



President's Message

Honing a Vision of Teaching

RRCNA President Janice Van Dyke

Do you have a vision of teaching? What guides your approach? In their book, *Growing as a Teacher: Goals and Pathways of Ongoing Teacher Learning*, authors Clive Beck and Clare Kosnik suggest that your vision of teaching reflects the teacher you want to be and guides your initiatives within the ever-changing world of education. Confronted with distorted concepts of teaching, such as the simple transmission of a package of academic material, teachers need to develop a strong alternative vision so they can confidently teach in a complex, effective, and relevant way (Beck & Kosnik, 2014).

Reflecting back over my years in education, I am not the teacher I was 36 years ago; my vision is honed over many years and a variety of experiences. It guides my approach to academic instruction and other elements such as helping my students develop a viable way of life, building safe and inclusive learning communities, and establishing strong teacher-student relationships (Beck & Kosnik, 2014). My vision has also been strongly influenced by membership in Reading Recovery professional learning communities and by the exchange of ideas with other members of those communities.

During my training year as a Reading Recovery teacher, my teacher leader introduced me to the benefits of

Reading Recovery Council of North America membership. That was 22 years ago, and I am continually grateful to RRCNA for the breadth of its offerings. Perhaps its greatest contribution to supporting my vision of teaching is the variety of choices for self-directed learning, and in particular, the annual National Reading Recovery & K-6 Literacy Conference. This outstanding opportunity to learn with colleagues can help you be the teacher you want to be in classrooms, early intervention, coaching, leadership, with English language

learners, or as a specialist. The 2018 Conference will be held February 17–20 in Columbus, OH.

Keynote speakers Mary Fried, Ellin Keene, and Pat Cummings promise to inspire and challenge us. Featured speakers Jeff Anderson, Gravity Goldberg and Renee Houser, Jennifer Serravallo, Connie Briggs and Salli Forbes, Sue Duncan, and Lea McGee will explore some of the many complexities of literacy learning.

There are also options for how you want to learn. Study sessions encour-



Planning for the National Conference is a yearlong process involving more than 40 committee members and staff. After session proposals are reviewed and approved by strand committees, the Session Scheduling Subcommittee determines when and where each session will be offered. Pictured around the table from the left are Kim Reynolds, Cheri Slinger (chair), Gail Gandal, Carrie Williams, Kellie Ehlers, and Conference Director Anita Gibson.

age interaction with other educators in an in-depth investigation of a topic, and concurrent sessions take a more lecture-like format.

Saturday Preconference Institutes complement the Conference and provide full-day sessions in leadership, Reading Recovery, and classroom literacy.

If you are in leadership, imagine a full day learning and talking about the latest research on leadership actions and student achievement with Dr. Douglas Reeves at the Leadership Institute. Also, imagine how conversations with the speaker and fellow attendees can begin even before and carry on after the Institute via Twitter, Facebook, and by email using the Conference Mobile App.

For Reading Recovery educators who always crave more time for discussions, two full-day Institutes provide

that opportunity. James Schnug, Lisa Patrick Pinkerton, and Maryann McBride bring together the challenge of acceleration and the crucial early lessons during Roaming Around the Known. Or, Elizabeth (Betsy) Kaye will lead you through a day-long exploration into the idea of reciprocal gains from linked reading and writing processes.

Two additional full-day Institutes that are open to all attendees address current and unique topics that promise to take your learning into new territory. Drawing on their book, *Disrupting Thinking*, Kyleene Beers and Robert Probst will pursue questions such as how to encourage responsive and responsible reading of texts, especially nonfiction, and how to help even our youngest students identify fake news. Or, you can join Tanny McGregor to explore what it means to make your thinking visible

and learn more about her approach to weaving visual literacy practices into instruction.

High-quality professional learning inspires us and drives our vision forward. As a 2017 Conference attendee shared,

“The conference validated my vision for my school and fueled me to move forward as a new administrator with a reading and literacy focus.”

Whatever path you are on, I encourage you to actively pursue the professional learning that will hone your vision of teaching and expand your network.

Reference

Beck, C., & Kosnik, C. (2014). *Growing as a teacher: Goals and pathways of ongoing teacher learning*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: SensePublishers.



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