



CONNECTIONS

WINTER 2012 VOLUME 11, ISSUE 2

2011 AETA CONFERENCE IN REVIEW

5 RANDOM THOUGHTS ABOUT: PASSING PERFECT

Ellen Hopkins kicked off AETA's fall conference by sharing 25 random things about her life, from the state of her new kitchen to the fact that she owned a video store before packing it in to become a freelance writer. Hopkins revealed that a history assignment in high school where she drew Bobby Kennedy's name out of a hat, sparked her interest in social action and a fight to revise the school's dress code. Astounding how that slip of paper became a point on a string that has led her from championing the rights of 16-year-old girls to wear pants to school, to writing the kind of contemporary fiction that has made her to the most challenged YA author of the last decade, and the voice of teenagers in all kinds of pain. So in the honor of randomness, here are 5 moments that shaped the focus of our weekend at ASU Polytechnic.

1. After Hopkins' initial presentation, we had four concurrent sessions on how various teachers have used her work in their classrooms. Unable to get to all four, random chance made sure we did not miss Mary Powell's presentation. Her student, Tara, then had the rare opportunity to read her Hopkins-inspired poetry in front of her muse. Watching



a writer bare her soul was a huge reminder that we English teachers have a special gift not always found in the other disciplines. When we hold our students' stories, we are also holding their hearts in our hands. We teach them how to give voice to their stories and their pain, and moments like that are at the heart of our mission to empower students with language.

2. Deciding which workshops to attend is always stressful. Is this appropriate to my level? Is this topic something I've been meaning to add to my teaching

skill set? Will I get something I can use on Monday, since I'm here instead of at my desk writing lesson plans?? I decide go to Billy Gerchick's AETA presentation in 2009, partly because he teaches at Coronado High School—home of the Dons which was also my high school's mascot. Now we're working together to promote YAAZ (see p. 4)

IN THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|-------------------------|------|
| Conference Reflections | 1-2 |
| Awards | 3-4 |
| YAAZ | 4 |
| Writing Projects | 8 |
| A Newbie's Take on AETA | 6 |
| Writing Projects | 7 |
| rl txt | 8 |
| AETA Registration | 9-10 |

**AETA State-wide Conference Fall
Sept. 28-29, 2012
Don't miss Laurie Halse Anderson!**



3. Notre Dame Prep teacher and co-editor, Siiri Julian runs into a former student in Cooley Ballroom, a student who is now on her way to becoming an English teacher.
4. Kamian Jackson presented on how the isolation of being the lone “chocolate chip” in her Florence, AZ elementary school brought her through shame in her ancestry to a particular pride in the ability of people to survive the atrocities of slavery. If I had never walked into her presentation, I might never have realized the damage that the word “slave” can cause to a little girl seeing someone who looks like her labeled other than human.
5. Finally, a nod to how randomness guides our cyberworld. Hopkins’ book, *Impulse*, was posted on a reader’s facebook page and as the strings of random connections fired away, the sales of this book rocketed to the top of the New York Times Bestsellers’ List.



But random doesn’t always fully explain or satisfy. Ellen Hopkins didn’t become a bestselling author because one post went viral in 2008. She seems to have been destined to write: Her mother instilled a love of literature and her birth mother, as it turns out, was a poet. The chance that sometimes seems to guide our lives instead seems part of the design. An ill-fated trip by Hopkins’ daughter to Albuquerque led to addiction, heartbreak and heavy loss. But through that pain has come this author’s mission: To tell the stories of children around the world, who are trapped by monsters of all kind. No problem is taboo and no voice silenced. And in that way random seems, well, not so random after all.

~Kelly O’Rourke, Desert Canyon Middle School



MYRLIN HEPWORTH

I’m firmly convinced it was not fate that led me to walk into Myrlin Hepworth’s hip hop poetry presentation. By that point in the day, I was fully immersed in emotional poetry experiences and the pull of his session’s title was strong. He and his co-presenter, Mahogney Turner moved me (once again!!) to tears and inspired me to spend more time teaching my students how to present their memorized poems in class.

