



A BCTF PROVINCIAL SPECIALIST ASSOCIATION

BC Teachers of English Language Arts

IN THIS ISSUE

President's Greeting

by Kyla Hadden

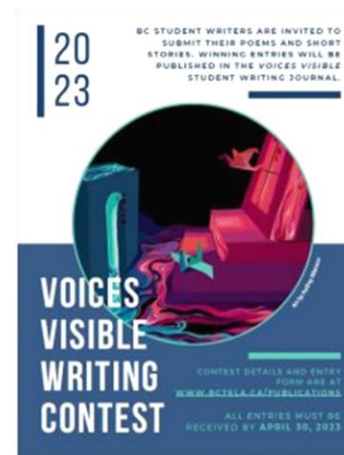
Hello BCTELA Members,

I hope the 2022-23 school year has been going well for all of you. We are more than halfway to the finish line, with many of our Secondary colleagues having just passed the turnabout into their second semester and our primary colleagues reaching the 100th day of school.

Your BCTELA executive has been working hard to plan a few exciting events for you. In addition to our regular opportunities like our student writing contest, *Voices Visible*, our professional journal, *English Practice*, and (of course) our provincial October conference, we have an exciting new mini conference coming up in May. **This New Media Journalism mini conference** will be co-hosting by BCTELA and SFU and will take place on **May 13th**. Participant spaces will be limited. Mark your calendars and stay tuned for more information.

If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to reach out via [Twitter](#) (yes, we're still there), [Facebook](#), or [email](#). We love having conversations about English Language Arts-related things. Our Facebook page is a rich resource of teaching experience; and I encourage you to pop in there and start a conversation or add your thoughts to an existing thread. This challenging profession is a lot easier if we work as a collective.

I'm so glad you're here with us. Your choice to invest in your BCTELA membership—whether you're reading this newsletter and staying in the loop, writing a piece for *English Practice*, or submitting a session proposal for the October conference—enriches your practice and ELA teaching across BC.



April 30th: Submit your students' writing to *Voices Visible*



May 13th: Save the date for our New Media Journalism mini conference, co-hosted with SFU & stay tuned for more info.

Meet your new BCTELA executive

Name: Kyla Hadden

School District: #83 North Okanagan-Shuswap

Current teaching assignment: Secondary humanities and textiles

Recent lesson: Descriptive paragraphs about homemade chocolate chip cookies with my Composition 10 class.

Joyful activities outside of school: Travel and knitting.

A recent good read: *The Firekeeper's*

Daughter by Angeline Boutley is an exploration of what it means to be of mixed ancestry wrapped in a mystery novel. **Three-word review:** insightful, compelling, joyful.

Name: Neelam Brach

School District: Surrey/SD36

Current teaching assignment: Senior English (Composition 11 and ES 12)

Recent lesson: One of my goals for this semester is to bring life into my classroom; I've quite literally done so with a unit featuring poetry and plants! As a fun way to wrap up my poetry unit, I had my students write their favourite line of their poem on a clay plant pot, paint and decorate it, and plant a flower/plant/seed of their choice! I like to call this "planting poetry"!

Joyful activities outside of school: In my spare time I practice yoga on a daily basis and when the weather permits it, I go on hikes with my goldendoodle, Moose.

A recent good read: *Blue Lock* (manga).

Author: Muneyuki Kaneshiro and illustrated by Yusuke Nomura.

Three-word review: soccer, survival, growth.

Name: Elise Costa

School District: Burnaby SD 41

Teaching assignment: P/T Secondary teacher, P/T District SOGI Support Teacher

Joyful activities outside of school: I attend as many concerts as possible because live music fuels me.

A recent good read: *Shuggue Bain* by Douglas Stuart. **Three-word review:** Raw, authentic, heartbreaking.

Name: Kyle McKillop

School District: Surrey (#36)

Teaching assignment: ELA 9-12

Recent lesson: My teaching partners and I just guided 77 grade 9s through writing and performing a play that showed their understanding of power and reclaimed identity (and a ton of cross-curricular skills) for an audience of grade 6/7s and parents.

Joyful activities outside of school: Gardener and dog dad

A recent good read: *Wayi Wah!* By Jo

Chorna. **Three-word review:** Powerful, profound, essential.

