



A BCTF PROVINCIAL SPECIAL ASSOCIATION

BC Teachers of English Language Arts

IN THIS ISSUE

President's Greeting

by BCTELA President: Kyla Haddon

So much is planned for 2024!

How are we more than half-way through the 2023-24 school year? I swear we just wrapped up our October conference! For me, this year has made me feel a bit like a new teacher again with new reporting requirements and a change to how senior ELA courses are offered in my local. I am consistently reminded of the need to work together and support each other as we move forward.

This Spring, we will be offering a three-part virtual series exploring SOGI and ELA. This series will be free to all BCTELA members. We are happy to learn with Bryan Gidinski, Chanelle Tye, and Nisha Patel. Watch our website and social media accounts for more details and information on how to register.

The BCTELA book club will be running again this summer. Stay tuned for more information and a chance to win a few copies of a book.

Our October conference is quickly taking shape. We are very excited to welcome Michelle Good as our Keynote speaker at this year's fall conference. We are currently accepting workshop proposals. Information

about the conference and workshop proposals can be found on our website.

Finally, if you are interested in becoming more involved in BCTELA, please reach out to us: it's a chance to get into rich learning, connect meaningfully, and make a difference for our community. Plus, we have fun together! 📖



Voices Visible Deadline Apr 30th

BCTELA's student writing contest is open to young writers from grade 4 through 12. Entry is free to students of BCTELA members. (pg 4)



Enhanced pathways to SOGI ed.

This spring BCTELA presents a three-part series of virtual sessions on creative and practical ways to enhance your understanding about SOGI-inclusive education. You can sign up for free! (see pg 6)

Comments & the New Reporting Order

By BCTELA Past-president Kyle McKillop

I try in my classroom to practice student-centred assessment, using rubrics, goalsetting, conferencing, and self-generated marks with portfolios (physical or digital) to track student progress. The new reporting order hasn't changed how I share the resulting marks through MyEdBC, but it has changed how I share comments. I still want students to have that reflective opportunity and power, but I now need to get all that student-generated writing into MyEd instead of our portfolio app.

Along with my teaching partners, Kessey Jemmott and Manvir Mander, I decided to have students generate digital comments using Microsoft Forms; we tried it for the first time this semester. Where answers are most predictable or required, we decided to make the options clickable; where the answers are more individualized, we had students write their own text. The course is cross-curricular, but you can see an ELA-only version of our form, including a sample answer, here: <https://forms.office.com/r/EgXkipHeLG>
Our district asks for comments on a

curriculum-related strength, area for growth, and behaviour.

Once students complete their form, I can access the information through an automatically generated Excel sheet. I copy and paste answers into a document, and we discuss their answers as part of our grade

conferencing process. We can accept their answers verbatim or make corrections as needed, and we can immediately paste the comment into MyEd at the end of the conference. Done! It's been pretty smooth so far, and the form can be adjusted to meet student need by adding more or less choice in wording. 📖

Sample ELA Learning Update Reflection 2023

To prepare for your AMP report card, please complete the following questions thoughtfully. Note that your teachers will review your answers with you, and we will paste your accurate comments directly into your report card. Please write carefully, with precise spelling and punctuation.

This reflection is designed to be exported with complete sentences -- if you follow the directions! The final result will look like this:

McKillop, Kyle. One of my strengths is using imagery and figurative language. An example of this is when I used interesting images in Journal #2, including descriptive words about the smelt of the forest. I want to keep working on using Canadian spelling, grammar, and punctuation, by using commas to separate sentence clauses. I also want to try using semicolons to separate complete sentences. I've been late many times after lunch. I care about my work, but I can do better at helping my group focus when we're rehearsing.

1. Your last name:
Enter your answer

2. Your first name:
Enter your answer

3. **Understand & Communicate:** choose one of your strengths in this course.

- One of my strengths is looking at text critically, creatively, reflectively
- One of my strengths is planning, developing, and creating engaging texts for a specific audience
- One of my strengths is using imagery and figurative language
- One of my strengths is using Canadian spelling, grammar, and punctuation
- One of my strengths is collaborating to understand & build things together

Online Resources to Support ELA

by BCTELA President Kyla Haddon

I recently had the pleasure of presenting a workshop on this topic to some of our members.

Whether you are a new teacher, a new to ELA teacher, or a well-seasoned teacher like myself, the continual search for resources is one of the most time consuming pieces of teaching. Here are a few on-line resources that I find really useful:

Please note that these resources are not controlled by BCTELA and can change and evolve over time. Please use your professional

judgement and follow any resource guidelines from your district.

