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WCTE convention

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WCTE is a volunteer organization, and it is thanks to many dedicated professionals that it continues to be a vital part of the professional lives of English language arts teachers in Wisconsin.

— Jessica Gallo

FROM THE WCTE PRESIDENT >> Jess Gallo

Dear Colleagues,
As 2012 and another semester draw rapidly to a close, I have been thinking back on all of the wonderful things that have happened for WCTE this year.

WCTE sponsored valuable workshops, including the state-wide gathering at Arrowhead High School in March. In October, English educators from all over the state convened in Madison for the WCTE annual convention. Recently, many Wisconsin English educators returned from the NCTE convention held in Las Vegas in November.

Besides these excellent professional development opportunities, WCTE has coordinated and sponsored numerous awards, writing initiatives, and outreach activities designed to serve and support you. Yes, it has been an exciting year for WCTE, and I look forward to spending 2013 with you.

WCTE is a volunteer organization, and it is thanks to many dedicated professionals that it continues to be a vital part of the professional lives of English language arts teachers in Wisconsin.

Specifically, I would like to warmly welcome WCTE's new district directors: Jack Van Treese of UW-Waukesha, Tym Allison of Dodgeville High School, Denise Benden of Western Technical College, Jacalyn Mabon (who has moved from District 2 to District 5) of P.J. Jacobs Junior High School in Stevens Point, Lynn Aprill of Bonduel High School, Janelle Bailey of Bayport High School in Green Bay, Kelly Baudhuin of Preble High School in Green Bay, Martha Handrick of Lakeland Union

High School in Minocqua, Tom Pamperin of Chippewa Falls High School, and Eva Elizabeth Ennamorato of Riverside University High School in Milwaukee. [See directors and district map on page 2.]

District directors are elected to act as a liaison between WCTE and the teachers in a given region of the state. In other words, your district directors are interested in meeting your needs. Feel free to drop them a line to share your concerns about teaching English and language arts or to suggest new initiatives for WCTE to take up in coming years.

As we look forward to 2013, consider making WCTE part of your new year's plans. There are so many ways to get involved in the organization, and we welcome contributions of any shape.

Perhaps you are interested in writing and contributing an article about an innovative teaching idea to the Wisconsin English Journal or the WCTE Update.

Maybe you would like to help shape future WCTE conventions by getting involved in the planning committee. Or perhaps you see new possibilities for the directions of WCTE and would like to get involved as a district director or a committee chair.

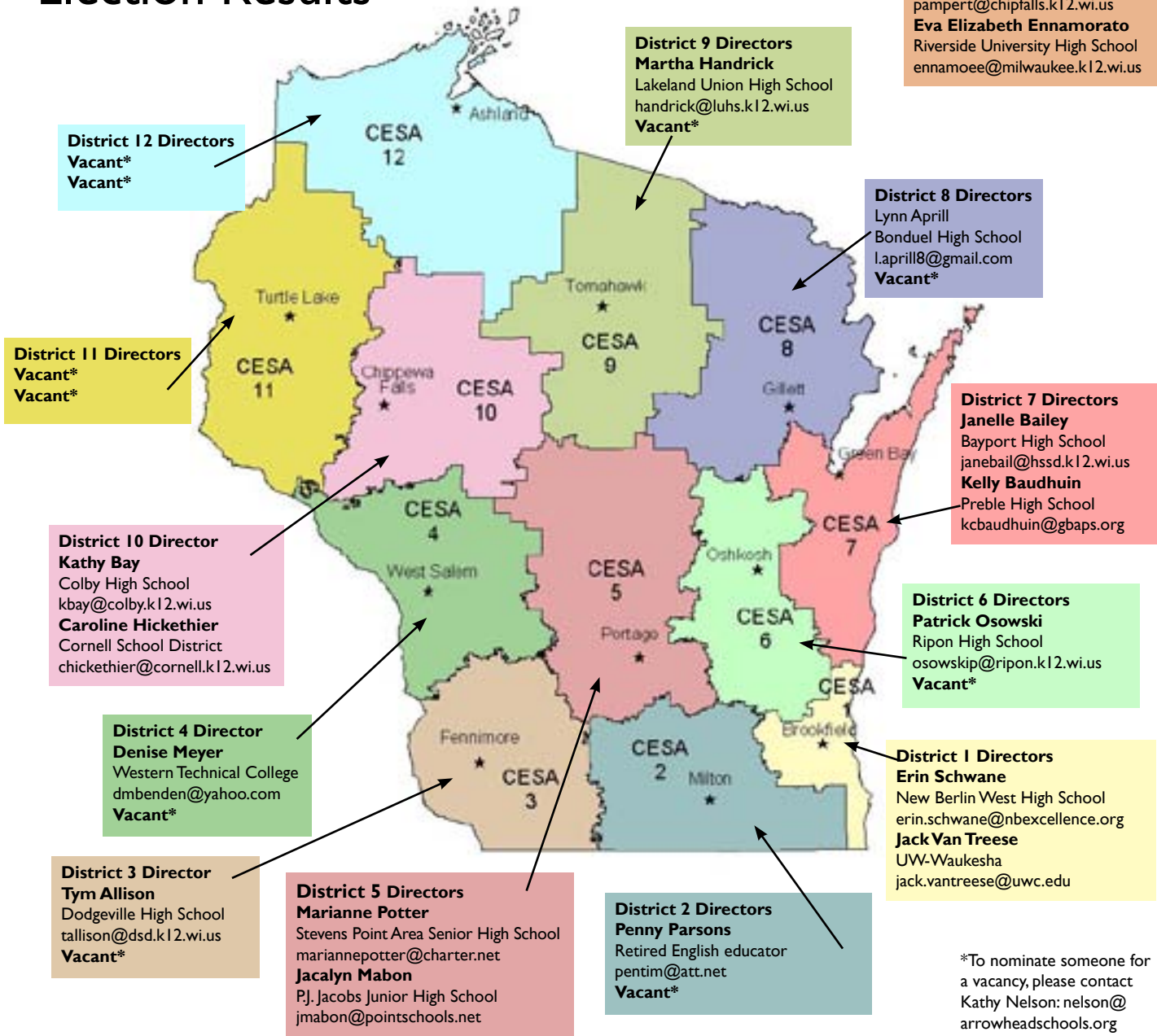
We would love to hear your ideas! Feel free to contact me at jrgallo@wisc.edu, and I would be happy to discuss volunteer options with you.

