Oral and Written Pathways to Self-Expression

Photos courtesy of Sara Guren and Tim Kahn

A NAMTA conference featuring
Maryanne Wolf
plus
Amy Eikenbery • Carla Foster • Janet McDonell • David McNees

Columbia, Maryland • October 8–11, 2015
Sheraton Columbia Hotel
To become a confident and articulate writer a child must first become a confident and articulate speaker. Montessori educators at all levels have the opportunity to develop the power of language and light the flame of imagination in children. From rhymes, songs, poetry, and finger plays, to dramatic recitation, speeches, and debates, foundations in speech lead to artfully crafted writing, and appreciation for the power and beauty of words. Led by Montessori trainers Janet McDonell and Carla Foster, and enhanced by Maryanne Wolf’s work on the neurological underpinnings of reading, language, and dyslexia this conference offers a full overview of oral and written language supporting development from childhood to adolescence.

**Thursday, October 8, 2015**
7:00 – 8:00 p.m. • Registration

**Friday, October 9, 2015**

*Self-Expression and the Spoken Word*

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. • Registration

9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

*Self Expression and Early Childhood:*

“The Pacific Ocean is Specifically Not *pacific*”

*Janet McDonell*

Language can be playful, perplexing, profound...informative, expressive, enrapturing...and more. Humans have been collectively and unconsciously creating language for millennia. This magnificent tool of self-expression and communion takes root in the first plane of development. The adult is the vital link in offering the richness of the spoken and written word to the young child at this critical and tender period of absorption.

10:00 – 10:30 a.m. • Break
Friday, October 9, 2015, continued

10:30 – 11:30 a.m.
Conversing About Life, the Universe and Everything: Wondering Aloud
Carla Foster

The mind of the second plane child is primed for big questions and great quests. The wonder and excitement that are ignited in the Great Stories can be cultivated further in all the subject areas. Oral tradition is the foundation of our impressionistic approach, inspiring children to think and express themselves creatively about the world they can see and the worlds they are exploring with their imaginations. Whether we are presenting math, grammar, historical timelines or scientific concepts, we must remain storytellers of the truth. That also means learning to wonder aloud.

11:30 a.m. – Noon
Question and Answer Session with Janet McDonell & Carla Foster

Noon – 1:30 p.m. • Lunch

1:30 – 4:30 p.m. • Breakouts (choose one)
Cultivating Spoken Language

A. Taking Possession of the Spoken Word in Primary
Janet McDonell

In the first six years of life, the child forms her personality. How will she express that self? Which words will become her words? How will she describe her unique experience of the world? We are the source material to support the child in this aspect of development; quite possibly the most enjoyable part of teaching children.

B. The Poem and the Song, Savoring the Spoken Word in Elementary
Carla Foster

Words are delicious and rhythm is infectious. Song is in the air and poems hide everywhere. Winding our way through time and space, our songs and poems are always with us, part of the spiritual territory that can never be invaded, but that can always expand. Children are often natural poets and want to say big things with few words. Let us help them express the poetry in science and history, erasing the borders between the shelves of the subjects.

C. Adolescent-Drama as the Soul of Self Expression
David McNees

See description on the following page.
C. Adolescent-Drama as the Soul of Self Expression

with David McNees, continued

In understanding the necessity of a dramatic curriculum in our schools, one must recognize life as a system of roles which, when mastered with fluidity and adaptability, create a healthy holistic balance within oneself. The adolescent is a seeker on the path of discovering an authentic and personal role and its power to serve the good, and is learning to recognize the value of character and how it affects community. Creating and supporting a dramatic program in your school is as much a help to life as any other aspect of academia in that it promotes healthy self discovery and adaptability. We will look into the many different possibilities of creating a dramatic program, as well as integrating dramatic technique into other aspects of teaching.

**Saturday, October 10, 2015**

*Introducing Maryanne Wolf*

9:00 – 9:45 a.m.

