

ELA REPORTER



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YOUR PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERACY

Professional Learning for Rigorous Academic Writing

The changing landscape of teaching and learning compels us to deepen our instructional practices aimed at increasing student achievement. For the past year, our staff members have written various articles, offered research findings, and suggested timely resources that address the instructional shifts and increased focus on improving student writing. In a continued effort to support teachers in addressing the learning targets of the writing standards, we felt it a natural outgrowth to conduct professional learning to build teacher capacity in writing instruction. Accordingly, the GaDOE ELA staff, in collaboration with the 16 RESA Districts, has embarked upon a journey to help teachers acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to increase student achievement in writing by offering a Rigorous Academic Writing course - predicated on the strategies embedded in The DBQ Project. This training course is designed to equip teachers with the resources *and* the professional development needed to promote and build sustainability for writing instruction across the state. Teachers who were nominated for this training will be given specific instructional strategies and a systematic process for tackling complex text to inform student writing.

This August 177 teachers attended Day 1 of the Rigorous Academic Writing training course. After implementing the strategies in their classrooms, those same teachers will return in October for Day 2 Follow-up. During the Day 2 training, teachers will bring back student work, and the day's work will center on analyzing student writing and scoring the papers, as well as calibrating the scores.

Nominated teacher leaders are tasked with returning to their respective school/district to further build teacher capacity by hosting peer observations, analyzing student work, and sharing the results of the writing that takes place within the classroom.

Attendees are eligible for one PLU credit after attending both days of training.

As a result of this training, teachers will

- ◆ learn practices to help students write for both formative and summative purposes.
- ◆ acquire instructional strategies for teaching students how to link prior knowledge to new content to write evidence-based essays.
- ◆ learn how to develop literacy skills that enable students to interpret, create, and present information.
- ◆ learn instructional methods to help students read different kinds of texts to answer engaging questions.
- ◆ acquire lesson design strategies and structures that provide authentic assessment at all levels of student readiness.

Below is the training schedule for the Rigorous Academic Writing course:

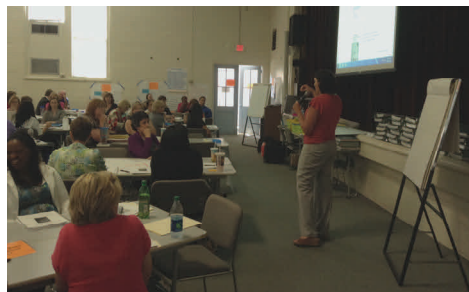
Day 1

August 20, 2014	Dearing, GA
August 21, 2014	Cartersville, GA
August 22, 2014	Lenox, GA

Day 2

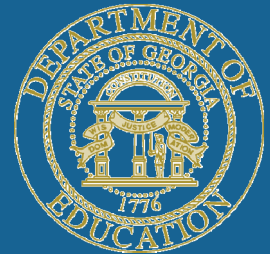
October 7, 2014	Dearing, GA
October 8, 2014	Cartersville, GA
October 9, 2014	Lenox, GA

Teachers who attended the course in August were engaged in activities that not only challenged their thinking but also encouraged them to be creative in their writing instruction.



~Stephanie Sanders

Georgia
Department
of Education



Dr. John D. Barge,
State School
Superintendent

*"Making Education Work
for All Georgians"*

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GRA Fall Forum



"Keys for Successful Teaching: Unlocking Teaching Keys and the Common Core"

The Georgia Reading Association Fall Forum will be held at the Macon State College on October 27, 2014. The program will feature three distinguished speakers - Dr. Linda Gambrell, former IRA President, Dr. Ron Walker, and Ms. Helen Long.

Dr. Gambrell is Professor of Reading Education at Clemson University in South Carolina. Her most recently published book is *Teaching Reading in the Common Core*. Dr. Walker is a national speaker, and is well known for his work in differentiating instruction. Ms. Long's sessions will focus on the Common Core Writing Standards, and she will also offer a hands-on workshop.

In addition to the keynotes, this program will offer choices of concurrent break-out sessions delivered by dynamic presenters.

Conference details and paper registration forms can be found at <http://www.georgiareading.org/>



Featured Speaker Dr. Linda B. Gambrell



Middle Georgia State College, Professional Sciences Building

Have you ever read a book that set your mind on fire? Daniel Pink's *A Whole New Mind* absolutely tilted my windmills! I have worried for years about how education has become such a left-brain industry and how we may have unwittingly disenfranchised our most creative students from the challenging education they deserve. We have just about killed creativity in favor of rote memorization and then wondered why the vast majority of our dropouts cite boredom as the reason. We have become what Charles Dickens satirized in *Hard Times* as Professor

Gradgrind extolled the virtue of hard facts and chastised Cecilia for preferring her nickname 'Sissy' and loving flowery carpets. "Everyone knows flowers don't belong on carpets; otherwise, you would trample them! Just stick to hard facts, Cecilia." (Gradgrind? Really?)

I want to challenge each teacher to read this book and to embrace your own passion for teaching—with innovation and creativity!