Wishing you a happy and healthy new year,

Jessica Gallo
WCTE President

CESA DISTRICTS: Meet your WCTE District Directors Election Results

Directors-at-Large
Tom Pamperin
 Chippewa Falls High School
 pampert@chipfalls.k12.wi.us
Eva Elizabeth Ennamorato
 Riverside University High School
 ennamoe@milwaukee.k12.wi.us



*To nominate someone for a vacancy, please contact Kathy Nelson: nelson@arrowheadschoools.org

WCTE Board >> Lynn Aprill, election chair

OFFICERS

President: Jessica Gallo, UW-Madison
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Second Vice President: John Pruitt, UW-Rock County
Director at Large/Past President: Kathy Nelson, Arrowhead High School
Secretary: Karen Kelley Rigoni, UW-Milwaukee
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District Director Liaison: Lynn Aprill, Bonduel High School

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Convention Manager: Marti Matyska, Retired English Educator

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Affiliate Liaison to NCTE: Tom Scott, UW-Milwaukee
Professional Issues Committee Chair: Tom Pamperin, Chippewa Falls High School
Wisconsin Authors Committee Chair: Marti Matyska, Retired English Educator
Intellectual Freedom Committee Chair: John Pruitt, UW-Rock County
Diversity Chair: Abbie Fishman, Riverside University High School
Archivist: Emily Tymus Ihrke, University School of Milwaukee
Awards Coordinator: Jacalyn Mabon, P.J. Jacobs Junior High School



PEOPLE

WCTE Awards presented at Fall Convention in Madison

Chisholm Award for Meritorious Service to the Profession



photos by Linda Barrington

Lynn Aprill

~ Lynn was nominated for her dedication to WCTE over many years. She has served as president twice and run two successful conventions. She is dedicated to WCTE and continually takes on new projects with enthusiasm. She teaches at Bonduel High School.

Outstanding First Year Teacher



Lindsay Kircher

~ Lindsay teaches at New Berlin West Middle/High School.

Outstanding Student Teacher

Kati Binkowski Kapral

~ Kati student taught in Sauk Prairie High School. She graduated from UW-Stevens Point. She is now teaching at Ben Lomond High School in northern Utah.

Outstanding Student Teacher



Olivia Nelson

~ Olivia did her student teaching at Eau Claire South Middle School. She is awaiting placement with the Peace Corps.

Jarvis E. Busch Award for Successful Techniques in Teaching Composition



Tom Pamperin

~ Tom explained his writing techniques in his winning essay, "Good Writers, Not Good Papers: Improving Student Writing Through Explicit Instruction in Syntax."

Lee Burress Intellectual Freedom Award



Ellen Lym UW-Waukesha

~ Ellen was featured in the fall issue of the WCTE Update for her work with student veterans at the UW-Waukesha campus.

Pre-convention workshop Gay Ivey: From Reading Engagement to the Common Core and Beyond



Gay Ivey's pre-Convention workshop, based on her work and research as a reading specialist in a mid-Atlantic area public school, explored how classrooms might be restructured — re-imagined — to foster avid readers.

Engagement, Ivey argued passionately throughout her workshop, is everything; if teachers can turn students into engaged readers, readers who are able to lose themselves in a text, then almost everything else that education values will follow. An easy message for English teachers to agree with — but Ivey's presentation pushed beyond easy agreement to ask important questions about engagement, and begin to answer them: What might an engagement-centered classroom look like? How would such a classroom change the roles of teacher and student?

The central thread of Ivey's workshop was the notion that engagement and accountability are incompatible demands. If students are taught to read so they can get good grades on the tests, quizzes, and projects — all the standard measures of accountability whose actual utility is examined far too rarely — then they will miss out on more important things reading has to offer: personal growth, empathy, and compassion. In the accountability-centered classroom, students will focus on grades, and the (as Ivey explains it) "agency, identity, social imagination, relationships, moral and intellectual stance, self-regulation, etc." that engaged reading evokes will be lost.

But, as teachers in public schools, in a political system in which "accountability" has displaced all else, what are teachers to do?

What Ivey did was to convince every eighth grade English class in an entire school to drop all required reading from the curriculum for a year, replacing it — all of it — with student-selected, student-paced reading, most of it centered on high-interest YA texts.

The pre-convention workshop shared anecdotal evidence and personal reactions about the experience. Some hard evidence, too; Ivey reported "a 15% increase in the numbers of students passing the state reading test," for example.

But Ivey is adamant that the improvement in test scores — one which the school has maintained ever since — is only a side benefit. The real point, Ivey argues, is the finding that "if we prioritize student engagement we certainly don't lose anything in terms of test scores, but we gain mightily in other ways — students' emotional, social, intellectual, and moral development."



photos by Lois Zamzow

Wauwatosa West High School English teachers Tom Norstrom and Julie Manders attended the Thursday pre-conference workshop. Norstrom is English Department chairman and Manders also teaches theater at West.

