

# PACIFIC VIEW

## Two-Year College Association Pacific Northwest

Volume IV, Issue I

Spring 2005



### Trailblazing in Yakima

### From the Editors

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#### CONFERENCE 2005, YAKIMA, WA

Kathleen Blake Yancey, past CCCC chair, well-respected portfolio-assessment advocate, and R. Roy Pearce Professor of Professional Communication at Clemson University, will headline the TYCA-Pacific Northwest annual conference at Yakima Valley Community College on October 21 – 22, 2005. Blake Yancey will keynote the conference, which will feature plenty of professional activities as well as brushes of local color.

To capture the Hispanic influence of the Yakima Valley, as well as the essence of our work in two-year colleges, we have selected the conference theme,

*“Abrecaminos: Finding a Way.”* In

Spanish, *abrir* means to open; a *camino* is a path or way.

*Abrecaminos* then are trailblazers, those who open the way. At the

conference, we intend to explore how we as English teachers help our first-generation college students open paths into and through the Academy.

The host city, Yakima, is a city of approximately 70,000 located in Central Washington. By the time you arrive in October, harvest of apples and wine grapes will be complete, and we hope

*(continued on page 2)*

So here we are. At the end of another academic year as well as the end of our run as your *Pacific View* editors. It's been a great trip all around. We've learned a lot, made new friends, gained a broader perspective of the impressive work in our region, laughed, picked up some good teaching tips along the way, and tried our best to pass on the contributions of our members in an appealing format to all of you.

One of the most rewarding parts of this experience has been the vantage point we've gained from reading all your submissions. Why should we be the only ones to have this perspective though? We want others to share in it too and trust that someone out there—maybe *you* or perhaps *you two, another pair of co-editors*—will be ready to take over the publication come fall with new talent and creative energy. We promise to do whatever we can to help make a smooth transition.

With a quick glance through the articles in this edition, you'll see that creating paths, *finding a way*, is not only the theme of our next conference but also a subtle refrain that plays throughout the newsletter. Tom Gribble and Alexis Nelson, our regional chairs, confirm that more two-year college faculty found their way to the 4 Cs than ever before. Eva Payne from TYCA national points out the considerable barriers we face as well as attempts some are making to forge paths around them. Sharon Mitchler finds an efficient way to get students to develop daily writing habits;

*(continued on page 7)*

*Pacific View* is published twice a year in the spring and fall by Yakima Valley Community College in conjunction with TYCA-PNW Association, an affiliate of NCTE. All rights and title reserved, but feel free to share contents with colleagues. **Editors:** Dodie Forrest (dforrest@yvcc.edu) and Sandra Schroeder (sschroeder@yvcc.edu), English Dept. Yakima Valley Community College, South 16th Ave. and Nob Hill Blvd.; PO Box 22520; Yakima, WA 98907.

**Submissions:** We encourage submissions for four of our columns: "Practical Matters," which gives specific classroom activities; "Student Talk," providing a student's perspective on learning; "Guest Spotlight," addressing thoughts on theory or philosophy of teaching; and "Poetry," a place where colleagues can exhibit their creative side. Submissions should be 300–400 words and sent electronically in an attached document form, preferably Word. Be sure to include your school affiliation along with your name, address, phone, and email.



Yakima Valley CC campus

## Trailblazing *(continued from cover)*

you'll take some time to enjoy the fruits of our harvest by visiting the Farmer's Market on Sunday or some of the many wineries located in our valley along I-82 between Prosser and Yakima. In addition to agriculture, Yakima is well known for its 300 plus days of sunshine.

The conference will open Friday afternoon with an interactive workshop, followed by a wine-tasting event featuring local vintners and one of YVCC's internationally renowned jazz combos. Saturday's activities will include the keynote address, concurrent sessions, elections for regional executive committee positions, and recognition of the Lisa Ede Award recipients for outstanding teaching.

Keynote speaker Kathleen Blake Yancey, in addition to her numerous journal articles, book chapters, and other titles, has written *Portfolios in the Writing Classroom*, *Self-Assessment and Development in Writing*, and *Teaching Literature as Reflective Practice*. She is also cofounder of the journal *Assessing Writing*. Kathleen is well known for her assessment work, particularly print and electronic portfolios. Some of her other research interests include teaching with technology, use of reflection to enhance learning, multimedia and digital compositions, teacher leadership, and classroom assessment and research.



