



ASILOMAR **61**

THE LANGUAGE ARTS CONFERENCE

**WHY LITERATURE?
WHAT LITERATURE?
HOW?**

SEPTEMBER 28-30, 2012

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WHY LITERATURE? WHAT LITERATURE? HOW?

We ask ourselves this year's Curriculum Study Commission questions every day: Why Literature? What Literature? How? Whether we set out to explore *The Iliad*, *A House on Mango Street*, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" or online-novels.blogspot.com, we navigate district and state mandates that might challenge our preferences and passions. Within our classrooms we try to find the focus between diverse student needs and state common core standards. We measure the force of new technologies on students' habits of mind. When the literary scholar, Northrup Frye, asked Why Literature? a half century ago, he answered that literature educates the imagination, where we live every day of our lives,

in all our private and public decisions. In what ways is Frye's assumption true? Who has the answer to What Literature? And who has the best answers to How? In what ways, old and new, will we meet our students' wants and needs?

This year we offer two new ways to continue the conversations around these questions online and in person. The Asilomar tradition expands online through Twitter as we invite attendees to follow us @Asilomar61 where we consider answers to literature's why's and what's and how's, while the Let's Talk forums (also new this year) invite informal conversations around shared interests held in various settings between sessions throughout the conference.

<http://curriculumstudy.org>

twitter follow us @Asilomar61

Find us on Facebook

1. Teaching Science Fiction with Technology

GRADES 4-COLLEGE TEACHING MATERIAL PROVIDED USEFUL FOR NEW TEACHERS

For thousands of years, humanity has been captivated by the stories of the stars and of one another, but what if the natural world served as witness to the stories of humanity? Participants will use the iPad and other technology to explore storytelling through science fiction, history, science, literature, and myth. Bring iPad or similar device. **PRE-CONFERENCE READING:** *Always Coming Home* by Ursula K. Le Guin

2. Strategies for the Writing Process

GRADES 9-COLLEGE TEACHING MATERIAL PROVIDED USEFUL FOR NEW TEACHERS
ENGLISH LEARNERS DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

This session focuses on writing as a process. Participants will engage in prewriting activities, essay writing, and editing activities to incorporate new strategies into their teaching of writing. Participants are asked to bring one prewriting, one writing, and one editing activity or strategy to share with the group. Focus will be on non-fiction, essay.

3. Sweet-Bitter Eros

GRADES 9-COLLEGE GENERAL ENRICHMENT TEACHING MATERIAL PROVIDED

Desire, like the taste of honey--first sweet, then bitter--forces opposites together: love & hate, burning & freezing, pursuing & fleeing. We'll see what the poets say, and consider Sokrates' idea that Eros is a kind of thinking--and thinking a kind of Eros. It's all the puzzle of Desire organized around a "radiant absence." **PRE-CONFERENCE READING:** Visit artistsonyafe.com for additional information.

4. Recycling in the Classroom: Using Postcards and Magazines to Enhance Creativity and Analogy

GRADES 9-12 GENERAL ENRICHMENT TEACHING MATERIAL PROVIDED

In this workshop we will use postcards and magazine images to inspire our creativity in writing. We will explore how images can be used to make connections to enhance our understanding of literature and life and to write stories and poems.

5. Creative Nonfiction

GRADES 9-COLLEGE GENERAL ENRICHMENT TEACHING MATERIAL PROVIDED

What is creative nonfiction? Drawing excerpts and exercises from *Writing True: The Art and Craft of Creative Nonfiction* (Perl and Schwartz), *The Sun Magazine* and *Creative Nonfiction*, participants will have a chance to read and write place pieces, profiles, and short shorts and explore this exciting (often untaught) fourth genre.

6. Writing on the Road

GRADES 9-COLLEGE GENERAL ENRICHMENT USEFUL FOR NEW TEACHERS

Teachers of writing rarely have time to practice the craft of writing themselves. Participants select a local destination and are given the time to write. Group members respond to one another's drafts. Spend a weekend writing in the beautiful surrounding of Asilomar and brushing up on how to get students to respond to one another's writing.

