

Media Advisory

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CONTACT: Millie Davis, 800-369-6283, ext. 3634, public_info@ncte.org

Writing for School vs. Writing for Life

Urbana, IL, March 9, 2009 – “What everyone seems to agree upon...is that the ability to communicate clearly and understand complex messages is more important than ever to students’ future success,” notes *Writing between the Lines—and Everywhere Else*, the third in a series of reports from the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) on writing and 21st century literacies.

Students are writing in school—essays, narratives, letters and journals related to assignments, for example. But today, as in the past, much writing also goes on outside of school and students don’t recognize their self-directed, often online, out-of-school writing as writing that counts as much as the writing they do in school. They don’t see a connection between the two. On the other hand, teachers who responded to an NCTE survey noted that their best recipe for student success is connecting classroom work to real-world situations that students will encounter across a lifetime.

On **Wednesday, March 11, 2009**, from **12 noon to 1:00 p.m. PDT**, the National Council of Teachers of English, representing 50,000 members worldwide, will release *Writing between the Lines—and Everywhere Else* (<http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Press/WritingbetweentheLinesFinal.pdf>) during the CCCC Convention at the **Hilton San Francisco**, Continental Ballroom 4/Ballroom Level, 333 O’Farrell Street, San Francisco, California. At the same time, to recognize the importance of writing for everyone, NCTE also will announce the **National Day on Writing** (<http://www.ncte.org/action/dayonwriting>) and the **National Gallery of Writing**.

To talk about the nexus of in and out of school writing, **Jabari Mahiri**, associate professor in UC Berkeley’s Graduate School of Education; **Charles Bazerman**, professor of education, University of California, Santa Barbara; **Erika Lindemann**, professor of English, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and **Andrew Chang**, marketing director, Google Docs, Google, Inc.; will join **Barbara Cambridge**, director, NCTE Washington, DC, Office, and **Kent Williamson**, NCTE executive director.

Writing between the Lines—and Everywhere Else points out, “Writing is a daily practice for millions of Americans [young and old], but few notice how integral writing has become to daily life. In fact, writing may be the quintessential 21st century skill.”

To draw attention to the remarkable variety of writing most engage in today and to help make writers from all walks of life aware of their craft, NCTE is working to establish **October 20, 2009**, as the **National Day on Writing** (<http://www.ncte.org/action/dayonwriting>). To celebrate composition in all its forms, we are inviting diverse participants—students, teachers, parents, grandparents, service and industrial workers, managers, business owners, legislators, retirees, and many more—to submit a piece of writing to the **National Gallery of Writing**, which will be a digital archive of samples that exhibit how and why Americans are writing every day, accessible to all through a free, searchable website.

“By capturing a portrait of how writing happens today—who writes and for what purposes,” NCTE Executive Director Kent Williamson notes, “teachers can better prepare the next generation for success across the full range of 21st century literacies. Our hope is that everyone who participates in this initiative will better understand writing as a valuable lifelong practice rather than as something that is done only in school or only by a select group of people.”

The National Council of Teachers of English, with 50,000 individual and institutional members worldwide, is dedicated to improving the teaching and learning of English and the language arts at all levels of education. For more information, please visit <http://www.ncte.org>.

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