

The Association for Constructivist Teaching

January 2012 Newsletter, v. 3. , n. 1

From the President:

Dear ACT friends and colleagues,

We had a wonderful conference in Houston, hosted by Board Member Carolyn Black and her teachers at the University of Houston Charter School. Visits at the school were exciting. We were able to see the children in action as well as have many present especially for our group, to share their view of their learning in this special environment. We thank the entire Houston committee for their hard work to make our conference a great success!

Jim Pelech was voted to be our President-Elect. He will take office in October.

*Our 2012 ACT Conference will be in Johnson City this year on **October 19 & 20**. We had a great time having you all in my city in 2008 and look forward to another great event at the Millennium Centre.*

- *We have a pre-conference day session:*
 - **October 18, in the AM**, set up to visit two early childhood classrooms where children are exploring ramps and pathways, hosted by member Rosemary Geiken, as well as a panel discussion among a couple or a few board members, TBA.
- *We have a pre-board meeting for committee work*
 - **October 18 beginning at 2:00 or 3:00 PM** (to be confirmed)
 - **Board Member dinner to follow this meeting**
 - *We would like all Board Members to attend our committee work session/*
 - *We invite any members wishing to be active with our organization to attend our committee work session.*

Newsletter changes:

We are going through some shifts with our newsletter, inspired by the meetings of the mind of Board Member/Communications Chair Kate Chechak and web manager Mike Garrett. They generated an idea for moving us into the 21st century with a blog! It took a while to organize the blog authoring process and to coordinate our blogging with our already established newsletter format. This process forced a lapse in creating the newsletters in a timely fashion this year, thus the late

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arrival of this January volume, which you will be receiving with our June newsletter.

The change of Newsletter format is this:

- **Board Member interviews and From the Field articles** will be posted on our blog AND on published in a PDF formatted newsletter.
- **PDF newsletters** will be sent to all members and are available in an archive on our members' only page.

Our Blog will include:

- more than the Board Member Interviews and From the Field articles:

- *An elementary science blog from Board Member Jennifer Thompson*
- *A technology for early education blog from Board Member Kate Chechak*
- *A science blog from member Jackie Grennon-Brooks*
- *A blog on modeling from member Mike Garrett*
- *Updates from the President*

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We are replacing our Yahoo Groups discussion forum with our blog and with Facebook.

Asking help of Board Members and General Membership:

- *Visit our blog site:*
<http://constructivistblog.wordpress.com/>
- *Click on follow so that new posts will go to your email*
- *We want to encourage dialog among our members and others on the internet who may want to join after being involved on our blog*
- **IMPORTANT!** – *get colleagues you know to follow our blog!*

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Member's Blogs & Sites

- [Integrate Tech](#)
- [There are no circles](#)
- [innovativece](#)

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Thank you all who attended our meeting in Houston and for all who continue to support our organization.

Jane Tingle Broderick, ACT President

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BOARD MEMBER INTERVIEW *with Dr. Kathryn Castle; Professor, Chuck & Kim Watson Endowed Chair in Education, & Graduate Coordinator, School of Teaching and Curriculum Leadership, Oklahoma State University (kathryn.castle@okstate.edu)*

By Kimberly D. Cassidy, PhD Student, East Tennessee State University

KDC: Can you share a bit about your background and what brought you into your profession?

KC: My first job at age 11 was babysitting. I became a child watcher even at that young age as I would continuously try to understand what children were thinking. As a young adult, I was a caregiver for my nephew during his early childhood. I observed him often including a time when he defied his mother and I tried to figure out why he did this: was it defiance or something else? Through my observations I concluded his desire for a certain sensory experience exceeded his fear of his mother's reprimands. I write about this experience in my new book, *Early Childhood Teacher Research*. I have been a teacher all my life. The career direction I took was related to the culture of the times when I grew up plus the influence of many wonderful educators along the way. Growing up in the 50s and 60s gave women three career choices: housewife, nurse, or teacher. During my term as president of the high school medical club, I arranged a field trip to the local teaching hospital. Viewing the cadaver and passing around the organs were enough to convince me that the medical field was not for me! Today women have many more career opportunities than when I grew up.

