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# NCTEAR

National Council of Teachers of English  
Assembly for Research

## Newsletter

Summer 2014

### 2014 NCTE Assembly for Research Midwinter Conference at Elmhurst College



**Ayanna F. Brown**  
2013-2014 Chair

“Bringing together this magnificent group of scholars for NCTEAR 2014 reminds me that research is not only valuable but a necessity for building community and learning from one another. This is what NCTEAR does so well, and I am proud to have had this opportunity to serve as chair.”

A roaring fireplace greeted over 150 conference participants to the NCTEAR Midwinter Conference in the Frick Center at Elmhurst College. While winter offered freezing cold air, icy sidewalks, and gray skies, inside the Founders Lounge displayed the multimedia artwork created by students of ten local high schools. The colors, textures, and themes of their work were a welcomed contrast to winter’s palette. Conference participants gathered for the Pre-Conference Institute.

The Pre-Conference Institute began with a tribute to Dr. John Gumperz who passed away in March 2013. Gumperz is known for theorizing sociolinguistics, and with Dell Hymes, ethnography of communication. Dr. Jenny Cook-Gumperz joined us via video. Drs. Django Paris, Judith Green, David Bloome, Shirley Brice Heath, and Jerri Willett shared how Dr. Gumperz’s mentorship and/or scholarship have informed their work as well as how his work shaped the field.

**2015 NCTEAR  
Midwinter Conference**

**Location: New Orleans**

**Date: February 6-8, 2015**

## *Notes from the Pre-Conference Institute & Midwinter Conference*

*by Maria José Botelho*



David Bloome, Shirley Brice Heath,  
Django Paris, Jerri Willett, and Judith  
Green (left to right)

**Jenny Cook-Gumperz** began the tribute with an overview of Gumperz's interest in social interaction within formal schooling contexts and how people make their way through these institutions. Through ethnographic methodology and methods he was interested in the following four points of analysis to (1) identify key interactive situations between institutions and its participants; (2) consider how literate practice is negotiated, understood, and misunderstood within key interactive situations; (3) examine key processes in different interactions through conversational analysis; and (4) reveal ideological processes of language and communicative practices. Cook-Gumperz reminded conference participants that these are exciting times because of cultural heterogeneity. She invited researchers to attend to communicative diversity, that is, multicultural, multilingual, and multimodal practices.

**Django Paris** came to know John Gumperz's work in his search for theoretical tools during his first year as a doctoral student. Django maintained that Gumperz's "multilingual asset-based perspective" of language and stance that social boundaries are permeable and language plays a role in contextualizing these boundaries, are humanizing scholarly understandings.

**Judith Green** studied with John Gumperz. She asserted that his scholarship offers the "language of possibility and potential." Gumperz maintained that the analysis of communicative practice offers insights to social issues. His work offers four key practice-centered insights: (1) communicative practices; (2) semantic importance of context; (3) communication as creating and depending on context; and (4) relational model that monitors what is said and not said, what verbal and nonverbal exchanges indicate, and how they are being received.

**David Bloome**, "a student of a student," studied with Judith Green. He spoke about how Gumperz's work has produced a series of intellectual provocations that continue to challenge language, culture, and education research. Gumperz's scholarship offers five intellectual challenges: (1) rejection of binaries; (2) centrality of conversational inferencing and understanding; (3) language as a verb; (4) interpretative ambiguity; and (5) inequality. Gumperz's research questions the binaries of: inequity rendered as people and institutions because these are complex power relations; theories and methodologies because theories are applied and methodologies are theorized; and cognitive and social domains, which he reconceptualized through an interpretative framework. People are actively involved in social interactions and co-constructing intersubjectivity. These interactions are largely shaped by how people use language. What is said and not said creates spaces to establish intersubjectivity. Language's centrality in everyday interactions contributes to the complex social processes that sort people.

