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**2016 NCTEAR  
Midwinter Conference**

**Location:**

**Eastern Michigan University  
Ypsilanti, MI**

**Date: February 5-7, 2016**

**NCTEAR**

National Council of Teachers of English  
Assembly for Research

**Newsletter**

**Spring 2015**

**2015 NCTEAR  
Midwinter Conference at  
Xavier University**



Adrienne Dixon of University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Chair of NCTEAR 2015, and Jamila Smith of Eastern Illinois University, Co-Chair, convened the Midwinter Conference at Xavier University. Jayne Lammers, Secretary of NCTEAR, and Kelly Byrd, a doctoral candidate at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Speech Language Pathologist in St. Louis Public Schools, registered conference participants, while Kevin Lawrence Henry, Jr., a Ph.D. candidate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Cecilia E. Suarez of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and Ivory M. Berry of Wright State University, welcomed conference participants and shared Mardi Gras beads and information about New Orleans. Over 130 researchers of languages and literacies spent the weekend in dialogue as they considered “Research at the Intersections of Race, Language, and Literacy in Context.”





## CONVERSATION CIRCLE:

### Students At the Center



**Students At the Center (SAC)** is an independent program that has worked in public schools in New Orleans since 1996. The students of SAC participate through English and elective writing and social studies classes in their schools. In addition to these daily classes, since Hurricane Katrina, SAC graduates have worked as key staff members, serving as resource teachers in public school classrooms, organizers for youth involvement, and producers of youth media.

For NCTEAR 2015, SAC participated in an intergenerational conversation circle that focused on working with youth and adults to understand the intersections of race, class and gender on language and literacy practices. The students collaborated with Carmen Kynard of John Jay College of Criminal Justice/CUNY, Jamal Cooks of San Francisco State University, Django Paris of Michigan State University, and Jamila Smith (from left to right, the adults in the photo to the right) about writing and other relevant literacy activities that connected to social justice and liberation in New Orleans and the diaspora. Jamila Smith facilitated this collaboration.

Xavier University Provost Loren J. Blanchard warmly welcomed the conference participants to campus. He shared 10 characteristics that distinguish Xavier University from other higher education institutions. Some them include: the University is the only university in the Western Hemisphere that was founded by a saint, Saint Katharine Drexel. It also is the only historically Black institution in the United States that is Catholic. Saint Katharine's belief guides the Xavier community: The purpose of teaching and learning is to enable graduates to become leaders whose work will contribute to making a more just and humane world. NCTEAR was at home.



Eleven SAC members, representing two New Orleans public high schools, presented their work. The students read their narratives based on their lived experiences and juxtaposed them with historical and sociopolitical information and commentary. They invited the conference participants and other SAC members to ask questions and provide feedback. In listening to their stories, one could not help but think about learning as embodied experience, a way of living emotionally and intellectually, individually and collectively.

The students' narratives demonstrated that understanding the present is a collective responsibility. These stories offered nuanced understandings of the present. Some of the themes reflected in SAC members' stories and poems read included: conversations with family members through writing; the effects of prison time on the entire family, not just the individual; public and private identities; and, the meaning of being Black in present-day America. These stories showed that young people "know what is going on," said Jamal Cooks. It is also evident that young people are "growing up in multiple Americas," commented Judith Green. These life narratives created spaces for dialogue and critical and emotional engagement as these young writers represented their experiences.

Some of the students discussed how writing "forced [them] to look at" the issues at hand, helping them be more self reflective. Others commented on how writing gave them courage "to write down thoughts that [they] may have not had the guts to say." Compilations of SAC writing is available at [www.sacnola.com](http://www.sacnola.com).

## PAST CHAIR'S PANEL



On Saturday morning, Ayanna Brown of Elmhurst College, the 2013-2014 Chair, facilitated a dialogue among Stuart Greene of University of Notre Dame, Arnetha Ball of Stanford University, and conference participants. Stuart presented his research on "practicing democracy" with youth, and Arnetha shared her work on teacher education across national boundaries.

