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*In tandem with developments in the United Kingdom, professional associations in the United States are concerned with the need for thorough-*

*going reforms in the teaching of English. The following reports are from DIANE ALLEN of the Public Information Office of the NCTE, Urbana, Illinois.*

## NCTE says: state governors can act to improve teaching and learning of English

*As the state governors of the U.S. prepared for President George Bush's Education Summit in Charlottesville, Virginia (27-8 September 1989), the National Council of Teachers of English offered the following statement on state and national issues and concerns that English teachers believe must be addressed if education in English and the language arts in the United States is to improve. The statement was issued in response to an invitation by the National Governors' Association (NGA), and focuses on eight areas in which the states have the power to change existing practices and conditions in public education, elementary school through college.*

The recommendations of the National Council of Teachers of English call for smaller classes in English and language arts, classroom decision-making authority for teachers, support for teachers' professional growth, limits on the influence of standardized testing on instruction, an end to reliance on emergency certification for staffing English programs, teaching approaches that integrate the language arts, schools that are rich in books and learning materials, adequate support services for English and language arts teachers, and finally, strengthening of curriculum development efforts at the state and local levels.

The eight recommendations include concern for broadening the English curriculum to acknowledge cultural diversity in the U.S., and for increasing the numbers of minority teachers.

"The ideas we have put before the governors represent a broad consensus within the English teaching profession," said NCTE Executive Director John C. Maxwell, who took part in drafting the statement. "They are concepts endorsed by the Coalition of English Associations, which issued its report on education reform earlier this year." (That report: *The English Coalition Conference: Democracy through Language*, was developed jointly by NCTE, the Modern Language Association, constituent groups within both organizations, the College English Association, and the College Language Association. It was published by NCTE.)

Noting a prediction by Michael Cohen of NGA

that restructuring efforts in the schools this year will center on curriculum, Maxwell added, "I am glad the governors are focusing on what is taught and how it is taught. I believe that because education is chiefly in the hands of the states, the nation's governors are in a position to make significant improvements."

NCTE's message to the National Governors' Association says the nation's teachers of English are eager "to prepare lifelong learners whose command of language is exemplary and who gain pleasure and fulfillment from reading, writing, listening, and speaking." It notes the importance of well-developed language abilities for citizenship in a democracy and for the health of U.S. society. It tells the governors they can help to create "a new era in teaching of this most important of subjects at all levels of instruction." And it offers NCTE's cooperation and assistance.

NCTE's eight recommendations to the governors for bringing about "dramatic change in the effectiveness" of English language arts teaching follow:

1. Laws and regulations providing for *smaller classes in English and the language arts* so that students can become active, enthusiastic learners working together on meaningful language tasks, able to move about and interact with others, and create their own sense of things. At the secondary level this means no more than four classes of 20 students [per teacher], at the elementary no more than 25 students in a class, and at the college level no more than 60 students per week in classes where writing is taught. When these standards are met, it will be possible for us to teach more effectively—especially written composition.

2. *Provision for teachers of a greater measure of control, or empowerment, over the circumstances in which we work:* to determine what is best for our students in curriculum, materials, and modes of instruction; to prevent unwarranted interruption of classroom work; to have time to plan effective lessons and have frequent conferences with students and parents.

3. Allocation of funds to permit teachers to return to study (and also attend professional conferences) to learn about the latest research in language learning; about how to create and improve active, student-centered learning; and about new subject matter, such as the literature of minority writers and new linguistic scholarship.

4. Prevention of pressure from those who would measure our work on the simplistic basis of standardized test scores, a menacing force that reduces the curriculum to a narrow set of "basics," misshapes our ways of teaching, and denies students access to exciting ideas.

5. Assurance that our new colleagues will be well-educated, well-trained, and sensitive professionals – not part-time or "emergency-certificated" personnel who do not understand modern theory, research and practice. Major steps are needed to assure that new faculty will reflect the diversity of our society.

6. Encouragement of the idea that language study is a unified whole, and that reading, writing, listening and speaking are essential human needs

and capabilities best taught and learned in an integrated fashion with a central focus on wide reading in our diverse literary tradition including works by men and women of many racial, ethnic, and cultural groups.

7. Provision of rich resources for students and teachers, such as classroom libraries, well-stocked resource centers, teacher aides and other para-professionals, duplicating facilities, word processors and other technology, writing labs, and a clean, safe environment.

8. Strengthening state and local capability for curriculum development, including appointment of highly qualified English language arts coordinators to lead instructional reform in this most important of school subjects.

The National Council of Teachers of English is a nonprofit professional organization made up of 130,000 individual members and subscribers and devoted to improving the teaching of English and the language arts. It includes teachers of English and related subjects at all levels of education.

## CCCC Calls for Reforms to Improve the Quality of Writing Instruction in Higher Education

The Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), a constituent group within the National Council of Teachers of English, has called for reforms intended to promote both the quality of writing instruction and academic freedoms in higher education. CCCC contends that postsecondary teachers of writing face widespread and exploitative practices in hiring and corrosive working conditions which undermine their ability to assure the highest quality of writing instruction for American undergraduates.

