The members of West Houston Area Council of Teachers of English are looking forward to hosting the 50th Annual Conference for the Texas Council of Teachers of English. We will be at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Houston, a vibrant, exciting area with access to theater, sports venues, and museums and enjoy visits with some of our favorite authors and ELA leaders:

- Christopher Paul Curtis
- Paul Janeczko
- Ernest Morrell, past-president of NCTE
- Gretchen Bernabei
- Karin Miller
- Benjamin Sáenz
- Sarah Ressler Wright
- Chris Dolejs
- Donalyn Miller
- Victoria Young

While we participate in some great opportunities to grow as teachers, we will also support the growth of local adults by supporting the Fort Bend Literacy Council. The Council teaches adult literacy, supporting efforts to attain GEDs and improve lifestyles through education. At the end of each general session, you will have opportunities to donate to their efforts.

Many thanks to the volunteers from the Houston area who are helping to organize this event and will be on hand to welcome you to the conference. Travel safely to the conference. We will see you in the Bayou City!
President’s Message
By P. Tim Martindell, President

Come one, come all to the 50th Annual Conference of the Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts at the downtown Hyatt in Houston the weekend of January 23-25, 2015.

In this our golden year we gather to celebrate and learn from each other. Keynote speakers this conference include: NCTE past president, Ernest Morrell; poet Paul Janeczko; young adult authors Christopher Paul Curtis and Benjamin Alire Saenz; and our colleagues, Donalyn Miller and Gretchen Bernabei. In addition, the conference will feature over fifty breakout sessions and workshops.

Make sure to join TCTELA as we honor the best elementary, middle, high school and college English teachers from across our state at our Saturday luncheon. Raise a glass as we recognize and honor all past presidents of TCTELA, the Texas Joint Council of Teachers of English, and the Texas Council of Teachers of English.

I urge you to use this weekend to expand your professional network - whether attending sessions, breaking bread together during the luncheons, or after all is done and you are out on the town - be sure to reach out and meet new colleagues. These friends and colleagues will help you take what you learn this weekend in Houston and weave your new learning into your personal teaching practice.

Come join us in Houston this January to experience powerful learning, engage in courageous conversations that will push your practice, and bask in the synergy that comes when groups of English teachers gather. ptmwriter@aol.com

Financial update
By Katrina Gonzales, Executive Secretary

With the 2015 TCTELA Conference awaiting us around the corner, you should know that your organization’s 2014-2015 budget is a balanced one. As always the budget relies expectantly on you and your colleagues to attend our January 2015 conference.

One new addition to our budget will affect committee chairs. We wanted to extend our gratitude to those who volunteer to chair our various committees. In the coming year each chair will receive $100 towards the cost of his or her conference. As this is a new endeavor, we will revisit this practice yearly to ascertain its effectiveness.

The three day à la carte registration fee for members is $225 until December 19 after which the price increases to $325, definitely a bargain in comparison to other educational conferences. Tickets to the luncheons may be purchased for $30 each. Take a look at our conference page on the TCTELA site to see the speaker lineup: http://www.tctela.org/2015-conference/.

Please help us in publicizing the conference to your colleagues. Prices will increase after 12/19/14, so consider approaching your campus leaders about this opportunity before that date.

I will continue the practice of hosting a member financial audit, just as our past Executive Secretary, Alana Morris, did. Please email me if you are interested in being a part of that important group. The process is fairly streamlined and will not take an iota of your time during the conference in January.

We look forward to seeing all of you in Houston on January 23-25, 2015 in Houston, Texas. katgonmom@gmail.com
Honoring Outstanding High School Writers:  
The 2015 NCTE Achievement Awards 
in Writing Contest for High School Juniors

Want to Help Your Best Writers Shine?

Since 1957, NCTE has sponsored the Achievement Awards in Writing contest to recognizing some of the best student writers in the nation. In 2014, 796 students were nominated for this award, and 164 students were recognized by NCTE as outstanding writers.

For 2015, NCTE’s goals for the Achievement Awards in Writing contest are to honor more student writers and, therefore, to promote the importance of writing. If you would like to get involved, here are some tips to get you started:

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**Take the Lead:** Select one English teacher volunteer to serve as coordinator of the school nomination and submission process.

**Find the Best Writers:** Ask English teachers in your department to submit the names of their best 11th grade writers. Look beyond the teachers of current 11th graders; students’ former ninth- and tenth-grade teachers are also good sources for nominees.

**Determine the Number:** The number of nominees allowed from each school is tied to current total enrollment in grades 10, 11, and 12.

**Narrow the Field:** The English department should determine which students will become your official representatives. The Achievement Awards in Writing contest rewards excellence in all modes of writing, so look for students who demonstrate effective writing, exhibit power to inform, and move an audience through control of a wide range of the English language.

**Coach the Students:** Student nominees may submit up to 10 typed pages for their submissions, 6 pages of their best writing in any genre and up to 4 pages responding to a prompt listed on the contest website: http://www.ncte.org/awards/student/aa. Encourage your nominees to work through several drafts and revisions.

**Submit your Entries:** The submission deadline is February 13, 2015. Entries are submitted online by one teacher per school at http://www.ncte.org/awards/student/aa.

**Get the results:** Submissions are judged by a nationwide committee of English/Language Arts educators. NCTE will announce the results online in May 2015.

**Honor your nominees:** Students winners will have their names posted on the NCTE website and will receive certificates honoring their achievement. Many schools honor their student nominees at awards ceremonies. Finally, remind the nominees to include this honor in their college applications!

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Ready to get started? The Achievement Awards in Writing contest is a wonderful way to promote writing at your school while helping your best writers to shine. Coordinating the submission process is professionally rewarding for many teachers. According to Martha Beall, an English teacher at West Springfield HS in Virginia, “It is exciting for me to mentor talented students who are keenly invested in their writing. Their memorably polished poetry and prose awaken both my mind and heart.”

