



Preconvention Workshops take place Thursday, November 16, 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

W.01 Investigative Literacy: Using Informational Texts to Ask the Big Questions and Solve the Big Problems

Audience Level: Middle, Secondary, Teacher Education

Strands: CEE, WLU

Informational texts provide rich opportunities for students to explore big ideas, deepen knowledge, and identify a multitude of perspectives. However, informational literacy can sometimes be challenging for students, and it can be challenging for us to determine its place in our English curriculum. In this workshop, we will engage in and identify best practices for including informational texts and "hooking" students as they explore the big questions and ponder the big solutions through investigative literacy.

Presenters: Emily Creveling, The Urban Assembly, New York, NY

Lawrence Orsini, New York City Department of Education, New York, NY

Full Description

In this workshop, participants will explore the practice of investigative literacy—using texts to create investigative, problem-solving units that not only expose students to a multitude of varied texts, but also engage them in big questions around social justice, human behavior and psychology, and world affairs.

Participants will spend the first two hours completely immersed as students in a station-driven lesson about the My Lai Massacre from the Vietnam War. The stations expose participants to best practices around analyzing informational texts, collaborating with peers, differentiating instruction, and using critical thinking skills as a means of engagement.

Throughout the station-driven lesson, participants will analyze a variety of informational texts, including primary source documents such as court testimony, soldiers' diary entries and correspondence, and interview transcripts. Participants will also view taped interviews of veterans and will analyze photographs from the event.

After the lesson immersion, participants will have the opportunity to deconstruct the lesson and analyze it through the use of the DOK wheel and several components of Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching. Participants will then have the opportunity to reflect on their own practices and consider implications for classroom instruction.



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W.02 Hamilton, Hurston, Heck Tate & Hurricane Katrina: Exploring Text-Based Grammar Study

Audience Level: Middle, Secondary

Using various texts including *Hamilton*, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and an article on Hurricane Katrina, participants will engage in various text-based grammar lessons around perspective, bias, dialect, and pronoun usage. This workshop will conclude with participants designing their own text-embedded grammar lessons.

Workshop Facilitators: Sara DeMartino, Institute for Learning, University of Pittsburgh, PA

Allison Escher, Institute for Learning, University of Pittsburgh, PA

Krista Morrison, Institute for Learning, University of Pittsburgh, PA

Full Description

This interactive workshop is based on Deborah Dean’s belief that “grammar involves learning about language from a variety of perspectives to help students read, write, and speak in meaningful ways in a variety of contexts.” We also root our work in Constance Weaver’s notion that grammar should be taught in context. We believe that students should be encouraged to experiment, take risks, and play with language; these are necessary for growth. Rather than framing grammar as correct or incorrect, we encourage students to consider the ambiguities and nuances of grammar as a lens for viewing language as a flexible and powerful communication tool. Our ultimate goal for grammar instruction is to create a community of language researchers, wherein inquiry and investigation become the goals of student learning.

We will frame our work with grammar as a way to engage students in critical, reflective discourse around language and its use, engaging participants in sample grammar lessons to demonstrate four aspects of grammar: traditional grammar (content, not pedagogy), usage, language change, and rhetorical grammar. Using various texts including lyrics/songs from *Hamilton*, excerpts from *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, excerpts from *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and an article on Hurricane Katrina, participants will engage in various text-based lessons around perspective, bias, dialect, and pronoun usage. We will demonstrate how grammar can be taught with a constructivist approach by engaging participants in scaffolded sequences of study that include accessing prior knowledge, studying grammatical choices in professional or student-written texts, learning and naming grammatical concepts, playing with the grammatical feature, and applying the grammatical feature in their own writing.

Participants will create their own text-based grammar lessons, using a selection of texts. These will serve as model texts to illustrate how we can sustain interest in the study of grammar. Participants will also share their grammar lessons and receive feedback from their peers on their work. Upon leaving the session, participants will be armed with tools and resources for text-based grammar study, examples of text-based grammar lessons, and a renewed excitement for the teaching of grammar.



