



MCTE News

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Newsletter of the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English

President's Column ~ *by Paige Shreeve-Welle*

The MCTE Spring Conference is in Duluth this year in April, and I hope everyone can make it! The theme for this year's conference is "50 years of Continuity and Change." Since I have started teaching in the English classroom, I have seen students go from typing papers on a typewriter to word processing on computers. Spell check was invented. The Internet came along and gave students access to resources that, prior to this, would have required a trip to a university library. MLA bibliographies and citations changed. MLA bibliographies changed again and again. Outcome Based Education came and went, but most teachers kept using pieces of it, like being able to rewrite papers until certain standards are met. The Profiles of Learning came and went also, and again, most of us kept what seemed to work. One of the biggest pieces that I continued using from the Profiles was the stress on primary research in writing projects.

Now, as educators, we are faced with "Race to the Top." In case you haven't heard about "Race to the Top," it proposes that schools that don't have high enough test scores, or show enough improvement, must undergo one of four possible reforms. The reforms include takeover by a charter or school-management organization, transformation which requires a longer school day, among other changes, and "turnaround" which requires the entire teaching staff be fired and no more than 50 percent rehired in the fall. Wow. Fire an entire staff? That couldn't happen, could it? It could. On Tuesday, February 23, 2010, the school board in Central Falls, Rhode Island fired its entire high school teaching staff, including 74 classroom teachers, reading specialists, guidance counselors, physical education teachers, the school psychologist, the principal, and three assistant principals. This was not a change that I saw coming, but one that is on the horizon and needs to be faced head on.

At the Spring Conference, there will be opportunities to talk to other teachers and find out what is happening in their districts, as well as learn many new teaching strategies. There are many sessions on using technology in the classroom, as well as sessions that touch on reading strategies and writing strategies. I'm super excited to see Deb Appleman returning, as her sessions are always very thought-provoking and practical for the English classroom.

English teachers are without a doubt, some of the hardest working teachers in any school district. I know it is hard to leave the classroom, even for a day, because you are a dedicated teacher, but with some of the most difficult changes ahead of us, I encourage you to attend the conference in Duluth this spring and visit with other English teachers about the changes that are coming, or quite possibly are already here.

Have you heard...?

The K-12 English Language Arts Common Core State Standards have been released. Check out

www.corestandards.org for details. After doing so, educators, groups, and stakeholders are encouraged to provide feedback on the document by April 2. Two surveys, in particular, are available for voicing your opinion: One is provided by CCSSO at

www.corestandards.org and the other is through the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) at www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22ABML6WDYV.

Minnesotans are especially asked to participate via MDE's survey to get an accurate picture of the state's reaction to these standards.



Spring Conference Breakout Session Preview

Friday, April 23

9:00-9:45: Leila Christenbury

10:00-11:00: Session 1

~ "Successful Staff Development Strategies," presented by Muriel Thompson and Kristen Jamsen of the Minnesota Writing Project

~ "Multi-media Approaches to Teaching and Tutoring English Language Learners," presented by Carol Mohrbacher, Jillian Mergen, and Joel McDonough

~ "Differentiating in the Secondary Language Arts Classroom," presented by Kari Sampson and Mary Alberts

~ "Hearing Voices," presented by Rob Gardner

~ "Virtually Face to Face: Wikis, Nings, and Hybrid Writing Classes," presented by Paige Shreeve Welle and Elizabeth Boeser

11:15-12:15: Session 2

~ "Oral Histories: Connect to the Community and Jumpstart Student Reflection," presented by Tanya Miller & Susan Perala-Dewey & Michelle Shaw

~ "Strategies for Teaching College Composition," presented by Elizabeth Kirchoff, Michael Tomanek, and Marlo Belschner

~ "25 Free or Inexpensive Digital Tool," presented by Sandy Hayes, who requests you bring your laptop

~ "I Write Because I Can't Fly': Creative Writing Behind the Bars of Incarceration," presented by Deborah Appleman

~ "Going Beyond 'Define and Use': Strategies for Effective Vocabulary Instruction," presented by Suzanne Kack

12:30-1:45: Lunch & Kao Kalia Yang

2:00-3:00: Session 3

~ "Creating a K-12 Writing Cohort in Your District," presented by Michelle Shaw and Paul Beverage

~ "How to Stop Your Students' Papers from Killing You (and Them): Three Approaches to Writing as Learning," presented by Deborah Appleman, Keith Harrison, and Julie Landsman

~ "Boys and Literacy," presented by Amber Walsh

~ "Literature Circles and Expanded Reading Choices," presented Luke Stordahl

~ "Using Social Networking and Digital Tools to Teach Writing and Literature," presented by Richard Beach and Elizabeth Boeser

3:15-4:30: Annual Meeting

Saturday, April 24

9:00-10:00: Julie Landsman

10:15-11:15: Session 4

~ "Strategies for Teaching Metaphor," presented by John Schmit

~ "Community Building through Online Technologies for Group Assignments in College Writing Classrooms," presented by Brian Lewis, Laurie Lykken, & Gordon Pueschner

~ "Reading Strategies," presented by Heidi Dresser, Amy Koskela, and Kerrie Speer

~ "Multicultural Literature Revisited: New Books and Teaching Ideas," presented by Anne O'Meara

~ "You and YouTube in the Classroom," presented by Paige Shreeve Welle and Andy Burklund

11:30-12:30: Session 5

~ "The Search for Self and Student within the Contemporary Indian Novel," presented by Paula Schevers, Candice Deal, Corinne Ehrfurth, and Mary Susan Johnston

~ "Teaching Writing and Literature Online: When, How, and Why," presented by Linda Frances Lein

~ "Beyond the Book: Using Independent Reading to Reach Curricular Goals," presented by Sherri Larson and Jeremy Hoffman

~ "MAVWriters and MAVReaders: A Secondary School/University Partnership," presented by Cindy Olson, Jackie Arnold, and Michelle Peterson

~ "African-American English (AAE) & Effective Teaching," presented by Daryl Parks

12:30-1:30: Lunch and Pete Hautman
Come contribute to the conversation as we look back on 50 years of Continuity and Change within the field of language arts. Fill out the registration form on page 3, and we'll see you in Duluth!



