



ASILOMAR 69

LANGUAGE ARTS CONFERENCE
SEPTEMBER 29 - OCTOBER 1, 2023



**DECOLONIZING CURRICULUMS:
AWARENESS AND INCLUSION THROUGH
CONTENT, DESIGN AND INSTRUCTION**



Dear Teacher,
Before you teach us to splinter our souls/ For a seat at the table
Teach us to splinter our hands/ As carpenters of our own justice...

—Jamila Lyiscott, *Black Appetite. White Food.*

DECOLONIZING CURRICULUMS: AWARENESS AND INCLUSION THROUGH CONTENT, DESIGN AND INSTRUCTION

The 2023 conference looks to challenge existing norms, effectively “Decolonizing” the extant curriculums that permeate our schools, departments, and classes we teach. A legacy in multiple canons exists that has not only perpetuated, but promulgated a Eurocentric, white-dominant legacy that endures to this day in classrooms across the country. Asilomar 69 will endeavor to decolonize

curriculums by raising awareness, promoting inclusion, and proffering an opportunity to consider the content, design, and instruction of English, history, and more. **“The purpose is to create space for you to define and enter into deep conversation with meanings and manifestations of white privilege, especially as it manifests itself in your school, community, and yourself.”** --*Black Appetite. White Food.*



KEYNOTE SPEAKER: JAMILA LYISCOTT



Social Justice Education Scholar, Author & Spoken Word Poet Jamila Lyiscott aka, Dr. J, is an aspiring way-maker, a community-engaged scholar, nationally renowned speaker, and the author of *Black Appetite. White Food: Issues of Race, Voice, and Justice Within and Beyond the Classroom.* She

currently serves as an Associate Professor of Social Justice Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where she is the co-founder and co-director of the Center of Racial Justice and Youth Engaged Research.

Dr. J is most well known for being featured on TED.com where her video, ‘3 Ways to Speak English,’ has been viewed over 5 million times. Dr. J is the recipient of the AERA Outstanding Public Communication of Education Research Award, the AERA Scholar-Activist & Community Advocacy Award, and the CIES Ernest D. Morrell Emerging Scholar Award. She has been invited to keynote at 100s of institutions nationally and internationally. Dr. J’s scholarship and activism work together

to explore, assert, and defend the value of Black life globally. Her research examines the liberatory capacity of literacies in the lives of youth of color, racial healing, youth-led research, and the capacity of African Diasporic cultures to transgress white coloniality.

Dr. J serves as co-editor of the journal of Equity & Excellence in Education, and holds faculty fellowships at the University of Notre Dame, and Teachers College, Columbia University. In her active efforts to disrupt the bounds of the academy, she has also been featured in Spike Lee’s “2 Fists Up,” on BBC Radio, NPR, Cosmopolitan, NowThis, and many other media outlets nationally and internationally.

The Asilomar Conference is based on sustained group discussions following the teachers-teaching-teachers, collaborative learning philosophy. Resource and chair persons in each group do not function as lecturers. Rather, participants offer information and insights as the discussions evolve. The emphasis is on good conversation and the pursuit of intellectual interests.



SESSIONS:

Select a first, second, and third choice from the group sessions below. For the group to maintain integrity, it is necessary that the same people stay together for the weekend. Expanded descriptions and pre-conference readings for many of the following sessions are available at: <http://curriculumstudy.org>

1. Academic Freedom in the Current Political Climate

GRADES 6-12

"My principal made me take down my diversity poster." "A parent complained because this author is from Afghanistan." "Our Board is saying we shouldn't teach about protest." Across our nation, academic freedom is being limited and, in many places, attacked. This session is designed to provide a place to talk, plan, and share resources—including resources in California Ed Code, in School and District policies, procedures, and regulations, and in our union collective bargaining agreements.

2. Refocusing Our Target: Shifting from a Monocultural Lens to a Multicultural One

GRADES 6-12

Join us for a discussion about the equity issues that impact secondary Language Arts classrooms and the need to shift perspectives and practices from a traditional monocultural lens approach to include more diverse literary material. What would this multicultural classroom look like as a result of adapting the classic (monocultural) cannon to a more diverse cannon?

3. Promoting Academic Success for African-American Male Students

GRADES K-12

We will examine the elements of a program that has increased positive outcomes, including GPA and graduation rates, for African-American male students. We will discuss the strategies used and how they might be applied in classes from elementary through secondary levels

4. An Interdisciplinary Take on Colson Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad*

GRADES 9-COLLEGE

Update your curriculum with a much-celebrated text that can also provide a window into important, contemporary issues. Whitehead's magical realist novel is an introduction to this genre and a springboard to rich discussions of contemporary politics and issues of bias.

5. We All Belong Here: Poetry of Inclusion, Inspiration, and Action

GRADES 6-COLLEGE, GENERAL ENRICHMENT

We will explore and discuss how poetry of awareness, hard truth, and courage can counteract exclusions, encourage equity, and give us strength to carry on. We'll explore ways to assist our students and ourselves via poetry in collaborating and corresponding with each other. We'll share our own writing experiences, too, so come prepared to write and share.

6. Designing Equitable Grading Systems

GRADES 6-12

Historically, grading has been a tool of white supremacy that benefits the dominant culture and acts as a threshold guardian to keep students of color and first generation students from higher learning. Explore and design a grading system that empowers, motivates, and reflects true learning. Come ready to roll up your sleeves, create an equitable system, provide and receive critical feedback so you can start on Monday

7. What's In a Name? Building Relationships by Honoring Student Identity

GRADES 6-12

We will discuss the importance of correct name pronunciation and use of preferred pronouns in building relationships with our students. Participants will access a unit of study that includes quick write response questions, nonfiction analysis, and student presentation projects. Lessons are accessible for all English language proficiency levels. Participants will develop strategies for how to invite students to share their names and identities with their classmates.

