

# ELA Reporter

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YOUR PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERACY

## Exciting New Professional Learning Format to Debut!

Since last fall, the ELA Specialists here at the Georgia Department of Education have produced well over 50 hours of archived material on the Blackboard and Elluminate Live webinar platforms. These webinars have included real-time audience participation through the chat function, and have explored Georgia Common Core Performance Standards topics including the origins of and research behind the standards, how to design CCGPS units of study, how to gauge text complexity, implementing the literacy standards for science and social studies, and much more. In addition to our recurring webinar offerings, we also



filmed more than 15 hours of live-streaming professional learning through our partnership with Georgia Public Broadcasting. The GPB sessions had the added benefit of a visual component and provided us with the opportunity to share demonstrations and student work. While these forums have been useful and productive stages for collaboration with the educators implementing the new curriculum, we have continued to search for new and cost-effective digital avenues through which to share CCGPS news, strategies, and resources.

Some of you may have participated in the survey we conducted in September that was aimed at gathering feedback from Georgia educators about what you would like to see in future professional learning

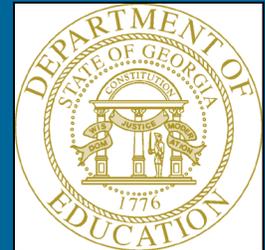
produced by the DOE. We heard from you that you would like more hands-on, real-world examples of units of instruction in action. You asked for professional learning that was archived and available for viewing at anytime. You asked for input from and interaction with Georgia teachers and students. The old-fashioned "PowerPoint Webinar" format was deemed not optimally engaging, and finally, the webinars themselves were perceived as being too long and often not quick enough to get to the point.

Well, we are happy to announce that we have heard you loud and clear, and are working tirelessly with our partners from the Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESA) to tailor a brand new and invigorated series of professional learning offerings that incorporate nearly all of these great suggestions.

During November we will be collecting student work samples gleaned from the first nine weeks of instruction in our state—primarily but not exclusively from our model instructional units—and interviewing the teachers whose students produced the work. We will be sharing archived interviews that will be available for viewing at your convenience that will explore the planning and tasks that preceded the assessments, successes and challenges experienced along the way, tips for future implementation, and more. While we will lose the real-time chat component in the "view-at-your-convenience" format, we will add a blog for each segment that will facilitate an even broader and more sustained conversation about the instructional issues raised in each interview.

We are excited about this new format and hope that you are too! Watch for this series to become available the first week in December at <https://www.georgiastandards.org/Common-Core/Pages/ELA.aspx>

## Georgia Department of Education



Dr. John D. Barge,  
State School  
Superintendent

*"Making Education  
Work for All Georgians"*

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Do you have student work to share? Would you like to participate in creating a webinar? Contact Susan Jacobs at [sjacobs@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:sjacobs@doe.k12.ga.us)

## The Crucial Role of Media Specialists in CCGPS

*Notes from the first Collaborative Media Specialist CCGPS Workshop*

### Media Specialist Collaborative Workshop a Great Success

As we shared with you in last month's newsletter, we have recently begun a rigorous campaign to communicate more fully and effectively with the state's Media Specialists, bringing their essential expertise more effectively into the conversation as we move through our first year of CCGPS implementation. In education we often bemoan the hindrances inherent in the "silo" mentality, a mentality that finds many of us working away in our own areas of responsibility and expertise and failing to collaborate effectively with our peers.

In large part, we work in silos not because of a lack of willingness to collaborate, but because of the restrictions placed on us by time, geography, personal responsibilities, and the enormity of the average workload in a year full of new educational initiatives. Now, thanks to the proactive and positive attitude of Betsy Clem, Media Specialist at Tunnel High School in Tunnel, Georgia, and co-facilitator for the North Georgia RESA Media Consortium, we have begun to move toward a new level of cooperation and teamwork with our state's Media Specialists.

On September 28, 2012, Media Specialists from all over Northeast Georgia met at the beautiful Sequoyah High School in Canton, Georgia to begin the conversation. On October 18 we met with Media Specialists from Clayton County Schools and on December 10 will meet with Media Specialists from the Heart of Georgia RESA area (Tel: (478) 374-2240, Web: <http://www.hgresa.org>, Serves: Bleckley, Dodge, Laurens, Montgomery, Pulaski, Telfair, Treutlen, Wheeler, Wilcox and Dublin City).

