

issue and plan to attend a few.

And **OPI has PD resources** as well as help for online learning as does **Montana PBS**.

Your Editor,
Katie Kotynski

MFPE Fall Conference Changes and News:



Master Storyteller Richard Fifield to Present on Memoirs in Virtual Fall Conference

Richard Fifield, author of *The Flood Girls* and *The Small Crimes of Tiffany Templeton* will be the MATELA keynote speaker for the MFPE Educators' Conference Oct. 15.

During his recent conversation on the Montana Public Radio show *The Write Question*, host Sarah Aronson praised Fifield as “a master storyteller and fierce defender of arts in Montana” and said, “In addition to being a novelist, he designs spaces for underrepresented voices to be heard: for silence to be broken.” (You can listen to their entire, engaging conversation [here](#).)

young writer.” The starred review from Kirkus stated, “[*The Flood Girls*] includes barfights and AA meetings, a parade, a wedding, and a black bear, all of which Fifield juggles beautifully...The Wild West earns its name all over again in this lovable chronicle of small-town insanity.”

In *The Small Crimes of Tiffany Templeton*, Tiffany is the “toughest girl in the trailer park,” clad in a big leather jacket and a calloused exterior. The whole town knows she has just returned from reform school, but the townspeople don’t know that she keeps a typewriter case full of secrets behind the laundromat. As her current and past story unfold, the reader gets to know a cast of quirky characters not to be forgotten.

In his keynote address, Fifield will discuss the power of creative writing and memoir in the classroom environment. Through providing a non-judgmental environment for all students to be authentic and vulnerable, teachers can assign writing exercises that produce true respect and enhance communication.

Fifield will trace his own journey from student to writer to teacher and how creative expression helped him and others understand their past, remove stigma and shame, and build a new kind of self-worth through the power of sharing their stories.

His session will be live streamed at 11 a.m. Oct. 15.

Conference Moves to Digital Format

With this coming school year, there is much that is uncertain, but one thing that is certain is the MFPE Educators’ Conference on Oct. 15-16. ! In case you haven’t yet heard, the conference will be virtual this year and will still feature the same high quality professional development as in the past. The bonus is that no travel will be required for you to earn your renewal units and engage in professional growth.

As in past years, participants will need to register and pay the \$30 fee. (Soon, you will be receiving an email from MFPE concerning logistical details.). Registration will also be available at the below link in September:

<https://www.mfpe.org/edconference/>

Sessions will be offered throughout Thursday and Friday, with the first sessions at 8 a.m. and the last ones at 4 p.m. Across all content areas, over 175 sessions are scheduled, so there will be a lot to choose from no matter your interest. Most will be videos that include a question and answer session with the presenter, while the keynotes will be livestreamed videos.

How will you do the conference this year? Snuggled at home in your pajamas with your favorite beverage? Gathered with friends to view and learn together (but still socially distanced)? Logged into a few sessions in between autumn adventures? Use your imagination and take advantage of this new-style learning opportunity.

By Dana Haring, Treasurer and Conference Chair

Wynhoff Olsen Keynote: Listening to Images to Showcase Understanding, Disrupt Misconceptions



Writing Projects Under the Big Sky is proud to announce that Allison Wynhoff Olsen, Associate Professor of English Education at MSU-Bozeman and Director of the Yellowstone Writing Project, will present a keynote address during the MFPE Educators' Conference Oct. 15 at 2 p.m. This talk will not only examine images but also introduce the use of the creative and revision processes that add nuance to writing and build community.

Wynhoff Olsen's address, entitled "Listening to Images: Creating Disruptions and Building Community," will explore how images tell stories. Those who engage with her online will also consider how images showcase understanding and may be used to disrupt misconceptions.

Finally, Wynhoff Olsen will note how telling stories through and with images allows youth to identify as artists, thereby building a more robust community of writers.

"As humans we empathize through stories, and images foster human connectivity and represent understandings of and experiences in place. Teachers can empower students by listening with their eyes and their ears," Wynhoff-Olsen said.

The keynote will be offered remotely via live streaming.

