

CCA Board of Director's Report
CTA Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Conference 2016

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I attended the CTA GLBT conference on December 9-11, 2016 at the Riviera Hotel in Palm Springs, California. I attended with fellow CCA board members Randa Wahbe, Patrick Mitchell, and Dorothy Reina.

I attended four wonderful sessions at the conference. The first, "Internalized Homophobia is SO Gay!" was moderated by C. Scott Miller from the Santa Anna Teachers' Association. It was an interesting lecture and discussion about how even LGBT educators can have biased views towards LGBT students due to messages they have received in media and from society throughout their lifetimes.

The second session that I attended was probably my favorite. The subject was the teaching of gay literature in English classes. As an English instructor, I am always interested in adding more diversity into the literature that I teach. Gene Kahane, an Encinal High School English teacher, was the facilitator of "Queer Literature is Great Literature." He used his own classroom as a model and showed how his students were able to have excellent discussions based around queer texts such as *The Hours* and *The Laramie Project*. The students also participated in a poster-making contest to celebrate Harvey Milk Day. The literature itself and the lesson plans Kahane introduced were more geared towards K-12 students as Kahane himself is a high school teacher. However,

I could see where these lesson plans could be adapted for both my developmental and transferable college English classes.

In the afternoon, I attended trans activist Willy Wilkinson's session, "Creating Trans-Affirming Schools." This was a very eye-opening lecture. Wilkinson discussed the different terms used and accepted by the trans community. As an educator, it is important to remember that our trans students are often overlooked as a minority within a minority. While we accept them in the gay community, we also need to remember that they have challenges that are all their own both within that community and in the larger society. I've had several trans students in my classroom, and I welcome the idea of understanding their struggles as best I can and making our college a welcoming and safe space for them.

On Saturday evening, we watched the film *Pride*. This is a movie about a striking British coal mining union and their partnership with young LGBT activists during the 1980s. It was a beautiful movie that I believe we should consider screening at a future CCA conference. It is very seamlessly combined issues of gay rights with the message that there is power in a union.

On Sunday morning, my final session was "Stressed?" run by Alyson Browning and Roger Kavigan. The session encouraged educators to evaluate the stress levels in their lives and reprioritize in order to live healthier. I found it to be very enjoyable and helpful.

The CTA GLBT conference was a very inspiring and well-organized conference. I got a lot of good information while I was there and met many excellent educators who are advocating for our students and our community. Although this was my first GLBT conference, there have been eight so far. Many of my fellow educators proudly wore their "8th Conference Attended" ribbons. They told me that no matter how many times they come, they always learn something new. I hope that one day I will be able to proudly display my own multiple conference ribbon, and I can't wait to see what new and valuable things I learn next year.