



ELA Think Tank / Leadership

So March begins. I always found February to be the “never-ending story” of the school year. It’s dark, cold, and just seems to go on and on. And this was a leap year!

I have been reluctant (some may call it negligent) to have our “think tank” meeting. I know you are busy in your schools and districts, and I want to make sure that we have a discussion-worthy agenda set before convening a face-to-face or a virtual meeting. If the info can be delivered via this update ...

I do want to have a dialogue soon. There are some items on the horizon (one of which is discussed below) which will call for collaborative efforts, so I will definitely be putting together a meeting.

News from the Office of Standards & Instructional Support

Future happenings in Reading, Writing, and Communicating:

If you are interested in being involved with PARCC related tasks, please let me know. Teachers, curriculum specialists, and assessment folks from the PARCC states collaborate on such things as passage selection, item development, rangefinding for scoring, and other tasks. I have found involvement in the PARCC work to be very insightful and informative; I think classroom teachers and district admin find it valuable, as well, for both assessment knowledge and instructional purposes. **Jonathan Wright**, Language Arts Teacher / Coordinator from Boulder Valley School District (among others), has been involved in this work and could give you his perspective, as well. His email is jonathan.wright@bvsd.org. My contact info is provided below.

2016 Legislative Session, Board Discussions, New Commissioner

We will, of course, be listening to the key issues that the legislature will identify and discuss over the next few months. If last year is any indication, I think we can anticipate discussions around assessment (e.g. PARCC results, the new PSAT and SAT – see Interim Commissioner Asp’s letter [here](#)), teacher evaluation, graduation requirements, and other issues. You may follow the legislative actions by accessing Chalkbeat’s “Education Bill Tracker 2016” at [this link](#).

NCTE, CCIRA, CLAS Notes

NCTE: The National Council of Teachers of English ([NCTE](#)) provides great resources for English teachers. If you have not done so, you should check out the #nctechat on Twitter. These are great sessions! To see the archives of #nctechat and a calendar of upcoming chats, click [here](#).

NCTE has just published its [Professional Knowledge for the Teaching of Writing](#) statement. This is a revised statement replacing the *NCTE Beliefs about the Teaching of Writing*. I would be interested in hearing your thoughts, and those of your colleagues, about this position statement.

CLAS: The [Colorado Language Arts Society](#) has information posted for its [2016 Regional Fall Conference](#) -- “For the Love of Teaching / Reclaiming the Classroom.” This year’s speakers include Taylor Mali, Jimmy Santiago Baca, and Sarah Brown Wessling.

Be sure, too, to check out the [CLAS Writing Contest](#), open to all Colorado K-12 Students!

Research & Resources

Student Agency refers to the level of control, autonomy, and power that a **student** experiences in an educational situation. **Student agency** can be manifested in the choice of learning environment, subject matter, approach, and/or pace.

I’ve been exploring **student agency** and **student engagement** lately. I found this article on [Mindsets and Student Agency](#) to be very interesting.

Student Engagement: “The student’s psychological investment in and effort directed toward learning, understanding, or mastering the knowledge, skills or crafts that academic work is intended to promote (Newman, F., 1992, p. 12).”

And I have been exploring how **engagement** and **agency** might overlap or intersect. Here’s a great article: [“Using Student Engagement to Improve Adolescent Literacy.”](#)

Watch this space in the future for research and resources. If you have a tech resource or bit of research you would like to share, please email them to me!

Contact Info

Please feel free to contact me with any feedback on this e-update or to suggest topics or questions you would like to see addressed in future updates. I want this monthly newsletter to be useful as you do the vital day-to-day work with your students and colleagues. I may be reached at Puzick_v@cde.state.co.us or (303) 866-6583.