Name: Adrienne McChesney

School District: Burnaby (SD #41)

Current teaching assignment: Secondary English [English 9, English 12, New Media 11: Film Studies, Literary Studies 11: English Literature (Enriched), and Advanced Placement English Literature & Composition 12]

Recent lesson: My Film Studies class recently explored the theme of social inequality in *Snowpiercer* and *Parasite* by Korean director Bong Joon-Ho.

Joyful activities outside of school: Reading and travel bring me great joy!

A recent good read: *Cloud Cuckoo Land* by Anthony Doerr - A novel about reaching for utopia and then choosing to return home to appreciate life's simple pleasures. **Three-word review:** family, friendship, and a connection to the land.

Name: Shelley van Erp

School District: SD 91 Nechako Lakes

Current teaching assignment: Social Justice 12, ES 12

Recent lesson: Exploring Worldview using Creative Non-Fiction. How does your family's story demonstrate worldview?

Joyful activities outside of school: Hanging with the grandkids in the garden and on the farm!

A recent good read: *Eating on the Wild Side* by Jo Robinson. **Three-word review:** Informative, interesting, indispensable.

Name: Amber Norris

School district: SD41 (Burnaby)

Current teaching assignment: EFP 10, EFP 11, Sports Council 8-12, Athletic Director (all sports), AP Coordinator

A recent lesson topic: We looked at a resource, Indigenous History in Burnaby (from Burnaby Village Museum and the City for Burnaby) The students were able to learn what existed before the arrival of settlers and really get a feel for colonization, the changes made and the treatment of the people of whose land we are now working, learning, and living on.

Joyful activity outside of school: I know I should say read, but I really like hanging out with family and watching movies. 😊

Recent good read: *The Foghorn Echoes* by Danny Ramadan. **Three-word review:**

Touching, entertaining, educational

Name: Michelle Miller-Gauthier

School District: Nechako Lakes SD 91

Current teaching assignment: District Literacy & Inquiry Support Teacher

Recent lesson: Strengthening descriptive narrative storytelling through images

Joyful activities outside of school: Snowshoeing

A recent good read: *What Happened to You* by Dr. Bruce Perry & Oprah Winfrey

Three-word review: relationship, recalibrate, curiosity.

Name: Celia Brogan

School District: SD 71 (Comox Valley)

Current teaching assignment: TOC (I recently moved from Vancouver, where I was an elementary teacher-librarian)

Recent lesson: A recent favourite project was a Media Studies "Rabbit Hole" assignment where my gr 6/7s started with a CBC news article and laid their own breadcrumb path as they followed emergent questions through different media, analyzing source reliability.

Joyful activities outside of school: I sing in a choir, and I've recently gotten into fermenting. I also play ultimate frisbee and do a lot of baking, knitting, and reading.

A recent good read: *Octavia's Brood: science fiction stories from social justice movements* eds Adrienne Maree Brown and Walidah Imarisha. **Three-word review:** imagination, visionary, revolutionary.

Resource: Infusing Indigenous Texts in the classroom

by: Celia Brogan

This website was developed by the ARPDC to support K-12 teachers as we strive to infuse our programs with indigenous texts in meaningful and respectful ways. It includes Q&A videos, slide decks for professional learning, learning guides, book talks, and annotated book lists, and was developed as a collaboration between ARDPC consultants and Tł̓ch̓q Dene Author, Storyteller, and Educator, Richard Van Camp.

Highlights include the sections titled “Cultures of Belonging” and “Instructional Design” under Classroom Supports, and the tired Foundational Knowledge section.

While this is not a BC resource, there are many opportunities here to deepen our learning and teaching practice. You should check it out.



CHECK IT OUT!

There is so much on offer on the this website. Have fun exploring!

<https://empoweringthespirit.ca/>

Your new BCTELA executive

Continued from page 2

Name: Shannon Daly

School District: Richmond (SD38)

Current teaching assignment: Teacher Consultant for Assessment and Literacy

Recent lesson: We just organized a workshop on Building Community in the Classroom. We looked at how we might collectively work towards creating spaces of safety and belonging so that students are able to learn whole-heartedly.

Joyful activities outside of school: I have been learning how to throw pottery on the wheel. My recent efforts are approaching symmetry...

A recent good read: *The Crossing* by Elly Griffiths. **Three-word review:** Atmospheric, sinister, fun! (I liked it so much that I immediately read the next four in the series.)

