



COLLEGE ASSOCIATION FOR LANGUAGE AND LITERACY NEWSLETTER

www.callontario.org

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We are a professional organization of college educators who teach language and literacy skills to students in the Ontario college system.



CALL Conference
May 30, 31, June 1, 2018
St. Clair College
Centre for the Arts
Windsor, Ontario

In This Issue

- Movement in the Classroom
- Pronoun Politics
- Academic Freedom
- Conference 2018

College Association for Language and Literacy

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Conference 2018

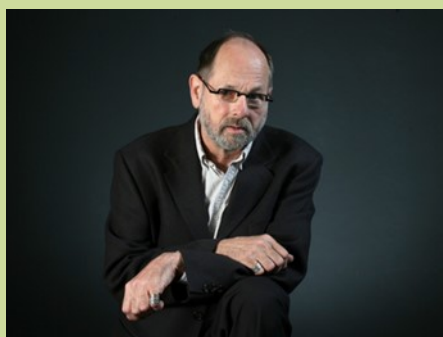
At

St. Clair College
Centre for the Arts

**May 30-31, June 1
Windsor, Ontario**

Keynote Address by

Marty Gervais



Marty Gervais is an award-winning Canadian journalist. He is also a photographer, poet, playwright, historian, editor, and teacher.

**Stay tuned to
www.callontario.org
For more details and
registration information.**

Conference 2018

By Randy Hamelin, St. Clair College

St. Clair College Centre for the Arts is proud to host the *2018 College Association for Language and Literacy* Conference. Our campus conference centre is located on the beautiful Windsor downtown waterfront.

Joining our conference this year as our keynote speaker will be award-winning journalist, poet, photographer, playwright, historian, editor, and teacher, Marty Gervais.

Gervais has been the recipient of nearly 20 newspaper awards for journalism. He received a B.A. from the University of Guelph and an M.A. from the University of Windsor, where he studied writing under the celebrated Canadian novelist and short story writer, Morley Callaghan.

He has written more than a dozen books of poetry, two plays, and a novella. His most successful work, *The Rumrunners*, a book about the prohibition period, was a Canadian bestseller in 1980. It was re-released in the late 2000s and once again became a bestseller.

Equally successful was *Seeds In The Wilderness*, a book of essays based on interviews Gervais conducted with such notable religious leaders as Mother Theresa, Bishop Desmond Tutu, Hans Kung, and Terry Waite. With this latter book, Gervais photographed many of these world leaders. Marty Gervais is also the founder and publisher of Black Moss Press.

Our conference will include three fun-filled days of learning opportunities, networking sessions, and of course, lots of delicious food prepared by our culinary experts.

Other events and attractions within walking distance include Caesars Windsor Casino, Adventure Bay Water Park, Art Gallery of Windsor, various river boat tours, and many award winning restaurants, bars, pubs, and theaters.

We hope you join us for this exciting three days of learning, fun, and relaxation to finish off your school year. For additional information, scheduling updates, and registration, please visit our website at www.callontario.org.

The Power of Movement in the College Classroom

By Erica Kelly, Lambton College

During the most recent CALL Conference, I shared some thoughts on the benefits of encouraging students to move around the college classroom. While students are often initially reluctant when I tell them they'll be expected to get up and out of their seats, they usually warm up fairly quickly, and by the end of the hour, they seem to be having fun—they're talking to each other, they're talking about the content, and I leave feeling like we've had a good class.

Research on teaching suggests that "getting students out of their seats ... encourage[s] new levels of self-discovery and self-expression" (Griss, 2013). In other words, movement can facilitate learning for students, both about the subject matter and about themselves.

Below, I've briefly summarized a few of the exercises I've tried in class. They're common practices, but I've tried to adapt them to suit the communications classroom. I tailor each of these activities to suit the space I'm in and the students I'm with: if someone has mobility issues, we adjust to keep things inclusive.

