

Surviving Shock and Awe: NCLB vs. Colleges of Education

Nancy Mellin McCracken

You know, if there was any piece of legislation that I could pass, it would be to blow up colleges of education.

—Reid Lyon, Advisor to President George W. Bush (November 18, 2002)

In the spring of 2003, the United States went to war against Iraq. Rejecting proposals of at least some high-ranking military advisors for a larger ground force, The Department of Defense under Secretary Donald Rumsfeld opted for a smaller ground force preceded by an intensive wave of bombing—called “Shock and Awe.” Shock and Awe would lessen the need for a large ground force because the ferocity of the raid would so weaken the resolve of the Iraqi military that they would surrender at once, and the war would be over in a matter of days. When surrender did not immediately follow Shock and Awe, and the press began to ask about a revised timeline for military action in Iraq, the Defense Department’s rhetoric shifted a bit. Americans were now informed that it would be foolish to make predictions about the duration of the war because victory is not “time-driven,” but “event-driven.” Indeed, what was needed, we were told, and what had been prepared right along with Shock and Awe was a “highly flexible plan.”

The No Child Left Behind Act, signed into law in 2002, bears certain resemblances to the war on terrorism in Iraq. Of course, NCLB will not directly produce any civilian casualties or smashed buildings, but the political strategies used to roll it out have been eerily similar to those used in the war against terrorism. Disturbing rates of illiteracy in parts of the United States are said to be as destructive to the nation as attacks on life and property. Nothing short of all-out war, it is argued, will put an end to continuing threats of illiteracy. Lacking a literacy Osama bin Laden or Saddam Hussein,

the Department of Education has targeted U.S. colleges of education for extinction. According to national press releases and prestigious forums on evidence-based policy, colleges of education repeatedly have ignored opportunities to put an end to the terror of illiteracy. The administration has been patient, but now it is time to act. Chester E. Finn, Jr. (2003), Bush supporter and long-term critic of the American educational system, framed the analogy sharply in his signed Fordham Foundation editorial:

It's time to consider whether most protests against standards-based, test-driven state accountability systems have more to do with objections to the concept—and to change itself—than with credible evidence that such systems don't work. Do not, however, doubt the determination of resisters to stick by the regime under which they have thrived. The most dogged of them may turn out to be the ed schools, which (along with the teacher unions) one might term public education's version of Iraq's "Republican guards." (Para. 5)

This essay looks at NCLB from the perspective of the sections that impinge on colleges of education and suggests some ways English education professors might respond—first in these early days of “shock and awe,” and then for the longer haul as the Department of Education discovers that reform in education, like victory in war, is “event-driven” not “time-driven,” and that what is needed and what has been in place all along is a “highly flexible plan.”

Shock and Awe

Readers of the public transcripts that include the statement cited at the head of this essay (Lyon, 2002) experienced something very much like shock and awe. Those of us engaged in teacher education have come to expect a certain level of scapegoating from the public. The history of education reform in the U.S. traces a persistent cycle of perceived or “manufactured” education crises, each with a narrowly focused, often vitriolic blaming of educators, followed by another highly touted education policy reform (Squire, 2003; Berliner & Biddle, 1995). But Lyon's statement about blowing up colleges of education, coming just months after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, was and is alarming. At best, his comment could be dismissed as a form of joking or merely the unfortunate rhetorical excesses of a speaker carried away by being in the presence of the powerful.

However, what is important about Lyon's preposterous statements is that they were made by one of the President's most valued and powerful education advisors and that they went unchallenged at the highly visible

“Forum of the Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy with U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige,” a public meeting attended by the highest ranking educational leaders in the country. While it is a federal crime to joke about firearms in an airport, it is clearly acceptable to joke about terrorism in a national forum with Secretary Paige—provided the joke is aimed at colleges of education. Attending this meeting via a webcast sponsored by the Council for Excellence in Government is like being able to listen in on the strategizing sessions of one’s enemy. In the presentations of all members of the panel and in the question-and-answer period following the panel, it is very clear that colleges of education have been excluded as viable allies in the current plans to reform education through “evidence-based” approaches. Awesome and shocking to me is the empowerment of speakers at this meeting to impugn the integrity of all colleges of education and openly plan ways to undermine their (our) academically free work.

