

# ELA REPORTER



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YOUR PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERACY

## New Webcast Series Featuring Georgia Educators Set to Debut!

A few months ago we circulated a survey asking for your feedback on our existing webinar series. The feedback we received asked for more hands-on, real-world examples from Georgia teachers and students, as well as a more modern format, shorter segments,



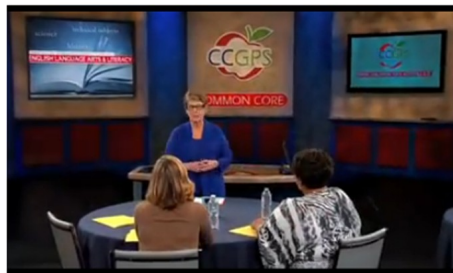
and a flexible viewing schedule. Since then we have been working diligently at developing a next-generation series of offerings.

If you are a regular reader of the ELA Reporter, you already know that on December 5, 2012, your Georgia DOE English Language Arts team will begin publishing these new segments. The webcasts will be available for viewing on our ELA CCGPS page at GeorgiaStandards.Org (<https://www.georgiastandards.org/Common-Core/Pages/ELA.aspx>). Each segment is presented as an informational webcast with 6-8 short videos embedded along the continuum of informational graphics. The videos describe strategies, instructional practices, and practical advice from Georgia teachers, and feature authentic student work. All of the instructional tools, notes, and other documentation are included alongside the webcast link on GSD for downloading by our viewers. As you view, please include your comments in the chat box beneath the videos so that we can continue to shape this series through your feedback.



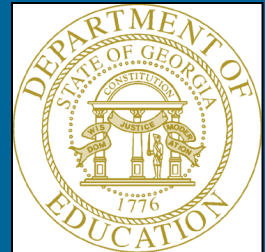
Along with this exciting new series debuting December 5th, we'd like to recommend that you also watch—if you have not already—the series filmed at GPB a few months ago by Cynde Snider, a regular contributor here at the ELA Reporter and an expert in differentiation, special education, and the Universal Design for Learning philosophy. Differentiation and scaffolding for struggling learners is a very hot topic in the Common Core community, and one that deserves close attention as we raise the rigor of our texts and instruction and raise our expectations for all students.

- ◆ Making Challenging Texts Accessible  
<http://www.gpb.org/education/common-core/making-challenging-texts>
- ◆ Facilitating Student-Led Discussions  
<http://www.gpb.org/education/common-core/facilitating-student-led>
- ◆ Universal Design for Learning Part I: Principles  
<http://www.gpb.org/education/common-core/udl-part-1>
- ◆ Universal Design for Learning Part II: Scaffolding Texts/Explicit Instructional Strategies  
<http://www.gpb.org/education/common-core/udl-part-2>



The series provides a 30-minute standalone session appropriate for K-12 professional development in all subjects/contents during faculty meetings, before or after school, or during teacher planning time. Following each 30-minute segment, teachers and instructional leaders can work collaboratively to implement the ideas and strategies in their classrooms and schools.

Georgia  
Department of  
Education



Dr. John D. Barge,  
State School  
Superintendent

*"Making Education  
Work for All Georgians"*

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## Rethinking Accommodations Cynde Snider

In the [September 1, 2012 issue of the \*ELA Reporter\*](#), I wrote about empowering students, noting that “[i]t’s often easier and quicker to do things for students, to tell them what we want them to know, or to lower our overall expectations; but these actions enable learned helplessness rather than empowering students to be successful” (page 2). Keeping this in mind, as we implement the CCGPS and move toward the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments in 2014-15, we need to rethink the purpose of accommodations for students with disabilities who have IEPs or 504s.



### What is an accommodation?

“Accommodations are changes to the manner in which instruction/assessment is administered or how a student responds to a learning task/assessment. Accommodations *do not reduce or change the learning expectations* for the student” ([Special Education Rules Implementation Manual](#), Part I, page 105, *emphasis added*). In other words, with the exception of the 1% of students with significant cognitive disabilities, students with IEPs or 504s should have the same overall learning expectations/goals/targets as students without disabilities.