Dr. Gay Ivey's workshop was attended by more than 50 educators on Saturday afternoon. Her presentation provided plenty of data about student engagement in self-selected reading, but also a lot of ideas for engaging students in reading.



Ivey's workshop made, I think, a good case that prioritizing engagement is possible. The students themselves were overwhelmingly in favor, and self-reported many of the benefits Ivey saw in her research; parents, too, were impressed with the results. As were the teachers, who have chosen to continue the self-paced, self-selected model ever since.

Although a four-hour workshop makes it impossible to cover everything (I'd have liked more detail on exactly how to use teacher read-alouds and other strategies to guide student learning), there was plenty to get me thinking, and plenty to confirm my increasing suspicions that engagement needs to be the cornerstone of any effective education.

Sometimes, I suspect, an overly structured classroom serves the teacher's need for control rather than the students' need for learning. Dr. Ivey's workshop on engaged reading suggested that better alternatives are possible if we have the courage to try them.

CONVENTION WRAP-UP >> Erin Schwane, New Berlin West High School

FRIDAY MORNING KEYNOTE

Ivey explains how letting go can capture students

It is difficult to imagine a team of eighth grade English teachers agreeing to assign no reading to their students. However, that is exactly what transpired when Gay Ivey and her colleagues embarked on a project which aimed to make every eighth grade student in their school an engaged reader.

Ivey, a former middle school teacher and literacy specialist, provided the keynote address at this year's convention. Now the Tasha F. Morgridge Chair in Reading and Literacy at UW-Madison, Ivey inspired the audience with her litany of reasons for why students still need to read books, especially books that matter to them.

Ivey and her team of teachers made student self-selection the core of their reading curriculum. As

a result, the majority of what their students read was young adult literature, something Ivey argues may exceed what is set out in the standards, due to its multiple narrators, complex text structures and other features.

Also unique to Ivey's project was the fact that teachers relied on student discourse to generate feedback about their progress rather than reports, journals or other projects common in language arts classrooms.

Through a number of direct quotes from student interviews, Ivey showed how engaged reading was more than behavioral. It was also dialogical, fostering discussion about what students value and how they live their lives; transactional, inspiring students to recognize issues across books and their lives; and



photo by Linda Barrington

Dr. Gay Ivey used many anecdotal examples to reinforce her research with eighth grade students and their self-selection of reading materials.

strategic, creating an environment in which students wanted to enact literacy practices that suited their individual needs while reading.

After hearing so many compelling reflections from the students in Ivey's study, it was clear that literacy-rich, engaging environments can and do thrive when teachers allow students to set the reading agenda.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS >> Jessica Gallo, WCTE President

After a year away to celebrate NCTE's Centennial Convention in Chicago, WCTE's annual convention returned to Madison, Oct. 11-12, 2012. With the convention theme of Literacy, Diversity, and Reflection, educators from around the state and beyond shared new ideas and celebrated the diversity of their classrooms and teaching situations. More than 150 English language arts educators attended the convention at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

Convention exhibitors were on hand to share the latest in children and young adult book titles, classroom materials and resources for a wide variety of teaching situations and needs.

You won't want to miss next year's convention when we return to the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Madison on Oct. 10-11. We hope you'll join us for another exciting convention!

What is the most pressing professional issue you face right now?

This poll was taken during the luncheon through polleverywhere.com. These numbers represent 40 respondents.





CONVENTION WRAP-UP



photos by Linda Barrington

Teachers listen during an early morning session as Tamara Maxwell explains how the Common Core State Standards and the Smarter Balanced Assessment work together to identify and measure what students need to know and be able to do. Maxwell is the English Language Arts consultant at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.



Jessica Benson, a pre-service teacher, attends "Building Networks to Learn the Ropes," facilitated by Kathy Nelson. Among other things, participants discussed difficult situations for student teachers and how their supervising teacher might assist them.



Julie Luecke of Edgewood College starts her session by reading from a children's book. She went on to present techniques to allow students to make disconnections from texts, which can lead to teaching for social justice.



Jacki Martindale describes how the Poetry Out Loud program can be integrated into high school classes and how poetry still fits into the teaching of English Common Core Standards.



Olivia Nelson takes notes during the session titled "The Multicultural Science Fiction Classroom." Speaker Jim Holler discussed ways that race and racism can be discussed in a Science Fiction elective class.



Speaker Lindsay Feest (left) of Bay Lane Middle School in Muskego challenges participants to demonstrate the range of their agreement or disagreement with a short video by standing in a line. The teacher to her right explains his viewpoint.



Lisa Flooding of Port Washington High School stands at the opposite end of the line and disagrees with the viewpoint of the teacher speaking in the photo at the left.

Spa for the Weary English Teacher's Mind

If you are reading this and have not yet been to an NCTE convention, you must add it to your bucket list. It's worse than being in a candy store with limited spending money: the choices are so enticing yet you can only be in one session at a time and decisions are incredibly hard when they have so much to offer. Having been home more than a week, I'm still unpacking and processing all that I gained.

I had to teach the first day of convention so I arrived just in time for the first evening general session and was roped into participating in a flash dance, a kick-off orchestrated by the local committee. What a treat they created for us. The keynote for that evening, Natalie Merchant, entertained us with poetry she set to music. You must buy her just released, 19-song CD, "Leave Your Sleep," packaged with delightful illustrations available by Frances Foster Books for the young and old alike on your holiday shopping list. She will make even the most reluctant enchanted with her light-hearted poetry performed with the clarity as only a popular folk singer like her can craft. The illustrations alone will leave you chuckling.

