

Commission on Language

A key issue in language instruction today is teaching English language learners. NCTE has accepted responsibility for educating its membership so that ELL becomes an intentional part of what we do in every realm, such as policy development, conference proposals, materials, [resources](#), surveys, research briefs, and professional development. NCTE is striving to become the major source of assistance to teachers of English Language Learners.

Charge

- *Examine the various ways English Language Learners are being taught in American schools and identify those that appear to be most effective.*
- *Advise the Executive Committee regarding actions that can be taken to help NCTE realize these research and development goals in the next three years:*
 - *Because of NCTE's efforts in supporting research, scholars will be able to write extensive reviews of literature on research about learners of English as an additional language in classrooms where English is the language of instruction and the dominant language for the teacher and most of the students.*
 - *Help most NCTE members become aware of specific practices for supporting learners of English as an additional language in their classrooms.*
- *Continue to propose convention sessions and publications or other learning experiences for NCTE members on emerging issues in the teaching of language and linguistics.*

What major actions or projects have been completed by your group since July 1, 2008?

- *The two COL-Sponsored presentations for the past NCTE Annual Convention, 2008 provided a forum for fruitful discussions about complex educational issues, such as the increasing population of linguistic diversity students in American classrooms and the pedagogical practices to support the academic success of these students. These presentations were very well attended and well received by the public.*
- *Through our sponsored presentations we were able to forge valuable collaborations with the Linguistic Society of America (LSA). In the 2008 NCTE Annual Convention, the COL and LSA co-planned and co-presented a symposium on the topic of "what teachers need to know and be able do about language in order to work with the linguistically diverse student." This presentation was very successful and has prompted a larger COL/LSA collaborative study on the same topic (currently in preparation).*
- *Jerrie Scott, Dorothy Straker, and Laurie Katz, have recently published an impressive edited volume (NCTE and Routledge, 2008) entitled, *Affirming Students' Right to Their Own Language: Bridging Language Policy and Pedagogical Practices*. This was a major project that lasted about four years from the time of its inception to the time of publication. All of the editors were members of the COL as the book was being conceived and realized. This 24-chapter volume reflects the COL's collective conversations that took place in our Convention meetings. In addition, many of the chapters were authored by of past and present COL members, as well as by other NCTE constituents. As a result, the volume provides in-depth analyses on the topic, and boasts an imposing body of scholars.*
- *The COL has deliberately recruited and offered positions of leadership to representative members of various regions of the U.S as well as members of a variety of racial, ethnic, and cultural communities. In addition, our membership*

includes public school teachers, district officials, and scholars. The coming together of these different constituent groups of NCTE have given voice to historically underrepresented populations and added a multiplicity of perspectives, which are of great value, to the field of English Language Arts Education at large.

What projects, initiatives, or studies are "in progress" at this time?

- In collaboration with colleagues from The Ohio State University, the COL is currently in the process of proposing a Conference on Students Rights to Their Own Language: Research, Policy, and Practice. For this project, we will count with the support of current and past members of our Commission as well as with the participation of representatives from the LSA and the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL).
- Many members of the COL, in collaboration with members of the LSA, are in the process of submitting a proposal to the NCTE Research Grant Foundation in order to investigate pedagogical practices that support the learning of linguistically diverse students.
- Following the strong tradition of publications from the COL, our current committee is discussing the conceptualization of a new book foregrounding the importance of promoting pedagogical and curriculum change vis-à-vis new understanding about linguistically diverse students' linguistic, cognitive, and academic needs. Part of this project includes the creation of web-cases to illustrate pedagogical practices and the particularities of these students' learning.
- In continuing with our recent topics of inquiry, we have proposed two symposia for the NCTE 2009 Convention in Philadelphia:
 1. What does "English" really mean? When many languages, dialects, and variations are in one classroom, what's a teacher to do?
 2. All Those Discourse Communities! Using What Students Know To Foster Language Learning For All.

Strategic Governance: Over the past few years, the NCTE Executive Committee has established outcomes and priorities relating to these key topics in our field: Multimodal Literacy and Technology, Research and Teaching, English Language Learners, Professional Development, Closing the Achievement Gap, Reading Research, 21st Century Literacies, Meeting the Needs of Audiences Currently Unserved/Underserved by NCTE, Attracting, Supporting, and Advancing Early Career Educators, and International Involvement, "Global English", and NCTE. Does your group have research findings or suggestions to contribute that are relevant to on-going work on these strategic governance topics?

Yes, our group has been actively engaged in comprehensive research regarding English Language Learners and Professional Development.