Myrlin Hepworth is a rising star within the Arizona Commission on the Arts where he is currently a Teaching Artist. He is also the first undergraduate teaching artist for the Young Writers Program at ASU . Performing in schools, youth centers, group homes, museums, and theaters have made him a popular speaker/performer. He has competed on three National Poetry Slam teams and co-founded and coached the Phoenix

youth team to success in a variety of competitions.

Myrlin uses a variety of acting and presentation exercises to get kids comfortable with presenting their own poems in a dramatic format. Using tongue twisters and body movement helps unlock kids physically and have fun with words. Through different writing exercises they are then able to unlock their creative minds and let the words flow.

In his Friday night address to the conference attendees, Myrlin not only shared his background and inspiration for writing, but treated us to gripping performances of a sampling of his repertoire. It’s extraordinary to see how a poem’s life begins on a page, but is then transformed through a physical performance to become a living piece of art on a whole new level.

If you missed him at the conference, check out *From the Rooftops*, a new collection of his written poetry But keep your eye out for another opportunity to see him live. There is no substitute!

Myrlin can be reached at: myrlinhepworth@gmail.com



A HUGE THANK YOU!

Conference Chairs: Ian Moulton, Renee Rude, Duane Roen and Tricia Sindel-Arrington are in their 5th year of running this conference. Needless to say, they have it down to a fine art form. From reserving rooms, working with the caterer, putting up parking signs, copying the program and running front and center on technical support they did it all. Duane can also be found working as the official event photographer.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD: DUANE ROEN

Duane was honored by colleague, Mary Powell who described him eloquently as a visionary, a researcher of people, and a sower of knowledge and friendship. The “telescope” Duane has the ability to look within and without, able to use his sight for detailed examinations and long-range universal concepts. Like the author, John Steinbeck, he is able to get into his students’ worlds...this is no ivory tower, inaccessible professor. We have all benefitted from the seeds that Duane has planted, whether as a student, colleague or friend. We are proud to honor this distinguished, yet humble man.



FRIEND OF AETA: BEVERLY ANN CHIN

It’s hard to find a place in English education where Beverly Ann Chin’s helping hand hasn’t been at some time, gently leading and urging things along. From National Boards, the Annenberg Foundation, Writing Project, NAEP & NCTE, there is probably no one who has touched more people and made more friends in our field. For many years, Beverly has provided her services for the Arizona English Teachers’ Association annual conference, often as a volunteer, and we greatly appreciate her time and the sharing of her talent and experience. This year, we are pleased to present her with the Friends of AETA Award for 2011.

DEVELOPING LEADER AWARD: RENEE RUDE

Renee Rude not only serves on the executive board for AETA, but she coordinates the Teachers as Writers contest, serves on the sub-committee to build and maintain the Teachers of Excellence awards, and helps bring our fall conference to fruition. After teaching in Mesa for many years, Renee has recently left the valley to work on her PhD at NAU. Her commitment to students and her fellow colleagues serves as a model and inspiration for us all.

TEACHERS OF EXCELLENCE: AMY METCALF & IRENE VUCKO

Amy Metcalf teaches AP English Literature at Cactus Shadows High School in Cave Creek where she is also department chair. She is a consummate professional and expert in her field. She not only teaches, but creates curriculum and new programs for her school. Her colleagues rely on her to develop their most rigorous courses and her extensive content background, degrees and certification have contributed to the success of her department and the excelling label for the Falcons.

Irene Vucko is currently a teacher of Desert Ridge Junior High in Gilbert as well as a Language and Literacy PhD student at ASU. She uses research-based approaches in her teaching of English, specifically reading and writing workshops. Through these workshops, she motivates her students to participate in lively discussions about books and create unique writing pieces. Her positive relationships with students continue long after the course ends...she is truly and inspirational master teacher!



