

2024 ACT CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Embracing Constructivism: From theory to practice

Saturday, October 19th

**Participants may check in or [register](#) to receive Welcome information, including name badge and conference schedule.*

8:00 a.m. – **Breakfast available**

“Welcome” from ACT President, Dr. Beth Van Meeteren

8:15 – 9:30 a.m.

**Keynote Presentation – Embracing Constructivism: Interweaving linguistic and culturally responsive theory and practice by Dr. Brenda Fyfe*

9:45 – 11:00 a.m. – Breakout Session #1

11:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. – Breakout Session #2

12:30 – 1:45 p.m. – LUNCH

1:45 – 3:00 p.m. – Breakout Session #3

3:15 – 4:30 p.m. – Breakout Session #4

4:45 – 6:00 p.m. – Breakout Session #5

Sunday, October 20th

8:00 – 9:15 a.m. – **Breakfast available** and optional walk-through of [Boulder Journey School](#)

9:30 – 10:45 a.m. – Breakout Session #6

11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. – *Featured Session for all Participants*

Closing Panel Discussion

Creating your own professional development plan: How can ACT help you transform theory into practice?

Monday, October 21st

[Optional Add-On Study Tour of Boulder Journey School – please see Alex Morgan for registration](#)

2024 ACT Conference

Embracing Constructivism: From theory to practice

*Keynote Presentation – *Embracing Constructivism: Interweaving linguistic and culturally responsive theory and practice* by Dr. Brenda Fyfe

Breakout Session #1			
Saturday, 10/19			
9:45 – 11:00 a.m.			
Session Title	Presenter(s)	Location	Session Description
<i>Providing Play Environments for Rich Learning</i>	Cris Lozon Erika Garcia	On-Site	In this session, attendees will learn how young children construct social and physical knowledge through classroom environments and experiences that lead to rich relational thinking. Presenters will share documentation of change through time in children's thinking, making learning visible.
<i>The “Holy Curiosity of Inquiry”: Back to the Real Basics in Secondary and University Education</i>	Ron Erdei Bruce Marlowe	On-Site	The purpose of this interactive session is to engage participants in a constructivist framework for reimagining both high school and post-secondary education.
<i>Creative Minds: Problem-Solving Strategies of K-2 Students in a Novel Math Challenge</i>	Shushan Vardanyan Cora Brasfield Causey Renee Hill-Cunningham	On-Site	The objective of this presentation is to demonstrate evidence of young children’s creative thinking abilities in problem-solving and to support Kamii’s assertion that young children are capable of inventing and reinventing arithmetic concepts.
<i>Using Reflective Supervision practices as a component in a Teacher Residency Program</i>	Ashley Parks	On-Site	This presentation shares examples of how integrating reflective supervision became an integral tool in teacher development and teacher retention.
<i>Using Common Spaces to Provoke Learning in a Middle and High School</i>	Jennifer Lamkin Jesse Stallings	On-Site	We will showcase how we have begun scratching the surface of utilizing common spaces (hallways, libraries, empty rooms, outdoors) for constructivist learning opportunities in our 6-12 school and will highlight the impact these intentional spaces have had on both teachers and students.
<i>A Case Study in Using Makeshift Indoor Large Motor Spaces to Meet Children’s Unique Developmental Needs</i>	Jocelyn Prewett	On-Site	Sometimes it can be challenging to figure out how to meet children’s unique developmental needs. Participants will hear how one educator met those needs by creating makeshift large motor spaces and then consider how they might meet the needs of the children in their own settings.