Sandy Hayes kicked off the Friday General Session introducing international speaker, Sir Ken Robinson, Ph.D. See his TED Conference videos: http://www.ted.com/talks/sir_ken_robinson_bring_on_the_revolution.html. Next, I chose to hear Chris Crutcher read from his books again in a session with Ralph Fletcher, "Engaging Boy Writers," a great companion to Crutcher. They affirmed my belief that girls like what boys like to read and write about but the reverse isn't as likely.

NCTE historian, Leila Christenbury, provided the highlight of our Annual Business Meeting, a delightful tribute to retiring Jacqui Joseph-Biddle, NCTE's Director of Conventions, including a multitude of challenges she overcame at NCTE conventions while putting on an average of 15 miles per day!

The Exhibit Hall opened Saturday with a bounty of freebies! I even had to ship a box home! New this year was a strand of sessions called "Ignite." All these speakers presented their ideas using 20 slides that auto-advance every 15 seconds for a total of just five minutes — like concentrated orange juice! Another session I selected starred one of my favorites, Sara Kajder, who shared her experience of returning to the classroom and her use of Pecha Kucha to lighten her paper load. Pecha Kucha, similar to Ignite, basically is 20 Power Point slides, with the presenter speaking 20 seconds per slide. Why not try it out and then write up your experience for an upcoming Wisconsin English Journal or Update?

If you love Sherman Alexie's frank writing voice, your students may, too. He entertained hundreds of English teacher fans during the Secondary Section Luncheon. And if you haven't checked out <http://www.fisherandfrey.com/>, you must and while you are at it, look at their new YouTube Channel, <http://www.youtube.com/user/FisherandFrey>. Share this with your administration to earn some brownie points!

And oh, what a night Saturday was! Following the traditional Thanksgiving dinner provided by Scholastic Publications, a few hundred of us made our way to the showing of "The Perks of Being a Wallflower." What a treat when Stephen Chbosky, the author and key player in making the video, showed up to talk with us and sign free copies of his book!

Don't ask me to weigh in but I ate my way through Sunday. At the Affiliate's breakfast, President-Elect Ernest Morrell provided us with food for thought as to affiliates' roles in his "Inventors of the Future: A Vision for NCTE and Our Affiliates." Then I caught Barbara Cambridge's perspective on proposed legislation to assess colleges and universities before rushing to the Scholastic Brunch featuring readings from their up-and-coming new authors with a copy of each of their books. Then it was on to a real treat! [See CEL convention on the next page.]

*Kathy's
Convention
Journal*
If you are reading
this and have not
yet been to an
NCTE conven-
tion, you must
add it to your...



photos provided by Kathy Nelson
Young adult novelist Chris Crutcher meets Kathy Nelson at an NCTE sectional at which Crutcher spoke on "Engaging Boys as Readers"



WCTE past president Kathy Nelson meets Stephen Chbosky who is signing copies of his book, "The Perks of Being a Wallflower" after 300 English teachers viewed his recently released film and participated in a Q&A with him Saturday evening. Chbosky signed books and chatted with teachers past midnight.

CEL CONVENTION >> Kathy Nelson, CEL Liaison

CEL brought in Nicholas Sparks to dazzle us with his amazing autobiographic connections to his story lines and introduce his brother, who has compiled companion study materials to each of his brother's novels. The afternoon continued with CEL's "Writing and Leading from Head and Heart: An Afternoon with Penny Kittle and Tom Romano." They modeled modeling writing before our students, then they put us to work writing alongside them. Not surprisingly, more English teachers accepted their invitation to share their writing than my students do.

Then it was on to even more food at the CEL welcoming social. What fun it was to meet the first-time attendees and give them tips of how to make the most of their CEL experience and discuss pedagogy with English teachers from Hawaii and Japan! It was a free evening and our Wisconsin DPI Liaison, Tamara Maxwell, and I made our way to "Love," the Beatle-inspired Cirque de Soleil performance.

Bright and early the next morning, Peg Tyre spoke on "The Trouble With Boys: Yes, Boys Are Falling Behind School. What Does This Have to Do with English Teachers?" while we breakfasted. Consultant Frank Baker, shared approaches to incorporating media literacies into our classroom using one of Obama's recent speeches. New Trier High School teachers led my next session sharing their district-wide approach of writing feedback.

Then, it was off to yet another luncheon but to see "Raising Readers and Writers in the Age of Common Core" with full-time English teacher/writer Kelly Gallagher. I had the opportunity to meet with the author of a text we are considering for our honors program and his department chair to learn their curricular approach with that text. And after that social, past WCTE president Lynn Aprill; our DPI Liaison, Tamara Maxwell; and I headed to Paris and then enjoyed the Bellagio's fountain show and people watching from an outdoor café: my first experience on the Las Vegas strip.

And all too soon, it came to an end with a final breakfast and Montana Writing Project Co-Director, Casey Olsen, speaking on "Writing and Place: The Concentric Circles of Self." My Tuesday morning sessions began with Scott Eggerding and consultant Ryan Goble's interdisciplinary curriculum designing work for a Chicago suburban school district. Then, Colette Bennett demonstrated how to take Writers' Workshops to High Tech Literature Circle.

Finally, Harvey Daniels closed our conference taking his familiar strategies we've loved for years and updating them with new twists. One of the take-aways I've been enjoying with my students since I've returned is having students reflect on their reading by way of writing to and exchanging notes or letters with a classmate. This allows all students to express their thoughts, not just the one speaking at a time in a whole class discussion.



