

Promising Young Writers Advisory Committee

Charge: The NCTE [Promising Young Writers](#) program makes use of an advisory committee and state coordinators. Their charges are as follows:

Promising Young Writers Committee: To advise staff on the nature, policies, and procedures regarding the NCTE Promising Young Writer Awards, including the following issues: to develop a specific plan for involving more public schools in the awards, especially those with large non-white populations.

To prepare a written set of recommendations for the Executive Committee regarding the following: revision of the structure of the award to mitigate the negative effects of competition on student identity and learning; consideration and development of diversified awards: that recognize development of English Language Learners in writing in their first language as well as English composition; that recognize remarkable improvement or growth in writing; that recognize multi-modal composition (digital or non-digital); and that recognize remarkable risk-taking with the process of writing, instead of the exclusive focus on the final draft.

What major actions or projects have been completed by your group pursuant to your charge since July 1, 2012?

Since July 1, 2012, the committee has completed one major project that addresses our charge: we have revised the rubric used by judges to score student writing, making it more applicable to a variety of media/genres. This revision is directly in keeping with the committee's charge to "recognize multi-modal composition (digital or non-digital)," and indirectly addresses the need to "mitigate the negative effects of competition on student identity and learning" by inviting submissions in forms that may be valued less often in traditional academic contexts.

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

Last spring, members of the committee piloted, evaluated, and co-wrote/submitted a research article about a possible revision to the program in order to 1) make recommendations to NCTE based on that experience, and 2) publicize the PYW program via a public forum like a professional journal.

The pilot involved using an online forum to invite a single, "best writing" submission (in any medium or genre) from students, and then having students revise that submission over three "rounds" based on feedback from other students, then from a panel of judges, and finally from a "famous" published author.

This pilot was relatively successful at inviting submissions from a significant number of students in a variety of genres (thereby addressing the committee's charge regarding increasing participation and multi-modal composition). However, it was largely ineffective at promoting substantive revision and "risk-taking with the process of writing."

While the piloted revision was only somewhat successful for the middle school student participants, the journal article we wrote describes the positive effects on the panel of judges (teacher candidates in a university writing pedagogies course) of this piloted revision, which provided an opportunity for them to practice responding to the middle schoolers as real writers.

Strategic Governance and Council Initiatives: Over the past few years, NCTE has established the [National Center for Literacy Education](#) (NCLE) to advance collaboration and inquiry among educators teaching literacy in all disciplines. Through the strategic governance process the Executive Committee has also established goals and priorities relating to these key topics in our field: [Teacher Evaluation](#) and Performance Assessment of Teacher and Student Learning, among others.

How do you see the work of your group contributing to or benefiting from these initiatives?

Our group's efforts at piloting a revision to the program address goals that the National Center for Literacy Education has emphasized in its recent (2013) report, *Remodeling Literacy*. For example, that report indicates the value of collaboration, and we created a collaboration across middle schools, a university teacher education program, and members of a national committee that led to learning for all three groups.

What additional information do you need about these topics or initiatives?

I would like to learn more about the 2012 position statement on teacher evaluation and the accompanying initiatives in motions 39-42. I believe a different system of teacher evaluation (and for evaluation of student learning) that does not rely on the current types of standardized tests will indirectly affect the PYW program. For example, our program's previous emphasis on a thematic writing submission has begun to be associated with the kind of "timed writing" genre common to standardized testing. This association goes against the committee's charge to increase participation in the program by mitigating the negative effects of competition, inviting a variety of media/genres for submission, and encouraging risk-taking in the writing process.

<http://www.ncte.org/volunteer/groups/pywadcom>

Michael Sherry, Chair