**Shirley Brice Heath** spoke about how he participated in scholarly circles. Gumperz's social status did not dictate how he interacted with people. He used his social power to gather all kinds of people, including "gaints" in the field, to engage with ideas. Gumperz established a summer institute of language that spread to several institutes in several cities. He knew many languages and crossed many social lines (cross-age, -culture, -expertise lines) to continually learn about cultural and linguistic diversity. He welcomed people to challenge his thinking and allowed their work to converge and diverge. How John Gumperz lived had a great hold on how he theorized ethnography. Heath invited conference participants to consider: "What motivates you? What is your passion? How do you use your social networks to create spaces for dialogue and socially transformative ways of being in the academy? How do your ways of participating in conferences and social circles challenge colleagues' thinking?" Collaboration can promote transformative ways of being in the academe.

**Jerri Willett** studied with Shirley Brice Heath and was mentored by David Bloome and Judith Greene too. While Jerri only met John Gumperz once, his scholarship helped Willett tighten her theoretical framing of her master’s thesis. She re/traced situated micro-interactions across community and school across time. Jerri’s research in multicultural and multilingual communities considers the cultural resources children draw on in school settings. She has been interested in reconstructing more productive home/school relations centered on literacy. Her work created a space in which the children, teachers/researchers, and parents jointly constructed new kinds of literacy practices and created new speech events that drew on the resources of children, families, and their teachers. The focus was on what children knew. Jerri’s work shows that microanalysis can make great contributions to a social justice research agenda.

## Mentoring Circles

After the tribute, Adrienne Dixson, Ana Christina Iddings, and Kevin Leander joined the above scholars in facilitating mentor circles and providing guidance to emerging scholars. Instances of mutual mentoring were commonplace as circle participants also offered feedback on projects. The senior scholars’ presence formalized these conversations.

Shirley offered advice about methodology and the caveat that data collection in schools shapes interpretation. At Django’s table, a theoretical framing of intertextuality was suggested to understand six-grader story writing ties to popular literature, to analyze the affordances and constraints of these intertextual links. Judith demystified publishing by bringing attention to the role of editors play on what gets published, and not published. She recommended “writing into the future through envisioning what is possible,” at the same time, keeping readers in mind.

### *What Participants Said...*



**Daniel Olufeni**, a first-year doctoral student of the University of New Mexico, participated in Django’s mentoring circle. He shared a work-in-progress on the teaching digital technologies and literacy to grade 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> students. Daniel is interested in understanding how students’ narratives are shaped by digital technologies. The mentoring circle “validated” his work as he learned from members’ contributions. This experience has inspired him to submit a proposal for the next NCTEAR Midwinter Conference.

## MENTORING CIRCLES





**Wendy Williams**, a doctoral student of Arizona State University, brought a dissertation fellowship application, which included a seven-page overview of her dissertation research. The mentoring-circle feature is what brought her to the conference. She participated in Adrienne’s circle. She received feedback from around the table on how she should construct her argument. She said: “As doctoral students we think we have nothing to offer. It was good to know that I had something to contribute to other’s people’s process. It was good to help each other in this supportive environment.” Wendy also learned about the possibilities of mixed methods for literacy research.

**Danielle DeFaux**, a doctoral student of the University of Michigan-Dearborn, worked with Jerri. She brought a draft of her roundtable presentation. She reflected: “[The conversation] pushed my thinking. I didn’t know where to go with the theoretical framework.” She also got a window into different projects and international research. Danielle learned more about metalanguage and metalinguistics.

# LOUDER THAN A BOMB 2013

This year’s conference opening began with spoken word performances by Young Chicago Authors’ Louder Than a Bomb (LTAB). Kevin Coval, the YCA Artistic Director and one of the founding members, described how the young authors’ backgrounds, knowledge, hopes, and fears inform their writing. He reminded the audience that “stories are living in classrooms.” Teachers use contemporary texts to broaden youth’s experiences and help them to re-imagine what is possible. LTAB creates a culture in the schools of poet teams, much like sporting events and star athletes. Louder Than a Bomb, inspired by a Public Enemy song, celebrates its 13<sup>th</sup> year with over 120 teams, representing multiple schools and communities to “live beyond the borders that confine and define.” The group works in some international contexts like Spain and South Africa. They are also considering working with university students.