### How does this differ from common practice?

Misconceptions regarding the difference between an accommodation and a modification generally result in lowered expectations for students. For example, decreasing the number of items that a student must answer on a classroom assessment may *modify* the content of the assessment, which then makes this practice a modification rather than an accommodation. If a student can meet learning expectations and demonstrate mastery with fewer items, why not include fewer items on the assessment for all students? If, on the other hand, completion of all items is necessary to demonstrate mastery, then students with IEPs or 504s need to complete all the items. Rather than decreasing the number of items, an appropriate accommodation might be to break the assessment up into smaller chunks and provide extra time and frequent breaks.

### Why does this matter?

More rigorous standards (CCGPS) mean more rigorous common, standardized assessments (PARCC). Every item on the PARCC assessments for ELA and literacy will be text based. These assessments will require in-depth, close, independent reading and more text-based writing, both of which necessitate increased stamina and persistence in students. All students need to develop this stamina and persistence in the classroom throughout the year.

Accommodations should reduce or eliminate the effect of a disability; they should empower students for success. If what we’re calling an accommodation requires students to do less or meet lower learning expectations, this may simplify things for the short run, but it undermines the development of stamina and persistence and *disables* students in the long run. Think about it.

For more detailed information about accommodations, see Chapter Nine of the [Special Education Rules Implementation Manual](#), Part I and the [Accommodations Manual: A Guide to Selecting, Administering, and Evaluating the Use of Test Administration Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#).



### Common Core Impact on Students with Special Needs

Students with disabilities continue to demonstrate the capacity to succeed in the general curriculum with appropriate specialized instruction, supports, and accommodations. Reports from the [National Center for Educational Outcomes](#) (NCEO) reveal that students with a variety of learning profiles are continuing to demonstrate greater capacity to acquire and express all levels of knowledge than was previously anticipated. Transitioning administrators, teachers, and related service personnel to this expectation of higher achievement based on demonstrated outcomes is part of the challenge for our field.

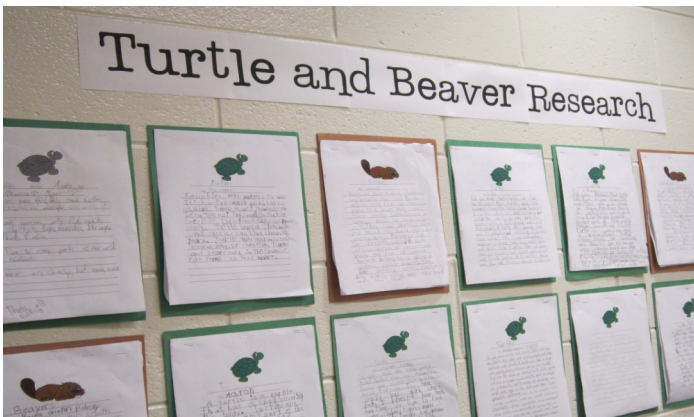
The CCS are laden with literacy, numeracy, and cross-disciplinary skills, e.g., communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and use of technology. Embedded throughout, as well, is clear evidence that the CCS should be read as allowing for the widest possible range of students to participate fully from the outset, along with the appropriate accommodations to ensure maximum participation of students with special education needs (continued... see below)

To read the complete article:  
[http://www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=CEC\\_Today&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=15269](http://www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=CEC_Today&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=15269)

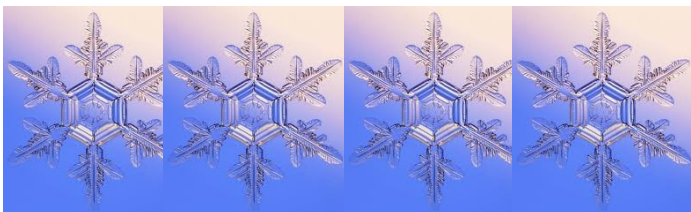
## Collaboration in Teaching the Common Core State Standards

*By second grade teacher Allison Talley and media specialist Jennifer Lewis*

At Indian Knoll Elementary School in Canton, Georgia, we are embracing the Common Core's emphasis on research skills! Recently, we worked collaboratively to develop a research project for students. The project was designed to complement the folktale *Turtle's Race with Beaver* by Joseph and James Bruchac in our second grade textbook. We decided our students would more fully comprehend the story if they had additional background knowledge of the turtle and beaver. We created a graphic organizer for students to complete with basic information about a turtle or a beaver. Then we taught them how to access information about animals in Kids Galileo and how to take notes from articles. We showed students how to turn on the read-aloud feature to help them access difficult vocabulary. Students used computers in the media center and both teachers assisted students with locating information and with technology.