To get started, visit the contest website at http://www.ncte.org/awards/student/aa.
Annotation and the young reader: Making space to respond

By Brian Bass, Vice President-Elect of Membership and Affiliates

When I read, I am never empty-handed. With a pencil and a highlighter, I mark-up the page like I am painting on my own personal canvas: I ask questions, I react, I dialogue with the text. And although annotation invigorates my reading experience, I feel uncertain about how this practice influences developing readers. If we want them to establish strong reading habits, how does requiring them to engage in an academic task while they read independently affect how they perceive reading, how they interact with the text, and how they develop as readers? Although I have questions, I still believe in the annotation process and its positive influence on reading comprehension.

To generate active, purposeful reading, we require our students to read at least three to four books per nine-week period. Each book must be approved and annotated. Once completed students must have a parent sign their book form and present the form and their book to their language arts teacher. At the beginning of the year, we guided our students through effective annotation strategies. Using small texts, we modeled how to be efficient in their meta-conversation since students tend to mark everything or nothing. We also established annotation strategies to limit the number of possibilities to annotate: Gut Reaction, Confusion, Power Phrase, and Say Something. A “Gut Reaction” is an initial reaction to something read. A “Confusion” is a response about something a reader does not understand about the text. If a word or phrase stands out to a reader, he or she may highlight it to signal a “Power Phrase.” Finally, if a reader who wants to speak to a character directly he or she would “Say Something.” We encourage our students to mark directly into the text, but students who did not own their books are allowed to use sticky notes, and students who use electronic devices may annotate digitally. Although we prefer at least two annotations per page, we do not penalize students who only annotate once per page.

As the end of the first semester nears, we have begun to assess our reading program. Students (often the struggling readers) “look” for areas to annotate instead of reading the text and responding in the moment. Some students continue to highlight too liberally, and often students’ annotations are haphazard and/or cursory. In addition, several students over the course of the semester have complained that annotation distracts and complicates their reading. However, many students have embraced annotation. Frequently, students present books that are expertly highlighted with exceptional amounts of marginalia decorating the pages. Some struggling readers have realized annotating a text improves their comprehension, and we have noticed an increase in the number of books students have read during the first semester. Surprisingly, teachers in other disciplines have reinforced annotation strategies in their classrooms. Ultimately, we are encouraged by the process because we know how, where, and to what extent our students are engaging with texts. Making their thinking about texts transparent helps us meet the needs of our students and over time helps us develop engaged readers.

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Challenging the system

By Valerie Taylor, Co-Editor, English in Texas

Cory Doctorow, author of science fiction, young adult novels Little Brother and its sequel Homeland as well as a new graphic novel In Real Life, spoke at the Secondary Section Luncheon at this year’s NCTE Annual Convention. In his talk, Doctorow shared his thoughts about the world in relation to technology, specifically use of the Internet, and government monitoring. He asked the audience to consider what it means to be safe and whether or not safety exists. He challenged the audience to consider the validity of the question often asked: How much freedom is society willing to sacrifice for safety? And when the government makes claims that these sacrifices are necessary, Doctorow argued, “Extraordinary claims require extraordinary proof.” Still, Doctorow said that people tend to buy into the government’s claims because “human beings have a bottomless capacity for self-deception.”

Doctorow also spent part of his talk speaking about the difference between personal and public writing. He said, “If you write for someone else, you have to be more rigorous.” So, Doctorow does take time to think deeply and work diligently on his writing for his books and his blog (Boing, Boing).

Finally, during the question and answer section of his talk, Doctorow shared his thoughts about not applying industrial copyright laws to individuals. He claims that no one would sign agreements for use of others’ work if they actually read what they are agreeing to, but since people do not really read these agreements, they do sign. Doctorow said these “rules themselves are way less important than the people they apply to,” and that is why these rules should only apply to those in the industry, not to individuals who are cultural users. To learn more about his position on copyright, check out his post “Information Doesn’t Want to Be Free” on techcrunch.com.

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One of the highlights of the sessions at the NCTE conference was a presentation entitled “The Storyteller’s Story: Three Celebrated Young Adult Authors Dive Deeply into the Craft, Power, and Magic of YA Fiction.” The enlightening stories shared by all highlighted many important concepts for teachers of English language arts.

All three authors shared stories about the power of being a reader. Alan Lawrence Sitomer, author of Caged Warrior and the forthcoming sequel Noble Warrior, said, “The magic of reading can shape young lives. That’s what saved me.” Sitomer talked about how literature can become a mirror for students. As a successful teacher and winner of the California Teacher of the Year award, Sitomer helped many students see themselves in that literary mirror. He said, “The stories we believe dictate our behavior; we have to teach kids to tell themselves the right story.” Literature can reshape student stories and redirect their lives in positive ways. Acclaimed author of the Skinjacker Trilogy, Neal Shusterman, shared a story of spending third grade “time outs” in the library with a librarian who changed who he was as a reader (or nonreader in this case). She kept offering books, he kept resisting, and she persisted. Ultimately, he dove into one of the books that she shared with him and ended up becoming a voracious reader. Her persistence likely gave us the author we know today. In addition, Cinda Williams Chima, who has written such works as the Heir Chronicles and the Seven Realms series, talked about how books changed her life. She said, “Everything became accessible to me in school when I became a reader. All of the reading I did made me a better reader and makes me a better writer.” She closed by saying that “readers and writers are partners in story.” Chima confirmed what teachers have always felt to be true. Reading empowers writing.

One of the most important moments of the hour-long discussion came when Shusterman walked the audience through his revision process for the last book in the Unwind Dystology, Undivided. Shusterman showed images of colored notecards used to organize the stories of each character in Undivided and shared with audience members the spreadsheet created to track the distance between each story in the book. He knew that he could not leave readers suspended for too long and made sure that he came back to stories before his readers could become frustrated. Most interestingly, Shusterman shared how he handwrites a piece, types it, revises and retypes it, etc. until he has completed six iterations. His sixth version is what he finally calls a first draft. The power of that image of a writer in the depths of revision prompted many questions from teachers in the audience and seemed to inspire them to think more deeply about how revision is done in classrooms today. Revision is a real process that requires grit and dedication.

