep concerns regarding education. Monday April 2nd came and teachers did in fact not show up in the classroom and instead occupied the state capitol. For two weeks’ straight teachers, parents, and students stood together at the capitol in support of changing the current state of education. I personally got the chance to go to the capitol one

day and found it to be very empowering. I had the privilege of talking with educators to learn about their story and experience as a teacher. Each teacher came to the capitol with an agenda to fight for their students, because they believed that they deserve so much more than what they are getting right now. Walking through the crowds gave me chills because you could see the determination, passion, and gentle love behind every person that attended.

Before this experience I was excited for my future of teaching, but over the past few weeks I have felt my love for education and my future career grow immensely. I believe that there is a power that is found within when people unite for a common cause. I stand with all of the teachers that are fighting for a better pay, but even more so I believe that Education needs attention as a whole. Teachers are often times the people that students spend most time with throughout the day, so if teachers aren't being supported then it will be nearly impossible for them to reciprocate that to the students. It is not just teacher pay that needs improvement, but funding for students needs to be increased so they know they are supported and believed in by teachers, staff, state officials, and parents. Not only do teachers impact and change lives but often they will literally save them. That is why I want to be a part of the noblest profession.

Christine Jones is a Senior Elementary Education Major studying in the Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education at the University of Oklahoma.



Dedications

***This issue is dedicated to
Mrs. Martha E. Rhymes and***

Dr. Gail E. Tompkins

Martha E. Rhymes is a lifetime member of the Oklahoma Council of Teachers of English, who served Oklahoma as a classroom teacher for many years. Over her professional career she has served actively in NCTE, OkCTE, and the Oklahoma Writing Project (OWP). Mrs. Rhymes published many times in the Oklahoma English Journal under the editorship of Kevin Davis. She has also authored many books and book reviews available on Amazon and Kindle. At 88, Mrs. Rhymes is still active in her community and engaged in creative writing. She reached out to me with a wonderful letter and a donation to our journal. I know that I speak for all of us at OkCTE when I say that we are grateful to lifelong teachers like Mrs. Rhymes who continue to make a positive difference in Oklahoma education.

Gail Elaine Tompkins, Ed.D. (1949-2017). After graduating from the University of Nebraska, Gail taught first grade in Virginia for eight years, and then she earned an Ed.D. in Reading and Language Arts from Virginia Tech. Over her 25-year university teaching career, she taught at Miami University in Ohio, the University of Oklahoma, and finally at California State University, Fresno. She received awards for teaching excellence at OU and CSUF and was inducted into the California Reading Association Hall of Fame. Gail will be remembered as a college textbook author. She is the author of Language Arts: Patterns of Practice, Literacy for the 21st Century, Literacy in the Early Grades, Literacy in the Middle Grades, Teaching Writing, 50 Literacy Strategies, and Language Arts Essentials, all published by Pearson. Each of Dr. Tompkins' books have been the leading texts in their respective markets. Thousands of pre-service teachers across the United States have learned to teach reading, writing, and language arts from her books. In addition, Dr. Tompkins worked with elementary through college-level writing teachers at two National Writing Project sites during the last three decades. She directed the Oklahoma Writing Project when she taught at the University of Oklahoma, and more recently she led the San Joaquin Valley Writing Project (SJWVP) in California, where she encouraged teachers to write for publication. Dr. Tompkins published the first ever book from teacher-writers at the Oklahoma Writing Project in 1984. Her friend Faith Nitschke wrote to me to share of Dr. Tompkins passing, and I am grateful to share with our readers the many accomplishments of Dr. Tompkins, whose work supported teachers and children internationally.

The **Oklahoma English Journal** is a peer reviewed journal, published by the Oklahoma Council Teachers of English as an affiliate journal of the National Council of Teachers of English.

OEJ publishes articles of interest to classroom teachers, librarians, administrators, and university professors across literacy studies and the humanities regardless of teaching level.

Submission Guidelines -- See new details, p.