Peg Tyre



Kelly Gallagher



Harvey Daniels



photo by Kathy Nelson
Nicholas Sparks signs books for convention attendees.

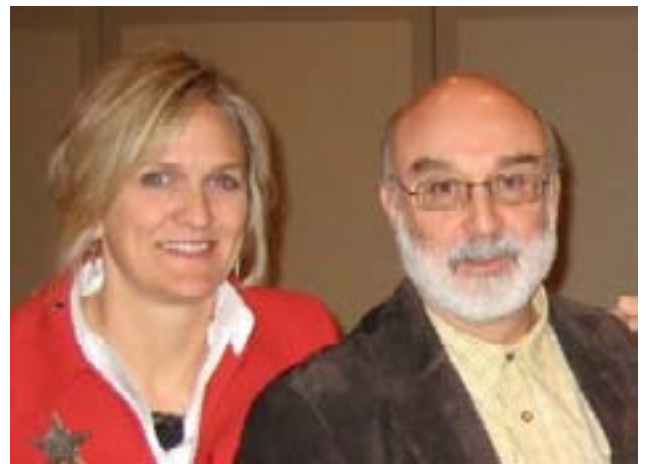


photo provided by Penny Kittle
Penny Kittle and WCTE's workshop and keynoter next fall, Tom Romano, keynoted Sunday afternoon with "Writing and Leading from Head and Heart: An Afternoon with Penny Kittle and Tom Romano."



photo provided by Kathy Nelson
WCTE board members gather for a photo at the Conference for English Leadership, in November at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas. Lynn Aprill, Kathy Nelson, Tom Scott and Tamara Maxwell represented WCTE at the convention.

WISCONSIN AUTHORS >> Lynn Aprill and Marti Matyska

A revised Wisconsin Authors poster is available for \$15 for purchase from WCTE to be sent anywhere in Wisconsin. This 18" by 24" laminated document lists 24 authors showcasing 12 with photographs. A separate bibliography of 100 authors accompanies the poster.

It can be seen in more detail on the WCTE website:

<http://www.wcteonline.org/publications/wisconsin-literary-map/>

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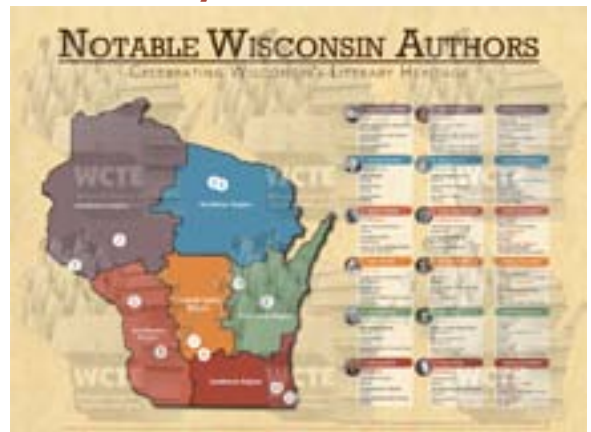
Checks should be made out to Marti Matyska, WCTE Convention Manager

Mail to:

Marti Matyska, WCTE Convention Manager
5055 County Road V
Cecil, WI 54111

Lynn Aprill and Kathy Nelson pose next to the Wisconsin Author Map at the NCTE Convention in Las Vegas in November.

Photo provided by Kathy Nelson



Thank you to Marti Matyska and Lynn Aprill for their research and editing of this fine new map.



PUBLICATIONS >> from Jessica Gallo, assistant editor

Wisconsin English Journal invites writers, reviewers

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The Wisconsin English Journal (WEJ) welcomes articles on all subjects related to teaching English in middle and high schools. For spring 2013, we have chosen the theme of Diversity: An Asset to Education. From students' background knowledge to using various texts, we invite you to submit articles showcasing the importance of diversity in your classroom and how it has contributed to students' literacy development. The due date for the spring issue is Feb. 1, 2013. The theme for the fall 2013 issue is the Common Core State Standards, and the due date is Aug. 1, 2013.

We also have call from Dr. Dawnene Hassett, one of our associate editors:

Call for Idea Submissions: The New Adventures of Old Literature

Future issues of this column will contain your own teaching ideas. To submit an idea, email me at ddhassett@wisc.edu. Submit a paragraph or an outline about how you teach a classic piece of literature in ways that resonate with

today's students. Include your phone number and email at the bottom of your submission, and I will be in touch with you as we work together to publish your units or lessons.

Sincerely Yours, Dawnene Hassett, Associate Editor

We believe that the juried journal process that we have organized is vital to developing excellent articles for readers. We hope that all of you will be willing to be journal

reviewers and help us support authors. Because we are a juried journal with each article receiving at least two anonymous reviews, the journal may hold more power for those concerned about the publication's impact on their careers. To become a reviewer for Wisconsin English Journal, visit <http://journals.library.wisc.edu/index.php/wej> and click on "Register."

Please consider submitting an article to the Wisconsin English Journal. We look forward to receiving and reviewing your texts.

Publication dates: Oct. 1 and April 1.

To submit articles to the Wisconsin English Journal, log on to the [website](#) and follow the prompts. The deadline for submissions for the spring issue is Feb 1, 2013.

Meet Denise Meyer District 4 director

Denise Meyer has been a WCTE member for five years and is entering her first term as a district director for CESA 4. She earned her undergraduate degree in English Education at Colorado State University and her Masters' Degree in English Literature and Language at Winona State University.