There is no more powerful way to exemplify the ideas that reading is a powerful writer’s tool and that revision is much more than writing a second draft than to share the words of the students’ favorite authors. Encourage students to read the author bios found on their websites to learn more and even have them write to the authors about how reading has nurtured them as writers.

Helping student writers revise

If you are looking for concrete ways to help students move from the first draft and finished mentality with their writing, check out Revision Decisions: Talking Through Sentences and Beyond by Jeff Anderson and Deborah Dean. Early on, Anderson and Dean write that Revision Decisions stands on the shoulders of sentence combining, a strategy many teachers once tried and often discarded as it felt more like drill than actual support for revision. The authors take sentence combining and show teachers how to use it to help students see how it can be a useful tool for revising their writing at the sentence level.

Revision Decisions is based on four specific principles: 1) create a context for revising sentences; 2) invite collaboration that becomes the conversation in writers’ heads; 3) allow choice, risk-taking, and error, and 4) make meaning by reflecting and evaluating. To accelerate student learning, the lessons start “slow and small.” Each of the ten lessons is designed to help students discover options for revising their writing instead of learning individual grammar rules.

Before beginning the specific revision lessons provided, teachers are encouraged to teach their students the mnemonic DRAFT: D – delete unnecessary words and repeated words; R – rearrange sentence parts/chunks; A – add connectors; F – form new verb endings; T – talk it out. Following the DRAFT lessons, readers will find the ten lesson sets, which all follow a common lesson structure including student application of the revision decision to their own writing, a crucial step.

The book ends with a lengthy set of appendices that provide teachers with all of the mentor text excerpts and sentences used throughout the lessons. Revision Decisions will provide teachers with much-needed tools to facilitate the teaching of revision in a way that will make it stick with their students. Pick this one up and add it to your reading stack for the holidays—you will be glad you did (and so will your students)!

pinkertonk@uhd.edu
Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts
50th ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND EXPOSITION

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

THURSDAY – January 22, 2015
6:00 pm – 10:00 pm ATTENDEE REGISTRATION

FRIDAY – January 23, 2015
8:00 am - 5:15 pm ATTENDEE REGISTRATION
8:00 am - 5:15 pm EXHIBITS OPEN
9:00 am - 11:15 am FRIDAY MORNING WORKSHOPS – Christopher Dolejs, Karin Miller, and Victoria Young, Sarah Ressler Wright
11:30 am - 12:45 pm LUNCHEON – Paul Janeczko
1:00 pm - 2:15 pm GENERAL SESSION I - WELCOME AND KEYNOTE – Ernest Morrell

3:00 pm - 4:00 pm CONCURRENT SESSION A
• Teacher Candidates’ Journaling in Field-Based Practica
• Invigorating Reading with Text Sets
• Conferences: Making Time to Talk, Taking Time to Teach
• Literary Leadership Excellence: Imagining New Adventures for Effective Support
• Teaching Empathy to Optimize Literacy Learning and Expand Thinking in Diverse Communities
• Short Answer Response: From Close Reading to Critical Analysis
• Writing Across the Content Areas: Making a Difference in the K-5 Classroom
• Socrates Had It Right: The Value of Seminar
• Poetry, Poetry, Poetry—Reading and Writing Poetry in the Bilingual Classroom
• Active Shakespeare in English Language Arts Classrooms—Opportunities for Engaged Experience and Analysis of Complex Texts Grades 6-12

4:15 pm - 5:15 pm CONCURRENT SESSION B
• Demonstrating the Importance of Vocabulary Engagement to Pre-service Content Area Teachers
• #edupopculture
• Pre-AP Does Not Mean Busy Work
• Dancing on the Digital Divide: Using New Media Literature, Composition, and Pedagogy
• Stemology 101
• Easy In, Quickly Out: Writing Haiku-style Poems
• Word by Word, Sentence by Sentence, Crafting Better Thinkers
• Top Ten Signs You Might Be a Great Teacher!
• When Are Pictures Worth a Thousand Words? Integrating Science, Math, and Literacy Skills Using Wordless Books and Notebook Foldables

1:45 pm – 2:45 pm CONCURRENT SESSION D
• Revision Decisions: Talking Through Sentences and Beyond
• Balancing Difficulty and Complexity: College & Career Ready Classrooms
• TASA on iTunes U®: Transforming Teaching and Learning in ELA
• The “How” for Teaching Narrative Writing
• Conferences in the Writing Workshop: A Troubleshooting Guide
• Let’s Hear It for the Boys: Integrated Reading and Writing Strategies Designed Specifically with Boys in Mind
• Reading History Like a Detective: Proclamations – Declarations – and Addresses OH MY!
• Literature of War
• Hip-Hop Music, a Catalyst for Incorporating Informational Texts: Tupac Shakur’s “Changes”
• Poetry STAAR Power

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm CONCURRENT SESSION E
• 50/50/50--Fifty Books in Fifty Minutes for TCTELA’s 50th Anniversary
• Vocabulary Development: Foundation for Student Success
• Using Multimodal Texts to Teach Rhetorical Skills for Improving Students’ Comprehension and Writing
• Small Groups for Big Success: Remediation and Acceleration in the Secondary Classroom
• Leveling Up: Effective Intervention for Students at Risk for EOC Failure
• The Sound of Sense: Putting Poetry at the Core of Literacy Instruction
• Stretching to Reach the Literacy STAARs
• Celebrating Shared Values and Stories: Collaboration and Practices that “Lead the Way” to Implementing Writer’s Notebooks
• Critical Thought from Self to System
• The COURAGE to Write: Telling Your Stories Through the Quick List

4:15 pm – 5:15 pm CONCURRENT SESSION F
• All Aboard! Helping EVERY Young Reader and Writer to Board the Informational Text Express
• Writing Short: Beyond Elements--The Atoms of Style
• Empowering Struggling Writers Through Film
• Digital Writing: Epiphanies from Five Teachers
• Work in Progress: Building Bridges with Families and Community Members Through Reading and Writing
• Reading in the Deep
• Reader Response Using Multicultural Children’s Literature
• Too LEGIT to Quit: Large Educational Group Instructional Techniques
• Student Voices Beyond the Classroom: Building Confidence and Independence Through Student Conferencing and Guided Inquiry
• Inspiration: Chocolate
Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts 50th ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND EXPOSITION

Hyatt Regency
1200 Louisiana Street
Houston, Texas 77002

Visit tctela.org to book your hotel room. TCTELA Annual Conference sleeping room discount is available, on a limited basis, until 12/20/14.

