



Over 150 teachers attended 46th annual VATE conference

By Kelly Trump, VATE President

Last October, the city of Richmond welcomed English teachers from across the state. Over 150 teachers attended our 46th annual conference. This conference had 45 different breakout sessions on Friday and Saturday, which covered a wide variety of topics and intended audiences. VATE was lucky to have had the Library of Congress host a break out session, along with other fabulous teachers, students, and supervisors. There was a lot of positive feedback about our breakout sessions this year, and there are too many shout-outs to list. VATE is incredibly proud of its 2015 presenters. You can still visit Sched to access the materials from the sessions. VATE will be accepting proposals for next year's conference in the late spring of 2016.

Our sessions were not our only highpoints of the weekend. Our conference featured two award-winning young adult authors Katherine Erskine and Gigi Amateau, both proud Virginians. Gigi kicked-off our conference on a positive tune with strategies guiding us in how to build resilience in our students and our readers. Tying into the conference theme, VATE 101 Back to Basics, Kathy reminded us of the BASICS of our profession. Another feature of our conference and the Richmond area, was a program put on by the Edgar Allan Poe Museum just up the road. Learning about Poe, participants judged a mock trial from the Tell Tale heart and a melancholy poetry reading contest. The Poetry Society of Virginia provided another rich hour of poets and original poetry. Charlotte Matthews, UVA professor and poet, also spoke with brunch attendees about her original works and ways to engage students in creating their own poems. Virginia Department of Education English Coordinator, Tracy Robertson, gave us the State of the State presentation. She updated us on this year's changes as well as what is coming down the pike. All general sessions were well-attended and VATE is grateful for our authors and speakers.

The conference wouldn't have been possible without the incredible staff at the Crowne Plaza. The hotel was a warm and cozy center for us this year. All of the staff was accommodating and made it a wonderful experience. We are hoping that next year's conference, also at a Crowne Plaza, will live up to the high expectations set by this location.

In order to make this the best conference yet, VATE tried some new methods to make the conference more organized and user friendly. We improved our paper program in making it more clear what the session take-aways and intended audiences were. We also put our program fully online this year, providing a stream-lining way to search for and organize your schedule. It also provided a one-stop shop for session materials. We received a lot of good feedback about Sched and plan to use it, or something equivalent, for future conferences. To improve our conference even more, we created a post-conference survey to see what areas we can tailor to best meet your needs. We gathered valuable feedback about what we are doing right as well as what we can make better for you.

You don't have to wait until next year's conference to stay involved with VATE! Our next event will be a VATE sponsored EdCamp in February. After that, our Literacy Explosion student contest will be held in April. Come to a VATE social and just hang out with other English teachers this summer! One social will be hosted in Richmond, and stay tuned for other socials announced through our Facebook page and website.

Richard Meade Scholarship Winner Reflects on 2015 Conference

By Megan Almond

One of the best things – if not the best thing – about getting to attend the 2015 VATE Conference as the Richard Meade Student Teaching Scholarship winner was getting to observe the very teacher-driven nature of this conference. Teachers planned and executed all aspects of the conference; classroom design and management are transferrable skills for sure. All of the sessions that I sat in on were helpful, enlightening, amusing, or some combination of the three. I realized that the presenters' experience as classroom teachers makes what they are saying much more credible and exciting to listen to since they can not only share methods, but what these would actually look like in action. I did not come away with new, untested concepts or programs that would require setting aside more time to sort through the information, but instead concrete advice and materials for implementation. I discovered that sometimes what it takes to lead students to understand the power of language and the importance of their communication skills is telling them really good stories in a really engaging way (thanks, Jennifer McCluney) and that students who are being engaged will become students who care (always interesting, Panderson).

As a pre-service teacher, it is hard to make the transition of thinking of yourself as a teacher, someone with authority, and not “just” a student. This is a shift that I am still in the process of making, to be sure. However, getting the opportunity to attend this conference and talk with experienced teachers about teaching reminded me that a) I'm not in over my head (yet), and b) a positive outlook, a team mindset, and lots of coffee will make a world of difference.