I had a triple major in college: French, psychology and education. I was chosen from 150 students in my sophomore psychology class to join my professor Dr. Robert Weiss, in working in his social psychology lab as a research assistant where I worked for the duration of my college years. Although the focus of his work was on social learning theory (Hull) and not constructivism, I learned a great deal from conducting experiments on college students wanting extra credit and writing up research reports under his supervision. My master's program in educational psychology was steeped in behaviorism. So many things I learned in that program contradicted what I knew about children's thinking. You could say I rebelled against behaviorism even though I completed my thesis research on young children's concept identification that was published in the journal of *Child Development*.

I taught at all levels during my early career as an educator but was captivated most by the early childhood level. My fascination with children and their thinking motivated me to study constructivism in a doctoral program. My doctoral degree

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from the University of Virginia in 1975 was in Curriculum & Instruction: Early Childhood Education/Child Development and I did my dissertation research from Constructivist perspective on the topic of the relationship of peer interaction young children's role taking ability, a topic researched by Piaget. After obtaining an academic position at Oklahoma State University, I replicated the study and published it in the *Journal of Genetic Psychology*. The article was selected to be in the Piagetian Archives in Geneva, Switzerland.

I've been in my current position for 36 years where I am a professor and the Chuck and Kim Watson Endowed Chair in Education and serve as Graduate Coordinator for the School of Teaching and Curriculum Leadership. For half my career I taught and supervised undergraduate early childhood students/student teachers and graduate students. For the second half, I helped develop the graduate program in Curriculum Studies where I am today. My job primarily involves working with graduate students and doing research on teaching and learning.

KDC: Can you share information about your teaching (ideas on how to share - what makes it unique to you, how does it inform your research, how does it align with current trends in education and constructivist pedagogy / principles)? Can you share information about your teaching -ideas on how to share, what makes it unique to you, how does it inform your research, how does it align with current trends in education and constructivist pedagogy / principles? Can you share about your research and about what began your interest in your research?

KC: My teaching, research, and service are all interconnected. Although my student evaluations are consistently very good, I am never content with my teaching and I never teach the same course in the same way twice. I have tried numerous teaching approaches to better engage students and provoke their thinking. Early in my career, I taught college students preparing to be early childhood teachers in similar ways to how I taught children using activity centers and project work in order to model for them. As teacher and student teacher supervisor, I involved my students in creating course objectives, assignments, and evaluation rubrics for the class. Students resisted strongly telling me that they thought I should just tell them what to do because that was what I was getting paid for! It was only at the end of their student teaching experience that some students began to understand the importance of their own active role in the direction of the course as they connected it to what they were attempting to do with children. These students had to negotiate a plan with their cooperating teachers for what they would do during their student teaching experience. I wrote about the various ways they undertook this negotiation in an article, *Student Teacher Autonomy: Negotiation of Student Teaching Experiences* (1991, *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*).

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Through study with Connie Kamii at one of her summer Piaget institutes and a sabbatical spent with Rheta DeVries in Houston and with the Project Construct teachers in Missouri, I learned about the importance of autonomy to knowledge construction and professional decision making. These experiences greatly influenced my subsequent teaching and research. I use case method in my classes to help students share perspectives, consider issues from multiple viewpoints, and problem solve within a safe, comfortable classroom atmosphere. I also encourage students to write their own cases based on issues in their own teaching experiences.

I use approaches drawn from Joyce and Weil's Models of Teaching. I particularly like the Syntectics model for encouraging creative problem solving. My classes involve much collaborative group work. Initially I spend time creating classroom community drawing from DeVries work on the meaning of classroom community. I have found that creating community early in the course results in more meaningful student learning, sharing of ideas, and risk taking. I have found the use of narrative writing to be most effective for students to realistically connect with course content. As van Manen (1991) said, "the writing is the research". Autobiographical narrative and teacher narrative writing encourage student reflection and assimilation/accommodation of course content. I also conduct memory research with my graduate students in class. One of my classes produced a book of Memories of Early Schooling. I co-authored an article, Memories of Early Schooling, with one of the students involved in the project. This article was published in the *Curriculum & Teaching Dialogue Journal*, 2 (1), (2000), 20-25. Several of my students have published other assignments they did in my class.

