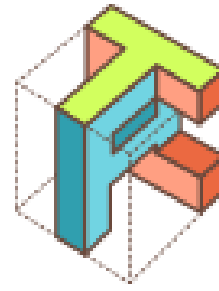


January 2022 ACT Newsletter



ASSOCIATION FOR
CONSTRUCTIVIST
TEACHING 

- ✓ In this edition of the ACT Newsletter, Past President Dr. Seong Bock Hong shares her closing remarks, and we welcome newest ACT President, Dr. Kelly Russell.
- ✓ *From the Field:* Reflections from ACT 2021 Conference
- ✓ Past President Dr. Jane Tingle Broderick reflects on her ACT journey.
- ✓ Welcome to our newest board member, **Taylor Eads!**
- ✓ Reminders:
 - ✓ ACT 2022 Conference, hosted by the University of Northern Iowa
 - ✓ Send newsletter announcements to Dr. Randa Dunlap at Randa.Dunlap@usca.edu
 - ✓ Follow ACT on social media, or check out our website: <https://acteducators.com/>

Closing remarks from Dr. Seong Bock Hong

Dear ACT Board members and Members,

As I look back on 2020 and 2021, my heart is filled with so much gratitude for our amazing board members and how our ACT organization has thrived through many challenges. These unprecedented times have been difficult, but I truly believe that we have learned and grown so much together.

Looking back, we continued to enhance our organization's outreach and mission using creativity, thoughtful dialogues, and innovation that each board member brought to the table. This past year we experienced additional growth, including enhanced websites, a communication committee that posted updates, a new webinar format, as well as a member blog site. We are proud of all our achievements, big and small!

A valuable aspect of membership in any professional organization is the sharing of ideas during conference gatherings and through refereed journal entries. ACT brings together some of the most prominent researchers in teacher education. Our conferences and traditions are unique in that we really get to know these researchers and their cutting edge, up-to-date work through thought provoking discussions. We were able to continue this tradition through our two virtual conferences.



“...collaborating, creating, and adapting to new changes as we grow...”

I am so proud of how our ACT board members worked collaboratively to offer our 37th annual, and first all virtual conference in 2020 and our 38th second virtual conference in 2021, using a new interactive conference format and embracing a virtual way of being together. While we look forward to the day that we can gather in person again, just remembering how exhilarated we were after the success of these conferences and the feedback we received from the conference participants was wonderful! We were excited about the increased geographic diversity of the participants and a wide range of social justice issues that were discussed in all education disciplines spanning birth to higher education.

I am also so proud that our ACT organization has demonstrated leadership in education these past years through actively extending and deepening the focus of the organization on social justice issues. It is safe to say that we all have experienced many layers of disequilibrium due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic has served as a catalyst for national conversation about racial disparities and systemic inequality. The events of the past two years have only emphasized the fact that our society needs talented, hardworking, educated students with the knowledge, skills, and work to solve big problems. I think our ACT organization has been and continues to be an important part of this movement. We have challenged ourselves to continue to reflect, learn and grow as we work to transform our work. The success of our organization depends on all of us collaborating, creating, and adapting to new changes as we grow.

*Thank you,
Dr. Seong Bock Hong,
for your service to ACT!*

ACT is an organization that is dear to my heart, and I treasure many years of involvement. Every involvement has been a beautiful growth experience for me professionally and personally.

I want to recognize our new president, Dr. Kelly Russell for all her hard work and involvement in the ACT organization. I look forward to serving as immediate past president this year and helping ACT continue to grow under Kelly's leadership.

Regards,
Seong Bock Hong
ACT President from 2020-2021



*During the 2021 ACT Conference, **Dr. Hong** was presented an award to commemorate her presidency, leadership, and service to the organization.*

Welcome to our newest ACT President, **Dr. Kelly Russell!**

About Kelly:

“I am from Birmingham, Alabama, and I have been teaching at Birmingham-Southern College since 2007. Before that I was a first-grade teacher and adjunct instructor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

I currently teach in an elementary/collaborative teacher education program at a small liberal arts college. My husband and I have two children and two grandchildren. In my spare time, I play with grandbabies and knit when I can.”





From the President: Dr. Kelly Russell

Greetings from the Association for Constructivist Teaching. I hope you were able to take part in the recent ACT Conference. We are all still learning to navigate the virtual world, and the conference team worked tirelessly to bring together many voices to have rich discussions about how constructivist teaching IS social justice teaching.

