

# COUNCIL CHRONICLE

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH



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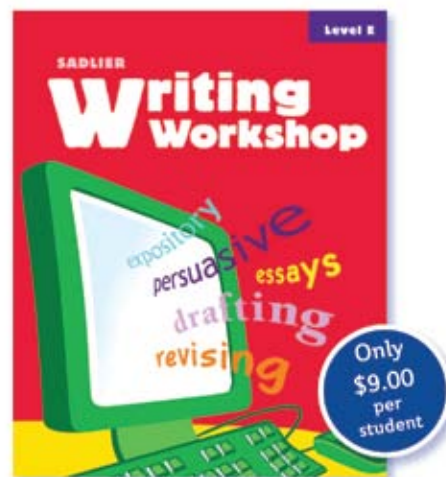
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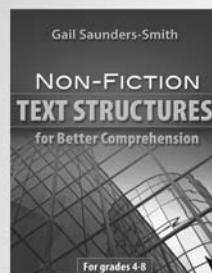
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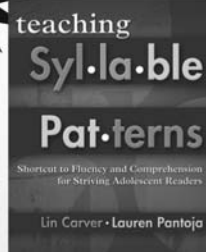
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## New features and functions for [www.ncte.org](http://www.ncte.org)!



Over the last few years, NCTE staff have worked with the Writing in Digital Environments Research Center (<http://www.wide.msu.edu/>), members, focus groups, and outside contractors in order to develop the features and functions of a new website for [www.ncte.org](http://www.ncte.org).

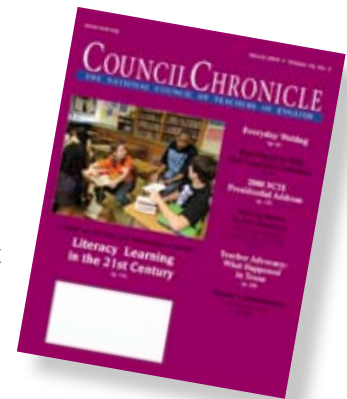
Not only will you find a new platform with interactivity on almost every page, you'll be able to find what you need faster and easier through a streamlined navigation system.

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We encourage you to visit the new site at [www.ncte.org](http://www.ncte.org) and check out all the updated features. Then share your feedback with us through the Comments box at [www.ncte.org/redesign](http://www.ncte.org/redesign).

And to read the current *Council Chronicle* issue online, visit [www.ncte.org/magazine](http://www.ncte.org/magazine).



THE COUNCIL CHRONICLE (ISSN #1057-4190) is published four times a year, in March, July, September, and November by the National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096, as an exclusive benefit of membership. \$5 of your membership dues is allocated to *The Council Chronicle*. Periodical postage paid at Urbana, IL, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Council Chronicle*, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096.

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## Let Your Voice Be Heard! NCTE's Education Policy and English Language Arts Day and Month April 23, 2009 • Washington, D.C.

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## THE COUNCIL CHRONICLE

The National Council of Teachers of English

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# Everyday Writing

## *Words Matter More Than Ever in 21st Century Workplace*

**W**e expect people in certain jobs to do a lot of writing: attorneys, journalists, English teachers. Part of that expectation relies on a definition of writing that includes sentences and paragraphs in structured compositions.

But not all writing meets that definition. Whenever words are transcribed to a communication medium—whether it’s a waitress jotting an order on a pad, a mechanic making a list of needed parts, a data clerk filling out an online form—this, too, is writing. People in many different walks of life do this type of writing, as well as more traditional writing, every day.

The rise of Internet-based communication has led to even greater amount of writing than in decades past, as increasingly, people in a wide range of jobs find themselves emailing more often, texting more often, and using their computers to fill out forms or other types of information.

Here are stories from ten people in different walks of life—ranging from a high school student to a college student, an Air Force sergeant to a restaurant owner, a stay-at-home mom to a post-surgical nurse, a math teacher to a land surveyor, a carpenter to a retired engineer. All of these people use writing every day, in ways that may surprise you.

As a high-school student, **Anthony Jackson** didn’t much care for or about writing; he did papers as required, but they were a chore.

Today, though, as a regional sales manager for a restaurant-services company, Jackson, 20, takes new interest in what he writes, because it is relevant and meaningful to his work life.

“My attitude has changed dramatically,” says Jackson, who lives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. “This is my career; I take more passion in it because it’s for me. But with school I had no enthusiasm in writing because it was a teacher who was making me do it.”

Jackson uses texts, emails from his computer and from his Blackberry, and faxes to communicate with vendors and customers.

“I email when I am out on the road and I have a question to one of my buyers. I like to do email with them because they get back to me quicker than a phone call would.”

At home, Jackson emails with family and texts with friends, as well as posting on Facebook. Altogether, he says, he spends three to four hours per day writing.

```
From: Anthony Jackson
Sent: Monday, December 15, 2008 8:50 PM
To: J-- N--
Subject: Important

Hey J--. How have you been? Anything new and exciting?

R-- O-- would like to start desert menus. I have been sitting on this for a month now and forgot all about it.

Here are the items they would like to have on the menu:

Lemoncello
Tiramisu Big
New York Cheesecake
Coconut Ripieno
Choc. Fondant
Coppa Crème Brulee

Is it 4, 6, or 8 items they need?

Anthony
```

Email is a common form of writing for Anthony Jackson, both at home and in his job as a regional sales manager.



Perhaps not surprisingly, college student **Joselyn Huynh**, 20, feels like she is “constantly writing.” The marketing major at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois, writes papers, takes notes during class, and writes essay exams.

Besides this, Huynh says she is “constantly texting—whether it is to keep in touch with my friends or to keep in touch with my mom,” makes lists of everything from to-dos to groceries needed, and posts often on Facebook.

Today’s technologies have resulted in her writing more than she might otherwise, says Huynh. “Without text messaging or Facebook I would be talking on the phone a lot more,” she says. “I also think that I write a lot more because I find it so much easier to sit down and type a letter or assignment than write one with pen and paper.”

Huynh estimates she spends four hours per day writing. “It’s just a part of my every day life,” she says.



Joselyn Huynh  
Coms 356  
November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008

Changeling

In a world where someone seems to be all alone and no one believes in anything they say or do, what does a person do? *Changeling* is about a woman who overcomes all the obstacles of media, police, and the general public to fight for what she believes in and how she will not give up until she succeeds. She has to go through so much pain and at times she wants to give up but she does not. The will to never give up is a strong character and Angelina Jolie demonstrates it in her search for her missing son.

There are so many scenes throughout this movie that contribute to the theme in this movie. The first scene that demonstrates what the movie is about is when Angelina Jolie is yelling at the little boy who claims to be her son.

In this scene lighting plays a huge roll. The light is very dim to demonstrate the darkness of the whole situation. Is this the son or has she gone crazy? The only light seems to be mainly on the child and Angelina Jolie. The light signifies how she is feeling inside. From her outward appearance it does not appear that she has it all together but deep down inside through it all she will not give up and she will not stop until she finds her son.

Another aspect that make this scene relate to the theme is how it is shot. The director varies between close ups and wide shots. The close up shots show the agony that she is going

through how distressed she is and how she has the thought of giving up, but finds the strength to not. There are so many thoughts that the audience can tell are coming through her mind. Who will believe her and where is her son? All these relate back to the theme of the movie and how she has the will power to not give up. The long shots in this scene show the distance between Angelina Jolie and the child. It shows how far away they are. This is not a

Examples of everyday writing from Joselyn Huynh include her Facebook page and a college essay.



Think “Air Force mechanic” and you don’t necessarily think “writer.” Yet **Eric Eidemiller** says the writing he does as part of his job as an aerospace pneumatic systems craftsman at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Alaska is crucial—indeed, a matter of life and death.

Eidemiller, 37, is a technical sergeant in charge of recovering, launching, servicing and repairing military aircraft, including planes that transport the President, run combat missions, evacuate wounded people, and provide disaster relief worldwide. He spends half of each shift writing: documenting maintenance, filling out performance reviews of the crew he supervises, writing reports, and keeping detailed records of work done on planes, using computerized forms that “must be filled out 100 percent correctly so the pilots can tell exactly what has been done to the aircraft.”

Eidemiller points out that a mistake in communication in his job “could lead to a plane crash or injury to personnel.”

“In this time of war, mistakes in written communication could lead to mission failure. Proper written and verbal communication is highly stressed in the USAF.”

While off-duty, Eidemiller keeps in touch with his family and friends through email, MySpace and Facebook, spending an average of two hours a day with this type of writing.

Continued on page 8



Nursing is a hands-on profession, but it also requires nurses to spend time writing about their patients.

**Maliuqka Burton**, 34, is a recovery room nurse at Saint Francis Hospital

in Poughkeepsie, New York. She spends one to two hours per day writing patient information—such as pain levels and vital signs—in their charts. Her hospital doesn't yet have electronic record-keeping for its nurses, she says, so she does this writing by hand.

Burton also is studying for her nursing degree, so she spends another part of her day taking notes and writing papers. "Although I am in college, they don't teach you about writing," she says. "At least grammar is not as much of an issue, because the computer is going to assist you in that."

At home, Burton doesn't do much emailing or texting, both of which she dislikes, preferring personal interaction instead. "I don't do a lot of texting—that's for the younger population."

**Juancarlos Virgen** knows how to wield a hammer, a crowbar, a welding torch—and the text keys to his ever-present Blackberry. His profession in the building trades requires it.

Virgen, 32, is a carpenter from Rockford, Illinois, who works on government projects, including renovating Veterans Administration hospitals. As a government contractor, he spends almost as much time filling out reports about construction as he does in actual construction—in all, about 3 to 4 hours per day writing.

"Even to turn on the little tank to weld something, you have to get written permission; you have to specify what you're going to do and how long you're going to do it," Virgen says.

Other types of writing he does include keeping daily logs and progress reports; tracking employee performance and hours; writing reports about unforeseen occurrences; writing time cards; and writing notes and to-do lists for himself. Many of his reports are made online, via government forms or email. He also finds himself texting all day long, both to keep in touch with friends and family in Illinois (he works away from home during the week) as well as work-related texts.