My research efforts are closely tied to my teaching. I continue to use project work. For example, over the course of three semesters I studied how graduate students construct knowledge of constructivism in project work on a study of the moon through three lunar phases, similar to what Eleanor Duckworth wrote about in her book *The Having of Wonderful Ideas*. It was a fascinating study that really enhanced my students' and my own learning. Analysis of the data helped me identify several phases students go through in constructing their knowledge of constructivism. I published this work in the 1997 *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 18(1), 55-67. Most of my published work has been focused on how children and adults construct knowledge or on teaching for knowledge construction. For example, I had an eye-opening experience during one graduate class when I tried everything I knew to engage one of my students to no avail. I felt like a failure until I read her final paper that documented how she was trying her best to make sense

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of the class. She was not accustomed to being an active learner. She wrote about her application of the constructivist principles she was learning to her own work. It was a wonderful paper. We had been having a parallel monologue throughout the entire semester about the struggles each was undergoing in the class. I learned that student silence does not always indicate a lack of interest and noninvolvement in the course. The student and I co-authored an article, Silence, Culture, and Constructivism in which we document what happened and how we dealt with it and finally came together in our understanding (see the 2002 *The Constructivist*, 14(1), 21-26).

The theme of autonomy threads through my work. Kamii's work on this topic has always inspired me to wonder how children and teachers develop autonomy. I have studied and written several articles on this topic including a poignant piece describing how second grade children and their teacher demonstrated autonomy in their reactions following the Oklahoma City bombing. On the day of the bombing teachers were told not to discuss it and to shield students from news coverage about it, so that some children returned home that day not knowing that their parent had been killed in the blast. The teacher I wrote about did what she thought was the morally right thing to do in discussing what happened with her students who had actually felt and heard the blast and wondered what terrible event had occurred and whether they would be safe. Over the course of a few weeks the children in this classroom channeled their energies and autonomy in making sense of the tragedy and doing things to benefit the survivors and the rescuers (see Children of the Heartland, 1996, *Childhood Education*, 72(4), 226-231). I grappled with the multiple meanings of the term autonomy and its constructivist meaning in an article, The Meaning of Autonomy in Early Childhood Teacher Education (*Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 25 (4), 3-10). I studied autonomy in children, student teachers, and teacher researchers. I created the designation of *pedagogical researcher* to get at the relationship of autonomy to teacher research (see Autonomy through Pedagogical Research, 2006, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 22(8), 1094-1103).

Another theme in my teaching and research is the focus on teacher research. Years ago the Missouri Project Construct teachers impressed me with their ability to research their own teaching and its impact on student learning despite resistance from other teachers and in spite of mandates coming from the accountability movement. Gradually I realized that teacher research is very slowly and quietly reforming schooling from the inside. I decided to propose courses in teacher research in our graduate teacher education program. The proposed courses were approved and I have been teaching them for several years. I teach both master's and doctoral level courses in teacher research. Students engage in reflection, questioning, literature review, and planning of their own teacher research studies. I

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have always done teacher research on my own teaching in order to improve it. I wondered if other early childhood teacher educators conducted their own teacher research and encouraged their students to learn about it and do it. I conducted a two-year study and am in the process of analyzing data. I surveyed and interviewed early childhood teacher educators about the extent to which they teach about, engage in, and do teacher research. I also did a review of the history of articles published in the *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*. So far I have found that early childhood teacher educator teacher research is alive and well and that about one fifth of the content of the journal has been reports of this research. I have found increasing numbers of doctoral students conducting teacher research dissertations. One of my advisees, Dr. Sandra Bequette, received the National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators 2010 Outstanding Dissertation Award for her teacher research dissertation on kindergarten children's math talk.