## Further Dialogue



### Stuart Green's Critical Questions

- Are we equipping all students with the capacity to reach their highest potential as citizens in a democracy?
- Are youth learning to be reflective, empathic individuals who understand their own convictions and have the know-how to act on those convictions?
- Are they learning to see that raising questions is as important as trying to find answers?
- Are they learning to pursue equity in the face of injustice and inequality?
- Are they learning how to use their own possibility and generosity to build a stronger, more resilient and inclusive democracy?
- Are we creating spaces to foster youth's sense of agency as citizens in a democracy, particularly as youth learn to take on varied community, familial, and economic roles?

Stuart invited his young participants to consider what they needed as they used their lived experiences as texts, while creating democratic spaces where youth can change laws, speak up for themselves, and empower the community. Stuart said that young adults came to understand their roles in the neighborhood through community walks and reaching out to their neighbors with the goal of “translating their commitments into action.” He argues that children and young adults can participate in their communities if educators re-imagine school and after-school programs as spaces for voice, advocacy, and social action. These contexts can create many opportunities for “scaffolding democratic ways of being in the world.” He maintains that knowing the neighborhood’s assets can bring the community together to formulate and solve problems. He offered several critical questions for literacy researchers and educators to consider. (See sidebar in previous page.)

Arethna shared some of the findings from her research in the United States and South Africa. She argues that teacher education is “an area of hope” internationally. She reminded the group that half of the folks who become teachers leave the field within five years of service – two million will leave teaching in the next decade. This is an “unprecedented opportunity for change.” In preservice and teacher education, she claims, we can have concerted efforts to change how teachers perceive children, language, race, and classroom discourse. Professional learning can change teachers’ perspectives by helping them to think metacognitively, critically, and generatively. She reminded the group that listening to students’ experiences embodies generativity. Teacher education should “instill indignant passion” in practitioners to be agents of change.

Gloria Ladson-Billings, who attended the panel discussion, proposed that researchers and educators need to move away from the notion of winning in terms of social justice work because winning presumes someone has to lose: “Struggle is human activity.” She implored the group to “relish the dignity of the struggle” and asked: “How do we prepare teachers and students for advocacy and dignity of struggle? How do we empower new teachers in times when measurement practices silence them?”

Judith Green recommended taking an ethnographic approach. She asked: “How do we come together across traditions to show these complexities and dialogues of possibility?” Empirical studies can help researchers and teachers understand.

Django Paris suggested that researchers and teachers foster intergenerational relationships. “How can we join young people’s activism and engage in intergenerational dialogue?”

Gloria urged the conference participants to be “secretaries of this movement.” Researchers should participate as witnesses and resources.

Ayanna reminded the audience that conversations are central to NCTEAR and invited the group to continue the conversation and consider what it means for their local context, while allowing themselves to be uncomfortable and unsettled.



## Glimpses from Break-Out Sessions

### Break-Out Session: Language & Power



Xiqiao Wang, Titiana Joseph, and Cecilia E. Suarez

#### **“Hanging onto a Big Thigh” – Remixing Translocal Discourses and Constructing Translingual Identities”**

by Xiqiao Wang of Michigan State University

Xiqiao maintained that other languages are changing in relationship to “global Englishes.”

#### **“The Challenges of English Language Learners in a Catholic School”**

by Titiana Joseph of University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Titiana claimed that Catholic schools serve a high percentage of Spanish speakers but do not enlist students’ cultural and linguistic resources for classroom learning. She argues for Catholic education infused with ESL pedagogy.

#### **“eRACed Tongues: Latina College Students Navigating Bilingualism within their Latin-Spanish/English Dual Identity”**

by Cecilia E. Suarez of University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Cecilia shared that the research literature lumps Mexican-American students together. First-generation college students “live intersectionality,” that is, multiple identities that are often considered in isolation from each other.

### Break-Out Session: Teacher Education



From left to right:  
Marsha Liaw, Maria José Botelho, Sunny Lau, Malayna Bernstein, and Kristine J. Massey.

