

CALL FOR PROGRAM PROPOSALS



RESPONSIBILITY, CREATIVITY, AND THE ARTS OF LANGUAGE

It seems quaint to invoke “the language arts.” After all, science, not art, is ascendant these days, and the educational world spins around STEM. As graduates vie for jobs, people want “practical” skills. Clearly, we must respond responsibly to our students’ and society’s needs.

But we should promote school and career skills as but one aspect of literacy. We should value not only workers but also citizens, not only students passing tests but also social beings making connections, not only information processors but also idea creators. We read to extract—but also to evaluate and imagine. We compose to report—but also to remember and reflect, to influence and entertain, to console and inspire. Fully literate lives need creativity as well as competency.

The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein contended, “The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.” At a cultural moment when it’s tempting to make the world defensively smaller, we should yet advocate the ample arts of language. As professional makers of readers and writers, NCTE members advance literate life at its richest.

What arts of language?

Reading and writing are not only obliged activities (things we must do) but also self-sponsored ones (things we might choose). Consider reading textbooks for information versus novels for ideas; manuals versus social media; reports versus editorials versus photo essays. Writing is similarly dappled. Consider differences between writing applications and tweets; between creating a family history and drafting a set of instructions; between literary analyses, petitions, PowerPoints, and infographics.

How might we best teach and promote the many language arts? What are our best goals, practices, and research?

How can we advance our expertise?

There’s no shortage of critiques of teaching. Unfortunately, many of them lack teacher research and wisdom. “Common sense” is sometimes grounded in assumptions that diminish complex students and situations, sometimes motivated more by political interest than by educational expertise.

We are the professionals in the arts of language. NCTE members know literacy development, from acquisition to lifelong enhancement. We sponsor curricular and pedagogical knowledge. We should be the first and best source for professional development and assessment. Expertise unacknowledged is expertise squandered.

What ideas—in departments, schools, systems, or states—might our best advocates share? How can we teach policymakers and pundits what we know and why it matters?

How might we teach beyond classrooms?

Obviously, classrooms remain our most vital teaching sites. Too, there’s the co-curriculum: student publications, theatre programs, writing centers, maker spaces, events, and celebrations.

But when people learn throughout life, we neglect other opportunities at our peril. Think of community centers, galleries, and libraries, sites digital as well as physical. Teaching beyond classrooms serves not only publics but also us. After all, stakeholders who know us—who learn from and with us—better trust our expertise.

How can we make our knowledge visible and valued in places beyond schools and colleges? What can we learn from those already doing this?

What makes healthy teachers?

The threat of teacher burnout has never been higher. We’re pressured by budget constraints and accountability measures. Students from complex family, economic, language, and cultural backgrounds complicate tidy generalizations. College instructors are increasingly part-time and contingent, piecing together minimal livelihoods at multiple campuses.

How, then, do we sustain ourselves—and one another? What practices renew and give us energy?

The Call

One answer, of course, is to come together in Minneapolis, making the land of 10,000 lakes the land of ten times as many ideas. I invite proposals that address these questions or share any practices and insights—from traditional and practical to innovative and speculative—that help language arts teachers, pre-K through grad school, approach teaching and learning more expertly, confidently, even joyfully.

Doug Hesse

SUBMITTING PROPOSALS

All proposals must be submitted online at

<http://www.ncte.org/annual/call>

The NCTE online proposal system will close at 11:59 pm PST, Wednesday, January 14, 2015.

Incomplete proposals will not be considered.

To promote the participation of newcomers to the profession, NCTE wishes to include early-career teachers in as many sessions as possible. Please check the “Early Career” box beside the name of any individual who has taught fewer than five years.

To promote the participation of urban teachers, program planners find it helpful when the students and teachers considered in a session are from public school districts in large cities. If the content is especially attentive to the interests of teachers and students in big cities, please check the “Urban Teacher” box beside the presenter’s name.