Save the Date: VATE's 47th Annual Conference will be in Hampton

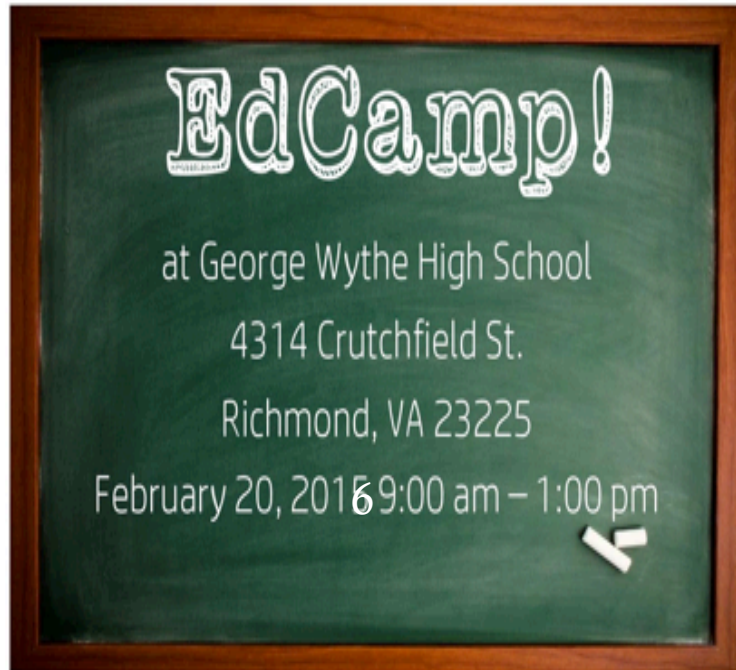


VATE's annual conference will be held in Hampton, VA. The dates for the conference are October 20-23, 2016 at the Crowne Plaza, located at 700 Settlers Landing Rd. The theme this year is “Celebrating Waves of Success through Literacy.” We are excited about the 102nd year and look forward to celebrating with the English teachers attending the conference.

We invite you to attend and plan to present your best practices. Bring a colleague and friend from all levels to attend the conference. You do not want to miss this chance to share and learn from others. You will enjoy the experience. On Friday evening we will host a reception at the Hampton University Art Museum. Saturday evening come out and sail with us while we enjoy a festive literary night on the Miss Hampton Harbor Cruise Boat.

Proposals will start being accepted in the month of March and the window will close on July 1, 2016.

Virginia Association of Teachers of English invites you to



What is an EdCamp?

- ↳ free registration
- ↳ non-commercial and conducted with a vendor-free presence
- ↳ made up of sessions that are determined on the day of the event
- ↳ events where anyone who attends can be a presenter
- ↳ geared towards anyone who would like to talk and learn about education
- ↳ reliant on the "law of two feet" that encourages participants to find a session that meets their needs

Visit EdCamp.org for more information about the workshop model.

register at
Vate.org/EdCamp



hosted by



Send us your submissions or students' work

If you are doing awesome work in your classroom or want to showcase your students' hard work, send an email to the VATE Voices editor, Shannon Pittman-Price, at shannonpittmanprice@gmail.com.

VATE names High School Teacher of the Year

Karrie Rinder has been named Virginia Association of Teachers of English's 2015 High School Teacher of Excellence.

She was awarded this honor at the National Teacher of English's annual conference in Minneapolis on Saturday, November 21, 2015.

Karrie has been a teacher at Dominion High School in Loudoun County, Virginia for ten years. In her over seventeen years of teaching, she has not only served as a classroom teacher but also as a conference speaker, team leader, acting assistant principal, club sponsor and developer of curriculum.

During her tenure in Loudoun County students, peers, parents and administrators have benefited from their interactions with Karrie. Students have noted that she was by far the most challenging yet rewarding teacher from whom they grew the most. She fostered in them a love of reading and writing, which strengthened their writing skills and prepared them for the real world. Her current principal, Dr. John Brewer, especially noted that she has established a successful and rigorous academic program at Dominion and performs at a world-class level. He references that she is an exemplary instructor who makes an indelible impact in the lives of her students as scholars and citizens.