### **“Text/Identity/Curriculum Work: The Language and Literacy Opportunities of**

**Text Production in the Bilingual Elementary Classroom”** by Maria José Botelho and Marsha Liaw of University of Massachusetts Amherst and Sunny Lau of Bishops University in Québec.

Maria José, Marsha, and Sunny argued that text production, in this case, of a bilingual ABC book, does not only affirm the child producer, but also how making texts creates spaces for negotiating and performing identities and generating relevant curriculum and meaningful opportunities for literacy teaching.

### **“From “Border Crossing” to a Transnational Perspective: Re-Envisioning Literacy Practices”**

by Kristine J. Massey of University of Texas

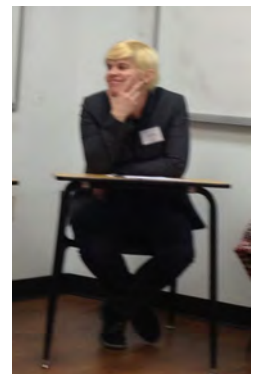
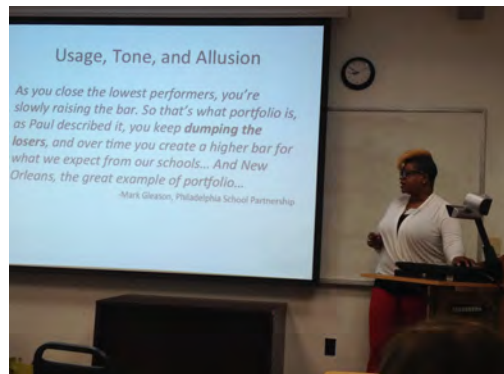
Kristine claimed that the permeability across national borders produces transnational literacies and experiences that can be resources for classroom learning.

### **“Harnessing the Power and Dissecting the Foundations of Collaborative Research”**

by Malayna Bernstein and colleagues

Malayna maintained that collaboration affords opportunities to negotiate and reconsider research questions and theoretical framework, and complementary methods as well as offer textured representations of research.

## **Break-Out Session: Place**



## **Mustafa Hersi, Camika Royal, and Laura Jones**

### **“Saudi Arabia: Disguised Racism in a Nation of Many Tribes”**

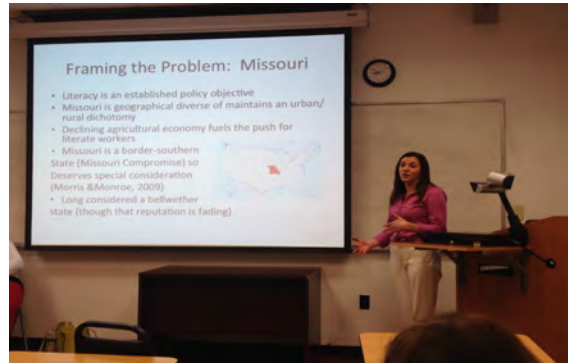
by Mustafa Hersi of University of New Mexico

Mustafa considered how race is “standardized” in elementary school English textbooks in Saudi Arabia. He argued that the “we’re-all-the-same’ discourse of Islam” interrupts the questioning of racism and makes it invisible and normalized.

### **“Nationwide Reform, Local Vernacular: The Clashing Language of Education Policymakers and Community Stakeholders”**

by Laura Jones of Montclair State University and Camika Royal of Loyola University Maryland

Camika and Laura’s work shows that the variability in commitment of the community works against community interest.



Nancy Dixon and Elizabeth Thorne Wallington

**“Marginalized ‘Mexicans’: The Growing New Orleans Latino Community”**

by Nancy Dixon of Dillard University

Nancy argued that New Orleans “has a ways to go” to serve children of undocumented workers from Central American countries. Latinos are lumped together as Mexicans within this context. Families are marginalized and ghettoized, and children are forced to speak English in school.

**“Thinking Geospatially: Geographic Variance of Effects on Reading Achievement”**

by Elizabeth Thorne Wallington of Washington University in St. Louis

Elizabeth claimed that the inclusion of geography in statistics shows the importance of location among variable relationships. For example, this combination shows the spatial dependence of race and class across the state.