Name: Melissa Reeves

School District: District 22 (Vernon)

Current teaching assignment: A mix of grade 8, 11, and 12 in English, EFP, and Contemporary Indigenous Studies

Recent lesson: A recent lesson/unit I did that I loved was teaching I am Malala to my grade 8s and using it to spark a lot of thoughtful conversation. The text allowed us to work on English curriculum outcomes but also on our personal and social core competencies with

very positive results.

Joyful activities outside of school: I spend time with my cats and husband, or I coach grade 8 sports teams (brings me joy but definitely not in my skillset!), or knit in straight lines only!

A recent good read: *True Biz* by Sara Novic.

Three-word review: captivating, mysterious, representative! (Deaf culture, written by a deaf author!)

Name: Beverly Jones

School District: University of the Fraser Valley

Current teaching assignment: Upgrading English 064, 071, 081, 091 (equivalent to English 9-12)

Recent lesson: Next week, we'll explore Tony Hoagland's "Grammar" through dialectical journals and a Socratic seminar.

This poem often initially seems incomprehensible to students before becoming a favourite. Who knew that conjugated verbs could be so racy and that grammar is such a good metaphor for the challenges most of us have in understanding and navigating love and relationships?

Joyful activities outside of school:

Paddleboarding, camping, Earl Grey tea

A recent good read: *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig. **Three-word review:** [the] beauty [of] ordinary life.

Name: Belinda Chi

School District: Burnaby, SD 41

Current teaching assignment: District Learning Lead

Recent lesson: In a grade 4/5 class, we worked on unpacking the First Peoples Principles of Learning with connections to self. Students demonstrated their thinking through writing and drawings.

Joyful activities outside of school: I love baking!

A recent good read: *Beyond the Gender Binary* by Alok Vaid-Menon. **Three-word review:** Empowering, intersectionality, social movement.

Name: Bryan Gindinski

School District: Burnaby, SD 41

Current teaching assignment: Learning Lead for Literacy, SOGI, Inclusive Ed, and Assessment and Reporting

Recent lesson: Lately we've been exploring using Picture Books as provocations to simultaneously affirm identities and inform about identities.

Joyful activities outside of school: Textile Arts, Pottery, Soccer and Kayaking

A recent good read: *A Mind Spread Out on the Ground* by Alicia Elliot. **Three-word review:** Masterful. Provocative. Powerful

The Performance of Pink: Some Reflections on Pink Shirt Day

by: Bryan Gindinski

The following is an excerpt of a blog post from Bryan's website, *LostBoysConsulting.com*

always find it difficult to articulate my feelings around Pink T-Shirt Day, but this year I thought it was worth the effort. Recently, I was involved in a seminar for Simon Fraser University Student Teachers in the Faculty of Education and someone posed the question: "How do you feel about days of recognition like Pink T-Shirt Day?"

If I'm being honest, I simultaneously hate them AND recognize the need for them. I'm networked to other LGBTQ+ advocates and activists who find the day cringe-worthy, and, for many of us, the day approaches with frustration and trepidation. Though well-intentioned, I struggle with the way that the day is often handled in schools. Lately, I have Lin-Manuel Miranda's song from "Encanto" in my head, but I've replaced the lyrics, "We Don't Talk About Bruno-no-no" with "We Don't Talk About Homo-pho-bia."

My frustration from days like Pink T-Shirt Day comes from the potentially performative aspect involved. I worked at a school that participated in a Pink T-Shirt Day flash mob

event. We rehearsed choreography to perform in the stands at a Vancouver Giants game (back when they hosted their games at The Coliseum). The opportunity to be part of a flash mob is a powerful thing. There is merit in the sense of community experienced as being part of a collective energy that is hard to capture in other contexts.

What I struggled with was the discrepancy between the number of hours invested in learning and practicing the dance in comparison to the amount of time spent developing understandings about the origins of the day or what we were attempting to communicate by participating. Even the song selection became quite sanitized, focusing on the inspirational, but somewhat superficial, and failing to centre the music of queer artists who might have commentary on the kind of bullying the day is supposed to address.