Authors are invited to submit creative, multimodal submissions as well as traditional texts. OEJ encourages many forms of communication including poetry, prose, narrative, graphic stories, art, and photography.

Research Articles should be organized to include the following categories, as applicable:

Introduction/rationale, Theoretical framing, Methods, Findings, Discussion, and Implications for future research, practice, and policy.

Practitioner Articles should be theoretically based yet pedagogically applicable.

Research and Practitioner Articles, including references and appendices, should be less than 4,000 words.

Reflections, Expert Voices, Geographical Views, and Teaching Tips should be less than 1,500 words.

**Interested in submitting new content ideas for a one-time or recurring special column in OEJ?
Please contact Julianna with your ideas!**

Acknowledgements

Current OEJ Editor Julianna Lopez Kershen, Ed.D. You can reach Julianna at jekershen@ou.edu

The editor thanks the following individuals and organizations for supporting the production of this issue of *Oklahoma English Journal*:

OkCTE Executive Board Members and Leadership <http://www.okcte.org/>

Current OkCTE President Jane Baber, M.Ed. at the University of Oklahoma

Former OEJ editor Deborah Brown, Ph.D. at University of Central Oklahoma

Cover art and poem: Randi Bray

Printed at the University of Oklahoma

Publication of the Oklahoma Council Teachers of English
www.okcte.org

Copyright July 2018



Oklahoma Council of Teachers of English



National Council of
Teachers of English

2018 NCTE Annual Convention

Houston, Texas

November 15-16-17-18, 2018

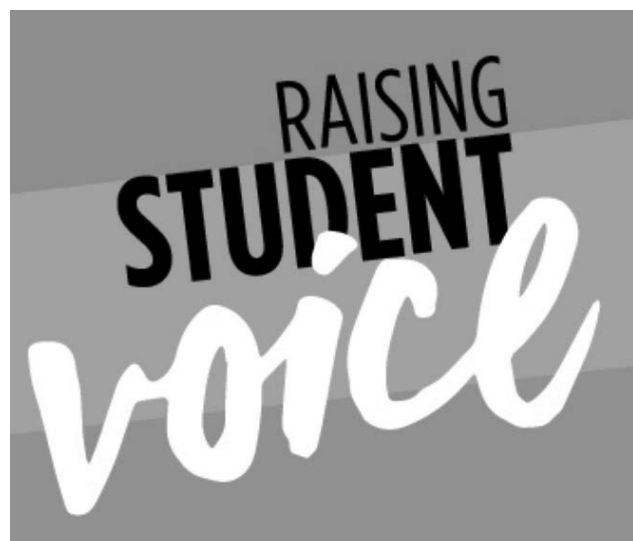
Conference on English Leadership
(CEL) Convention

November 18-19-20, 2018

Assembly on Literature for Adolescents for the
NCTE

(ALAN) Convention

November 19-20, 2018



Oklahoma English Journal

The Oklahoma Council of Teachers of English is an affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English. We promote improvement in the teaching of all phases of the English language arts, including reading, writing, thinking, and speaking, at all levels of education. We are committed to addressing current issues in literacy and language arts learning, instructional practice and education policy, as well as research in the fields of humanities, literacy, language learning and English language arts. We do our best to help English and humanities teachers be more effective by providing the best professional development at the lowest possible cost, sponsoring a spring and fall conference.

OKCTE members work together across the state and region to support excellence in language arts learning and teaching. To become a member or to renew your membership contact OKCTE at okctenglish@gmail.com

One Year Membership - \$50.00

Retired Teacher Membership - One Year - \$10.00

Teacher Candidate Membership - FREE

First Year Teacher Memberships - One Year - FREE

Geraldine Burns Award Winner/Mentor - One Year - FREE

**Oklahoma Council of Teachers of English
Oklahoma English Journal
c/o Editor, Julianna L. Kershen, Ed.D.
Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education
University of Oklahoma
Collings Hall, room 114
820 Van Vleet Oval
Norman, Oklahoma 73019**