My most recent teaching and research efforts focus on using protocols in my own teaching. Protocols are ways groups, such as a graduate class, can collaboratively work together to have a structured conversation about an issue or about examples of student work and what it might mean. I became interested in using protocols when I became acquainted with the National Writing Project and its local affiliate in my university community. I am currently engaged in a two-year study of using protocols in my own teaching. From a constructivist perspective, protocols are simultaneously prescriptive, highly structured, and focused while they are also very freeing and transformative in how they open up thinking to new possibilities that would not occur otherwise. For example, in the courses I teach on teacher research, I have experienced the powerful effect of the Inquiry Circles protocol on enhancing the research questions students generate for their teacher research projects. Prior to engaging in the protocol, students' teacher research questions tend to be rather broad, unwieldy, and not focused much on their own professional work. Students were merely coming up with research questions because it was a class assignment. Participation in the Inquiry Circles protocol transformed their questions into questions that were more realistic and much more focused on their own professional work. I think it is the narrative component of this protocol that makes such a big difference. They are asked to write and share a narrative of a time in their professional lives when they felt they made a difference and felt professionally strong. Focusing on what is positive about their work helps them find researchable questions worth exploring that will actually benefit their work.

KDC: Can you share about your service?

KC: I currently serve on three editorial boards and as a reviewer for six journals. I am a member of the NAEYC Steering Committee on Teacher Research and review for their teacher research journal, *Voices of Practitioners*. I just finished a two year

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term as a Governing Board member for the National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators. I serve on the Governing Board of the Association for Constructivist Teaching. I work informally in elementary schools with teachers who do teacher research. I serve as a mentor and assistant in all aspects of the research process.

Books:

- Castle, K. (2012). *Early Childhood Teacher Research: From Questions to Results*. New York: Routledge.
- Branscombe, A., Castle, K., Dorsey, A., Surbeck, E., & Taylor, J. (2003). *Early Childhood Curriculum, A Constructivist Perspective*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Branscombe, A., Castle, K., Dorsey, A., Surbeck, E., & Taylor, J. (2000). *Early Childhood Education, A Constructivist Perspective*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Castle, Kathryn. (1998). *Cool Junk and Games Rule*, two children's books. Danbury, CT: Creative Thinkers, Inc.
- Swick, K. and Castle, K. (Eds.) (1986). *Acting on What We Know: Guidelines for Developing Effective Programs for Young Children*. Publication of the Southern Association on Children Under Six.
- Castle, Kathryn. (1982). *The Infant and Toddler Handbook*. Atlanta: Humanics.

Book Chapters and Peer Reviewed Journal Articles:

- Castle, Kathryn. (1981). A Language Model for Moral Development, chapter in *Exploring Early Childhood Education: Theory and Practice*, Margot Kaplan-Sanoff, (Ed.) MacMillan Co., pp. 276-285.
- Castle, Kathryn and Douglas B. Aichele (1994). Professional Development and Teacher Autonomy. Chapter 1 in *1994 National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Yearbook: Professional Development for Teachers of Mathematics*. Reston, VA: NCTM.
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- Rollins, Howard and Kathryn Castle. (1973). Dimensional Preference Pertaining and Attention in Children's Concept Identification, *Child Development*, 44, 363-366.
- Castle, Kathryn and Herbert Richards. (1979). Adult/Peer Interactions and Role Taking Ability Among Preschool Children, *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, October; Abstract in *Resources in Education*, November 1978.
- Grant, Kay and Castle, Kathryn. (1990). Theory to Practice: Student Teachers' Construction of Knowledge. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, #34, Vol. 11:1, pp. 13-14.
- Castle, Kathryn. (1990). Children's Invented Games. *Childhood Education*, Vol. 67, #2, pp. 82-85.
- Castle, Kathryn and Meyer, Jane. (1991). Student Teacher Autonomy: Negotiation of Student Teaching Experiences. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, #37, Vol. 12:1, p. 8. Also appeared in *Positively Impacting Educational Practices Through Research*, Proceedings of Oklahoma Education, Research Symposium VI, L. Ivey and N. O'Donnell (Eds.), May 3, 1991
- Castle, Kathryn and Rahhal, Kelly (1992). Moving Toward Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Primary Teaching." *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education* #40, Vol. 13:1, pp. 3-6.
- Castle, Kathryn and Rogers, Karen (1993-94). Rule Creating in a Constructivist Classroom Community. *Childhood Education*, Vol. 70: 2, pp. 77-80.
- Castle, Kathryn. (1995). Forming Partnerships for Action Research, *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 16(1), 18-20
- Castle, Kathryn, Beasley, Lori, & Skinner, Linda. (1996). Children of the Heartland, *Childhood Education*, Vol. 72, #4, 226-231.
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- Castle, Kathryn. (1998). Children's Rule Knowledge In Invented Games, *Journal of Research In Childhood Education*, 12 (2), 197-209.

