Language Arts Journal of Michigan

Volume 26
Issue 1 *Leading Literate Lives*

Article 15

2010

President's Message

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Recommended Citation

Richmond, Kia Jane (2010) "President's Message," *Language Arts Journal of Michigan*: Vol. 26: Iss. 1, Article 15.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.9707/2168-149X.1017>

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Kia Jane Richmond

President's Message

Our days are a kaleidoscope. Every instant a change takes place in the contents. New harmonies, new contrasts, new combinations of every sort. Nothing ever happens twice alike. The most familiar people stand each moment in some new relation to each other, to their work, to surrounding objects.
-(Henry Ward Beecher 1813 - 1887)

Welcome

Welcome to another amazing year of teaching English Language Arts in Michigan! As your new president, I am honored to serve you and to share a few thoughts here as we prepare for a new academic year. I invite you to reflect on your days as a kaleidoscope as Henry Ward Beecher notes in the quote above. As you step into your classrooms this fall, notice the changes. Pay attention to new harmonies and contrasts. Strive to find moments to take it all in, and let the wonder of each new experience wash over you in brilliant colors.

Membership

Whether you are teaching full-time or part-time, going to school, or enjoying retirement, MCTE, as your professional organization, is here to help you. As the official state affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English, MCTE offers members professional development opportunities, electronic and face-to-face networking, print and electronic publications (the award-winning *E-Met* and *Language Arts Journal of Michigan*), and, perhaps most importantly, insight, inspiration, and information from many of the best teachers in Michigan.

Our award-winning web site (<http://mcte.info>) offers interactions with other English Language Arts professionals, updates on educational news in Michigan, links to important educational resources, and access to MCTE executive committee members, conference information, and relevant publications. Please take a moment this month to review your membership status and to renew your commitment to MCTE. What's more, invite a friend, colleague, or neighbor to join MCTE. You can find more information about membership at <http://mcte.info/page/join-mcte-1>.

Fall Conference/Autumn Assembly 2010 Preview

Registration is open now at <http://mcte.info>. Plan to join us Friday, October 29th for the MCTE Fall Conference/Autumn Assembly 2010 at the Lexington Hotel in Lansing. The conference theme, *Focusing the Kaleidoscope*, invites you to re-imagine the teaching of English Language Arts in Michigan. This year's fall conference will feature the following: amazing breakfast items, awards, and fabulous keynote speaker, Pam Munoz Ryan; over 35 interactive concurrent sessions that focus on literature (including Shakespeare, graphic novels, poetry, classics), writing, reading, grammar, technology, etc; an inspiring luncheon speaker (Carol Glynn) and lots of time at lunch to converse with other teachers; and two special sessions on Native American issues in children's and young adult literature with Debbie Reese.

We're also including individual sessions on teaching reluctant readers, teaching in alternative school settings, and teaching with the Common Core Standards. You'll leave this day of professional development with innovative and practical strategies for teaching English Language Arts. You'll also meet new friends/colleagues with whom you can continue the discussion as you go back into your own classrooms. For more information, feel free to contact me at krichmon@nmu.edu. I look forward to seeing you in Lansing!

Good News in Michigan

Celebrate! English Language Arts teachers across Michigan are doing fantastic work both in and out of the classroom. MCTE is a great place to celebrate our successes. For example, MCTE member Troy Hicks, author of *The Digital Writing Workshop*, is a featured speaker on November 18th at this year's annual NCTE convention in Orlando! Likewise, member Daria Plumb is the 2010 chair of the Amelia Elizabeth Walden Award Committee for the Assembly on Literature for Adolescents. MCTE member Kent Case's Concord Academy students won multiple awards for their writing in the Crooked Tree Arts Center 2010 Young Writer's Expo. Member Amanda Stearns-Pfeiffer (with Karen Vocke) published an article entitled "Building a Community for Migrant

Education Services through Family Literacy and Farm Worker Outreach” in *The Tapestry Journal* (Winter 2009). If you have good news to share, please post it on our web site or send it to me at krichmon@nmu.edu. ☺

The Common Core Standards

Thanks to MCTE member Jill Van Antwerp for sharing the updates on the CCSS. The Michigan Department of Education has posted alignment charts which compare the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) with the Michigan Grade Content Expectations (GLCE) and High School Content Expectations (HSCE) in five different grade bands (see below):

An additional comparison of Michigan ELA Unit Framework and Common Unit Components in the Common Core State Standards is also posted at: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/ELA_Unit_Framework_vs_CCS_v3-10-10_3-24-10MLH_319486_7.pdf

According to the MDE, the Common Core State Standards DO NOT “mandate such things as a particular writing process or the full range of metacognitive strategies that students may need to use to monitor and direct their thinking and learning.”

Likewise, the MDE reports that the Standards DO NOT “indicate a list of recommended texts, reasons for reading great literature, recommendations for portfolio evidence, or discussion of language use and abuse – all addressed in guidance provided in Michigan HSCE, Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) Course/Credit Requirements, and ELA model units of instruction.”