7. Teaching Literature for Transformative Experience

GRADES 6-COLLEGE GENERAL ENRICHMENT

Often the encounters with literature that students take with them from school bear little resemblance to the moving, even life-changing experiences that many avid readers have undergone. This session will examine the nature of those transformative experiences and explore ways that literature classrooms can better foster such experiences with students.

8. California Young Reader Medal Books in the Classroom

GRADES 6-12 TEACHING MATERIAL PROVIDED USEFUL FOR NEW TEACHERS

Supporting the California English-Language standards while reading the CA Young Reader Medal books in your classroom is a wonderful way to promote reading for fun and pleasure. This session will focus on Middle School and Young Adult nominees for 2011-2012. Resource packets will be distributed.

9. Teaching Social Justice in Your Classroom

GRADES K-12

This interactive workshop will explore how to confidently teach socially relevant content. You will peruse films, books, and lessons accumulated by the SF Freedom School in collaboration with elementary, middle and high school teachers. This personalized workshop is designed to enhance your ELA, ELD, and SS curriculum.

10. Literature and Compradors: Writing as a Muslim

GENERAL ENRICHMENT

How do stories function in a culture? What are the purposes of telling and retelling stories? In our session we probe the question "Why Literature?" through examination of Laila Lalami's novels. Collateral readings shed light upon method, legitimacy, and strategies teachers can use to avoid selecting classroom texts that facilitate teaching "from the missionary position" by brokering the Other's culture (comprador).

11. Literacy Through Filmmaking

GRADES 6-12 DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Film's pervasiveness in society continues to expand from cinemas to even our mobile phones. With this expansion comes an opportunity to develop literacy through filmmaking. Participants will engage in film "boot-camp:" writing, shooting, and editing their own projects with final screenings and critiques on Sunday morning.

12. Kurt Vonnegut and Social Commentary

GRADES 6-12 TEACHING MATERIAL PROVIDED

Some texts help us make sense of our self and our world -- Kurt Vonnegut authored many. Join us as we revel in the works and words of an American genius whose ideas have, for generations, been an inspiring and influential voice on our path to social consciousness and commentary. Content for immediate use in the classroom will be both distributed and created by the group.

PRE-CONFERENCE READING: *Slaughterhouse-Five* and *Welcome to the Monkey House*

SPEAKERS

Nick Flynn

Nick Flynn's *Being Flynn* (Norton, 2004) won the PEN/Martha Albrand Award, was shortlisted for France's Prix Femina, and has been translated into thirteen languages. Of Flynn's second memoir, *The Ticking Is the Bomb* (Norton, 2010), the Kirkus Book Reviews reports: "A striking collection of memories that will mystify, enlighten, trouble and amaze." Flynn is also the author of a play, *Alice Invents a Little Game and Alice Always Wins* (Faber, 2008), as well as two books of poetry, *Some Ether* (Graywolf, 2000) and *Blind Huber* (Graywolf, 2002), for which he received fellowships from, among other organizations, the Guggenheim Foundation and the Library of Congress. Some of the venues in which his poems, essays, and nonfiction have appeared include the New Yorker, the Paris Review, National Public Radio's This American Life, and The New York Times Book Review. His film credits include "field poet" and artistic collaborator on the film *Darwin's Nightmare*, which was nominated for an Academy Award for best feature documentary in 2006. The film version of *Another Bullshit Night...debut*s this spring and stars Robert DeNiro as Nick's father. One semester a year, Flynn teaches at the University of Houston, and he then spends the rest of the year in Brooklyn. (www.nickflynn.org)