Schemes, secrets, ambitions, and misunderstandings ... get a clue!

Jane Austen's novel *Emma* has all the ingredients of a timeless story. Plus a Regency-era study of women and power! The book has been popular for 200 years and has been adapted many times for television, movies (including *Clueless*), and new media (the web series *Emma Approved*).

Take a look at *Emma* with the Jane Austen Society of North America (JASNA) by signing up for the J. David Grey Young Writers' Workshop. Our workshop program, open to all 8th through 11th graders in D.C., Maryland, and Virginia, includes:

- Monthly webinars through the summer
- Regular email updates for a more in-depth study of the characters
- Half-day workshop to talk with students from around the area
- Writing assignment on the big day
- Prizes
- Swag
- A chance to win an invitation to an event at JASNA's 2016 conference in D.C.!

The workshop will be held in the capital area in September 2016.

For more information, email
YWW2016@gmail.com



Attend the Holocaust Museum Teacher Fellowship Program



2016–17 MUSEUM TEACHER FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

July 17–21, 2016

Applications due February 1, 2016

The Museum Teacher Fellowship Program seeks to train leaders in the field of Holocaust education. The fellows are a national corps of skilled educators who assist the Museum's efforts to promote quality Holocaust education that is rooted in accurate history and responsible pedagogy.

The Museum's teacher training programs ensure that learning how and why the Holocaust happened is an important component of education in America and strengthens students' critical thinking about their roles in society.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Established in 1996, the Museum Teacher Fellowship Program has developed a national corps of skilled educators to help lead the Museum's efforts to ensure quality Holocaust education in secondary schools. To date, 320 teachers have become a part of the corps, working to:

- Organize conferences
- Lead workshops
- Write curricula
- Serve on boards of Holocaust museums and education centers
- Lead study trips to Holocaust sites
- Serve as conduits to the Museum for educators, institutions, professional organizations, and community groups in their regions

Each year, the Museum designates up to 20 educators—from grades 7 through 12 and community college faculty—as new Museum teacher fellows. These educators must show evidence of extensive knowledge of Holocaust history, successful teaching experience, and participation in community and professional organizations.

Fellows participate in the Pines, Sarna, Statfeld Summer Institute for the Museum Teacher Fellowship Program held at the Museum in Washington, DC. This five-day, all-expenses-paid institute is designed to immerse fellows in advanced historical and pedagogical issues. Following the institute, they are expected to create and implement an outreach project in their schools, colleges, communities, or professional organizations. In July of the following year, they attend a follow-up program at the Museum to assess their efforts and to continue their study of the Holocaust with Museum staff and noted speakers.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

The Museum welcomes applications from community college faculty and middle and high school teachers of history, social studies, foreign languages, English, and journalism. Librarians and instructional media specialists are encouraged to apply as well, and the Museum will also consider other content areas. Applicants must teach in United States schools and have taught the Holocaust for a minimum of five years.

VATE's Literacy Explosion to be held at Seneca Ridge M.S.



DATE: Saturday, April 9, 2016

Location: Seneca Ridge Middle School, Sterling, VA.

Registration is now open! Register at <http://vate.org/contests-for-students/literacy-explosion/>

What is Literacy Explosion?

The Literacy Explosion is a state-wide language arts festival designed to celebrate and promote the integration of literacy and 21st century learning skills by encouraging and rewarding students' excellence in reading, writing, speaking, presenting, filming, drawing, and acting. Students show their understanding and appreciation of a text and expertise in their use of language, communication, and digital media in one of these formats: book covers, book trailers, digital posters, photo essays, podcasts, and videos. Both fiction and nonfiction texts may be used to create these projects. Texts may include, but are not limited to narratives, plays, poems, essays, informational texts, and students' original writing. Students submit entries individually or as part of a collaborative team.

For highlights from Literacy Explosion 2015, go to <http://vate.org/contests-for-students/literacy-explosion-2015/>

For more information, contact Cheryl Golden – Cheryl.Golden@lcps.org

Connect with us on social media