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W.03 Strategies for Teaching the Real Threat of Fake News

Audience Level: Secondary

Participants will receive and generate ideas for teaching students to understand the concept of fake news. We will analyze texts to determine red flags, supply writing prompts to generate discussion, and share materials and resources for discussing the role of the Fourth Estate and social media in American politics.

Presenters: John Golden, Portland Public Schools, Portland, OR

Megan Pankiewicz, Rockville High School, Rockville, MD

Lawrence Scanlon, Iona College, New Rochelle, NY

Renee Shea, Bowie State University, Columbus, OH

Full Description

Our task as English teachers in the current media environment is clear. We must teach our students how to engage with a world of news in which the line between fact and opinion has been nearly erased. Taking on this task strengthens several aspects of our professional agency: developing students' adeptness at close reading, critical thinking, and informed writing. This workshop will provide methods, lessons, and materials for teaching the concept of fake news within the ELA classroom, spanning all grades and levels. Teachers will leave the workshop armed with tools and ideas we can use to fulfill our mission of developing an informed citizenry.

Presenters will provide sample texts, engage the audience in identifying whether certain news pieces are real or fake, lead a discussion of the texts, and facilitate the creation of an expandable list of the red flags of fake news. Participants will brainstorm creative ways to engage students in learning about the concept of fake news and understanding its relevance to their lives.

Presenters will supply lesson ideas for teaching students to evaluate online information, recognize fake news, and understand the relationship of fake news with the rhetorical triangle and facilitate discussions of the specific challenges faced by students with limited English proficiency. Participants will then work together to outline how they would sequence these specific skills at their own schools and in their own classrooms.



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W.04 Improv Out Part 2: Recapturing Revision

Audience Level: General

In this workshop, we will lead teachers through 8-10 improvisational games that they will be able to utilize with students. There will also be time for question and answer and writing reflection. Teachers will leave with a comprehensive list of games to lead revision efforts in the classroom.

Presenters: Molly B. Burnham, HarperCollins/Katherine Tegen Books

Heidi Haas, Northampton High School, Northampton, MA

Lisa Papademetriou, HarperCollins

Full Description

Revising our writing is one of the hardest things to do and one of the hardest skills to teach. After spending many hours getting the words on the page, revising can feel laborious and tortuous. Students who suffer from feelings of being judged “not good enough” can find the task of re-envisioning work rife with emotional challenges. It is not easy to reimagine words, capture greater detail, and generally find ways to challenge and improve our work just at the moment that we hoped it was done.

The ability to revise, though, is not limited to the written page it is also essential to human beings. Teaching students today, tomorrow, and forever requires educators who can revise their own practices, their own thoughts, their own techniques, and their own actions. To maintain engagement in the process of education, teachers must constantly challenge themselves and rethink their assumptions. In essence, revision is growth.

In her book *Mindset*, Carol Dweck asserts that there are two frameworks (mindsets) that tend to govern our actions. A fixed mindset operates with the framework that people either have talent or don't and that this doesn't change over a lifetime. A growth mindset operates in the framework that talent and intelligence can be developed through effort. With a growth mindset, effort and failure are essential steps to becoming smarter and/or more talented. Unsurprisingly, engendering a growth mindset in the classroom results in building confidence and resilience in students. Revision is the essence of this mindset.

Through improvisational games we can find humorous, playful, and joyful ways to practice a growth mindset. The low-stakes, high-acceptance ethos of improv, in which every offer engenders a “yes, and,” is the perfect laboratory in which to offer a new vision for ways in which our work might change. Improv helps students to see what revising can look like in real time, so they have a sense that it truly makes a difference. These games provide a safe place to explore revision on any level and make it easier to bring those changes to the page.



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W.05 Increasing the Volume of Your Digital Literacy Instruction: Taking Your Knowledge to a Higher Level to Boost Students' Global Voices

Audience Level: General

Both teachers and students must boost their digital literacy voices in order to collaborate in our global community. This three-part workshop will help participants understand how to effectively integrate technology into their curriculum, explore innovative technology tools, and transform their classroom using the newly learned skills.