Lamar Jordan, a teaching artist and hip hop artist, originally from the South Side of Chicago, shared that the YCA “showed that I had a voice. People wanted to hear what I had to say.” This experience has turned Lamar into an educator. He is returning back to school to study teaching. His spoken word project on slavery began “I see genocide in your eyes.”

Team Englewood performed “White Lies.” This team’s members spoke about how this work changed their lives and worldviews as well as learned about other people and their stories. Members also described how this work built their confidence and strengthened their voices.

Melissa Hughes is on her 14<sup>th</sup> year of teaching shared “how exciting to start with the culture of schools.” Her participation in YCA has “reignited” her teaching and connected her with students across schools and the city as well as parts of the suburbs.

Kevin Coval argues that spoken word has the power to transform the culture of the classroom, school, city, politics, and policies. See the documentary on Louder Than a Bomb by Greg Jacobs and Jon Siskel and/or visit the LTAB website at <http://youngchicagoauthors.org/blog/>. There, you will find materials for creating teams, group writing, and afterschool curricula.



**Lamar Jordan, Teaching Artist**



**Team Englewood**



Denise Davila of the University of Georgia and Danny C. Martinez of the University of California Davis are fellows of NCTE's Cultivating New Voices Among Scholars of Color program. Elizabeth Birmingham (in photo) of the University of Illinois at Chicago, Kierstin Thompson of Downers Grove South High School and the University of Illinois of Chicago, and Larkin Weyland of The Ohio State University were recognized with NCTEAR Teacher Researcher scholarships.

## Conversation Circles

### Conversation Circle #1: Laurie Katz, Iliana Reyes, and Debbie Rowe

This circle of scholars considered the assessment of children's early literacies without reducing children's learning to scores and devaluing what children know and do. Conference participants contributed the dialogue. They scholars offered the example of assessing children's emergent writing practices: Teachers can use descriptive, practical, authentic, and/or comprehensive assessments. These practices provide snapshots of what children are doing as they interact with teachers and other children. When assessing in dual language contexts, working across two language systems is not translation; it's language use within context. English language learners are translanguaging across two or three language systems. Teachers need to recognize children's multilingual resources.

Reggio Emilia has some promising practices of capturing the process of what children are doing within context. Children also express themselves multimodally. A sociocultural perspective of learning considers play as multimodal engagement. How can reading, speaking, and representing through dramatic play offer windows into writing? What can be observed? Teachers also need to integrate the domains of development (e.g., cognitive, social, emotional, physical) and not consider them in isolation from each other. Assessments can help teachers see children's learning across literacy events.

In the end, teachers and researchers should examine who decides which assessments are legitimate and what is deemed learning and knowledge. Teachers and researchers need to take children's point of view by observing and listening carefully and working closely with children. Inservice teacher education is one space for great transformation as teachers and teacher educators consider multimodal and intra-domain ways of learning. New teachers need mentoring too. Researchers need to be cautious how they work with the state and federal governments because these institutions want to impose their priorities on our expertise. Oftentimes, researchers are approached to help but decisions have already been made.

### Conversation Circle #2: David Bloome, Shirley Brice Heath, and Django Paris

This conversation circle focused on the dynamism, multiplicity, and situatedness of literacies. The speakers recommend that researchers study outside of institutions ethnographically to document the multicultural, multilingual, and multiliterate resources deployed by families, youth, and children for all kinds of purposes. The role of teachers in this work is essential as they learn about their students over time.