I was a student in the elementary schools that I now work in. I experienced the kind of bullying and harassment that Pink T-Shirt Day is a response to. While we have taken strides to make progress, I'm consistently reminded of how misconceptions about gender expression and sexual orientation are still as pervasive as they were when I was a student. I experienced homophobic harassment long before I understood or could articulate my own sexuality. So, it

wasn't even necessarily about being gay. It was about being perceived as being gay. A lot of boys who demonstrate stereotypically feminine traits or feminine preferences often have their masculinity and their sexuality questioned. These perceptions about their sexuality are often weaponized against them. Decades later, I still have very vivid memories of some of those exchanges, and the feelings associated with them. The incident in Nova Scotia in 2007, where a boy was subjected to homophobic taunts for wearing a pink shirt to school, prompting Travis Price and David Shepherd to take action is a fairly routine example of this.

We've all probably had those moments where we've felt guilt about interactions we've witnessed and lacked the courage to intervene. Those teens took action and should be applauded, but I struggle with the Random Acts of Kindness narrative attached to Pink T-Shirt Day. It wasn't a random act. It was a targeted and purposeful response with an objective. It was a product of observing hurt and isolation that conflicted with their values and that they wanted to do something about. It was a response to witnessing homophobic taunts and engaging in a peaceful and productive demonstration to combat that specific behaviour and to communicate a sense of "you are not alone" to the young boy who was targeted. When we don't include that part of the narrative, and we separate the victim from the event, we potentially end up with just another "saviour" narrative.

To read the rest of the article please go to <http://www.lostboysconsulting.ca/uncategorized/the-performance-of-pink/>

CONTEST ANNOUNCEMENT!

We want to hear from you!

As we look ahead to our provincial conference, coming up in October 2023, we invite you to let us know what would help you build the most beneficial professional learning experience on the PSA Day.

[Reach out to us via email](#) and 1) suggest a workshop or topic that you would like to see at the conference or 2) give us the name and contact information of a colleague that you think would be a good presenter at the conference (we will reach out to them via email).

Share your ideas with us at psac46@bctf.ca. We will draw from your contributions and award some fabulous professional reading material to the winning names (but really, everyone wins when we build great pro-d together.)

WRITE FOR *ENGLISH PRACTICE*, SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE, GROW AS A PROFESSIONAL

by former *English Practice* Editor Sara Davidson

What is *English Practice*?

English Practice is a peer-reviewed, open access, online publication. It is published one to two times annually and distributed to BCTELA members throughout British Columbia. It is also exchanged with other provincial specialist associations of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation and other specialist associations from across Canada.

Why write for *English Practice*?

As educators, we often lose touch with the experience of writing and sharing our work. Last fall, we worked with a group of educators to engage in some writing activities, and they informed us that they appreciated the opportunity to remember what it was like to write and to share their writing again. Writing for *English*

Practice allows you to authentically engage with the writing process and model this for your students.

Because the journal is published online and is open access, **it is a great way to share ideas with colleagues across British Columbia and Canada.** Often as educators we can become isolated in our classrooms and our practice, and we don't have the opportunity to share our best practices with others. This can be particularly true for educators in rural or remote settings, as they are often the only educator in their field at any given school. Connecting with our colleagues across the province allows us to exchange ideas and perspectives that are particularly relevant to teachers of English language arts.

Publishing in *English Practice* **may strengthen or diversify applications to Masters and Doctoral programs.** Because *English Practice* is peer-reviewed, you can also receive valuable

feedback on your submissions from other professionals in the field.

I want to be involved with *English Practice*, but I am uncomfortable writing...

You do not need to submit articles to be a part of *English Practice*. Here are some other ways to get involved:

- You can submit ideas that you have for articles and work with one of the co-editors to publishable quality
- You can submit original high resolution photographs to be featured on the cover or included throughout the journal
- You can join our editing circle and review articles
- You can spread the word and invite others to join us

For more information check out our webpage <http://bctela.ca/publications/english-practice/> or contact us at englishpracticejournal@gmail.com 📧

Voices Visible: BCTELA's Student Writing Contest

By *Voices Visible* Co-Editor Melissa Reeves

Voices Visible has been BCTELA's publication of student writing for over thirty years. Each year, teachers across British Columbia submit their students' writing and pieces are selected for publication. There is a Poetry category and a Prose category and each of these is separated by grade; this year the contest is open to BC students in grades 4 through 12.