Breakout Session #2
Saturday, 10/19
11: 15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

<i>Transforming a Review Session into a Creative Endeavor Through Constructivism</i>	James Pelech Holly Rey	On-Site	The purpose of this interactive session is to engage participants in the application of Constructivist learning strategies to create a learner-centered review session. Attendees are strongly encouraged to bring their electronic devices!
<i>Implementing constructivist strategies to enhance teacher candidates' leadership, advocacy, and collaboration skills</i>	Randa Dunlap Denise Brewer Dionne Busio	On-Site	The purpose of this session is to share the story of how teacher educators implemented constructivist teaching strategies in an undergraduate-level course related to leadership, advocacy, and collaboration. Ultimately, candidates experienced opportunities to engage in extended, community-based project work with assignments based on constructivist approaches as they not only formed their own philosophy of leadership, but also had the chance to practice and apply their advocacy and collaboration skills.
<i>Empowering Future Child Development Professionals: Enhancing Constructivist Learning through Leadership, Advocacy, and Professional Practice Projects</i>	Teresa Sumrall Rhonda Russell	On-Site	This session explores how integrating Leadership, Advocacy, and Professional Practice (LAPP) projects within internships can support constructivist learning for college students. Attendees will gain practical strategies and innovative ideas for embedding meaningful projects into internship curricula, ultimately fostering a more dynamic, engaging, and impactful educational experience.
<i>Wonder, Strategize, Resolve: Inquiry Learning and Teaching with Infants and Toddlers</i>	Sherri Peterson	On-Site	In this session we will share what we are learning about how educators engage in inquiry as they create opportunities for inquiry learning, problem solving, and the development of STEM learning dispositions for infants and toddlers.
<i>Constructivist Practices of Teacher Educators with Preservice Teachers</i>	Libby Ethridge Amber Beisly	On-Site	The purpose of this session is to engage participants in the application of Constructivist practices and assignments teacher educators can use with preservice teachers.
<i>Faculty Self-Study on Preservice Teacher Agency as Constructivist, Reggio-Emilia Inspired Practice</i>	Amy Wolfe Kaitlin Northey Karen M. La Paro Nora Krieger	Virtual	Participants will engage in reflection on constructivist theory, teacher preparation, and professional development. Presenters will describe their Self-Study Community of Practice (SSCoP) as a Reggio Emilia inspired model of constructivist professional development.

Breakout Session #3
Saturday, 10/19
1:45 – 3:00 p.m.

<i>CONSTRUCTIVIST PRACTICES in SUPPORT of STUDENTS with AUTISM</i>	Donald Mesibov	On-Site	Classrooms are disrupted, administrators time is wasted, and students with autism are traumatized because of misunderstandings due to educators who have little or no information about autism. Our 20 "Tips" can change this.
<i>The Language of Collaboration: Art Inquiry Among Art and Early Childhood Educators</i>	Jane Broderick Seong Bock Hong Gigi Schroeder Yu	On-Site	This session shares research on collaboration constructed among art and early childhood educators who rarely have opportunities to build collective knowledge regarding art inquiry approaches for young children. In our session we will share the study and the ways that participants constructed an understanding of collaboration through experiences with art.
<i>The Studio as a Place of Research: Supporting Young Children's Construction of Knowledge through the Arts</i>	Jennifer Hardison Tammy Pipitone	On-Site	Young children construct knowledge as they observe and act on the world, asking questions, making predictions, testing those predictions, and reflecting on their experience. When young children explore new art materials, they are conducting similar research; as children become more familiar with art media and materials, they begin to use them to represent ideas, explain phenomena, and begin to sustain and deepen their inquiry and long-term investigations.
<i>The Power of Learning in My Backyard: children constructing theories in a variety of natural environments in both public and private settings.</i>	Laura Wagonlander Suzanne Gabli Linda Mora	On-Site	The purpose of this session is to engage participants in a deeper understanding of how nature provides the best setting for children to construct knowledge by utilizing all of their senses to build theories and experiences. By the end of the workshop, the participant will have a comprehensive toolkit of strategies and practical applications of ways to incorporate nature into their daily routine, anywhere, everywhere.
<i>Stimulating Teacher Creativity through Embracing Constraints</i>	Jon L. Smythe	On-Site	The purpose of this presentation is to consider how engaging teachers in arts-based projects with imposed constraints can prepare them to navigate the very real constraints they face in their classrooms with both creativity and ingenuity.
<i>Maximizing Children's Choices through Dynamic Projects</i>	Brian Stone	Virtual	Dynamic, choice-based projects allow for interest differentiation and unique personal and social constructions of knowledge. This presentation explores the theory and practical considerations for developing meaningful projects.