Virgen says today's technology—with its automatic grammar- and spell-checkers—makes writing "a lot more lazy, in a way . . . . If I were to sit down and write a letter today, I'd probably make all kinds of goofy mistakes."

Not to mention, he says, that the family members he used to write paper letters to in Mexico all use email now.

**NOTES:**

1. No layout was found for Day Mountain Road. Road right-of-way limits shown were determined from physical evidence recovered (as shown) and by assuming a three rod (= 49.5') width (common for this type of road and suggested by stone walls recovered on both sides of the road somewhat northerly of the locus site). Actual road limits are boundary and may vary (i.e. if a layout were found and/or a long portion of the road were resurveyed).
2. The easterly portion of the Vogel/Judson boundary is the southerly line of a parcel created in Book 310 P. 264 (Mitchell to Palmer, 1949) and was also described in an outconveyance executed the following day (Book 310 P. 265, Palmer to Vanderhoff, 1949) for the southerly portion of the larger parcel. Both deeds call for an iron pipe near a birch tree near the pond as a southeasterly corner (neither calls a specific pond frontage distance). The 14" white birch found (as shown) was accepted as the birch called in said deed because it is prominent, appears large enough to date from circa 1949, and because its location compares well with that of the Judson's northeasterly corner as indicated by measurements called in their deed (as referenced hereon). The location of the said Vogel boundary was determined from that of said tree and pipes 'C' and 'D' and from the call for a distance of 4 rods (= 66') along the westerly line of the said 1949 outconveyance (as depicted hereon).  
Pipe 'E' was not accepted as the pipe called near a birch tree in the aforesaid deeds because of its poor conformance with the configuration outlined above. Note also that pipes called in pertinent outconveyances by Palmer appear to be 1" pipes and not 3/4" pipes. Judson may have some claim to the area southerly of pipe 'E' and the fence extending from it to pipe 'D' if it could be shown that said pipe is in fact the aforesaid southeasterly corner pipe called in said 1949 deeds or that the fence represents a boundary duly established by the parties by unwritten means (note that said fence is not called in any deeds found). An attorney should be consulted if this question is of concern.
3. Pertinent deeds to pondside lots in the Vogel chain of title appear to include rights-of-way to said lots from the Day Mountain Road but do not indicate precise locations. Deeds in the Judson chain of title appear to except a right-of-way to at least the most southeasterly of the Vogel lots, probably along what is now the Judson driveway and then within strip 'A' (as shown hereon). No evidence that such access was ever physically established was found; however, no opinion is expressed or implied by this surveyor as to the current legal status or precise location of said right-of-way outside of the parcel surveyed. Current vehicular access into the Vogel parcel by the more northerly gravel driveway shown is well-established.
4. Distance call of 60' +/- in Book 352 P. 254 (Mitchell to Vogel, 1958) appears to run southeasterly to pipe 'D' and thus to create an overlap with what in 1958 was an abutting lot; however, said abutting lot was conveyed into the Vogel chain of title by the 1973 deed referenced hereon, thus rendering the apparent overlap moot.
5. Description found in the aforesaid 1973 deed originates in Book 344 P. 481 (Palmer to Goding, 1957) and calls for the northeasterly corner of the former Vanderhoff lot (shown hereon) as its northeasterly corner; however, said call appears to be in error, and the call in said 1957 deed for Bell as an abuttor is in any case sufficient to extend the 1957/1973 parcel northerly to the former Bell lot (as shown hereon).
6. 1/4" iron rods shown are not called in pertinent deeds and are casual in appearance; they were thus given little weight in determining the boundaries surveyed.
7. Any matters pertaining to title, easements, restrictions, unwritten rights, etc. should be referred to an attorney.

The notes that land surveyor Creston Gaither develops for a property map are just one example of his everyday writing.

Legal property descriptions might not be the most fascinating prose, at least for most readers. Yet they require the utmost precision and care in crafting. Otherwise, says land surveyor **Creston Gaither**, lawsuits could occur.

Gaither, 56, who lives in Vienna, Maine, jokingly refers to the annotations he makes about land he surveys as "sleeping aids," but notes that due to their potential legal ramifications, he takes "obsessive" care in their construction.

Other than legalese, Gaither also writes business emails, letters, and reports. In his private life, he also emails, plus writes the occasional letter to the editor or essay.

Gaither finds that, thanks to the Internet, he is writing much more these days, while spending less time on the phone, especially for business. Email is more efficient and results in a permanent record of what was said "without seeming as weighty or even confrontational as a formal letter might," Gaither says. "I use varying levels of formality depending on my correspondent and purpose, but I do proofread and have yet to use 'u' as a pronoun."



Though **Anna Pearson's** profession focuses on numbers, she uses words just as often.

Pearson, 29, is a math teacher at Addison Trail High School in Addison, Illinois. "As a teacher, I am writing all day long," says Pearson. Examples include writing assessments,

activities and lesson plans; writing to-do lists for herself; emailing counselors, administrators, parents, students, colleagues, coaches, social workers, case managers; and filling out weekly, daily, and semester reports.

Outside of work, Pearson is studying for her master's in school counseling, which requires writing at least one paper each week. She texts "constantly," emails friends and family, and, due to a medical condition, records what she eats and drinks.

During a typical day, Pearson estimates she spends about five hours writing, but sees a danger to too much time spent this way. "Technology allows us all to be in constant contact—as long as we are willing to write," says Pearson. "At times it can become very overwhelming to deal with all of the writing we must do as teachers, because it takes time away from our face-to-face time with students. Just because you *can* make a report or online form doesn't necessarily mean there is a need for it."

**Prob & Data** Name \_\_\_\_\_  
**Measures of Center & Spread** Date \_\_\_\_\_  
**Hour** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*\*DIRECTIONS: Before beginning, you will need to calculate the winning percentages of each team. ☐**

1. What is the mean winning percentage (of the top 32 teams in the NFL)?
2. What is the (sample) standard deviation of winning percentage?
3. How many of the teams are within 1 standard deviation above or below average for the winning percentage? (Draw a number line with values.)
4. Sketch a box plot to show the five number \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the mean number of Super Bowl \_\_\_\_\_
6. What is the (sample) standard deviation of \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many of the teams are within 1 standard number line with values.)
8. Sketch a box plot to show the five number \_\_\_\_\_

9. Given these statistics and graphs, which of the two measures of success do you believe is more representative of a team's greatness: winning percentage for the season OR super bowl appearances? Explain your answer!

TEAM	Wins	Losses	Winning %'s	Playoff Appearances	Super Bowl Appearances	SB Wins
Atlanta	179	243		7	1	0
Baltimore (Colts & Ravens)	99	132		3	1	1
Buffalo	218	206		12	4	0
Carolina	82	94		3	1	0
Chicago	220	204		11	1	1
Cincinnati	176	248		5	2	0
Cleveland	167	208		9	0	0
Dallas	231	193		15	3	2
Denver	258	165		15	5	2
Green Bay	220	201		11	2	1
Houston ( Oilers & Texans )	150	194		9	0	0
Indianapolis	168	183		9	0	0
Jacksonville	94	82		5	0	0
Kansas City	226	196		9	0	0
Miami	253	170		15	2	0
Minnesota	227	197		13	0	0
New England	218	206		11	3	1
New Orleans	191	233		5	0	0
New York Giants	220	202		11	3	2
New York Jets	194	228		9	0	0
Philadelphia	232	189		14	2	0
Pittsburgh	246	177		15	2	1
Raiders	225	198		11	1	2
San Diego (Cardinals & Rams)	147	166		6	2	1
San Diego	198	227		8	1	0
San Francisco	240	163		18	5	5
Seattle	211	214		8	0	0
Tampa Bay	176	248		9	1	1
Tennessee	81	63		4	1	0
Washington	230	193		10	4	3

Statistics are for the years 1970-2005. These are the years that ESPN has been in operation. Stats were found on ESPN.com.

High school math teacher Anna Pearson counts sports-based math problem as examples of everyday writing from her life.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2008  
**Funny Vacation Story**

As most of my readers know, I have three little girls. We went to Michigan for Thanksgiving to spend it with Grandpa and Grandma. Uncle Jeremy and Aunt Anouk went as well.

One evening my two 5 year olds were upstairs in the old house talking to Uncle Jeremy. They happened to glance at the book he was reading. They told him the man on the cover of the book was John Calvin (one of the early Reformers). Jeremy turned his book over and surprisingly said, "yes it is, how did you know that?" To that they replied, "My daddy has that book, and we can't read it yet, but we will someday. Brianna will borrow daddy's and I will borrow yours."

A couple of days later, Grandpa and Grandma took the same two children to see Christmas lights. One of the displays had Santa and his reindeer. She asked them if they knew who it was. They had no idea who Santa is.

So my kids know who John Calvin is and not Santa Claus at age 5. Imagine that!!

POSTED BY HEIDI AT 9:27 PM 1 COMMENTS

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2008  
**Life is good**

Well, lots of wonderful things have happened.



**Heidi Scott** has her hands full with three children under age 6, including 5-year-old twins and a 22-month-old. But she still finds time to write, which is her way of staying connected to the outside world.

Scott, 32, is a stay-at-home mom in Rockford, Illinois. She maintains two blogs: a weight-loss journal co-written with a friend and a solo blog about life as a mom of twins. Besides her blogging, Scott, a former schoolteacher, tracks lesson plans and grades papers for her twins, whom she is home-schooling; completes online surveys for cash; keeps in touch with friends through email, Facebook, instant-messaging and text-messaging; and writes grocery lists and to-do lists. She estimates she spends about an hour per day writing.

"I think using the Internet has really, really helped," says Scott. "I can keep in touch with people I would never have kept in touch with."

On the other hand, says Scott, "I do think I'm writing less because you are sending messages faster—you are writing a sentence or two at a time, versus writing a three-page letter once a month."

Heidi Scott's writing example is an entry from the blog she keeps about life as the mother of twins.

Continued on page 10

When **Haven Whiteside** returned to college after World War II, he chose to pursue engineering rather than journalism, because jobs in engineering were more plentiful.