I am Kelly Russell, and I am the President of ACT. I am humbled to guide this organization that is so dear to me. My first conference was in 2003 in Virginia. I traveled there with my mentor, Dr. Constance Kamii. I already identified as a constructivist teacher, and the years that I studied with Dr. Kamii and my involvement with ACT over the past twenty years have helped me to strengthen my theory and practice and to connect with likeminded educators.

Whether you are new to ACT or have been affiliated with us for many years, we welcome you to learn with us as we promote student-centered teaching. It truly does take a village to carry this work forward, and I am grateful to our members from all areas of education. Whether you are a classroom teacher, a pre-service teacher, a professor, or an interested parent, we have a common mission, and that is to support children in all domains of development - intellectual, physical, social, emotional and moral.

*Reflections from ACT 2021
Conference:
Constructivist teaching IS social
justice teaching*

The ACT 2021 Conference was hosted by Dr. Cris Lozon and her team at St. Margaret's Episcopal School in San Juan Capistrano, California.

Due to residual challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, the event's sessions were a hybrid mix with many presenters and attendees participating virtually and board members, facilitators, and tech support collaborating together on site at St. Margaret's.

We would like to extend our sincerest thanks to Cris, her conference planning committee, and the team of educators at St. Margaret's for providing all with memorable, meaningful experiences!

Pictured are Dr. Cris Lozon with event moderator, Dr. Jacqueline Grennon Brooks (*top right*) and St. Margaret's Episcopal School (*bottom right*).



THANK YOU TO OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKERS!

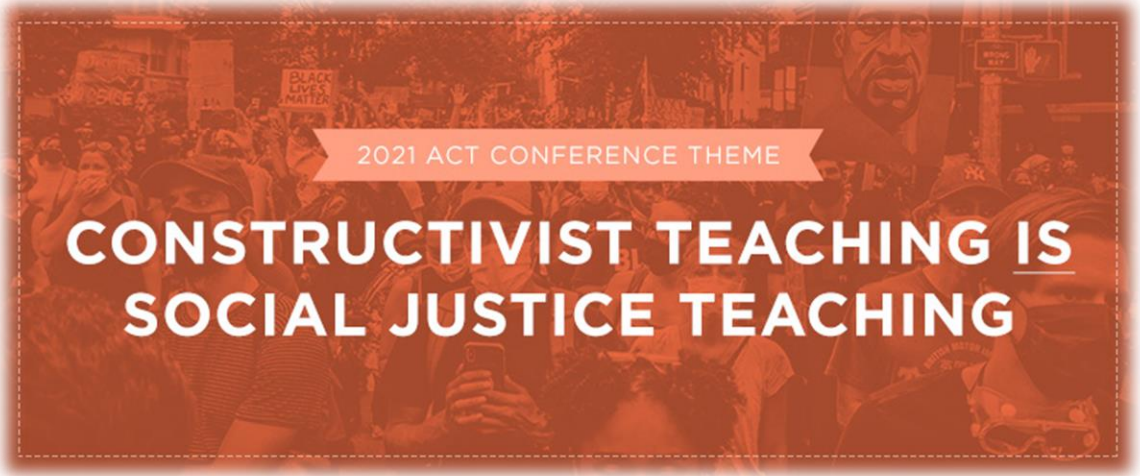
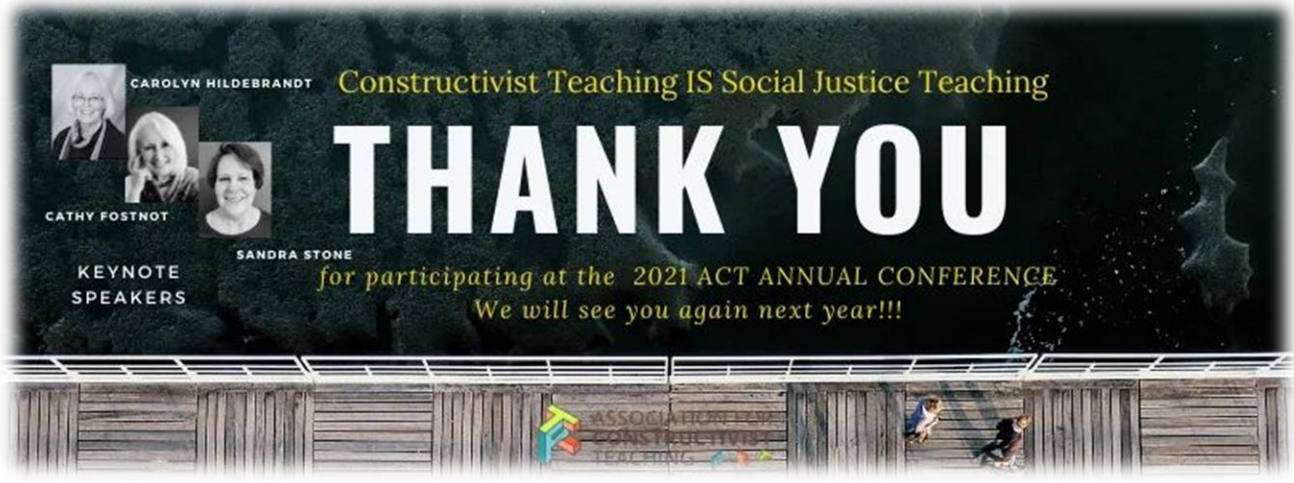
CONSTRUCTIVIST TEACHING IS
Dr. Carolyn Hildebrandt
Our Journey Towards Justice