Ana Christina DaSilva Iddings, Director

Commission on Literature

Charge: *The Commission on Literature is a deliberative and advisory body which each year identifies and reports to the [NCTE Executive Committee](#):*

- *on key issues in the teaching of literature*
- *reviews what the Council has done concerning literature during the year*
- *recommends new projects and persons who might undertake them*

The Commission:

- *monitors current and projected [NCTE publications](#) (other than journals)*
- *suggests topics for future NCTE publications on literature*
- *performs a similar role of review and recommendation for the [NCTE Annual Convention](#) program*

Occasionally, the Commission undertakes further tasks and projects as approved by the NCTE Executive Committee.

What major actions or projects have been completed by your group since July 1, 2008?

- The Commission on Literature sponsored a double session at the NCTE Annual Convention, 2008 focused on Politics of Literature: Negotiating Shifting Values. As part of the session, attendees were given a set of children's and young adult books that were discussed during the presentations. The session was not as well-attended as we anticipated. A check of other sessions running concurrently in the same location also indicated low attendance rates. In response to this, the Commission on Literature decided to offer two regular sessions instead of a double-session at the 2009 Annual Meetings.
- Commission members have been active during 2009 pursuing projects that address the teaching and role of literature in k-12 schooling. Judith Franzak published "Social Upheaval and Psychological Scarring: Exploring the Future in Meg Rosoff's *How I Live Now*" in *The ALAN Review*, 36, 34-39. Judi Franzak and Joyce Herbeck are co-authoring an article on pre-service teachers' preparation to teach multicultural British children's and young adult literature. Elizabeth Primas facilitated a project in which U.S. high school students read African literature and contextualized their study through distance-education interaction with African youth.
- Upon receipt of the Executive Committee's decision to phase out the Commissions, considerable time was devoted to by the Literature Commission to discussing this decision. The Literature Commission drafted a letter to Kylene Beers and Kathleen Blake Yancey outlining our concerns about the implications of this decision on leadership in the teaching of literature. Paramount among our concerns was the question of how NCTE members would be able to participate in processes related to developing policy, position statements, and advancing pedagogy through focused group work. A second concern focused on accessibility to meeting times and support—as a group, we questioned how the shift to ning-based communities could foster the kind of focused discussion that happens during our face-to-face meetings at the annual convention. After extensive discussion of these issues as a group and with Kathleen Blake Yancey, we drafted a letter to Kylene Beers and Kathleen Blake Yancey detailing our concerns.

What projects, initiatives, or studies are "in progress" at this time?

- Given the prospect of ending our work together, we discussed our program sessions for the 2009 Annual Meeting and how we might continue our work beyond the formal organization of the Commission. We selected the theme of "Teaching International

Literature” for 2009 and proposed two sessions, one a hands-on session from the k-12 classroom perspective and the other a panel session presenting research and literary criticism on international texts currently taught in the English language arts classroom.

- We developed an outline for a book prospectus that members will work on as individuals rather than as a group representing the Literature Commission since the Commission will have been disbanded by the time the prospectus is finished. The book explores how Batchelor Award-winning literature can be incorporated into teaching for literature standards. Several members of the Commission to continue to work on this project.

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- Our group has not developed research or findings specifically addressing these areas, though members of the group are interested in developing a policy paper on the role of international literature in 21st Century Literacies. We will be pursuing this project at the 2009 Annual Meeting.

Judi Franzak, Director

Commission on Media

As the twenty-first Century begins, we see rapid, large scale changes in the electronic media available to the public for everyday use. At the same time creative teachers are enriching instruction by mixing traditional media, such as drawing and construction, with the use of new media forms and instruments. NCTE has the responsibility to make all teachers aware of these changes and the opportunities they offer for improved instruction.

Charge

- *To advise the [NCTE Executive Committee](#) regarding issues relating to media and 21st Century Learning that need to be addressed by NCTE policy or through public policy advocacy measures.*
- *Through the Executive Director's office, to advise the staff regarding ways to gather digital images of effective teaching practices involving multi-modal literacies. These images shall represent a range of practices and a range of educational levels and settings, including a substantial number of high-needs schools.*

The goal of this project shall be to:

- 1. Help teachers understand the value, possibilities, pedagogies, and constraints of multi-modal literacies.*
 - 2. Support advocacy work with school and system administrators, boards, and other educational policy makers.*
- *To develop guidelines for evaluating various types of multi-modal literacy projects.*
 - *To inform the Long-Range Planning Subcommittee of the Executive Committee regarding possibilities for future expansion of media use to enhance ELA instruction and to identify current and future obstacles to the expanded use of media.*
 - *To enrich the [NCTE Annual Convention](#) program by proposing sessions or demonstrations that will expand members' knowledge of ways that emerging media can be used to extend and enhance ELA instruction.*

[Media Literacy Award](#) (Sponsored by the Commission on Media)

What major actions or projects have been completed by your group since July 1, 2008?