Today, at age 77, after careers as a nuclear physicist, governmental policy analyst, and peace and justice worker, Whiteside is rediscovering his earlier love for writing.

After his wife, Rose, died in 2005, Whiteside took a “writing in retirement” course at a university near his Tampa, Florida, home, and began writing essays through his late wife’s perspective. This exercise then “turned on my creative gene,” says Whiteside, and he began writing poetry.

Whiteside also writes accounts of his mission trips, emails friends and associates, and keeps a journal. He has started to receive Facebook “friend” requests from people he knows, but says for now, he is choosing to stick with email.



**Sue Golubski** makes more than sandwiches at the Quiznos franchise she owns and runs in Belvidere, Illinois. She also makes flyers, brochures, to-do lists, work schedules, reports to the corporate office, lists of

inventory, memos, advance orders for food and drink, memos, delivery records, and more.

All told, Golubski, 49, spends about one-third of her day “writing stuff down.”

That doesn’t count time spent writing at home, which mainly consists of emails, paying bills, and sending “lots of texts to my kids.”

It’s the writing she does at work that most occupies Golubski’s thoughts, particularly emails she sends to her corporate office.

“I think a lot about my writing,” she says. “I’ll think, ‘Is my grammar correct?’ I’m very conscientious about sending something out that isn’t spelled correctly. I always double-check everything. I don’t want to send things to corporate and sound dumb.”

Order #	PO Order #	Order Name	Time	Time	Time-in	Total \$	Check or Gift Card	Prep. Credit Card
2/15	1	1003 (Bentek / Oscar)				139.99	CC	2.00
2/15	2	1021 (Mohan / Oscar)				19.05	Cash	1.00
2/16	3	1003 (Dore / Magaly)				20.60	CC/Cash	1.00
2/16	4	1001 (BDS / Magaly)				14.04	Cash	1.00
2/16		1007 (BDS / Magaly)				22.86	Cash	1.00
2/16		1020 (Haran / Magaly)				14.91	Cash	1.00
2/16		1044 (Dr. Chopko / D. Wipf)				20.51	Cash	2.00
2/16		1041 (Hase / D. Wipf)				10.60	Cash	2.00
2/17		1008 (Lynn / Oscar)				16.42	Cash	1.00
2/17		1009 (Kuren / Oscar)				20.52	Cash	1.00
2/17		1029 (Wagner / Oscar)				19.96	Cash	2.00
2/17		1048 (WAW / Oscar)				37.49	Cash	2.00
2/17		1051 (Ong-ah / Oscar)				27.78	Cash	1.00
2/17		1058 (Wolfgang / Oscar)				10.60	Cash	1.00
2/18		1004 (Evan / Oscar)				99.94	CC / 3.00	1.00
2/18		1001 (Seth / Oscar)				33.80	Cash	2.00
2/18		1005 (Bull / Oscar)				15.52	CC 3.00	1.00
2/18		1019 (Gold / Oscar)				31.07	CC 4.00	1.00
2/18		1071 (US / Oscar)				10.87	Cash	1.00
2/18		1085 (Hase / Oscar)				13.93	Cash	1.00
2/18		1089 (Hase / Oscar)				18.14	Cash	1.00
2/18		377664 (Arnold / Oscar)				41.18	Online	2.00
2/19		1002 (Rahab / Oscar)				22.85	Cash	1.00
2/19		1011 (Optical / Oscar)				10.44	CC	1.00

prep LC  
 dishes LC  
 hot sauce CC  
 pre-weights KC  
 Flip MC  
 Chicken murg OC  
 trunc/d.r. KC  
 salads KE

Everyday writing tasks for Sue Golubski include to-do lists and delivery-lists of food orders.

**Lorna Collier** is a freelance writer based in northern Illinois.

# The National Day on Writing

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## The National Gallery of Writing



October 20, 2009

<http://www.ncte.org/action/dayonwriting>

The National Council of Teachers of English invites you to explore and celebrate the integral role writing has in each of our lives by participating in the National Day on Writing/National Gallery of Writing.

### Who can participate?

Everyone! NCTE invites everyone to play an active role in this celebration of writing. We encourage participants from many sectors—students, teachers, parents, grandparents, service and industrial workers, managers, business owners, legislators, retirees, and many more—to submit a piece of writing.

### What types of writing will be accepted?

We welcome composition in all of its forms, from textual to audio and video pieces. The only criterion is that it is a piece that matters to you.

### Where will I submit my writing?

NCTE, along with our participation partners, will unveil an online National Gallery of Writing this spring that will feature different types of composition. The gallery will be a digital archive accessible to all through a free, searchable website.

## National English Honor Society Continues Growth

*by Dave Wendelin*

Starting a writing center in a high school; writing letters for senior citizens; collecting books for a children's center; hosting author Chris Crutcher; traveling to London and Paris; attending plays; tutoring—these are but a few of the activities members of chapters of the National English Honor Society (NEHS) have been engaged in during the first semester of this school year.

Launched in 2004, NEHS, a program sponsored by Sigma Tau Delta, has quickly become one of the leading academic honor societies in close to 300 high schools across the country. Approximately 13,000 students are now engaged in activities and projects that are impacting, not only their lives, but the lives of those in their communities as well. The motto of the society, *Gelast Seal Mid Are* (Old English for “duty goes with honor”), captures the significance of NEHS. Students are selected and honored for their academic accomplishments, particularly in English studies; once inducted, however, they become a part of a “society,” a community of individuals dedicated to utilizing their talents to help others.

NCTE members who teach high school are invited to consider sponsoring a NEHS chapter in their schools. The growing network of chapters is positively impacting the literacy challenges evident in many communities.

Participation also affords students and faculty many opportunities to learn together by attending plays, forming book clubs, and, in the coming year, connecting with NCTE's National Day on Writing, promoting and publishing writing. Additionally, generous scholarships are available to high school seniors interested in pursuing English studies at the university level.

I encourage anyone interested in learning more about the society to visit the website at [www.nehs.us](http://www.nehs.us). Information about starting a chapter is available there, as well as contact information for all the chapters across the country.

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**Dave Wendelin** is the Director of the National English Honor Society and supervises student teachers for Metropolitan State College of Denver.



# Best Practices Help End Copyright Confusion

**English teachers have a new policy document from NCTE that helps them understand copyright law, enabling both teachers and students to employ copyrighted materials under the doctrine of fair use.**

When English and film professor Peter DeCherney co-hosted the annual Mashup Contest at Weigle Information Commons at the University of Pennsylvania last year, he used a mashup activity as a powerful tool for teaching and learning. A mashup consists of a combination of multiple sources of media integrated into a new creative work. Students from across the university were invited to compose a new visual message by using excerpts and clips of existing copyrighted materials. For example, one student re-edited film clips from *The Titanic* into a movie trailer designed to portray Jack as a serial killer who is stalking Rose.

Of course, artists have always created new ideas by using, reworking, and manipulating pre-existing materials that are culturally familiar and relevant. Similarly, educators have always encouraged learners to copy, modify, and transform classic texts to make them relevant to contemporary contexts.

As DeCherney explained, “When students create mashup videos, they learn how to view films and how to analyze them. Thinking about editing, thinking about sound, thinking about narrative structure, visual framing and composition—all these things help us to become more critical viewers and citizens.”

For those teaching literacy using the pedagogy of media literacy education in the context of 21st century learning skills, interest in this kind of work has increased in recent years.

Unfortunately, some English teachers may discourage creative assignments like this because they are uncomfortable with the copyright questions that such work may generate. Many educators—at all levels—lack information or are misinformed about copyright and fair use.

Some teachers think they are breaking the law when they use copyrighted materials in the classroom, even though Section 110 of the Copyright Act expressly permits this. Some educators think that the educational use guidelines are the ultimate definition of the doctrine of fair use, when they certainly are not. In fact, some of the books, videos, and resources available for educators about copyright only create more confusion. Educators’ fear, uncertainty, and doubt (combined with a lack of interest and knowledge) about copyright and fair use actually interfere with implementing innovative instructional practices, as we found in our research, *The Cost of Copyright Confusion for Media Literacy*.

The Internet and other digital technologies have made it easier than ever to share, use, copy, excerpt from, quote from, modify, repurpose and distribute language, still and moving images, and sounds that are the intellectual property of others. These same technological innovations have made intellectual property owners keenly aware of the economic value of media content.

## Video Clip: “Erasing Copyright Confusion Forever”

Learn more about NCTE’s *Code of Best Practices for Fair Use in Media Literacy Education* in the video clip, “Erasing Copyright Confusion Forever,” by Renee Hobbs, available on the NCTE Ning.

Visit <http://ncte2008.ning.com/video/erasing-copyright-confusion>

## NCTE’s Ning

Are you interested in sharing conversations, blogs, photos, and videos with NCTE colleagues across the country?

The NCTE Ning, a social networking site, lets you chat with colleagues, view and post blogs, photos, and videos, and join and create discussion forums and groups on topics ranging from 21st century literacies and adolescent literacy to English language learners and critical literacy in practice.

Join NCTE’s Ning now by clicking the sign-up box on the Ning home page at <http://ncte2008.ning.com/>



in new context. As Martine Rife has explained, such transformative use is at the heart of English education, where teachers and students use copyrighted materials, including works of literature, mass media, popular culture and digital media in the process of developing literacy, composition, and 21st century learning skills.

To clarify educators’ confusion about copyright, I worked with Peter Jaszi of Washington College of Law at American University and Patricia Aufderheide at the Center for Social Media to create the *Code of Best Practices for Fair Use in Media Literacy Education* with more than 150 educators from around the country.

The Code was adopted as an official NCTE policy on fair use in November 2008. The Code is a tool for education and advocacy, created by educators ourselves. It simply and clearly articulates how copyright and fair use applies to our work.

By helping educators better understand copyright and fair use, the *Code* helps counteract much of the misunderstanding that has grown up around this topic over the past few years. The *Code* helps to increase confidence among educators who incorporate the use of copyrighted materials into a variety of innovative teaching and learning practices, including practices that make use of remix and other approaches that rely on the transformative use of copyrighted works. The *Code* was rigorously reviewed by a team of legal experts and the work was supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation with additional support from the Ford Foundation.