Here's an excerpt from Daniel Pink's "Introduction": *The future belongs to a very different kind of person with a very different kind of mind—creators and empathizers, pattern recognizers, and meaning makers. These people—artists, inventors, designers, storytellers, caregivers, consolers, big picture thinkers—will now reap society's richest rewards and share its greatest joys. This book describes a seismic—though as*

yet undetected—shift now under way in much of the advanced world. We are moving from an economy and a society built on the logical, linear, computerlike capabilities of the Information Age to an economy and a society built in the inventive, empathic, big-picture capabilities of what's rising in its place, the Conceptual Age.... In this book, you will learn the six essential aptitudes—what I call 'the six senses'—on which professional success and personal satisfaction increasingly will depend. Design. Story. Symphony. Empathy. Play. Meaning. These are fundamentally human abilities that everyone can master—and helping you do that is my goal...

For nearly a century, Western society in general, and American society in particular, has been dominated by a form of thinking and an approach to life that is narrowly reductive and deeply analytical. Ours has been the age of the 'knowledge worker,' the well-educated manipulator of information and deployer of expertise. But that is changing.

An intriguing book, Pink's thesis may have a profound impact on the fundamental work of educators. We know the push is on for "higher-order thinking," and we know that "creativity" now tops Bloom's Taxonomy. We also have been dabbling in brain-theories that encourage whole-brain-learning; moreover, teachers need to understand Gardner's Multiple Intelligences in order to "differentiate" instruction. Isn't it time for teachers to *unleash the beast* of their own creativity and acknowledge that real learning can and should be fun? Sounds like a challenge to me!

~Carolyn Waters

National Council of Teachers of English Fall 2014 Conference



The 2014 NCTE Convention (November 20-23, 2014) will be held at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center. Sessions will explore the many dimensions of story as the landscape of knowing--story as literary and informational text, story as cross-disciplinary collaborations, story as multiple literacies and genres, story as memory and identity, story as teacher knowledge and research, story as community and culture, story as marginalization, and story as resistance. The 2014 NCTE Annual Convention is an opportunity to take back the right to tell our stories, to create our own landscapes, and to "talk story" with each other.—*NCTE website*

- FirstWave*** Friday Morning General Session
- Heidi Mills and Tim O’Keefe*** Elementary Section Get-Together
- T.A. Baron*** Middle Section Get-Together
- Jim Burke*** Secondary Section Get-Together
- Joseph Bruchac*** Middle Level Luncheon
- Matt de la Pena*** CEE Luncheon
- Kelly Gallagher and Carol Jago*** High School Matters
- Doug Hesse*** College Celebration
- Andrew Smith*** ALAN Breakfast
- Jacqueline Woodson*** Books for Children Luncheon
- Cory Doctorow*** Secondary Luncheon
- Peter, Cook, Kenny Lerner, and Flying Words Project*** College Level Luncheon
- Doug Hesse*** Affiliate Luncheon
- Jon Klassen*** CLA Breakfast
- Naomi Shihab Nye*** CEL Luncheon
- Earnest Morrell*** Sunday General Session

<http://www.ncte.org/annual/workshops>

Workshop Topics
Writing: W.01, W.04, W.06
Common Core: W.07, W.09
Adolescent Literacy: W.11
Grammar: W.03
Journalism: W.02
Literature: W.08
CEL Convention: W.12
Technology: W.05



In the two related videos below, Teaching Channel offers Marie Coover’s strategies for empowering sixth-grade students to write higher-order questions.

Click on the link below the image to view “Writing Higher Order Questions.”

[Writing Higher Order Questions](#)

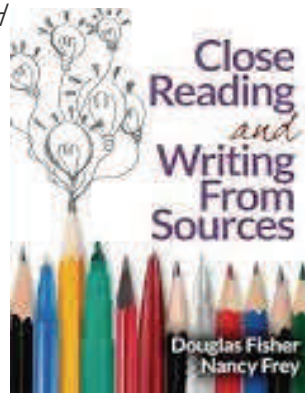
[Writing Higher Order Questions: A Path to Deeper Learning](#)

Resource We Recommend

Close Reading and Writing from Sources by Doug Fisher and Nancy Fry

Fisher and Frey present a model for teaching middle and high school students some of the most crucial skills, often neglected, in today's schools: reading texts closely, taking good notes, analyzing and synthesizing information from multiple sources, then writing clearly and effectively.

The authors have developed, implemented, and refined a process for teachers and students that results in evidence becoming a signature part of student work. When you use this process in your classroom, students will learn how to read closely to find out what a complex text says and means. They'll understand the purpose and use of evidence. They will hone their annotation and sourcing skills. And they'll learn how to communicate and focus their ideas through meaningful discussion before writing.



Chapters in this book focus on

- *The Role of Evidence in Reading, Writing, and Discussion*
- *Close Reading of Complex Texts*
- *Preparing for Discussion and Writing: Annotation, Sourcing, and Avoiding Plagiarism*
- *Using Evidence in Discussion*
- *Writing From Sources*

Book review excerpted from <http://www.reading.org/general/Publications/Books/bk158>



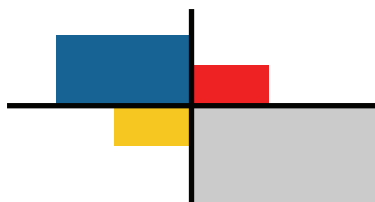
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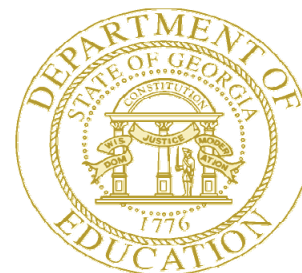


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Important Links:

[DOE ELA Page](#)

[GeorgiaStandards.Org ELA](http://GeorgiaStandards.Org)