Dr. Cathy Fosnot
Social Justice in Math

Dr. Sandra Stone
The Social Constructivist Context of Play

Topics:

- Our Journey Towards Justice
- **Dr. Jacqueline Grennon Brooks**
Event moderator
- The Social Constructivist Context of Play
- ...and many more peer-reviewed sessions!



From the Field:

Site visits during the ACT 2021 Conference in California

*Thank you to **Dr. Tom Chiaromonte** for facilitating site visits during the conference! Tour attendees were able to observe amazing constructivist work being implemented in these schools:*

Community Seedlings Preschool

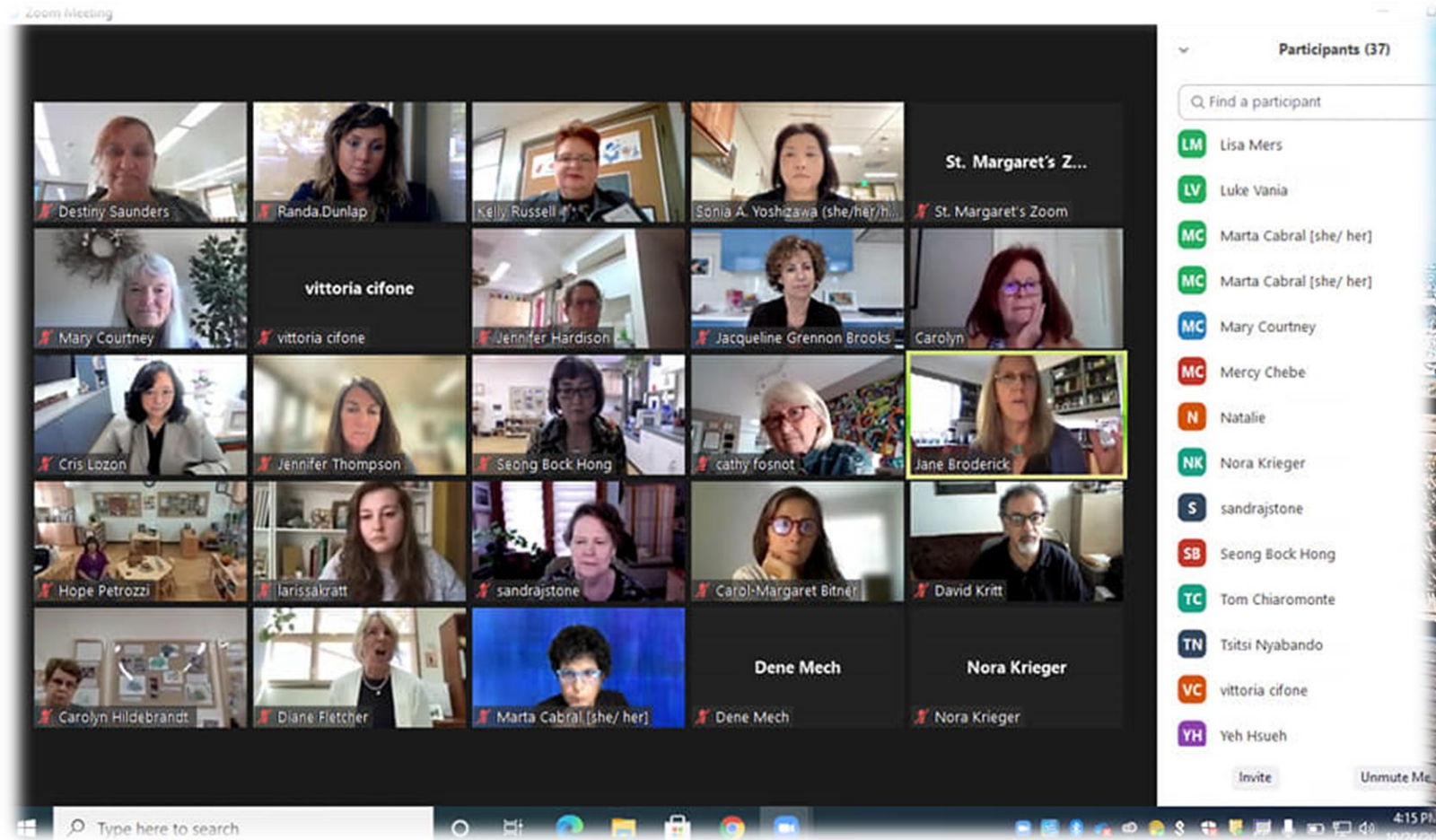
Tour facilitated by Carrie Fetter and Andrea Knudsen