*The Code of Best Practices in Fair Use for Media Literacy Education* identifies five principles, each with limitations, representing educators’ own current consensus about acceptable practices for the fair use of copyrighted

To protect that value, owners have lobbied for changes in copyright law in their favor and forcefully asserted their rights to restrict, limit, and/or charge high fees for the use of their works. Some even use scare tactics that critics claim may not be entirely legal themselves, misrepresenting users’ rights under the law.

Fortunately, **the doctrine of fair use**, part of the Copyright Act of 1976, states that people have a right to use copyrighted materials freely without payment or permission, for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, and research. In essence, fair use gives people a right to use copyrighted material when the cost to the copyright holder is less than the social benefit of the use of the copyrighted work.

To determine if fair use applies, individuals must assess the specific context and situation of the use of a copyrighted work. Hard-and-fast rules are inappropriate since the doctrine of fair use requires that people use reasoning and judgment.

In recent years, courts have recognized that **transformative uses are fair uses**. Specifically, when a user of copyrighted materials adds value to, or repurposes materials for a use different from that for which it was originally intended, it will likely be considered fair use. The doctrine of fair use generally supports the modification of existing media content if it is placed

**The doctrine of fair use is designed to enable many uses of copyrighted materials without payment or permissions.**

*Continued on page 27*

# Literacy Learning in the 21st Century

## How to Use This NCTE Policy Brief

### Opening Up Our Classroom Doors

There was a time when we teachers thought we could afford to just “close our doors and teach.” But that time is gone. Federal and state legislation, such as No Child Left Behind, and mandated state tests have reached into everyone’s classrooms, bringing hours of test preparation and threats of sanctions.

At the same time, funding for literacy programs has languished, and technological shifts have turned students into digital natives, who, according to studies of student engagement like *Speak Up* and the *High School Survey of Student Engagement*, find school work less stimulating than their extracurricular literacy practices. Resources that could be used for literacy programs that do interest students, professional development of teachers, and investment in a technological infrastructure are too often diverted to testing or other priorities.

What happens in Washington, DC, and in state capitals matters to our schools and our students. It is time for teachers to open our classroom doors and advocate to policymakers for the literacy practices that will engage our students and prepare them for success both in school and in the future.

***Literacy Learning in the 21st Century is designed to help get the process of advocacy under way.*** It describes research-based approaches and recommendations that

policymakers can adopt to support teachers in 21st century literacy instruction. The question then is “How do I as a teacher use such a policy brief?”

Here’s just one example. One research finding in the brief is that students’ interests outside of school can be used to engage them in reading and writing in school. For example, blogs in the classroom provide students with an interactive, multimedia writing space in which to share ideas and learn from one another. NCTE recommends that policymakers provide and fund professional development to help teachers learn ways to effectively incorporate technologies such as blogs in pedagogy and curriculum.

Share this recommendation, and others in the brief, with policymakers at local, state, and national levels:

- Develop talking points on 21st century literacies, including stories from your classroom, to share during visits with local policymakers, including school board members and city officials.
- Compose a letter to your Congressional representatives asking them to support 21st century literacy policies and legislation. (You could edit NCTE’s letter on this topic to include your own personal examples at <http://www.ncte.org/action>.)
- Hand this brief to legislators whom you visit in your own state during NCTE’s Literacy Education Advocacy Month (April 2009) or in Washington, DC on Advocacy Day (April 23, 2009).

#### ***Want to know more? See:***

##### ***The NCTE Definition of 21st Century Literacies***

<http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/21stcentdefinition>

##### ***The NCTE Framework for 21st Century Curriculum and Assessment***

[http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/Positions/Framework\\_21stCent\\_Curr\\_Assessment.pdf](http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/Positions/Framework_21stCent_Curr_Assessment.pdf)

##### ***The 21st Century Skills and English Map***

[http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/documents/21st\\_century\\_skills\\_english\\_map.pdf](http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/documents/21st_century_skills_english_map.pdf)

(done in collaboration with the Partnership for 21st Century Skills)

##### ***The online version of Literacy Learning in the 21st Century*** (with supplementary materials)

<http://www.ncte.org/policy-research>

##### ***Speak Up***

<http://www.tomorrow.org/docs/National%20Findings%20Speak%20Up%202007.pdf>

##### ***The High School Survey of Student Engagement***

<http://www.indiana.edu/~ceep/hsss>

# Literacy Learning in the 21st Century

A Policy Brief produced by the National Council of Teachers of English



Photo: Thompson-McClellan Photography

To be successful in the 21st century requires skills that an earlier generation never imagined. Fundamental changes in the economy, jobs, and businesses have reshaped industry and the nature of work. Today, employees engage with a technology-driven, diverse, and quickly changing global economy that requires new and different skills. Literacy demands have changed along with these changes in society and technology.

Technology has increased the intensity and complexity of literate environments, and the 21st century demands that a literate person possess a wide range of abilities and competencies. Twenty-first century readers and writers need to be able to:

- Develop proficiency with the tools of technology;
- Build relationships with others to pose and solve problems collaboratively and cross-culturally;
- Design and share information for global communities to meet a variety of purposes;
- Manage, analyze, and synthesize multiple streams of simultaneous information;
- Create, critique, analyze, and evaluate multi-media texts; and
- Attend to the ethical responsibilities required by these complex environments.

Because students build 21st century literacies essential for their future through access to technology and to instruction and practice in these literacies, the National Council of Teachers of English supports efforts by Congress to increase the federal investment in programs that address 21st century literacy teachers and learners. As Congress reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (NCLB) and considers a comprehensive literacy policy and other legislation affecting our nation's schools, attention needs to be paid to research on 21st century literacies. This document describes important research-based approaches and recommendations for policymakers in order to prepare students to become informed citizens, prepared workers, and life-long learners in the 21st century.

## Research-based Practices

### ***Aligning literacy efforts in preschool and early grades with middle and high school assures a continuum of instruction and learning.***

Interventions with low-income preschoolers offer the highest potential returns in terms of later school success because achievement gaps between low-income and more affluent children begin well before kindergarten and increase with each school year. <sup>1</sup> With appropriate instruction, including new technologies, children three to five years of age can develop understandings about the appearance of print, the connection between marks and language, the ways different kinds of writing shape the form and meaning of texts, and the ways readers and writers see and understand one another. <sup>2</sup>

Once students enter middle and high school they must develop the ability to read and comprehend complex texts and multimedia texts, to write to diverse audiences in varied ways, and to use a variety of media forms to make meaning. Just when students need support to reach these higher literacy levels, most schools stop providing literacy instruction. Accordingly, secondary teachers need to explicitly address the specific and specialized literacy demands of each discipline. Creating a comprehensive literacy program across academic levels and providing professional development across content areas would support continuity and high-quality literacy instruction in all content areas.

*Continued on page 16*

**Twenty-first century students need to gather information from multiple sources, evaluate their reliability, and apply their findings effectively.**

Most students like to use the Web, but often lack skills necessary to find information or to use that information effectively. Teachers need to provide explicit instruction on strategies such as formulating a research question, evaluating information, evaluating the search process, and assimilating information.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, professional development about information literacy is crucial.

**Twenty-first century technologies can engage students in learning.**

Research shows that computer technology and other multi-channel digital technologies can reduce the isolation of school work from real-world contexts.<sup>4</sup> Students' natural interest in the use of various media outside of school can be tapped to engage them in reading and writing in school. Accordingly, professional development is needed in order to effectively incorporate technologies in pedagogy and curriculum.

**Twenty-first century assessment will be different because of technology.**

Research shows that newer forms of assessments, such as portfolio and performance-based assessment, can motivate student learning.<sup>5</sup> Portfolio-based assessment fosters reflection which, in turn, enhances student awareness of and engagement in learning.<sup>6</sup> Performance-based assessment reveals how students can apply their knowledge in real world settings.

## Recommendations for Policymakers

Teachers need both intellectual and material support for effective 21st century literacy instruction. Accordingly, federal and state legislators need to support schools in providing continuing opportunities for professional development as well as up-to-date technologies for use in literacy classrooms.

- Create and fund a comprehensive early childhood through grade 12 literacy program.
- Provide funding for professional development to help teachers learn ways to support student progress in the full range of 21st century literacies, and provide assistance to schools for professional development

to help teachers incorporate literacy learning in all content areas.

- Make performance-based assessments of 21st century literacies a priority. Teachers should contribute to the choice of appropriate assessments and have access to assessment data in a timely fashion so they can use it to shape instruction.
- Ensure that schools are equipped with a 21st century technology infrastructure and 21st century technology tools.<sup>7</sup>

For more than ninety-five years, the National Council of Teachers of English has been devoted to improving the teaching and learning of English and the language arts at all levels of education. We value your efforts to enact policies that support this goal. If you have questions or need further assistance, please contact Stacey Novelli, NCTE Legislative Associate, at [snovelli@ncte.org](mailto:snovelli@ncte.org).

## Endnotes

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- <sup>2</sup> Rowe, D.W. (2008). Social contracts for writing: Negotiating shared understandings about text in the preschool years. *Reading Research Quarterly* 43(1), 66-95; Harste, J., Woodward, V., & Burke, C. (1984). Language stories and literacy lessons. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- <sup>3</sup> Kulper, E., Colman, M., & Terwel, J. (2005). The web as an information resource in K-12 education: Strategies for supporting students in searching and processing information. *Review of Educational Research* 75(3), 283-328.
- <sup>4</sup> Moje, E.B., Ovrby, M., Tysvaer, N. & Morris, K. (2008). The complex world of adolescent literacy: Myths, motivations, and mysteries. *Harvard Educational Review* 78(1), 107-158; Yi, Y. (2008). Relay writing in adolescent online community: Relay writing can serve as a new and valuable window into online literacy as well as adolescent literacy practices outside of school. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 51(8), 670-681.
- <sup>5</sup> Hargreaves, A., Earl, L., & Schmidt, M. (2002). Perspectives on alternative assessment reform. *American Educational Research Journal* 39(1), 69-95.
- <sup>6</sup> Scott, T. (2005). Creating the subject of portfolios: Reflective writing and the conveyance of institutional prerogatives. *Written Communication* 22(1), 3-35.
- <sup>7</sup> The Partnership for 21st Century Learning Skills. Retrieved on December 8, 2008, from <http://www.21stcenturyskills.org>.

