References

Proposal Call for the 2010 CEL Annual Program

Whether you’re a veteran or novice educator, you have experiences to share to help us become better leaders in our diverse society. We invite you to submit a proposal to tell your story, share your strategy, demonstrate your lessons, or report your research. Our interactive workshops are designed to give our conference attendees insight into ways they can better serve the communities in which we live and work.

Our 2010 theme, “Reclaiming Creativity,” will give us an opportunity to look at English language arts leadership in light of multiple intelligences, differentiated instruction, gender issues, cultures, race, languages, and different kinds of schools—private, parochial, charter, and public; urban, suburban, and rural.

Submit your completed proposal to the 2010 CEL Program Chair, Scott Eggerding, at seggerding@lths.net, or mail your proposal to Scott Eggerding, Lyons Twp HS, 100 S. Brainard Ave., La Grange, IL 60525-2101 by May 1, 2010.
students who are reluctant to embrace the act of reading because all too often it’s been nothing more than a minefield littered with “I don’t get it/This is boring/Why do I have to read this stuff?”

There’s a book out there for every kid. A real book. We all believe this. That’s why I feel that as a teacher or librarian or a school, our job ought to be to find it, use it, and leverage it to create a path from one book to another book. Kids will find their way to great literature only after they have been empowered with the capacity to comprehend the nuances of great literature. Before that happens, there is no pathway of access. After all, as one who doesn’t drink wine, I would have a very hard time intelligently illuminating why a bottle of Château Lafite is so spectacular. And just because someone tells me that it’s so doesn’t necessarily make it so for me. Yet warm me up with an introduction to Italian table wine, take me on a journey to the reds being poured in the South of France, crack open some of Napa Valley’s cabernets, and walk me through a sommelier’s class suited to my own particular palette, and then when you ask me to sample the Château Lafite and offer a response, I might not come off sounding like such an inarticulate ignoramus.

Dickens, Joyce, Hawthorne, and that crew, they are literature’s Château Lafite, and the fact is, our system needs an overhaul. There’s an immense power laying dormant, the power of allowing kids to read real books, especially ones that they self-select. So as a front line soldier in an inner-city, Title I classroom, I think my own experience in applying this strategy warrants a bit of consideration. For me, the textbooks sit in the closet. But that doesn’t mean we don’t read. We read like fiends in my class. We read “old” winners. We read “new” favorites. We read “more obscure” delights. And my students, year after year after year, tell me they really dig the books they get to explore. Look, there is no one single book that is going to be the magic pill for all kids, so I don’t even try to look for such a thing.

To scatter light, one must first light the torch. Isn’t it time we finally made an effort to do so?

Alan Sitomer is California’s 2007 Teacher of the Year and author of six books, including Homeboyz, The Hoopster, and The Secret Story of Sonia Rodriguez. Visit www.AlanSitomer.com for more tools and resources on how to bring real books back into our classrooms.

References

NCTE Literacy Education Advocacy Day 2010: April 22
Join NCTE members from across the nation for NCTE’s Literacy Education Advocacy Day on Thursday, April 22, 2010. NCTE members will meet for a morning of briefings, an afternoon of visiting legislative offices, and a debriefing get-together at the end of the day. See http://www.ncte.org/action/advocacyday for details.
In retrospect, Haviland would revise the har-rumphing statement she made when she was eight—books can be a key to the imagination. But it might be that it is a different kind of imagination, one that works in multiple genres and media and acutely appeals to the visual sense of the reader as well as the literary. And it just might be an imagination that makes it easier to transgress the bounds of learning labels.

Teri Holbrook is an assistant professor in the Early Childhood Education department at Georgia State University where she specializes in literacy education.

Haviland Holbrook is a high school senior and plans to enter a film studies program upon graduation.

References

Call for 2010 Halle Award Nominations

The NCTE Richard W. Halle Award for Outstanding Middle Level Educator honors a middle level educator who has consistently worked to improve the quality of middle school education and middle school educators, especially in the English language arts. Originally established in 1996 by the Junior High/Middle School Assembly, this award pays special tribute to the person who has worked to improve schools and schooling for the middle level—teacher, principal, college faculty, curriculum specialist, or supervisor.

Nomination packet information can be found on the NCTE website at www.ncte.org/awards/halle and must be postmarked no later than June 1, 2010. Results will be announced in September, and the award will be presented at the 2010 Annual Convention in Orlando, Florida, during the Middle Level Get-Together.
**TAR:** You’re now a sophomore at NYU, double majoring in English and Political Science. How do you think your studies and experience in college will affect the issues you want to explore in your writing?

**IF:** I set a goal for myself to finish the Truancy series while still a teenager. If I had waited until I was out of high school, I would have never been able to do it. The urgency isn’t there anymore. Even after spending a year or two out of high school, you forget the bad things. I did sort of forget how I was treated, but [my high school English teacher invited me back to Stuyvesant to speak]. The security guards didn’t realize I wasn’t a student. I had my headphones on when I walked in and the woman at the front [desk] was screeching at me, “Take your headphones off!” That was really shocking because no one is that rude to you out in the real world. She was screeching!

**TAR:** Truancy City is now with your editor. What’s next?

**IF:** I’m tossing around several ideas. [One] is a sort of ghost story but with a twist that the ghosts can’t survive without taking over a host; they have to possess someone. Either they have to stick in the darkness or inhabit a human body. My idea is that the main character would be a woman who would not really be possessed, but who would have a symbiotic relationship with a ghost; they share control, and they hunt bad ghosts.

Sara L. Schwebel is an assistant professor of English at the University of South Carolina, where she teaches courses in Children’s, Adolescent, and American Literature. A former middle school teacher (American history and English), she is coauthor of The Student Teacher’s Handbook, 4th edition. Sara is currently completing a book manuscript that examines the most widely taught historical novels in today’s middle schools.

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**CALL for the Secondary Section High School Teacher of Excellence Award**

Each NCTE affiliate is at liberty to select a person for this honor in the manner of its choice. An affiliate’s governing board might acknowledge someone who has previously won an award within the affiliate, thus moving that person’s recognition to a national level, or the affiliate might advertise for applications for nominations before choosing a winner.

**Deadline:** Documentation should be sent to the Secondary Section Steering Committee administrator/designee by MAY 1 of each year. Materials should be sent to the address on the current nomination form. For more information, go to www.ncte.org/second.