Leila Christenbury



Leila Christenbury, past president of NCTE, is a former high school English teacher who is Commonwealth Professor of English Education at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), Richmond. The former co-editor of The ALAN Review and the former editor of English Journal, she is the author of ten books, including *Handbook on Adolescent Literacy Research* (2009, Guilford), winner of the 2009 National Reading Conference Edward B. Fry Book Award, as well as *Writing on Demand: Best Practices and Strategies for Success* (2005, Heinemann), *Student Guide to Writing on Demand: Strategies for High Scoring Essays* (2006, Heinemann) and *Making the Journey: Being and Becoming a Teacher of English Language Arts* (third edition 2006, Heinemann). Dr. Christenbury is a frequent speaker across the country on issues of English teaching and learning. In interviews regarding English teaching, she has been featured on National Public Radio's All Things Considered, CNN, and, among others, in the New York Times, USA Today, Washington Post, Chicago Tribune, Baltimore Sun, Virginian Pilot, and U.S. News & World Report.

SATURDAY NIGHT AROUND THE HEARTH

Session A: 7:15 PM – 8:30 PM

Memoir as History Jim Burke discusses *Being Flynn* and other memoirs typically read during the middle school and high school years—why the form is so powerful and the importance of the author's role in contextualizing personal memory within the flow of society's tensions during that period.

Why Literature? Cristy Bruns discusses her book, *Why Literature?*, at a time when many people doubt its value, as well as how literature should be taught.

Technology Around the Chapel Classroom practitioners and technology experts present 21st Century approaches to classroom learning. Skype/Web-based instruction, SmartPens, the iPad Touch, and appropriate/effective uses of Twitter and Facebook are all on the table.

Session B: 8:45 PM – 10:00 PM

Technology and the English Classroom Jim McCarthy hosts a panel discussion on the use of technology in English classrooms with panelists Jim Burke, Leila Christenbury, Jacob Ruth, Michael Holmes and others.

Technology Around the Chapel Classroom practitioners and technology experts present 21st Century approaches to classroom learning. Skype/Web-based instruction, SmartPens, are both on the table. Pick your destination or visit them both.

Open Mic Reading Gary Thomas will be the moderator for those wanting to share their writing.

13. The Life and Times of Opera Star Placido Domingo

GENERAL ENRICHMENT

To Rest -- is to Rust, is the motto, of one of the most talented and loved tenors in the world today. He has been singing for more than 40 years. The Opera Group will view, listen to, and discuss some of his most note worthy roles, many of which are based on the great literature of the world. Suggestions will be offered as to how to incorporate opera into a literature program.

14. Steinbeck on the Road

GRADES 9-COLLEGE GENERAL ENRICHMENT USEFUL FOR NEW TEACHERS

Steinbeck's classics: New bottles for old wine or viewing with new lenses? We undertake a metaphoric journey with Steinbeck for a fresh look at his novels from the Salinas/Monterey area. One session will be held off grounds as the group literally "takes to the road." You will leave with a binder of handouts and lessons from a wide range of Steinbeck novels and short stories.

15. English for an American Democracy

GRADES 9-COLLEGE TEACHING MATERIAL PROVIDED USEFUL FOR NEW TEACHERS
ENGLISH LEARNERS DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

A discussion of the relationship of ELA instruction to involvement in the democratic process through consideration of the implications of the Common Core Standards for English, particularly the one related to understanding of reasoning in seminal U.S. texts including U.S. Supreme Court decisions. Dewey, Freire, Howe, and Moffett will be invoked.

16. Songs My Teacher Taught Me

GRADES 9-12 TEACHING MATERIAL PROVIDED USEFUL FOR NEW TEACHERS
DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Teaching poetry to teenagers can be a difficult task. It starts with changing the attitude and perception students have toward poetry and demonstrating for kids how poetry can function in their own lives. We will discuss strategies for making poetry more attractive, accessible and relevant to kids. We will also discuss ways to use the poetry already provided in your required textbooks and how to incorporate poems you love that may not be a part of your adopted texts. Bring your favorite textbooks!