By Donna Miller, Writing Project Liaison & Awards Chair

MATELA Complete Session Schedule

Subscribe	Past Issues		Translate ▼	RSS
	Educational Outreach at the C.M. Russell Museum	Melissa Werber	9 a.m.	
	Formative ELA Resources- Tools for Teachers	Marisa Graybill	10 a.m.	
	KEYNOTE: I See You: Creating Safe Spaces For Diverse Voices and Experiences	Richard Fifield	11 a.m.	
	Satellite Shakespeare	Jeff Ross	12 p.m.	
	Crafting Historical Narrative, Primary Sources: The Cause, Revolutionary War Fiction	Jean O'Connor	1 p.m.	
	FRIDAY			
	Reading Images and Multimodal Texts in English Language Arts Classrooms	Stephanie Reid	8 a.m.	
	Prosaic and Poetic Blending of Argument in Sappho and Catullus	Jeff Ross	9 a.m.	
	Giving Voice to Students: Young Adult Literature in Practice	Rebecca Chatham	10 a.m.	
	Reading Ain't Fun When I Have to Do a Packet!	Latimer Hoke	11 a.m.	
	Test Writing is ONE Genre - Let's Teach Some Others!	Rebecca Chatham	12 p.m.	
	Digital Note-taking in English and Social Studies: Boon or Bane?	Dana Haring	1 p.m.	
	Evidence-based Narratives: Close Reading Meets Creative Writing	Dana Haring	3 p.m.	

NCTE Fall Conference Also Moves to Online

NCTE Annual Convention Goes Virtual

In addition to our Montana educators' conference, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) announced that its annual meeting, scheduled for Nov. 19-22 at the Colorado Convention Center in Denver, will move online amid continuing safety concerns and closings due to the COVID-19 pandemic. By state order, the Colorado Convention Center will remain staged as a temporary field hospital to treat COVID-19 patients through the rest of the year. [Read More.](#)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Lori Bianchini, NCTE Meetings & Events, Annual2020@ncte.org; 217-278-3611



IN RESPONSE TO GEORGE FLOYD'S DEATH

NCTE Conference on College Composition:

'We Demand that Teachers Stop Using Academic Language and Standard English as the Accepted Communicative Norm, which Reflects White Mainstream English!'

the statement. We see it as presenting a set of actions for us to enact, not just encouraging words. I offer this cover letter to encourage you to view it in the same actionable light.

Vershawn Ashanti Young
Chair, CCCC 2020

we demand

teachers stop using academic language and standard English as the accepted communicative norm, which reflects White Mainstream English!

teachers stop teaching Black students to code-switch and teach Black students about anti-Black linguistic racism and white linguistic supremacy instead!

political discussions and praxis that center Black Language as teacher-researcher activism for classrooms and communities!

teachers develop and teach Black Linguistic Consciousness that works to decolonize the mind (and/or) language, unlearn white supremacy, and unravel anti-Black linguistic racism!

Black dispositions in the research and teaching of Black Language!

This list of demands was created by the 2020 Special Committee on Composing a CCCC Statement on Anti-Black Racism and Black Linguistic Justice, Or, Why We Cain't Breathe!

Best Practices for Teaching Writing Online: NCTE's Conference on College Composition

"According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education's* report *Online Learning* (2011), the number of postsecondary students taking at least one online course has tripled in the past ten years (p. B20). In line with overall trends in online and distance learning in general, exponential growth of online writing instruction (OWI) is in evidence, and the literature surrounding it has begun to proliferate (OWI Bibliography, 2009; Warnock, 2009).

"With the rise in Internet-based and Intranet-based courses as well as an abundance of mobile mechanisms for teaching and learning, online courses increasingly are a primary means of instruction for many first-year

encompassing statement about how best to teach writing online." [Read more](#)

From: <https://cccc.ncte.org/>



Board Member's Book, 'Honoring Identities' Due Out in November

Book hopes to build culturally responsive mindsets and ensure all students feel that they have a place at the learning table



I am happy to announce that I have a book coming out in November. Published by Rowman and Littlefield, *Honoring Identities* argues that creating culturally responsive learning communities is a process which begins with building community, cultivating certain student and teacher dispositions, nurturing social justice, leveraging the power of talk and dialogic exchange, using Cultural Identity Literature (CIL) to build bridges and to normalize difference, and fostering a culture of civil discourse.