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 - Castle, Kathryn and Ethridge, Elizabeth A. (2003). Urgently Needed: Autonomous Early Childhood Teacher Educators. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 24 (2), 111-118.
 - Castle, Kathryn. (2004). The Meaning of Autonomy in Early Childhood Teacher Education. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 25 (4), 3-10.
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 - Brown, P., Castle, K., Rogers, K., Feuerhelm, K., & Chimblo, S. (2007). The Nature of Primary Teaching: Body, Space, Time, and Relationships. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 28(1), 3-16.
 - Castle, Kathryn & Needham, J. (2007). First Graders' Understanding of Measurement. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 35(3), 215-221.
 - Castle, Kathryn & Russell, Keri (2008). Honoring Children's Mathematical Constructions. *The Constructivist*, 19(1).
 - Castle, K., & Paris, C. (2010). Early Childhood Teacher Educator Teacher Research. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 31(3), 203-206.
 - Ellis, C., & Castle, Kathryn. (2010). Teacher Research as Continuous Process Improvement. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 18(4), 271-285.

Favorite Resources:

- Christine Chaille and Lory Britain, 1997, *The Young Child as Scientist*, 2nd Ed., New York: Longman.
- Anything written by Rheta DeVries (*Programs of Early Education; Moral Classrooms, Moral Children*)
- Anything written by Connie Kamii (*Young Children Reinvent Arithmetic* series)
- Jean Piaget's *The Moral Judgment of the Child*, 1965, New York: The Free Press.
- Piaget's article: Causality, or How Do We Interpret the Phenomena of the World?, Seventh Conversation in Jean-Claude Bringuier's *Conversations with Jean Piaget*, 1980, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Max van Manen's *Researching Lived Experiences*, 1990, New York: State University of New York Press.

JOURNAL UPDATE

Amy Malkus reports that there are translators helping us to overcome our delay due to Spanish translations for several already accepted articles. We have two instructors at East Tennessee State University helping with this project and anticipate publication of our next journal this summer. Several articles are already in review for a journal we hope to publish by December.

- Any members who would like to serve as reviewers can please contact Amy so that their names can be added to our list of reviewers: malkus@etsu.edu
- We ask our members to please submit articles and encourage colleagues to submit! Our goal is to build to publishing bi-annually, and build from there.
- Contact Amy with a proposal or submission advice: malkus@etsu.edu

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FROM THE FIELD: *Introducing ideas and activities from ACT Members in the field*

Contributed by: *Cathy Landy, East Tennessee State University Doctoral Fellow & Vicky Flessner, Director, Highland Plaza United Methodist Preschool, Hixson TN*

Highland Plaza: A Place Where Kids Reach for the Sky

If a child never....experiences the richness of nature, what happens to that child? ~ Richard Louv (author of *No Child Left Inside* and *The Nature Principle*).

Highland Plaza United Methodist Preschool (HPUMP) is located in the Hixson area of Chattanooga, Tennessee. The preschool employs constructivist teaching methods, allowing children to learn as they construct a personal understanding based on intentionally prepared experiences in the classroom and in their environment, and also by reflecting on those experiences. Vicky Flessner, Preschool Director, and her staff are guided by the Reggio Emilia approach to education where the classroom becomes a learning environment that enhances and facilitates children's



A tree that was partly destroyed in a tornado became a totem pole.

construction of their own knowledge. The role of the teacher is that of a learner and

researcher alongside the children. Within such a role, teachers listen, observe, and document children's work, while they provoke and stimulate thinking about children's collaboration with peers. The teachers reflect together to determine the "one next step" that will scaffold a child's integration of new concepts.