Topics covered in the discussions included exploring the vital role of Media Specialists in

- ♦ defining appropriate text complexity and helping teachers create meaningful text sets
- ♦ providing guidance on informational texts (finding, using, citing)
- ♦ promoting effective use of GALILEO, newspapers, historic primary source documents, and other specialty concerns necessary to CCGPS
- ♦ conducting research
- ♦ assisting teachers with the difficult work of moving students to a new level of engagement with texts (close reading)
- ♦ providing expertise in understanding Lexile measurements—both of texts and of students' reader levels
- ♦ identifying/locating exciting and engaging texts and assisting with building units of instruction around those texts

The second part of our conversation hinged on identifying the most important questions and concerns that the workshop attendees had about their Media Centers, GALILEO, their dwindling resources, and their worries about the future. Our "Wish List" included the following:

### Communicate the Importance of Your Media Specialist and Your Media Center to your Administration, Parents, and Community

Media Specialists have never been more crucial to education than they are today. The new Common Core Georgia Performance Standards ask for more research, more careful text selection, a larger selection of texts of more mixed genres, and more primary source documents and informational text than ever before. No one in the educational world is better positioned than Media Specialists to help teachers negotiate these materials.

### Help Us Save GALILEO

GALILEO is essential to the work of CCGPS and its emphasis on informational text. SIRS Issues Researcher was cut in August and has been a huge loss to many high schools that were already using it for their argumentative essays. The specialists also articulated that high schools should have access to the GALILEO databases used by colleges in order to prepare our students for college.



The tireless work of Judy Serritella ([jserrite@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:jserrite@doe.k12.ga.us)), the GaDOE Coordinator of Library Media Services in fighting to keep these databases will need to be continued by all of us after her retirement October 31, 2012. (We will miss you Judy and promise to carry on the good work!)

### Schedule a Meeting for Your Area

Contact Susan Jacobs at [sjacobs@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:sjacobs@doe.k12.ga.us).

## Damaged Goods: Reflections on Childhood, Choices, and Consequences

Hayward Cordy

*Dr. Hayward Cordy is the Executive Director of the Oconee Regional Educational Service Agency and a great advocate for children in our state. This month we would like to share with you an excerpt from one of Dr. Cordy's moving essays about attitude and worth. We thank him for allowing us to share and hope you enjoy his inspiring message as much as we have.*

Growing up in the small southern town of Wrightsville, Georgia, one of my fondest memories is that of going to town with mama and daddy on Saturdays. Before daddy bought an old brown 1957 Chevrolet in 1969, I remember vividly his borrowing his bossman's Ford pickup and our riding to town on it. It was a balancing act to remain in a vertical position as the chairs slid across the truck with each turn in the road. Mama and daddy shopped at Outlaw's Grocery. Outlaw's Grocery was a mom and pop grocery store with the name emblazoned on a metal Sunbeam Bread sign. A Coke machine stood watch by the front door.

Mama and daddy shopped the aisles for a few staples such as grits and rice. They would then head back to the meat counter where Mr. Junior (Outlaw) always stood with a cigar and a smile. Mr. Junior always saved boxes of older meat and damaged canned goods for daddy to buy.

**While most people don't suffer from a physical or emotional disability, many suffer from the damaged goods syndrome.**

I can recall thinking how thoughtful it was of Mr. Junior to save the meat and damaged goods for us. Mama and daddy could not have raised thirteen children without them. In the back of my mind though, I can remember the funny feeling that I got when I saw other shoppers going down the aisles, filling their buggies with bright, shiny, perfectly round cans.

The damaged goods provided necessary subsistence, since daddy made only \$15.00 a day at this time. The damaged goods also served to remind me of the poverty that permeated our lives.

Somehow, these damaged goods mirrored my inner feelings about myself. The teasing and ridicule from others due to my speech impediment often left me feeling like the damaged goods that we bought. I quickly discovered that I was not perfectly round like the cans purchased from the grocery store shelves. I was made acutely aware of the fact that I was damaged.