Congratulations to Bloomington Jefferson High School's Elizabeth Boeser, featured in a November/December 2009 issue of *Adolescent Literacy In Perspective*. Along with other teachers, Liz was interviewed for her innovative hybrid teaching practices as part of research for William Kist's new book, *The Socially Networked Classroom: Teaching in the New Media Age*. The article highlighted how Liz uses blogs, wikis, and Nings to help her students connect with texts through online role playing and in-character conversations. Not only are these new media methods impressive for how they engage students when interacting with literature but also for how they have translated into real world extensions, as evidenced by a year-long dialogue students initiated with school administrators about Internet policy after discussing how the Internet could control young people in Doctorow's *Little Brother*.

MCTE Spring Conference, April 23-24, 2010
Celebrating 50 Years of Continuity and Change
Duluth Entertainment Convention Center (DECC)

Featuring...

- **Leila Christenbury**: Professor of English Education and former president of NCTE

- **Kao Kalia Yang**: Local author of *The Latehomecomer: A Hmong Family Memoir*

- **Julie Landsman**: Author of *Basic Needs: A Year With Street Kids in a City School* and *Growing Up*

White: A Veteran Teacher Reflects on Racism

- **Pete Hautman**: Author of *How to Steal a Car*, *Godless*, *Sweetblood*, *Invisible*, and *Rash*

Please send a copy of this registration form and payment in the form of a check payable to the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English (MCTE). No purchase orders or credit cards, please. Mailing deadline: April 7, 2010. Mailing Address: MCTE, Minnesota Humanities Education Center, 987 East Ivy Ave., St. Paul, MN 55106. Registrations postmarked after April 7 and onsite registrations will be charged an additional \$20. Retain a copy of this form for your records. There are no refunds for cancellations or no-shows.

Name: _____

Home mailing address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____

E-mail address: _____

Please check one:

_____ \$160: Friday and Saturday combined registration (includes all meals and speakers)

_____ \$110: Friday only registration (9 a.m.-4 p.m., includes continental breakfast, lunch, afternoon hors d'oeuvres, speakers)

_____ \$70: Saturday only registration (8 a.m.-1 p.m., includes full breakfast, lunch, speakers)

_____ \$50: Student teacher/ college student ~ Please indicate your college: _____

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A reminder...you are able to reserve a room from one of the following hotels at the conference rate by March 22:
* Hampton Inn (218)-720-3000 * Comfort Suites (218) 727-1378 *Registration questions? Send an email to jessica.dockter@gmail.com

And a bonus! Check out some extra Duluth activities!

Thursday: Arriving early? Gather for an evening dinner with other conference attendees. Meet at the Hampton Inn lobby at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday. We'll go as a group to a recommended restaurant.

Friday: After the sessions for the day, go catch some dinner on your own, but then plan to meet for dessert and conversation at the Amazing Grace Bakery and Coffeehouse at 394 South Lake Avenue (toward town from Canal Park). Local writers from the Lake Superior Writers group will be reading from their work and telling us about their very successful writing community. Poets Sheila Packa and Connie Wanek are on the list for now. **But wait, there's more!** After the reading, we'll be heading out to a most literary activity-- bowling. We have some group space reserved at Incline Lanes beginning at 9:15. Games are \$3.50 a piece, and because the bowling alley is so eager to host some grammarians, shoes are FREE.

MCTE Book Trailer Contest: **Deadline--April 9, 2010**

Wondering how to make independent reading interesting and relevant to your students? Thinking about how to teach your students multi-media skills for digital literacy? Encourage them to make movie trailers for their favorite books!

MCTE is proud to sponsor a book trailer contest for grades 3-12 and college students. Working individually or in groups of up to four, students can create powerful promos using their own visual interpretation of characters, scenes, intriguing storytelling dilemmas and discoveries, and moments to remember. While no copyrighted still images and no clips, still pictures, sound track, or music from any commercial production made from the book may be used, music sources and video clips may be

included with credits at the end of the trailer.

Ranging in length from 30 seconds to 3 minutes, the digital format is a hands-on way for students to critically analyze and manifest the literary nuance of mood, character motivation, and meaning in a captivating medium. There will be four division levels (intermediate, middle school, high school, and college) with one winner at each level receiving \$100. Besides being awarded certificates of excellence, winners and honorable mentions will have their trailers displayed at MCTE's Spring Conference and posted to MCTE's website and the Minnesota Writing Quilt Gallery through the National Writing Gallery. How cool! Let's make reading "reel."

For more contest details...

visit MCTE's website at www.mcte.org. Then, on the right sidebar, find the Book Trailer Contest link. There you will find helpful trailer examples appropriate for each division level, guidelines, and judging criteria.

Submit .mov (QuickTime) or .wav (Windows Media) files and verification forms to mcteinfo@gmail.com by April 9.

Good luck making those good reads come to a screen near you!

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Inside this Issue: Spring Conference Information and Registration Form
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By May 15, send articles for the next issue to: jodi.anderson@anoka.k12.mn.us