TEACHING READING AND LITERATURE IN THE CONTEXT OF COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

Bev Chin used her vast body of professional knowledge to guide conference attendees through applying the new CCSS to lesson plans we already create using rich, engaging text. Using a piece of expository text by jazz musician, Wynton Marsalis, English teachers were given a great example of a well-written non-fiction essay that provides a backdrop for lessons on metaphor, word choice, organization of text, and much more. Arizona English teachers are ready to meet the challenge of including more informational text-reading skills in the framework of college and career readiness.

WHAT'S THE YOUNG AUTHORS OF ARIZONA?

We're a group of Arizona middle school, high school, and college teachers who want to give young authors an outlet for free-thinking and highest-level authorship for their age group.

In the prestigious 89-year history of the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, this year marks Arizona's first ever Alliance for Young Artists and Writers regional affiliate: the Young Authors of Arizona. One of over 100 national affiliates, we provide all grade 7-12 Young Authors of Arizona the chance to enter this competition. We also provide :

- scholarship opportunities
- the chance to get published in our first ever Best of Young Authors of Arizona 2012 paperback book
- recognition at the April 14th Young Authors of Arizona Awards ceremony
- a chance to get recognized at the 2012 Scholastic Art and Writing Awards national ceremony this May at Carnegie Hall and much more!

All great authors developed from young writers. Who's your favorite author? He or she at some point crossed the threshold from writing to sharing writing with a greater audience and we know this step can be daunting. To gain perspective, check out the words of these former teen Scholastic Art and Writing Award participants. See if you can guess who each author is? Before getting famous, these authors were like our students: original, emerging, ready to express their ideas with the rest of the world. One of our students could be next!

CAN YOU GUESS WHO THESE FAMOUS AUTHORS ARE?

#1 sensitive poet from Massachusetts: "Everything in life is writable about if you have the outgoing guts to do it, and the imagination to improvise. The worst enemy to creativity is self-doubt."

#2 Oscar-winning actor & movie director: "I believe in mythology... a culture or society without mythology would die, and we're close to that."

#3 author & gadabout: "A conversation is a dialogue, not a monologue. That's why there are so few good conversations: due to scarcity, two intelligent talkers seldom meet."

#4 author of over 50 novels, hundreds of short stories & essays: "Where we come from in America no longer signifies. It's where we go, and what we do when we get there, that tells us who we are."

#5 actor, composer, author: "I keep looking for things I haven't done yet."

ANSWERS ON P.5

~William Gerchick, Coronado High School



2011 TEACHERS AS WRITERS WINNERS



TAW winners receive a \$100 cash award and will be published in the next Arizona English Bulletin.

POETRY: KELLY O'ROURKE FOR "BLUEBERRY SEEDS"

SHORT STORY: CHRIS HAZELTINE FOR "CAPTAIN NEMO"

NON-FICTION PROSE: EILEEN GROOM FOR "A NAME"



ANSWERS TO MYSTERY AUTHORS

Author#1: Sylvia Plath

Author#2: Robert Redford

Author#3: Truman Capote

Author#4: Joyce Carol Oates

Author#5: John Lithgow





THE AETA CONFERENCE: A MUST FOR TEACHERS IN LOVE WITH TEACHING

As a **future teacher** just months away from student teaching, it's natural that I have a lot of questions. Attending the AETA conference answered many of them. For example, **where can I find a community of English teachers who are passionate about what they do and that come together to share ideas and grow together?** Or, where can I go after I've graduated to continue my own personal growth as an educator in this field? The AETA conference brought together a remarkable collection of professionals, from every background, all of whom cared about their students and about making a difference in their lives. Regardless of how we choose to go about accomplishing it, we all shared that common goal.