Presenters: Michelle Cosmah, Miami University, Oxford, OH

Sarah Flum, Miami University, Oxford, OH

Irene Kleiman, Miami University, Oxford, OH

Full Description

Using the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards to guide their instructional planning, teachers can empower student voice and ensure that learning is a student-driven process of exploration, creativity, and discovery no matter which level they or their teachers have reached in their knowledge of digital learning. This workshop will focus on four digital literacy levels, based on participants' experience, that grow in complexity. For example, with Level 1, ISTE specifies the following objectives: "I critically select, evaluate, and synthesize digital resources into a collection that reflects my learning and builds my knowledge" and "I understand the rights, responsibilities and opportunities of living, learning, and working in an interconnected digital world." Participants will learn how to connect their curriculum standards to these objectives so that their students will be exposed to both content and technology in the same lesson.

Presenters will demonstrate various digital literacy tools, readily available at minimal cost, that encourage innovative strategies to enhance teachers' instruction and their students' knowledge of technology. Participants will have time to select a digital literacy tool for themselves and plan how to integrate it into their teaching. With assistance from presenters and other participants, they will revise a classroom routine or assignment based on one of the ISTE standards that is suitable for their level of digital literacy understanding.

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants will share their plans for new digital literacy elements in their classrooms with each other. A Google Spreadsheet will be created to organize the teachers' contributions, along with live links to lesson plans, apps, and websites. This easily accessible resource will allow participants to reflect on their ideas in the future and encourage them to include their students' voices as they grow as digitally literate global citizens.



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W.06 Apps and Tools for Capturing Voices, Sparking Imagination, and Transforming Learning

Sponsored by the Assembly on Computers in English (ACE)

Audience Level: General

Through hands-on instruction, participants will have the opportunity to explore virtual reality and social media apps and media production tools in support of creativity, critical thinking, artistic mastery, and responsibility and also to give today's students and educators voice and agency.

Presenters: Trent Kays, Hampton University, Hampton, VA, "Critical Pedagogy and Technology for Lifelong Learning and Action"

Ewa McGrail, Georgia State University, Atlanta, "Shooting Photos with an iPhone/Android Camera: Exploring Photography Rules and Techniques"

J. Patrick McGrail, Jacksonville State University, Jacksonville, AL, "Shooting Photos with an iPhone/Android Camera: Exploring Photography Rules and Techniques"

Clarice Moran, Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, GA, "Using Virtual Reality to Help Today's Students Build Writing Skills for Tomorrow"

Mary Rice, University of Kansas, Lawrence, "Empowering Student Voice with Make Beliefs Comix!"

Full Description

In line with the theme "Teaching our students today, tomorrow, forever," this technology workshop sponsored by Assembly on Computers in English (ACE) will invite the participants to explore virtual reality and social media apps and media production tools in support of creativity, critical thinking, artistic responsibility, and also to give today's students and educators voice and agency.

Participants will learn how to give students practice with a variety of social media apps and creative tools—text, still and moving pictures, sound effects and music, virtual reality apps and comics creation software, among others—to both critique and present varying points of view. The sessions provide opportunities to discuss how to move learners from merely consuming content to curating content to finally creating digital content and in this way to empower them to be advocates of social change, equity, and responsible citizenship in online, offline, and hybrid spaces.

Workshop leaders, drawn from both K–12 and postsecondary faculty, will incorporate hands-on activities, group discussions, and instruction to familiarize participants with a newer generation of apps and technology tools. The sessions feature student work, classroom activities, and teacher resources.

Following a practical engagement with each new application, participants will have ample time to ask additional questions about incorporating each tool into their classrooms and schools. Participants will also be invited to join the ACE organization and ACE Connected Community, allowing them to work with ACE consultants throughout the year to develop technology projects for their own classrooms.