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2007-2008 NCTE President Kathleen Blake Yancey delivered her presidential address at the NCTE Annual Convention in San Antonio in November 2008. The following is a preview of that address. Read the full text online at <http://tinyurl.com/dgwbos>.

by Kathleen  
Blake Yancey  
2007-2008  
NCTE President



2008 NCTE  
Presidential  
Address

# The Impulse to Compose and the Age of Composition

An historical account of composition in the twentieth century suggests two important themes: (1) for a variety of reasons, composition instruction K–college has not been well-based in theory or research, nor has writing more generally enjoyed the cultural support provided to reading; and (2) nonetheless people have always composed—the documents that founded our country; the everyday diaries we call on now to help us write history; the letter from jail composed by Martin Luther King.

Today, in the 21st century, people compose as never before—in print and online, in emails and text messages and IMs and blogs and facebook. We thus face three challenges that are also opportunities: developing *new models of composing*; designing a *new curriculum* supporting those models; and creating *new pedagogies* enacting that curriculum.

As important, in responding to this moment, we can help students create the texts of their lives as we connect to and carry forward the larger history of composing. Early on in this history, we composed on stone, using plant and animal materials for color; much later, we composed documents creating citizenships; much later still, a West Virginia miner composed his last hours on whatever paper he could find in order to assure his loved ones that his death was not painful. Historically, like today, we compose on all the available materials. Whether those materials are rocks or computer screens, composing is

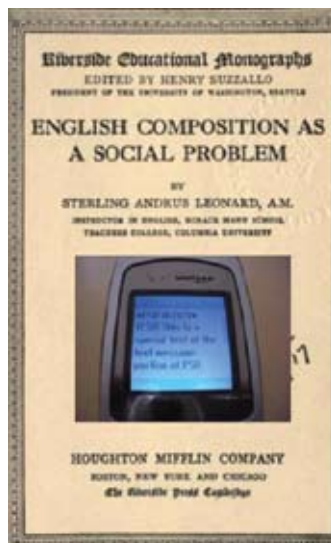
a material as well as social practice; composing is situated within and informed by specific kinds of materials as well as by its location in community. We have simply never seen it quite so clearly as we do now.

Historically, we humans have experienced an impulse to write; we have found the materials to write; we have endured the labor of composition; we have understood that writing offers new possibility and a unique agency. Historically, we composers pursued this impulse in spite of—in *spite of* cultures that devalued writing; *in spite of* prohibitions against it when we were female or a person of color; *in spite of* the fact that we—if we were 6 or 7 or 8 or even 9—were told we should read but that we weren't *ready* to compose. *In spite of*.

So, yes, this is a call to action, a call to research and articulate new composition, a call to help our students compose often, compose well, and through these composings, *become*—the citizen writers of our country, the citizen writers of our world, and the writers of our future.

**Read the 2008 Presidential Address at <http://tinyurl.com/dgwbos>**

**Kathleen Blake Yancey** is NCTE Past President (2007-2008) and is Kellogg W. Hunt Professor of English and Director of the graduate program in Rhetoric and Composition, Florida State University, Tallahassee. She can be reached at [kyancey@fsu.edu](mailto:kyancey@fsu.edu).





## Re-examining Historical Waters, Anticipating New Rhetorical Currents: *Making Waves and Waves and Waves* in San Francisco

Conference on College Composition  
and Communication  
Annual Convention, March 11-14, 2009



The Conference on College Composition and Communication celebrates its 60th anniversary in San Francisco, a city known for attracting all kinds of waves—waves of immigrants, waves of writers, waves of activists, and now waves of compositionists!

This year's convention theme, "Making Waves," offers us the opportunity to examine past and present research, theory, and pedagogy in order to chart new waters and prepare us for possible rough waters ahead. We will also be making waves in our regular format by offering two poster sessions, "Digital Interventions" and "Scholars for the Dream," more technology-equipped rooms, childcare facilities, a digitally archived literacy Story Booth, and even a Qigong session to rebalance and re-energize.

Our anniversary is the perfect occasion to give a historical perspective of our discipline. The Opening Session will begin with a brief retrospective of CCCC leaders and groundbreaking research, and throughout the program, the feature "Pivotal Moments" and other panels will consider key scholars—among them Edward P. J. Corbett, W. Ross Winterowd, Ann E. Berthoff, Peter Elbow, David Bartholomae, Mina Shaughnessy, and Wendy Bishop—as well as major theoretical influences that have shaped how we teach and learn writing. Besides a featured

overview of research on "Teacher Response and Best Practices," there will be presenters that recount rhetorical histories and deal with current and future pedagogical issues, especially new uses of technology.

Our historical theme also makes San Francisco a focus. With an immigrant population of thirty-seven percent, it has been considered a welcoming, open city, and recently proclaimed itself a "sanctuary" for undocumented immigrants, including LGBTQ young adult immigrants, but these advancements have not come without some bleaker times and vocal protests.

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, for example, detained Chinese immigrants on Angel Island for many months before admittance. Charles Egan from San Francisco State University will describe their poetic inscriptions on barracks walls, expressing their hopes and fears.

While those on Angel Island suffered invisibly, others in the late '60s demanded their rights publically on another island. To commemorate the 40th anniversary of the American Indian protest at Alcatraz, CCCC members will recount the impact of that event.

Other sessions will give attention to Asian rhetorics, Chicano/Chicana and Latino/Latina voices, Native American and African-American students' rights to their language, and

first generation college students' particular needs. One panel with Peter Elbow, Paul Matsuda, and Christine Tardy will describe how multilingual writers negotiate literacies in other varieties of English or other languages. Diversity also extends to how we approach queer presences in literature, in our classrooms, even in Second Life. Many sessions will do just that.

Paul Longmore, author of *Why I Burned My Book and Other Essays on Disability*, will speak on the ideologies shaping our perceptions of people with disabilities and ways to assist students in instruction as will other presentations on how to teach autistic students, deaf students, and those with special needs. In addition to the diversity of our students, one featured session will analyze our own membership within CCCC through past and future multigenerational, intersectional, and pan-ethnic people of color coalitions.

We couldn't make waves in San Francisco without giving attention to the Beat poets and their social activism at City Lights Bookstore. Anne Waldman, co-founder of the Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics, will describe the movement and perform her poetry.

And what more significant time than the present to contemplate the complexities of "Writing of War, Writing of Peace"? Dave Eggers, author of

*What Is the What*, the harrowing account of a Sudanese boy in a civil war, will be sharing his writing about conflict and survival and will be joined by six veterans from three wars reading from their experiences. Panels during the convention will also be analyzing wartime rhetorics, Peace Corps memoir, discourses of peace, and teaching writing in a Post-9/11 world.

Insights gained from public thought and other disciplines and countries will begin with pre-convention workshops on community partners, social action, and service learning. Mike Rose will reflect on lessons he has learned from twenty years of writing for broader publics. Ronald T. Kellogg, author of *The Psychology of Writing*, will explain how students' brain waves affect their

advanced writing skills. Ecocomposition scholars Christian Weisser and Sidney Dobrin will examine the dynamic relationship between writing and place.

Attending to waves between continents, Charles Bazerman and others will ask us to foster global dialogues. There will be workshops on transnationalizing/globalizing rhetoric and composition studies, panels on international writing scholarship and collaborative research, and speakers from 50 international communities, as far away as Lebanon and Australia. Spot-lighting our neighbor to the south, Fatima Encinas, Ruth Roix, and

Gerardo del Rosal will describe literacy in higher education in Mexico.

In these times of budget and program cuts and changing administrations, it is even more critical to join together in making waves, to learn from each other and to gain momentum as a force for excellence in college writing. Do join us in San Francisco.

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*Marilyn J. Valentino is professor of English at Lorain County Community College, Ohio and 2009 Convention Program Chair for the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC).*



Visit the CCCC Convention website to search the full program and find information on sessions, speakers, and events, as well as "106 Places to Eat, Shop, and Explore." <http://www.ncte.org/cccc/conv/>

## Statements on Scripted Curricula and English-Only Instructional Policies Approved

NCTE members attending the 2008 Annual Business Meeting in San Antonio, Texas, passed the following resolutions. To learn how you can submit a resolution for the 2009 annual convention discussion, or how to submit an issue for exploration by NCTE's Executive Committee, see <http://www.ncte.org/positions>.

### Resolution on Scripted Curricula

RESOLVED, that the National Council of Teachers of English

- Continue to conduct research that documents the effects of scripted programs and high-stakes testing on teacher retention and job performance;
- Oppose policies that require educators to utilize scripted programs and materials;
- Oppose attempts by state legislatures, other elected or appointed officials, or school administrators to dictate scripted programs, materials, and methods; and
- Label such mandates as censorship.

### Resolution on English-Only Instructional Policies

RESOLVED, that the National Council of Teachers of English

- Support continuing comparative study on the effects on students of English-only policies and other English language acquisition programs;
- Oppose policies that fail to recognize, in all content areas, the importance of adequate materials in students' first language and the necessity for personnel trained in language-minority issues;
- Oppose attempts by state legislatures to dictate curriculum, curricular materials, and/or teaching and learning strategies that exclude language-minority students from academic success, so that English language learners have access to the best resources for their needs;
- Support the work of local, state, and federal organizations that oppose English-only policies; and
- Label English-only policies as censorship designed to deprive language-minority students of their voices and their ability to receive "equal educational opportunity" in the classroom (from NABE's "Educational Excellence and Equity for ELLs," pt. 3).