TCTELA MEMBERSHIP
Membership must be active at the time of registration and at the conference to receive the member rate. Membership is active for 12 months from the date of joining or renewing.

REGISTRANT INFORMATION
Terms and Conditions: Refunds before 12/19/14 will be processed with a $50 cancellation/name change fee and no refunds will be provided after that date. Incomplete registrations will not be processed. Payment is required by the first day of the conference. Membership fees are non-refundable.

Registrants are responsible for submitting invoice to institution before the event.

Registration is also available online at tctela.org.

- ❑ Current member ❑ New member:
  - ❑ Professional ❑ Undergraduate Student ❑ Parent

- ❑ Renewing member ❑ Retired

Name: __________________________
Mailing Address: __________________________
City, State, Zip: __________________________
Phone (H): ______________________ (W): ______________________
District Name / ESC / Institution: __________________________
School Campus: __________________________
E-mail (H): ______________________ (W): ______________________

Email address must be unique for each registration form. All confirmation information will arrive by email.

- ❑ Elementary ❑ Middle ❑ High ❑ College ❑ Administration
- ❑ Please check if you require specific aids or services under the Americans with Disabilities Act in order to participate in this conference.

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION
Submit separate forms for each registration. Check amount can be combined for multiple registrations.

FULL CONFERENCE PACKAGE
Includes Friday through Sunday workshops, professional development luncheons, membership celebration and poetry reading.

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<tr>
<th>Before 12/19</th>
<th>❑ Current Member $285</th>
<th>❑ New/Renewing Member $320</th>
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<td>After 12/19</td>
<td>❑ Current Member $385</td>
<td>❑ New/Renewing Member $420</td>
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ONE-DAY CONFERENCE PASS - FRIDAY, SATURDAY OR SUNDAY
Professional development luncheons are not included.

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<tr>
<th>Select one day</th>
<th>❑ Friday Pass ❑ Saturday Pass ❑ Sunday Pass</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Before 12/19</td>
<td>❑ Current Member $150 ❑ New/Renewing Member $185</td>
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<tr>
<td>After 12/19</td>
<td>❑ Current Member $250 ❑ New/Renewing Member $285</td>
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THREE-DAY, A LA CARTE CONFERENCE PASS
Professional development luncheons are not included.

| Before 12/19 | ❑ Current Member $225 ❑ New/Renewing Member $260 |
|-------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| After 12/19 | ❑ Current Member $325 | ❑ New/Renewing Member $360 |

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LUNCHEONS

- ❑ Friday Luncheon with Paul Janeczko $30
- ❑ Saturday Luncheon with Christopher Paul Curtis $30

STUDENT, PARENT OR RETIRED PROFESSIONAL
Professional development luncheons are not included.

| Before 12/19 | ❑ Current Member $170 ❑ New/Renewing Member $220 |
|-------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| After 12/19 | ❑ Current Member $285 | ❑ New/Renewing Member $360 |

Suggested Community Outreach Donation $1 (include in total)

| Grand Total $ __________________________ |

PAYMENT INFORMATION

Payment is being made by:
- ❑ Credit Card ❑ Personal Check ❑ Company Check ❑ P.O. Number

Credit Card Info:
- ❑ MasterCard ❑ VISA ❑ Discover

Account Number: __________________________
Expiration Date: _________________ CSV Code: __________________________

Cardholder Name (print): __________________________
Cardholder Address: __________________________
City, State, Zip: __________________________
Phone: __________________________

I authorize TCTELA to charge my credit card in the amount of $ __________________________

Authorized Signature: __________________________

Total amount of check or purchase order is $ __________________________
(Make check payable to TCTELA.)

Check # __________________________ P.O. # __________________________

The registrant acknowledges that by knowingly submitting a fraudulent PO number or by not following your institution’s guidelines in obtaining a PO, the registrant is liable for the full amount of the registration fee.

Complete form and mail with payment by January 12, 2015 to: TCTELA,
919 Congress Avenue #1400, Austin, Texas 78701
Several affiliate events occur during the NCTE Convention each year, and they serve as a great opportunity to replenish the TCTELA leaders’ motivation and to network with other leaders across the nation about their processes, procedures, and events. Without a doubt, though, the most thrilling event is the Affiliate Roundtable Breakfast at which NCTE presented ten awards this year.

Affiliates must submit applications and documentation for the awards around May and are usually notified in the fall. This year TCTELA received the highest honor for the sixth year, the NCTE Affiliate Excellence Award, which recognizes affiliates that meet high standards of performance for affiliate programming to promote improvement in the teaching of English language arts. This award is given to as many affiliates as qualify and affiliates may win the award each year.

TCTELA also received recognition for its two outstanding publications. The Texas Voices newsletter won the Affiliate Newsletter Award, and the English in Texas journal received Honorable Mention. The organization strives to deliver scholarly articles and useful information for our members through these publications and is excited to have NCTE recognize the efforts of our volunteers. The winner is ineligible to participate the following year.

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Attending the NCTE conference is not all about meeting authors, mingling with other book junkies, and hearing inspirational keynotes. One of the most powerful moments at an NCTE conference happens when attendees see how theory can transform the way teachers assist students in classrooms. “Passionate, Savvy Writing Instruction: Preparing Teachers to Use Rhetorically Rich Approaches with ELL, Generation 1.5, and Bidialectal Writers” was one such session that provided this type of insight.

Christina Ortmeier-Hooper of the University of New Hampshire, Chicago high school teacher Maja Teref, and Melinda McBee Orzulak from Bradley University brought together three separate presentations that merged second-language theories and practices. From the three presentations, a seamless process for enhancing writing instruction for second or alternate-language learners emerged.