Child Development & Educational Studies Department and Lab School (Fullerton College)

Tour facilitated by Tom Chiaromonte, Jorge Gamboa, Karin Pavelek, and Veronica Hernandez

The Early Learning Program at St. Margaret's Episcopal School
Tour facilitated by Diane Fletcher and Cris Lozon





“Even when life seems uncertain...keep paddling.”

This quote seemed fitting for the year 2021. Whether you joined us in person in San Juan Capistrano or virtually from the comfort of your own home, all participants played a vital role in making the conference a success. ACT welcomed participants and presenters from across the globe, and we are excited to see what 2022 has in store!

The University of Northern Iowa will be hosting this year’s ACT 2022 conference; more details coming soon.

*Interview with Past
President,
Dr. Jane Tingle Broderick*

When reflecting on her journey with ACT, Dr. Broderick remembers a particular conference at her alma mater, University of Massachusetts, where she first met Dr. Seong Bock Hong—who saw documentation of the projects she had been doing at the Reggio Emilia-inspired Early Childhood Lab School and invited her to work on a project together for ACT.

Broderick remembers Hong describing ACT to her as a group of strong constructivist educators who present and discuss in an intimate setting. ACT was Broderick's first conference outside of U Mass.

Among the attendees of Broderick's first presentation with ACT were Rheta DeVries, Brenda Fyfe, Constance Kamii, and Cathy Fosnot. Broderick shared, "If I had known these individuals who I admired so much were in the session, I would have been pretty anxious!"



ACT's philosophy & comradery

The next year after that first conference experience, Dr. Broderick accepted a position at East Tennessee State University. She kept attending ACT and presenting regularly.

She reflected on some of her reasons for attending consistently; these included the size of the conference, the constructivist-based philosophy, and the format of the sessions. She explained that the sessions are also “a place for you to not always necessarily present something finished, but to present ongoing projects and get feedback from people that is really genuine, really helpful.”

The philosophy and comradery of ACT were important to her. She noted that the constructivist philosophy “inspires us and is the foundation of the work that we do.” Additionally, she appreciated the interaction with everyone where “you can discuss and debate with rigor.” She commented that ACT “starts to feel like a different kind of family and home-base” where you can “develop strong relationships.”

After her consistent involvement with the conference, Dr. Broderick was encouraged to become a board member and eventually President. She was actively involved with service and leadership for ACT and hosted two conferences at ETSU (2008, 2012).



Top – with Dr. Hong and doctoral students at 2016 conference in Houston.

Bottom – 2019 conference in Michigan.

ACT moving forward

During her presidency, Dr. Broderick initiated the newsletter. She felt it was important for members to obtain more information in addition to the conferences. She also had ideas for starting a blog and for reorganizing the website. She enlisted the help of an ETSU alum, Christian Schmidt, to assist with communications. Additionally, she introduced the process of assigning board members to committees, a process that has been refined in the years since.

Thinking about her ideal vision for ACT moving forward, Broderick notes that it has been “wonderful through this virtual time that our conference was able to grow.” She feels it’s “important to have the in-person meetings, as long as we can have them,” but she recognizes that including virtual options “would be beneficial as a way to continue to grow our numbers.” She points out that “there’s always been an international presence, with sometimes an inability to attend,” and that the recent virtual format has drawn more international participants to the conference.

