



An Honor Council of
The International Reading
Association

Nassau Reading Council Newsletter

Chartered By THE INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION
Member of New York Reading Association Volume 41•Number 2
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Hope everyone is enjoying a well-deserved break. While resting please consider joining your Newsletter team. We are in need of someone who is quite proficient with computers to join us for 2013-2014.

Your Editors,

Sarah, Susan and Nancy

Need to honor or memorialize a special person? Our Literacy cards honoring Books for Babies or International Literacy are available for purchase at the sign-in table at each workshop.

Young Author's Contest Winners

Once again Donna Tassone and her committee did a fabulous job bringing us a delightful evening at Molloy. The Young Authors proved to be not only great writers, but also entertaining presenters.

Nassau Reading Council
Young Author's Contest
2013 Award Winners
Kindergarten - Grade 12
(primary entries have been edited for spelling)

Kindergarten

Holly Emerson	Theodore Roosevelt Elem School Oyster Bay School District Ms. Ryles
Morgan Leary	Gotham Avenue School Elmont School District Mrs. Pourakis
Charlise Winter	Theodore Roosevelt Elem School Oyster Bay School District Ms. Fauvell

Grade 1

Zoe Brita	Buckley County Day School Roslyn, NY Ms. Janik
Kate Juhel	Buckley County Day School Roslyn, NY

Ms. Janik

Jaden Tucker

Buckley County Day School
Roslyn, NY
Ms. Janik

Grade 2

Danielle Davis

Buckley County Day School
Roslyn, NY
Mrs. Rosenthal

Michael Marrale

Buckley County Day School
Roslyn, NY
Ms. Janik

Regan Nolan

John Street School
Franklin Square School District
Ms. Hoford

Tara Sheridan

East Lake Elem School
Massapequa School District
Mrs. Cawley

Grade 3

Emma Ambrosino

Mandalay Elem School
Wantagh School District
Mrs. O'Callaghan

Juliana Jarvis

Buckley Country Day School
Roslyn, NY
Mrs. Uhr

Matthew Roesler

School #2
Oceanside School District
Ms. Loughman

Grade 4

Charlotte Baker

Buckley Country Day School
Roslyn NY
Mrs. Knox

Mairead Lees

School #5
Oceanside School District
Mrs. Keegan

Isabella Marrele

Buckley County Day School
Roslyn, NY
Mrs. Powers

Grade 5

Theresa Brophy

Fulton Elementary School #8
Oceanside School District
Mrs. Harris

Nicole Donelan

School #5
Oceanside School District
Mr. Memoutis

Nina Storic

Wantagh Elementary School
Wantagh School District
Ms. Weiss

Grade 6

Olivia Hagan

School #2
Oceanside School District
Mrs. Gales

Grace Anne McKenna

Wantagh Middle School
Wantagh School District
Mr. Burke

Elizabeth Rogers

East Lake School
Massapequa School District
Mrs. Dunston

Grade 7

Nefissa Kemech	Valley Stream South Jr/Sr HS Valley Stream Central HS District Ms. Bojsa
Caitlin Lopeck	Valley Stream South Jr/Sr HS Valley Stream Central HS District Ms. Bojsa
Sara Salomon	New Hyde Park Memorial HS Sewanhaka HS District Mrs. Rodriguez
Shane Samuel	New Hyde Park Memorial HS Sewanhaka HS District Mr. Di Scala

Grade 8

Karen Chen	Baldwin Middle School Baldwin School District Ms. Atlas
Maude-Laura Maurice	Lawrence Road Middle School Uniondale School District Mrs. Kirwin
Megan McDermott	Baldwin Middle School Baldwin School District Ms. Atlas
Mallory Wilson	JFK Middle School Bethpage School District Ms. Hayes

Grade 9

Brahmjot Kaur

Valley Stream South Jr/Sr HS
Valley Stream School District
Ms. Strong

Allyce Yang

Valley Stream South Jr/Sr HS
Valley Stream School District
Ms. Strong

Isabel Yeo

Valley Stream South Jr/Sr HS
Valley Stream School District
Ms. Strong

Grade 10

Daniel Brioso

West Hempstead High School
West Hempstead School District
Mr. Bonasia

Alex Medina

West Hempstead High School
West Hempstead School District
Mr. Bonasia

Paul Russell

West Hempstead High School
West Hempstead School District
Mr. Bonasia

Grade 11

Greg Caso

Locust Valley High School
Locust Valley School District
Dr. Comerford

Jeremiah Tolkin

Valley Stream South HS
Valley Stream School District
Mrs. Rudin

Grade 12

Elizabeth Gurdus

Oyster Bay High School
Oyster Bay-East Norwich SD
Mrs. Brady

Gregory Morales

Valley Stream South HS
Valley Stream School District
Ms. Butler

Alessandra Puccio

Oyster Bay High School
Oyster Bay-East Norwich SD
Mrs. Brady

Impressions of the International Literacy Conference of the Consejo de Lectura,
Guatemala City, Guatemala, February 2013
by Dr. Miriam Pepper-Sanello and Dr. Adrienne Andi Sosin

As interested literacy teacher educators and members of the Nassau Reading Council (NRC) we attended and presented a professional development workshop at the Consejo de Lectura's biennial conference held in Guatemala City, Guatemala in February 2013.