First: Stop and think! Ortmeier-Hooper shared that students who do not have Standard English as a primary language need to start writing as soon as possible. Teachers do not need to delay writing experiences until grammar and mechanics skills are mastered. These skills must be honed in the process of writing; waiting to write only disables writers. In addition, immersing ELL writers in writing experiences helps teachers to see that there is no one type of ELL writer. Just like every other writer, these students each have their own unique learning needs, and until they are in the moment of their own writing, teachers cannot see these individualized opportunities for instruction.

Second: Build on what they know! Teachers should learn about the literacy narratives of all students. Especially for speakers of other languages, this is important. Find out how they learned to read and write in their primary and secondary languages, learn about when they read and write and in what language they do it, and discover where they are expert readers and writers outside of academia. According to Ortmeier-Hooper, teachers can use this information to pinpoint “rhetorical fingerholds” that can be used as springboards for moving from low to high context writing. For example, students may write about how an injustice affected them personally and then move to how it could affect others in the classroom and then on to the effects on the community. Starting from their own experiences and then moving outside of themselves gives students a hold on which to grasp the concept.

Third: Remember that writing is a process for everyone! Learning to write in Standard English takes time. Teref told the participants that writers need time to “stew over their own writing.” They need to think before writing. Consider allowing students to submit proposals for writing. Talk and think with the students about the proposals. Give them time to talk and think about the proposal with peers. According to Teref, “there is no shortcut when it comes to thinking.” After thinking through the proposal, allow for multiple drafts of a piece in both the first and then second language. And, after each draft, talk and think some more. McBee Orzulak told listeners to be sure to “provide focused feedback about the various drafts rather than correcting everything.” Teachers have to be careful not to overwhelm writers with grammar, mechanics, and craft rules; teach them one at a time and through the process of writing.

Teaching these varied English language learners to become savvy writers should not be difficult; simply apply what is known about writing theory to practice. Just like we want writers to start with what they know, teachers must start with what is known as well.

Much more than just strategies and tools

By Jennifer Engle, Editor, Texas Voices

While many sessions at the National Council of Teachers of English Annual Convention feature strategies and applications to utilize in K-16 English classrooms, some sessions dedicate time and conversation to the research behind these tools and the leadership supporting the teachers.

Sessions denoted as a research strand allow for conversations on white papers in a roundtable setting which offers an opportunity for healthy discussion on important topics in the profession and networking with colleagues who share common interests. One such session, “A Dialogue About Literacy Educational Practice and Research in the Teaching of English(es): Emerging Directions and Possibilities”, explored topics on ‘languaging’, writing, religion, and race. Co-chairs of this event guided the outcomes so that there were effective, rich conversations and definite takeaways from the session.

The Conference on English Leadership sponsored sessions such as “Learning to Lead, Leading to Learn: Transforming Leadership and Literacies in a Diverse Society” which offered fifteen different roundtable options with topics ranging from small schools to technology to literacy in the content areas. The occasion to brainstorm and toss out questions to a new network imparts new knowledge and new connections.

The models used in these types of NCTE sessions could be very productive in faculty or district-wide meetings to disseminate information, inspire independent exploration, and stimulate effective collaboration.
What’s new in high school writing in Texas?
By Kay Shurtleff, Past President

**What’s old is new again.** If there is one thing teachers understand, it is change. The most resilient and flexible group of people on earth, teachers expect changes. At the state level, though, it can be hard to keep track of what changes occur. We offer this guide in the hope that our readers will find it a reliable quick reference to what is happening statewide in the teaching and assessment of writing.

**What is the new design of English I & II EOC?** The most obvious change is in the structure of the end of course STAAR for English I and English II. (Remember, English III is now an optional assessment.) Both English I and II will contain combined writing and reading to make one 5-hour test. One of the changes that makes this possible is the removal of the field test writing prompt, which eliminates the requirement for students to write an “extra” full essay which is not scored. (Note: the field test writing prompt for 7th grade writing has also been removed.) See TEA’s new, updated website for an updated test schematic for English I and English II.

**What about field tests?** That’s a return to the old as well. Beginning in 2017 and every three years thereafter, TEA will conduct a field test with limited campuses.

**What about connecting reading and writing?** The new design (or return to the former design) can help reinforce to students the ways that reading and writing are inexorably linked. A careful comparison of the writing rubric to question stems from the reading part of the STAAR further cements this connection. Like other ESCs and districts, Region 10 ESC has developed tools to help make that connection concrete for students and teachers. These tools are free and accessible to anyone. (To access them, start here: http://olc.region10.org/catalog/ Click “Resources” and then “STAAR.” Next click “STAAR Analysis Tools” and then “View this Resource.” A login page may appear, but you may access the resources by selecting “Guest.” Then click “Reading/Writing Connection Charts.”)

**What is Write for Texas?** There are also other state resources available to support writing teachers. A recent state initiative, Write for Texas, is providing writing coaches to support teachers in selected campuses throughout the state. Available to every district is the web site which houses resources for teaching everything from sentence skills to writing expository text summaries. The resource is designed for use in all content areas and is available here: www.writefortexas.org

**Good writing is still good writing.** As happens every year, educators face changes in policies and procedures. What never changes, though, is good writing and solid instruction. Whatever the initiative, whatever the test design, whatever the passing standard, one thing remains: the single most important factor in the classroom is the teacher. Keep adjusting to the changes and keep doing the right thing. Where would the kids be without you? Kay.Shurtleff@region10.org

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**CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS**

**Review the submission guidelines at http://www.tctela.org/english-in-texas/**

**Publication:** English in Texas Volume 45.1 [SPRING/SUMMER 2015]

**Theme:** Recording the past and composing the future

**Call for Professional Submissions (Deadline: April 1st, 2015):**

2015 marks the 50th anniversary of English in Texas. It just so happens that fifty years ago, in 1965, The Sound of Music won an academy award for Best Picture. The Beatles’ songs, “Help!” and “Yesterday” were at the top of the charts.

With the recent focus on multimodal literacies, research continues to support the link between music and literacy learning. Music has the potential to accelerate learning, increase self-esteem, and improve memorization skills. Music also has the power to elevate students’ math and reading skills and leverage learning in other fields of study.