She has 10 years teaching experience in the public schools, most recently at Onalaska High School where she earned National Board Certification in English Language Arts. Before relocating to La Crosse, she taught English and Literature for five years in Boston, Mass.

Currently, she teaches writing at Western Technical College to both high school and college level students. Most recently, she has collaborated with the Business School at WTC to teach writing for the Business Majors.

The high school students Denise teaches have not been successful in the traditional model of public schools. In order to graduate, they attend high

school at Western.

"Students come into my classes with a wide range of abilities and a diverse way of living," Denise said. "I work with students who struggle with homelessness, addiction, and mental illness."

Because of these needs, Denise works diligently to locate relevant curriculum in order for students to learn both the English skills and the life skills necessary to find a place in today's world.

She says, "It is my job to find a way into the curriculum for all of my students to be successful, both inside and outside of the classroom. I want them to create meaning from the topics we read, discuss, and write about in order to use their learning as a bridge for future success."

With more pressure to meet external standards, Denise is concerned that her students' needs are too often lost in the minutiae of the technical aspects of schooling. A focus on standards without an emphasis of how to use learning



Denise Meyer

to make the most out of one's life can have adverse effects on students.

"All too often, I see students who have had such a negative experience in the classroom that they are afraid to go to school. I try to reformat how my students view school. I try to make it a place where learning applies to their complicated, stressful, day-to-day lives. Through the discipline of English, I hope to hone their already strong survival skills to show that reading and writing can have a real and positive effect on their lives."

TEACHING IN LITHUANA >> Robert Pine, WIESCO director of Vilnius camp

Invitation to teach English to Lithuanian educators

**Vilnius, Lithuania
June 14 – July 10**

For more than three decades, the Wisconsin Educational Scientific Cultural Organization (WIESCO), a 501c3 not-for-profit, has sponsored English-language camps in Eastern Europe.

In cooperation with the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science, we are organizing a special camp for Lithuanian teachers of English and Ministry of Education personnel. It will be held in Vilnius, the capital and cultural center of the country.

The teaching and boarding facility is located at walking distance to the large and beautiful Old City of Vilnius, with its museums, galleries, restaurants, Baroque churches and other cultural, historical and artistic venues. There is no need to know the Lithuanian language; all lessons are held in English. We seek 6 to 8 instructors for this camp.

DURATION: The camp is three weeks, preceded by a few days for travel and time to prepare your classroom, followed by a few days of optional R&R. You may append additional personal travel. We have had many husband and wife teams at camp; in these cases each spouse is required to teach.

PROGRAMS: You choose to instruct either of two independent adult groups:

- English teachers seeking to learn new techniques and methods of instruction useful to them in their classrooms, and to improve their personal fluency in English.
- Ministry personnel and administrators seeking to improve their English, particularly for professional reasons. This group generally has a lower skill level in the language, thus its focus is upon fundamental instruction.

QUALIFICATION: Solid experience in teaching English, English as a Second Language or teaching another language is desired. ESL certification is an added benefit.

EXPENSES & TAX DEDUCTIBILITY: Our hosts provide full room and board, transportation between the site and the airport, and some sightseeing or entertainment. Your expense is airfare and a \$400 per person administration fee, both of which are tax deductible as allowable by current law.

CONTACT US: More detailed information can be found on our web site at www.wiesco.org. Contact me by email at thepine@att.net or by phone at 630-279-5646). I look forward to discussing your questions and thoughts in detail.

Common Core State Standards and Smarter Balanced Assessment: A recap of WCTE and a look to the future



Tamara Maxwell

Through its adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), Wisconsin led the nation in ensuring that its students have more rigorous and relevant standards in English language arts as a way to prepare every student for college and world of work. With that comes the responsibility to provide a balanced assessment system aligned to the CCSS in both letter and spirit and the resources educators need to implement and sustain the instructional shifts necessary to meet the demands of the CCSS.

In addition to any college entrance assessment it may use, Wisconsin remains committed to the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter) in its role as a governing state. Wisconsin will continue to work with Smarter to develop a system of multiple assessments at grades 3-11, including formative, benchmark, and summative tools, as well as resources that will assist with further CCSS implementation. Because no one assessment can give us all of the information we need about how students are learning, a balanced assessment system should allow students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in authentic ways and should not narrow curriculum and instruction. *Any summative assessment adopted by Wisconsin must be created or modified to meet the content and instructional demands of the CCSS.*

The Smarter Balanced assessment system is computer adaptive and includes four different item types.

- **Selected-response items** prompt students to select one or more responses for a set of options.
- **Technology-enhanced items** take advantage of computer-based administration to assess a deeper understanding of content and skills than would otherwise be possible with traditional item types. Technology-enhanced items capitalize on technology to collect evidence through a non-traditional response type, such as editing text or drawing an object. Selected-response and technology-enhanced items can be scored automatically.
- **Constructed-response items** prompt students to produce a text in order to collect evidence about their knowledge or understanding of a given assessment target.
- **Performance tasks** measure a student's ability to integrate knowledge and skills across multiple standards — a key component of college and career readiness. Performance tasks will be used to better measure capacities such as depth of understanding, research skills, and

complex analysis, which cannot be adequately assessed with selected- or constructed-response items.

Some constructed-response items and performance tasks can be scored automatically; many will be hand-scored by professionally trained readers. These tasks will be delivered as part of the interim and summative components of the assessment system, with more extended tasks available in the digital library as part of the Smarter Balanced-developed exemplar instructional modules and inventory of currently available resources.

