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MOVING TARGETS: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS  
OF LITERACY, IDEOLOGY, AND STANDARDS IN ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHER PREPARATION GUIDELINES

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Leslie David Burns

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A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF LITERACY, IDEOLOGY,  
AND STANDARDS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHER PREPARATION  
GUIDELINES**

**By**

**Leslie David Burns**

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## ABSTRACT

### MOVING TARGETS: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF LITERACY, IDEOLOGY, AND STANDARDS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHER PREPARATION GUIDELINES

By

Leslie David Burns

The following dissertation describes a critical discourse analysis of the National Council of Teachers of English's 1996 *Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of the English Language Arts*. It proceeds from the premise that literacy has expanded beyond traditional print-based practices to include literacies related to new technologies, diverse social groups, and social issues including economic shifts and transformations in work and social discourses. Meanwhile, the discourse of accountability documents in English education operates to constrain the integration of new literacies into the traditional curriculum. By analyzing the *Guidelines* at multiple levels, the author seeks to understand how discourse practices related to accountability interact with English educators' deployment of knowledge about their field as they design curricula for preparing new professionals.

The study addresses the following questions: 1) How do the 1996 *Guidelines* represent English language arts and English teacher education? 2) What discourses are at play in these representations? and 3) What are the potential consequences of these representations?

These questions are addressed through literature reviews in the New Literacy Studies, the history of NCTE and the teaching of English, standards-based reform in the English language arts, and accountability theory. These reviews represent the sociocultural and sociopolitical context for the textual analysis that constitutes the study. Chapter 3 describes the study's methodology, including the nature of critical discourse analysis theory and its function in activist scholarship, the analysis of ideologies, and the creation of spaces for difference and change in discourse communities. Chapter 4 describes the methods used to select, transcribe, and code data, and also discusses the analytical process used to develop findings, situating the author as an English teacher, teacher educator, and researcher who is a member of the National Council of Teachers of English. Chapter 5 offers a descriptive analysis of the NCTE *Guidelines*, discussing the social actors represented in the text. Chapter 6 describes the use of language in the *Guidelines* and highlights patterns in the use of terms central to literacy curricula. Chapter 7 describes the ways in which the *Guidelines*' use of "effective teaching" as a central construct, its explicit accommodation of the national education accountability movement, and its deployment of accountability philosophies function ideologically to produce a framework for English education that is potentially inequitable. Chapter 8 concludes the study with a discussion of the findings and their implications for curriculum design and professional activity in both the National Council of Teachers of English and the field of literacy and English language arts in general.

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## DEDICATION

To my wife Bobbilynn, my parents Robert and Patricia, my brother Christopher,  
my family, and all of the many teachers who helped me along the way. You all  
have my thanks, my respect, and my love.

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## PRELUDE:

### *A True Story*

Just before Christmas last year, I had to go to the mechanic and get my car ready for the annual cross-country Christmas trek to visit my in-laws in Kansas. Normally, I'm not a very animated person when I go to the mechanic, because they can smell fear. Any sense you might give to them that you don't know a thing about your car can be deadly, so it's best to clam up. But today, I was feeling chatty. Maybe it was the Christmas spirit. Or something.

Anyway, I went to the mechanic's and had a conversation with the guy who came out to sign me in. There was an ad on the lounge TV selling those little video game modules that plug right into your television and instantly give you classic games like Pacman and Space Invaders. The mechanic said he'd just bought one for his young boy so that he could learn to play video games. "That might not be the best idea," he said ruefully, "but oh well. He loves it."

I laughed and said, "Actually, I do research in literacy, and there's evidence to show that teaching your kid to use video games is a really smart idea. They learn a lot about narrative, logic, and problem solving" (Gee, 2003; but let's be clear—I only said the citation inside my own head). "Say what you want about the thematic content, but kids learn a ton from playing video games."

At this, another customer put her book down and peered at me with both annoyance and condescension. "I'm a teacher," she said. "And I can tell you that the content of those games leaves an *awful* lot to be desired."

"Right," I replied. "Like I said, the content of the games may not always be nice, but that doesn't mean that kids don't learn useful things from playing them."