Even a cursory look at various policy and public relations documents related to “evidence-based policy” and the NCLB Act reveals that colleges of education are under attack. An ultimatum has been issued: teach and do research according to an experimental paradigm designed for use in agriculture, medicine, and industry . . . or else. NCLB provides the Bush administration with powerful weapons to use against colleges of education that persist in ignoring the ultimatum. English educators need to be aware of

these weapons and respond to them as individuals, as members of departments, and as members of the profession who share a citizen’s sense of the importance of educating all of our children for the common good.

Of course, the major threat to our shared goal of leaving no child behind is NCLB’s imposition on schools of hastily contrived standardized tests and test-prep curricula that frequently accompany them. Those of us who prepare new teachers and support the development of experienced teachers face enormous ethical and tactical

Those of us who prepare new teachers and support the development of experienced teachers face enormous ethical and tactical challenges working with teachers who are being required to act in ways that we, and they, know will be ineffective for many and harmful for some.

challenges working with teachers who are being required to act in ways that we, and they, know will be ineffective for many and harmful for some. With teacher licensure tied increasingly to single-measure standardized tests, the imposition of inappropriate test-prep curricula also looms over our college classrooms (McCracken & McCracken, 2001). At the same historical moment when laughably brief alternative licensure programs are being funded for former military personnel and others whose careers have been

outside schools, ever greater licensure hurdles are being erected against those who choose first the career of teacher and spend four to five years in preparation and internship.

In addition, three other threats to the effective work of colleges of education warrant discussion here because they are insidious and appear comprehensive, targeting simultaneously our past, future, and present work. The first two threats relate to control of education research—what Secretary Paige has called “The Stealth Pillar of Reform” (Paige, 2002): (1) purging and limiting access to the scholarly archives and (2) controlling the research agenda. The third threat consists of a full-scale public relations campaign to undercut the credibility of the present work of teacher educators in the eyes of parents, students, publishers, and the business community. Taken together, these moves constitute a massive attack on teacher education, one that is likely to cause the surrender of many of the best minds and hearts in the profession. It will take uncommon resolve in the face of such an assault to continue our work in preparing the future teaching force of the nation and supporting the development of our most experienced and dedicated teacher leaders.

Purging the Scholarly Record

One of the key strategies of the Department of Education is to ensure that the federally funded education research database include only those studies it deems scientific. By scientific studies, the Department means experiments conducted under randomized control conditions. Two examples will illustrate how effectively this weapon can work. The National Reading Panel (NRP) (2002) was commissioned to review what is known about learning to read. As Joan Yatvin (2002), Reid Lyon (2002), and others have noted, over a thousand studies were available to the panel, but only a few hundred were considered to be sufficiently “scientific” for review. As a result, the public and our students who look to federally sponsored summaries of research on reading instruction, will read much about studies of phonemic awareness and systematic phonics instruction because these are topics that were studied under the particular research design selected by the panel. They will find nothing about reading-writing workshop or whole-language approaches to reading instruction since studies of complex, integrated approaches involved methodologies that were excluded from the panel’s review. Defining “scientific” as randomized experiments and quasi-experiments takes off the table much of the case study and teacher-research that has deeply informed our professional understanding of how to teach reading. In recent months,

strong critiques of the NRP's procedure and of the misuse of the Panel's report by the current administration have been made public (e.g., Yatvin), but policies based upon the report are already in place and will be difficult to reverse.

In another example of purging the scholarly record, as this essay is being written, ERIC, the greatest source of access to educational research available in user-friendly formats to teachers and scholars alike, is under threat. In the proposed revision, instead of individual clearinghouses containing a broad variety of research on topics within education (writing, reading, etc.) there will be one centrally controlled "What Works Clearinghouse" and it will include only research of a particular form and only on topics given high federal priority (U.S. Department of Education).