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W.07 Using Student-Created Theater to Enhance Learning and Build A More Engaging Classroom

Audience Level: General

Strands: Rainbow

Learn to use student-created theater in the classroom with members of Looking In Theater (<http://youtu.be/q4mWAo-flPg>). Watch teen actors present scenes they've created and have a dialogue with them. Create and present your own scenes and discuss how to use this process. An exciting way to “teach” less but deliver more. **No theater experience necessary.**

Presenter: Jonathan Gillman, Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts, Hartford, CT

Full Description

Looking In Theatre, based in Hartford, CT, has been using theater to reach students for almost forty years (<http://youtu.be/q4mWAo-flPg>). In Looking In, trained teen actors create and perform short dramatic scenes about issues of concern to students and then lead a discussion, answering questions as their characters. Every year, Looking In reaches thousands of students in dozens of in-school performances.

In this workshop—no theater experience necessary!—three Looking In actors will perform two scenes for participants and then lead a discussion with the audience, first as their characters and then as themselves. Participants will then create, with guidance, their own scenes. They will brainstorm possible topics; work in groups, selected by topic, to create scenes; present their scenes to participants; and engage in discussion as the characters they portrayed. Debriefing will include discussion about the process and how to use it with students.

Since students create the scenes themselves, the topics and ideas are theirs. In a highly collaborative process, they figure out together what to include and what to exclude, what to say and how to say it. This process, by its nature, is inclusive. Each participant gives input; each participant has a voice in the outcome. As a result, underrepresented voices are heard, with a liberating effect for all involved. While many of the topics will be social in nature, the methodology aligns with Common Core. It can be used with any text and adds value to any classroom.



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W.08 Workshopping the Canon

Audience Level: Middle, Secondary, College

This interactive, practice-based workshop will demonstrate how to partner classical texts with a variety of high-interest texts from multiple genres within a reading and writing workshop structure, aligning the teaching of literature with what we have come to recognize as best practices in the teaching of literacy.

Presenters: Angela Byrd, University of South Carolina, Columbia, "Mini-Lessons to Teach"

Kayla Hostetler, University of South Carolina, Columbia, "Need to Write"

Mary Stysliger, University of South Carolina, Columbia, "Why and How To Workshop"

Nicole Walker, Ridge View High School, Columbia, SC, "Reading Matters"

Full Description

Workshopping the Canon will introduce a process for planning and teaching the most frequently taught texts in middle, secondary, and postsecondary classrooms using a workshop approach. Presenters will demonstrate how to partner classical texts with a variety of high-interest texts from multiple genres within a reading and writing workshop structure, aligning the teaching of literature with what we have come to recognize as best practices in the teaching of literacy. These structures and strategies will be introduced, modeled, and practiced across a variety of sample units. When we workshop the canon, we can be both teachers of literacy and teachers of literature. One does not have to preclude the other.

While this workshop will provide specific suggestions and resources for workshopping certain canonical texts detailed in a helpful Appendix provided, ideas will be shared to prompt independent, creative, and critical thinking. The ideas offered are meant to be *descriptive*, not prescriptive. This session endeavors to make the often invisible and always messy processes of workshop planning visible. It will show teachers a way to teach reading, writing, language, speaking, and listening using familiar classical texts.

This practice-based workshop will provide direction for implementing workshop structures and strategies and include classroom examples and student artifacts. It is a workshop designed to help bridge the divide between literature and literacy and guide us through the process of workshopping the canon. Materials and resources will be introduced and shared by three workshopping teachers and a university professor.



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W.09 Developing Agency and Engagement through Self-Evaluation: Student-Designed Writing Rubrics

Audience Level: General

This presentation explores the use of student-designed, collaborative writing rubrics to foster critical literacy, deepened analysis, and self-assessment. The presenter provides a research rationale, explores voices of student writers engaged in the process, demonstrates the teaching strategy, and discusses applications for student writers at different instructional levels.

Presenters: Sarah Morris, West Virginia University, Morgantown
Thomas Sura, West Virginia University, Morgantown

Full Description

Grounded in the learning-centered work of Maryellen Weimer, Jack Mezirow's concepts of critical reflection, and the writing workshop model, this presentation examines students' work in analyzing writing genres and models, developing and revising their own rubrics, and applying those rubrics reflectively in peer-response workshops and in self-assessment. The presentation includes a demonstration of teaching methods and discussion of applications for a range of student writers.

