

Acceptance Speech given by Jerry Judd, from the UCI Writing Project, for receiving the Classroom Excellence Award.

CATE 2005 Convention, The Westin Santa Clara & Santa Clara Convention Center

Thank you.

Thanks for having me here today. Thank you to CATE President Maureen Rippee for her support and thank you to Southland Council President Catherine Linn for her nomination for this prestigious award, and thanks to the entire CATE board for bringing us together here.

It seems kind of funny for me to be up here today, for I am just one voice of the many speaking on behalf of all who have guided me here today. I am humbled to be standing here among you. I stand here proudly, proud of the difference that together we make in the elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, junior colleges and universities throughout the state of California. Over the past 23 years in teaching, I have learned that part of what we teach when we teach writing, reading and literature is that which is invisible and that can only be felt with the human heart. I have learned that you can't measure progress in writing and reading with a truck scale. Let good educational theory and the tried and proven techniques of the National & California Writing Projects play a larger role in guiding our profession.

It is ironic that at a time when the teachers in our state most need staff development training and expertise in meeting the demands of state mandated testing and standards, our politicians and bureaucrats have cut staff development. The Writing and Literacy and Technology Projects that we so desperately need have to fight for funding, fight for their very existence each and every year. And this is a tragedy. For we teach all of the population of students in this great state. We are not a special interest group. We are the voice of reason and reality, and a group equipped with the power and intelligence and leadership to confront and meet the challenges in these stormy, confused times of uncertainty in our profession. But we need the time, the training, the expertise, technology and dollars to move forward and be successful.

I am lucky to have had the opportunity to work with Carol Olson, the late, great Owen Thomas, and Catherine D'Aoust from the UC Irvine Writing Project and the many other fine people associated with the Writing Projects throughout country. I am the beneficiary of great staff development opportunities, allowing me to stand here in front of you today, but what about today's beginning teachers. The young teachers of today often feel isolated, alone in this profession. I want them to have the same opportunities, and to make them part of this team. Together, we can make a difference. But choke off the funding, choke off the staff development opportunities, choke off the expertise of the voice of reason, and it will set this profession adrift in stormy, confused political seas. We are a community of learners; we are part of a team. I have but one voice here today, but it is one voice of the team of many we have assembled. It is a team of strength, of understanding, of compassion and of power. Let us move forward together to meet these challenges. Let each of us veteran teachers reach out, and keeping one hand for the boat, and one hand for us, invite these young teachers and student teachers to become part of our team. Thanks for having me here today. Thanks for letting me be a part of this team. Let's not let this profession go "Sideways." Thank you.