Daily, our lives cross the paths of children who feel damaged, not perfectly round. Such children are aware that they don't quite measure up. Their arrogance, defiant attitude, and tough guy image serves as a facade to cover up their feelings of being damaged. People who feel damaged feel it is far better to exhibit undesirable and antisocial behaviors and be ostracized by choice rather than legitimize their damaged state by exhibiting proper behavior and attitude and then being rejected by others.

Life dictates an expectancy for individuals to be perfectly round. Yet, life today perpetuates the vicious cycle of physical, emotional, and spiritual neglect that creates damaged goods. While most people don't suffer from a physical or emotional disability, many suffer from the damaged goods syndrome. They feel that they are different, not as good, unloved, not perfectly round!



The damaged goods that my parents bought, while being different in outward appearance, were basically of the same quality as those on the grocery store shelves. Their difference in value was due in the part to the perception of the buyer. The damaged goods syndrome results when the goods are viewed as substandard. In order to escape the damaged goods syndrome, an individual must change his/her perception of himself/herself.

Children must be made to realize that there is inherent value in them. Children must be made to realize that they are worthy of love and respect. They must be made to realize their worth. Children must be made to realize that life is about choices and consequences. They must realize that true success is not found in personal gain but in utilizing the talents that they possess.

In my case, there were significant others in my life, who along with my mama and daddy, refused to excuse me from being my best simply because I had a speech impediment and was born into a poor family. I was taught that the love and acceptance that I desired from others must first begin within me. I was taught that although my parents had to struggle, working as day laborers and share croppers, I was expected to take advantage to the educational opportunities available to me and make a better life for myself.

I learned that the things in life that matter most are the things that money cannot buy.

## Georgia Council of Teachers of English Wants YOU!

GCTE wants you to nominate yourself or a colleague for one of the GCTE Teacher of the Year awards to be given at the annual conference in February. Awards are given to teachers at the elementary, middle, secondary, and college levels. Please use the form provided through the link at right as a guide. Please complete your application on either the pdf or Word version.

All applicants must submit an information package to GCTE by January 11, 2013 in order to be considered for GCTE's Teacher of the Year 2012 in one of these categories: Elementary (K-5), Middle (6-8), Secondary (9-12), or College. This information will be submitted as an electronic .pdf file to Brenda Logan at [Brenda.Logan@armstrong.edu](mailto:Brenda.Logan@armstrong.edu).

1. A narrative explaining your philosophy and approach to teaching English/Language Arts (1 page, single spaced)
2. A narrative that explains a typical day in your classroom as well as how you address your language arts curriculum throughout a school year (1 page, single spaced)
3. An expository article of two lessons that you currently use in your classroom which incorporates best teaching practices with no more than two pages for your article and no more than two additional pages for artifacts (including pictures) that support these specific lessons (no more than 4 pages)
4. Write a response to two of the following questions

(2 pages, single spaced):

- a. Relate an experience in your career as a teacher that epitomizes what teaching is all about to you.
  - b. How would you define the term "21st century literacy" within your classroom? What do you believe your students will need to be successful communicators five, ten, or even fifteen years from now?
  - c. What project or performance task have you created that encourages students to achieve at a higher level?
  - d. What do you think is a crucial issue affecting English/Language arts education today? How would you respond to this issue, and what would you do to inform others of its importance?
  - e. How has your personal involvement in community service influenced your practice in the classroom, your local community, and beyond?
  - f. What has been your greatest contribution to your students?
5. Two letters of support from a colleague, supervisor, administrator, parent, or student (2 pages)

The applicant package should be **no longer than 10 pages**, excluding this award application page. Please convert your documents to a single .pdf file and email the file to Brenda Logan at [Brenda.Logan@armstrong.edu](mailto:Brenda.Logan@armstrong.edu).



<http://www.gcte.net/TeacheroftheYear/index.htm>

"Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you help them become what they are capable of becoming." -- Goethe



## A Word About Selecting Texts

As we continue to make progress through our first year of CCGPS implementation, remember that choosing texts of appropriate genre and complexity is of paramount importance in delivering the standards with true fidelity. Units of study should be based upon the extended and in-depth close reading of an extended text selection, and the genre focus of that study should switch from informational to literary texts throughout the year to ensure an equitable offering of both genres.