**Symposium**



Judith Green, W. Douglas Baker, and Diana Arya

**“On What is Learned Through Interdisciplinary/Transdisciplinary Challenges: Multiple Perspectives and Multiple Sites for Learning”**

by Judith Green of University of California Santa Barbara, W. Douglas Baker of Eastern Michigan University, and Diana Arya of University of California Santa Barbara

Chair: Huili Hong of Eastern Tennessee State University

Discussant: David Bloome of The Ohio State University

The symposium presentations explored the affordances and challenges of interdisciplinary work (e.g., a course of literary theory for teachers designed by a teacher educator and an English literature faculty; a science course designed by a science teacher educator and an anthropologist) – “common interests and uncommon knowledges” – carrying out inquiries and constructing arguments across disciplines and discourses. Ethnographic practice creates spaces for “slowing down the process to see what is happening” as collaborators become cultural guides for each other. The presenters maintain that the collaborative process can deepen teaching and research, creating opportunities for new thinking, new practices as the collaborators teach and research ethnographically.

As the discussant, David problematized the papers. He echoed David Barton’s critique of “community of practice” and invited the presenters and conference participants to rethink the notion that disciplines socialize people (“what is done to people”) and consider how teachers and researchers use the disciplines to make sense of phenomena (“what people do”). He argued that researchers and teachers need to consider education to understand “what it means to be human in a social world” and consider power relations across the disciplines. Lastly, David invited the group to question the borders of transdisciplinary work – how they are separate and joined. He said that “holding contradictory thoughts is a human potential.”



David Bloome in dialogue with Judith Greene.

## ***Note from the Editor***

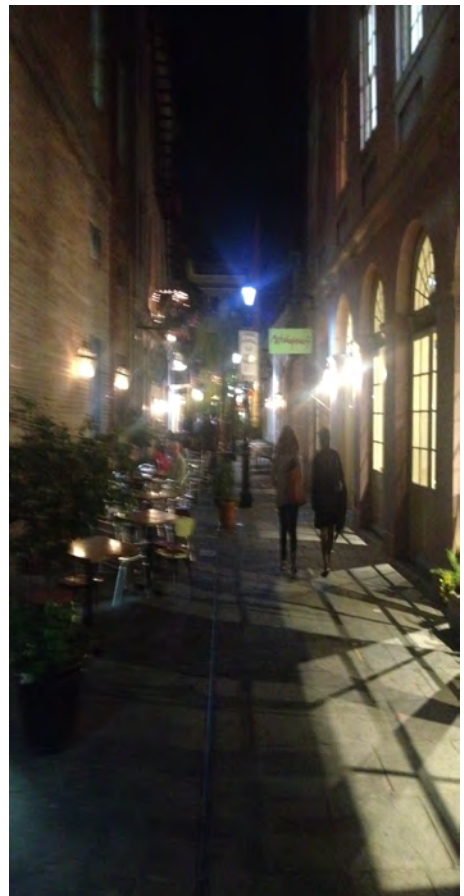
Dear NCTEAR Member,

This spring issue of the *NCTEAR Newsletter* represents my listening, viewing, and participating during the 2015 Midwinter Conference. I took copious notes and many photographs as I attended sessions. While you will find direct quotations here and there in my reporting, the presenters’ and participants’ language use was a resource for my writing as I paraphrased their contributions. My goal was to capture the essence of each session. I apologize in advance if I have misrepresented and/or underrepresented any of these conversations.

The “News from the NCTEAR Community” column (the last page) is a compilation of the publication information members sent to me in response to the February call. The fall newsletter, which will be published in September 2015, is the next opportunity for you to disseminate your news to our community. Please look for the call for news that I will send out two weeks prior to the newsletter’s circulation.

I would like to thank my doctoral advisee Marsha Liaw for her tech support as I explored a different medium for producing this newsletter. Marsha also took the photographs from the Students-at-the-Center Conversation Circle. Thank you!