1. "Stand where you Stand"

Label one side of the room "strongly agree" and the other side "strongly disagree." Ask a question of the class, and invite students to demonstrate their answer by moving around the room. In a second version of this activity, I have students select a topic they'll write about as a class: I post six or seven ideas around the room, and students move to the topic of their choice. I eliminate the two that have the fewest students, and I ask those students to select again. Before students move, I ask those standing by remaining topics to share their reasons for their selection in an attempt to win over undecided classmates. We continue to discuss until we've chosen a topic (or two). By the time we've arrived at a topic, students have engaged in debate, and they feel invested in the final decision.

2. Gallery Walk

Students bring in a research question. At this point in the term, they have already selected a topic for their final assignment. Each student posts a piece of paper to a wall of the classroom. Students write their research question at the top of their page, and as they write, we review the components of a strong research question. I ask them to list two things they already know about their topic and two things they'd like to know. They then move to the neighbouring paper, and at each new page, they read what's already there, add a question of their own, and put a checkmark beside the question that interests them most. They move around the room until they're back to their own papers, and I lead them through some reflection on what others have contributed. Ideally, this exercise helps students find their interest and focus within a broad topic, and it helps them to find subtopics and start to think about organizational strategies.

3. Connotation Game

As a class, we brainstorm synonyms for "job." If students are stuck, I explain the purpose of a thesaurus and invite them to use their devices to find synonyms. As students yell out synonyms for the word "job," I write each on a separate piece of paper. I hand the paper (and a piece of tape) to the student who contributed the word. I then define denotation and connotation. I draw a line on the board across the front of the room, with a positive symbol at one end and a negative symbol at the other. I invite the students to stick their word to the scale at the front of the class where they feel it belongs. When all the words are placed, we discuss them as a class, noting whether there are any words we'd rearrange. I remind them that we don't have to agree—there is some general consensus, but also personal/regional/cultural variation. Words also shift over time, and these changes keep language interesting.

Continued on page 4



A Message from the Interim President

Rhonda Dynes
Mohawk College



Fall was just a wee bit busy around the college system and the same was true at CALL. With a lot of positive change now in the air, it means a lot happening behind the scenes for CALL. Here is a little update, and a request from me.

At the 2017 Conference, we introduced MOBILE CALL. You'll be happy to know that our first MOBILE CALL visit is in the works. Thanks to a recent job switch from our own dear (former CALL President) John Stilla, I reached out to see if he would like to be the first to have a visitor with his faculty. A survey is going to go out to them soon to see topics of interest. Once I get those, either myself or another board member will head out to spread the word about CALL and share some stories.

The first issue of the CALL journal is waiting an end of April/May submission date and we at CALL are determined to get it up and running. If you are interested in submitting, you can email me anytime at rhoda.dynes@mohawkcollege.ca. We have five articles on the go: some from partial load faculty and part time students who either have or who are working on PhDs and want some experience with publishing in a journal. We are still looking for some creative submissions as well, so let me know if you're still interested.

And, as for John Stilla moving into a Past President role due to his job change, I feel both congratulatory and sad. John has been a wonderful friend to CALL and a wonderful presence to have on the board. Thank goodness he will be a friend to CALL as we move into new territory. Congratulations John!

I hope you are having a productive and inspiring Winter Semester and I look forward to seeing you in Windsor for the 2018 CALL Conference this spring! It may just be the necessary retreat and time to reflect that we all need.

The CALL Newsletter publishes in the spring and fall each year. Do you have any ideas, thoughts, or reflections about teaching language and literacy in the Ontario college system? Contributions to the CALL Newsletter are welcome. Short articles (500-700 words), infographics, photos etc. about best practices, classroom experiences, current academic issues, or other related topics can be sent to

callontario.newsletter@gmail.com

Movement, continued from p. 3.

