



COLLEGE ASSOCIATION FOR
LANGUAGE AND LITERACY
NEWSLETTER
www.callontario.org

Volume 1

Spring 2017



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



CALL Conference
June 1-2, 2017
George Brown College
Waterfront Campus
Toronto

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A Message from the President

John Stilla, Humber College



I am thrilled to introduce you to the inaugural College Association for Language and Literacy (CALL) newsletter!

As you know, CALL is an organization of language and literacy educators from across Ontario's twenty-four public colleges. Our aim is to promote the teaching of language and literacy skills across college curricula and to provide the professional development opportunities necessary to excel in such teaching. No matter what context you teach in—composition, literature, English for Academic Purposes, workplace writing skills, general education, or learning centres—you are a member of CALL and play a key role in teaching the most valuable transferrable skills post-secondary students need to succeed not only in their careers but also as active citizens of their communities.

CALL is a by-faculty, for-faculty organization, which means it is also a forum to engage in critical discussions about the role of language and literacy in the Ontario college system. We need to work together to continue advocating for what we do, and we need to always be thinking of ways to reinvent ourselves as our teaching contexts continue to change.

The need for consistent reflection and reinvention is why our annual conference is so important. It is the one time of the year when we can all meet face to face to engage in formal and informal discussions that can lead to significant innovations, as well as to unforeseen solutions to problems we may be currently trying to solve by ourselves. The theme of this year's conference, *Divergent Thinking in the College Communications Classroom*, perfectly captures not only what we need to be teaching our students, but what we need to be doing as educators as well. I hope to see you at George Brown College from June 1 to June 2, 2017, to engage in meaningful discussions surrounding divergent thinking and the teaching of language and literacy.

Of course, our communication with one another needs to continue beyond the all-too-rare times we can meet as a large group. Therefore, the CALL Board of Directors is also launching two significant initiatives. This newsletter is the first. It will provide a forum for faculty to write short articles about topics that are of interest and importance to all of us, and it will be distributed to the membership three times each year. The second is a peer-reviewed journal on the teaching of language and literacy skills in Ontario colleges, which will be produced semi-annually. Such a journal is necessary to address college-specific concerns that are often marginalized by other publications that focus on university teaching. The first issue will be debuted at this year's CALL Conference.

On that note, I look forward to working with you all as we continue to develop our important role in the post-secondary education landscape. Please feel free to get in touch with either me or the Member-at-Large who represents your region if you have any questions about CALL or how you can contribute to the ongoing vitality of the organization.

Cheers, and see you on June 1st at George Brown College's beautiful Waterfront Campus.

Reflections on the CALL experience

Heather Greene
St. Clair College

After attending the CALL conference for two years, I am impressed with both this organization and its annual conference. It is a delight to network with, learn from, and laugh with subject-specific colleagues from across the province. Members share a passion for improving their craft as well as engaging students in writing and literacy, and these interests are reflected in the conference's workshops and speakers. I look forward to seeing familiar faces each year, as well as meeting new colleagues and making professional connections.

The conference is held in enjoyable surroundings. Whether in a lakefront lodge surrounded by forest (hosted by Georgian College, 2016) or a converted asylum with a dark history but colourful tour guides (Humber College's Lakeshore Campus, 2014), the location contributes to the overall sense of discovery.



College Association for Language and Literacy

presents

Conference 2017

Divergent Thinking in the College Communications Classroom

June 1-2, 2017

George Brown College

Waterfront Campus

Toronto, Ontario

Registration for the 2017 CALL Conference is now open. Fees for the conference are as follows:

- 1. Full conference, early-bird fee: \$250**
Includes all meals
Must register on or before Friday, March 24, 2017
- 2. Full conference, regular fee: \$275**
Includes all meals
For registrations after Friday, March 24, 2017
- 3. Single-day conference fee: \$225**
No early-bird fee available
Includes all meals

Accommodation information is available on the CALL website. To register, visit the CALL website at

www.callontario.org

That First Conference Experience

By Jack Wilson, Algonquin College



I recall my first CALL Conference, organized by Dan Borody of Lambton College in the mid-eighties. There was a lot of enthusiasm generated by that conference, partly due to the fact it was the first provincial conference for language and literacy teachers after a hiatus of several years, and the conference and the accommodations were all on the same site. It is hard to believe today, but Lambton was the only community college in Ontario that had a residence on campus at that time.