The teacher became visibly agitated, vibrating quietly in her seat. "Kids still have to learn to read and write, you know. Kids today have to be told that sometimes they can't do just whatever it is they want to do whenever they want to do it. Sometimes they have to be made to learn things that don't interest them, you know. They still live in a world of print, and they have to read if they're going to get along."

"I don't disagree with that at all," I said. "What you're talking about, though, is an issue of motivation and engagement, right?" She agreed skeptically. "It's not really about whether video games teach useful skills. It's not even about whether kids should learn to read. But kids today grow up in a very different culture from ours, and they think differently." She rolled her eyes and gave me a look that said *you poor, foolish little man, what could you possibly know about it?* "I'm an English teacher, too," I added.

At this revelation, we both began to regard each other with mutual dismay. I half expected to be led into the Thunderdome for a battle to the death. "They do NOT grow up in a different culture!" she bit at me. "They grow up in the exact same culture as we do, and they need to learn how to get by."

"It IS different for them," I insisted. "Yes, okay, they are in the same general culture as we are, but their social contexts and perceptions of that culture are different from ours, and their literacies are not exactly the same as the ones we grew up with. They think differently and process differently than we do. They do still need to learn print literacy, but there are other things happening that they need to know about too. And I don't think schools do a very good job of accounting for those other things."

I got a classic teacher's glare out of her for that last bit. "Oh! I don't agree with you at all. We're just going have to agree to disagree. I can't talk to you anymore. We have to stop." She pulled her book back into position and began, pointedly, to READ.

"I guess so," I shrugged, and somehow the Christmas spirit prevented me from saying things that would have shocked Scrooge. True story.



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## CHAPTER 1:

### *Insiders on the Outside Looking In*

We think that the schools belong to the people, not the teachers, not the professors. So frankly, we've never been concerned about what professors think. They fought us vigorously in the beginning on testing. They fought us on all variety of things. And so we invited them out of the meetings. We don't even talk to them (Shepley, 2002, p. 19, cited in Wixon, Dutro, & Athan, 2004, p. 94).

As the statement above indicates, teachers and teacher educators are being marginalized in state and national conversations about school curriculum, standardized testing, and accountability that will be used to determine and govern their own work. They are insiders on the outside looking in. At the same time, a prominent theme in national standards texts for teacher preparation, certification, and professional development is that teachers are active agents of change and reform, and that teachers are decision-makers whose job it is to develop, translate, and deliver curriculum (National Council of Teachers of English, 1996a; National Council for Teaching and America's Future, 1996; Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, 1992; National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1996). In these texts (often created by professional teachers rather than private citizens and elected policy makers), teachers are often characterized as "reflective" practitioners and "critical" thinkers—"professionals" who undertake a process of "lifelong learning" in order to perform their jobs well and meet the needs of children in the communities where they teach. Accepting such premises, it seems strange that politicians and private citizens, who for the most part do not have expertise or experience in teaching or education in general, largely determine curriculum policy at the state

and national levels while purposefully excluding the expertise and input of teachers and teacher educators. While educators may be involved in developing drafts for policy texts, they have little control over the final content used to govern their daily practices.

This state of affairs has affected curriculum and policy in the English language arts as well as other school subject fields. As an English teacher and a teacher educator with over a decade of active participation in the field, I am comfortable making the claim that, if there must be accountability measures for the teaching of English, then English educators at all levels should be involved in their construction at every stage, including final approval, publication, and amendment of such texts for use in governing teachers' professional activities. I am further comfortable making the claim that no one knows more about the teaching and learning of English language arts than English language arts teachers, a group that includes classroom teachers, literacy educators and researchers, and English language arts teacher educators and researchers from levels K-16. From such a perspective, it seems logical that English teachers ought to participate in determining how to account for their own work. However, in addition to asking *who* ought to set standards and how we ought to implement them, or even asking *whether* we ought to create standards for the teaching of "English language arts," there are more fundamental questions that literacy and English language arts educators, policy makers, and their constituents should ask. Before asking "Which standards?" or "How can we implement standards?" it is important to understand the nature of literacy, the nature of our professional



discourses, and also to understand how such a thing as standards-based accountability reform might interact with those discourses and literacy curriculum design.