## Conference Sessions:

### Symposia, Paper Presentations, and Roundtables

Session one featured presentations on youth songwriting, benefits of student testimony for literacy learning, the social construction of “struggling readers,” online family literacy, collaborative writing in the foreign language classroom, to name a few. I attended “Graffiti: Out of School literacy Events and Practices” by Julie Averil of The Ohio State University, who considered graffiti writing as adolescent literacy and “expressions of global and local relationships.” “Art as Collective Critical Literacy” by Eli Tucker-Raymond of TERC in Massachusetts examined place-based art as social and political tools that “form relations in the community between generations” through cultural reclamation and political resistance. Both presenters advocated for permeability between schools and communities to create place-based learning experiences.

Session two featured presentations on problematizing dialogue, critical analysis of the Common Core Standards and culturally and linguistically diverse students, social media as tools for preservice teacher education, listening during reader’s workshop, participatory pedagogy, mindfulness practices in preschool classrooms, ethnography of modal digital literacy, and temporality as a genre feature. I attended a panel on “Examining Bi(Multi)lingual Students’ Expansive Discourses.” Mariana Pacheco of the University of Wisconsin-Madison explored “Collaborative Translanguaging and Translating in a Third Grade Classroom” as “language learning as a collective process” that is informed by “linguistic repertoires.” Danny C. Martínez of the University of California Davis presented on “Sustaining Our Communicative Repertoires: The Linguistic Work of Black and Latino Youth.” He recommended the construct of repertoire as a metaphor for language. P. Zitlali Morales of the University of Illinois Chicago reported on “Negotiating Non-standard Language Practices,” a study on how teachers negotiate Common Core Standards as they support English language learners’ in content area literacies.

The roundtable sessions were numerous. Presenters shared their work about trans\*literacies, literacy as object, metaethnography of family literacy, parents as researchers and storytellers, role of teacher researchers in inservice education, out-of-school literacies, drama, English learning as identity construction, politeness in Japanese language class, layers of meaning in literature class, and the like.

The third session had papers on professional reading and study as practical experience, media depictions of schools, relationship between argumentative practices and oral genres, social construction of evidence in argumentative writing, intertextuality in writing, student interest and complex texts, math literacies, intercultural pedagogies, and science literacies. I attended the symposium on “Opening Up Affect and Emotion in Literacy: Some Experiments with Experience” with Kevin Leader, Ty Hollett, Christian Ehret, all of Vanderbilt University, and Ana Christina Iddings of the University of Arizona. The presenters maintain that emotion is connected to embodiment and interpretation: “[D]ata is not just cognitive.” The goal is to humanize interaction and interpretation. “How do we help the readers of our work ‘feel our data’ to add texture to literacy?”

Sunday morning sessions began with presentations on critical literacy in urban English classrooms, working-class teacher lives, metadiscourse in children’s literature, nonfiction writing in first grade, Finnish literacy curriculum and Waldorf education, informational texts in the primary grades, ELA Common Core Standards, scripted literacy curriculum, transforming literacy practices, critical media literacies, creativity and the Common Core, queer literacy research, early writing and mandated curriculum, academic socialization of Black students, multimodal English classroom, rethinking “printness” of literacy, and teachers’ interpretations of multimedia work. I attended the presentation, “Close Reading and Text Complexity: Problematic Constructs for Assessing Attainment of the Common Core State Standards, by Lucretia E. Penny Pence of the University of New Mexico. The presenter invited participants to problematize the Common Core’s stance on text complexity - meaning and complexity reside in the text – and turn their gaze to readers as they complicate texts through their meaning-making practices.

Review the 2014 NCTEAR Midwinter Conference Program at [www.nctear.org](http://www.nctear.org) for more information.

## Letter from Adrienne Dixon, 2014-2015 Chair

Dear NCTEAR Family!

Summer has arrived! It was a beautiful day here in New Orleans.

Thank you to Ayanna Brown, Jayne Lammers, Alecia Magnifico and Maria José Botelho for all of their hard work on NCTEAR 2014. Ayanna has been extremely generous with sharing her time and resources as I assume the chair for NCTEAR 2015. She will be taking on a special project this year and will have more to share in subsequent newsletters.