First, Ellen Hopkins spoke about herself, her writing, and the **ugly-but-true** nature of the topics she chooses to write about. She brought many of us to tears with her passion and her experience with many of those powerful and devastating

issues. Hopkins also made an excellent point that conflicts on behalf of her books: the statistics posed to, or victimized by, things like drugs, tling. If one in four American girls will be sexu- this mean about the literature we choose and she told) navigate such a traumatic experience in believe this is a question all of us should be con- Hopkins's books.



could even potentially be used in **ensorship** behind the frequency at which students are being ex- sexual abuse, pregnancy, and prostitution, are star- ally abused by the time she turns eighteen, what does how it may be able to help her (and the three friends a healthy way, and in a safe place with adult guidance? I sidering when we consider reading and teaching Ellen

The two sessions I attended after Hopkins's were equally as stimulating, and the first served as the perfect follow-up by sug- gesting and introducing me to a variety of multi-media project approaches for teaching "Perfect." The session, led by a group of ASU students, effectively demonstrated how technological tools can be used for literature-based creative projects and provided extensive visual examples of them. Some of these tools included things like **Prezi**, **picnik**, **Glogster**, and Micro-blogging sites.\

I learned about a tremendous amount of resources that are available to me as a teacher and was familiarized with a set of constructive teaching methods that will benefit me immensely as I enter my career.

The next session I attended was called: "Co-Constructing Knowledge: **Building a Native Amercian Cur- riculum** Based on Student Driven Understanding." I was blown away by the intensity and sincerity with which its pre- senters (Timothy San Pedro and Andi Box) approached this topic, and enjoyed being part of the reenactment of an example lesson used in a real classroom that aimed to co-construct knowledge in a progressive fashion, moving interpretations from the individual, to pairs, to groups. I learned about a tremendous amount of resources that are available to me as a teacher and was familiarized with a set of constructive teaching methods that **will benefit me immensely** as I enter my career. Attending the AETA conference was, without a shadow of a doubt, one of the best moves I have ever made toward my own professional development outside of school. I would highly recommend every future and current teacher I know to attend this conference and experience the community and passion that radiated throughout this event. (Not to mention, the food is amazing!)

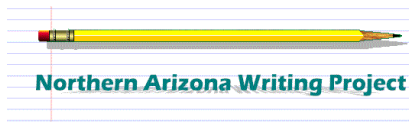
~Brandi Rasmussen, NAU



THE NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT

A premier effort to improve writing in America, through its professional development model, NWP builds the leadership, programs, and research needed for teachers to help their students become successful writers and learners. Every student deserves a highly skilled teacher of writing. To that end, each of the 195 NWP sites conducts an annual summer institute, attended by the most experienced teachers in the area. Together, these teachers prepare for leadership roles by demonstrating their most effective practices, studying research, and improving their knowledge of writing by writing themselves.

After the institute, writing project teachers conduct project-sponsored programs in their own schools and in neighboring schools and districts, with two purposes: developing teacher knowledge and leadership in their home communities and putting this knowledge and leadership to work to improve student achievement.



2012 Summer Institute: TBA

Phone: 928-523-2600

Email: maya.murray@nau.edu

Website: <http://www.cal.nau.edu/nawp>



Summer Institutes generally concurrent with UA Summer Session: application due January 15, but spots may still be open, especially for primary teachers:

University of Arizona, English Department
PO Box 210067

Tucson, AZ 85721-0067

Website: <http://www.sawp.web.arizona.edu>

OPEN CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS FOR THE *ARIZONA ENGLISH BULLETIN*: NOW ACCEPTING ARTICLES FOR FUTURE ISSUES

The Arizona English Bulletin invites English and Language Arts teachers at all levels—elementary, secondary, and college—to submit manuscripts for consideration. We seek manuscripts on any aspect of English and Language Arts teaching. Writers may describe ideas, practices, and issues regarding the teaching of English and Language Arts. We prefer manuscripts that focus on classrooms, classroom practices, students, and teachers, although we are also interested in relevant theory and research as a context for action in the teaching of English and Language Arts. We will also publish reviews of books, programs, and resources.

We are currently accepting manuscripts year-round on any topic or issue related to English/Language Arts instruction.

GUIDELINES

Please submit your manuscript electronically by *email attachment only* (Please do not mail a hard copy). We require writers to submit a copy of their manuscript as a Microsoft Word attachment. Manuscripts submitted in the body of the email will not be accepted.