In this 50th Year Anniversary Issue, we are looking for manuscripts that speak to the ways that teachers use music and the performance arts to leverage literacy learning. In that regard, how have you used music to enhance students’ literacy or to connect with new concepts? Have you drawn on music or performance art to help students engage with plot, theme, or literary devices? How have music or the arts enhanced the teaching of writing in your classroom? Perhaps you have used drama to teach emotional intelligence or reading fluency. In what other ways have you incorporated music or drama into your classroom?

The hills are alive with many possibilities for music and theater. Take a look back at “Yesterday” to find ways to compose the future of teaching. We all need a little “Help!” from our friends and colleagues and would love to share your expertise in this 50th anniversary edition of English in Texas.

**Call for Student Submissions (Deadline: March 15th, 2015):**

Many people feel a strong connection to music from an early age. Almost any component of literacy can be put into musical format, from learning texts and poems to any form of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. We invite students to think of ways that music or the arts have been incorporated into your English classrooms. How has this inclusion of the arts helped you make connections to content? Describe any ways that music, drama, or the arts have enhanced your interest in a topic. Also valuable are songs, poetry, or theatrical writings you have composed on your own or for class project or presentation.

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Two Austin Teachers Receive Statewide Award

Humanities Texas is pleased to announce that Melissa Dupre and Valerie Taylor of Austin have been named as recipients of the 2014 Outstanding Teaching of the Humanities Award.

State Senator Kirk Watson and Humanities Texas Executive Director Michael L. Gillette will present Ms. Dupre and Ms. Taylor with their awards on Thursday, December 4, at Westlake High School in Austin.

Humanities Texas presents these awards annually to Texas classroom teachers who have made exemplary contributions in teaching, curriculum development and extracurricular programming. Over five hundred teachers across the state were nominated for the 2014 awards.

Both Ms. Dupre and Ms. Taylor teach English at Westlake High School and are regularly involved in campus activities, as well as state and national teaching organizations such as the Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts and the National Council of Teachers of English.

“Mrs. Dupre and Mrs. Taylor are immensely deserving of this recognition,” said Westlake High School Principal John Carter. “These two professionals give extensively of themselves on a daily basis to ensure that their students develop academic, social and emotional skills through the study of English. Every year, students return to our school from their post-secondary experiences to sing the praises of these two teachers ... I am honored to work with them on a daily basis and am grateful to Humanities Texas for recognizing their excellence.”

With innovative lessons and methods to engage and instruct students and a continued dedication to professional development, Ms. Dupre and Ms. Taylor demonstrate what it means not only to teach effectively, but also to encourage students to develop a love of learning and a genuine interest in literature.

Their influence on students can be felt beyond the classroom experience. “I feel I am helping students learn more about being human as they discover ways to express themselves more effectively in their writing and as they learn to connect with the ideas of other writers,” said Ms. Taylor.

Ms. Dupre remarked that her senior English seminar students “often marvel at their new interest in literature and the shift of their own perspectives to the larger world. They discuss books and issues with enthusiasm and respect.”

“We are pleased to recognize both Ms. Dupre and Ms. Taylor as outstanding teachers of the humanities,” said Humanities Texas Executive Director Michael L. Gillette. “Both instill the joys of learning in their students and motivate them to achieve at high levels.”

Both Ms. Dupre and Ms. Taylor will receive a $5,000 cash award, with an additional $500 for Westlake High School to purchase instructional materials.

Humanities Texas is the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Its mission is to advance education through programs that improve the quality of classroom teaching, support libraries and museums and create opportunities for lifelong learning for all Texans.

Humanities Texas is currently accepting nominations for the 2015 Outstanding Teaching Awards. Additional information about Humanities Texas and its teacher award program is available at www.humanitiestexas.org.

For questions related to this press release please contact Liz James, coordinator of educational programs at Humanities Texas at ota@humanitiestexas.org or 512.440.1991.

Creating the literate adults that democracy demands

By Cindy Benge, President-Elect

In their 2014 NCTE session, “The Literacy Democracy Demands,” authors and literacy advocates Carol Jago, Penny Kittle, and Kelly Gallagher demonstrated instructional techniques for helping students to be critical readers of the informational texts that they will have to be able to navigate in order to participate as informed citizens in a democracy. These texts are not limited to narrative texts in traditional media formats, but also seemingly limitless messages in the mainstream media and messages posted on social media that include images as well as words.

Jago began by stating that teachers had to help students to understand that argument must be taught in a much broader format than pro or con. In order to illustrate this point, Jago used several texts created in the aftermath of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill—two different photographs of a seagull covered in thick, black crude oil taken immediately after the spill and a public relations commercial produced by BP after the clean-up had begun. Participants discussed who had created these images and why, the techniques that were used to establish the message, the points of view presented, and the lifestyle and values that were promoted.

Similar to Jago in her approach, Kittle used a television spot aired during the recent election. Audience members discussed the content of the ad and then viewed it again, the second time looking carefully at who funded the advertisement and why they might be an advocate for the candidate. Kittle also advocated for the use of the books Juvenile Injustice and Savage Inequalities as texts that should be used with adolescents to help them become more critical in their reading and aware of the messages within texts.

Gallagher used President Obama’s speeches and explained how he has his students analyze the text, looking for what the speech says
Scholastic Art & Writing Awards: Honoring young artist and writers
By Regina Chanel Rodriguez, Ph.D., Coastal Bend Writing Project

For many, fall marks the time of year when the sweltering heat of summer cools to a bearable temperature; the leaves change from rich greens to fiery hues of yellow, orange, and red; and students count down the days until Thanksgiving break. Fall also marks the beginning of the entry period for the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, whose online submission system opened September 15th. The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards were founded in 1923 as a way to inspire and honor the creative work of teens throughout the country. Notable past winners include: Andy Warhol, John Lithgow, Sylvia Plath, Robert Redford, Truman Capote, and many more.