I am happy to be working with a great time of colleagues for NCTEAR 2015! In this newsletter, I will share information on dates, location and accommodations. We will send out the theme and the call for papers in a separate communication. I also want to acknowledge Jamila Smith, Assistant Professor of English at Eastern Illinois University. She is serving as my unofficial Program Chair and helping me with the details for next year's conference.

The 2015 NCTEAR Midwinter Conference will take place in New Orleans, Louisiana, on February 6 to 8, 2015. Using New Orleans as a point of departure, the theme for NCTEAR 2015 challenges us to think about how we make sense of language and literacy in local and geographic contexts (or space and place) and the ways in which race, and other identity markers, inform and shape them. We are interested in the project of research and specifically the scholarly examination of languages and literacies as they intersect with race, class, gender, sexuality, and citizenship status, among others. We are also interested in language and literacy scholarship that raises particular questions about methodology, epistemology, and the politics of research. We invite proposals that focus on empirical research as well as conceptual/theoretical work. The proposal submission deadline has been extended from September 8, 2014 to October 3, 2014 at 11:59 pm CST. Submit your proposal at [nctear2015@gmail.com](mailto:nctear2015@gmail.com).

The Astor Crowne Plaza is the official hotel for the conference and has given us a very competitive rate of \$183/night (rate applies for single, double, triple and quad). Please note that our conference is during Mardi Gras parade season. Although Mardi Gras Day is February 17, 2015, there are a number of events leading up to that day with the weekend of our conference being a busy time for parades and balls. Over a dozen parades will "roll" the weekend of NCTEAR 2015. Thus, hotel rates in the City can be double what they are normally (although "normal" and New Orleans might be an oxymoron). I encourage you to take advantage of the Astor Crowne Plaza not only for the rate, but also its prime location on Canal Street, a key street on the parade routes.

If you are registering online, please use this link: <http://www.ihg.com/crowneplaza/hotels/us/en/new-orleans/msyla/hoteldetail?groupCode=CTE>. If you prefer to call, please follow these instructions: Call Central Reservations Office at (888) 696-4806 and ask for the *National Council of Teachers of English-AR* group rate. The group block code is *CTE*.

I look forward to working with and for the wonderful members of NCTEAR. Please feel free to contact me directly at [adixson@illinois.edu](mailto:adixson@illinois.edu).

*Adrienne*

## 2014 NCTEAR Associate Chair Elected!

**Doug Baker**, Professor of English Education at Eastern Michigan University, was elected as Associate Chair of NCTEAR. Doug is member of NCTEAR, NCTE, CEE and AERA. He served as editor of the *Language Arts Journal of Michigan* (LAJM) and is Chair of the Language and Social Process Special Interest Group of AERA. He is committed to working collaboratively with research colleagues, and early career scholars as well as teachers. He is currently exploring, with a colleague who teaches Literature, the relationship of English Education and Literature Education. His publications focus on issues of researching literacies and learning in an intergenerational art class, and on the importance of reflexivity in education research. In support of this nomination, he stated that “In challenging times such as these, the research base and its connection to practice is critical, and I would like the opportunity to contribute to NCTEAR as Associate Chair and eventually Chair. One of the key ideas I am committed to is compiling historical roots and perspectives of the group and inviting in and supporting new scholars and scholars from diverse communities. As a former high school English teacher, and now Professor of English Education, I welcome the challenge of coordinating and continuing to build this professional community.”

### Call for Nominations for NCTEAR Treasurer

Please consider serving NCTEAR in the position of Treasurer. The elected Treasurer will serve in the position for three years (2015-2018), beginning at the 2015 Midwinter conference, receiving mentorship from the current Treasurer, and then remaining on the board until the 2018 Midwinter conference, during which s/he will pass on the mentorship to the next elected Treasurer.

