

A. Policy on Involvement of People of Color

It is the policy of the National Council of Teachers of English that it demonstrate sensitivity to the concerns of people of color and they be represented on all Council-sponsored programs, and that a similar policy be urged on affiliated organizations (conferences, assemblies, and affiliates). People of color refers to historically underrepresented groups--African Americans, Pacific Islanders, American Indians, Asian Americans, and Latinos. To this end, the following actions are to be undertaken:

- to include people of color on all appointed commissions, boards, committees, task forces, and other official groups;
- to include people of color among the leadership of the above groups;
- to include people of color among the nominees presented by each nominating committee;
- to include in NCTE conventions and workshops sessions dealing with interests of people of color and using as leaders or consultants practicing teachers of color from the levels of instruction concerned;
- to include people of color in verbal and visual materials intended to represent or describe NCTE;
- to include people of color as targeted groups in any recruiting efforts.

In order to monitor the effecting of this policy, the Advisory Committee of People of Color will be maintained until such time as deemed unnecessary by the Board of Directors.

The intent of this policy should not be construed to mean every subcommittee within a commission, board, committee, task force, or other official group.

This policy was approved by the NCTE Board of Directors in 1980. The policy was updated in February 1994 to reflect the action of the NCTE Executive Committee (November 1991) to use the term "people of color" or to use the exact term of ethnicity when referring to the historically underrepresented groups. The second item was added by the Executive Committee (September 1996) at the request of the NCTE Task Force on Involving People of Color in the Council.

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- a leadership database, including people of color, will be available as a reference for each NCTE Nominating Committee for the selection of candidates for offices.
- to ensure the regular election of persons of color to the NCTE Vice Presidency, the NCTE Nominating Committee is strongly recommended to run at least four slates of all persons of color in each twelve-year cycle. (See the Election Policy on Involving People of Color.)

These elements were added in September 2001 to reflect action of the NCTE Executive Committee.

B. Statement on Anti-Racism to Support Teaching and Learning

from the National Council of Teachers of English Committee on Racism and Bias in the Teaching of English, February 2007

Racism and discrimination continue to be a part of American society and have adversely affected diverse student populations and public education. The Committee on Racism and Bias in the Teaching of English of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) is committed to working toward the eradication of racism and discrimination in the profession, in the preparation of teachers, and in the administrative decisions made in schools, especially in the teaching and learning of English and language arts at all levels. Our work involves making research-based recommendations to counteract racism and racial bias in materials, methods, and programs for the teaching and learning of English and the language arts. Most importantly, the NCTE Committee on Racism and Bias in the Teaching of English works toward positive communication and the promotion of social justice in access to and delivery of public education.

In recent months, there have been increasing incidents and forms of blatant practices, threats of physical violence, production and dissemination of racist and biased materials, and expressions of racism, bias, and prejudice toward students of culturally diverse human backgrounds attending U.S. public schools and higher education institutions. Specific charges and indictments have been based on intersectional identities involving hate crimes and bias-motivated incidents in public schools and higher education institutions (e.g., race; ethnicity; class; gender; age; mental and physical abilities; nationality; migrant, immigrant, and refugee status; religious affiliation; and sexual orientation). More evident, English language learners, especially from migrant and immigrant families, children, and students, have faced discriminatory practices in their attempts to access public education programs. Recent national examples include the following institutions:

- Baltimore (Maryland) Public School System, "[Race, Politics, and the Schools: Q&A: Marion Orr](#)," *The Baltimore Sun*, May 28, 2006
- Boston (Massachusetts) Public Schools, "[Teens Probe Sexual Harassment in Schools](#)," *The Boston-Bay State Banner*, April 6, 2006
- Clark County (Nevada) School District, "[Breaking Up Is Hard to Do -- Mason Says Racism a Factor in Districting](#)," *Las Vegas Sun*, January 5, 2006
- Dartmouth College (Hanover, New Hampshire), "[Dartmouth Apologizes for Indian Incidents](#)," *Inside Higher Ed*, November 27, 2006
- Truth or Consequences (New Mexico) Schools, "[Educators Get Support after Complaint over Racism Project](#)," *Santa Fe New Mexican*, December 20, 2006
- Tufts University (Medford, Massachusetts), "[A Not So Merry Christmas](#)," *Inside Higher Ed*, December 12, 2006
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, "[Ugly Turn in Mascot Dispute](#)," *Inside Higher Ed*, January 10, 2007

- Whitman College (Walla Walla, Washington), "[Racism Rears Its Head](#)," *Inside Higher Ed*, November 16, 2006
- Winner (South Dakota) School District, "[Graduating to Prison: Native Americans Sue School District](#)," *The Progressive*, February 2007

Recent research results have been discussed in national periodicals and reports and are as follows:

- [The ABCs of Bullying](#), Teaching Tolerance website, January 2007
- [National School Climate Survey](#), The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network, 2006
- [The Segregation of American Teachers](#), Teaching Tolerance website, January 5, 2007

In order to ensure that all individuals have access to public education that is free of racism, bias, and prejudice and to support the intellectual development and growth of students from early childhood education levels to university studies (Pre-Kindergarten through 16), the NCTE Committee on Racism and Bias in the Teaching of English recommends that English language arts educators:

1. Actively identify and challenge individual or systemic acts of racism, bias, and prejudice in educational institutions and within our profession, exposing such acts through external communication and publications.
2. Express strong declarations of solidarity among people of diverse human and cultural backgrounds to eradicate forms of racism, bias, and prejudice in spaces of teaching and learning.
3. Promote cultural diversity and expand linguistic knowledge by participating in ongoing professional development for educators to succeed with students of diverse abilities and backgrounds.
4. Support the enforcement of laws and policies that provide sanctions against racial and ethnic discrimination in public education.

Furthermore, the NCTE Committee on Racism and Bias in the Teaching of English recommends that . . .

- All administrators secure funds and provide opportunities for teacher professional development for teachers and instructional programs that affirm cultural and human diversity among all students;
- All educational stakeholders -- policymakers, parents, and the general public -- understand that they can best support educators or teacher professionals and students by actively participating in public conversations about racism and bias in our multilingual

and multicultural American society, defined in the key opening words of the United States Constitution's Preamble "We the People . . ."

C. NCTE Core Values and Benefits: Diversity

Diversity

The English/Language Arts classroom can and should be a unique place to develop voice as well as to respect and to hear all voices. It is the place where many students learn they have a right to their own language, where multiple forms of literacy are explored, where censorship is abhorred, and where difference is valued in pursuit of an education befitting a democracy. Members benefit from opportunities to work with and hear from colleagues with varying backgrounds and experience; to study, question and critique dominant and often assumed societal stances; to learn how to create classrooms where students develop voices that make them effective participants in academic and public discourses; and, from opportunities to learn how to make their classrooms more relevant, more inclusive, and more critical to the lives of the learners they teach and the society in which they teach.