K C T E / L A

Kentucky Council of Teachers of English / Language Arts
www.kcte.org

REFLECTIONS: 2014 CONFERENCE

Session Reflections from the 2014 Conference:

I got to meet some amazing new teachers, reconnect with some of my favorites, and learn some new things.

That is always a win. I learned some new moves from the redoubtable Barry Lane (ideas I've already implemented) but the session that sticks with me the most and is shaping the assignment I'm currently designing was Carol Ruppel's session on the Power of Project-Based Learning (PBL). PBL supports the sort of deep thinking and reflection-based learning that I want to see from my students. Plus, it is just more fun for me and my students.

But Carol's session also reminded me how many teachers don't really understand PBL and its benefits. They assume that simply assigning "projects" make its PBL. When in fact there is a distinct difference between projects and project-based learning. Projects are separate from instruction and learning. Projects are an end result usually used to demonstrate learning. In project-based learning (PBL) the project is the learning – and the teaching and learning take place through the project. Projects are a fine way to demonstrate learning, but project-based learning is a tremendous way to engage and educate.

The PBL session inspired me as an educator and as a blogger:

http: metawriting.deannamascle.com/

(Deanna Mascle- Morehead Writing Project Morehead State University)

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"I always find sharing ideas with other teachers in the trenches refuels and refreshes me...I remember I am never alone at the big desk. I enjoyed the session I attended on emergent readers. Great ideas that work using images to inspire critical thinking."

(Mandy Lawson, Sheldon Clark High School in Martin County.)

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I attended wonderfully uplifting sessions at KCTE. After attending a session on senior projects, I have already started the process with my senior students. During each session I found myself writing down idea after idea to use in my classroom. I attended sessions on Program Review, PGES, standards based grading, and teaching grammar through reading. Thank you for having such a wide variety of topics for the breakout sessions. It was a great experience, and I am excited for next year.

(Lindsay Johnson– Morehead Writing Project Fellow)

Which Author is Your Soul Mate?

Recently on our "100th" snow day, I was scrolling through Facebook and came across one of many "which one are you" kind of polls. (I have discovered that I am Pumba from *Lion King*, that Henry David Thoreau is my soul mate, I am Amy Farrah Fowler from the *Big Bang Theory*, and The Beatles and I are connected- all from taking such polls.) Recently the poll "Which Author is your soul mate?" came across my Facebook page and out of sheer boredom, I took it.

It got me thinking. What kind of research would be involved for a student to create such a poll about an author/authors? Could students each take an author and based on his/her life and works together create such a poll? The poll I am referring to is located at http://www.buzzfeed.com/dianabruk/which-classic-author-is-your-soulmate and I warn you that the questions are NOT all appropriate, so it would not make a good model. If I were to ever try this, I would have to create my own as a model for students to look at. (It would be fun to make one with children's books!)

Let's take Edgar Allan Poe for example. What kind of house represents him? What song would represent him? What font, color, movie or saying? I think that students would certainly have to do some serious research and justification for these choices, which could result in an academic essay that identifies the above selections with explanation that justifies each choice.

Students could use PowerPoint, as pictures can be linked to another slide and even Microsoft word allows for links within a document. I am not tech savvy enough to explain how the multiple selections might lead to a final answer- but students could assign points to each particular answer given and at the end of the poll what points identify which author.

If you scored 4 points- you are….

If you scored 6 points- you are… etc.

And, of course, the technology project could be simplified where students simply create their own presentations of one particular author- tying in speaking and listening skills from the CCS. Through their presentation, they can explain their choices and explain why each choice fits that author and his/her works. I also ran across a neat new tech tool called Twine- Interactive Text- kind of like a choose your own adventure set up (see page 5 for an example using Twine) I feel that students might even produce a presentation using this platform.

In addition, choosing an image, color, etc. that represents a work or author could be posted on a Wiki page, Edmodo, a discussion board, etc. and a discussion could ensue as to why that particular image, song, etc. fits or does not fit the author and/or his/her work(s).