To promote new involvement by people from historically under-represented groups, NCTE’s Conference on English Education invites applications for Cultural Diversity grants of \$500 to help defray the costs of travel and registration for the NCTE Convention. Applicants should check the “CEE Cultural Diversity Grant” box on the proposal form and visit the website (<http://www.ncte.org/cee/awards/culturaldiversity>) to submit an application. The application deadline is Monday, May 18. Direct all questions about the process to conventions@ncte.org.

To promote involvement of two-year college faculty, we encourage proposals that explore the unique learning environment of the community college.

Proposals designed to advertise or disseminate information about books, materials, or services for sale will not be accepted.

In order to include as many members as possible on the program, NCTE policy limits each participant to one extended speaking appearance per convention. The program chair may drop multiply submitting speakers from all but one extended speaking role, which may result in sessions being excluded. The following do NOT count as extended speaking roles: session chairs, respondents, roundtable discussants/facilitators.

All speakers are required to pay registration fees for the convention. Speakers are encouraged to be members of NCTE. NCTE does not reimburse program speakers for travel or hotel expenses.

Session proposers should advise all involved in their proposal that submission of a proposal does not constitute an invitation to appear on the program. Individual invitations are sent in late spring following the planning committee’s review meeting.

Trade book authors who require funding from their publishers to appear on the program must secure that support prior to the proposal deadline.

Sessions are accepted with the expectation that the presenters listed will present at the convention; changes to the presenter list after acceptance may result in the session being removed from the program.

Presenters will not be listed in the Program (including the online program) until NCTE receives payment or proof of payment request for registration.

CRITERIA FOR PROGRAM SELECTION

The NCTE Convention Planning Committee is comprised of representatives from the college, middle, secondary, and elementary sections. Two NCTE members from the section indicated on the proposal read, rate, and comment on each proposal before assigning a preliminary score. The proposal is reviewed a second time by planning committee members during a face-to-face planning meeting in the spring. These evaluations go to the Program Chair, who makes the final decision on convention programming. Though the criteria for excellence vary to some extent among these groups, some common values are listed here:

Clarity and thoughtfulness of proposal—Reviewers favor proposals that are very clear about their content, explicit about what presenters will do in the session, and thoughtful in identifying a meaningful focus and providing a compelling rationale.

Appropriate and engaging method of presentation—Reviewers value appropriately engaging presentation styles. They particularly look for opportunities for audience members to participate actively and interact with presenters and each other, not just listen to presenters read papers.

Content and issues are timely and critical to the field—Reviewers want to know how a proposal fits broader conversations of theory, research, and/or practice in the field. They evaluate the significance of the presenter’s work, its acknowledgment of prior scholarship or practice, and its connections to important debates or concerns in the field.

Strong fit with NCTE mission and intended NCTE audience—Reviewers expect proposals to connect with the mission of NCTE and with the knowledge, perspectives, interests, and concerns of NCTE members and the convention audience.

ONLINE COACHES

Online coaches can help you revise your proposal! Send a draft of your proposal to a coach no later than three weeks prior to the proposal deadline. Coaches will read the proposal and respond with suggestions for improvement. For more details, visit <http://www.ncte.org/annual>.

CONVENTION STRANDS

Proposals may be selected for inclusion in special program strands. These selections are determined by convention planning committee reviewers representing NCTE committees, caucuses, or conferences. A brief description of each strand follows. Check the appropriate box on the proposal form if you believe your proposal should be highlighted in one of the convention strands.

Research Presentation Strand. The NCTE Standing Committee on Research invites proposals that discuss new research advancing the mission of the NCTE: “to promote the development of literacy, the use of language to construct personal and public worlds, and to achieve full participation in society, through the learning and teaching of English and the related arts and sciences of language.” Submissions should include a clear theoretical framework, research design, and anticipated or completed results. Proposals are evaluated through a blind-review process based on the contribution to the field, soundness of argument and/or research design, appropriateness of conclusions, and clarity.