If you have additional exercises that encourage students to get up and out of their seats, please let me know. I'd like to incorporate more of these moments in my teaching. I find these activities help me to demonstrate and celebrate the multiplicity of perspectives in the room, reminding students that it's rewarding to talk and to listen together. *Erica.Kelly@lambtoncollege.ca*

Griss, S. (2013, March 20). The Power of Movement in Teaching and Learning. *Education Week*. Retrieved from http://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2013/03/19/fp_griss.html

PRONOUNS: THE BROADER DIVERSITY ISSUE

By Dr. Karen Pike, Conestoga College

Several years ago, I had the opportunity to listen to a series of lectures by John McWhorter, the author of *Our Magnificent Bastard Tongue: The Untold History of English*. I came away marvelling at the language's capacity to adapt to the diversity of its users in two key ways. English simplifies its grammar to accommodate new users, and it increases its vocabulary to reflect the experience of speakers from various cultures. I believe these two strategies are both in play in the changes to pronoun use on campus and in the workplace: specifically, the singular *they* and the proliferation of gendered pronouns.

As we witness this two-fold process of simplifying grammar and increasing vocabulary, if we find ourselves experiencing some trepidation, perhaps we should temper our response with a serious look at our role as educators on college campuses. The majority of us are not teaching Creative Writing. Neither is it our job description to spearhead a social movement. Rather, we are teaching our students to write practical messages in applied fields as effectively, simply, and correctly as possible. What most helps our students to do this? Many of our students are ELL. Do they benefit from knowing that Shakespeare, Chaucer, and Austen all used the singular *they* but we cannot? No. Should we insist on *he or she* when our students can bring us newspaper articles, company memos, and advertising copy that all use the singular *they*? Probably not. Many faculty already seem to agree – if we want our students to write simply and effectively, they need to use the grammar that is common to the workplace. *They* it is. The OED refers to this acceptable use of *they* as the “third person plural singular” (“They” 2017), and the American Dialect Society approves (Bennett, 2016).

Frankly, the reason English speakers all used *he* or *him* to refer to an ungendered antecedent before the feminist revolution was not just sexism – it was English trying to simplify itself. While the switch to “he or she” had important social implications, the added complexity simply went against our language's tendency to simplify its grammar. People started “erring” with *they* and *you* when the antecedent was of unknown gender. The error was a call for simplification.

So, what do we do with the other drive towards a diversity of vocabulary? The lists of pronouns being used on campuses can include anywhere from 3 to 70 different pronouns to reflect various gender identities. How do we simplify grammar when vocabulary growth is happening to a key grammatical component like the pronoun? Again, the singular *they* comes to the rescue. With its implicit plurality, it can encompass all of the pronouns, just as it has recently been encompassing both *he* and *she*. Whether or not the newly coined pronouns catch on is not our decision to make. The ever-changing, diversity-loving-but-always-simplifying English language has it covered.

Bennett, J. (2016, Jan. 30). *She? Ze? They? What's In a Gender Pronoun*. Retrieved September 6, 2017 from <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/31/fashion/pronoun-confusion-sexual-fluidity.html>

They. (2017). In *Oxford English Dictionary*. Retrieved September 6, 2017, from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/they>

Academic Freedom and Precarious Work in Ontario Colleges

By Jack Wilson, Algonquin College

On September 14, Ontario college faculty provided a strong strike mandate to their bargaining team coincidental with the 50th anniversary of the community college system. Faculty provided an even stronger mandate to the bargaining team on November 16 when they rejected the Forced Offer of The Council. Several issues were at play, but chief among them were academic freedom and the precarious nature of work for contract faculty. December's arbitration award by William Kaplan, while did not completely resolving these issues, has, nonetheless, pointed the way forward that will see the most gains for college faculty in decades of bargaining.

Until the past decade, academic freedom was assumed to be a given by most faculty at Ontario colleges. However, successive collective agreements have consistently stated that it is academic managers who have final say when it comes to academic decision-making; the fact is most managers have chosen not to exercise that right, and faculty have had academic freedom by default. However, an increasing number of faculty have discovered to their bewilderment and consternation that decisions are being made by managers about their programs and courses that are unsound pedagogically and harmful to the quality of the programming they seek to deliver to their students.