Finally, a teacher might even consider pulling choices together as a 'teaser' for a book students are about to read in class. Presenting students with images of a house, hearing a song, showing a trailer for a movie- all connected to represent the author and his/her works, can prove to be an excellent preview of what they are about to read/study. You might challenge students, as they read and study that author, to come up with justifications for each of the images, songs, etc. that you presented at the start of the unit. Where did it click that this particular image, song fit this author? How are they connected? Etc. Using a variety – music, images, etc. connects to the whole brain and reaches students with a variety of learning styles, thus enhancing motivation.

Many argue that the CCS remove the need to read novels, but as ELA teachers, we cling to the need to study complete works and the literary stamina needed to do this. On the other hand, technology and media have pervaded almost every aspect of our students' lives- so why not take both- literature and media- and instill critical thinking, writing, speaking and listening opportunities as well as promote motivation to enhance the study of literature?

Barry Lane edifying teachers through spoken word and song. Conference 2014

Education Commissioner—Terry Holliday updating teachers on the latest in KY Education– Conference 2014

2015 *KY English Bulletin* Call for Manuscripts

Theme: Classroom Literature

The 2015 Call For Manuscripts for the *Kentucky English Bulletin* focuses on the theme of Classroom Literature. The spring 2015 issue of the Bulletin invites you to share your love and appreciation of teaching literature in its various forms, such as picture books, chapter books, young adult novels, poetry, nonfiction, short stories, plays, canonical works, recent titles, mainstream texts, marginalized texts, and graphic novels.

For many language arts teachers, our developing love of reading as children was also the beginning of the path to our adult careers. The spring 2015 issue of the *Bulletin* invites you to share your love and appreciation of teaching literature in its various forms, such as picture books, chapter books, young adult novels, poetry, nonfiction, short stories, plays, canonical works, recent titles, mainstream texts, marginalized texts, and graphic novels. Which texts have proven useful, engaging, or powerful in your classroom? How do you make use of various instructional formats, such as full-class assignments, group assignments, literature circles, or individual reading? What challenges have you faced in teaching literature, and how did you overcome them? How does your teaching of literature connect with other language arts, other **content areas, or other aspects of your students' lives? How have technology and various me**dia influenced the ways you teach . . . and the ways your students learn? How are you working with teachers in other content areas who are addressing the increasing emphasis on informational texts? (For that matter, how are you dealing with the common misconception that the CCSS call for language arts classes to abandon literary texts in favor of informational texts?)

In addition to articles, contributions are sought for standing sections of the *Bulletin*:

- Teachers as Writers: Poetry, Essays, Letters
- *KEB* Teaching Strategy Exchange
- Professional Reading Recommendations
- Humor
- **What's New in Young Adult Literature?**
- Speak Out: Professional Issues

Inquiries and drafts are welcome.

The *Bulletin* **observes MLA documentation style and NCTE's position on avoiding sexism in** language. Articles from 500 to 2500 words welcome!

Electronic submissions are preferred: keb@kcte.org.

Hard copies may be mailed to Dr. David LeNoir, English Department, Western Kentucky University, 1906 College Heights Blvd. #11086, Bowling Green, KY 42101-1086.

Have You heard About?

Ever Try Student Led Conferences? I was able to do this a few years ago and it was an enormous success. Students reflected on their growth and set goals for growth, collected their most important writing piece to share with their parent or guardian and received a printed copy of their progress report to discuss. Parents/guardians made appointments during the school day to come in and meet with their child and for those students whose parents could not attend, a teacher took their place. I stumbled across a recent blog post about student led conferences for elementary students– check it out here at **"Juice Boxes and Crayons"**

The author offers everything from scheduling tips to set-up and what forms she used.

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Everyone thought blogging would be a hit in the classroom, and for some it has been, yet for others-not so much. Read up on **"8 Brilliant Alternatives to Blogging"**

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Twine is a really cool open-source tool for telling interactive nonlinear stories. It is a free tool that does not require code to create. Check out a sample story here: (It is more of a personal reflective piece) You can find Twine here: http://twinery.org/

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Formative Assessment is a hot topic and directly connected to the PGES- NCTE recently held a Twitter chat about Formative Assessment. Check out the list of follow-up blog posts created by teachers all over the country covering formative assessment. You can also find the Twitter chat archive link there.