Kathleen Blake Yancey

**Lodging Information:** Forty rooms are reserved at the Clarion Hotel in Yakima, 1507 North First St. (509) 248-7850. Please consider staying both Friday and Saturday nights to take advantage of the local color and flavor. Rates are \$60 per night for a double or single occupancy *and* a complementary hot-cooked breakfast. Register by Oct. 10, 2005 to get the conference rate. The hotel will provide shuttle service to and from campus and the airport.

**Carolyn Calhoon-Dillahunt**  
Program Co-chair

**Gordon Koestler**  
Local Arrangements Chair  
Yakima Valley Community College, WA

## A Note From the Chairs

As we long for the rest summer provides—which seems remote when viewed through stacks of essays, application letters and résumés or job applicants' files—it helps to think of why we do this work and to recognize when it's good. We do good work. Graduate students from Eastern Washington University who presented at our conference in Portland last fall have successfully taken their show on the road: to San Diego and Lewiston. We do good work by providing a learning platform for those entering into our profession.

Our region is active professionally; everywhere one turned at the 4 Cs in San Francisco, one saw a familiar face from PNW. And our work, our presence in the field, was made more apparent when Sharon Mitchler asked at the plenary session for all faculty teaching at two-year colleges to stand; about 40% of the room rose to their feet—to the surprise of those seated. When we're in the middle of our after-conference lives, we forget about the quiet ways we nurture and sustain this profession. Often that TYCA-PNW conference affords a proving ground for ideas, a stimulus to our imaginations, and an encounter with the humane, tolerant values that brought us into this community. We engage one another as an energetic bunch of English teachers who are thorough and kind. We welcome the perspectives of novice and experienced teachers. We do good work.

As we lean toward our 2005 conference on the handsome, friendly campus of Yakima Valley CC, let's energize our ranks: invite new members, become activists on our home campuses and in our organization, reach out to colleagues in Alaska and Canada, recognize the excellent teaching of those in our departments by nominating a colleague for the Lisa Ede Outstanding Teaching Award, and volunteer to serve on the Regional Executive Committee. We've grown at a steady pace within our region, and we welcome fresh faces and new ideas to help us to do more of our good work.

**Tom Gribble**  
Spokane Community College, WA

**Alexis Nelson**  
Spokane Falls Community College, WA

## News from National

### CHANGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

We have unquestionable successes to be proud of within our organization, such as the fact that TYCA-PNW is the fastest growing TYCA region in the country and that the current national chair, Sharon Mitchler, comes from our ranks. TYCA national, as a result of Jody Millward's ambitious and detailed survey that went out in April, will provide more information on the state of community colleges nationwide.

At the 4 Cs in San Francisco, the seven regional representatives presented at a well-attended early morning session the successes and challenges in their regions. Learning from each other about our changing roles on our campuses both inside and outside the classroom enriches and informs us. In spite of the aforementioned successes, there are challenges that our region faces as well:

Oregon and Washington have both been hit with significant budget cuts. Faculty who were eligible for retirement left community colleges in record numbers rather than staying on and having retirement benefits reduced. As far as students are concerned, the lack of funding seems to hit the most vulnerable students the hardest with fewer sections being offered to ESL learners and those in need of remediation prior to entry into college level course work.

Mary B. Marcy's 2002 article "Diversity, Demographics, and Dollars: Challenges for High Education" asserts, "While the diversity and number of students are expected to increase in American higher education, institutions are simultaneously being asked to become more financially efficient and more accountable for educational outcomes." Seeing increased diversity and diminishing dollars juxtaposed in the same sentence makes for an interesting conversation about the root causes of the current trend to severely under-fund public education. Marcy's article targeted four-year schools. However, the diversity is often greater and the

*"diversity is often greater and the budget cuts deeper at the community college level"*

budget cuts deeper at the community college level.

Meeting lean times with fewer full-time faculty and more adjunct faculty, an often lamentable answer for the underpaid people holding those positions, leaves our colleges still seeking additional cost reductions. Other recommendations include utilizing such things as service learning, credit for prior learning, increased technology, and learning communities.

At our TYCA conference in Portland last fall, one breakout session delved into the wild west arena of the many unique arrangements community colleges have with local high schools for offering college credit. Some community colleges see the best work coming from talented and gifted, college-track high school students. Conversely, others see college credit being given for work that does not prepare high school students for college writing. Aligning our community college expectations about assessment with both high schools and the senior colleges where our students transfer presents an ongoing challenge.