Stories abound from that of managers dictating the choice of resources—at Algonquin, faculty found themselves obliged for a time to use eTexts whether they were appropriate or not—to managers changing final grades without input or permission from faculty, to managers changing evaluation factors from essay/project to multiple choice in order to jam more courses onto a SWF. At my home college, an idea was purportedly floated by one manager to lower the pass rate to 40% in the name of “improving retention.”

As guardians of the quality of our programs, faculty have quite rightly voiced their need for academic freedom: subject matter experts should have the ability to make the appropriate decisions to maintain the quality of their courses and programs. That faculty in community colleges in other provinces, and university professors in every province, enjoy that right should belie any notion that what is being sought is either radical or unfeasible.

What the Kaplan Award has done is to establish academic freedom as a contractual obligation not a college policy that can be changed at whim. The new language under the heading “Copyright and Academic Freedom” makes it clear that all faculty have the right “to enquire about, investigate, pursue, teach and speak freely about academic issues without fear of impairment to position or other reprisal.”

As JP Hornick, the Chair of the Bargaining Team notes, “This change is nothing less than historic. It is a watershed moment for the colleges that will be truly transformational in the years ahead.”

The second issue at play has been the precariousness of the work of contract faculty. Every four months, thousands of contract faculty have to reapply for work and, in some cases, such as the

(Continued on next page)

(Academic Freedom, con't)

metro Toronto area, they must try to piece work from several colleges in order to maintain a semblance of a livelihood. In addition to not having a guarantee of work beyond four months at a time, many are provided little in way of material support: no office, no phone, no place to meet students out of class. They know they are at the mercy of unhappy students, and with the full knowledge that the college wants high retention, they may feel obliged to evaluate more generously so as to minimize student complaints.

None of this is a recipe for maintaining quality education for our students, and with the imbalance of contract to full-time faculty (by some estimates, the imbalance is **over 70%** in favour of contract faculty), the college system is exploiting an underclass of college workers while short-changing the very students the colleges purport to support in getting a quality education.

However, under the new collective agreement, “a new multi-stakeholder government-facilitated task force will be established to make recommendations on faculty complement, precarious work, college funding, student success, collegial governance, and other issues critical to the success of the college system. This is a serious forum in which faculty will be able to make their voices heard. The government has committed to considering the task force’s recommendations at the Cabinet level,” says Hornick.

In the months ahead, it will be up to faculty then to monitor the progress of the Task Force, to provide input where and when warranted, and to respond to the findings of the Task Force when it makes its interim report May 18. Then we may have something to truly celebrate on the 50th anniversary of the community college system.



Call for Proposals

Faculty are invited to submit proposals for presentations, panels, workshops, or discussion groups for the 2018 CALL Conference, May 30, 31, and June 1. This year's theme is

Identity:

Who are we? Who R U? Who M I?

Here are possible topics to consider: #metoo, identity before and after the strike, communications and consent, diversifying faculty, teaching at multiple colleges, living contract-to-contract, student identity in the classroom, teaching pronouns, diversity in the classroom, creative writing, meditation, self care for faculty, how to self-advocate, conflict resolution, engaging students, politics in the classroom, including international students within the class experience, challenges for ESL faculty.

Proposals should be 150-200 words, and should include the title, style/format, and length of presentation (30, 60, or 90 minutes), as well as a brief bio of the presenter(s). Also note any AV requirements. Submit proposals to rhamelin@stclaircollege.ca by February 28, 2018.

Coming soon: The CALL Journal

THE JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE AND LITERACY IN ONTARIO COLLEGES

The CALL Journal is now inviting submissions of articles on any aspect of language and literacy-based education in the Ontario college sector including theory, pedagogy, curriculum, leadership, or policy.

It is our goal to create a contributor-paid, peer-reviewed online journal of the highest calibre to highlight the important work being done by our peers and researchers in higher education language and literacy instruction. Articles might be research based, experiential, philosophical, or descriptive. Submissions may be in English or French.

Articles should be 2500 words or more. Submissions for our inaugural issue should be sent to Rhonda.dynes@mohawkcollege.ca as either a Word document or rtf. Style documents are available on the CALL website.



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