Before the Consejo conference began we visited *Safe Passage*, a non-governmental organization (NGO), that since 1999 has developed programs to help the poorest at-risk children of families working in the Guatemala City garbage dump through education. Along with educators attending the Consejo, we observed Safe Passage's early childhood classrooms, visited the before and afterschool tutoring programs and the parent education and entrepreneurship efforts, and noted best practice elements in the literacy instructional program. We were pleased to deliver to Safe Passage's school support program literacy materials written in Spanish and English donated by *Rally! Education*. We also traveled to a *Mayan Hands* weaving cooperative in the Guatemalan Highlands, where Mayan women are developing fair trade textile businesses that help them gain financial independence. The pre-conference tours provided us with greater understanding of the complexity of Guatemalan culture and the country's educational environment, and gave us greater appreciation for the work being done by these organizations.

The Guatemalan Literacy Project has been very successful in promoting literacy education and training teachers in Guatemala. Led by Marcie Mondschein for over twenty years, the GLP has recruited International Reading Association (IRA) Councils from all across the USA that send volunteer literacy specialists who offer Guatemalan teachers professional development, and sell crafts at US conferences to fund book donations for classroom libraries. Many noted IRA leaders, including Yetta and Ken Goodman and Donna Ogle, who attended this year's conference, have been strong supporters of the project from its inception. The GLP's professional development initiative strengthens the qualifications of Guatemalan teachers to teach reading and writing, and builds capacity and sustainability of the IRA Guatemalan Council, the Consejo de Lectura.

Over the time we have participated in the GLP, we are pleased to report that the Consejo has had a substantial positive impact on teaching and learning in Guatemala. For example, the reading, writing and mathematics scores of students attending the public Santa Barbara School in Guatemala City have improved significantly. Santa Barbara's principal, Zully Soberanis, visited schools in New York hosted by NRC members. Zully, who is the current President of the Consejo, recently received a leadership award from the Guatemalan Ministry of Education.

Our participation in the GLP and attendance at the International Literacy Conferences allows us to engage with Guatemalan teachers, parents, children, administrators, and officials, and learn from them what it is like to confront their difficult educational environment. Observing and coaching Guatemalan in-service and pre-service educators in urban and rural, public and private schools, and sharing literacy strategies and skills, has offered us perspective on our own practices, and has improved our understanding of how to reach across languages and cultures to share the literacy education techniques we take for granted in the USA. We are honored to represent NRC in working with the GLP.

For more information visit the Nassau Reading Council's page describing the Guatemalan Literacy Project at <http://www.nassaureadingcouncil.org/NRCGLP.html>

Teaching Content in a Common Core Era
Presented by Kim Yaris
By Susan Johnson

Kim Yaris, an independent consultant with Burkins and Yaris, Inc., conducted a most informative workshop for all participants at Molloy College. She informed us that she has “closely read” the Common Core Standards. Her definition of *close reading* is: “rereading for the purpose of recognizing details and nuances of text that may go unnoticed during the cursory first read so that new understanding and insights may reveal themselves.”

To engage her audience, she distributed handouts with 10 anchor statements for reading that are aligned with the Reading Common Core Standards. Participants were directed to work with a partner to “closely read” each statement and match it with one of ten picture items that could signify the statement. This activity demonstrated how important it is for students to be engaged in the conversations with peers to accomplish the skill of critical thinking to improve reading, writing, listening and speaking. Other benefits of conversation and collaboration are: sharing ideas, learning to use new vocabulary, and enabling students to elaborate on their thinking and build new ideas. Collaboration is very important for students to achieve the standards. Ms. Yaris encouraged teachers to provide reading activities that will offer students the opportunity to do deductive reasoning. She emphasized that Common Core teaching involves repeated modeling for students.

Participants were given a non-fiction article to read independently to demonstrate how important it is for teachers to stress to students the importance of using both text and graphics while reading non-fiction. Using both helps the synthesize information. Ms. Yaris stated that text selection – both fiction and non-fiction – is so important.