In a *Statement of Principles and Standards for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing*, CCCC argues that the principles usually applied in higher education to assure the quality of teaching are "rarely applied to those who teach writing" because their contribution is undervalued at most universities, four-year colleges, and two-year colleges. The statement points specifically to the following conditions:

○ "More than half the English faculty at two-year colleges, and nearly one-third of the English faculty at four-year colleges and universities, work on part-time and/or temporary appointments." The resulting lack of job security, professional benefits, and adequate salaries is, according to the statement, "a fact which many consider the worst scandal in higher education today."

○ "English graduate students who staff many writing programs are regularly assigned teaching duties they cannot responsibly discharge without neglecting their own course work."

○ "The teaching, research, and service contributions of tenure-line composition faculty are often misunderstood or undervalued."

○ Writing program administrators often are not granted the authority needed to discharge their responsibilities.

Noting that "a democracy demands citizens who can read critically and write clearly and cogently," CCCC calls for reforms which would, in appointing, evaluating, and supporting writing instructors, apply the same principles traditionally used to assure both quality in higher education and academic freedom. CCCC proposes reorganizing writing programs to replace the heavy reliance on non-tenure-track positions with tenure lines.

The statement advises English departments to plan a period of transition to lessen the economic effects on those teachers currently employed in non-tenure-line positions. During that transition period, the statement calls upon departments to adopt policies which assure that the academic freedom of non-tenurable faculty is protected, to provide reasonable teaching conditions to all teachers of writing, and to assure that undergraduates are taught by well-qualified writing instructors.

James Slevin, chair of the English Department at Georgetown University, headed the committee which prepared the CCCC statement. "These guidelines," he said, "represent the first step in a nationwide effort to reform the profession of English and to reverse several damaging practices

that have become all too common at postsecondary institutions over the past 15 years. The statement will be sent to over 8,000 college and university administrators, including presidents, deans, and English department chairs. In addition, it will be available to all CCCC members and writing program administrators in the October issue of the CCCC journal, *College Composition and Communication*. It is intended to assist local initiatives on individual campuses; only such initiatives will make possible the reform outlined in the document."

The CCCC statement calls for higher education officials to broaden the range of scholarship and research activities recognized for promotion and tenure of faculty who teach writing. It points out that collaborative research, textbook writing, staging of professional development workshops, and "demanding administrative service" characterize the work of writing faculty and should be viewed as legitimate professional contributions when decisions about tenure are made.

In addition, the CCCC statement calls for reform of the conditions under which graduate students serve as teaching assistants in writing programs. Institutions, it urges, need to recognize the dual responsibilities of graduate assistants as both learners and teachers. They should award assistantship on the basis of "superior writing ability" and promising performance in teaching. Institutions should limit assistants' workloads, provide adequate training and supervision, pay assistants according to their responsibilities, and make sure they have support services, access to scholarly literature, and opportunities for professional development.

The statement stresses the special demands that quality teaching of writing places on all instructors: reading and critiquing of large numbers of student papers and conducting conferences

with individual student writers. It recommends strict limits on faculty workload in terms of numbers of students per class and overall student-teacher ratios: writing classes of no more than 20 students, preferably 15; remedial classes of no more than 15; overall workloads of no more than 60 writing students (or 45 "developmental" students) per faculty member in a given term.

In addition to Slevin, members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Professional Standards for Quality Education included Vivian I. Davis, Eastfield Community College, Mesquite, Texas; Ben McClelland, University of Mississippi; James C. Raymond, University of Alabama; Linda Robertson, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, New York; Audrey Roth, Miami-Dade Community College; and James Vincent, Robert Morris College, Corapolis, Pennsylvania.

The CCCC Executive Committee appointed this committee in response to a resolution calling for reform, which was passed unanimously at the 1987 CCCC Convention. Known within the profession as the Wyoming Conference Resolution, it was drafted and endorsed by 200 participants at the Wyoming Conference on English in June, 1986, many of whom are affected by exploitative conditions addressed in the document. The annual conference, held at the University of Wyoming in Laramie, focuses primarily on the teaching of literature and writing to undergraduates.

The CCCC is a professional organization for college teachers of writing with a membership of approximately 7,000. The National Council of Teachers of English, of which CCCC is a part, has some 62,000 individual members at the elementary, secondary, and college levels, plus a like number of subscribers, making it the largest organization of teachers of English in North America.

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## Announcing a new journal and call for papers

The inaugural issue of the *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, to be published by Multilingual Matters Ltd (Clevedon, England/Philadelphia), is to appear in early 1990. Research on language issues and communication problems in the Asian Pacific region appears in a wide diversity of journals. In addition, any linguistic and communication problems faced by Southeast Asian immigrants elsewhere in the world are also located in disparate contexts. This journal provides the first forum for such widespread concerns to be published in the English language. The second and third volumes are to be Guest

Edited by Florian Coulmas and Braj Kachru on 'The economics of language in the Asian Pacific' and 'Language and identity' respectively; deadlines for submissions are 30th April 1990 and 1st December 1990. Further information about subscriptions, the contents of the first issue, and guidelines for the above special issues may be obtained from the General Editors of the *JAPC*: Howard Giles, Communication Studies, University of California-Santa Barbara, CA 93106, USA, and Herbert Pierson, English Language Teaching Unit, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shatin, N.T., Hong Kong.