Finally, students received instruction on writing about nonfiction texts and developed their essays using their graphic organizers. Their final products were displayed in the media center for all students and staff to enjoy. Through this research project, we taught Core Standards W.2.2. (write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop a point, and provide a concluding sentence) and W.2.7. (participate in shared research and writing projects). Small research projects such as these provide scaffolding and support for our students as they build the research skills required for longer, more in-depth projects. We look forward to collaborating on many more projects that will provide our students with meaningful and progressively complex research and writing opportunities.



## GALILEO Britannica Online STEM Training for Georgia K-12 Schools

As Georgia educators continue to implement the new Common Core GPS Literacy Standards in the content areas, English Language Arts instructors are often at the fore assisting their colleagues with this important transition. If you are an ELA instructor interested in learning more about accessing informational texts in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) subject areas, or simply want to know more about the wealth of resources available through GALILEO, tune into this webinar series in December! During this free 1-hour long webinar, you will learn all about how to access Britannica School's great collection of STEM resources.

With just a few clicks of the mouse, Britannica School provides educators quick and easy access to a variety of STEM resources. Conveniently organized by subject and grade level, thousands of topical articles, student activities, and teacher resources are ideal for classroom lessons and special projects. Resources are included for all levels, Kindergarten up through High School and all areas of STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math). All sessions will be archived and available for future viewing on the GSD ELA/Literacy webpage:

Elementary

Monday, December 10

3:30 PM - 4:30 PM

[www.gotomeeting.com/register/836714377](http://www.gotomeeting.com/register/836714377)

Middle School

Tuesday, December 11

4:00 PM - 5:00 PM

[www.gotomeeting.com/register/812958457](http://www.gotomeeting.com/register/812958457)

High School

Wednesday, December 12

3:30 PM - 4:30 PM

[www.gotomeeting.com/register/422950969](http://www.gotomeeting.com/register/422950969)

Also, tune in for a webinar series focused SOLELY on GALILEO. Specialists will provide tips on maximizing this resource for quick and efficient identification of appropriate grade-level CCGPS texts.

January 22, 3:30-4:30—Elementary

January 29, 4:00-5:00—Middle School

January 31, 3:30-4:30—High School

(watch for links on the CCGPS Literacy homepage on GSD)

For more information on this webinar series, contact ELA/Literacy Program Specialist Daniel Rock at [drock@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:drock@doe.k12.ga.us)

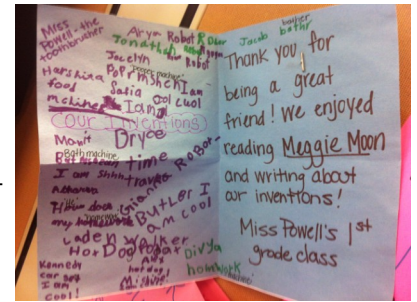
## A Big Thank You to Manning Elementary...



There is nothing that warms the heart more than a random act of kindness, especially one as gracious as this! A few weeks ago Ava Sheffield, a Curriculum Support Teacher at Manning Oaks Elementary School in Fulton County sent us an

email. She had discovered that a text mentioned in one of the DOE sample unit plans was no longer in print, and the teachers really wanted to use it. This is the sort of glitch we sometimes encounter that can really make us cringe! No one wants to introduce an obstacle to teachers already working so very hard to implement a new and challenging curriculum. We were prepared for a well-deserved upbraiding! But instead, Ms. Sheffield very kindly offered that these kinds of things sometimes

just can't be helped or foreseen, and was just wondering if we had a workaround. It just so happened that we had one copy of the book in question, *Meggie Moon* here in our offices. It wasn't much for an entire elementary school to share, but we shipped it off to Manning Oaks Elementary anyway, thinking it was an awfully small gesture and wishing we could do more. Imagine our surprise when a few weeks later our mailbox exploded with an entire collection of thank you notes from each and every child who heard the story and shared the book. In this holiday season we can't think of a kinder, more inspiring attitude towards what began as a troublesome challenge. Thank you, Manning Elementary, for your big hearts and your shining example.



