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The 4th CEE summer conference will occur in collaboration with the International Federation for the Teaching of English (IFTE), an organization comprising the national English teaching organizations of IFTE member nations. It will take place July 6–9, 2015, at Fordham University’s Rose Hill campus in the north Bronx, New York City.

As a member of IFTE, CEE is pleased to host the 2015 IFTE Conference in conjunction with our biannual summer meeting. Keynote speakers include Ngaire Hoben, University of Auckland, New Zealand; Hilary Janks, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa; Mary Kalantzis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Illinois, US; and Ernest Morrell, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, New York, US.

The conference begins with a cookout and plenary session Monday, July 6, at 5:00 pm, and concludes Thursday, July 9, at 3:00 pm. In addition to keynote speakers, there will be nearly 100 roundtables, workshops, discussions, and panel presentations. On Thursday, in addition to a full offering of sessions, there will be a special-interest strand for graduate students.

The registration fee includes six meals, access to all sessions and speakers, and all materials. Housing in the Fordham University dorms is available at a reasonable price.

Find more information, including how to register, at http://ncte.connectedcommunity.org/IFTE/conference

Registration deadline: June 30, 2015
Housing deadline: June 22, 2015
As we write this editorial, it is the dog days of summer, and just as quickly as we thought we could slow down and take a breath, we realized that it is time to plan for the 2014–15 school year. With close to 40 years of teaching experience between us, we finally recognize and admit that We. Will. Never. Get. It. All. Done.

For teachers and teacher educators, getting it all done is standard operating procedure, or so we like to tell ourselves. However, in the impossible pursuit of accomplishing every task on our current and future agendas, what is sacrificed? Health? Relationships? Our reflective practices? Our best teaching?

As we brainstormed about what to write for this editorial, we created lists of what we needed to do. Writing these editorials can be fun and cathartic, and the current endeavor was—to be frank—stressing us out. So, we each decided to pick one topic to write about that might resonate with the readers. That topic is assessment.

In the rush to go from mindless five-paragraph persuasive and expository (simple explanation) essays—how Florida tested 10th graders’ writing proficiency for years—we now turn 180 degrees to on-demand comparison/contrast and argumentative, with some synthesis thrown in, essays that are demanding for a population that has been cranking out formulaic writing for over 15 years. On a practice writing test last year, ninth graders had to compare a nineteenth-century poem with a black-and-white photo of a tree. As Lisa was evaluating students’ writing all she could think was, *I would have a tough time with this writing task, and I have a master’s degree in English and a PhD in Reading.*

This was a light-bulb moment for Lisa, and she realized that she would need to slow down to teach the beauty of poetry, all aspects of it, not just dissecting it to write for an essay. If not, students’ experiences with poetry would be rushed and forced, prompted by a fear of not doing well on the new
on-demand writing assessments, rather than times to savor the splendor of poets’ words. In her 2012 article “What Poetry Teaches Us about the Power of Persuasion” in The Atlantic, Dorothea Lasky wrote:

Learning about poetry (how to read it, write it, and appreciate it) is an integral part of teaching students about all forms of writing. A poem is not just a place to present a student’s grammatical knowledge (in fact, it is often the space to subvert it!). Poetry, more than any other form of writing, trains students to take into account the style of language. This close looking and listening is crucial to writing well in any manner. It would be hard to say that any outstanding essay does not involve meticulous word choice or the ability to persuade a reader through sheer aesthetic prowess. Poetry teaches students how to do this.

Slowing down to read, write, and discuss poetry will enable teachers to “cover” many standards, allowing the pedagogical space to decelerate and savor the beauty of language.

It is easy for classroom teachers to feel pressured to conform out of fear: value-added models influence pay, school grades are publicly shared, and students’ diplomas can be withheld. However, a love of words and the desire to seek knowledge extend beyond high-stakes assessments, or at least they should. Students deserve the time to slow down and appreciate language.

As an administrator for a teacher education program, Leslie supervises faculty as they employ common assessments across the curriculum, prepares students for the edTPA—a performance assessment designed to ensure that new teachers are prepared for the classroom—and attempts to ensure that state and federal policymakers understand the role that these data play in helping us be knowledgeable about our programs and our students.