While we may not have all the solutions to the trials our institutions are facing, it's important that we keep the discussion alive with our colleagues and continue to share the new and innovative approaches many of us are taking to eliminate the barriers to successful student learning.

#### Eva Payne

Associate Chair, TYCA National  
Chemeketa Community College, OR

### Get Involved

Join the TYCA-PNW  
Regional Executive Committee

*Nominations accepted each year at the fall conference*

To see job descriptions, visit <http://tyca-pnw.org> and click on "Regional Executive Committee."

## Practical Matters

### WRITER'S NOTEBOOK

One of the challenges we confront in first-year composition courses is providing opportunities for students to write without adding to the grading load for instructors. This variation on a journal has been a way for my English 101 Expository Writing students to accomplish this goal without adding to my workload. The key to this assignment is that I do not read, or even collect, this written work.

The first five minutes of every class day is set aside for a "writer's notebook" activity. I write a prompt, generally a question, on the board. As students arrive, they settle in and begin writing. If the prompt on the board is not a topic that appeals to them, they may write about something else, as long as they are writing. At the end of five minutes, I redirect their attention to the day's first activity.

I do not collect their work. Instead, I have a class list in a dated grid, which my grading program generates. I simply record each day that a student participates. As students arrive, I "check" them off. I include the writer's notebook as a graded assignment. Each day a student writes, she earns 20 points, and each five days add up to 100 points, which I then record in the grade book.

My goal is to have them develop a space and a habit of writing, even if it is just for five minutes. After the first day or two the class meets, this activity becomes expected. Students quickly adjust to the ritual of arriving in class and writing.

I have found several unexpected benefits to beginning class in this way. Students must be in class on time in order to participate in this activity. Students who come late or who are not in attendance cannot "make-up" this work. This sure gets students to class on time! (And there are so many of these assignments that missing a day or two due to legitimate conflicts does not impact a student's overall course grade.)

This activity fulfills several objectives. Students often comment on the way they use the writer's notebook as a place to find topics for papers, to play with ideas, and to write without worrying about whether or not what they write is correct.

The writer's notebook also reinforces the purpose for the class. The first five minutes of class is an important space for setting the tone for each day's lesson, and the writer's notebook gives students a focused activity that helps them transition into the intellectual focus of the class.

A fun twist on this assignment is to have students write prompts for future classes. Currently, I have about 100 student-developed prompts on index cards. I ask one of the students who arrives earliest to class to choose the prompt for the day.

**Sharon Mitchler**

Centralia College, WA

## Student Talk

### LEARNING IN THE ONLINE CLASSROOM

I remember coming home from college one year to find my father had purchased a new computer system from Dell. It had all the latest bells and whistles: modem, monitor, CD burner, scanner, copier, and DSL instant internet access, technology which was never before so readily available to the average Joe. That computer might as well have been from another planet as far as Dad was concerned. Watching him pour over the instructions, pecking away at the keyboard earnestly, it dawned on me. He doesn't know what he is doing! What an epiphany that was to me. But then it really got me thinking. Since grade school I have been immersed in computer education. Ranging from the engrossing PowerPoint software design class I took in middle school to the repetitive keyboarding lessons I hated during the eighth grade, I have been preparing for an educational future inexorably linked with computers.

Throughout the course of my college career, my online education has been invaluable to me. In our sometimes hectic and demanding society, balancing work, classes, and kids can be an overwhelming venture. Imagine going to class right before bedtime while in your pajama pants. The flexibility of attending college online offers a distinct advantage in American educational cul-

ture. Communicating on a discussion board with your peers and teacher from home is comparable in many ways to learning in a classroom; however, in my opinion, online education provides a more open forum for discussion than a traditional classroom experience may offer, particularly for those shy students who may have a tough time speaking up in a traditional class to exchange their ideas, thoughts, or opinions.

However, relationships with computers never last. And in order to prosper in an online learning environment, a student must be committed, dedicated, and persistent. Without the determination to study independently, an online class can quickly go awry.

It takes a certain type of person to teach online as well. I have been very lucky; every online instructor I have had so far in my college career has brought the qualities of dependability and impeccable organizational skills to the online educational table. Limited contact demands efficient and effective communication skills.

With an ever increasing demand of personal time needed to assist us in keeping our daily responsibilities in harmony, the flexibility of online courses is very appealing. I now look at the computer literacy education I have received since elementary school as having prepared me to be the successful online college student I am today. I have been fortunate enough to gain experience through the vessel of online education.