*Maria José Botelho*





## Sunday Opening Plenary Session: Notes from a Conversation Circle



From left to right: Elaine “Docta E” Richardson, Lisa Delpit, Keith Gilyard, Anne Haas Dyson, Gloria Ladson-Billings, and Django Paris (facilitator).

**Django:** How do place, race, and art intersect in your own work?

**Gloria:** Place and space are not interchangeable. New Orleans has a sense of place; it was difficult to leave it during the storm. Schools are spaces, not places. When you uproot people and put people in spaces, problems develop. However, schools can become places. SAC is a good example.

**Lisa:** Children speak through their artwork. The arts are the language of children.

**Keith:** Art is the language that the world speaks. Art is persuasive. Artistic persuasion. Artistic mindset.

**Anne:** Place and space and lives of young children. Children are treated as spaces, targets of socialization. Children are social agents. Children are much more than apprentices; they are also actors.

**Django:** Where are those artistic places that we can join?

**Elaine:** After-school clubs can be places where African American girls are free to talk. Literacies are compartmentalized in schools but they are broadly defined in after-school clubs. Eleven-, twelve-, and thirteen-year-old girls engage with being Black girls in the United States: How do I know who I am? Why we can't wait for a movement: Girls are labeled and criminalized. Pregnancy and parenting make it difficult for African American girls to participate in schools. The club belongs to and supports each other. Girls can do critical discourse analysis but the school doesn't think what we're doing is academic. Young people's lived experience *is* the curriculum.

**Django:** How can our methodologies join teachers and communities in the movement?

**Gloria:** The present movement is exciting because it draws on art. But we need to be cautious about “hashtag activism,” though: From the comfort of our homes we're in the movement as we “post as proxy.” We need to get people together who experience the same trauma and augment with critical race theory and generate “counter-narratives, not therapy.” We need to explore the context of the issue.

**Keith:** We need to generate curriculum on experiences in the space.

**Anne:** Taking the middle-class child's experience as the norm narrows childhood and normalizes resources. Let's focus on the particularity of children's lives. There are childhoods.

**Lisa:** Black children are not viewed as children, not as the future. They are viewed as a way to make money. What kind of methodology? We need to spend time with the voices that have not been heard.

**Keith:** Let's carry out case studies of places.

**Elaine:** Research the complexities of "pulling yourself up."

**Gloria:** I supervised teachers in Bay Area. I observed a language arts activity about subject/verb agreement. Children had to circle the right verb. One child always got it wrong. The child then figured out "if I think this is right, then it is wrong." How can we keep children from turning themselves inside out, remaking themselves?

**Django:** How do we motivate teachers?

**Lisa:** It's not the person; it's what society has told us. It's more difficult for African Americans. Are the children as successful we want them to be? Of course not. Why don't we have higher expectations?

**Gloria:** We have a notion of school that it will remain the same. Research youth spaces outside of school and democratize digital technologies across the world. We have a responsibility to study when and how children are growing up.

**Anne:** Teachers should see the children in front of them, not the imaginary ones. Children have knowledges. They have a responsibility to know what children know. Let children enjoy and study the schools that are becoming. Let them be ethnographers of their own childhoods.

**Elaine:** Teachers need to be ethnographers of their practice.



#### 2014-2015 Executive Board

Adrienne Dixon (Chair), Ayanna Brown (Past Chair), Maria José Botelho, Alecia Magnifico, and Jayne Lammers

#### NCTE Assembly for Research

The NCTEAR came into existence in 1983 through an initiative of the steering committee of NCRLL (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>.



## Letter from W. Douglas Baker 2015-2016 Chair

Mark your calendars for *NCTEAR 2016*! The annual conference will be hosted by Eastern Michigan University (EMU) in Ypsilanti on February 5 to 7, 2016. Originally founded in 1849 as a Normal School—the sixth teacher education institution in the nation and the first west of the Allegheny Mountains, EMU became the first tax-supported college in Michigan open to both men and women. Now a comprehensive, public university, EMU is located in historic Ypsilanti, about 10 miles east of downtown Ann Arbor; 36 miles west of Detroit, just 20 minutes from Detroit Metropolitan Airport; and, 38 miles from Ontario, Canada.