The classrooms at Highland Plaza support children's natural curiosity and provide many opportunities for learning.

HPUMP is a community, where children, teachers, and parents learn together. In the classrooms, teachers facilitate an "emergent curriculum", one that builds upon both the children's and teacher's ideas. They work together, formulating hypotheses about possible directions of a project and also what materials might be needed. Parents and other members of the community often become engaged in the project as well. Emphasis is placed on collaboration among home, school, and community to support the learning of the child. Visibility of children's work in progress is also considered an important tool in the learning process of children, teachers, and parents. This documentation of the children's experiences allow the "walls to talk" and provide glimpses into the work happening in the classrooms.

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A tree that was partly destroyed in a tornado became a totem pole, sculpted with native wildlife and overlooking the Playscape from atop a hill.

The children spend time outdoors everyday. Frederich Froebel said “Play is the highest expression of human development, for it alone is the free expression of what is in a child’s soul.” The land surrounding the preschool has been converted into a natural playscape, a wooded wonderland dotted with play components such as climbable sculptures, environmental art, vegetation (trees, shrubs, flowers, and mosses), rock structures, dirt and sand, textured pathways, water features and artistic play areas, all encouraging children to explore the outdoors. The design was inspired by the latest field-tested, age-appropriate methods for reconnecting children with nature.

Ms. Flessner, her staff, parent volunteers, and church and community supporters raised funds and helped to construct the Playscape which features play areas that include natural as well as historic and cultural landmarks in Chattanooga. In each of the areas, there are books and materials for children to use while exploring the site. The “Tennessee River”, with water splashing down the hill and over rocks, makes the area a wonderful and peaceful place for everyone (teachers included!) to enjoy. The climbing wall, made from reclaimed tires, represents “Lookout Mountain” where children can climb up and down the side of a hill. An outdoor art studio (the Art District) and a musical instrument area (the Chattanooga Symphony) foster the children’s expression of creativity. Container gardens will be blooming this spring, with vegetables and herbs that children will use to make pizza and vegetable soup.



A stone water play table named “Lake Chickamauga” has two old-fashioned hand pumps (representing the riverfront water cannons) and is imprinted with fossils and several mosaics created by the children including a rainbow trout.

Natural playscapes like the one at HPUMP blend natural materials, features, and vegetation with landforms to create spaces that challenge and captivate children, teaching them about the wonders of the natural world as they play within it. Studies show how beneficial and important it is for children to be in regular contact with nature. Outdoor learning promotes independent play and fosters children’s abilities to solve disputes themselves. Teachers from HPUMP have reported that since the children have been using the outdoor setting, their new understanding of negotiating and problem-solving has transferred into the classroom setting and there are fewer behavior problems.

As constructivist educators, responsible for guiding students and asking them questions that lead to drawing their own conclusions about topics such as the environment; we are left with these questions: What are some opportunities that you can provide to your students to expose them to the natural world, encouraging their inquisitiveness and curiosity? How can you integrate your curriculum into the study of nature and the environment?

From the Field editor: Rosemary Geiken, Assistant Professor, East Tennessee State University

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NEW PUBLICATIONS:

Broderick, J. and Hong, S. B. (2011). Introducing the Cycle of Inquiry System: A Reflective Inquiry Practice for Early Childhood Teacher Development. *Early Childhood Research & Practice*, v. 13, n2. [retrieve online at <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v13n2/broderick.html>]

If your colleagues have not received this newsletter, please encourage them to join ACT online:
www.constructivistassociation.org

Follow our Blog: <http://constructivistblog.wordpress.com/>

Find us on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/48559805714/>

Visit our Website: www.constructivistassociation.org

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COMMITTEE REPORT

Conference Committee

- Conference Chair Jane Tingle Broderick – For the first time ACT has used a company to help us negotiate our conference venue. Krista Murphy from Conference Direct has been very helpful and is working with the committee for the 2013 Conference, when we *hope* to have our meeting in NYC.