Controlling the Research Agenda

If the national goal were that only *some* children be left behind, then the randomized experimental research designs the Department of Education intends to privilege in funding future research would suffice. But if *no* child is to be left behind, then every child must be studied. What is needed now

Randomized experimental research is one important methodology, but selecting that methodology as a requirement for 75% of all future federally funded studies of effective practices in schools is dangerously limiting.

more than ever is research on small groups and individual children working in particular contexts. Randomized experimental research is one important methodology, but selecting that methodology as a requirement for 75% of all future federally funded studies of effective practices in schools is dangerously limiting. The most recent edition of the *Handbook of Research on Teaching the English Language Arts* (2003) provides an overview of the agenda for needed research in

English language arts as envisioned by contemporary researchers in the field and generally confirms the notion that what is needed are studies that include context in ways that are excluded by randomized experiments. For example, Mayher and Brause (2003), in "Who Really Goes to School? Teaching and Learning for the Students We Really Have," raise questions about diversities absolutely critical to the national goal of literacy for all. Yet such questions will not be addressed as matters of high priority in an administration which believes, in the words of former Assistant Secretary of Education Susan Neuman, that NCLB should "stifle, and hopefully it will kill" creative, experimental teaching methods, since scientific research will show the right way to teach regardless of social, cultural, or material difference: "If you

have good instruction, children can learn regardless of what the neighborhood looks like”(qtd. in Balta, 2002, p. 1). The review essay by Smith and Stock (2003), “Trends and Issues in Research in the Teaching of the English Language Arts,” highlights the need for research on the contexts of teaching and learning and concludes with the prediction that English educators “will turn and return to narrative and story, both real and imaginative, as means of exploring intellectual, moral, and ethical dilemmas through the eyes of particular individuals at particular times in particular places” (p. 126).

In stark contrast with the agenda being articulated by many leading educational researchers in English language arts, the Department of Education has issued a “Strategic Plan 2002-2007” (USDOE, 2002) that calls for increased funding of randomized experimental design research and a limitation on funding for research on topics not deemed relevant to immediate classroom performance. The Strategic Plan includes two major objectives related to the federal education research agenda: “Objective 4.1 Raise the quality of research funded or conducted by the Department [and] Objective 4.2 Increase the relevance of our research in order to meet the needs of our customers” (p. 59). With regard to the first objective, the Department intends to reach it by increasing to 75% the proportion of funded projects that employ randomized experimental designs. With regard to the second objective, the Department declares that only research that addresses the question of “what works” in educational practice (as studied mainly in randomized experimental designs) will be considered relevant. Which aspects of educational practice will be relevant and who will decide? Will the Department be guided by teachers and educational researchers close to the field? No. As the Strategic Plan document explains,

The Department will periodically conduct fast-response surveys of Congressional staff, governors’ aides, chief state school officers, state higher education officers, school administrators, and individuals in other major categories of education decision makers to determine the issues about which they most need evidence. (p. 62)

The constituents and the order of this list of agenda setters is troubling, as is the notion that “fast-response” is the ideal way to determine the national educational research agenda. The failure to include teachers and teacher educators explicitly as primary informants on the list of agenda setters for educational research in the name of “no child left behind” is notable. “Fast-response surveys of Congressional staff and governors’ aides” are unlikely to reveal critical hypothesis-generating knowledge, developing currently through the slow ethnography, case studies, and teacher research designs published in journals such as *English Education* and *RTE*.

The work of English educators in the 21st century is to conduct and provide ready access to research that can provide knowledge and insight to those who choose to devote their lives to teaching the diverse students who populate the United States and its schools. Methodologies designed to compare the rust resistance of corn hybrids, the effects of administering a drug vs. a placebo, the effects on production time of the implementation of robotics in industry, are not sufficient for this purpose. Under NCLB, English educators will find it more difficult to obtain funding for context-sensitive research. We will find it more difficult to make our findings readily available to teachers, parents, and fellow researchers. The Department of Education's "Objective 2.4" in their 2002-2007 Strategic Plan, "Improve Teacher and Principal Quality," having defined "research-based instructional practices" as those which have been proven effective in randomized experiments, declares its intent to "work with the states to ensure that all professional development funded through Department programs focuses on research-based instructional practice" The Department "will also encourage induction and mentoring programs for new teachers that are focused on research-based practices" (p. 48). As English educators continue to foster complex, context-sensitive teacher research as a powerful model for professional development in our work with schools, we will be challenged to compete for limited staff development funds with large commercial programs currently under study in randomized-experimental design research. We will find it more challenging to access the research of our colleagues around the country and the world. Our students will face these same challenges and we must be prepared to meet them in new ways.