**The Reading Brain and Self Expression**

*Maryanne Wolf*

Wolf’s story of the development of the reading brain encompasses many fields, from linguistics, philosophy, and education to history, literature and neuroscience. The cultural centrality of reading and the cognitive centrality of multiple forms of language and self expression within reading will be emphasized. There will, however, be a large caveat, as Wolf shows how “the complex beauty of the reading brain circuit” and self expression are both changing within a digital culture with threat and promise to both.

9:45 – 10:30 a.m. • **Audience Discussion**

10:30 – 11:00 a.m. • **Break**

11:00 – 11:20 a.m.

**Question and Answer Session with Maryanne Wolf**

11:20 a.m. – Noon

**Self Expression, Fluency, and Dyslexia: How the Science of Reading and Self Expression Encounters Reading Difficulties and their Intervention.**

*Maryanne Wolf*

See description on the following page.
Oral and Written Pathways to Self-Expression

Self Expression, Fluency, and Dyslexia with Maryanne Wolf, continued
Knowledge of the multiple components of the reading brain circuit provides us with a broadened perspective on dyslexia and other reading struggles. Very importantly it provides a more comprehensive approach to intervention with an emphasis on multiple aspects of oral and written language.

Noon – 1:30 p.m. • Lunch

1:30 – 4:30 p.m. • Breakouts (choose one)

How to Utilize Writing to Maximize Self Expression

D. Making Thoughts Visible in the Primary
Janet McDonell
Of all the musings, feelings and ideas in a child’s mind, which ones can be written? In the earliest stages, a single word is sufficient. But, teasing out phrases is so much more satisfying. Recording complete thoughts is divine. Our part in supporting the very personal act of writing is to offer indirect preparations so that the child is free to “speak” in absolute silence.

E. Models for Writing in the Elementary
Carla Foster
Our elementary environments need to be full of models for creative writing. Where in the materials can the children get ideas for writing? Explore word choice? Work with crafting sentences? Shift between genres? How can we stay true to the principle of limiting the material in our classrooms while promoting maximum creativity? Do our environments really have what it takes to be a language laboratory, where all aspects of good writing can be experienced and explored? How do we keep geography, biology and human history at the center of our writing presentations?

F. Adolescents and the Inner Voice:
Using Writing as a Pathway to Self-Expression
Amy Eikenbery
Adolescents have much to say. Our job is to provide the techniques, the opportunities, and the safe and affirming community to receive their offerings. The adolescent uses language to identify what he thinks, what he feels, and how he wants to live. Language is a step towards participation in adult society and a strong writing focus is a critical component to any Montessori adolescent program. The Writer’s Workshop model incorporates writing into the entire Montessori curriculum to develop the adolescent’s voice.

October 8–11, 2015
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2015
9:45 – 10:30 a.m.
Creative Expression: I Express Myself Therefore I Am
David Kahn, Moderator

David Kahn and panel provide creative expression ideas for teacher’s to fathom their own capabilities for self expression which is necessary to understand and discover self expression in children and adolescents.

FEATURED SPEAKER

Maryanne Wolf is the author Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain, which has received numerous awards and is now translated into 13 languages. In addition, Wolf is the author of over 130 scientific publications. Wolf is the John DiBiaggio Professor of Citizenship and Public Service, Director of the Center for Reading and Language Research, and Professor in the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study and Human Development at Tufts University. She received her doctoral degree from Harvard University, where her research began on the reading brain, the development of language and literacy, and dyslexia. Selected awards for teaching include Distinguished Professor of the Year from the Massachusetts Psychological Association and the Teaching Excellence Award for Universities from the American Psychological Association.

At the Center for Advanced Studies for the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University, she is completing two books, What It Means to be Literate: A Literacy Agenda for the 21st Century for Oxford University Press, and Letters to the Good Reader: The Contemplative Dimension in the Future Reading Brain for Harper-Collins.
**Conference Speakers**

**Amy Eikenbery** holds a B.A. in history from The University of the South, a Master’s degree in environmental studies from Evergreen University, and a certificate from NAMTA’s Montessori Orientation in Adolescent Studies. She has worked primarily on writing and humanities in the adolescent program at Pacific Crest School in Seattle, Washington (12 years).