We are encouraged to visit www.burkinsandyaris.com for additional information.

Dawn Woods from Professor Mary Dickinson's class has provided us with her views of our Spring Conference.

I decided to attend The Nassau Reading Council spring conference, *Shifting Instruction to the Core*. I was impressed with the flow of the day and thoroughly enjoyed the conference. The first keynote speaker, Kelly Gallagher was a great speaker and truly enlightening. One important point he made is that teachers need to recognize the difference between *assigning* writing and *teaching* writing. He also stressed how important it is for our students to understand that literacy will open pathways for them in their future. Our students need to really grasp this concept because they will work hard if they realize there is something intrinsic for them. Kelly did point out the harsh reality that we are teaching children to be memorizers instead of thinkers. In order to change this, teachers need to do more modeling and conferencing. We need to teach students to *Read, Analyze, and Emulate* is Kelly's advice; children need to stand next to someone that knows how to do it. I liked the example he used, an executive table technician (waiter/waitress) and how they were trained. It was a great connection for me. I have a better understanding of how students need to be trained how to write. The flow of Kelly Gallagher's classroom starts with an example from the professional writer, he goes, they go. His theory is that students don't want to fail and they will try it if you go first. Let them see the teacher make mistakes and point out that this is where our best learning comes from. Another great point that he made was that kids should be writing four times as much as the teacher can grade and if the ratio is not 4:1, your students are not writing enough. It's a great point, students should be writing all the time. Writing sparks new ideas, helps generate creativity, and helps students to become problem solvers and genuine thinkers.

The first workshop I attended was *Twitter For Professional Learning...Yes, Twitter!*, with JoEllen McCarthy and Tony Sinanis. They were both so enthusiastic about their own experiences with Twitter and their presentation it was fun to watch. They taught us how to set up a Twitter account and use it in our own professional development. They talked about a number of ways to expand on our professional learning and networking with educators, administrators, and authors. They recommended a number of different Twitter sites and suggested that we follow them and branch off from there. Overall, I felt like it was an informative workshop. Twitter is a great way to collaborate with others in the education field.

For the second workshop I decided to attend Brian Heinz's, *Narrative Writing: Bring Common Core Elements to Life on the Page*. Brian shared a number of his own books and explained his experience with the writing process. He shared Writers Workshop tips for success. One point that he really stressed during his presentation was the use of strong nouns and verbs. He explained how to teach our students to avoid the three weakest verbs in the English language, *put, got, and went*; and to use verbs of precision with visual impact. He talked about sensory vocabulary and how to teach our children how to use it. He showed us how to edit out superfluous words and redundant words and to use more specific words. He also suggested using metaphor and simile to help students make connections in their writing.

Lester Laminack was the second keynote speaker and he was quite a character. I could relate to his point that by second grade students equate quality with quantity and that is just not the case. It is important for students to clarify their opinions, and for teachers to talk to them about what they value. Teach them that writing is not about pleasing someone else it is about valuing themselves as writers.

He suggested having our students write poetry all year long, to write science poems and procedure poems. Finding the core of what your trying to say is so important. Another thing I took from his lecture was the idea of a story mountain. I liked how the student had to talk about the main part of the story and work backwards. He used the example of how his sister broke her leg. He worked the story back “what happened before that...” and eventually had a theme, “my sister doesn’t ever listen.” I thought this was fantastic. He talked about making your notebook your fun book, to collect artifacts and memories, to find things that fascinate you, collect stuff, sketch scenes, list things.

Overall I found the conference was a great experience and very informative. I’m so glad I was able to attend. I feel that I learned a lot and will definitely take what I have learned into my own classroom.



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Our Professional Development Series 1 has recently ended. Series 2 will commence on February 7. We hope to see you at the workshops. We are expecting great things for Nassau Reading Council in 2013 and hope all of members who were adversely affected by Hurricane Sandy have a wonderful new year.

Your Editors,

Sarah, Susan and Nancy

Need to honor or memorialize a special person? Our Literacy cards honoring Books for Babies or International Literacy are available for purchase at the sign-in table at each workshop.

Professional Development Series

Series 2 of our Workshop schedule starts on February 7th. Make sure to visit www.mylearningplan.com if you want BOCES credit.

The dates for Series 2 are:

February 7, 2013

February 28, 2013

March 14, 2013

April 11, 2013

April 25, 2013

2013 Annual Conference

Friday, April 5, 2013

7:30 am to 2:30 pm

Melville Marriott

The Conference theme this year is: **Shifting Instruction to the Core**. We have 2 outstanding Keynote speakers lined up.