Although the target audience for *Honoring Identities* is educators, its ideas transfer to any community of learners: employees in the workplace or a group of students in a classroom. After all, the managers of employees are interested in some of the same results that concern educators. Both business managers and teachers set expectations and endeavor to ensure that talent is developed through progressively more challenging and meaningful tasks. In that development process, leaders wish to boost engagement levels and reward performance while also seeking strategies for how to take greater advantage of what people already do well.

As teachers navigate these steps, I offer GREEN APPLE. This acronym is a learning tool that enables its users to call to mind the 11 common determinants of cultural identity: Gender Expression, Religion/Spiritual Beliefs, Ethnicity and Race, Economic/Socioeconomic Status, Age, Place (geography and national territory), Perception of Belonging, Language/Discourse Community, and Exceptionality—from gifted to challenged.

—even protected or private, so leaders will do well to start with something already revealed and to remember to navigate the future with respectful interaction.

If teachers can hitch novel information to something already known, then they can mitigate much of the discomfort initiated by a new data encounter. Therefore, knowing the people with whom we work and building community with them are paramount. In this process, the formula ABC⁴ can remind us of crucial learning steps. Because we want learners to feel that they belong in the learning space or workplace, we affirm their identity and build community in the process of cultivating critical, creative, and curious thinkers. Whether we work with students or employees, asking them about their weekends, their families, and their hobbies, and sharing tidbits about our own will aid the process of building trusting relationships. Such engagement further allows us to interact more effectively because it sends a message that we care.

ABC⁴

Honoring Identities provides both theory and practice to advance the important mission of building culturally responsive mindsets and to ensure that all students feel like they have a place at the learning table. CIL reflects and honors the lives of all young people, and GREEN APPLE questions focus their reading on key facets of identity, multiplying the effectiveness of the reading experience. GREEN APPLE questions also provide a lens for anyone else wishing to select CIL—whether librarians, humanities or social science instructors, or language arts teachers. The questions not only illuminate different perspectives of a text but make readers aware that individual experiences color the reading of a text.

While the book would be an ideal professional development book for any educator, whether preservice, veteran, or somewhere in between, it would also make an insightful text in a teaching methods course, advanced practicum course, or any education course focused on building culturally responsive learning communities or teaching the diverse child. University teacher preparation programs, as well as English language arts teachers who are looking for concrete steps in improving culturally sustaining pedagogy will find the book useful.

Throughout *Honoring Identities*, I thread the theme that learning about others has potential to make our eyes see differently. Looking beyond the self and one way of knowing and believing to accept alternatives enables us to see more deeply and completely. When we withhold judgment and are curious about unfamiliarity and difference, we adopt the eyes of an explorer. These eye-opening experiences may inspire us to speak out about diversity issues and to interrupt the fear that results in discriminatory attitudes and actions.

With the help of *Honoring Identities*, teachers can construct and put into practice a variety of approaches to the texts they and their future students will read. Whether teachers use the GREEN APPLE questions, a Pause and Ponder Moment, or one of the other critical thinking strategies presented in this book to facilitate cross-cultural comprehension, they are training themselves and their students to read beneath layers built by preference and familiarity.

By Donna Miller, Writing Project Liaison & Awards Chair





Illustrations by Matt Chase. Source photographs courtesy the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, C. M. Bell Studio Collection

Are You with 'Em or Again; 'Em:

Review of 'All My Pronouns'; How I learned to live with the singular they

By [Anne Fadiman](#)

Anne Fadiman's essay "All My Pronouns; How I learned to live with the singular *they*" may have personal and pedagogical use for English Language Art Teachers.

diction, multiple “sides” of the pronoun controversies, and varied syntax would doubtless allow lively discussion. Her claims about the influence of college students’ language might help generate interest in (y)our students: “College students are bellwethers—or, if you’re a prescriptivist, canaries in the coal mine. Once a new usage becomes widespread on campus, in a few years it’s widespread everywhere.”