# Teacher Advocacy: What Happened in Texas

Teachers typically do not enter the profession intent on becoming political advocates. Their focus is how best to help individual students, leaving others to look out for students' and teachers' interests in the wider world. However, many teachers are recognizing that their classroom efforts are being hampered by forces outside the classroom. In order to counteract those forces, some teachers have become advocates for their profession and their students in the public arena.

For example, in Texas, English teachers have found that their efforts to teach English language arts are being compromised by some actions by the State Board of Education (SBOE). Last May, the SBOE passed a set of standards (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, or TEKS) that, one teacher, Pat Jacoby, described as "f awed standards that will produce errors, gaps and weaknesses in the curriculum."

The document, say teachers who have seen it, is cobbled together, poorly written and unclear, with many holes in it. Examples include the adopted reading standard: "monitor accuracy of decoding." Teachers say that reading is more than decoding words; it also uses syntax, semantics, and visual information in order to comprehend the text. The teacher version of this standard reads, "monitor accuracy of reading using decoding, syntax, semantics, and visual information."

Over the past three years, as the standards have been slowly reworked, Texas English language arts teachers learned to form coalitions with other literacy organizations and other professional teaching organizations; to work with state legislators; to use the media to publicize their efforts to create high-quality standards; and to communicate with PTAs, parents, and school superintendents. In addition, Texas teachers have begun to recognize the importance of participating more fully in the political process by paying closer attention to local elections, by considering running for local office themselves, and by informing others about local politics and

the importance of local elections. The Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts (TCTELA), an affiliate of NCTE, was a driving force in these advocacy efforts.

The discord in Texas comes from philosophical differences between board members and teachers. The majority of board members, led by SBOE chair Don McLeroy, feel strongly that it's useful to teach subjects like grammar and spelling in isolation from writing, and also that comprehension skills, such as inference, do not need to be taught in more than one year, saying that is repetitive.

Teachers and a minority of school board members feel that grammar and spelling is more effectively learned in the context of reading and writing. Doing otherwise, says Forth Worth teacher Betsy Oney, "makes about as much sense as teaching a child to ride a bicycle without a bicycle."

In addition, teachers note that comprehension skills might appear repetitive, but that each year the texts become more difficult, and that teaching comprehension every year is key to students' learning critical thinking.

Voicing an opposing view, board member David Bradley, who shares McLeroy's views, told the Houston Chronicle "This critical thinking stuff is gobbledygook."

The teachers' efforts began three years ago, when the TEKS were first being re-

worked. Although the process was confusing and unclear, with the goals and methods changing, teachers worked hard to have their voices heard. For example, Alana Morris, a literacy integration specialist and past president of both the TCTELA and of the Coalition of Reading and English Supervisors of Texas (CREST), and others spoke up to make sure professional organizations had a voice in how the TEKS were revised. Originally those organizations were not included. In addition, regional meetings were held, allowing educators all over the state to review changes to the standards so that they also could have a role in creating quality standards. Attendance at these meetings ranged from between 15 and 47 participants representing more than 40 school districts and several

**The most important thing teachers can do is be informed about the positions of candidates running for the legislature and for local and state boards that set educational policy.**

—Cindy Tyroff, NCTE/SLATE representative for the Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts

universities, and an enormous depth of experience, said Morris.

In addition, TCTELA passed resolutions calling on the board to heed the recommendations of Texas educators, as documented in the CREST meetings, and to broaden its panel to include experts recognized by state and national education English and reading organizations.

National organizations like NCTE also became involved. Kylene Beers, then NCTE president-elect, and Kent Williamson, executive director, each wrote letters to the State Board of Education regarding the TEKS.

Up until one day before the school board voted on the new standards, teachers were cautiously optimistic that, despite their differences with the board, their voices would be heard. And then McLeroy decided to rewrite the document. Those board members not involved in rewriting the document received the new version little more than one hour before they were set to vote on it.

Not only did teachers feel this was unfair, after they had spent so much time and energy helping to create good standards, but they say it broke the SBOE's own rules that say the standards must be on the Texas Register website for 30 days before being adopted. This rule ensures that the public is able to review the standards.

The teachers were very discouraged, especially since nine of the 16 board members voted to accept these standards. According to state regulations, the adoption of these "f awed" TEKS standards will affect Texas school children for a decade, at which point the standards can be revisited. The state's standardized tests are based on these TEKS, as are textbooks. As Texas is one of the largest textbook purchasers in the country, these standards could well affect textbook content nationwide. "What happens in Texas does not stay in Texas," Morris said.

One result of teacher advocacy in Texas was increased media coverage for the events. In addition to covering the f awed process, the media shone the spotlight on several SBOE members. One such board member was Cynthia Dunbar, whose book titled *One Nation Under God: How the Left is Trying to Erase What Made Us Great* was reviewed by the *Houston Chronicle*. According to the review, Dunbar argues in her book that "public education is tyrannical, unconstitutional and the Satan-following Left's 'subtly deceptive tool of perversion,'" and that "America's declining, immoral society is in need of Christian soldiers who will rise up to save it."

Another result of teacher advocacy was that the Texas House Committee on Public Education held an oversight hearing in July in order for McLeroy to explain why he had systematically ignored expert advice and rushed through standards at the last moment.

## You Can Be an Advocate for Education

*"Though the legislators and I inhabit different spheres, there is good in talking to one another."*

—Anne Cognard, Lincoln, Nebraska

*"Legislators want to hear from the classroom teachers."*

—Janice Suppa-Friedman, Stanardsville, Virginia

You too can make a difference! Join your colleagues for NCTE's Literacy Education Advocacy Day on Thursday, April 23, 2009, in Washington, DC.

This event, free to all NCTE members, will allow participants to:

- learn how educational policies affecting English language arts teachers are shaped;
- hear key educational policymakers discuss English language arts legislation issues and participate in question and answer sessions;
- gain a deeper understanding of trends in federal legislation;
- receive a briefing from NCTE legislative counsel;
- and share NCTE positions with legislators.

Visit [www.ncte.org/action/advocacyday](http://www.ncte.org/action/advocacyday)

For other ways you can make a difference, visit NCTE's Action page at [www.ncte.org/action](http://www.ncte.org/action).

In addition to his testimony, 25 others—most of them teachers—also testified.

"This was not a democratic process," said one teacher (Anna) during this testimony. "It was not good for Texas kids and we had no voice in it."

The teachers may have lost this battle, but this will not stop their efforts to advocate for students. They can count several gains: teachers began to highlight for the public the ways that the SBOE can negatively impact all children; they made the legislature aware of how the SBOE is an obstacle to the legislators' own efforts to improve the state; they showed the public and the legislature how to

*Continued on page 22*

fight fair and professionally; and their experiences have alerted social studies and science teachers of the kinds of tactics the board might use in those upcoming standards revision projects.

"The damage that has been done over the last decade by many of the politically motivated SBOE decisions will not be fixed overnight, said Brock Gregg, governmental relations director for the Association of Texas Professional Educators. "But the way the Language Arts community came together and advocated was just what is needed to start down that path."

"We know we lost the vote but we made some strides," says Morris. "We know not to turn our backs. It changed us as people, changed us politically. I had always trusted that people have kids' best interest at heart. But what I learned is they have their own interests at heart."

Teachers like Morris and Cindy Tyroff, a secondary language arts instructor in the San Antonio area and the NCTE/SLATE (Support for the Learning and Teaching of English) representative for TCTELA, say teachers everywhere can learn from their experiences in Texas.

"The most important thing teachers can do," says Tyroff, "is to be informed about the positions of candidates running for the legislature and for local and state boards that set educational policy."

"Educational board elections receive little publicity but what I've learned is that I cannot afford to be unaware

again. While I've always voted, I now have conversations with friends and relatives about the educational platforms of elected officials."

Another easy and worthwhile action teachers can take is to fill out surveys that NCTE and other professional organizations conduct regarding educational issues. The results of those polls are provided to legislators, which give them valuable information regarding a particular issue.

"Now that I understand one of the ways these surveys are used, I'm carving out a few minutes to complete each one I receive," says Tyroff.

Advocacy, Tyroff learned, is about building relationships, including inviting elected officials to

schools and discussing practices with them.

These relationships need to be built over time, Tyroff warns, not just in a crisis mode, but they can be very gratifying.

"Many elected officials are well-meaning individuals who simply need information, whether in the form of research, classroom anecdotes, or student data, in order to make sound decisions and in order to engage in debates on educational issues."

**The damage that has been done over the last decade will not be fixed overnight. But the way the Language Arts community came together and advocated was just what is needed to start down that path.**

—*Brock Gregg, governmental relations director for the Association of Texas Professional Educators*

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**Deb Aronson** is a freelance writer based in Urbana, Illinois.

**LOG  
ON**

## Advocacy for Everyday Teachers

As an educator and NCTE member, you're living on the front lines! Learn to share your knowledge and experience with others and you can make a real difference in today's important education issues.

Talking with administrators or legislators may seem daunting, but it's not as difficult as you might think.