Kelly Gallagher, author of

- *Reading Reasons: Motivational Mini Lessons*
- *Comprehending Challenging Texts*
- *Readicide*

Lester Laminack, author of

- *Learning with Zachary*
- *Spelling in Use*
- *Jake's 100th Day of School*
- *Snow Day!*
- *Three Hens and a Peacock*

Ruth Culham

By Nancy Roloson

Scott Hymowech of Scholastic Books sponsored Ruth Culham to speak about Writing for our November workshop. Ruth is the President of the Culham Writing Company and the author of *6+1 Traits of Writing*. In a very entertaining, interactive presentation utilizing our audience to chant and repeat, she utilized James Dean and Eric Litwin's book, *Pete the Cat* to introduce the 4 w's of writing and the 6+1 traits.

Ruth stressed that you need to use your life as a springboard to get kids to connect to content area subjects and to write. Previously, writing was on the peripheral, but now is getting its share of time in staff development due to high-stakes testing and the Common Core Standards. Expect future trends to discuss a need for a common language of writing, called foundational commonality. NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) in October 2012 released test results for grades 8 and 11. In grade 8, 27% perform at or above proficient. Of that 27%, 3% are advanced. That leaves 73% of our eighth graders as not proficient. In 11th grade 24% are proficient, with 3% again classified advanced, leaving 76% as not proficient. SAT College Board results in 2011 were down 9 points since 2006, and were the lowest English scores since 1972.

It is time for a writing revolution. If students are to learn they must write. Writing is thinking. According to the National Commission on Writing in 2003, if students are to make knowledge their own, they must struggle with the details. Students need to wrestle with the facts, and rework raw information and dimly understood concepts into language.

The 4 w's of writing are:

- Writing process
- Writing traits
- Writing modes
- Writing workshop

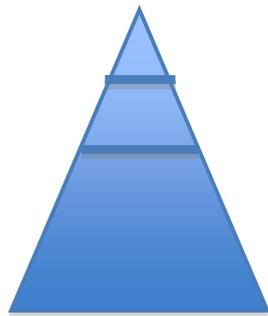
These 4 w's are integral to the common core. Modes are covered by Standard 1: Text types and purpose (Narrative, Expository, Persuasive). Standard 2: Production and Distribution of Writing encompasses process and traits. The Writing Workshop is

embedded in Standard 3: Research to Build and Present Knowledge. Here students need to look for reasoning and something they can cite. Standard 4: Range of Writing deals with process, traits and the writing workshop.

Writing Traits are the language used in the writing classroom for assessment and skills instruction. The 6+1 traits are:

- Idea
- Organization
- Voice
- Word choice
- Sentence fluency
- Conventions
- Presentation

My favorite idea was Culham's writing triangle.



The top section is a trait-based lesson.

The middle is guided writing from a writing folder.

Most writing time is spent in the bottom on Independent writing on all traits.

Nassau Reading Council's International Literacy Project with Guatemala

By Marcia Mondschein

1989: Volunteer educators from Long Island, New York began to work with volunteer Guatemalan educators to improve literacy in Guatemala.

1989-present: Groups of volunteer educators from the USA travel to Guatemala twice a year at their own expense as workshop leaders. During this trip, they, along with Guatemalan workshop leaders, provide five days of workshops for the educators in Guatemala. The Guatemalan educators, through the Consejo de Lectura, are responsible for and arrange all workshop sites, including volunteer translators. In addition, a different group of Guatemalan educators visit Long Island, NY each year to attend professional conferences, visit school districts and meet with teachers, students, and administrators to exchange ideas and practices.

1991-1993: Nassau Reading Council worked with Guatemalan volunteer educators to form the Guatemalan Reading Council, which became the Guatemalan Reading Association, fully affiliated with the International Reading Association.

1991-present: Many Guatemalan educators who have participated in this partnership have begun or returned to higher education programs and have attained degrees. Some have become teacher trainers throughout Latin America.

1991-present: Nassau Reading Council raises funds for mini-libraries by selling Guatemalan handicrafts at IRA national, state, and local conferences. All profits are used to purchase books in Spanish. The only expense paid before profit is the cost of the handicrafts.

1993-present: The GRA and NRC have co-sponsored eight international literacy conferences in Guatemala City. At each conference, 1000-1500 Guatemalan educators participate in workshops on the latest techniques and strategies in education. Presenters have traveled from Central and South America, Puerto Rico, New Zealand and 18 states in the USA. In 1999 this conference was the site of the Latin American Regional

Conference of the International Reading Association. A ninth such conference is planned for February 2013.

1996- Recipient of the Constance McCullough Award from the International Reading Association for being the most exemplary literacy project in a developing country.