The Campaign against the Present Work of Colleges of Education

In addition to purging the scholarly record and controlling the research agenda, NCLB has provided many opportunities for the Department of Education to undermine the present work of teacher educators. In the current public rhetoric surrounding the enactment of NCLB, critical readers of the media might note what appears to be a well-orchestrated campaign to impugn colleges of education in the name of NCLB. From First Lady Laura Bush, to Secretary Rod Paige, to Chairman of the Success for All Foundation Robert E. Slavin, NCLB advocates have all been using similar language and talking "on point"—the point being that colleges of education are uniquely subject to the vagaries of ideology and belief and incapable of contributing knowledge to the current education reform initiative. Here are some samples:

- › Evidence-based reform could finally bring education to the point reached early in the 20th century by medicine, agriculture, and technology, fields in which evidence is the lifeblood of progress. . . . Informed education leaders can contribute to this effort. It is ironic that the field of education has embraced ideology rather than knowledge in its own reform process. (Slavin, 2003, p. 16)
- › Unlike medicine, agriculture and industrial production, the field of education operates largely on the basis of ideology and professional consensus. As such, it is subject to fads and is incapable of the cumulative progress that follows from the application of the scientific method and from the systematic collection and use of objective information in policy making. (Department of Education, 2002, p. 48)
- › When people ask me what's so special about the President's plan and why do we think it can change things, there are a lot of different reasons why I think that. But the most important reason is this fourth pillar, scientifically-based pedagogy that we know works. Because for the first time, we are applying the same rigorous standards for education research that is applied in medicine. For the first time, we insist that states pay attention to research. And for the first time, we're insisting on evidence-driven classroom methods that really work. No fads, no good feeling stuff, no fluff. Good solid instruction based on science. (Paige, 2002, p. 14)

The effort to undermine the credibility of colleges of education is not only accomplished by painting colleges of education as bastions of ignorance. The Department of Education (2002) effectively erases educators, including those in colleges of education, in its Strategic Plan with a rhetorical sleight of hand in which the word “customers” is used consistently in places where one would expect to find the words, “teachers,” “teacher educators,” and “faculty.” In the U.S. Department of Education Strategic Plan, for example, goals are established to “meet the needs of our customers.”

How to Be an English Education Professor in This Environment

The weapons associated with NCLB present a triple threat to concepts that I personally value and that I believe the profession of English education has come to view as foundational: teacher as researcher, teacher as artist, teacher as agent for democratic social justice. I confess that there are moments when

I believe the shock and awe assault has worked and I should surrender, take up another line of work, retire to my neglected gardens.

How am I to talk with my students who are teachers and teachers-to-be? How shall I prepare myself for the coming year in which I will teach undergraduate methods courses, graduate courses, a National Writing Project Institute? How shall I prepare to guide the doctoral dissertations of those teachers who have come to study in depth the intricate workings of curriculum and instruction as it plays out in the lives of children and teachers? What can I bring to students that can genuinely help them and their students to flourish in U.S. public school systems of today? In short, is it possible to do good teacher education work in this environment? I believe it is, and I want to write some of the possibilities for action that will drive my work in the coming year.

I believe it is important to write and talk about political matters that influence the education community at times like this. Writers such as Susan Ohanian, Alfie Kohn, Leila Christenbury, and Randy Bomer offer strong models of how to engage in a needed public debate beyond the safer confines of the campus. It is critical, now, for teacher educators to discuss with

their preservice and inservice students the NCLB reform rhetoric. It may not be immediately obvious to those with whom we work in schools that teacher education is not unique in being characterized by "ideology and belief." It may be necessary to point to the highly ideological nature of decisions about genetically engineered export crops, pharmaceutical production, and industrial production models that are currently being touted as providing the "gold standard" for education research. In a teacher education curriculum that is already packed with essential pedagogical content, it is not easy to find space for examination of the current rhetorical and political context of teaching, but it is essential if

our students are to survive in a public environment in which their education is under a well organized attack by the highest leaders in the country.