One move that Leslie’s program is making is holding a “data summit” at the beginning of the fall semester, an opportunity for all faculty who teach in her teacher education program to review the common assessment and edTPA data. The focus of this review is to answer the question, “Where are our programmatic strengths and weaknesses?” However, preparing for this data summit is a daunting task: choosing which data to present and how to present them; developing a system for faculty members to engage in as they view data; figuring out how to engage faculty members without setting ourselves up for too-drastic change.

All of this preparation is underway at the same time that Leslie’s college is working on program reviews and preparing for an accreditation visit, putting together search committees for a new dean and multiple faculty members, and doing all of the other work involved in keeping programs running smoothly for students, faculty, and staff.
The two examples above show that it will never be perfect. However, our work continues to engage and enliven us, even while the pressure remains daunting. It is comforting to know that we are not in this alone, and that we have thousands of colleagues around the country who support each other and us every day.

Our first article in this issue, “The Stormy Times of James Moffett” by Russel Keith Durst, takes us on a historical journey into a conflict over Moffett’s collection of materials for English teachers titled *Interaction*. Moffett developed this set of multimedia, multigenre, and diverse materials in collaboration with teachers, and it was designed to be used by teachers in innovative, creative ways—far from a scripted curriculum. Durst traces the vocal and political opposition to this curriculum and connects it to today’s political landscape: “Yet in the years since he wrote these words, the forces of standardization have gotten stronger, the tests more frequent, the consequences greater, with even less scope now for teachers and textbook writers to work against the grain” (p. 128). Still, Durst helps us to recognize that there is work similar to Moffett’s underway; we would do well to recognize this work and to join in it.

William Kist and Kristine E. Pytash, in their article, “‘I Love to Flip the Pages’: Preservice Teachers and New Literacies within a Field Experience,” articulate the disconnect they found when their students—preservice English teachers—participated in a year-long internship focused on technology use and new literacies. As with many studies, this one began with an expectation of a particular finding—a disconnect between what was happening in schools and what was being discussed in the methods course—and ended with something different: “What we did not expect was that the data would speak so clearly to the tensions that existed, apparently, between ideologies—the ideologies and literacy practices of the preservice teachers and the ideologies and visions of new literacies in English classrooms that we had discussed in our methods classes” (p. 145). Kist and Pytash explore the notion of digital natives and digital immigrants (Prensky, 2005), turning that concept on its ear and conveying, once again, how difficult it is to effect change in both teaching beliefs and teaching practices.

Linda Sue Stewart is the author of our Extending the Conversation work in this issue, titled “A Catalyst for Change: Staging Dramatics for Preservice English Teachers through Improv, Role-Play, and Collaborative Reflection.” In keeping with the idea of the Extending the Conversation section, Stewart asks, “What does acting have to do with educating future ELA teachers?” (p. 171). Stewart provides information about how she has used dramatic ac-
tivities in her teacher education classroom to reinforce culturally responsive teaching, to facilitate reflection, and to encourage improvisation.

We know that you are as busy or busier than we are; we both hope that you will take a time and space away from that busyness to engage in the articles in this issue, and that your endeavors on the part of your students will benefit as a result.

References

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**Russell Award Winner Announced**

The 2014 winner of the NCTE David H. Russell Award for Distinguished Research in the Teaching of English is David E. Kirkland for his book *A Search Past Silence: The Literacy of Young Black Men* (Teachers College Press). The book argues that educators need to understand the social worlds and complex literacy practices of African American males in order to pay the increasing educational debt we owe all youth and break the school-to-prison pipeline. Portraits from the lives of six friends bring to life the structural characteristics and qualities of meaning-making practices, particularly practices that reveal the political tensions of defining who gets to be literate and who does not. Key chapters on language, literacy, race, and masculinity examine how the literacies, languages, and identities of these friends are shaped by the silences of societal denial. Ultimately, *A Search Past Silence* is a passionate call for educators to listen to the silenced voices of black youth and to reimagine the concept of being literate in a multicultural democratic society.

David E. Kirkland is an associate professor of English and urban education at NYU Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. He directs the Center for Applied Inclusive Teaching and Learning in Arts and Humanities at the Michigan State University College of Arts and Letters.