Watch "Advocacy for the Everyday Teacher"—a web seminar from NCTE—for pointers on sharing your knowledge of teaching and learning. You'll find the link on the NCTE Advocacy Day page at

<http://www.ncte.org/action/advocacyday>



## To Do

- **mid-Apr.:** NCTE, TYCA, & CEE ballots are mailed
- **Apr. 23:** NCTE Advocacy Day in Washington, DC; April Is Advocacy Month
- **May 1:** nomination deadline for the NCTE/SLATE Intellectual Freedom National Award, several NCTE affiliate awards, three CEE awards, the High School Teacher of Excellence Award, and the CCCC Outstanding Book Award
- **May 1:** program proposal deadline for 2009 CEL Annual Convention
- **June 1:** deadline for returning NCTE, TYCA, & CEE ballots to NCTE
- **June 1:** nomination deadline for the Donald H. Graves Writing Award and the Richard W. Halle Award
- **June 15:** proposal deadline for NCTE Research Foundation Grants
- **June 15:** deadline for returning WLU ballots to NCTE
- **June 30:** entry deadline for the Program to Recognize Excellence in Student Literary Magazines
- **July 15:** nomination deadline for the Affiliate Excellence Awards
- **July 19–21:** Affiliate Leadership Meeting for Regions 1, 3, 7, & 8 in Charleston, South Carolina
- **Aug. 1:** deadline for returning CCCC ballots to NCTE
- **Aug. 31:** application deadline for the CCCC Writing Program Certificate of Excellence Awards
- **Oct. 20:** National Day on Writing



For more information about these announcements, and for other important dates, visit the NCTE website at [www.ncte.org](http://www.ncte.org)

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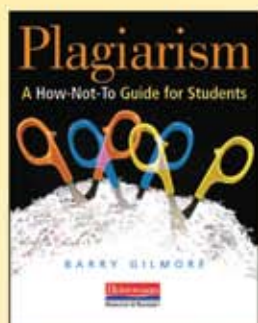
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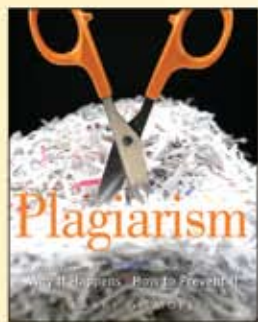
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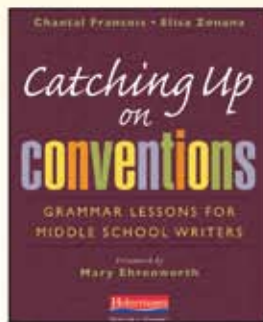
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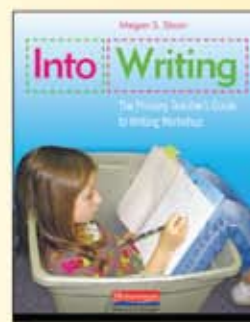
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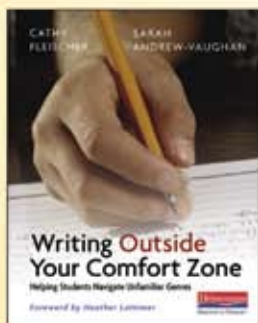
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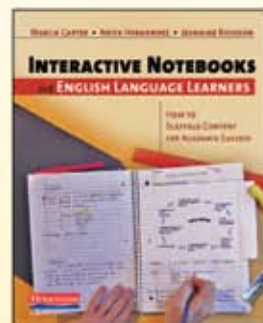
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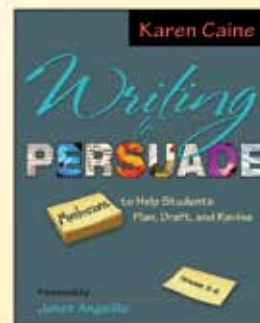
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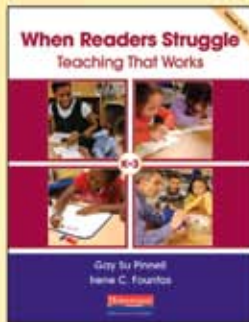


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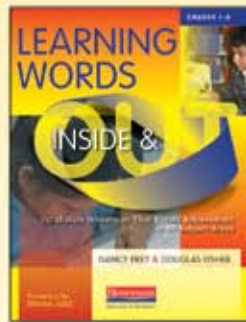


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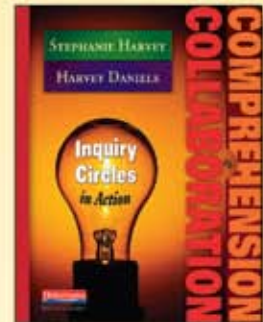




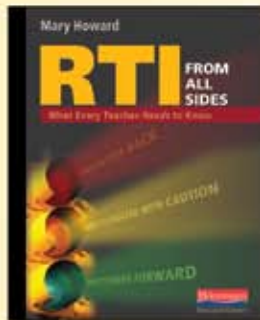
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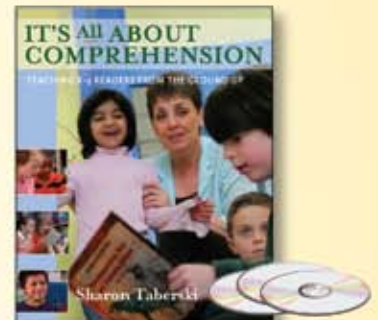
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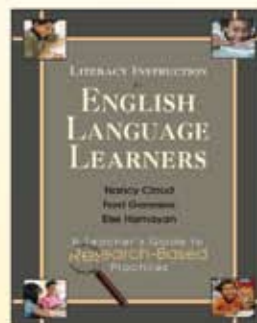
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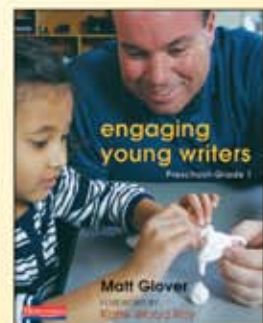
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materials. As articulated in the *Code*, educators can, under some circumstances:

- Make copies of newspaper articles, TV shows, and other copyrighted works, and use them and keep them for educational use.
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When using copyrighted work for teaching and learning, the *Code* helps educators gain the confidence needed to make their own careful assessments of fair use. Similarly, students should learn to make such determinations for themselves when they use copyrighted materials in their own creative work.

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As the U.S. Constitution says, the purpose of copyright is to promote the spread of knowledge and innovation. The intellectual property rights provision of the Constitution was included because the Founders believed—correctly—that encouraging the development of new ideas and information serves society as a whole.

The doctrine of fair use is designed to be flexibly applied to new technologies as well as new approaches to teaching and learning. By increasing our ability to

understand the doctrine of fair use, the *Code* supports the work of educators who are unleashing the creative power of digital media for teaching and learning.

---

**Renee Hobbs** is Professor of Communication in the Department of Broadcasting, Telecommunications and Mass Media and Founder of the Media Education Lab at Temple University's School of Communications and Theater.

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## You Can Use Copyrighted Materials!

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Order a copy of this archived web seminar now from <http://www.ncte.org/seminars/ondemand>.

# From Edge City



Victor Villanueva is shown discussing the principles of rhetoric with students at Washington State University.

## LOG ON

Victor Villanueva was awarded the NCTE 2008 Advancement of People of Color Leadership Award. To learn more or make a nomination (2009 deadline: April 1), visit [www.ncte.org/awards/advancement](http://www.ncte.org/awards/advancement).

*What do I know? Not much, really. I surely don't know of the real constraints of secondary and primary school teachers. Never was one. Spent a very little time in a conventional high school as a kid. And even that was nearly fifty years ago. Still, I reckon some things bear repeating every so often, just to make sure they don't get lost.*

*Musings. The later 1990s: CUNY puts the basic writing program to sleep, in the way of old dogs, in the way of economic security. When the middle is happy, the bottom suffers, because they, the citizens of Edge City, can't incite too much. Times are hard again, and we will be seeing the students again, we in the colleges. And the dropout rate will increase as the college entry rate also increases. Not a contradiction. An economy—those who believe they can make it to college will try; those who don't won't "waste" their time beyond the legal limit.*

*When I think of hard times, I remember New York, my home so long ago: Times Square. I remember it as vibrant: men with snap-brim hats, long overcoats, walking alongside women wearing mink coats and black or white gloves, jumping out of taxis, steam flowing from nostrils. It was the place for those doing well long ago. And I remember the XXX hawkers and the suitcase vendors too, when New York was going bankrupt,*

\* This is a revised and updated (and abbreviated) version of a foreword to a section in *Composition 2000: Negotiating the Margins*. Michelle Hall Kells and Valerie M. Balester (eds.), Boston: Heinemann, 1999, 1–5.

and doors opened to the colleges, and Mina Shaughnessy told us all about it. Now Times Square is clean, not the vibrant of those days of snap-brim hats and fur coats, somehow artificial, but surely affluent. MTV shows broadcast from a studio overlooking Times Square. So the doors in the later 1990s were closing: Open Admissions no longer tied to free tuition. When there is prosperity, the forgotten are forgotten again. Forgotten, the troubles remain. So I wonder what happens now, when most of us suffer troubles again. So as a teacher I think of Paulo Freire. Freire and change. Freire says that in changing the word we can change the world.

*Conscientização*, critical consciousness, problem posing—nearly synonymous terms—have students discover and articulate the worlds they are in, which means that we teachers can't impose our worldviews, that we are not to become classroom propagandists, but it also doesn't mean that students make all curricular decisions. We seek a balance.

In what they produce in the classroom, perhaps, they come to know more about an inequitable system, come to know—consciously and explicitly—that there is a dominant language and a dominant set of ways with that language that reflect power relations. And in that knowing, the students might consider change.

*Conscientização* is engendered through *generative themes*. Generative themes are critical assessments of *limit situations*, the myths that keep us from seeing the big picture. Play out these critical assessments by having students write about their contexts, not necessarily as hardships, or even as privileges, but as pictures, literate snapshots into their worlds, writing about the folks they know and meet, on the stoop, in the grocery, about the assumptions folks hold, varied and multiple. We can never know, really, where folks are coming from. All snapshots. But with each verbal snapshot comes a learning about writing and about the world. And maybe a critical consciousness. The students look at their individual histories and cultures in relation to others', comparing assumptions and ways of being with what they are led to believe is their places in the world, making the contradictions between their world views, others' world views, and official world views explicit—at least, making such assessments possible.

I remember Carol Rodriguez being so excited to learn about Freire in some seminar I taught some time ago. And being taken by the Sophists, not at all unlikely juxtapositions, though this isn't the place to explore that. She knew that to start with where the students are, you have to ask the students. Dr. Piaget and Dr. Bloom don't know where those students before us are—their contexts, the particularities of place in a time of generalized hardship, not only for those we associate with hardship but for the middle class. So she would walk in with the school newspaper, *The Lumberjack*, and turn to the editorial page, where the editors were the students who weren't her proto-

academically-literate students (reaching for the term that speaks of possibility rather than deficiency, disease, or doom: "developmental," "remedial," or "at-risk"). And she'd ask them all to say something about what was on the page—a reading lesson, a way to look at rhetorical strategies and to discuss them, a way to enter into a dialectic with the writers on the page.

