

# Follow Your Passion in an NCTE Collaborative

## *Collaboratives Facilitate Sharing, Learning, and Action on Professional Causes*

NCTE, like every group working for change and progress, depends upon the energy and contributions of its members. Sometimes, that energy is harnessed through groups that are elected by members or appointed by elected leaders. Typically, these groups pursue “charges” or objectives that link to the advancement of Council policies and programs.

But, every mission-driven organization needs grass-roots groups, too—those driven by passion for a particular topic or cause. To flexibly support Council members who want to find ways to affiliate with others who share their particular professional concerns, NCTE created loosely-structured Collaboratives.

Collaboratives are self-organizing groups that, while recognized by the NCTE Executive Committee, are free to choose their own leader and conduct most of their work through an online space in the NCTE Connected Community and at the NCTE Annual Convention. To become established, a Collaborative need only propose their area of shared inquiry and method of selecting a leader to the NCTE Executive Committee, in addition to providing a 3- to 4-sentence description about the goal/work of the group.

Once approved, the group is given a virtual space to hold conversations, exchange files and videos, and otherwise pursue their work together on the Connected Community. The group is given a space to meet at the NCTE Annual Convention and a slot for round-table meetings with other Collaboratives, to facilitate sharing and the creation of new opportunities for learning and action. They maintain status as a recognized Collaborative as long as they select a new leader every three years and file an annual report with NCTE, to be shared with the membership.

Since the inception of the Collaborative structure four years ago, three NCTE Collaboratives have formed—and the door is open for many more.

Currently, the Reading Collaborative, Language Collaborative, and Media and Digital Literacies (Mad Lit) Collaborative are welcoming new members and active participation.

Michael Shaw of St. Thomas Aquinas College in New York has been a pioneer in the movement to establish Collaboratives as the founding leader of the NCTE Reading Collaborative. Starting a new enterprise is never easy, but Shaw has managed to keep the group active and vital in a time where teacher agency for making professional decisions in the best interests of student readers has been under siege.

Shaw describes the group’s work this way:

*The mission of the Reading Collaborative is to provide a forum for all NCTE members to add their voices to support the teaching of thoughtful literacy that goes beyond scripted instruction and test prep, in a way that supports NCTE policies and position statements.*

*We work together to have a strong voice within NCTE on literacy practice and policy. We authored NCTE resolutions in 2011 and 2012 that were approved by NCTE membership: Resolution on Challenging Current Education Policy and Affirming Literacy Educators’ Expertise (2011) and Resolution on Teacher Expertise and the Common Core State Standards (2012).*

*We also present sessions at the NCTE Annual Convention that invite member participation. Our 2012 session was titled ‘Save Our Schools: Igniting a Vision for Thoughtful Literacy.’ Our 2013 Convention session will be ‘Students and Teachers at the Core: Thoughtful Literacy Beyond the Standards.’*

### To Do

- **Sept. 22:** application deadline for the CEE Research Initiative
- **Oct. 3:** application deadline for the CCCC Research Initiative
- **Oct. 10:** submission deadline for the CCCC Scholars for the Dream Travel Award, Chairs’ Memorial Scholarship, and Gloria Anzaldúa Rhetorician Award
- **Oct. 15:** submission deadline for NCTE resolutions; nomination deadline for the CCCC Outstanding Dissertation Award in Technical Communication
- **Oct. 20:** celebrate the National Day on Writing
- **Nov. 1:** nomination deadline for the 2014 NCTE, TYCA, and CEE elections; application deadline for the CCCC Exemplar Award, Professional Equity Project Grants, and Stonewall Service Award
- **Nov. 10:** nomination deadline for the Diana Hacker TYCA/ Bedford/St. Martin’s Outstanding Programs in English Awards
- **Nov. 15:** nomination deadline for the TYCA Nell Ann Pickett Service Award; application deadline for the CCCC Tribal College Faculty Fellowship
- **Nov. 21–24** (workshops: Nov. 25–26): Annual Convention in Boston, Massachusetts
- **Dec. 31:** nomination deadline for the Orbis Pictus Award for Outstanding Nonfiction for Children and the CCCC Assistance Fund for Contingent Faculty
- **Jan. 15:** nomination deadline for the Whole Language Umbrella (WLU) Service Award, Lifetime Membership Award, and Reclaiming the Joy of Teaching Award
- **Feb. 27:** Literacy Education Advocacy Day (Advocacy Month is in March)