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**Harvey Daniels—2012 CEL Exemplary Leader Award Recipient**

Harvey “Smokey” Daniels is an extraordinary teacher leader whose writing, presentations, and professional development work define a model for teaching and leadership development based on research, best practice, common sense, trust, and respect. An author, editor, and consultant, he is a professor of Education at National Louis University in Chicago, Illinois (currently on leave). Smokey served as Co-director of the Illinois Writing Project for 26 years. A prolific writer, he has authored or coauthored 17 books, beginning with *Best Practice: Bringing Standards to Life in America’s Classrooms*, now in its fourth edition. In addition to books, he has contributed numerous articles and essays in professional journals. A common thread runs through his writings: literacy is accessible to all, and it should offer joy to all.

In 1989, Smokey founded a summer residential retreat, the Walloon Institute. During Walloon’s two decades, thousands of teachers from across the country were renewed and inspired, helping them to create classrooms that are experiential and active through increased levels of choice and responsibility, which in turn leads to higher student achievement. Smokey’s commitment to exceptional teaching led him to spearhead the creation of Best Practice High School in Chicago in 1966. In addition, his belief in the leadership capacity of committed teachers launched the Center for City Schools, a dozen interrelated projects that supported teachers and parents in restructuring schools around Chicago and the Midwest. In his numerous workshops and presentations, Smokey connects theory and practice in a way that embodies the kind of learning we envision for our students and ourselves. Smokey Daniels has initiated work that is visionary, and his impact on the profession is of lasting significance.
Infiltrating the Classroom

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In order to fulfill my Geaux Teach requirements for LSU, I have been observing classes at an inner-city high school in Baton Rouge. During this time, I was also enrolled in a course at LSU called Young Adult Literature. All semester, I have been learning about the merits and value of young adult literature, about how it touches and relates to the kids who read it. I had never thought about young adult literature as its own genre or as a viable reading/teaching option for an English classroom, but this course changed my opinion. However, I was skeptical as to how young adult literature would translate into a real-world classroom.

In the classroom I was observing, the students were completing outside reading of *The Hunger Games*. I was immediately filled with cynicism. Was this young adult book actually getting through to these inner-city students? Were they actually able to relate and find meaning in this novel? I had a hopeless feeling that the students weren’t any more interested in this book then they were in *The Crucible*.

Then one day, while I was observing 5th hour, my cynicism evaporated. As I walked around the room collecting *The Hunger Games* from the students after their 15 minutes of silent reading, I saw it: the third book in the Hunger Games series sitting on a student’s desk! I looked at this student who I saw as quiet, a student who flies under the radar, a student who looks asleep half of the time during class. Yet there the book sat. My heart fluttered as I asked him if he had read the entire series. He replied with a quiet, “Yes.” I asked, “Well, what do you think? Are they good?” and he said, “They’re great.”

That day I realized that young adult literature can infiltrate the classroom and students’ interests despite all the usual odds. It’s as simple as one young adult relating to another young adult, even if he or she comes from a different background or lifestyle. The struggles of young adults are universal, and although I don’t know what this particular student struggled with or for what reason he was so intrigued by *The Hunger Games*, the fact remains that he was intrigued, and he did find something that pushed him to keep reading an entire series. So there you have it: young adult literature is a viable and valuable option for the modern classroom!

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**2013 Call for CEL Award for Exemplary Leadership**

Please nominate an exceptional leader who has had an impact on the profession through one or more of the following: (1) work that has focused on exceptional teaching and/or leadership practices (e.g., building an effective department, grade level, or building team; developing curricula or processes for practicing English language arts educators; or mentoring); (2) contributions to the profession through involvement at both the local and national levels; (3) publications that have had a major impact. This award is given annually to an NCTE member who is an outstanding English language arts educator and leader. Your award nominee submission must include a nomination letter, the nominee’s curriculum vitae, and no more than three additional letters of support from various colleagues. Send by **February 1, 2013**, to: Wanda Porter, 47 Puukani Place, Kailua, HI 96734; wandrport@hawaiiantel.net. (Subject: CEL Exemplary Leader).
identity searches in the novel reveals how tightly
wound and symmetrically plotted the novel is. Though
that might sound like a criticism, it is not: because
of these cycles of narrative, the novel works well
with students who perform close readings and key
into these kinds of noticing patterns in literary texts.
Given Melinda’s own relationship to close reading,
one would think she would have appreciated analyz-
ing *Speak* in her own English class under the guidance
of a reformed and transformed Hairwoman. It would
probably fare better than “Poor Nathaniel” (p. 100),
who gets beat up a bit in Melinda’s class discussion of
his *Scarlet Letter*.

Robyn L. Schiffman, assistant professor of English at
Fairleigh Dickinson University in Madison, New Jersey, is
a scholar of 18th- and 19th-century British and German
literature. She has published articles on Bleak House,
Dickens and psychoanalysis, and The Sorrows of Young
Werther. Her article, “Werther and the Epistolary Novel,”
won the award for the best article published in European
Romantic Review (October 2008). Her latest article,
“Novalis and Hawthorne: A New Look at Hawthorne’s
German Influences,” appeared in Nathaniel Hawthorne
Review (Spring 2012).

Call for Student Reviews for *Voices from the Middle*

*Voices from the Middle* is NCTE’s journal for the Middle Level Section. The Student to Student feature runs in
each of the year’s four issues and contains five short book reviews written by students who have enjoyed a book
and want to recommend it to others. This has been a popular and motivating element of VM since its inception.

Wendy Ranck-Buhr, principal at the San Diego Cooperative Charter School, serves as department editor for
this feature. She invites teachers from across the nation and the world to submit their students’ book reviews. We
know from teacher feedback that these reviews motivate students to write with care, help readers pick out new
books, and generally support our students as readers and writers.

Please send Student to Student submissions as Word files to vmstudenttostudent@gmail.com. Keep in mind
that reviews should be 200 words (including bibliographic information—title, author, publisher, year of publication,
number of pages, non-discounted price, and 13-digit ISBN number), the student’s grade and school must
be identified, and the book reviewed should not have appeared in VM within the last three years. (For an easy
reference, check the annual indexes appearing in every May issue, both print and online.) You will be required to
secure a parent’s signature on a consent-to-publish form and fax or email that form to Dr. Ranck-Buhr.

We hope you will encourage your students to write reviews for consideration. Publication has made a differ-
ence in so many student lives!