In addition to formulating sound rationales for how and why institutions, teachers, and learners should be accountable, educators need to develop an understanding of how standards-based reform impacts curricular content, pedagogical practices, and the discursive structures operating in the field of literacy. In the fields of literacy and English language arts education, educators should ask what the consequences of any accountability system might be for the work they do.

One of the motivating factors behind this dissertation study is the swell of “accountability” measures that have developed over the last twenty years in the field of education. For professionals involved with literacy and language arts education in public schooling, teacher education, and educational research, standards have become ubiquitous; they have become the dominant texts at multiple levels in the field. Standards exist for subject matter content, achievement expectations, and instruction across K-12 levels, departmental curriculum and assessment in public schools and higher education, school- and program-level assessment and outcomes for teaching and teacher education, and so on. According to Robert Linn (2003), we live in a new era of accountability. It is an era in which literacy and language arts teachers and teacher educators are expected to implement standards for the instruction and

assessment of their own students while they also submit themselves to standards that govern the work of teaching and teacher education.

On the surface, such accounting may seem necessary and reasonable. Who would argue against the assertion that we should make sure that children in public schools are learning, and that their teachers are working to systematically improve their instruction and meet the needs of all children? Still, at the same time as educators are being held accountable for standards-based reform measures, it is not always clear that those standards are equitable, and professional English educators and classroom teachers have had only a limited role in the construction and design of standards and policies that specify the content and the processes involved with teaching, especially at the highest levels of state and national educational policy (Wixon, Dutro, and Athan, 2004). Further, standards-based accountability reform has generated a genre of policy texts that demands a focus on discrete criteria, objective assessment, and absolute measures for both process and product that inhibit the representation of subject-matter teaching and learning as complex, multifaceted, and non-linear domains in spite of increasing evidence about the social and complex nature of teaching and learning (Cole, 1996; Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wixom, Dutro, & Athan, 2004; Spiro, Coulson, Feltovich, and Anderson, 1988).

### *Contradictions of Accountability*

In fact, it is possible to argue that standards-based accountability

frequently runs counter to and even undermines well-established knowledge about the nature of literacy, teaching, and learning. Based on my own analysis, standards-based reform for literacy and the English language arts tends to operate based on the assumptions listed below. Such assumptions are necessary in order to make accountability a uniform and efficient practice that can be generalized across contexts. The assumptions are as follows:

- a) There is a clear consensus about the purposes of schooling and literacy.
- b) The most significant purpose of school is the acquisition of academic knowledge and skills.
- c) Public school subjects like “English” are equivalent to their disciplinary namesakes at the university academic level.
- d) Learning happens in a linear and predictable fashion.
- e) Learning can be easily measured using objective and standardized tests.
- f) What is taught in a classroom should be equivalent to what students learn.
- g) Literacy is an autonomous and simple technology, and Formal Standard English is a politically neutral language system that serves all students’ needs equally.
- h) There are identifiable “best” practices that apply to teaching all students, in all contexts, at all times.
- i) Schools are equitable social institutions.
- j) Teachers have access to the power they need in order to challenge, resist, and change inequitable conditions.

Although these assumptions are often the foundation of literacy accountability frameworks, these assumptions are demonstrably false if we weigh them against existing research and scholarship in the field of education studies. There is a significant body of literature that has involved research and critique of the above assumptions dating back to the work of John Dewey in the early 20th century (1904/1965). Related in particular to the areas of English, literacy, and English education, it is possible to state the following counterpoints:

- a) Consensus about the purpose of schooling is unlikely (Apple, 1990).
- b) Schools teach much more than just academic knowledge; they also use academic activities to govern student behavior (Popkewitz, 1998, 2002).
- c) The content of school subjects is not always equivalent to the disciplinary knowledge and structures of their university academic namesakes. (For example, public school “English language arts” is not equivalent to university-level “English.”) (Popkewitz, 1998, 2002).
- d) Learning does not always occur in a linear or predictable fashion (Smagorinsky, Cook and Johnson, 2003).
- e) Assessment of student literacy achievement requires multiple formal and informal measures of individual's performance in context (Routman, 2005, Dorman, Rosen, and Wilson, 1997)
- f) What is overtly taught in a classroom in a given year is unlikely to be equivalent to what students learn (Smagorinsky et al., 2003; Lave and Wenger, 1991)
- g) Literacy is neither politically neutral nor a simple matter of coding and

decoding letters on a page (Street, 1984). Further, English is a complex language that changes constantly and includes a number of legitimate dialect variations (Conference on College Composition and Communication, 1974). Further still, schools frequently emphasize and institutionalize the language of middle/upper class white English as “formal” and “standard,” mainstream, dominant, and neutral (Delpit, 1988).