Add short texts (poems, films, short stories, primary source documents, literary criticism, etc.) that compliment the extended text selection and help to create a contextual world within which meaningful learning can take place. Remember that "extended" doesn't necessarily mean lots and lots of

pages, it simply refers to an iterative, close, and careful study of the primary text selection.

Read and heed the caveats on the state's sample units of instruction! Text choices are extremely subjective, and what is desirable and appropriate may vary greatly from district to district or from classroom to classroom. Not every text choice will fit the tastes and sensibilities of every reader. Please carefully review the suggestions in the units before adopting the text or deciding to teach it. Substitute any text of comparable sophistication that you choose. Remember, the texts in the sample unit plans are just that, samples, and are not mandated. We celebrate the unique lens that each classroom brings to the reading experience. Explore, and choose the book that is just right for you and yours. Happy reading!

**Daniel Rock on LearnZillion** follow GPB's "Passion for Learning" blog at <http://www.gpb.org/blogs/passion-for-learning/2012/10/17/tech-thursday-getting-flipped-out-with-learnzillion>

What if we could "outsource" direct instruction? Instead of standing in front of thirty students trying to explain how to revise an essay, we could pass that job to someone else, freeing the teacher to provide feedback more, facilitate more, and monitor progress more. **LearnZillion** is a new, free web-based tool that brings this concept close to reality.

LearnZillion has brought together teachers from across the nation to create five to six minute "screencasts" of high quality lessons on math, reading, and writing skills. They are organized in sets that all relate to a common theme within the Common Core framework. For example, in 7th Grade there is a set of videos in a section called, "Using Revision Strategies to Strengthen an Argument within an Essay." Under that heading are brief and solid lessons on topics such as, "Revise Argument Writing to Target a Specific Audience" and "Using Transition Words in Argumentative Writing." addressing core skills delineated in the standards and are a requisite for college and career success.

My favorite aspect of LearnZillion is the high quality of all the lessons. Each begins with a clear learning target, reviews previous learning, discusses common mistakes or misconceptions, provides a model and think-aloud of the skills in action, and ends with a review of the key concepts. Additionally, the instructors speak in an engaging and kid-friendly manner. I find myself wishing I could sit in their live classrooms and learn from them directly. However, if teachers do not like the voices in the videos, but want the content, they can download the presentation as a PowerPoint and deliver it themselves.



Teachers are using LearnZillion in a variety of ways. Some are embracing the idea of the "flipped" classroom where students use the videos to learn at home, using time in school to practice with peer and teacher support. Some use it as a differentiation tool. Suppose the class is in the drafting phase of an essay, but Juan finished his and wants to begin revising, the teacher can set him up in front of a set of revision lessons and let him work ahead. Another option is using it as another form of direct instruction given to the entire class. Sometimes hearing the same information from a different source with different visuals is just what some students need.

With such diverse learners in our classrooms, simply providing information in a variety of ways can have a significant impact. LearnZillion provides an alternative mode of lesson delivery that allows students to access core ideas at their own pace in their own time. This tool can free teachers from repetitious explanations to the entire class, allowing them to spend more time providing feedback in small groups or individually.

As teachers, we are always learning what it means to teach our content standards and how best to move students toward mastering them. By watching instructors on LearnZillion teaching the standards in a systematic manner, we can reflect on our own practice and how we deliver direct instruction. In truth, LearnZillion is not "outsourcing" instruction, but building a new way of learning in the 21st century classroom.

## Resources!

High School Wiki: <http://elaccgps9-12.wikispaces.com/>

Middle School Wiki: <http://georgiaelaccgps6-8.wikispaces.com/>

Elementary School Wiki: <http://georgiaelaccgpsk-5.wikispaces.com/>

To Join the ListServ:

[Join-ela-k-2@list.doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:Join-ela-k-2@list.doe.k12.ga.us)

[Join-ela-6-8@list.doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:Join-ela-6-8@list.doe.k12.ga.us)

[Join-ela-3-5@list.doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:Join-ela-3-5@list.doe.k12.ga.us)

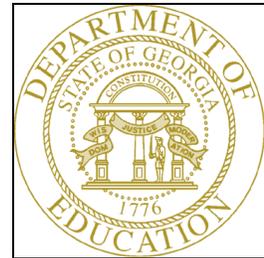
[Join-ela-9-12@list.doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:Join-ela-9-12@list.doe.k12.ga.us)

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