

**2005 Arizona ELL
"Teacher of the Year"**

Karen Merritt

Glendale High School, Glendale Union High School District

Karen Merritt looks like a poster illustration of the finer side of English county life. Her air of refinement and quiet flickering firelight, fine big dogs china.



restraint suggests images of and tea served in paper-thin

The reality is *way* different...

Karen is very much a modern parent and dedicated high school time-schedules and daily in Glendale, Arizona is complex, flux. She doesn't multi-task...she

American woman, a busy teacher, with all the frantic challenges that implies. Life on-the-run and constantly in has to *mega*-task.

She brings many strengths to her Learner (ELL) teacher. Passion, dedication, perseverance and focus on success are channeled into her instruction. On the wall in her classroom hangs a poster of "Rosie the Riveter". That strong graphic is a tangible reminder to her students that "they can do it!" She expects they will succeed; she knows they will succeed and she reminds them daily. Funny thing about the assured expectation of academic excellence...students start fulfilling that prophecy.

work as an English Language creativity, energy,

Karen is totally self-effacing; she is the first to tell you that she is in a classroom-working partnership with her paraprofessional, **Edna Reilly**. Together, they face and overcome the tests and challenges of ELL teaching. Like any other job in this world, there are joys and sadness, ups and downs. But they know this: there is never a dull moment in the world of an ELL educator!

Perhaps what is the most important element of her many teaching strengths, is **Karen's** drive to make each student feel valued. She works to find the key that will unlock the potential in each teenager. Patience and determination to find the student's motivation are her twin guides in reaching these students.

Karen embodies her own words, "Just keep on believing and doing." Teaching isn't just a philosophy to her. It is what she lives by and for. It is why she drives in to Glendale High every day. It is the now, it is the future. It is what she believes and what she does.

Karen Merritt holds an M.A. in ESL/Bilingual Education from Ottawa University in Phoenix, a B. A. in Political Science from ASU and certificates in English as a Second Language, Standards Secondary Education and Political Science. Karen is an ELL Teacher and ELL Department Chair at Glendale Union High School. She served as a member of the Arizona Task Force from 2006-2010.