Ideally, moving forward, she would like to see more student involvement with ACT. Student chapters and inclusion of a student board member were ideas shared with the board during her presidency, an initiative that has developed over the years but could develop further. At ETSU, she noted that the Early Childhood Department seeks ways to engage students in conferences and professional organizations, and perhaps a greater outreach for students could come to fruition for ACT.



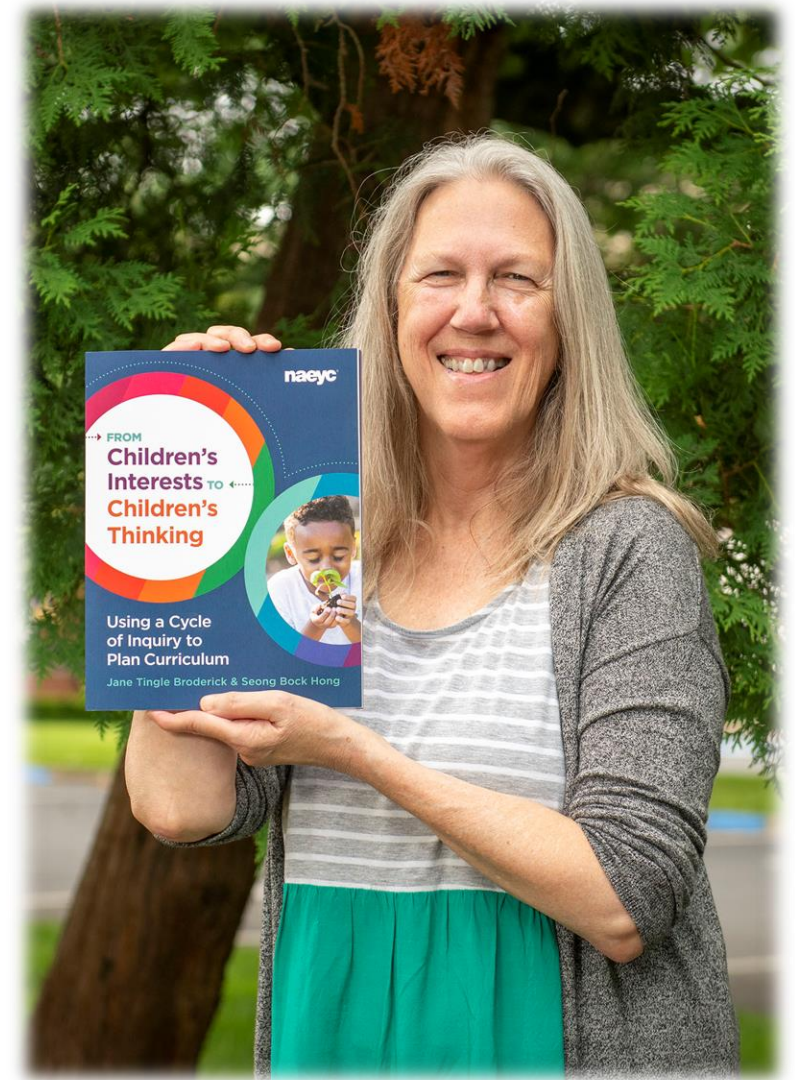
Pictured with Dr. Tom Chiaromente at lab school in Fullerton, California.

Current projects

When asked about current research or projects, Broderick answered that she and Seong Bock continue to work on their Reggio inspired Cycle of Inquiry research together, and they have quite a few projects underway...

Through the teachers and director at Fullerton College Child Development and Educational Studies Lab School, they hosted a webinar that she Seong Bock led during 2019-2020 based on their 2020 book published by NAEYC. They continue to collaborate with these teachers to develop their inquiry curriculum. Through that webinar they met another group in California that they're working with, "guiding their emergent inquiry curriculum processes."

Broderick and Hong continue to work with teachers across the country—from California and New Mexico to areas near Washington, D.C.—on topics such as curriculum and inquiry processes, teacher planning practices, and most recently "Art as Inquiry."



Pictured with book she co-authored with Seong Bock Hong.

Broderick, J. & Hong, S. B. (2020). *From Children's Interests to Children's Thinking: Using a Cycle of Inquiry to Plan Curriculum*. NAEYC.