17. From Page to Stage: Making Shakespeare Come Alive in the English Classroom

GRADES 9-12 TEACHING MATERIAL PROVIDED USEFUL FOR NEW TEACHERS
DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

This presentation will provide exceptionally effective, pragmatic, hands-on teaching methods that anyone can use to make Shakespeare's plays come alive in the English classroom. Featuring insider tips from the world of professional theatre, along with class-tested successful teaching techniques, the workshop will insure that your students end up understanding and loving the Bard's plays. Bring your acting shoes: This will be a uniquely interactive, enjoyable, and exciting workshop!

18. River of Words

GRADES 9-COLLEGE GENERAL ENRICHMENT TEACHING MATERIAL PROVIDED
USEFUL FOR NEW TEACHERS

In this poetry writing session, we will write a lot, focusing on the importance of place. Learn fun and engaging ways to spark your students' and your own imaginations by writing that informs and inspires. River of Words is a place-based K-12 program created to promote watershed awareness, literacy, and the arts.

19. RtI² in Middle and High School

GRADES 6-12 DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION GENERAL ENRICHMENT
TEACHING MATERIAL PROVIDED

RtI² involves building cohesive systems of assessment and instruction across grade levels that are designed to meet the needs of ALL students. It is important to catch students early and intervene swiftly with powerful and appropriate interventions. Participants will explore effective systems to assist struggling older students in general education courses who are not meeting with success. Topics of exploration include feedback to learners, peer support through collaborative work, and specific strategies to support students.

20. Exploring Social Media in the Classroom

GRADES 6-12 TEACHING MATERIAL PROVIDED

Students' literate behavior and social lives have made a partial migration to the Internet. This session will explore the ways in which the classroom can take advantage of students' natural interest in the online climate by creating "classrooms without walls." Participants should come equipped with a laptop, wireless connectivity, and basic experience with social media.

21. They Say, I Say and the Big "But" in Teaching Argument

GRADES 6-12 GENERAL ENRICHMENT TEACHING MATERIAL PROVIDED

USEFUL FOR NEW TEACHERS ENGLISH LEARNERS DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION
Believing and doubting are ways into thinking, says Peter Elbow, but do not forget—"Narrative is one thing, BUT argument is quite another." From Moffett to Graff to Hillocks and Toulmin, a review of distinctive ways of teaching argument.

22. More Than Soil, More Than Sky: Central California Literature in Our Lives

GRADES 6-COLLEGE GENERAL ENRICHMENT TEACHING MATERIAL PROVIDED
USEFUL FOR NEW TEACHERS DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

The spirit of place we inhabit/carry as Californians is enriched by Central California storytelling and literature via poetry, short fictions, and essays—to which we would do well to pay full attention. Please come prepared to honor and enlarge your vision of Central California writing, and to contribute and enlarge—via your own pen or pencil—your own perspective of what it means to be a California writer.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Friday, September 23

3:30-9:00 Registration
4:30-5:30 No Host Reception
6:00-7:00 Dinner* those arriving after 7pm will be too late for dinner.
7:15-8:30 General Session
Keynote Speaker: Nick Flynn
9:00-10:00 GROUP SESSION #1
10:00-11:00 Coffee in Asilomar Lodge

Saturday, September 24

7:30-9:00 Breakfast
8:00-9:00 Bookstore Open
9:00-10:30 GROUP SESSION #2
10:30-10:50 Coffee Break/ Bookstore Open
10:50-12:00 GROUP SESSION #3
12:00-1:00 Lunch
12:00-6:00 Bookstore Open
1:30-3:00 GROUP SESSION #4
4:00-5:30 No Host Reception and Book Signing
6:00-7:00 Dinner
7:15-8:30 Around the Hearth Sessions I
8:45-10:00 Around the Hearth Sessions II

Sunday, September 25

7:30-9:00 Breakfast
8:00-9:00 Bookstore Open
9:30-10:15 GROUP SESSION #5
10:45-12:00 General Session: Dr. Leila Christenbury

ASILOMAR 61 is brought to you by the Curriculum Study Commission

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