

CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

Virginia English Bulletin Spring / Summer 2010, Vol 60, #1
Themed Issue on Accountability

Accountable to Whom? And For What?

Seems as though every which way we turn these days, we encounter (sometimes strident) calls for continued or heightened accountability. If it's not Arne Duncan trumpeting his hyped up Race to the Top program tying stimulus funds to student performance, it's the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association (NGA) calling for a national curriculum...um, sorry, make that "national standards" for what students should know and be able to do upon completion of high school. Leaving aside the question of who anointed the current crop of politicians, a possibly more important question becomes: who has the definitive list of everything we all ought to know or be able to do? Probably most important, following that, is still another question: if we have a list, how do we assess learners knowledge of the contents of that list? In other words, who is measuring and what is being measured. And that has been (or should have been) the perennial question for accountability proponents forever.

The cynics among us say we should just sign up for all the Great Courses. Tongue-in-cheek? Perhaps. Others propose we take a lesson from E.D. Hirsch and fill up on cultural literacy instead of critical literacy or 21st Century literacy. Hirsch still has a list somewhere, surely. Hope he's added the Internet.

I favor my own list, filled to overflowing with practical skills and experiences: faucet repair, toilet replacement, automotive maintenance, perhaps a short series on retirement investing. Oh, and definitely a whole sequence on savvy consumerism, the shallowness of flash journalism, media spin-doctoring, and general web literacy, things like avoiding phishing and pharming schemes and staying off spam lists. Indeed, in my curriculum, we could spend a semester on beer and cigarette advertising (reading and writing).

Sorry. That was both the teacher and the old person talking.

In any event, with Accountability (with an uppercase "A") in mind, and coming off Virginia's most recent re-write of the Standards of Learning for English Language Arts, the *Virginia English Bulletin* invites authors to submit articles, essays, poems, or reviews for the Spring / Summer 2010 issue which will be devoted to all aspects of teaching and learning with accountability in mind. How do we make writing ability accountable, reading prowess answerable? How do we assess for critical literacy? Better yet, how *SHOULD* we make writing and reading and teaching accountable?

Perhaps we at VEB are the ones who are out of touch, and Arne Duncan, or the National Governors Association, or E.D. Hirsch has it right. You tell us. Are we too flippant? Too sarcastic? Have we been SOL'd into inappropriate cynicism ourselves? Tell us.

Because we eagerly await your articles about research you've done, lessons you've taught, units you're implemented, including original fiction and poetry, all related to your own struggles and triumphs with not just accountable teaching, but *responsible* teaching and learning. Write a response to the current Standards of Learning re-write and send us a copy when you post it to the Virginia Department of Education. Attend one of the public comment sessions and send us a copy of your remarks. Tell us. We look forward to your submissions.

Virginia English Bulletin is a fully refereed journal. In addition to publishing full length articles on English language arts teaching and learning, we feature teaching ideas in our Great Teaching ideas column.

Deadline: May 15, 2010

Authors should submit their articles electronically as e-mail attachments, preferably Microsoft Word or Corel WordPerfect; however, other formats and word processing programs are acceptable. We do not accept simultaneous submissions. **Please include your mailing address, as well as a short biographical sketch including the name of your school, position, courses taught, and a brief statement about your professional life; also include a statement of submission noting that the work has not been submitted elsewhere simultaneously for publication.**

Send to rohwilli@radford.edu, for the attention of Robert Williams, Radford University, P.O. Box 6935, Radford, Virginia 24142. The editor reserves the right to modify manuscripts to fit length and language considerations. Please include "VEB Submission" in the "Subject" line of your e-mail. Alternately, interested individuals may call the Editor at 540.831.6372.