



## **TERI LESESNE**

### **Portrait of a Volunteer**

In this feature, Teri Lesesne explains the work and rewards of serving as assistant co-chair of the Middle Section, a book and convention proposal reviewer, a lesson plan developer for ReadWriteThink, and a speaker.

Lesesne is an associate professor in the Department of Library Science at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas. She also is one of two assistant chairs of the Middle Level Steering Committee and is editor of the “Book Talk” column in *Voices from the Middle*.

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#### **What motivated you to volunteer for NCTE service?**

I just don't believe in being an inactive member of an organization. I like getting involved and having the chance to meet new people and to learn new things.

#### **What has kept you interested in volunteering your time over the years?**

I have been involved in different aspects of NCTE over the years—I've served on committees, on commissions, as a reviewer, as an author. I think NCTE has so many ways of involving members that there's no limit to how much one can do as a volunteer.

#### **What does your current role entail?**

I serve as the assistant co-chair of the Middle Level Section Steering Committee, act as a reviewer of book proposals as needed, help review program proposals for Convention, and occasionally serve as an NCTE co-sponsored speaker.

#### **What key roles have you played and what did you find most satisfying in carrying them out?**

I'm not certain that I would describe my roles as key. I think every single person who volunteers and works within NCTE's organization is as important as anyone else. What I do find satisfying is the feeling that I'm giving back to the organization that continues to provide me with professional development opportunities, with fabulous books and journals, and with the chance to link to other educators through listservs.

Right now I am one of the authors for the ReadWriteThink Calendar. I find composing lessons extremely rewarding and challenging. I hope teachers will take advantage of the RWT site ([www.readwritethink.org](http://www.readwritethink.org)) and all the incredible resources there.

#### **What satisfactions do you derive from volunteering?**

I love sharing ideas with colleagues. I love the give and take of meetings. I think talking to folks who work in different jobs in different parts of the country informs me and makes me a better teacher.

**Why would you recommend volunteering to another NCTE member?**

The only way to keep an organization responsive to the changing needs of its members is to work within that organization. Since I began volunteering, we have seen the creation of our very own Middle Level Section. That's incredibly exciting.

**How or has your affiliation with NCTE improved your professional development and career?**

I think I am a better teacher because I'm active in NCTE. I know that my professional development has been enriched by conference participation.

**Do you have a favorite NCTE publication?**

The journals are my favorite and always have been. I write for *Voices From The Middle*, so it is a particular favorite of mine. I also read *English Journal* and *Language Arts* regularly.

**What is the one book, article, or professional development experience you would recommend to other educators?**

Come to the Annual Conference! The NCTE Conference is something I look forward to each year; I gain so much from that experience.

**How has being part of an educational community like NCTE improved your abilities as a teacher and as a leader?**

All you have to do is look at the listservs to see how being a part of NCTE is enriching. Here is a collection of colleagues always willing to help one another.