## Upson-Lee South Elementary Explores The Wizard of Oz!



*Teachers and students from Upson-Lee South Elementary School in Thomaston, Georgia dress Book Character Parade after completing the Model Unit Framework on The Wizard of Oz. The unit required some modification and the teachers worked hard to make it fit their own unique needs, but in the end, says Instructional Coach Tracy Wainwright, "I am so impressed with how they ultimately embraced it - AND SO DID THE KIDS!! All the girls wanted to be Dorothy! So proud of them!" Thanks Upson-Lee! You inspire us!*

# RESOURCES

WE HEARTILY RECOMMEND!


For parents who would like family-friendly information on English Language Arts in the Common Core, the Georgia DOE Parent page has several informational videos recommended for viewing at

<http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/School-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Pages/Parent-Engagement-Program-For-Parents-Links.aspx>

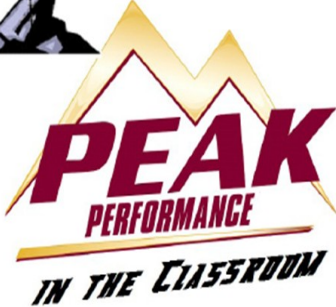
One of the most powerful things about the Common Core educational movement is the ability to share resources between and among states. Another good parent resource that we can recommend can be found the New York City Schools DOE. Like the Georgia resources, the overview you will find at this web address is written specifically with parents in mind, explaining what the implementation of the Common Core Standards will mean for children in the classroom.

[http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/D9D76EF9-4C46-408B-9A74-4F8141A3A1CA/D/CommonCore101711\\_PreOct31\\_final.pdf](http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/D9D76EF9-4C46-408B-9A74-4F8141A3A1CA/D/CommonCore101711_PreOct31_final.pdf)

## Georgia Council of Teachers of English



The 2013 Conference  
of the Georgia Council of  
Teachers of English  
February 22-23, 2013



**PEAK**  
PERFORMANCE  
IN THE CLASSROOM

Brasstown Valley Resort & Spa  
Young Harris, Georgia

The annual GCTE Conference will take place at the beautiful Brasstown Valley Resort in February, and it is not too late to reserve your spot! Save up to \$30 by registering before you arrive at

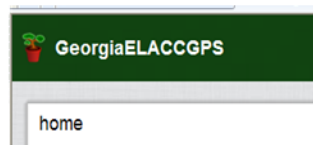
<http://www.gcte.net/Conference/Brasstown%202013/Conference%202013%20Registration.pdf>

Teacher leaders from across the state will present variety of professional learning sessions on topics including the big shifts with Common Core, text complexity, and changing strategies in the CCGPS classroom. ELA Specialists Susan Jacobs and Daniel Rock will host a session addressing finding and using informational text. Along with the many other benefits of joining GCTE, an additional discount is available for members, so join today! Information on membership can be found at the web address above.

## Young Georgia Authors 2013

The purpose of the Young Georgia Authors (YGA) writing competition is to encourage students to develop enthusiasm for and expertise in their writing, to provide a context to celebrate their writing successes, and to recognize student achievement in arts and academics. The contest is open to all Georgia public school students in grades K-12 and accepts every genre of writing from poetry to short stories to journalism to academic essays (under 5 pages in length). Only system-level winners may be submitted to the DOE. The 2013 contest deadline to receive submissions is April 5, 2013. **For more information visit the Wiki** for your grade level. Happy Writing!

High School Wiki: <http://elaccgps9-12.wikispaces.com/>  
Middle School Wiki: <http://georgiaelaccgps6-8.wikispaces.com/>  
Elementary School Wiki: <http://georgiaelaccgpsk-5.wikispaces.com/>



## Stay In Touch!

Remember to check our website often! In addition to the new webcast series appearing December 5, our GeorgiaStandards.Org page has a new look and will be easier than ever to navigate (see address below at right: DOE ELA HOMEPAGE). Get important updates through our ListServ and through Twitter. We'll see you in cyberspace!



follow us on Twitter! @GADOEELA

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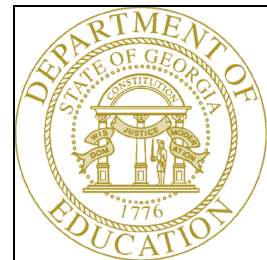


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### How Can We Help?

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