The Arizona English Bulletin uses the MLA style sheet. Be sure to include the author's name, address, school affiliation, and an email address on the first page. We would also appreciate a short biography of 2-3 sentences. Manuscripts should be no more than 3,500 words in length. Shorter articles are acceptable. We cannot publish any material that has been previously published in print or electronic form. Please do not submit material to other publishers while your manuscript is under consideration for the Arizona English Bulletin. Manuscripts will be read and reviewed, and replies sent, in approximately 8-12 weeks

Submit AEB manuscripts to:

Dr. Sandra Raymond, Editor
sandra.raymond@nau.edu





rl txt: The Central Arizona Young Writers' Institute

Affiliated with the National Writing Project and sponsored by the Central Arizona Writing Project, **rl txt** ("Real Text" in cyberspeak) is an institute designed to offer young writers a non-evaluative environment in which to explore the power of writing. Staffed by National Writing Project trained consultants, **Session A** will be held **June 4-15**, **Session B: June 18-29, 2012**. **Application deadline is April 6**. Offering time and inspiration, **rl txt** sessions support writers in a collaborative atmosphere as they interact with other authors and share works in progress. Writers will immerse themselves in the creative task of writing in a variety of genres, not limited to fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. **rl txt** participants will get the opportunity to mirror the craft of real writers producing real texts. Institute sessions will include:

- Guest presenters
- Daily writing workshops
- Activities to promote creativity
- Writing marathons
- Illuminated texts
- Craft secrets
- Nature/science observation and writing

The name **rl txt** intends to send a subliminal message: this program is about producing genuine writing, writing with voice, not something scripted but something self-initiated and meaningful to the writer -- writing that matters. **For additional information e-mail Tim San Pedro at: timothy.sanpedro@asu.edu**

To Do is to Not

Do not mistaken my tears for self-pity or buffoonery, for they have been shed by me and only me, and with that I will cry as and/or when I please.

Do not criticize me for what you see under first impression, I am not one to judge or be judged at first glance, and nor am I what you may speculate me to be.

Do not emphasize or imply to my blunders, for I have always been one to take affliction upon myself, and although it may not always replenish me, it works.

Do not delude me out of my own heart, I am not to be toyed with for I am no rag doll, no Barbie, nor am I just another intelligible, damaged girl on your list.

Do not strain my mind of deception, for my sincerity with words has always and will always be honorable, and yet you betray me action by action.

Do not acknowledge my love, for your adulation has always been dubious, yet I've stayed, ambushed in your cage of venom and fury.

Do not abdicate me.

Do heal me of my now disregarded past,

Do not annihilate me.

yet restore and prepare me for my replenished future.

~Jasmine Vargas, Grade 11, rl txt author

"Something amazing happened the summer of 2011."

Something the directors of rl txt will never forget. We've seen tears dropping, heard hearts breaking, watched imaginations creating new worlds, new characters, and new stories. We've seen siblings—not related by blood—form in just two weeks. What's at the center of all of this? Writing.

We strongly believe that if you give writers four things, they can always be successful: a pen, a piece of paper, a touch of inspiration, and support.

We all come to writing at different stages, each of them equally important as the next. You will never become better if you don't write and you will never write if you don't believe you can and surround yourself with others who share that belief as well. Everyone can write and everyone should have a place to share their work free from fear of ridicule or punishment from a letter grade. Writing is about the stories inside...however they come out is not as important as getting them out.

The students of rl txt have amazed us, shocked us, floored us because they've shown each of us how to become better writers, better thinkers, and better people. They are our inspiration.

