

Lynette Williamson

CHSSA HALL OF FAME 2005



Lynette was not a speech or communications major in college. She attended Fresno State to study physical therapy and only dabbled in debate when she was in high school. When she landed her first teaching position at her alma mater, St. Vincent High School in Petaluma in 1984, she was assigned two sections of freshman speech. Relying on her own high school forensics experiences, she pulled off what she calls "a pretty convincing 'humorous interp' as a speech teacher." Then the principal gave her the choice of coaching junior varsity girls' basketball or forensics. She says that she was equally qualified for both jobs: She could dribble and she could talk. She opted for forensics, rationalizing that her tongue might hold out longer than her knees. Today she says it was the best decision of her professional career.

Seven years later, she matriculated to Analy High School in Sebastopol where she's been coaching speech and debate and teaching English for the past fifteen years. In addition to her service to her school and students, Lynette has contributed a great deal to the California High School Speech Association especially in the area of curriculum.

As CHSSA Vice President of Curriculum for many years, she was successful in getting UC course approval for Rhetoric and Oral Interpretation--both courses continue to be offered by schools state-wide. Under her direction, the curriculum committee published, *Speaking Across the Curriculum*, a teacher's guide for infusing oral communication skills into a variety of subject areas. In addition, she has published articles in professional journals like *California English* and *The English Journal*. Her most recent article for *EJ* entitled, "How Coaching Forensics Made Me a Better Writing Coach" inspired her to draft the forthcoming book: *Speaking of On-Demand Writing: applying impromptu speaking skills to impromptu writing situations*, which is due out in the fall of 2008 and is being published by IDEA press.

In addition to sharing her curriculum ideas through writing, Lynette also conducts teacher in-services and workshops at state and national conferences and at the Sonoma County Office of Education. Her most recent seminar was billed as "Meeting the Demands of On-Demand Writing: coaching students for the SAT I and CAHSEE."

Upon her induction into the CHSSA Hall of Fame she wrote, "The students that have passed through my program have made the tedium and exhaustion of being an English teacher worth every red pencil; the coaches and colleagues that I've met along the way have kept me invigorated as an educator, and the opportunity to represent CHSSA as the Curriculum Chair for seven years was an honor that has continued to inspire me to publish and conduct workshops on curriculum."