CEE Strand proposals focus on issues, research, and practices pertaining to teacher development, professional development, and teacher education programs, including preservice and induction programs. Successful proposals highlight the practice of those who prepare literacy educators or support their continued development through courses, workshops, and inquiry.

Early Childhood Education Strand proposals focus on issues pertaining to the education of children from birth to age eight, their families, and their teachers. Early literacy is a key concept in identifying Early Childhood Education Strand proposals. Reviewers look for proposals that address diversities in early childhood and highlight practices and processes that are situated in social, historical, and cultural contexts.

LGBT Strand proposals focus on issues pertaining to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered students, their families, and their teachers. When selecting LGBT Strand sessions, reviewers look for proposals that address representations of sexual and affectional difference, a broad understanding of diversity, free inquiry and expression, critical pedagogy, democratic teaching practices, and for proposals that encourage the creation of safer, more inclusive schools.

NCLE Strand proposals highlight the work educators do together and with others to advance literacy practices of every student. Reviewers look for proposals that highlight the benefits and challenges of collaboration to support literacy—across disciplines, academic levels, school systems and the community—and highlight the conditions that support these collaborations, such as time, support of system leaders, and a professional learning culture that encourages innovation.

Rainbow Strand proposals focus on issues and strategies related to teaching and affirming culturally and linguistically diverse students. Affirming people of color is the key concept in identifying Rainbow Strand proposals. Reviewers look for proposals that affirm African Americans, Latinos/Latinas, American Indians, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders.

WLU Strand proposals focus on whole language theory and practice, to be reviewed by the Whole Language Umbrella. Reviewers look for proposals that push understandings of critical literacy, inquiry, and col-

laborative learning, and that integrate literacy with other sign systems and knowledge systems, situated in social, historical, political, and cultural contexts.

SESSION FORMATS

Panel presentations

Seventy-five-minute sessions in which two or more individuals speak, leaving at least 15 minutes for audience questions and responses. In one format, each speaker may present 15 to 20 minutes. In another format, each speaker may make brief opening remarks (for example, 5 minutes) before the panel enters into a moderated discussion.

Roundtables

Seventy-five-minute sessions in which a series of small-group discussions about related aspects of a specific topic or theme are led by leaders at individual round tables. Roundtables may be proposed, or they may be created in the convention planning process from individual proposals.

Poster sessions

Seventy-five-minute sessions in which a number of presenters display posters, or other artifacts of their research or teaching practices, standing nearby to explain and discuss, informally, their displayed work. Posters are most often submitted by one speaker. The planning committee or chair may assign individual proposals to poster sessions.

Classroom demonstrations

Seventy-five-minute sessions with three or four presenters who engage participants, as if they were students, in promising teaching practices.

Individual proposals

Presentations submitted by one speaker. These proposals will be combined by the NCTE Convention Planning Committee with other individual proposals to make full sessions or roundtables. Committee members may also assign individual proposals to poster sessions. Individual proposals should be crafted to fit into a 15-20 minute presentation during a roundtable or combined session.

Day-long workshops

Workshops take place Monday, November 23. Proposals must be explicit about the activities in which participants will engage and the apportionment of time to various activities throughout the day. Only proposals with more than one presenter will be considered. Proposals cannot include planned meal functions.

TOPICS OF EMPHASIS

Topics of Emphasis are used by the planning committee and are searchable in the online program.

Topics are:

Advocacy, Argumentation, Assessment, Community/Public Literacy Efforts, Content Area Literacies/Writing across the Curriculum, Composition/Writing, Digital and Media Literacies, Early Literacies, Equity and Social Justice, Informational Text, Literature, Multilingualism, Narrative, Oral Language, Reading, Rhetoric, Teacher Education and Professional Development

Call for Program
Proposals Enclosed

1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801-1096

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You are invited to submit
a proposal for the
105th NCTE Annual Convention
November 19–22, 2015

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