While sharing thoughtful analyses of the current education reform rhetoric, I believe we should not shrink from the government's demand for clear evidence of student learning. In the teacher inquiry projects our English education students conduct, we have been asking for as long as I can remember: how do you know and how can your students know that they are

I believe we should not shrink from the government's demand for clear evidence of student learning. . . . One of the ways we can strengthen our own research and the research done by our students is by including the principles for "Scientific Research in Education" . . . with other materials relevant to teacher research in our teacher education programs.

learning what you are trying to teach? One of the ways we can strengthen our own research and the research done by our students is by including the principles for “Scientific Research in Education” published by the National Research Council Committee on Scientific Principles for Education Research (2002) with other materials relevant to teacher research in our teacher education programs. While the notion that the most important questions about education policy can be answered through randomized experiments is theoretically and methodologically flawed, the demand for more studies that provide a comparative perspective might be helpful, if only to combat their use by those whose views we do not share. A recent example of research that combines qualitative methods with statistical analysis of written products of carefully selected control groups allows insight into the potentially harmful effects of NCLB’s mandated yearly high-stakes testing of all students (Roberts, 2002). Matching Writing Project-trained teachers with non-Writing Project-trained teachers at the same schools, and controlling for economic and cultural factors as well as the experience level of the teachers, Roberts found there was no significant difference in the scores on proficiency-test-like writing performances until after the state proficiency testing ended in February. From February to the end of the school year, the Writing Project teachers’ students significantly outperformed the students in their matched control classes. Based on follow-up interviews with both sets of teachers, Roberts discovered that Writing Project teachers didn’t always feel free to utilize their full repertoire of teaching strategies until after the test, while non-writing project teachers generally stopped teaching writing once the test was over.

A third response to the NCLB-related attacks is to explain constantly to our students and to the larger public that medicine, agriculture, and industrial production are not proper analogues for teaching and learning. With the NCLB rhetoric and policy insisting that teaching should be more like these other fields, and with the public’s common-sense understanding of progress, the argument that education is a field of a different sort must be made again and again and in a variety of ways.

What are proper analogues for teaching? When I began my career as a researcher almost 25 years ago, I was interested most of all in the teaching and learning of writing. I wanted to know how and why things worked and didn’t. After reviewing hundreds of studies with control groups and findings of “no significant difference,” I elected to do research of a different sort. If the analogue for my research is natural science, then I am the biologist, recording every detail of the fish. I am the astronomer watching tirelessly for the comet and noting carefully the time of its passage through the

night sky. If my research analogue is law, then I am the attorney poring over the facts of a case, studying precedents and honing my ability to read witnesses and develop arguments. What are the skills my students need to learn to do this kind of work? They need to know the value of teacher inquiry.

To succeed as teachers in the current climate, my students will need to learn how to believe in themselves as artists and scientists. They will need science that can provide them the sure knowledge that their students are learning (or not) and how they are learning (or not). They will also need the courage and the sense of efficacy of the artist if they are to remain hopeful in their work.

They need to learn how to learn about students, how to “kidwatch.” They need to learn how to frame questions about the teaching and learning in their classroom. They need to learn how to see the roomful of faces as a collection of lives in progress with their own. And they need to learn how to write for the public.

To succeed as teachers in the current climate, my students will need to learn how to believe in themselves as artists and scientists. They will need science that can provide them the sure knowledge that their students are learning (or not) and how they are learning (or not). They will also need the courage and the sense of efficacy of the artist if they are to remain hopeful in their work. There is very little in the current

public rhetoric or policy to provide support for such development, so it falls to me and others who mentor our new teachers. The Department of Education’s determination to publish only studies that exclude teacher knowledge places an even greater obligation on me to provide students with strong models and experiences with teacher research. The Reading First Initiative’s endorsement of only those programs based on experimental research highly favors a limited number of scripted programs in reading and has caused school systems to implement and enforce generic teaching strategies that run counter to what we know about teaching and learning. My students will need the skills to demonstrate where generic programs aren’t working as well as where they are working. But they will also need a sense of self-confidence to enter a profession in which their knowledge is publicly dismissed. I wouldn’t encourage them at all, except that history tells me that this cycle too will turn. But I can’t encourage them and not provide them with the strongest sense of themselves as effective decision makers and agents for learning and change in their schools.

None of us can do this work alone. We will need to work with our department and university colleagues as well as our partners in public schools. We need strong deans of colleges of education who are not afraid to support a variety of research methodologies. We need curriculum teams

that can collaborate on ways to keep the arts in language arts, even as we struggle to help our local schools raise test scores. We will need to share and combine our research expertise with colleagues to create the strongest possible findings given our values and the current government mandates. We'll need the humor and energy that camaraderie provides in time of battle.

