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Please Help Your Teachers Play Hookey With Us

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Please Help Your Teachers Play Hookey With Us

Abstract

Posting about the 2014 National Council of Teachers of English annual convention and why it's good for both teachers and students from *Teachers, Profs, Parents: Writers Who Care* - a blog advocating for authentic writing instruction.

<http://writerswhocare.wordpress.com/2014/11/10/please-help-your-teachers-play-hookey-with-us/>

Keywords

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Disciplines

Educational Methods | English Language and Literature | Rhetoric and Composition

Please Help Your Teachers Play Hookey with Us

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drkhturner

by [Leah Zuidema](#)

Next week, a few thousand English and language arts teachers from across the U.S. will be absent from their classrooms. As parents with students in K-12 schools, we are excited about these teachers' days away. Why? Although our kids will miss out on time with wonderful educators, we believe it's for the best because their teachers will be immersed in learning of their own at the [National Council of Teachers of English](#) annual convention. Teachers attending the NCTE convention join for up to four intense days of sharing best practices and learning from experts in the field. These days of professional development will be significant opportunities to learn more about teaching the English language arts while also fueling teachers' passion and encouraging them in their work.

NCTE is good for teachers—and ultimately, good for students. From our standpoint, the teachers' few days away (and the expenses for the conference and travel) are something that we are more than happy to support. We hope that schools and parents will offer their support, too.

Principals, parents, co-workers, and school boards can support teachers by:

- Encouraging teachers to take advantage of opportunities like NCTE.
- Providing funding for convention and travel expenses.
- Making arrangements for great substitute teachers.
- Thanking teachers for taking time away from their families and preparing well for their days away from the classroom.
- Showing interest in hearing from teachers when they return (personally as well as in newsletters or presentations).
- Affirming teachers when they apply what they've learned.....and encouraging them to present their own ideas at future conventions.

Teachers unable to attend NCTE this year can still get a taste of the convention via Twitter (#ncte2014 and #teachwriting). The #ncte2014 thread should be especially active from November 20-23, 2014. We also hope you will gather with us at a future convention. NCTE and CEE provide a professional home to all of us who work on the *Writers Who Care* blog: [NCTE](#) offers resources and support for teachers of English, and [CEE](#) serves those engaged in the preparation, support, and continuing education of teachers of English language arts / literacy. (Note that the biannual [CEE summer conference](#) will convene in New York on July 6-9, 2015.) There are many organizations that bring educators together to share and to learn, and we warmly encourage you to find a professional home.

For teachers and other educators attending NCTE 2014, we want to draw your attention to several writing-related events that may interest you—including a chance to work with us on writing for this blog or another outlet that interests you.

- The [Writers Who Care](#) editors will lead a **roundtable session for any**



and all who seek inspiration, time, space, and encouragement to write about what they know to be best for their students and children. Please join us for “[What’s blogging got to do with it? Story as Advocacy](#).” Our hope is that you will leave the session well on your way to sharing your story with a submission for our blog or another outlet. (Saturday, Nov. 22, Session [G.13](#))

- The **CEE Commission on Writing Teacher Education** (where this blog was born) will meet twice (sessions [D.49](#) and [J.46](#)). Two of our blog editors chair this commission (thank you, [Kristen Turner](#) and [Mark Letcher!](#)), and they will lead us in continued conversations about what we can do to further promote best practices of writing teachers and to amplify the voices of our colleagues in K-12 classrooms. As we have emphasized in this blog, the best way for students to learn to write is to write for authentic purposes and audiences. However, because of political, institutional, and financial pressures on classrooms, student-writers are not given these opportunities as often as we’d like, and teachers’ voices are too often unheard. We are striving to change those dynamics through the work of the CEE Commission on Writing Teacher Education, and we hope you’ll join these open meetings.
- The CEE Commission on Writing Teacher Education also announces the following sessions, all of which focus on the development of teachers of writing. Join CWTE members there:
 - **Passionate, Savvy Writing Instruction:** Preparing Teachers to Use Rhetorically Rich Approaches with ELL, Generation 1.5, and BiDialectal Writers ([A.05](#)) – presenters include *Writers Who Care* author Melinda J. McBee Orzulak (“[Should We Be Worried? Avoiding the Summer Slide by Moving Beyond the Cursive Debate](#)”)
 - **Using Narratives, Reading, and Media:** Professional Knowledges and Frameworks for Development in the Writing Methods Course ([H.02](#)) – presenters include Jonathan Bush, co-editor of *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education*, which grew from the work of the CEE Commission on Writing Teacher Education
 - **Teachers as Writers: Practices and Possibilities:** This roundtables session ([I.13](#)) for those who want to become (or grow) as teacher-writers is co-chaired by *Writers Who Care* authors Anne Whitney (“[And Yet We Write: Being a Teacher-Writer](#)”) and Jim Fredricksen (“[Uncertainty as an Opportunity](#)”).
 - **The Scholarship of Teacher Writing:** A roundtable conversation (one of several at the RTE roundtables session, [I.22](#)) led by *Writers Who Care* author Troy Hicks (“[Teaching Writing, Tablet Style](#)”) and blog editor Leah Zuidema.
 - And... **97 other sessions about writing:** see the [searchable NCTE program](#) to learn more about promising practices for teachers and students as writers!

We are eager to see you in Washington, D.C.! While you are at NCTE, please think about the one idea you’d like to share with colleagues and community members at home—and [write up an entry \(250-750 words\) to share as a post to the *Writers Who Care* blog](#). We’d love to hear from you, and it’s a great way to share the experience with those who couldn’t attend!

Leah A. Zuidema is an editor for Teachers, Professors, Parents: Writers Who Care. She has taught high school and college English, and now serves at Dordt College as Associate Provost and Dean for Curriculum and Instruction. One of her ongoing interests is supporting teachers in their work by connecting them with important resources—including other teachers.

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