On one occasion the students started to take issue with the school's caterer. The complaints were loud, unanimous among these students. Class projects: letters to the catering company, to the residence life folks on campus, to the president of the university—not pretend, to him quite literally; arrange for a meeting of all the interested parties, coordinating the place for the meeting, inviting the university president and other dignitaries; research on the conditions for healthful eating; research on the nutritional needs of active adolescents and just-barely-post-adolescents; research on the nutritional conditions of students of color. Then the meeting, like a conference or town meeting, followed up with a piece in *The Lumberjack*, followed by thank-you letters. All this as written work, all collaboratively constructed. Next semester, a change in eating conditions for the university. Food, health, racial considerations on food and health, and the ability to take action and reap rewards from political action—through written discourse.

So Freire's process begins with private, lived experience (which does not have to be autobiography). These experiences are generalized. In generalizing personal events, students find that nothing is value-free, that all is in one way or another political, is always affected by and affecting their conduct as citizens of the various communities they travel within and through, from Edge City to Core. Students discover that they are constantly in tension with their environments and that these environments are affected by social, political, and economic circumstances and events. Personal lives must contend with social, political, and economic situations. For Freire, the more students are aware of the tensions, the more they can affect changes in their selves and in their environments.

*Third World and First World, untenable terms anymore. The conditions that obtained for creating the First World no longer obtain: no New Worlds to exploit. Today there is talk of Cores and Peripheries, the Core and the Edge. And sometimes some from the Core find themselves in the Periphery, Edge City: a business tanks, a mortgage forecloses. And sometimes, some from the Periphery arrive at the Core. Not a clear devolution or evolution. Sometimes, little more than chance. But at least when the move is to the Core, more often the move is a matter of critical consciousness, a consciousness instigated by some critically conscious teacher, perhaps.*

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**Victor Villanueva** is professor of Rhetoric and Composition and Director of the Program in American Studies at Washington State University, Pullman, and a past Chair of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC).

# Candidates Announced for NCTE's Spring Elections

Shirley K. Rose, chair of the 2008-09 NCTE Nominating Committee, has announced the following slate for the spring elections.

The NCTE national election ballot, as well as CEE, TYCA, and NCTE Section ballots, will be mailed to members around April 15 and must be returned to NCTE Headquarters by June 1. Results will be announced in September. Lists of candidates for all of the ballots can be found on the NCTE website at <http://www.ncte.org/volunteer/elections>.

**The vice president candidates** (one to be elected): **Dana Fox**, Georgia State University, Atlanta; **Keith Gilyard**, Pennsylvania State University; **Doug Hesse**, University of Denver, Colorado.

**For Elementary Level Representative-at-Large** (one to be elected): **Carmen Tisdale**, Carver-Lyon Elementary School, Columbia, South Carolina; **Elisa Waingort**, Calgary, Alberta.

**For Middle Level Representative-at-Large** (one to be elected): **Terry Bigelow**, Rampello Downtown Partnership School, Tampa, Florida; **Dywanna Smith**, Hand Middle School, Columbia, South Carolina.

**For Trustee of the Research Foundation** (two to be elected): **David Kirkland**, New York University; **Susi Long**, University of South Carolina, Columbia; **Eric Paulson**, University of Cincinnati, Ohio; **Karen Smith**, Arizona State University, Tempe.

**For the NCTE Nominating Committee** (one to be elected from each group):

**Group A** (from the Secondary Section): **Stephen Gordon**, Arlington, Massachusetts; **Kiran Chaudhuri**, Brooklyn, New York; **Lori Mayo**, Queens High School of Teaching, Flushing, New York.

**Group B** (from the College Section): **Arnetha Ball**, Stanford University, California; **R. Joseph Rodriguez**, University of Houston, Texas; **Duane Roen**, Arizona State University, Mesa.

**Group C** (from the Middle Level Section): **Rose Casement**, University of Michigan, Flint; **Toby Kahn-Loftus**, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant; **Deborah Peters**, Northwestern Lehigh Middle School, New Tripoli, Pennsylvania.

**Group D** (from the Elementary Section): **Linda Crafton**, University of Wisconsin, Parkside; **Kathryn Mitchell Pierce**, Wydown Middle School, Clayton, Missouri; **Kathryn Whitmore**, University of Iowa, Iowa City.

**Group E** (from the Middle Level Section): **Susan**

**Houser**, Thurgood Marshall Middle School, St. Petersburg, Florida; **Sara Kajder**, Virginia Tech University, Blacksburg; **Jennifer Wilson**, University of South Carolina, Columbia.

The 2008-09 NCTE Nominating Committee members are **Shirley K. Rose**, Purdue University, West Lafayette, chair; **Dawn Abt-Perkins**, Lake Forest College, Illinois; **Akua Duku Anokye**, Arizona State University West, Phoenix; **Randy Bomer**, University of Texas, Austin; **Yetta M. Goodman**, professor emerita, University of Arizona, Tempe; **Pamela Jewett**, University of South Carolina, Columbia; and **Linda Rief**, Oyster River Middle School, Durham, New Hampshire.

## DATES & SITES

### NCTE Annual Convention

**2009: Nov. 19–22** (workshops: Nov. 23–24), Philadelphia, PA, "Once and Future Classics: Reading between the Lines"

**2010: Nov. 18–21** (workshops: Nov. 22–23), Orlando, FL

**2011: Nov. 17–20** (workshops: Nov. 21–22), Chicago, IL, NCTE's 100th Anniversary!

### CCCC Annual Convention

**2009: Mar. 11–14**, San Francisco, CA, "Making Waves"

**2010: Mar. 17–20**, Louisville, KY

**2011: Apr. 6–9**, Atlanta, GA

### Whole Language Umbrella "Literacies for All" Summer Institute

**2009: July 9–12**, Columbia, SC, "Learning in the Company of Others: Reading, Writing, and Inquiring in the 21st Century"

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<http://www.ncte.org/affiliates/meetings>.

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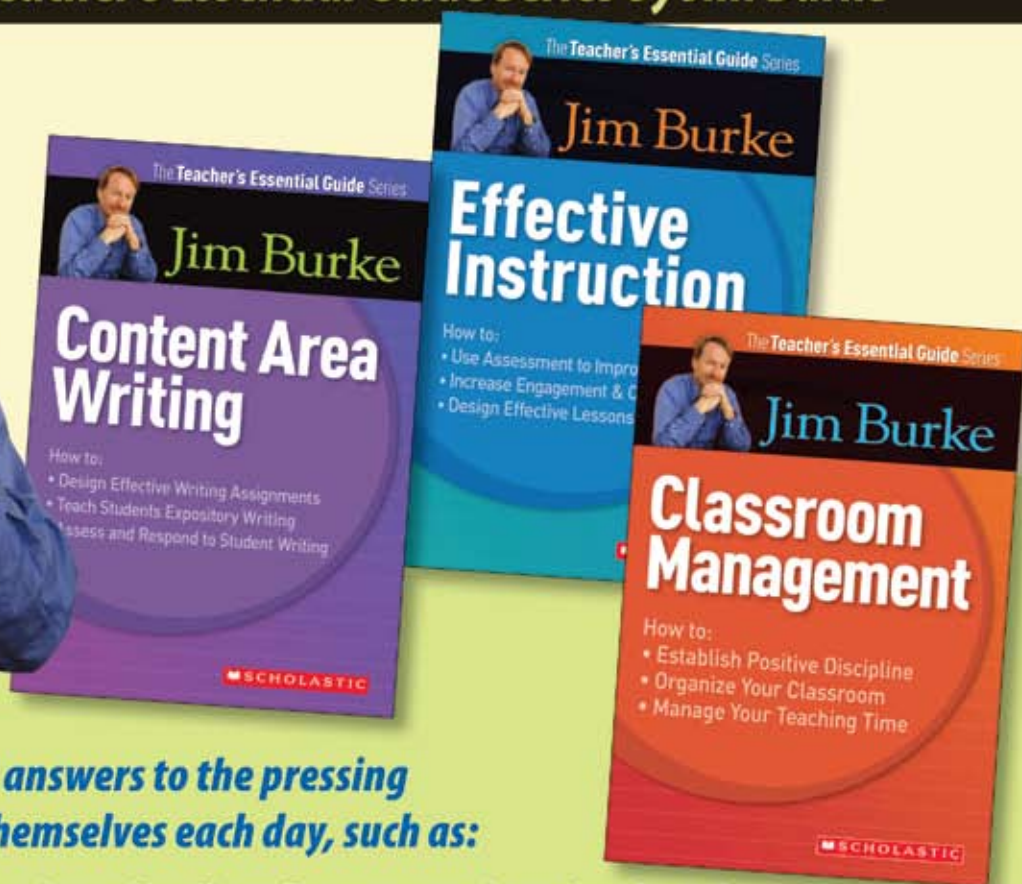
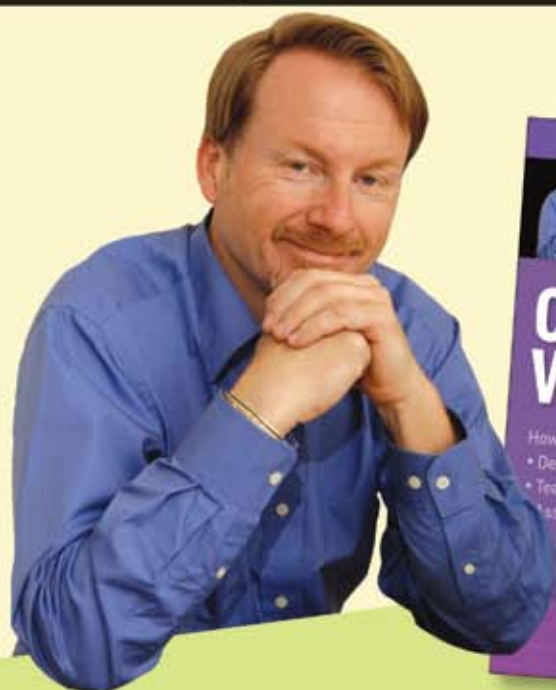
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