**Duties of the Treasurer:** The Treasurer serves a three-year term, and maintains the financial records of the Assembly and provides the Assembly with a permanent account of those records and reports to the Assembly every November during the business meeting convened at NCTE Annual Conference. The treasurer serves as the registration offices for the midwinter conference. The treasurer may spend funds of \$50 or less on routine Assembly expenses (e.g., postage), but may only spend funds in excess of \$50 with the approval of the chair and advisement of the Executive Committee. When the Assembly membership exceeds 350, the treasurer becomes the Assembly's third representative on the NCTE Board of Directors, unless the co-chairs govern the Assembly in which case the associate chair or chairs become(s) the Assembly's third representative.

You can self-nominate for Treasurer or nominate another. *Please consult with your nominee before sending forward his or her name.* Submit your nomination in the form of a brief (approximately 200 words) bio to [NCTEARSecretary@gmail.com](mailto:NCTEARSecretary@gmail.com). Interested members should also consider contacting Alecia Magnifico, the current Treasurer, at [alecia.magnifico@unh.edu](mailto:alecia.magnifico@unh.edu), as she can offer an experienced perspective on the

#### NCTE Assembly for Research

The NCTEAR came into existence in 1983 through an initiative of the steering committee of NCRL (then NCRE). The NCTEAR is affiliated with NCTE, though members of the NCTEAR do not need to belong to NCTE. Its membership is inclusive and open to any individual who wishes to join, therefore allowing graduate students, teachers, and other aspiring researchers the opportunity to participate in a research organization and its activities. The NCTEAR sponsors a workshop at the NCTE fall conference and its own independent midwinter conference. An updated NCTEAR constitution is available on its website at <http://nctear.org/content/constituion-updated-may-2014>.

#### 2013-2014 Executive Board

Adrienne Dixson,  
Ayanna Brown,  
Maria José Botelho,  
Alecia Magnifico,  
and Jayne Lammers



# NEWS FROM THE NCTEAR COMMUNITY

## Awards and Honors

James S. Chisholm was awarded an ALAN Foundation grant to support his "Multimodal Tools to Leverage Adolescents' Response to Young Adult Literature" project.

Jessica Zacher Pandya, with Maren Aukerman, will be co-editor of the Language Arts Research & Policy column for the next two years.

## Publications

Aukerman, M. & Zacher Pandya, J. (2013). Research and policy: Rethinking common answers to critical questions about classroom discourse. *Language Arts*, 91(1), 41-47.

Botelho, M. J., Kerekes, J., Jang, E., & Peterson, S. S. (2014). Assessing multiliteracies: Mismatches and opportunities. *Language and Literacy*, 16(1), 1-20.

Botelho, M. J., Young, S. L. B., & Nappi, T. (2014). Rereading Columbus: Critical multicultural analysis of multiple historical storylines. *Journal of Children's Literature*, 40(1), 41-51.

Chisholm, J. S., & Trent, B. (2013). Digital storytelling in a place-based composition course. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 57(4), 307-318.

Daiute, C. (2014). *Narrative inquiry: A dynamic approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishers.

Godley, A.J. (2013). Equivocal equity: The struggles of a literacy scholar, White middle-class urban school parent, and grassroots activist. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 48(2), 250-260.

Greene, S. (2013). *Race, community, and urban schools: Partnering with African American families*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Greene, S., Burke, K., & McKenna, M. (2013). Forms of voice: Exploring the empowerment of youth at the intersection of art and action." *The Urban Review*, 45, 311-334.

Kumasi, K. & Hill, R. F. (2013). Examining the hidden ideologies within cultural competence discourses among library and information science students: Implications for school library pedagogy. *School Libraries Worldwide*, 19(1), 128-139.

Kumasi, K. (2013). "The Library is Like Her House": Reimagining youth of color in LIS discourses. In Bernier, A. (Ed.), *Transforming young adult services: A reader for our age* (pp.103-113). Chicago, IL: Neal Schuman.

Paris, D. & Winn, M. T. (2014). *Humanizing research: Decolonizing qualitative inquiry with youth and communities*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishers.

Zacher Pandya, J. & Ávila, J. (Eds.) (2014). *Moving critical literacies forward: A new look at praxis across contexts*. New York, NY: Routledge.