Since then, I have had the opportunity to socialize and learn from colleagues at several conferences over the years from one end of the province (my hometown of Ottawa) to another (St. Clair College in Windsor). I have never been disappointed by either the programming or the hospitality of the host college, and that includes the most recent offerings last year in Barrie.

David Schokking is one of several part-time professors who attended the CALL Conference for the first time last year. Working at George Brown College for the past three years (and before that one term at Mohawk), David had never attended a college conference before he found out a number of his part-time colleagues were going to the 2016 CALL Conference in Barrie.



“I was interested in seeing what others in the field were going through, challenged by, and had learned from in the past.”

When asked about his most memorable moment, David said, “As odd as it seems, the thing that stood out to me about the conference was that it was full of teachers struggling with similar things. The discussions outside the conference were equally as valuable as within. I didn’t stay in accommodations at the conference site, but I wish I had, since the people were really the best part. I would also add the location was stunning and the conference was very inviting.”

For Adele Yamada, a full-time professor at Algonquin College, and another attendee at the Barrie Conference, it was the experience she had two years previously at the Humber 2014 CALL conference that motivated her to attend. Adele went to Humber to learn about different teaching practices, activities, and technologies from her provincial colleagues. “I enjoy opportunities to try and improve the classroom experience I provide for my students, and to build a repertoire of assignment types, learning activities, and assessment tools. Additionally, attending the conference provided a chance to relax with my colleagues and discuss a range of topics, some related to teaching, and some more personal.”



First Timers Continued on page 5

CONFERENCE 2017 KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Dr. Joel Westheimer

Teaching Students to Think:
Education, Democracy, and the Common Good

Teaching and learning in any democratic society has special requirements. Chief among these are that students know how to think critically, ask questions, evaluate multiple perspectives, and work with others toward change. Yet there are a number of forces that steadily work against these goals. Recent policy reforms in education have been devoted to making K-12 schools, colleges, and universities over in the image of job-training institutions, encouraging conformity and discouraging independent thought and reflection. The move toward instrumental goals has also ushered in an obsession with standardization and sameness, orderliness over free inquiry, testing over thinking. And that, in turn, has created a focus on particular bodies of knowledge and “facts” to the exclusion of divergent perspectives and interpretations. Through both individual actions and policy-driven directives, students are increasingly learning what to think rather than how to think. In this opening keynote presentation, Dr. Joel Westheimer articulates the challenges and possibilities facing educators at all levels who seek to teach students to ask substantive questions, embrace controversy, and engage divergent perspectives – that is, educators who aim to teach students to think.



Joel Westheimer is University Research Chair in Democracy and Education at the University of Ottawa and education columnist for CBC Radio's Ottawa Morning and Ontario Today shows. His newest critically acclaimed book is What Kind of Citizen: Educating Our Children for the Common Good (Teachers College Press, 2015). Other multiple award-winning books include Pledging Allegiance: The Politics of Patriotism in America's Schools (foreword by Howard Zinn) and Among Schoolteachers: Community, Autonomy and Ideology in Teachers' Work.

First Timers (continued from page 4)

“I think one of the most important aspects of the Georgian conference was the opportunity to discuss issues and concerns with experienced colleagues. There had been several difficult incidences with students that year, and the chance to share the outcomes and discuss options was beneficial to me both personally and professionally.”

In addition to the amazing location amenities, Adele felt that “the primary reason for attending is the opportunity to share ideas with colleagues, focus on the reasons why I love teaching, and enjoy time to 'decompress' at the end of the year.”

I look forward to the 2017 CALL Conference at George Brown and hope newcomers and returnees will enjoy the same positive experiences as David and Adele.

The CALL Newsletter plans to publish three times per 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 (Maximum 500 words) about experiences, best practices, or other related topics can be sent to callontario.newsletter@gmail.com.

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 between 2500 and 8000 words. Submissions for our inaugural issue, which will be found at www.callontario.org/journal, are due by **May 1, 2017**. Submissions should be sent to callontariojournal@gmail.com in either a Word document or .rtf. Author and style documents are available on the CALL website.



Visit us at
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