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium developed their claims from the CCSS, and the summative assessment items are based on these claims:

- **Claim #1 – Reading:** “Students can read closely and analytically to comprehend a range of increasingly complex literary and informational texts.”
- **Claim #2 – Writing:** “Students can produce effective and well-grounded writing for a range of purposes and audiences.”
- **Claim #3 – Speaking and Listening:** “Students can employ effective speaking and listening skills for a range of purposes and audiences.”
- **Claim #4 – Research/Inquiry:** “Students can engage in research and inquiry to investigate topics, and to analyze, integrate, and present information.”

Smarter Balanced assessments elicit evidence from students that is used to support claims about the extent to which students have the ability to integrate knowledge and skills across multiple assessment targets and are ready to meet the challenges of college and careers. Items and tasks must be constructed at various levels of cognitive rigor.

Smarter Balanced has defined **four levels of depth of knowledge**. **The first level** focuses on recall and reproduction of facts and other types of information. **The second level** focuses on basic skills and concepts that require cognitive processes that extend beyond the recall of information. **The third level** focuses on strategic thinking and reasoning. **The fourth and final level** requires extended thinking that includes complex reasoning, planning, development, and cognition that occurs over an extended period of time.

Sample items

can be accessed at <http://sampleitems.smarterbalanced.org/itempreview/sbac/ELA.htm>.

FROM page 11

To help meet the instructional demands of the CCSS, **the DPI has created instructional materials for the development of performance tasks for the classroom.**

A performance task is an example of an assessment that fits within a balanced assessment system. Teachers need to determine the **purpose of the performance task**: Is the performance task going to plan, support, monitor learning, or verify learning?

Teachers need to determine the **type of assessment the performance task is going to be**: Is the performance task going to be a formative, benchmark, or summative assessment?

Once that is decided, then teachers can design the performance task. A performance task presents students with a **complex, real-world challenge in which the scenario, role, process, and product are authentic**; students must then demonstrate that they have the skills and knowledge to complete the task. Use the following criteria to design performance tasks:

- **Integrate knowledge and skills** across multiple content standards or strands within a content area
- **Measure capacities** such as depth of understanding, research skills, complex analysis, and identification/providing of relevant evidence
- Require **student-initiated** planning, management of information and ideas, interaction with other materials
- Require **production** of extended responses, such as oral presentations, exhibitions, and other scorable products, including more extended written responses, which might be revised and edited
- Reflect a **real-world task** and/or scenario-based problem
- Allow for **multiple approaches**
- Represent **content that is relevant and meaningful** to students
- Allow for **demonstration of important knowledge and skills**, including those that address 21st century skills such as critically analyzing and synthesizing information presented in a variety of formats,

media, etc.

- Require **scoring** that focuses on the **essence of the task**
- Be **feasible for the school/classroom environment**

Using a sentence frame assists *[like the one in the box below]* in writing robust performance tasks. Students can be included in the process by being given the option/s of selecting the texts they are going to read/listen to/view, the way they are going to present their text – through writing/creating/presenting, the product they are going to create, and/or the mode of writing they are going to use.

Developing robust performance tasks that encompass the content and cognitive demands of the CCSS is one way Wisconsin educators can prepare students for the demands of college and the world of work. As the Department of Public Instruction continues to locate and create instructional resources, it will upload them to the Website, which can be accessed at http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/stn_ela-tchingandlrng.

Sentence Frame Assist for Developing Performance Tasks:

After reading/researching/listening/viewing _____ (texts),
write/create/present _____ (product) for _____ (audience)
that provides an/a explanation/argument/narrative _____ (content) so
that _____ (purpose/so what).

English Class Text-Based Performance Task

After reading/researching/listening/viewing “American’s Growing Dependency on Food Stamps,” excerpts from *Nickel and Dime*, and “Who benefits from Food Stamps”? (texts),
write/create/present a/an letter to the editor (product) for the local newspaper (audience)
that provides (an) explanation/argument/narrative that is focused, well developed, organized, and error free (content), so that you demonstrate your social and cross-cultural skills and economic literacy (purpose/so what).

Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets announces annual student poetry contest

Winners will be published in, and receive a copy of, the 2014 Wisconsin Poets' Calendar.

CASH PRIZES IN EACH DIVISION: 1st place \$50; 2nd place \$30; 3rd place \$20.

JUNIOR DIVISION (grades 6 - 8)

SENIOR DIVISION (grades 9 - 12)

THIS YEAR'S JUDGE: Gillian Nevers, Madison

DEADLINE: Wednesday, Jan. 2, 2013 (e-mail or postmark date)

RULES FOR SUBMISSION

Students may enter one poem, which must be the student's own work. Maximum length: 24 lines (which includes stanza breaks, but not the title). Plagiarized poems, longer poems or multiple entries will not be accepted. Students need to be attending a school (or home-schooled) in Wisconsin.

A student's previously-published poem or their poem that has won an award (except this contest) is still eligible. Include publication or award information.

E-MAIL SUBMISSIONS are preferred and strongly encouraged. In the subject line, write: WFOP Contest and your Last name and First name. For example: WFOP contest - SmithJoan.

- Send the poem as an attachment: Word documents are best (.doc). Use your name (just like the subject line) for the attachment. For example, name your document: "SmithJoan.doc". The document must contain only your poem and its title. Do not put your name or any other information in the document.
- In the body of the e-mail please include all information requested below in sections A, B, and C.

POSTAL SUBMISSIONS: Submit two copies of the poem, printed on white 8.5 x 11 inch paper in a plain 12-point font. Do not add graphics or decorations. On both poem copies: **POEM AND TITLE ONLY** — no author's name or initials. On a separate page, submit the following information:

A: The student's name, home address, e-mail address if available, telephone number, student's current grade in school, and the title of the poem.

Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets

Student Poetry Contest

Winners receive cash prizes and will be published in the *2014 Wisconsin Poets' Calendar*

Any **Wisconsin** student in grades 6 through 12 may enter
Junior division: grades 6-8 Senior division: grades 9-12

Prizes in each division:

1st prize of \$50

2nd prize of \$30

3rd prize of \$20

Winners also receive a copy of the calendar

> No entry fee

> Entry deadline: Wednesday, January 2nd 2013

Go to: wfop.org for submission guidelines

Click on "Contests" then on "student contest rules" on next page

Sponsored by the Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets (WFOP)
WFOP is a non-profit group promoting poetry in Wisconsin

B: The teacher's name, e-mail address if available, the school's name, school's complete mailing address, and school phone number (home-schoolers: indicate home-school association, if applicable).

C: Important! At the bottom, include the following statement: "This is my original work" followed by the student's signature (for postal submission) or student's name typed (for e-mail submissions).

NO POEMS WILL BE RETURNED. KEEP A COPY OF YOUR POEM FOR YOUR OWN RECORDS.

Winners will be posted at: wfop.org/contests.html

E-mail entries to: jeancarsten@gmail.com

Snail-mail entries to:

Jeanie Tomasko

6725 Century Ave

Middleton, WI 53562

Wisconsin English Teachers' Calendar of Events and Deadlines

December

- Dec. 10** Call for proposals deadline for Anti-Racist/Anti-Bias Conference on April 20 at the Indian Community School in Franklin

January

February

- Feb. 13** Mailing deadline for Promising Young Writers: This school-based writing program emphasizes the importance of writing skills among eighth-grade students. For more information, see <http://www.ncte.org/awards/student>.
- Feb. 13** Mailing deadline for NCTE Achievement Awards in Writing: This school-based writing program encourages high school students in their writing and recognizes publicly some of the best student writers in the nation. For 11th grade students. For more information: <http://www.ncte.org/awards/student>
- Feb. 15-16** WCTE Board meeting in Stevens Point
- Feb. 17** Last day for online or mail-in registration for Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) convention in Las Vegas, Mar. 13-16
<https://secure.ncte.org/store/register.aspx>

March

- Mar. 13-16** CCCC Convention, "The Public Work of Composition" in Las Vegas
- Mar. 31** Deadline for WCTE's Lee Burress Intellectual Freedom Award. More information: <http://www.wcteonline.org/awards-and-grants/lee-burress-intellectual-freedom-award/>

April

- April 1** Deadline for Affiliate Nomination for NCTE High School Teacher of Excellence Award
www.WCTEonline.org/hs_teacher.htm
- April 18** NCTE Literacy Education Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C.
- April 20** Anti-Racist/Anti-Bias Conference at the Indian Community School in Franklin: The Educator's Network for Social Justice invites educators and community members interested in issues of race and social justice in education to attend this conference. Dr. Kevin Kumashiro, president-elect of the National Association for Multicultural Education and author of *Bad Teacher! How Blaming Teachers Distorts the Bigger Picture* For more information: <http://www.ensj.org>
- April TBA** Mailing deadline for NCTE/Norman Mailer Writing Award. The Norman Mailer Writers Colony and the National Council of Teachers of English jointly sponsor the Norman Mailer High School and College Writing Awards.
<http://www.ncte.org/awards/student/nmwa>

May

- May 1** Deadline for nominating a student teacher of the Outstanding Student Teacher Award.
<http://www.wcteonline.org/awards-and-grants/outstanding-student-teacher-awards/>
- May 1** Deadline for nominating a first year teacher for the Nancy Hoefs Memorial Award for Outstanding First-Year Teacher
<http://www.wcteonline.org/awards-and-grants/nancy-hoefs-memorial-award/>

WCTE Update December 2012

President Jessica Gallo	Secretary Karen Kelley-Rigoni
1st Vice-President Lynn Frick	Treasurer Tom Scott
2nd Vice-President John Pruitt	Update Editor Linda Barrington

Text coding reveals students' thinking

As an English teacher, I struggled to “see” my students’ thinking when they read. I found that text coding offers a great alternative to study guides and can act as discussion preparation. Text coding is essentially short hand annotation. I am sure to prepare my students for this strategy by explaining that annotation is our way to make sense of the text, so it is crucial that they take time to engage with the text.



I teach my students to use these three text codes: A star (*) represents a main idea. An exclamation mark (!) represents a text connection (text to self, text to text and text to world). A question mark (?) represents a question: clarity or an “I wonder...” statement.

As they read, students use post-its to interact with the text and keep track of their thinking. This helps students who struggle with comprehension with a safe

way to communicate their confusion; it also allows me to see what students know and where we can clarify their understanding.

I check for their understanding in a variety of ways: by checking post-its while students are working independently, by calling students up to tell me about a couple of their post-its, by having students discuss their post-its as their small or large group discussion, by having students write one code and explain it as an exit slip, or by having them write what was happening in the text on their post-it and place it on the board for discussion.

Another benefit to this strategy is the application in informational text as well. I am able to model the strategy with articles and how the main ideas may change based on the type of text and the purpose for our reading, but the text coding strategy is the same.

Using this simple strategy can help provide a framework in which students can demonstrate their knowledge of text and teachers can scaffold instruction based on student need.



Jackie Mabon is a District 5 director for WCTE. She just moved to Stevens Point this summer where she now teaches at P.J. Jacobs Junior High School.