As we begin preparations for next year, we are in the process of focusing on how literacy research informs public perceptions of education and methodological discussions of transparency. Examining themes from 21<sup>st</sup> century NCTEAR conferences, we see a consistent focus on intersections of literacy research in education and sociocultural and sociopolitical issues and policies. For example, “Research at the Intersections of Race, Language, & Literacy in Context” (2015), “Literacy, Culture, Learning, and Life in Schools: Research and Designs for Change” (2009), “Literacy as a Civil Right: Reclaiming Social Justice in Literacy Research and Teaching” (2006), and “Researching the Relationship of Language, Literacies, and Power” (2002).

A focus on methodology is also apparent. For example, “New Literacies for New Times: Bakhtinian Perspectives on Language, Literacy, and Learning for the 21st Century” (2001), “Literacies across Time, Space, and Place: New Directions in Literacy Research for Political Action” (2005) and “Methodology Matters: Moving Literacy Research Forward” (2010). We are more than 15 years into the 21<sup>st</sup> century! As we reflect on our collective past as an organization, the current state of literacy education and research, and envision what and how literacy research can contribute to K-16 pedagogy, how can we make our methodologies more transparent and publicly available? How can we help to (re)shape public dialogue on educational literacy research? And how can senior and mid-career scholars encourage and engage with early-career researchers to make visible influential research and to contribute to current inquiries and discussions?

As we prepare for next year’s conference, consider some of these questions, among others, as we all look forward to scholarly dialogues that NCTEAR conferences reflect, ones that are “grounded in collaboration and forward thinking,” as Ayanna Brown, chair of the 2014 gathering said, and as the recent conference, chaired by Adrienne Dixson, further demonstrated. We look forward to seeing you next year in Michigan!

***W. Douglas Baker***

## NEWS FROM THE NCTEAR COMMUNITY

### Publications

**Bernstein, M.** (2014). Three planes of practice: Examining intersections of reading identity and pedagogy. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 13(3), pp. 110-129.

(<http://edlinked.soe.waikato.ac.nz/research/files/etpc/files/2014v13n3art6.pdf>)

**Botelho, M. J.** (in press). Learning from/with multicultural children's literature. In He, M. F., Schultz, B. & Schubert, W. H., *Guide to curriculum in education*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishers.

**Compton-Lilly, C.** (2014). The development of writing habitus: A ten-year case study of a young writer. *Written Communication*, 31(4), 371-403.

This work is based on the author's longitudinal study that followed the children from *Reading Families* (Teachers College Press, 2003). The article follows a gifted African American writer as he moves from grade one through high school and raises important questions about urban schools and social justice.

**Peter's Self-Portrait in Grade 1**



**Flynn, J. E. & Lewis, W.** (in press). Multi-modal composition in teacher education: From consumers to producers. In Baylen, D. & D'Alba, A. *Essentials of teaching and integrating visual and media literacy: Visualizing learning*. New York, NY: Springer.

In the chapter, the authors discuss how they use digital tools in their English education methods courses to foster understanding of teaching and of literature.

**Lewis, M. A.** (2014). Co-characters in an immigration story: Sixth grade students' narrative interpretations of literature and life. *Middle Grades Research Journal*, 9(1), 19-34.

**Lewis, M. A., & Durand, E. S.** (2014). Sexuality as risk and resistance in young adult literature. In C. Hill (Ed.), *The critical merits of young adult literature: Coming of age* (pp. 38-54). New York, NY: Routledge.

Sarigianides, S. T., **Lewis, M. A.**, & Petrone, R. (Eds.). (2015). Re-thinking "adolescence" to re-imagine English [Special issue]. *English Journal*, 104(3).

Petrone, R., Sarigianides, S. T., & **Lewis, M. A.** (in press). The *Youth Lens*: Analyzing adolescence/ts in literary texts. *Journal of Literacy Research*.