New York Times Learning Network

Pros - free once you sign-up, offers a wide variety of grade level and subject / content areas

Cons - American content, leans more towards intermediate/ secondary

Favourite feature - What's Going on in this Picture – practice questioning and inferring skills

Journal Buddies

Pros – grades 1-12, wide variety of ideas and prompts, searchable by grade

Cons – American content

Favourite feature – has exemplars for students' reference

Commonlit

Pros – free sign up, can add classes so students can work from home

Cons – American content, leans towards intermediate / secondary

Favourite feature – Text sets around essential questions 📖

A FEW OF NEELAM'S SNAPSHOTS



The PASS to everything

The colour-coded additions to the convention nametags function as a subtle way to “find your people” among the thousands of ELA teachers you pass while walking from session to session. For instance, only first-time attendees receive the yellow ribbon add-on.



Happy teacher

Neelam Brach poses in front of the NCTE display



Time to connect and debrief

Neelam, Elise, Sarah, Adrienne, and Brian out at supper. It's so great to go to this conference with colleagues because you can debrief everything you've learned and seen, which makes the experience all the richer.

A BCTELA delegation to NCTE

by Vice-president, Celia Brogan & the BCTELA delegates

This past November we were able to send members of the BCTELA executive to the National Council of Teachers of English annual convention. NCTE is the US national organisation, equivalent to BCTELA (but on a much larger scale.) I have been to NCTE before and it is a conference experience unlike any other.

Bryan

It was a treat to attend the annual NCTE conference with a delegation of BCTELA educators. The size of the conference alone was something to behold. The catalogue of available workshops / sessions was expansive and there were quite a range of options to choose from, prompting visitors to trek from one end of the Conference Centre to the other. It was interesting to attend a conference where people gather from different contexts in North America. The topic of censorship and book challenges came up in several conversations, and it was interesting to hear insights about how safe or unsafe educators felt to choose their resources and to offer diverse representations. Many authors offered sessions and were there to sign copies of their books, but the highlights of the conference for me were attending with colleagues and the closing keynote delivered by the inimitable Angie Thomas, author of “The Hate You Give,” whose commentary on resisting book banning and the importance of representation was inspirational.

Sarah

I have wanted to go to an NCTE conference my entire career, so I was delighted to attend the Ohio NCTE in Columbus with a cohort from BCTELA. It was a remarkable trip with many life-changing experiences: our group from BCTELA really connected about our learning each day and grew quite close. A highlight was going to The Book Loft bookstore together and sharing some wonderful meals. I found all of the

workshops very engaging, inspiring and transformative on some level. I also really loved the publishers to displays and thrill of lining up for so many free books all signed by the authors. It was great to connect with publishers and I thought about writing a book about teaching. It was wonderful meeting so many English teachers from across Canada and the US; it offered a unique perspective on our experience as educators in BC. As one colleague from the US put it: this conference is like Disneyland for teachers! It was an outstanding and unforgettable experience. I am very grateful to BCTELA for helping support me in going to this conference and I think I will save my pennies to go next year to the NCTE in Boston. Who knows, maybe I will present or write a book about my teaching experiences.

Adrienne

Imagine thousands of Language Arts teachers; hundreds of professional development sessions and workshops; dozens of authors reading and signing new works; row upon row of vendor booths stacked with books, books, books; and multiple keynote speakers, including the star-powered Tom Hanks! This was the 2023 NCTE conference last November in Columbus, Ohio, that I was lucky enough to attend with four of my BCTELA colleagues. The most helpful session I attended was on reading and writing strategies for teaching AP English Literature & Composition where I learned about #TeachLivingPoets, a project I will definitely be exploring next year with my senior classes. The energy and buzz of so many teachers in one building, all excited to share and learn together, was inspiring. It was a fantastic experience!

Continued from previous page.

Elise

I was fortunate enough to attend the NCTE conference this past November in Columbus, Ohio. To be honest, I didn't know much about the conference prior to attending but it turned out to be such a rich experience that I would encourage anyone who has the opportunity to attend at least once in their lifetime. The workshop offerings were vast and diverse, with AI, book banning, anti-racism and mental health being some of the hot topics. As a Canadian attending the conference, it quickly became apparent that the circumstances taking place in our country are vastly different to those of our neighbours in the south. I mention this because of course it has repercussions in the education system. In many workshops, I was left feeling so appreciative and grateful to work in a system that is not overwhelmed by restrictions and policing, where school shootings are not a monthly occurrence

and where I have incredible autonomy. The attendees were so friendly and beyond a newfound appreciation of our circumstances in BC, I left with some amazing book recommendations and rejuvenated passion for English Language Arts instruction.