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Check out Deanna Mascle's Blog—Metawriting

All things writing **including "10 Ways Literacy Narratives Will Rock Your World (or at Least Your Writing Classroom)"**

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Try 10 Wonderful Short Stories to Read Online!

Short Stories- Everything from Borges to Gaitskill. Mostly High School level readings.

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Morehead Writing Project Offers Online Summer Institute

Teachers can experience a National Writing Project Summer Institute online and earn up to six graduate credit hours in the process with the third Morehead Writing Project Online Summer Institute. Learn more: http://moreheadwritingproject.org/?p=1049

THE KENTUCKY COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH/ LANGUAGE ARTS
2014 WRITING CONTEST

Please support the efforts of KCTE/LA in recognizing the exceptional writing of your Kentucky students!

What is the KCTE/LA Writing Contest?
KCTE/LA sponsors a writing contest at the Elementary, Middle, High School, and College levels in with winners in first through fifth place in the following four categories:

1. Narrative/Real or Imagined
2. Informative/Explanatory
3. Opinion/Argumentative
4. Poetry

Who can submit student writing?
Submissions can be entered by any current member of KCTE (Email membership@kcte.org to check membership status) AT kcte.submittable.com/submit/28099

When can a teacher begin submitting entries?
Submission forms available from January 1st to May 31st.

When will students and teachers be notified of winning entries?
Submission forms available from January 1st to May 31st.

General Guidelines:
Teachers may submit up to three (3) total student entries in each of the categories (for example, one middle school teacher may submit three student entries in the Narrative category, three entries in the Poetry category, and so on).

Remember: Teachers who submit more than three entries per category will be disqualified and all entries from the teacher will be disqualified.

Submission Instructions:
* Entries must be submitted as a Word document through the KCTE/LA Contest Link
    * **Please read and follow the submission instructions carefully**
    * **Each piece, including poems by the same author, should be submitted** separately
    * **Teacher submitting the entry responsible for plagiarism checks and for** ensuring students under the age of 18 have proper release forms on file

Teachers taking the time to read Contest Winning submissions, responding to student writing with a note of encouragement.

Owensboro Community and Technical College (OCTC) celebrates Common Reading Program 10th Anniversary
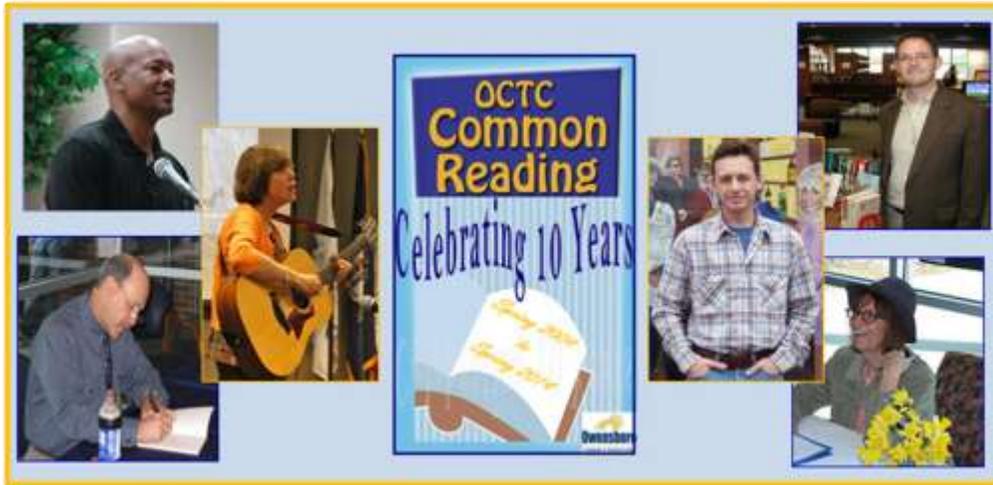
What do quilting, the Lewis and Clark expedition, conservation, multiculturalism, Mammoth Cave, farming, the Holocaust, 9/11, the working class, and a beauty queen have in common? All have been topics of discussion in the Common Reading Program at Owensboro Community and Technical College during the past 10 years. From the first book chosen in 2004, *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley, to the most recent book, Silas **House's** *A Parchment of Leaves,* all have been a part of a comprehensive, common reading in which authors, many from Kentucky, visit the college for readings and participate in class discussions.

