

Arkansas Tech University  
Professional Development Grant  
Final Report

Southeastern Regional Association of Teacher Educators  
2015 Annual Conference  
Jekyll Island, Georgia  
October 8 – 10, 2015

Stephanie P. Pepper, Ed.D.  
Assistant Professor of Early Childhood

## B. Restatement of Professional Enhancement Opportunity

The Southeastern Regional Association of Teacher Educators (SRATE) Annual Conference was held in Jekyll Island, Georgia, on October 8 – 10, 2015. The theme of the conference was aligned with the national organization and was entitled “*Shaping the Future of Education: Creating Access, Opportunity and Equity,*” My presentations were entitled “*Managing media: teacher candidates must help children and their families find a balance between technology and active learning*” and “*Accountability within the Southeastern Regional ATE (SRATE) States.*” Besides presenting in break-out sessions during the conference, I was asked to be a presenter, along with other colleagues to explain my involvement with SRATE as a member of the board and as President Elect-Elect.

## C. Brief Review

My presentation explained the issues which surround the unwise use of technology by young children. Educators have a responsibility to support parents and families as they seek to balance children’s screen time with active involvement with other activities. Time spent watching movies and videos, playing electronic games on devices, and surfing the Internet increase the total amount of time children spend watching a screen. Media-educated adults must be ready to help children make wise choices regarding the powerful influence of technology and media. Preparing Arkansas Tech University students for their future classrooms requires mentoring, multifaceted assignments, and the utilization of technology; yet, we, as teacher educators, play an important role in supporting future teachers in making wise decisions involving technology.

## D. Summary of Experiences

I am a member of the SRATE Board and am required to attend the Board Meeting prior to the conference. As a future President (presently Vice President) of our state association, Arkansas Association of Teacher Educators (ArATE), I will chair the 2017 SRATE Conference in Rogers, Arkansas. The leadership of SRATE has set the precedent that conference planners witness and participate in two conferences prior to

chairing, as this enhances continuity for the organization. During this conference I gained valuable knowledge concerning the responsibilities of the board members.

A highlight of the trip was the visit to the Georgia Sea Turtle Center located right on Jekyll Island. The director of the center hosted a reception for SRATE members and employees shared information about their work with sea turtles. It was very informative and lesson plans were shared with us which could be used in elementary classrooms to both inform children and to foster a protective spirit toward life on our planet. These ideas prove useful to ATU's teacher candidates.

#### E. Conclusion

In conclusion, when attending conferences, I discuss ATU's Teacher Education Program and always gain new knowledge of other programs across the country. I also learn about successful teaching ideas and new technology to incorporate. This conference proved to be a good source of information for my teaching and my responsibilities as an officer.

My increased responsibilities as a member of the SRATE board require that I attend the conferences to meet with other leaders. As a reviewer of Early Childhood Programs for the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), I am required to remain abreast of current trends in education. Additionally, I feel that my attendance proves beneficial to Arkansas Tech University in allowing me to improve my skills in curriculum planning. Furthermore, each experience serves to help keep me well informed about Teacher Education and current initiatives.

Please see below a copy of the name tag from the SRATE Conference:



SOUTHEASTERN ASSOCIATION  
OF TEACHER EDUCATORS

**Stephanie**

Stephanie Pepper  
Arkansas Tech University