**Carla Foster** has been the AMI Director of Training at Montessori Training Center of New England (MTCNE) the past few years and also works at the University College, Høgskolen i Vestfold og Buskerud, in Norway. She has been an elementary trainer since 2011. Carla holds a bachelor degree in Social Anthropology and Scandinavian Studies and a combined Masters’ degree in Old Icelandic Literature and Norwegian Literature from UC Berkeley. She has AMI 3-6 and 6-12 diplomas from MMI in London and the Montessori Institute of Milwaukee. She has worked with children at the levels 3-6, 6-9 and 9-12 and has had a 6-9 class for 12 years in Norway. Carla has taught ballet, modern dance, African dance and Irish dance and has given workshops on writing, drama, music and dance in the elementary classroom.

**David Kahn** is Executive Director of North American Montessori Teachers’ Association and Montessori Development Partnerships. He has served as a director for various non-profit Montessori management organizations over the last 40 years. He has 17 years of Montessori teaching experience, 12 of them as teaching principal at Ruffing Montessori School (Cleveland Heights, OH). Mr. Kahn was founding director of the Hershey Montessori School’s Adolescent Community in Huntingburg, OH, an internationally acclaimed Montessori farm school model for adolescent education. He also serves as founding director emeritus of Montessori High School at University Circle (Cleveland, OH), which has quickly emerged as another program exemplar. David developed the summer training institute, The AMI Montessori Orientation to Adolescent Studies, to guide and develop teachers who work with students ages 12-18. An outgrowth of that program, David is internationally recognized as the leading consultant to schools that are beginning Montessori farm schools or high schools. Mr. Kahn holds a BA in fine arts and classics from the University of Notre Dame (IN) as well as the AMI Montessori elementary diploma from Bergamo, Italy. He has utilized his film and writing skills to create the largest global Montessori media organization that documents Montessori innovation and implementation in both the public and private sectors through video and publications. He has created two major museum exhibits that have accented the social and ecological directions of the Montessori movement. Currently, he is assisting with the start-up of a land-based, Montessori charter school that will serve the urban poor in Cleveland, OH.
Janet McDonell is the Director of the Washington Montessori Institute at Loyola University, MD. She is also Director of Primary Training. In addition to her Primary diploma, she holds diplomas from the Association Montessori Internationale at the Elementary level and for Montessori Special Education. She has a B.A. in literature from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee and an M.Ed in Montessori Education from Loyola University Maryland. She has over 20 years teaching and administrative work in Montessori schools throughout the U.S. with children of widely varied backgrounds. Janet has been training teachers at the Washington Montessori Institute since 1994. She is an examiner for AMI and a school consultant for AMI/USA. She is the current head of the Consultation Committee for AMI/USA. She also served as a past board member of AMI/USA. Janet is the former head of the Training Group, a committee that oversees the international Training of Trainers Program for AMI. Most recently, Janet co-directed (with Silvia Dubovoy) a pilot AMI Inclusive Education Course.

David McNees is a guide at Hershey Montessori’s Adolescent Community in Huntsburg, OH. He holds a BA in English from U.C. Berkeley, a master’s degree in creative art therapy, applied psychology from New York University and a certificate from NAMTA’s Montessori Orientation to Adolescent Studies. David is a Shakespearean scholar and actor who has created drama programs for multiple schools and organizations, including the development of San Francisco Shakespeare festival’s adolescent camp. He has utilized the art of drama in clinical therapeutic situations for schizophrenic populations, terminally ill children, and inmates at Sing Sing correctional facility.

Photo courtesy of Montessori High School at University Circle, Cleveland Ohio
Centrally located between Baltimore’s Inner Harbor and Washington D.C., the Sheraton Columbia Town Center Hotel has everything you need for work and for play. This hotel is situated on 12 wooded acres in Columbia, MD, overlooking the serene Lake Kittamaquandi.