~Tim San Pedro, Director of rl txt

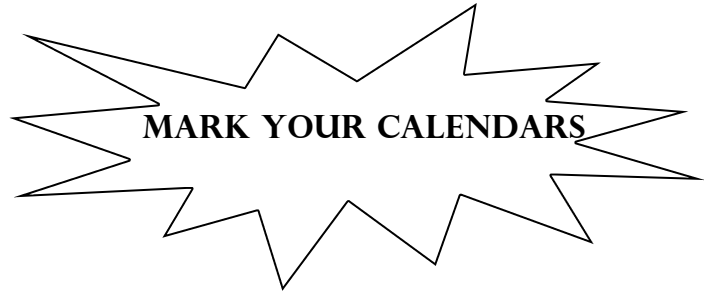


AETA State-wide Conference Fall Sept. 28-29, 2012

AETA is thrilled to host the incomparable Laurie Halse Anderson for her 2nd visit to our conference. The author of YA classics such as: *Wintergirls*, *Twisted*, *Catalyst*, *Speak*, *Fever 1793* and *Chains and Forge*, Anderson is also a dynamic speaker and a true advocate for the magic books can work in the lives of teens and adults. Her stands against censorship are well documented on her blog at :

madwomanintheforest.com

Laurie Halse Anderson shares personal successes and struggles as well as inspiration and news about her best-selling books on this website and you are guaranteed an energizing address when she speaks to us in September. Maybe she'll even sing for us again!



ASU Composition Conference

Saturday, March 3rd, 2012

ASU, Tempe

Register by February 20 on line or contact Wendy King at wking@asu.edu



PLAN NOW FOR A STRONG AZ PRESENCE AT NCTE 2012!

Did you know you can get a price break on registration by volunteering to help out at the conference? And check out the deadline for proposals. This is a great opportunity to participate with colleagues on a national level in our own backyard!



Dream · Connect · Ignite!
November 15-18, 2012 · Las Vegas, Nevada



Postconvention Workshops, November 19-20

For more information, visit www.ncte.org/annual



AETA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(Annual membership is from fall to fall of each year. Back issues of publications will be provided, as available.)

One-year individual membership (within U.S.) • School year 20___ to 20___ \$40

One-year emeritus/student membership • School year 20___ to 20___ \$20

Name: _____

School Affiliation: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone (H): _____ Phone (W): _____

Email: _____ FAX: _____

Area of Interest (circle one): K-6 4-8 9-12 Post-secondary

FOR MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Dr. Jean Boreen

<http://www.public.asu.edu/~jblasin/aeta/>

AETA Executive Secretary

Email: Jean.Boreen@NAU.EDU

1285 N. Wakonda St.

Flagstaff, AZ, 86004



ARE YOU A MEMBER OF AETA?

WHAT IS AETA?

The Arizona English Teachers Association serves as a professional network of English language arts educators across Arizona. It is the state affiliate of the national network,

the National Council of Teachers of English. The primary function of AETA is to foster policies, standards, and goals of NCTE among Arizona's educators of communication skills, language arts, and English from kindergarten through college/university levels. To this aim, it is AETA's goal to serve these teachers by narrowing the national focus to the needs, interests, and goals of Arizona teachers and students.

All AETA business, functions, and special events exist to enhance the quality of English language arts teaching in Arizona by:

- * DISSEMINATING information pertinent to local issues, concerns, and successes;
- * ENCOURAGING professional activity among teachers in all regions of the state;
- * GENERATING interest in students' and teachers' special achievements; and
- * ORGANIZING statewide and regional "outreach" activities and in-service opportunities.

Visit our **WEBSITE:**

<http://www.public.asu.edu/~jblasin/aeta/>

BENEFITS OF AETA MEMBERSHIP

Active membership in professional organizations empowers educators. It is a means for getting voices heard and for sharing the fun and frustrations of teaching. In an effort to address the needs of the diverse population that AETA serves, the following are provided as benefits of membership:

1. 4 issues of *Connections*, the AETA newsletter, an informal publication of news, events, and information of concern to Arizona teachers
2. 2 issues of the *Arizona English Bulletin*, the professional journal of AETA which provides professional reading on a variety of themes, from both theoretical and practical points of view
3. The opportunity to attend state and regional in-service activities, including "outreach" mini-conferences, professional presentations, and the annual statewide conference
4. Contact with teachers with special areas of interest and expertise through a professional network
5. Liaison efforts with the Arizona state legislature and Department of Education