Many scholars are beginning to assert that student-designed rubrics have the capacity to move assessment from a teacher-centered, subjective activity, to a student-centered, intersubjective collaboration—one that develops thinking, writing, and agency for novice readers and writers. The classroom practice explored in this presentation builds on Eric Turley and Chris Gallagher's work with rubrics as flexible, recursive, and discursive tools in constructivist classrooms and gives voice to that work through the experience of students in a second year composition classroom. This practice seeks to offer students ownership of their own voices and writing by asking them not only to assess, but to critically direct and reflect on that assessment; in doing so, students are empowered to make decisions about their own writing as writers in a community of writers.

Exploring the experience of novice writers in a composition course that privileges student voice in assessment and rubric design will comprise the first portion of this presentation; a background in research and in this inquiry will be discussed briefly. While the research for this practice took place in a college composition classroom, the presenter will address its effectiveness across levels of instruction. The second portion will allow participants to sample an activity in student-led rubric design and to discuss applications in their own courses.



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W.10 Learning How to Integrate Curriculum through Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI) to Engage Students in Reading and Writing in the Primary Grades

Audience Level: Elementary, Teacher Education

Strands: Early Childhood

This workshop will begin with participants engaging experientially in a concept-oriented reading instruction (CORI) lesson that focuses on using science concepts to deeply engage primary grade students in reading and writing. Then, the researcher will discuss the findings from a CORI study conducted in a kindergarten class.

Presenters: Char Moffit, University of Maine, Farmington

Kathryn Will-Dubyak, University of Maine, Farmington

Full Description

This workshop will be presented in two parts. Presenters will guide attendees through a hands-on concept-oriented reading instruction (CORI) lesson that focuses on using science concepts to deeply engage primary grade students in reading and writing. There are four phases to CORI: 1. Observe and personalize, 2. Search and retrieve, 3. Comprehend and integrate, and 4. Communicate to others. For this workshop, the science lesson will focus on insects brought by the presenters, including caterpillars, ladybug larvae, and a praying mantis egg case—all in small containers.

After the lesson, we will ask participants to discuss with a partner all of the literacy learning that took place during the lesson. Then, as a group, we will discuss all of the learning that *can* take place in a CORI lesson such as this one.

The second part of the workshop will present an overview of a CORI study, conducted by one of the presenters, in which these steps were followed. This study explored CORI at the kindergarten level to examine how this curriculum framework engaged young learners in science concepts and literacy learning. We will also discuss how they engaged with reading and writing throughout the CORI process.

Participants will each receive a handout that will include an overview of the workshop.

After attending this workshop, participants will have both an understanding and the tools to implement a CORI lesson in the primary grades.



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W.11 Deep Reading: Reinventing Identity through Imagination

Sponsored by the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning

Audience Level: General

We will explore the differences between the merely “close” reading of literature and the truly deep reading of it, how deep reading leads to deep living, and how a focus on the deep reading of both literature and ourselves can help turn our classrooms into living societies that can open new doors of hope in our students’ lives.

Presenters: John Creger, American High School, Fremont, CA, "Renovating Literacy to Interpret the Stories of Our Lives: An Introduction to The Personal Creed Project"

Jennifer Dorsey, East Central University, Ada, OK, "Literature as Escape: Using Fiction’s ‘Armour and Tools’ to Transform Ourselves and Our Realities"

Bruce Novak, The Foundation for Ethics and Meaning, Indiana, PA, "How Deep Reading Can Deepen the Texture of Human Existence"

Sarah Parker, Morrisville State College, Morrisville, NY, "The Echo of My Lost Words: How Reading Gave Me Back My Voice and Reshaped My Identity, Transforming Me into an Advocate for Lost Learners"

Jon Stansell, Belmont College, St. Clairsville, OH, "The Connection between Deep Reading and Deep Writing"

Vajra Watson, University of California, Davis, "The Art, Science, and Soul of Transformative Classrooms through the Deep Reading of Art and Life"

Full Description

We will explore the differences between the merely “close” reading of literature and the truly deep reading of it, how deep reading leads to deep living, and how a focus on the deep reading of both literature and ourselves can help turn our classrooms into living societies that can open new doors of hope in our students’ lives.