Register at the Sheraton Columbia Town Center Hotel by **September 23** to receive the NAMTA room rate of: Lodge - $124 or Tower - $144. Please mention NAMTA when making your reservation.

**Transportation**

The closest airport to the Sheraton Columbia Hotel is Baltimore/Washington International (BWI).

Transportation options from the airport to the hotel include airport shuttle or taxi. For airport shuttle reservations, please call 1-800-776-0323 or visit www.theairportshuttle.com. The average cost is $30 each way.

Taxi service from BWI ranges between $50-$65.

Driving directions can be found on the hotel website: http://www.sheratoncolumbia.com
A NAMTA Conference in Columbia, Maryland

**Registration**

Register by September 23 for early registration rates!

- **NAMTA member tuition fee:** $300 ( $315 after September 23)
- **Non-member tuition fee:** $360 ( $375 after September 23)

Tuition fees include Friday and Saturday luncheons. Choose one:
- Non-Vegetarian
- Vegetarian

Friday workshops (Choose one):
- A. Spoken Word in Primary
- B. Spoken Word in Elementary
- C. Adolescent Drama

Saturday workshops (Choose one):
- D. Primary
- E. Writing in Elementary
- F. Adolescents and Inner Voice

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Name: _________________________________________________________
Phone : _________________________ Email: __________________________
Address: _______________________________________________________
City: _________________________ State/Province: _______ Postal Code: _______
Country: __________ Name of Your School: __________________________

Payment options:
- Check or money order enclosed
- Must be payable in U.S. currency and drawn on a U.S. bank.
- Visa;
- MasterCard;
- Am Ex;
- Discover
- Please indicate credit card type and fill out the information below.

Card Number: __________________________________________________________________
Name on Card: __________________________________________________________________
Expiration Date: ___________ (month/year) 3- or 4-digit Authorization Code: ________
(found on front of AmEx, back of other cards)
Address: ___________________________________________________________________
Street Address where credit card bills are sent.
City: _________________________ State/Province: _______
Postal Code: _________________________ Country: __________

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Not a NAMTA member? It’s more economical to purchase a registration and a membership than it is to pay the non-member rate. Become a NAMTA member today by sending in the membership form along with your registration and enjoy all the benefits of NAMTA membership!

Join NAMTA and register for the conference online at www.montessori-namta.org!
Use this form to join NAMTA or renew your membership.
Membership is for individuals only. No schools, please. Please furnish your home mailing address. You must provide an e-mail address to receive The NAMTA Bulletin and member mailings.

U.S. Resident ........................................................................................................... $50
Outside U.S. ........................................................................................................... $60
Lifetime .................................................................................................................. $600
The NAMTA Directory (not included with membership) ............... $18
NAMTA’s Online Bibliography (see description below) ........ $10
Total Enclosed ....................................................................................................... $_____

- Return by January 15, 2016, to have your name listed in The NAMTA Directory.
  - Check here if you do not want your name listed.
- The NAMTA Online Montessori Bibliography is a searchable database of Montessori articles. Copies of articles are available for a fee.

Last Name: ________________________ First Name: ________________________
Address: ________________________________ __________________________________
City: __________________________________________
State/Province: __________ Postal Code: _________ Country: ___________
Name of Your School: _______________________________________________________
Phone : ___________________________ Email: ________________________________

If you are a new member, please list your Montessori training information:
Location: ___________________________ Affiliation: __________
Date of Diploma: ___________ Level of Course: _______

Current Montessori Status:   Administrator   Guide (Teacher)   Trainee
                         Assistant   Parent   Program Coordinator

Payment Options

- Check or money order: payable in U.S. currency and drawn on a U.S. bank.
- Visa   MasterCard   AmEx   Discover (complete the information below)
Card Number: ________________________________
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(found on front of AmEx, back of other cards)
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  Street Address where credit card bills are sent.
City: ____________________________ State/Province: __________
Postal Code: ____________________________ Country: ___________
Make your hotel reservations by September 23 to receive the NAMTA conference rate!