Finally, MDE states, that the Michigan GLCE and HSCE expand the CCSS, “providing guidance for curriculum, instruction, and assessment” for meeting the CCSS and the MMC requirements. The Michigan standards DO NOT “represent a curriculum.”

FYI

Banned Books Week:

Please note that Banned Books Week is being held this year during the week of September 25 – October 2. This event “highlights the benefits of free and open access to information while drawing attention to the harms of censorship by spotlighting actual or attempted bannings of books across the United States.” For more information about how you can get involved in this celebration of freedom, check out the ALA’s web site at <http://www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/banned/index.cfm>.

Awards

The Michigan Council of Teachers of English recognizes two individuals each year with wonderful awards.

The Charles Carpenter Fries Award:

This award celebrates long and faithful service to the profession of English teaching at any academic level, along with distinguished leadership and community, state, and/or national levels, inspirational qualities for students, originality, and academic superiority.

The Ray H. Lawson Award:

This award celebrates an MCTE who teaches English Language Arts at the K-12 level; the recipient must demonstrate distinguished leadership at the local/state levels, high admiration from colleagues/students, and unique and effective perspectives on teaching ELA. The Lawson Award recipient must have a minimum of 10 years of teaching experience and must be a current member of MCTE.

Please see the MCTE Ning (<http://mcte.info>) and click on What We Do/Awards for more information and nomination forms. The deadline for both awards is midnight on September 25, 2010, with forms going to krichmon@nmu.edu.

Alignment Charts compared to The Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

K-2 Literacy CCSS – ELA GLCE Alignment

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/K-2_ELA_CC_GLCE_Alignment_4-14-10MLH_4-21-10_319490_7.pdf

3-5 Literacy CCSS – ELA GLCE Alignment

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/3-5_ELA_CC_GLCE_Alignment_4-14-10MLH_4-21-10_319474_7.pdf

6-8 ELA CCSS – ELA GLCE Alignment

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/6-8_ELA_CC_-_GLCE_Alignment_SC_4-22-10_319476_7.pdf

9-CCR ELA CCSS – ELA HSCE

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/9-CCR_ELA_CC_-_HSCE_Alignment_SC_4-22-10_319481_7.pdf

6-12 Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects – CCSS – ELA, SC, SS GLCE/HSCE

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/6-12_Literacy_CC_-_GLCE-HSCE_SC_4-22-10_Alignment_319478_7.pdf

Michigan Teacher of the Year:

Information about the 2011-2012 Michigan Teacher of the Year Award will be posted on September 10, 2010, at the MDE web site: <https://mdoe.state.mi.us/mtoy/index.asp>.

Professional Development

This summer, MCTE members April Baker-Bell, Davena Jackson, and I attended the NCTE Affiliate Leadership Meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, where we networked with NCTE affiliate leaders from various regions and learned strategies for recruiting, retaining, and better serving state affiliate members. We also developed goals for MCTE including growing membership, increasing diversity, and coordinating with neighboring state affiliates to offer more professional development for English Language Arts teachers across Michigan. In collaboration with the Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English, I am preparing a regional workshop for teachers in the U.P. and eastern Wisconsin in fall 2011.

In August, I delivered a writing and publishing workshop to teachers at a joint retreat for the Meadow Brook Writing Project and Wayne State Writing Project. The time I spent with the retreat participants at Oakland University reminded me how much we, as teachers, need time to talk to another. I encourage you to engage in a professional development workshop in your area; whether the workshop is offered by MCTE, one of the many Michigan Writing Projects, or your regional education center, you will benefit tremendously from professional development, as will your students. As a member of our organization, if you are leading or taking part in professional development workshops, let me know; MCTE would like to recognize your efforts.

Tidbits

Recommended Professional Reading:

I propose that every English Language Arts teacher take a look at a recent report from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, *Writing to Read: Evidence for How Writing Can Improve Reading* (2010), which identifies a group of teaching practices that have demonstrated success in improving students' reading. Here are the top three recommendations:

- Have students write about the texts they read. Ask them to respond to texts in writing, interpreting/analyzing or creating personal reactions. Invite students to summarize texts and take notes. Have students answer questions about a text in writing or to create/answer written questions.
- Teach students the writing skills and processes that go into creating text. Examine

text structures for writing (paragraphing and sentence construction skills); teach spelling skills as well.

- Increase how much students write. Students' reading comprehension is enhanced through increasing the frequency with which they produce their own texts. (http://carnegie.org/fileadmin/Media/Publications/WritingToRead_01.pdf)

Recommended Personal Reading:

Wally Lamb's *The Hour I First Believed* (2008), which I read this summer, would enhance the bookshelves of any English Language Arts teacher. The book, which features the story of high school English teacher Caelum Quirk and his wife, takes readers on a journey of agony, repentance, and faith in the wake of a school shooting. Lamb's writing is empathetic and engaging, speaking volumes of the commitment that educators make to their students, their communities, and themselves.

Thanks to all of you for continuing your efforts in literacy education in our great state. I look forward to working with you, and for you, throughout the 2010-2011 school year.