House's book returns as the common reading material for the 10th anniversary celebration which will be held at the OCTC main campus on March 19-21, 2014. As part of the festivities, many of the former Common Reading authors, including Silas House, will be revisiting OCTC for a writer's festival, including readings, seminars, and a bookfair. Other returning authors include: George Ella Lyon, Bobbie Ann Mason, Davis McCombs, Joe Survant (former Kentucky Poet Laureate), and Frank X Walker (current Kentucky Poet Laureate). Most of the events are free and open to the public, but those interested should check out the web page for information on the ticketed Wednesday night reception with all the authors and the 10:00 Friday morning seminar with Silas House.

A Common Reading Committee, consisting of faculty and staff members from the various disciplines and areas of the college, oversees and features a new book each semester. Each book is selected for all participants to read, having common ground for discussions of major themes in the book. While the book choices vary in many ways (different genres, time-periods, and subject matters) they are chosen with the intention of expanding the knowledge and perspectives of readers. The background of the selected writers is diverse; however, many Kentucky and regional writers are also included in order to help appreciate local talent, acknowledge shared concerns, and celebrate our common heritage.

All OCTC students, staff, faculty, and interested community members are invited and encouraged to participate by reading the books and attending the many related presentations each semester.

OCTC led Owensboro in a community collaboration when they were awarded The National Endowment for the Arts Big Read grant in 2008. The Big Read initiative was launched by The National Endowment for the Arts to reinstate reading as a center of American culture. Communities are invited to select a classic novel from an approved list and engage residents in reading. Owensboro chose Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* with many events, book discussions, and a screening of the film as part of the festivities. In 2011, The National Endowment for the Humanities awarded OCTC one of the first NEH Challenge Grants in the nation; the grant, geared specifically toward community colleges to help them further humanities education in their communities, encouraged OCTC to increase partnerships within the community to create what will become a million dollar OCTC Humanities Endowment.

For the past 10 years, OCTC has offered a rich learning environment for students, faculty, staff, and community through its Common Reading Program. Today, when OCTC students are asked what book they most recently read, they typically rattle off the title of a current or past Common Read selection. The visit by the authors to campus to perform readings of their work, various community activities, and most recently a visit by Miss America 2014, Nina Davuluri, are just a few events that will be remembered by the OCTC family and community. After the 10th anniversary is celebrated this year, the program will continue **to offer exciting events and discussions as they relate to the current book for each semester's reading. Most** importantly, students will continue to have the opportunity to express their view points, share in conversations, hone their critical thinking skills, and learn to walk for a short time in the shoes of others. Please visit http://owensboro.kctcs.edu/Academics/Common_Reading for more information about the OCTC Common **Reading Program's 10**th anniversary. We hope to see you there!

*To purchase tickets for the Wednesday evening reception or the Friday morning seminar, please contact: Pamela.pickle@kctcs.edu, 270-686-4663.

Wednesday evening reception - $100 donation to NEH endowment

Friday morning workshop - $25 donation to NEH endowment

Make checks payable to the OCTC Foundation

If interested in a table at the Book Fair, contact Tonya at tonya.northenor@kctcs.edu

Poetry Transcription Lesson

Submitted by Elizabeth Prather—Educator at Lafayette High School

One of the mainstays of my creative writing classroom is poetry transcription, a writing exercise I learned from Rob Lockhart, a teacher with the Boyd County school system. I learned poetry transcription from Rob in 2004 during the Morehead Writing Project Summer Institute and have used it with every grade, class, and ability level since.

In linguistics, transcription is the act of rendering spoken language into written language. Similarly, in medical transcription, a transcriptionist listens to a doctor's abbreviated verbal recordings and writes down the information in a patient's files. With poetry transcription, I read a poem out loud to my students, word by word, line by line, break by break. As I reach each word and line, I give students information on capitalization, punctuation, spelling of homonyms or odd non-words (I'm looking at you, ee Cummings), line and stanza breaks. They listen intently to my cues and write what they hear. At the end, a student reads the whole poem from start to finish out loud. We may or may not discuss it. Or the poem might just hang there like an unbroken piñata or a mushroom cloud, depending on how our meta-moods are swinging that day.