English teachers, Writing teachers, Teacher-Librarians, Resource teachers, Elementary classroom teachers! Any BCTELA member can submit student writing to *Voices Visible*. The deadline for entry is **April 30th, 2023**. There is no limit to the number of pieces a student and [pieces can be submitted electronically](#).

This is a free contest open to students of BCTELA members. Students whose writing is chosen for publication will receive a copy of the *Voices Visible* Student Writing Journal as a celebration of becoming a published author. Members of BCTELA also receive this publication as part of their membership

benefits. Please note: student writing *must* be submitted by a current BCTELA member.

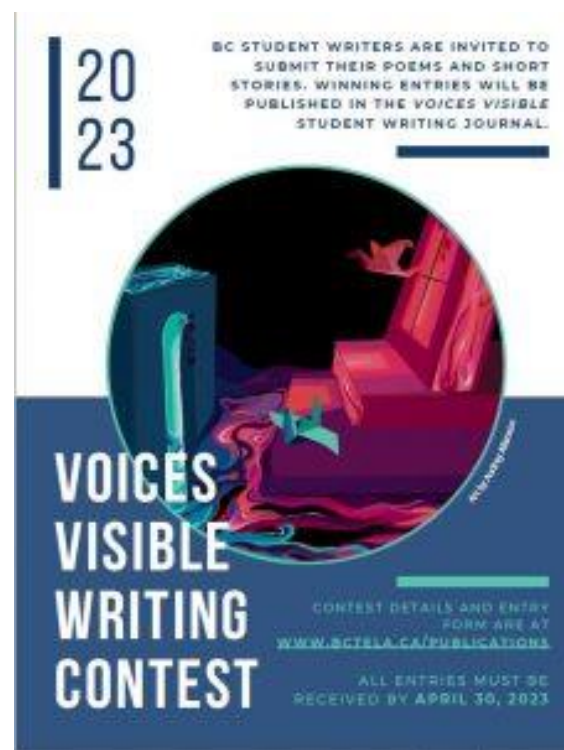
Preparing a written piece for submission is a great exercise for students to experience. Having their work published is awesome!

We look forward to reading your students' submissions!

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Go to the [BCTELA website](http://bctela.ca) to download the contest guidelines and entry cover sheet or follow the instruction for electronic submission. **Deadline for submissions is April 30th**

<http://bctela.ca/publications/>



Call for Articles for *English Practice: Evoking Harmony: Joy & Inspiration Through Convergence*

by BCTELA Journal Editors Belinda Chi & Elise Costa

Do you have great classroom ideas to share? Want to share your teaching practice? Tell us about the books you've been reading with your students! *English Practice* is looking for articles about ELA Teaching! We invite you to submit articles for our upcoming issue:

Evoking Harmony: Joy & Inspiration Through Convergence

Much of our planning and pedagogy is dedicated to creating the conditions for our students to find their sparks. Sometimes we hit the mark with an awesome unit. Often, though, it's a specific lesson, or text, or teaching moment that unlocks something for

a student. *English Practice* is an extension of the inspiration felt at our annual conference in that it's a wonderful way to continue our professional conversations.

In line with last Fall's BCTELA conference theme, *English Practice* invites you to submit teaching ideas, classroom inquiries and practice-focused research, reflective and critical narratives, poems, fiction and other arts-based renderings, as well as book reviews for our upcoming themed issue.

Entitled *Evoking Harmony: Joy & Inspiration Through Convergence*, this issue opens a space for exploration and conversation around how we can create learning environments that are developed through

relationships, honouring voices and mutual respect, in teaching English Language Arts.

Questions to consider:

How might we create safe spaces for students to have mutually respectful conversations?

What kinds of texts might we bring into our classrooms to ensure diverse voices are being represented and celebrated?

What are multi-modal ways students can demonstrate their thinking and learning?

How can we design our lessons to spark inspiration from various access points?

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Closing date: June 15th, 2023

Contact for questions and submissions:
Belinda Chi
englishpracticejournal@gmail.com

ONLINE AT WWW.BCTELA.CA
Or find us on Facebook!

English Practice, the journal of the BC Teachers of English Language Arts, is a peer-reviewed, open access, online publication.

Articles may be submitted under the following categories:

- Teaching Ideas (classroom lessons and strategies)
- Investigating our Practice (teacher inquiry)
- Salon (Literary & arts-based pieces)
- Check this Out (book reviews)

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