Breakout Session #4**Saturday, 10/19****3:15 – 4:30 p.m.**

<i>From Theory to Practice: Redesigning Early Childhood Courses with a Flipped Classroom Model</i>	Teresa Sumrall Randa Dunlap Andrea Anderson Juliana Phillips Rhonda Russell	On-Site	In this session, we will share our experience of redesigning an early childhood education course using a flipped classroom model, grounded in constructivist principles. By implementing a more constructivist approach, we put theory into practice, demonstrating how the flipped classroom model can enhance students' understanding and application of content while fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
<i>Cultivating Ecological Empathy and Care through Relationships and Technology</i>	Diane Fletcher Rachael Carter	On-Site	Facilitating a constructivist learning approach for young children, we allow the children to explore and understand natural phenomena interactively while engaging with technology outdoors, creating producers of technology instead of consumers and creators of their theories.
<i>Attempts to think through a few constructivist teaching principles</i>	Yeh Hsueh	On-Site	The purpose of this presentation is to share with the audience some ideas I kept struggling with from the time I realized that they were important in constructivist teaching. Over time they changed through a reconstruction process. To share is to seek help for making the ideas clearer.
<i>What do you mean "Environment is the Third Teacher?": Spaces that evolve with children's inquiry</i>	Brooke Dyer Cynthia Johnson	On-Site	We aim to highlight the strategies that facilitate a constructivist approach and provide practical insights for early childhood educators seeking to enrich their classrooms with Reggio-inspired principles. Our goal is to equip educators with actionable ideas and evidence-based approaches to foster a dynamic and responsive learning environment that aligns with the core tenets of constructivist education.
<i>Young Learners and Constructivism: Connecting Early Childhood Learning to Early Elementary Education</i>	Carol Green	On-Site	It is hoped that through this session, we can begin connections into how we can encourage the younger elementary educators to become more comfortable in adapting a constructivist approach to their classrooms.
<i>Constructivism in the K-5 Social Studies Classroom: One school's Perspective</i>	Mara Sombrotto Elizabeth Sweeney Kara Pranicoff	On-Site	We want people to understand what constructivist teaching through Social Studies looks like across a K-5 school. We will guide participants to envision how they could try this teaching and learning in their own community.

Breakout Session #5**Saturday, 10/19****4:45 – 6:00 p.m.**

<i>Developing a Culture of Documentation – under review</i>	Anne Lowry Peggy Ashbrook	Virtual	Teachers continually collect data, but how do they use it? In this session, participants will discuss information that can be gathered from documentation to further both student learning and teacher practices. Participants will also discuss methods and strategies for implementation ideas for using documentation.
<i>Constructing Spaces for Constructive Learning: ECED students build to learn</i>	Rebecca Pruitt	On-Site	This session invites participants to respond to an alternative approach to a classic early childhood education key assessment that traditionally required students to create an imaginary classroom built to support constructivist learning. The new approach invites students to engage in problem solving about real classroom environments (rather than imaginary ones) and to connect constructivist theory with practice in our Reggio-inspired early childhood learning lab.
<i>The Gift of Music: Composing a Shared Canon through Reciprocal Listening</i>	Natalie Harshman	On-Site	How do we know when a thread is a thread? How do we keep research sustained through a school year? This session follows a class of two year-olds and their love of music through the twists and turns of contextual curriculum.
<i>Collaborating with Cardboard: Thinking outside the box through Constructivist learning</i>	Faith Hanning	On-Site	The purpose of this session is to give participants a look into a year-long research project within a preschool classroom that centers on the connection between teachers and children as partners in learning. We will follow this class as their research developed into a study of helpers within both the school and community. We will also follow the teachers' processes of using observation and documentation to facilitate a curriculum that evolves throughout the year.
<i>AI and Early Childhood Education: Creating a Constructivist Curricula</i>	Mistie Reising-Cogbill	On-Site	In the book, Robot-Proof, author Joseph Aoun encourages educators to include new literacies such as cultural agility, critical thinking, and engendering creativity (2017). When considering the principles of constructivist teaching, how can early childhood educators and curriculum coaches support intentional classroom choices that develop these characteristics in young children? During the 2023-2024