On a broader level, we can respond to the current assault on colleges of education by staying active in professional organizations. NCTE, for example, with its capacity for publishing resolutions to inform legislators, is a way for our voices to be heard. NCTE recently passed a resolution reminding school districts that the Reading First Initiative is not permitted to endorse or mandate the use of any particular set of published materials as a prerequisite for grant funding. As a member of the Resolutions Committee, I was able to observe closely and participate in a democratic, grassroots effort to inform the public and to affect the implementation of education policy.

Yet another example of the potential for policy action is NCTE's connection with the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (McCracken et al., 2000). As flawed and politically complex as this relationship is, the fact remains that because NCTE is composed of active English educators, the standards that the Education Testing Service is currently proposing in its revision of the widely mandated Praxis II teacher tests are the standards written and reviewed by English educators. This reflects the core of teacher knowledge established through the methodology of observation, description, discussion and consensus—the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English Language Arts* (1996).

Finally, in these hard financial times when NCTE has found it necessary to put an end to the tradition of an annual spring meeting of CEE, there is a growing need for English educators to meet together and to support one another in the difficult battles we all face. We will need to find other ways to meet, and we will need, more than ever, to communicate through our journals, such as *English Education*.

What I Would Say to the Policy Makers If I Thought They Were Listening, and What I Believe They Will Discover on Their Own in Any Case

I would remind policy makers that, just as in the Iraqi War of 2003, there is already in place a highly flexible plan for continued improvement in U.S. education, and I would note that teacher preparation programs in U.S. colleges of education are at the heart of this plan. The shock and awe bombardment and rapid deployment strategies propounded by the current Depart-

ment of Education will not be effective in the long run in the war against illiteracy. The presumed stronger, leaner force of randomized experimental trials that the current administration so admires will not prove sufficient to handle the hugely complex, diverse terrain that is U.S. public education. Fortunately, contrary to the claims of Reid Lyon and others, doctoral students in U.S. colleges of education are well prepared to use multiple methods and to select methodologies that best illuminate their questions. Fortunately, colleges of education are preparing new teachers who are able to conduct inquiry-based learning in their classrooms and who are skillful in designing assessments that show not just what, but also how, their children are thinking and learning.

One highly flexible plan for leaving no child behind in U.S. education is a system whereby prospective teachers study their subject matter and apprentice themselves to scholars and clinical mentors over a period of years in an education that includes numerous tests and performance assessments. Then, having succeeded out in the field as teachers themselves and gained considerable experience and additional knowledge about teaching their field, some of them become clinical mentors and advanced scholarly researchers. All along the way they become skillful with a range of methodologies, building on grounded teacher research made public. This highly flexible plan is, at least in the best instances, the system that is currently in place in accredited teacher preparation programs in colleges of education. We don't always succeed in meeting our ideal; we face many obstacles that have to do with limited resources available in higher education combined with an ever-shifting set of challenges in schools and communities. The highly flexible plan that U.S. colleges of education offer for victory in the war against illiteracy is an inelegant plan. It doesn't fit into prescribed time-lines. But it has managed to produce astounding victories, and it shows the promise of more to come.

Finally, I would say to the policy makers that any plan of attack in the field of education as in the field of war must be sophisticated enough to prevent collateral damage. There is not a clear, fast path to total victory in literacy. Victory in education, as in war, is truly event-driven. What a teacher does first depends, in large part, on who shows up on the field. What she does the next day depends on what happened on the first day, and so forth. The progress of the battle for literacy in any classroom in the U.S. is also influenced by events outside that classroom, from large-scale culturally supported poverty to individual family events. You understand this principle when it relates to military battles. Why is it so difficult to grasp when it relates to education?