Establishment of New Media Gallery at Annual Conventions

The idea for a New Media Gallery was brainstormed at the 2006 Nashville conference by Commission members and started in a small fashion at the 2007 New York conference. The Gallery was conceptualized as paralleling the Film Festival which has been running for many years at the convention on Saturdays. It was thought that there was a need for a gallery that would go beyond film and showcase teachers and students who are working with new media in innovative ways to critically analyze and create. Since Nashville, we have actively solicited nominations of teachers to present in the Gallery who are promoting critical literacy, while also expanding their repertoire of texts to include such new media as podcasting, blogging, video making, web publishing, and text messaging, to name a few examples.

We were able to establish a very small New Media Gallery on Friday at the New York conference, in an area close to the kiosks where participants could check their email. In our meeting at the New York conference, we debriefed how our first attempt at the New Media Gallery went, and how we wanted to improve it for the San Antonio conference. With the help of Jacqui Joseph-Biddle, we secured a location for the Gallery in 2008 that was equipped with an Internet connection, an LCD projector, and a screen. The room

accommodated 100 people, and we were able to present such well-known new media educators as Karl Fisch (originator of "Shift Happens,") Bud Hunt, Chris Shamburg, and Jeff Share. While we were somewhat disappointed with the attendance at some of the afternoon sessions, we are encouraged that we will be able to build upon our experiences and continue to improve the concept of the New Media Gallery at the Philadelphia conference. While the presentations will again correspond to the session timetable (on Friday, November 20), we are hoping that participants will feel free to drop in and out of the gallery all day long. We have secured another all-star cast of new media educators, including Chris Lehman, principal of Philadelphia's Science Leadership Academy, one of the leaders of the new media movement; Renee Hobbs and her team of researchers at Temple's Media Education Lab; and Alan Miller, Director of the News Literacy Project.

Continuing of Film Festival

Longtime Commission member Mary Christel informed the Commission that the San Antonio conference would be the last Film Festival that she would curate. Sadly, it was also to be the last participation of her co-curator Greg Harris, who passed away early in 2009. Fittingly, the 2008 Film Festival saw an upsurge in attendance as the "swan song" for Mary and Greg, and our Commission is pleased to report that Mary and Greg have left the festival in the capable hands of Louis Mazza and Jane Nickerson who are shepherding the 2009 Film Festival to be an even richer experience with more appearances from filmmakers and more films shown.

Media Literacy Award

Along with the Assembly on Media, the Commission sponsors a Media Literacy Award. We have just finished the fourth annual nomination/award process and have determined a winner, Dr. Guofang Wan, of Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, who will be presented with her award in Philadelphia at the Assembly on Media sharing session.

Project New Media Literacies

At the San Antonio Commission on Media meeting, we were pleased to hear a presentation from Jenna McWilliams, Curriculum Specialist at Project New Media Literacies which has been directed by noted media scholar Henry Jenkins at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Jenna told her of the work about to be published providing modules for teachers interested in integrating media literacy into their classrooms.

Guaranteed Sessions for Philadelphia

In San Antonio, we decided on the following presenters for our two guaranteed session slots in Philadelphia.

Title:

Media Literacy Made Easy: Integrating Media and Technology into an English Classroom

Presenters:

Jeff Share

UCLA, Graduate School of Education and Information Studies

Chris Shamburg

New Jersey City University Graduate Program of Education and Technology

Program description/abstract:

Audience members will learn through doing, how to easily record sound effects and narration with photographs and drawings to create multimedia projects. Designed for teachers interested in integrating popular culture, technology, and media into their curriculum through an English Language Arts standards-based critical media literacy framework.

Title News Literacy: Helping Students Learn to Read Between The Lines

Presenters:

Alan Miller, Director

Robert Riegger, English/Journalism Teacher,
Stonybrook HS/University

Jenna Ortiz, Social Studies Teacher
Longwood High School

Program Description/Abstract: Two separate and unrelated “news literacy” projects are underway: both are designed to engage students in understanding how to interpret and critically question news in the 21st century. Four high school teachers, two representing each project, will describe how the project meets standards and engages young people to be smarter news consumers.

What projects, initiatives, or studies are “in progress” at this time?

As discussed above, the Media Commission will continue to work

- To continue to seek to be leaders within NCTE in the area of media literacy and new literacies in general
- To refine and perhaps expand the New Media Gallery for annual conventions in the future
- To continue to improve and expand the Film Festival
- To continue to sponsor the Media Literacy Award
- To explore the transition to a “Collaborative” structure as the Commission on Media will cease to exist after the 2010 convention.

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We see our work as relevant to all of the topics listed above. While we as a group do not have research to present as collaborators, our New Media Gallery stands as an example of what many educators from across the country are doing to infuse their classrooms with new media.

William Kist, Director