Participants will first hear two discussions of projects that use deep reading in different contexts that work toward the same goal: understanding how deep reading can help participants engage more deeply in their lives and guiding students with doing the same. Then they will choose from 4 deep-reading-focused lessons to learn how to implement this in the classroom.



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W.12 Setting Minds Aflame: How to Create and Stoke Youth Social Action Teams

Audience Level: Middle, Secondary

This practical workshop shows how to inspire students by inviting them to research local social issues of interest and publish multimodal narratives crafted to make change in their communities. Participants will examine concrete examples and gain ongoing access to superb materials.

Presenters: Paul Barnwell, Fern Creek Traditional High School, Louisville, KY
Kip Hottman, Jefferson County Schools, Louisville, KY
Tim O'Leary, Middlebury College's Bread Loaf School of English, Middlebury, VT
Bill Rich, Middlebury College's Bread Loaf School of English, Middlebury, VT

Full Description

Building on their session at #NCTE16, a team of adults and students from What's the Story? The Vermont Young People Social Action Team (WtS) will talk through the process of creating such a group: an innovative, credit-bearing course that invites middle and high school students to work in teams drawn together by a passion for a local issue—across schools, ages, and academic accomplishment. <http://whatsthestory.middcreate.net/vermont/>

Those who attend leave with

- A clear and compelling understanding of why and how WtS elicits the very best from adolescent learners of mixed ages and academic diversity.
- A set of guiding principles to use during and after the workshop to make decisions about how to design and sustain a WtS experience.
- Specific practices, models, and examples that show how to design and manage learning in a blended learning environment, allowing learners and their teachers to sustain their connections and momentum in between in-person meetings.
- Specific practices, models, and examples that show how to teach the art of digital storytelling through literary and nontraditional texts;
- A draft plan for how to adapt the materials and lessons learned of WtS VT and KY;
- Ongoing access to the entire WtS curriculum, assessments, and related materials.
- Ongoing access to a network of educators and students ready and able to support anyone interested in bringing WtS to their communities.

Most importantly, presenters hope to instill the awe they've experienced through the power of beginning with and sticking with a group of learners' ideas about how to learn and act in ways that make a difference in their communities and to help participants sustain these ideas in practical ways in their own settings.



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W.13 MLA Style Workshop

Audience Level: General

Strands: CEE

This workshop, based on a successful MLA 2017 workshop that was applied across all levels of instruction, will ground participants in the nuts and bolts of the new MLA style and then lead them through a series of classroom-tested activities for teaching students at all levels to collect, organize, and document works used in their research.

Presenters: Angela Gibson, Modern Language Association, New York, NY

Liana Silva, Cesar Chavez High School, Houston, TX

Full Description

Based on a successful workshop at the 2017 MLA Annual Convention that brought together middle school, high school, and college instructors, this workshop is suitable for teachers at all levels. It will first ground attendees in a thorough understanding of MLA style and then introduce them to classroom-tested ways to teach documentation, source evaluation, and—most vitally—source literacy.

The first presenter, an MLA staff editor and former college writing instructor who helped develop the new style, will guide workshop participants through the nuts and bolts of documenting sources in MLA style and collaborative exercises that will reinforce knowledge of this citation method.

The second presenter, a high school teacher of AP language and literature and a past college writing instructor, will lead participants through three classroom-tested activities for teaching MLA style and research at both levels of instruction. Activities will include a scavenger hunt, class journal exercises that emphasize evaluating sources as students work, and a self-editing exercise that will include incorporating reference-management software productively without compromising knowledge.