Neelam

I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to attend the 2023 NCTE conference. This was an invaluable learning experience as a new teacher trying to find my teaching style and voice. During this conference, I explored a side of English I had never seen before in local conferences. Who would have thought that I could use anime and gaming in my English classrooms!? I'm currently working on collating all of my notes and resources into useable unit plans on a Google doc for all teachers to access and use. Feel free to send me an email to access these notes (it's a work

in progress so I'm not ready to publish it live): brach_n@surreyschools.ca 📧



32 rooms of books!

What to ELA teachers do in their spare time while traveling? Visit giant bookstores, of course!

Voices Visible: BCTELA's Student Writing Contest

Did you know that if you're a member of BCTELA you can submit your students' creative writing to *Voices Visible* for free? There is no limit to the number of students' pieces you can submit. It's a great way to provide a real-life purpose for a writing assignment, or to offer an extension for your ambitious budding writers.

Every student writer whose piece is selected for publication will receive a physical copy of this year's edition. They will see their name and work alongside other writers from across the province.

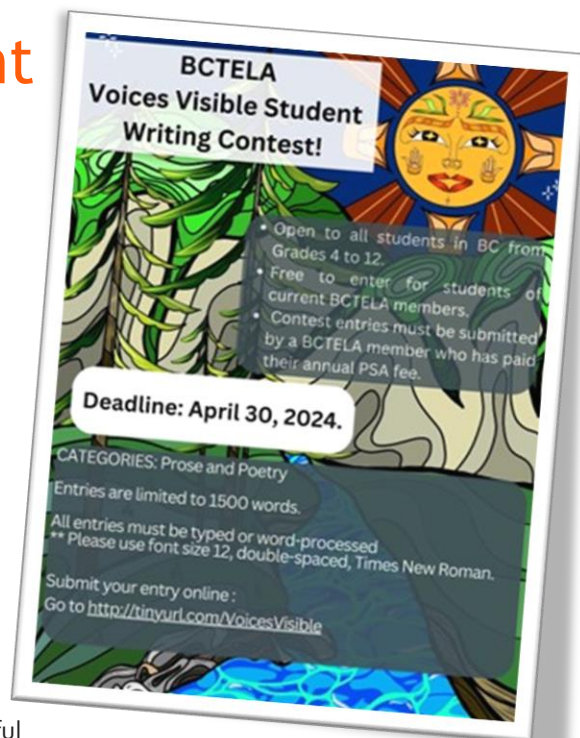
The contest is open to students in grades 4 through 12 with two categories: poetry and prose. Entries must be limited to 1500 words each.

In the past pieces had to be mailed in but now it's super easy with our online submission process. Check it out at

<http://tinyurl.com/VoicesVisible>

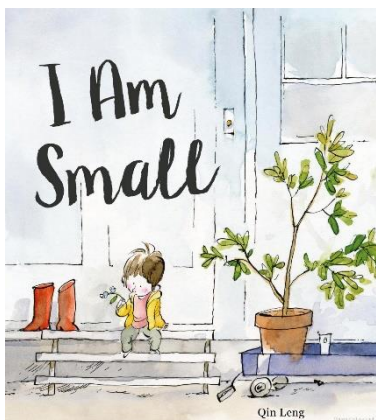
Remember that the submitting teacher must have paid their BCTELA dues for the current school year. If you attended the conference in October, you're all good.

Past issues of *Voices Visible* are also a great resource in a creative writing unit. They provide wonderful models of peers' writing and can be inspiring to students to see what's possible. 📖



Finding Gems that Represent our Learners

By Conference co-chair Belinda Chi



When I first saw this book by Qin Leng, I just had to pick it up. The title itself, *I Am Small*, instantly spoke to me because indeed, I am small. I am a petite sized human as some might say and being a teacher who usually

works with students in the intermediate grades, it is not uncommon that students tower over me.

I stood in the bookstore and excitedly read this book and each page resonated with me. It highlighted experiences from the character who felt small and illustrated moments of friends towering over them at school, always being front and centre for class pictures, and feeling lost in a crowd of people on a busy sidewalk. I could identify with each one of these moments, as I have experienced these myself in real life, as a child and as an adult.