Eligible Works
Students in grades 7-12 are welcome to submit writing in the following categories: Critical Essay, Dramatic Script, Flash Fiction, Humor, Journalism, Personal Essay/Memoir, Poetry, Science Fiction & Fantasy, Short Story, & Writing Portfolio. Students in grades 7-12 are welcome to submit art from the following categories: Architecture, Ceramics & Glass, Comic Art, Design, Digital Art, Drawing and Illustration, Fashion, Film & Animation, Jewelry, Mixed Media, Painting, Photography, Printmaking, Sculpture, & Art Portfolio. In addition to the standard categories, there are also special categories and sponsored awards: Best-in-Grade, Creativity and Citizenship, Duck Tape Brand Award, Future New, Gedenk Award, Novel Writing, & Video Games. To enter a submission for one of your students in any of the above categories, simply go to artandwriting.org and create an account. (Educator accounts must be re-created every year). As an educator, you can sign up individual students, or you can have students sign themselves up and select you as an educator.

Submission Deadlines
Deadlines vary by region. Some areas require entries to be submitted by early December and others have submissions open until the first week in January. To determine your region’s deadline, go to artandwriting.org, select “Local Guidelines & Deadlines,” and enter your school’s zip code on the right side of the screen. This will also give you the address of where to send student submissions. Please note that each individual category submission must include a $5 entry fee ($20 for portfolio) and a permission form (which can be printed from the website once a work is uploaded) signed by the educator, the student and the parent. Students for whom submission fees would be a barrier may submit a fee waiver (available on the website) with their entries.

Adjudication Process
Local NWP-Affiliated writing projects and other literary and visual organizations from around the country help the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers score the hundreds of thousands of entries from America’s innovative youth. The adjudication process takes place in January and the award recipients are posted on the artandwriting.org website by mid-February. At the regional level approximately 10-15% of works submitted receive Honorable Mention, 7-10% receive Silver Keys, and 5-7% receive Gold Keys. Students honored with Gold Key Awards automatically advance to the national level of competition. Approximately 10-15% of Gold Key recipients will receive national recognition and are invited to the National Celebration Events in New York City in Summer 2015. If your organization is interested in helping with the adjudication process, please contact Sazia Afrin, Program Coordinator Region-at-Large, safrin-intern@scholastic.com, 212-389-3939, for more information.

Do not miss out on this wonderful opportunity to recognize and inspire student artists and writers. For more information, visit the official Alliance for Young Artists & Writers, Scholastic Art & Writing Awards website at artandwriting.org.
reginachanel@gmail.com

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Creating the literate adults that democracy demands
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as well as what the speech does not say so that students are more capable of reading the subtext within the messages they hear and read. To demonstrate one way that the media can manipulate viewers with a subtext, Gallagher shared a Fox News chart illustrating the goals for Obama Care that used a distorted bar graph that did not reflect the correct percentages and, therefore, left the viewer with an incorrect impression of the goals that had been met.

Although the texts that were used for their demonstrations were selected by the teachers, both Kittle and Gallagher also strongly advocated for student choice in reading as an integral part of creating readers who will be up to the task of participating in a democracy. Gallagher, who previously suggested a lower percentage of self-selected reading, now recommends that 75% of the reading completed for class should be self-selected by the students. Although Kittle did not specify the percentage of self-selected texts versus teacher-selected texts, she did voice her objection to the lack of student choice, sharing the following question and answer recently posted on social media: How do you kill a young reader? Enroll him or her in an American high school.
On November 21, 2014 at the NCTE Annual Convention in Washington, D.C., Stephanie Harvey and Ann Goudvis presented a session entitled “Thinking Intensive Learning: Close Reading Is Strategic Reading.” Based on their new book, Colonial Times: Short Nonfiction for American History (1600-1750), Harvey and Goudvis showcased a variety of nonfiction texts for American History along with a few lessons on how to help students strategically “read and write like historians.” This session was especially important in contributing to the understanding of disciplinary literacy and how to help students become strategic readers and writers across the content areas.

During the presentation, Harvey reviewed the importance of close reading and the meaning of text complexity. She reminded teachers that text complexity is more than just lexicon scores, challenging vocabulary, or understanding a variety of text structures. Text complexity has as much to do with what IS NOT IN THE TEXT as it does with what IS NOT IN THE TEXT. In other words, when teachers choose complex texts for their students to read, they must consider the strategies students need in order to make meaningful inferences and text-to-world connections. Harvey explained, “The more complex the text, the more complex the thinking, the more strategic the reader must be.”

Goudvis connected the importance of text complexity and close reading to historical literacy. She pointed out four generative practices essential to helping students comprehend historical texts: 1) Interact with multiple texts such as personal narratives, articles, visual representations and other primary and secondary sources to build knowledge. 2) Encourage students to ask authentic questions that lead to thoughtful, purposeful reading. Provide time and space for students to search for answers to their questions and present their learning to others. 3) Evaluate authors’ purpose, point of view, and biases. Provide students with tools to question and interpret texts and take a skeptical stance with all sources they encounter. 4) Design instruction that helps students infer big ideas and consider complex questions found in historical texts. Harvey and Goudvis concluded with the important reminder that when educators teach for historical literacy, they bridge foundational literacy practices with thoughtful resources in a content-rich curriculum and help students draw on thinking strategies that extend across the curriculum (Goudvis & Harvey, 2012).

To learn more about how to teach historical literacy and help students become strategic readers and writers, educators can visit their website http://stephanieharvey.com/lassaf@txstate.edu

References

Books and authors galore!
By Margaret Hale, Ed. D., NCTE/SLATE Liaison

The Assembly on Literature for Adolescents for NCTE (ALAN) workshop this year began like every other – registrants checking in and receiving their 40 lb. box of books (donated by publishers). Each person luggered their box (some had help) into the enormous ballroom at the National Harbor Gaylord Resort and began unpacking the box to see what treasures it contained. One collection (now stacked and waiting to be read at home) contained these titles:

With audience members hidden behind their stacks of books, the day began with a keynote by Libba Bray, celebrated author of many books for teens including Beauty Queens, A Great and Terrible Beauty, and The Diviners. Bray encouraged the group to stop genderizing books by labeling them girl books or boy books. When a teen is told that a certain book is a “girl book,” the message is in essence that half of the population does not matter.