Lessons Learned

Why has this international literacy project continued for 22 years, while many similar projects, and their positive effects, end after a few years? Why do hundreds of teachers in Guatemala and the USA volunteer their time and spend their own money to teach and attend the project's professional education workshops, while other projects struggle for teacher attendance? What can other educators who want to create educational change in developing countries learn from the Guatemala Literacy Project? I offer my answers to these questions, based on my 22 years of experience with this project and as one of the founders of the project, as well as interviews with several Guatemalan and American educators who work with the project.

Project Leadership

One aspect of this project that stands out as unusual and that project leaders view as an important reason for its long-term success is that all decision making with regard to the project has always been done by the Guatemalan teachers, not by the Americans.

The Guatemalan Reading Association members decide the kinds of workshops that will be offered, when and where they will be offered, who will visit the USA, and which schools receive the mini-libraries. They base their decisions on teachers' attendance at GRA meetings and their willingness to share expertise by organizing and/or giving workshops themselves. The GRA organize monthly meetings for their teachers throughout the year, and twice a year they organize the workshops by teachers from the USA. There are now 6 satellite Guatemala Reading Councils across the country modeled on the GRA.

Independence from Funding Sources

The teachers who began the Guatemalan Literacy Project decided not to seek funding or grants that would have time limits. The Guatemalan educators were familiar with exchange programs that offered materials

and training for a year or so and then simply stopped when the funding ran out. They wanted this program to be able to sustain itself and so decided to raise their own funds.

Independence from Government Sponsorship

This project is not associated with any governmental organization. The goal is simply to provide a forum for teachers to share and exchange ideas and learning techniques.

Cultural Competence

Culturally competent educators make the effort to learn the values and views of the culture in which they work. They then “provide professional services in a way that is congruent with behaviors and expectations that are normative for a given community.” (Green, 1995, 1999) It is important that we Americans adjust to the culture and realities of the people with whom we work. We are used to doing things our way and that is not appropriate when we are guests in someone else’s country, school or home.

We return to Guatemala each year because the work is so gratifying and exciting. At the end of a workshop, there is often a line of teachers waiting to talk to the presenters. The teachers often want to know how they can learn more, where and how they can get books in Spanish on the topic or they want to give a specific example in their teaching experience and discuss how to apply what they learned in the workshop to that experience. Often they wait patiently in line to say “Thank you”.

Brian Quinn

10 Great American Novels

By Nancy Roloson

Brian Quinn, Professor at Alfred University and Rockville Centre resident, presented at our workshop series to discuss the classics. According to Brian, the classics stand up against the test of time to show what Americans are. To understand what makes Americans an American we have to recognize that our hemisphere is different from Europe and Asia. Our history and geography make us different. We were the first country to break away. The United States developed within a realm of themes. The themes we care about make us different. These themes were dependent upon our environment, both physical and political. These themes Americans care about are reflected in the best of our long literature.

Three overarching themes are reflected in our great literature. The best novels take up all 3 themes. These themes are:

1. **Nature:** man vs. nature
man in harmony with nature
man trying to figure his place in nature
2. **The Individual:** how to live in society
individual vs. society
individual working with society
3. **Racial Inequalities**

Of choosing the ten greatest American novels, the rule was that the novel had to be by an American author, but didn't necessarily have to be set in America.

This is Brian's frequently changing list of the best:

10. **The Good Earth** by Pearl S. Buck

First woman to receive the Nobel Prize in literature, Buck set her novel in China. This novel is part of a trilogy. She saw the Chinese as people first (individuals) by writing with compassion and passion. Her focus was on one strong woman.

9. ***My Antonia*** by Willa Cather

Antonia is an immigrant in Nebraska who in her quest to become a homesteader, is rebellious and fights for her own individuality.

8. ***The Grapes of Wrath*** by John Steinbeck

7. ***The Old Man and the Sea*** by Ernest Hemmingway

6. ***Absalom, Absalom*** by William Faulkner

What is truth?

5. ***The Scarlet Letter*** by Nathaniel Hawthorne

4. ***Uncle Tom's Cabin*** by Harriet Beecher Stowe

This novel shows what slavery is doing to slave owners as well as slaves.

3. ***The Invisible Man*** by Ralph Ellison

2. ***Moby Dick*** by Herman Melville

1. ***Huckleberry Finn*** by Mark Twain

Brian choose number 1 based on Huck's line "*Alright then, I'll go to Hell.*" Brian believes this is the most important line ever written. At that time people believed Hell was truly eternal damnation. Huck was willing to endure it for the sake of his friend, Jim.

Brian closed his presentation by reminding us that "all literature should show us that we need to get bravery."