When Dad called me the other day asking “Honey, exactly, what is a blog?” I chuckled to myself and launched into an explanation. Thankfully, computer literacy education begins now at a much younger age than when I began my education. I am excited to see what advances and possibilities the future holds for our many little online students . . . .

**Robin McBride**  
College of Central Oregon



[www.ncte.org](http://www.ncte.org)

## Poetry

### Astrophysics

When in the morning, students call  
to say they won't be in to class today—  
a touch of the flu, a bit of a cold,  
the lingering after-effects of a party—  
I can't help but feel a little annoyed  
at their self-importance.

Do they think my eye will linger  
on that one empty seat where they normally sit—  
whoever they are in that class of thirty?  
Do they call to spare me just that moment  
of anguish and fear—they're okay, they say,  
just a little down, a little  
under the weather.

Yet, when I heard her voice this morning,  
so intimate and so young—“Hi. This is Megan.  
From your one-thirty class?”—all my irritation  
vanished; my scorn at her naïve sense of self  
melted away like honey on a stove. “I hope  
you feel better,” I said and hung up.

Then I sat back in my chair and wondered  
whatever happened to that world in which I lived  
a benighted yet happy existence, a pebble  
flung far into space and spinning  
beyond Jupiter, barely warmed  
by the sun as big as a dot, yet believing  
in my own immutable universe?

**Jeff Klausman**

Whatcom Community College, WA

### **TYCA-PNW Annual Conference**

**Oct. 21 & 22, 2005**

*“Abrecaminos: Finding a Way”*

Yakima Valley Community College  
Yakima, Washington

**Mark your calendars!**

## Guest Spotlight

### LITERACY AS STUDENT-DIRECTED LEARNING



Lisa Ede

I am one of twelve children. Given such a large family, it's perhaps not surprising that I am one of several teachers—but it is a bit unusual that we all in one way or another teach literacy. My older sister Leni teaches a combined kindergarten and first grade class in Florida.

My younger sister Julie teaches English in a high school in Washington. And I teach university students in Oregon.

Several years ago when the spring NCTE conference was held in Portland, Oregon, we decided that we wanted to give a talk together. We chose to discuss—and exemplify—a pedagogical principle that informs all of our teaching, differently situated as we are. This principle is literacy as student-directed learning. Today I'd like to share some of our ideas, for although none of us teaches in a two-year college, I believe these ideas are relevant to all teaching.

My sister Leni emphasized the many ways that she attempts to empower her students to take charge of their learning. In the fall before classes begin, for instance, Leni invites students to come into the classroom and help decide how the open, free-flowing space should be organized. The goal is to create student-identified literacy centers, where students work on projects. Self-directed reading, writing, and research play a key role in Leni's classrooms. At the time that we gave our talk, students in Leni's class were researching snakes, the Great Wall of China, Costa Rica, tornadoes, volcanoes, rabbits, and jellyfish.

Portfolios play a key role in my sister Julie's teaching. Students not only save work in their portfolios but comment on it as well. In their senior year, students annotate their portfolios and write essays that answers the question "Who Am I as a Writer?" As a teacher, Julie is constantly looking for opportunities for student-directed literacy. Students select their own reading for silent sustained reading, and they have many opportunities to write

such real life texts as publicity for student clubs and speeches for student government campaigns.

If you're like me, you may be wishing that you had the flexibility that my sisters have in terms of your teaching. Those of us who teach in community colleges and colleges can hardly invite students in to arrange our classrooms in creative ways. Nor do we have the luxury of working with the same students over a number of years. There are, nevertheless, ways that we too can encourage student-directed learning. We can look for ways to empower students to claim responsibility for their own learning. When I teach a large sixty-student introduction to fiction class, I not only require students to keep journals but I also ask them to evaluate their journals. Students resist this at first, but I remind them that they're the ones who will benefit the most from re-reading their entries. I do provide criteria for evaluation and prescribe a process—and, yes, I spot check some journals. But the students determine their own grades, which they justify in a cover letter that introduces their journal. I rarely disagree with them, and if I do it's usually to raise their grade.