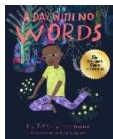
After I finished the book, I thought, I wish I had this book growing up. It would have made me feel seen and represented, as being small is a part of my identity and experiences in the world. As a Learning Lead in our

district, a couple of our team members and I have put together book kits for a project that we have titled: *Affirming Identities*. Within our kits, we have chosen picture books from diverse authors who have written books that highlight characters with a broad range of identities. Last year, we ran a series of workshops with the same title to share book ideas and lessons for teachers to try in their classroom. This year, we are presenting these book kits through Lunch & Learns at schools to encourage teachers to use more diverse texts in their teaching, with hopes that students will see representations of themselves in texts and learn more about identities outside of their own, with these picture books. 📖

Belinda is a district literacy lead in SD 41, Burnaby.

Affirming Identities Book Kit Titles

A Day with No Words - Tiffany Hammond



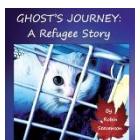
Always Anjali - Sheetal Sheth

Beautifully Me - Nabela Noor

Dancing with Daddy - Anitra Rowe Schulte

Everybody: A Celebration of Diverse Abilities - Shelley Rotner

Ghost's Journey: A Refugee Story – Robin Stevenson



Gibberish – Young Vo

Hair Love - Matthew A. Cherry

I Am Small by Qin Leng

I Sang You Down from the Stars - Tasha Spillet-Sumner

If You're a Kid Like Gavin - Gavin Grimm & Kyle Lukoff

In My World - Jillian Ma

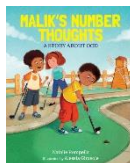
It Began with a Page: How Gyo Fujikawa Drew the Way - Kyo Maclear

Listen: How Evelyn Glennie, A Deaf Girl, Changed Percussion - Shannon Stocker

Love in the Library - Maggie Tokuda-Hall

Mae Among the Stars - Roda Ahmed

Malik's Number Thoughts: A Story About OCD - Natalie Rompella



My Day With Gong Gong words by Sennah Yee; pictures by Elaine Chen

Patchwork – Matt de la Pena

Ritu Weds Chandni - Ameya Narvankar

Sam's Super Seats - Keah Brown

The Arabic Quilt: An Immigrant Story - Aya Khalil

The Librarian of Basra: A True Story From Iraq - Jeanette Winter

Wishes - by Muon Thi Van

Crying in H Mart- Michelle Zauner



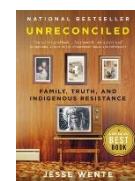
I've been meaning to tell you-David Chariandy

The Gender Creative Child: Pathways for Nurturing and Supporting Children Who Live Outside Gender Boxes - Diane Ehrensaft

Identity Affirming Classrooms: Spaces that Center Humanity – Erica Buchanan-Rivera

This is Your Brain on Stereotypes: How Science is Tackling Unconscious Bias- Tanya Lloyd Kyi & Drew Shannon

Unreconciled: Family, Truth, and Indigenous Resistance - Jesse Wentz



What Does Hate Look Like? - Sameena Jimenez and Corinne Promislow

Enhancing our SOGI-Inclusive Practices: Join us for a series of workshops

This spring BCTELA is proud to host a three-part series of after-school virtual workshops designed to open new pathways and enhance established practices to SOGI-inclusive education. The series is free to members so sign up now!

We hosted the first session, with **Brian Gidinski** on April 9th. There are two more coming up:

- April 9th - Bryan Gidinski
- April 30th - Nisha Patel
- May 14th - Chanelle Tye


The next session is with Nisha Patel: **Nisha Patel** is the Poet Laureate Emeritus of the City of Edmonton. An award-winning disabled and queer artist, she is a Canadian Poetry Slam Champion

and holds a Master of Arts in Cultural Studies from Queen's University. Her debut poetry collection, COCONUT (NeWest Press) was a finalist of the ABPA Regional Book of the Year. She is currently finishing her Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia, where she is writing her first graphic novel.

In her workshop, she is going to share one of her spoken word poems and provide information on social issues through writing. This will be adapted from the teaching resource on her website titled "*Spoken Word Lesson Plans for Alberta High Schools*" by Grayson Thate, Nisha Patel, and BiCurious George" but will be adapted for an audience of ELA teachers.

Our third session of this series is with Chanelle Tye. **Chanelle Tye** is an equity and inclusion facilitator, educator, curriculum designer, and coach who specializes in the areas of anti-racism and LGBTQ2SIA+ inclusion. Her use of humour and interactive participant engagement ensure safe learning environments for novices and experts in social justice issues. She brings a deep knowledge of the dynamics of power and privilege within educational, corporate, and institutional contexts.

Sessions will run 4:00-5:30 pm on Zoom.

You can sign up today by filling out this form: <https://forms.office.com/r/6srBRBLJ5U> or by emailing bctela@bctf.ca 

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