The guidelines are simple:

1)   Choose a short poem. Transcribing "The Raven" will lead directly to your death. I look for a poem under 20 lines.

2)   Speak slowly and distinctly, especially when you first start teaching the process to your students. Repeat each line twice.

3)   Tell students if words are capitalized or lower case. Tell students what punctuation is used, and spell out foreign or complex words and homonyms that could be confusing.

4)   Give students cues for all formatting, so they can transcribe the poem as accurately as possible. For example, if I were to transcribe Ezra Pounds' short poem "In the Station of the Metro," I would say something like the following: "Okay, folks, the poem we are transcribing today is 'In the Station of the Metro' by Ezra

Pound. The title is capital I-In, lower-case t-the, capital S-Station, lower-case o-of, lower-case t-the, capital M-Metro. The title is "In the Station of the Metro."

Below the title, you write the byline. The byline is lower-case b-by spelled b-y, capital e-Ezra, spelled e-z-r-a, capital p-Pound, spelled p-o-u-n-d. Okay, is everyone ready? Here we go: The first line, first word, first letter is capital T-The, apparition, spelled a-p-p-a-r-i-t-i-o-n, of these faces in the crowd, punctuation semi-colon. That line should read: The apparition of these faces in the crowd semi-colon. Next line, this is the second line, first word, first letter is capital p-Petals spelled p-e-t-a-l-s, on a wet, punctuation comma, black bough, spelled b-o-u-g-h, punctuation period. That line should read: Petals on a wet comma black bough period. Okay, who would like to read this poem?"

5)   Make sure a student, not you, reads the poem at the end. You've just been talking for five straight minutes. Let another voice reveal the whole poem. It's a wonder and a joy when they hear the whole thing as a unit.

 Each year, I ask students to give me feedback on the effectiveness of my instructional strategies. Every year, the feedback on poetry transcription runs about 75% to 80% positive. One big fan stated: "I loved the poetry transcriptions. They not only exposed me to lots of different poetry, but I also learned so much about word choice and line breaks. As the poem slowly unveiled itself, I would find myself holding my breath to find out what word or line would come next, and those experiences defiantly (sic maybe? sic maybe not?) influenced my own writing."

If you are a teacher in Central Kentucky, I would be happy to come to your classroom and lead this activity with you and your students.

See more great lesson plans like this at my blog, http://teachlikeeveryoneislistening.wordpress.com

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Shopping for some great books and instructional resources! Conference 2014

Barry Lane getting the teachers into the action!

Enjoying lunch and good fellowship!

Find us on Facebook: "Kentucky Council of Teachers of English/ Language Arts"

By liking the FB page, you are sure to get conference updates, as well as teaching and learning resources. You must type the name in the FB search bar as shown above to find us or just click on the above link!

Twitter: @KCTE_LA

Tweets from conference time as well as resources and updates go out through Twitter often. Follow us there too– click on the link above to hook up via Twitter!

New Webpage! Coming soon– more user friendly– one stop shop for everything KCTE/LA– www.kcte.us Keep in mind we are in transition on this site.

WE NEED YOU!

I know most teachers feel like what they do **in the classroom isn't anything special–** but it IS! Every day new teachers are entering our ranks and even those of us who are seasoned teachers could use some fresh ideas from time to time! Consider submitting an article to the *KCTE/LA Newsletter*– news@kcte.org or amy.clancy@wv.kyschools.us—anything from reviews of professional literature, YA literature recommendations, a lesson plan and/or strategy ideas for teaching and learning, etc.

In addition, our very own *KY English Bulletin* is always looking for submissions from KY

Dr. Kimberly Stormer (Murray State University) **presenting "Using Children's Literature to engage struggling Writers"**

teachers! keb@kcte.org.

You have a lot to offer so don't keep it under wraps! Share your ideas through submissions to the *KCTE/LA Newsletter* and the *KY English Bulletin.*