References

- Balta, V. (2002). End creative teaching, official says. No waivers of NCLB. *The Record*, October 25, 2002.
- Berliner, D., & Biddle, B. (1995). *The manufactured crisis: Myths, fraud, and the attack on America's public schools*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Finn, C. (2005, March 27). The law people love to hate—and pretend to love. *The Education Gadfly*, 3 (11). Retrieved from <http://www.edexcellence.net/gadfly/v03/gadfly11.html#checker1>
- Lyon, R. (2002). Forum of the Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy with U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige, available in print and as a webcast at www.excelgov.org/displayContent.asp?Keyword=prppcEvidence
- Mayher, J., & Brause, R. (2005). Who really goes to school? Teaching and learning for the students we really have. In J. Flood, D. Lapp, J. R. Squire, & J. Jensen (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teaching the English language arts* (2nd ed.), (pp. 285-299). Mahway, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- McCracken, N., & McCracken, H. T. (2001). Teaching in the time of testing: What have you lost? *English Journal*, 91(1), 30-35.
- McCracken, N., Duke, C., McCracken, H., and the NCTE/NCATE Committee on Assessment of Standards for Preparing Teachers of English Language Arts. (2000). Final Report. Urbana, IL: NCTE.
- National Reading Panel. (2002). *Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction*. Report of the subgroups. Washington, DC: National Institutes of Health.
- National Research Council. (2002). Scientific research in education. Committee on Scientific Principles for Education Research. J. J. Shavelson & L. Towne, (Eds.) Center for Education. Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Paige, R. (2002). Opening remarks. *Rigorous Evidence: The Key to Progress in Education*. Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy. Retrieved from http://www.excelgov.org/usermedia/images/uploads/PDFs/Final_Online_Version_-_November_18_Forum_Transcript.doc
- Roberts, C. (2002). *The influence of teachers' professional development on student writing achievement*. Unpublished manuscript. University of South Florida at Tampa.
- Slavin, R. E. (2005). A reader's guide to scientifically based research. *Educational Leadership*, 60 (5), 12-16.
- Small, R. (Ed.) (1996). *Guidelines for preparation of teachers of English language arts*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Smith, K., & Stock, P. L. (2005). Trends and issues in research in the teaching of the English language arts. In J. Flood, D. Lapp, J. R. Squire, & J. Jensen (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teaching the English language arts* (2nd ed.), (pp. 114-132). Mahway, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Squire, J. (2005). The history of the profession. In J. Flood, D. Lapp, J. R. Squire, & J. Jensen (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teaching the English language arts* (2nd ed.), (pp. 3-17). Mahway, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

United States Department of Education. (2002). Strategic Plan, 2002-2007, pp. 48-65. Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/stratplan2001-05/index.html>

Yatvin, J. (2002). Babes in the woods: Wanderings of the National Reading Panel. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 83 (5), 364-69.

Nancy Mellin McCracken is a professor in the Department of Teaching, Leadership, and Curriculum Studies at Kent State University.

Call for Proposals: ReadWriteThink Lesson Plans

In order to provide the best lessons for English language arts teachers, NCTE is seeking educators with the time and talent to write lesson plans for K-12 English language arts educators. All of the lessons will be of top quality and based on NCTE and IRA's Standards for the English Language Arts. Subjects to be covered include, among others, reading and writing workshop, drama, children's and young adult literature, and critical literacy. Please visit the ReadWriteThink site at <http://www.readwritethink.org/> to see the most recent lesson plans. For detailed submission guidelines, please visit the NCTE Web site at <http://readwritethink.ncte.org/mpauthors/>. Submissions from preservice teachers are welcome.

Call for Proposals: NCTE Theory and Research into Practice (TRIP) Book Series

The NCTE Books Program invites proposals for its TRIP series (Theory and Research into Practice). These books are single-authored and focus on a single topic, targeting a specified educational level (elementary, middle, or secondary). Each book will offer the following: solid theoretical foundation in a given subject area within English language arts; exposure to the pertinent research in that area; practice-oriented models designed to stimulate theory-based application in the reader's own classroom. The series has an extremely wide range of subject matter; past titles include *Creative Approaches to Sentence Combining*, *Unlocking Shakespeare's Language*, and *Enhancing Aesthetic Reading and Response*. For detailed submission guidelines, please visit the NCTE Web site at <http://www.ncte.org/pubs/publish/books/107577.htm>. Proposals to be considered for the TRIP series should include a short review of the theory and research, as well as examples of classroom practices that can be adapted to the teaching level specified. Send proposals to Zarina Hock, Director of Book Publications & Senior Editor, or Kurt Austin, Acquisitions Editor, NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096; e-mail: zhock@ncte.org or kaustin@ncte.org.