Conference Program Committee

- Teresa Harris and Holly Pence
- Proposals announcements have gone out. Reviewers are lined up. We have set an earlier due date for May 15, which seems to be moving many toward an earlier time frame! The call for proposals is available on our website . www.constructivistassociation.org

Webinar Committee: Organize and host a minimum of three online webinars per year; manage online survey.

- Chair: Ariel Ashe
- Members: Dewey Dryksta; Alice Wakefield, Halcyon Learned
- We held our first Webinar in December 2011. The turnout was bleak, only a few people attending. Still, we learned a lot and the committee is regrouping to plan for next steps. Report on next steps will come soon.

Communications Committee

- **Newsletter Editor:** Jane Broderick; broderic@etsu.edu
- **From the Field editor:** Rosemary Geiken; geiken@etsu.edu
 - **Blog editors and managers:** Kate Chechak & Mike Garrett; kate.chechak@gmail.com and zmdg11@goldmail.etsu.edu
- **Bloggers:** Jennifer Thompson, Jackie Grennon-Brooks, Mike Garrett, Kate Chechak; and Jane Broderick posting the ACT Board Member Interviews and ACT Updates; and Rosemary Geiken posting the From the Field articles.
- **Website manager:** Mike Garrett

UPDATE – see info on the changes in the letter from the President this month

- *The Newsletter:*
 - *will continue to be published in PDF format and sent to members, as well as being posted in an archive on our website's members' only page.*
 - *will publish ACT Board Member Interviews, From the Field articles; and updates on ACT committees and other business*
- *The Blog will publish the ACT Board Member Interviews, From the Field articles, President Updates; and three blogs on technology in education, elementary science, and science.*
- *Only members can be blog authors; blog content will be reviewed by our blog editors:*
kate.chechak@gmail.com and zmdg11@goldmail.etsu.edu

Membership Committee

- **Chair:** Jim Pelech; Pelech@ben.edu
- New members continue to register! Please encourage your friends to join our group. (See the form attached to the email with this newsletter. Our website should have this available within a week or two.)

Thank you all for your support in the work of ACT ~ the ACT Board

The Association for Constructivist Teaching

January 2012 Newsletter, v. 3. , n. 1

Our Mission: is to enhance the growth of all educators and students through identification and dissemination of effective constructivist practices in both the professional cultures of teachers and the learning environments of children. It is also to advance educators' understanding of Piaget's constructivism as a scientific theory that explains how human beings construct knowledge and moral values.

Membership: is open to anyone who is interested in the field of education. ACT Members are classroom teachers, administrators, supervisors, consultants, college and university personnel, students, parents and retired educators. They live all over the USA and in Mexico, Japan, Australia, Canada, Brazil, and China.

Benefits of Membership...

THE ACT QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER ... interviews, articles on practice, and book reviews
THE CONSTRUCTIVIST...An educational e-journal and journal archive.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE...discounted registration fee and early notice of call for presenters

AFFILIATION...with an association committed to supporting you. To join, please fill out the [membership form](#) on the membership page of our website: www.constructivistassociation.org

WEBINARS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ... *new in 2011 – dates to be announced in our next newsletter.* We plan on three per year, free to members and for a fee to non-members

Follow our Blog: <http://constructivistblog.wordpress.com/>

Find us on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/48559805714/>

Visit our Website: www.constructivistassociation.org

2012 Annual Conference will be hosted at the Millennium Centre, across from East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN. Download the Call for Proposals and Registration forms at: www.constructivistassociation.org

Our Journal: *The Constructivist*

As we continue our reviews for the next edition of *The Constructivist*, we encourage you to consider sharing your experiences and inquiries with us. Whether in the area of practice or research, we welcome your submissions.

- Contact our editor, Amy Malkus, at malkus@etsu.edu for more information.

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