			school year, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction AI Collaborative set out to create guidance and materials that facilitate building these "new" skills in early grades to support creative use of technology and artificial intelligence (AI) in the future.
<i>Co-creating joyful learning opportunities with our youngest learners</i>	Randi Albertson	On-Site	This session will help participants connect the dots between the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) position statement on Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP), joyful learning, and Constructivist Theory with hands-on, active learning experiences. Participants will leave this session with an action plan for creating joyful early childhood learning experiences by following the lead of the child. Together, we will explore the vast possibilities for joyful learning through relationship building, observation and documentation, and engaging environments to support the overall growth and development of children birth - age 5.
Breakout Session #6 Sunday, 10/20 9:15 – 10:30 a.m.			
<i>Care as Curriculum: Redesigning Care Routines with Constructivist Principles</i>	Katie Kunin	On-Site	The purpose of this session is to support participants in reflecting on and analyzing their program's regular care routines and redesigning those routines to align more closely with their program's educational philosophy and programmatic mission. The presenters share their own story of transforming snack time within a mixed-age preschool classroom, guided by their program's constructivist teaching values. These lessons are valuable across the ages as we reconceptualize care routines as an essential part of, rather than a deviation from, the curriculum.
<i>Revitalizing Early Childhood Learning: A Constructivist and Collaborative Journey at Our Children's Museum</i>	Alexandra Pafilis Jolanta Dohrmann	Virtual	Explore how our children's museum revitalized early childhood experiences using a constructivist approach. Discover the impact of hands-on, sensory-rich play, data-driven insights, and caregiver involvement in creating dynamic learning environments for infants and toddlers. Join us for practical strategies and collaborative discussions.

<i>Violet Park: One Provocation with Many Curriculum Pathways</i>	Vicki Oleson	On-Site	One exciting aspect of teaching in a constructivist approach is the opportunity to follow creativity and engage with surprise. This session examines three different classrooms (ages 3 - 5) who started with the same provocation and followed different journeys. We will use pedagogical documentation (photos and video) to view the research of the children.
<i>Constructivism and Cognitive Science: Why the Learner is Always Right and What to Do About It</i>	Sophie Steele	On-Site	The purpose of the session is to a) describe the development of cognition from a functional contextualist and scientific perspective, and b) relate language abilities to communication, academics and mental health in early childhood.
<i>Working Session: Exploring and Discussing Vignettes of Evolving Constructivist Practices</i>	William [Bill] Shorr Chris Lowry Susan Mayer Elizabeth Cavicchi	On-Site	Consider fascinating archival footage of key historical junctures in constructivist practice. Become intrigued by how the learning portrayed in the videos generates present and future learning opportunities. Appreciate the methodological roots of constructivist teaching practices.
<i>Affirming the Rights: Theory and Practice with Young Emergent Bilinguals Through the Hundred Languages</i>	Gigi Schroeder Yu Juana M. Reyes Brenda Fyfe	On-Site	In this session, participants will examine the results of a study on the Reggio Emilia Approach and constructivist educational practices used with young emergent bilingual learners. They will analyze documentation to understand and interpret how children interact nonverbally and verbally with each other, with materials, and within the context to foster relationships and a sense of belonging. Together, we will deepen our understanding of the concept of the hundred languages as a right within the framework of emergent bilingual learners.

11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. – *Featured Session for all Participants*

Closing Panel Discussion

Creating your own professional development plan: How can ACT help you transform theory into practice?

Please plan on joining us to wrap up our conference with a closing panel discussion designed to help you with your professional development plan. As we think about our vision and mission for ACT, we hope to become a premiere constructivist organization, and we value and appreciate your input. This will be an interactive session where we invite you to actively participate in the discussion of how we can better serve you.

*****Please note that Zoom links will be provided to all those who registered for the conference, allowing access to the entire conference.*****