Attendees will gain confidence in their working knowledge of MLA style and will develop various techniques for supporting student researchers in a broad range of activities, from collecting research materials to organizing their research to documenting it with various tools.



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W.15 (Re)Narrate Your Teacher Identity: Writing with Artifacts and Telling Truths

Audience Level: General

Explore how to use artifacts to (re)narrate your significant teaching moments. This hands-on session demonstrates how writing with artifacts “cracks open” ways to tell new and more truthful narratives of teaching. Together, we will consider how and why (re)narrating can positively affect our collective well being.

Chair: Audrey Lensmire, Augsburg College, Minneapolis, MN, "The Wild Horses"

Presenters: Aubrey Hendry, Hiawatha Leadership Academy, Minneapolis, MN, "Photo Artifacts"

Amanda Mohan, Minneapolis Public Schools, MN, "What Is Your Struggle?"

Samantha Scott, Augsburg College, Minneapolis, MN, "Our Students Also Need the Space"

Anna Schick, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, "Disrupting Assumptions"

Marie D. S. Voreis, Minneapolis Public Schools, MN, "What Is Your Image of Teacher?"

Full Description

Building upon a well-received panel of our collective’s storytelling and writing with artifacts at #NCTE16, we will share with teachers and teacher educators what happened when we came together monthly, over a period of more than three years, to tell teaching stories and collectively wrestle with how being a teacher preyed on our insecurities. In this session, we weave our storytelling with our writing and invite participants to reflect on their own artifacts—objects with significance. Participants will learn ways to “crack open” their artifacts and be encouraged to generate new stories. We anticipate that, like us, participants will begin to shift their views of themselves as teachers. Through an engagement in this process—storytelling, writing, and (re)narrating teaching lives—we anticipate our participants will feel that this kind of storytelling can encourage us to see ourselves, not only as stressed teachers, but as agents and collaborators with the power to redefine our narrative.

Our afternoon will be organized in four parts. We will move between storytelling, modeling writing with artifacts, and asking participants to do the same. We’ll explore how artifacts hold important meanings and values and how, by shifting perspectives and repositioning our understanding of the artifacts, we can strengthen our sense of health and well-being. Finally, we’ll invite participants to start their own collectives outside of official demands of the profession and to join us in truth-telling and (re)narrating what it really means to be a teacher. We will provide resources to participants to facilitate their future writing with artifacts with peers and students to support engagement and empowerment.



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W.16 Growing Roses in Concrete: Practicing Self-Care in the Eye of the Storm

Audience Level: General

Strands: Rainbow

In this interactive workshop, participants will use a wide range of unconventional tools—writing-for-full-presence, meditation, yoga, hip-hop, family, and food—to practice self-care, cultivate self-love, and sustain critical hope and liberating literacies in the eye of the storm of hate crimes, xenophobia, anti-blackness, heteronormativity, transphobia, poverty, trauma, high-stakes testing, standardized curricula, and job insecurity.

Presenters: Jennifer K. Johnson, San José State University, San José, CA

Marcelle Mentor, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY

Full Description

English educators are working in a time of uncertainty. Both presenters have very recent experience trying to navigate current societal and systemic disruptions that have affected them, their students, their colleagues, and their teaching practices. At a public university that is already recovering from previous hate crimes and where job security for faculty is unclear, where swastikas and sexual assault are regular occurrences, where the first two weeks of the semester include multiple suicides and the full effects of changing federal policies have yet to be seen, how does an educator continue to keep students focused on the tasks at hand? How should a non-white immigrant (from apartheid South Africa) teaching mostly white students in a private institution navigate lessons about American colonialism, race, patriotism, and gender?

Here, the question of self-care arises. How that looks depends on our positionality. In order to best serve our students and ourselves, we can attend to this question by drawing on our funds of knowledge and seemingly unconventional tools to fortify ourselves. The presenters will invite participants to dialogue and practice using a variety of resources, from yoga, meditation, and hip-hop to cooking, writing, and debate, to work within the limits of our situations (Freire, 1972) and maintain critical hope “when growing roses in concrete” (Duncan-Andrade, 2009).