8. Doors, Mirrors, and Windows: A Deep Dive into Young Adult Lit and Diversity

GRADES 6-12

Participants will learn about a variety of new young adult books representing a variety of diverse and inclusive voices and ways to use these texts in the classroom. Collaboration will center on strategies to encourage students to look beyond their worldview and select books with representation other than their own. Teachers will explore how to connect these YA books with required course texts. Share your own favorite YA diverse texts and leave with useful resources.

9. Purpose to the Pretty; Improving Equity and Accessibility with Intentional Visual and Digital Design

GRADES 6-12

Visual design enhances students' understanding; intentional presentation, iconography and visual cues are often overlooked. Visual literacy is essential for supporting underserved populations and must be considered when developing materials, especially digital ones. Participants will learn about and engage in intentional student centered design practices to better serve all populations.

10. Moffett in the Classroom: Putting All Symbol Systems to Work

GRADES 6-COLLEGE, GENERAL ENRICHMENT

Teachers will work toward promoting inclusion and giving voice to alternative ways of thinking by exploring disturbing cultural events reported in the news, and participate in paired think-alouds, personal reflections, descriptive writing, and explore ways to foster their students' ability to read for meaning using their own writing. Personal units will be created and shared.

11. Writing on the Road

GRADES 6-COLLEGE, GENERAL ENRICHMENT

Writing teachers rarely have time to practice the craft of writing themselves. It's easy to lose touch with what the experience is like for our students. This workshop provides the space and time to explore writing in a way that makes us better teachers of writing. Any personal or fiction writing is appropriate for this session (narrative essays, memoir, short stories, poetry). (Note: Academic/textbook writing is not well suited to this process.)

12. I'm Reading as Fast as I Can!

GENERAL ENRICHMENT

Expand your knowledge of books on the current list of new literature. Whether reading for personal pleasure or exploring potential books to teach, we will discuss a list of books and outline their possible use. Bring your current favorite book to discuss and share with the group. Leave with a list of useful books.

13. Opera in the Real World

GENERAL ENRICHMENT

If you have ever wanted to enjoy opera, this session is for you! Let us show you how to allow opera to speak to you. Vincenzo Bellini wrote: "Through singing, opera must make you weep, shudder, die." We will cover two upcoming SF Opera shows, so after this group, you can attend and enjoy opera live, WITH prior knowledge. We love opera; you will too.

14. Do Your Own Thing! Team Planning Session

Do Your Own Thing! Team Planning Session. School or district teams can use the conference time to plan their own projects or Common Core implementation. Groups often find inspiration from the keynote and Around the Hearth sessions.

SATURDAY NIGHT AROUND THE HEARTH

TEACHING IN TROUBLED TIMES: A CONVERSATION ABOUT THE STATE OF THE PROFESSION



For many years, the Asilomar Conference featured an open conversation called “the State of the Profession,” which was usually facilitated by Miles Myers, former NCTE Executive Director. Its aim was simple: bring together those interested in the larger conversation about the issues of the day and the ideas people were discussing in their Asilomar sessions. The focus of this year’s Asilomar conference guarantees important and engaging conversations within the sessions. This open forum on Saturday evening, led by Jim Burke, will provide an opportunity to bring ideas from those different sessions into a larger conversation with each other, while also making room to discuss the challenge teachers face as they try to navigate what

Peter Boghossian and James Lindsay call “impossible conversations” and the toll these challenges can take on teachers and the profession at large.

Jim Burke is the author of more than twenty-five books about teaching, learning, and secondary literacy. He taught high school English for more than thirty years, most recently at Middle College High School, a public program located on a community college campus. His more recent efforts have focused on social emotional learning and how those ideas and strategies can help students and teachers flourish in their work.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE:

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

- 3:30-9:00pm Registration
- 4:30-5:30pm Reception
- 6:00-7:00pm Dinner
- 7:15-8:30pm General Session A w/Jamila Lyiscott
- 8:45-9:45pm GROUP SESSION #1

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

- 7:30-8:45am Breakfast
- 8:00am-5:45pm Bookstore Open
- 9:00-10:30am GROUP SESSION #2
- 10:30-10:50am Coffee in Designated Places
- 10:50-12:00pm GROUP SESSION #3
- 12:00-1:00pm Lunch
- 1:30-3:00pm GROUP SESSION #4
- 4:00-5:30pm Reception and Book Signing
- 6:00-7:00pm Dinner
- 7:15-8:30pm Around the Hearth Session I w/Jim Burke
- 8:45-10:00pm Around the Hearth Sessions II

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1

- 7:30-9:00am Breakfast
- 8:00-9:00am Bookstore Open
- 9:15-11:30am GROUP SESSION #5
- 12:00-1:00pm LUNCH

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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 PHOTOGRAPHY: Ken Lane, Ken Williams, Marlowe Boyd
 ASILOMAR 69 is brought to you by the Curriculum Study Commission

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FOR CONFERENCE UPDATES AND ADDITIONAL INFO, VISIT

curriculumstudy.org

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1st Class



The Asilomar Conference is sponsored by the Curriculum Study Commission of the Central California Council of Teachers of English, an affiliate of the California Association of Teachers of English and the National Council of Teachers of English.