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# CEE and Life as an English Educator

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## CEE and Life as an English Educator

*An NCTE group specifically for English educators, the Conference on English Education is central to teacher preparation.*

**A**s the immediate past chair of the Conference on English Education (CEE) and a member of the organization for eleven years, I can say without a doubt that the existence of CEE has positively influenced my life as a scholar and teacher of English education. Through CEE I have met many of my past and present role models and mentors, and I have learned much about the power of an organization comprised of a cadre of committed, passionate individuals. I have also learned firsthand of the many challenges associated with reaching out to “make a difference” and the inherent frustrations of *not* making the difference that was perhaps desired.

All I have to do is read about linking teacher merit pay to student test scores, creating content standards and assessments without teacher input, or relegating teacher education to the taking of a single “competency” test, and I know that CEE members, including myself, may have not yet succeeded in having the influence that we desire. But I also know that CEE continues to flourish, and its members will continue to advocate for effective English teacher and literacy education through multiple forums, such as letters to the editor, newspaper op-eds, professional blogs, Facebook pages, scholarly articles, and even daily conversations at our institutions and in our hometowns.

### What CEE Is


CEE is a group comprised of those of us who call ourselves *English educators*, meaning that we teach teachers of English. The mission of CEE is to “serve

... those NCTE members who are engaged in the preparation, support, and continuing education of teachers of English language arts/literacy” (see <http://www.ncte.org/cee>). CEE is a group comprised of those who dedicate their lives and energies to the effective education of teachers of English, primarily of grades 6–12. Recent initiatives that support this mission include introducing our first annual research grant program funding research projects consistent with CEE’s beliefs and philosophies, reviving our annual conference, and strengthening graduate student involvement with CEE.

While we are a relatively small group (currently 1,330 members), the scope of our work in English education continues to expand. I joined the CEE Executive Board under the chairship of Suzanne Miller and, later, Don Zancanella. They each did much to spur CEE to address broader political and policy concerns of interest to CEE members, including K–12 literacy legislation, teacher education program accreditation, the globalization of our profession, and the ongoing standards movement. Their work organizing the first two “research and policy summits,” as well as my efforts planning the 2009 CEE conference in Chicago, is additional evidence of CEE’s growing involvement in educational policy issues. During the first two summits, working groups drafted many belief and policy statements that were later published on our CEE website. These statements covered topics as diverse as the role of methods instruction, connections between English language arts research and practice, social justice, and technology and English education. The first summit also resulted in a special

issue of *English Education* (July 2006). At the 2009 conference, working groups created plans for local action emerging from these philosophies.

I will continue to be active in CEE and recognize the influence the organization has had on my life. CEE's ongoing commitment to improving and supporting English teacher education, in the United States and internationally, is nothing to take lightly.

My work with CEE colleagues has increased my disciplinary knowledge, my understanding of the importance as well as the challenges of political advocacy, and my vision of what might be possible through the grassroots efforts of a nonprofit organization. I am proud to be a CEE member and am deeply grateful for how the organization and its members continue to inform, inspire, and promote positive change. 

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## NCTE 10 YEARS AGO

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### From the 2001 Resolution in Response to the September 11 Terrorist Attacks:

RESOLVED, that the National Council of Teachers of English publicly commend teachers, staff, and administrators

- for their courage in leading students in and near the World Trade Center to safety and for their professionalism as they continue to work with students in extraordinarily difficult circumstances;
- for assuming responsibility in similar instances where students' safety and well-being were threatened; and
- for providing opportunities for students in the United States and throughout the world to interpret these events.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCTE continue to support

- literature and writing instruction as a means for understanding loss, anger, war, and difference;
- language study as a vehicle for understanding conflict, propaganda, and democratic discourse; and
- critical literacy as an instrument essential to an informed citizenship and global understanding.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCTE impress upon policymakers the importance of maintaining funding for education despite the economic difficulties exacerbated by recent events.

"Resolution on Teaching in a Time of Crisis." Annual Business Meeting of the Board of Directors and Other Members of the Council, Baltimore, MD. *National Council of Teachers of English*. NCTE, 2001. Web. 17 Mar. 2011. <http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/teachingtimeofcrisis>.