Combined with the recent position statement about linguistic justice from the Conference on College Composition and Communication (<https://cccc.ncte.org/cccc/demand-for-black-linguistic-justice>), this article positions linguistic and rhetorical issues in current affairs: social, academic, political, ethical.

A snippet from the beginning of the essay: “As a junior, while taking my advanced non-fiction writing class, my advisee began using *they/them* pronouns and announced a new name—or, rather, a new initial—on Facebook: ‘So I’ll be going by M, because inside the letter M is a boy & a woman, the two of us together.’”

More simply put, I think you’ll find the article thought-provoking.

The *Harper’s* site allows anyone to read the full article, at least while the August 2020 issue is current: <https://harpers.org/archive/2020/08/all-my-pronouns-the-singular-they>.

By Curtis W. Bobbitt, University of Providence Liaison



Montana PBS: *Learn from Home Curriculum Returns Sept. 8*

resources.

This new schedule begins Sept. 8 and continues through the end of the semester Dec. 18.

MontanaPBS will dedicate its daytime weekday schedule to Montana state standards-aligned educational programming provided by MontanaPBS and the Office of Public Instruction. The 6:30 am to 5:30 pm weekday schedule includes specific blocks of time for pre-K through 8th grade levels and covers subjects including language arts, social studies, science and math. MontanaPBS' regular primetime schedule is not affected by this change.

"We have spent our summer learning from and reflecting on our spring Learn at Home initiative so we could bring back an even better version of the program this fall," said Director of Education Nikki Vradenburg. "We're very honored to provide educators and families around the state with free online and over-the-air resources to support their learning endeavors this fall, in whatever form that takes."

MontanaPBS has curated corresponding free digital content for the Learn at Home programming in order to better support teachers navigating this new learning landscape. Aligned to the same Montana content standards and topic areas as the broadcast service, MontanaPBS has created and shared the following free resources for teachers:

- **Distance Learning Webpage:** MontanaPBS has published a webpage that will include the weekly broadcast schedules (with embedded links in each PDF that point to free digital resources), as well as articles and activities created and/or vetted by the MontanaPBS Education team, other public media organizations and other trusted education partners. Visit montanapbs.org/learnathome.
- **Digital Media Collections:** View and download full resource collections on PBS LearningMedia that correspond with the TV broadcast schedule. Collections include curated media and lesson plans, sorted by grade level and subject area. Visit montana.pbslearningmedia.org.
- **Unplugged Learning Menus:** MontanaPBS created learning menus for K-12 students to be used for home learning. All of the learning menus feature activities that do not require technology or an internet connection. These menus can be downloaded from the distance learning webpage at montanapbs.org/learnathome.

By Nikki Vradenburg, Director of Education | nikki@montanapbs.org and Laura Dick, Digital Content & Marketing Manager | laura@montanapbs.org



opi.mt.gov

Montana
Office of Public Instruction
Superintendent Elsie Arntzen

Online? Hybrid? In School?

Teaching in the Time of Covid

Fall is definitely bringing unique challenges for educators. Many school districts are including remote learning in their daily school schedules with hybrid models of instruction or remote learning models of instruction, or even, traditional instruction with students and teachers in classrooms each day.

This uncertainty brings extra worry and stress to all of us teachers. The Montana Office of Public Instruction has some helpful online resources for instructors to help alleviate the worry and concern. These resources are designed to help teachers take care of themselves, their instruction, and their students in these challenging times.

- Find **ways to use technology efficiently to make instruction reachable**. Join OPI for online sessions that not only support remote learning but also share many other wonderful resources. Find these resources and links to the online learning support at <http://opi.mt.gov/Educators/Teaching-Learning/Academic-Remote-Learning-Resources>
- Go to the **Teacher Learning Hub** for renewal units and for helpful PD in a variety of content areas. *Resilience: Classroom (and online!) Strategies to Help Students* is coming soon!

A new **English Language Arts Instructional Coordinator is coming on board soon!** An introduction to this specialist will be in the next *Update* issue.

By Christy Mock-Stutz, ELA Instructional Coordinator, Montana Office of Public Instruction



Copyright © 2020 Montana Association of Teachers of English Language Arts, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