Keeping and evaluating their journal is a high-stakes activity for students since it represents a significant part of their grade. But I also try to employ a variety of low-stakes strategies to encourage self-directed learning. When students hand in essays, for instance, I ask them to include what I call a writing process analysis with it. To do so, they answer these four questions: 1) How did you write this essay? 2) What is working well in this essay in its current form? 3) What is not working so well? And 4) If you suddenly had three more days to work on this essay, what changes do you know right now that you would make? I like the way this encourages students to claim responsibility and authority for their writing—and the comments they write play a key role in my responding process.

These are just a few ways that I and my sisters attempt to encourage our students to claim authority and responsibility as learners. When you think about your own teaching, what strategies do you employ to achieve this important goal?

**Dr. Lisa Ede**  
Oregon State University

Robin McBride in “Student Talk” points out advantages to an educational path that features online courses; and Lisa Ede explores some ways she and two of her sisters, teachers at different levels in our education system, have applied student-directed learning in their classrooms. We think it especially fitting that Lisa, the person for whom our region’s teaching award is named, be the “Guest Spotlight” contributor in this edition. We are incredibly grateful to Lisa for *all* that she has contributed to TYCA-PNW as well as the profession of teaching writing.

We also couldn’t be happier to close with an invitation for you to join us at the fall conference in Yakima, our hometown. October is warm and serene in the valley. The new Deccio Higher Education Center, which will house the conference sessions, has the most up-to-date classroom technology, and our colleagues Carolyn, Mark, Gordon, and Mary are working hard to make sure all is ready when you arrive so that you have a great conference experience. Enjoy the summer months ahead. Here’s to safe journeys when you find *your way* to Yakima this fall. We can’t wait to see you!

Dodie and Sandy



## Nominate a Colleague for the Lisa Ede Outstanding Teaching Award

Two English faculty, one full-time and one part-time, who exemplify innovation and creativity will each receive a **cash grant of \$500.**

**Nominations due by September 1, 2005**

For more information and submission guidelines, visit  
<http://tyca-pnw.org>.

Send submissions to:

Mark Fuzie  
English Department  
Yakima Valley Community College  
South 16th Ave. & Nob Hill Blvd.  
Yakima, WA 98907  
mfuzie@yvcc.edu

## Regional Executive Committee

**Chairs:** **Alexis Nelson**, Spokane Falls Community College, Spokane, Washington (509) 533-3588, alexisn@spokanefalls.edu; and **Tom Gribble**, Spokane Community College, Spokane, Washington (509) 533-7206, tgribble@scc.spokane.edu **Terms:** October 2003—October 2006

**Previous Chair:** **Beth Camp**, Linn-Benton Community College, Albany, Oregon (541) 917-4556, beth.camp@linnbenton.edu

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**Membership Chair:** **Bradley Bleck**, Spokane Falls Community College, Spokane, Washington, BradB@spokanefalls.edu **Term:** October 2003—October 2006

**National Representative:** **Eva Payne**, Chemeketa Community College, Salem, Oregon (503) 589-7827, epayne1@chemeketa.edu **Term:** October 2003—October 2006

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- **Eleanor Latham**, Central Oregon Community College, Bend, Oregon (541) 383-7547, elatham@coccc.edu **Term:** October 2003—October 2005
- **Sharon Mitchler**, Centralia Community College, Centralia, Washington (360) 736-9391, Ext. 405, smitchler@centralia.ctc.edu **Term:** October 2003—October 2005 (Sharon currently serves as Chair of National TYCA.)
- **Troy Wilkerson**, Portland Community College, Sylvania campus, Portland, Oregon (503) 281-0225, twilkerson@pcc.edu **Term:** October 2004—October 2007

**2005 Program Co-Chairs:** **Carolyn Calhoon Dillahunt**, Yakima Valley Community College, Grandview campus, Grandview, Washington (509) 882-7020, ccalhoon@yvcc.edu; and **Mark Fuzie**, Yakima Valley Community College, Yakima, Washington (509) 574-4821, mfuzie@yvcc.edu

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# TYCA-PNW 2005-2006 Membership Form

\_\_\_ Enclosed is my check for US \$20 payable to TYCA-PNW for a one-year membership.

\_\_\_ Enclosed is my check for US \$10 payable to TYCA-PNW for a one-year student membership (students, part-time faculty, retired faculty).

My membership includes discounted conference fees at TYCA-PNW's annual conference.

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- Check one area you'd like to be active in:  Membership  
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 Regional representative

Are you currently a member of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)?      Yes      No

Thank you for your membership. Are there other comments you'd like to make? \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: Treasurer Kris Fink  
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