On day one the audience also heard from Arin Andrews, author of the memoir Some Assembly Required: The Not-So-Secret Life of a Transgender Teen, and Katie Rain Hill, author of Rethinking Normal: A Memoir in Transition, both of whom were accompanied by their mothers. Susan Kuklin, author of Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out, also spoke as part of this panel. This group of authors and parents opened attendees’ eyes to the struggles that transgendered teens experience. Not only do their friends misunderstand them, but often their families do as well. Arin and Rain’s mothers shared with the gathered group their own learning through this process. One important lesson they both learned was that being transgendered is not at all about the act of sex, something they both once believed. Instead they both realized at different points in the process that it is much more about who the person is on the inside.

Day two began with a sense of quiet as everyone in the room sat absorbing the impact of the Ferguson verdict announced the previous evening. The first panel was the perfect antidote as it brought to the stage authors Christopher Paul Curtis (Elijah of Buxton and many others) and Coe Booth (Tyrell and others) in conversation. They opened their panel by discussing their work in relation to the events in Ferguson, a great way to begin that particular day. Curtis stated that, “We are published African-American authors; we do have a
STUDENT RESEARCH PAPER PACKET

Explanation, Steps, & Resources

To participate in the Texas Youth Institute, students research a global challenge and write a two to three page paper with the guidance of a teacher mentor at their high school. The 2015 Texas Youth Institute is scheduled for March 4, 2015 at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo in Houston, Texas. The research paper is due in January 30, 2015 online.

Further details and instructions for the paper can be found online at www.worldfoodprize.org/texas. Please read the complete instructions to ensure eligibility. For questions, please contact Dr. Danielle Harris at danielleh@tamu.edu or call at (979)845-3712.

EXPLORE

• Choose a country and a critical global challenge to research.
• Propose your own solution to the challenge in a country of your choice.
• Discover careers paths and opportunities in STEM, food, agriculture, and policy.
• Analyze how global trends shape a nation and affect the citizens of that nation.

ENGAGE

• Present your ideas to fellow students and experts who are working to solve these real-world problems every day.
• Participate in interactive, hands-on experiments and simulations led by professors and faculty.
• Connect with peers who want to change the world.
• Immerse yourself in interactive activities to experience firsthand what it would be like to study and work in these fields.

EARN

• Qualify for international internships, paid fellowships at the USDA, and other exciting opportunities to fight hunger.
• Gain valuable feedback and life-changing experiences with world-renowned experts.
• Network with global leaders in science, industry and policy, and receive personalized feedback on your research papers.

STEPS TO COMPLETING THE RESEARCH PAPER

STEP 1:
Select a country as the focus of your research

STEP 2:
Select one key factor affecting food security

STEP 3:
Answer the listed questions to develop your paper

STEP 4:
Ask a mentor to help review and edit your paper

STEP 5:
Submit the paper online with your mentor
Papers rustle as students take their assigned spots. A boy pulls a well-worn sports novel from his backpack, his destiny as a “Crutcher, de la Peña, Dueker” fan sealed within the next few pages. Others see the book, shush their neighbors, and repeat the dig for their own novels within their backpacks. Within a matter of minutes, seventeen sophomores sit, confined to a desk, but lost in a world outside of Room 320. This is my life. This is the magic I have the privilege to witness five times per day, five days a week.

I doubted that this style of teaching which worked so well in my 8th grade ELA classroom for so many years would work in the confines of the high school English II and Pre-AP English II setting. I had a block schedule with my 8th graders, seeing them twice a day. Conversely, I would see my sophomores once per day, most of them, with the exception of one class, only four days per week.

Was there time to confer about reading? Would there be time to discuss their writing individually? I questioned other seasoned high school teachers. While I consistently heard, “Yes! You can make reading/writing workshop work,” I continued to doubt. Would high schoolers even respond to this type of teaching? Would they expect more direct instruction? Would I have to figure out how to be the “sage on the stage” again?

School started two weeks ago. Tomorrow will be the second full week. A Friday, thank goodness! Yes, I’m exhausted, but, more importantly, reading/writing workshop shows promise. One girl finished her book today, and, as we walked down the hallway together, she said, “I’m really not a reader, but this book just hooked me.” Yes, dear, and you are now a reader. I said nothing, but I know different. That book will be her warm fire in the dead of winter, her watermelon of the dog days of summer, her favorite worn blanket from her childhood. That book will be the book that more books will stand upon in this coming year. It wasn’t a classic. It’s not on the AP Reading List. It’s not written by a Newbery-Winning author. It’s a simple book with a story that pushed this girl off the edge, and, now, she IS a reader. Nothing is different between 8th graders and sophomores when it comes to that one book that snags them: that individual book soon holds all the promise in the world for that child.

Next week we’ll set new reading goals. We’ll begin a new piece of writing. We’ll read a short story. In the midst of all of this, if I listen closely, I’ll hear the magical sound of books summoning my sophomores, pulling them into the pages, making them readers for life.

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This is the first blog entry this school year from minningthemagic. Visit the site to read more posts from Katrina Gonzales.
Books and authors galore!

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responsibility,” to which he received a round of applause. Coe Booth shared that when she was growing up, she wanted to be the black Judy Blume!

The group was treated to many more authors throughout day two, and many more books. At the end of the day, Little Brown Books for Young Readers’ Director of School and Library Marketing, Victoria Stapleton, left the audience pondering the future of young adult literature. She helped them see that “there is a visitor in the house of YA, and they are adults,” after citing statistics indicating that 55% of young adult literature is purchased by those 18 and older. She encouraged members of ALAN to consider what they can do to ensure that young adult literature is still around ten years from now.

All told, it was a whirlwind two days filled with tons of books, tons of authors, and tons of talking points. To see a recap of the two days, visit the Storify created by Dr. Karin Perry of Sam Houston State University at https://storify.com/karinperry/alan14-day-2. grithale@aol.com

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Your Career
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