- h) Increasing diversity in US classrooms contradicts the notion of “best” practices for all students (Peterson & Bainbridge, 2002).
- i) Schools are not always equitable places (Anyon, 1981, 1997; Oakes, 1986a, 1986b).
- j) Teachers are only one factor among many that must be considered in education reform. (Cuban, 1993; Tyack & Cuban, 1995)

These two sets of assumptions and counter claims are represented in Tables 1 and 2 below. A comparison of the two raises this question: If we know these things about literacy education and accountability reform, why are we rushing to standardize educational goals and practices in ways that don’t fit our knowledge?

<u>1.</u>	<u>2.</u>	<u>3.</u>	<u>4.</u>	<u>5.</u>
Consensus exists about purposes of school and literacy	Academics are the most significant purpose of school	School knowledge = Academic knowledge	Learning is a linear and predictable process	Learning is easily measured

**Table 1: Assumptions About Literacy and Education in Standards-based Accountability Reform**

<u>6.</u>	<u>7.</u>	<u>8.</u>	<u>9.</u>	<u>10.</u>
Teaching = <i>Learning</i>	Literacy is simple, and standard English is sociopolitically neutral	There are “best” practices	Schools are equitable social institutions	Teachers have power to change schools and Education

**Table 1 (cont’d)**

<u>1.</u>	<u>2.</u>	<u>3.</u>	<u>4.</u>	<u>5.</u>
Consensus about the purposes of school and literacy is unlikely	Schools teach more than academics, and use academics to control behavior	School knowledge is not equivalent to academic/ disciplinary knowledge	Learning is not always linear or predictable	Assessment of student learning requires multiple formal and informal measures of individual’s performance in context
<u>6.</u>	<u>7.</u>	<u>8.</u>	<u>9.</u>	<u>10.</u>
<i>Teaching does not equal learning</i>	Literacy is not neutral or simple; English is a complex and dynamic language; academic contexts of school privilege white middle -class English	Increased diversity in schools contradicts the existence of “best” practices	Schools are not always equitable social institutions	Teachers are only one factor among many in education reform

**Table 2: Research-based Statements About Literacy and Education in the Field of Education Studies**

In part, the rush to standardization can be attributed to the fact that many proponents of standardization (for example, politicians, school board members,

business leaders, parents, etc.) do not read research literature produced in the field of education studies closely or directly, and therefore many of those in invested in educational reform may not be aware of problematic assumptions, understandings, or beliefs they might hold about how education and literacy work. Still another reason may be that proponents of standards-based reform have political agendas and operate from ideological positions that involve a purposeful ignorance or even denial of the existing systematic research and knowledge. As the quotation at the beginning of this chapter reveals, literacy education outsiders may often purposely and completely disregard the input of teachers and university professionals while developing accountability policies that directly influence the ability of such educators to perform their functions.

### *Accountability, Ideologies, and Professional Discourse*

In a recent article, Delandshere and Petrosky (2004) argued that the issue of standards-based accountability reform is ideological; that is, the current rush to standardization reflects a dominant set of perspectives that have become common sense at the policy level but that are incompatible with existing knowledge at the level of professional practice. In addition to the fact that standards have been imposed largely as the result of outside pressure on educational institutions (even when educators participate in the process), education insiders have tended to submit to the process and ask questions like “What standards should we use?” and “How will we implement them?” when they perhaps should have asked “Who decides which standards are accurate and

helpful?”, “Who benefits from different kinds of standards?”, and “What are the consequences of implementing standards?”

Recent history complicates these questions for educators who want to participate in debates about literacy education and accountability. In the early 1990s, English and literacy educators leading the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association were charged by the federal government to create standards for content in the language arts. In agreeing to participate, NCTE and IRA produced a set of standards that attempted to represent the complexity of language arts and literacy learning. The document they produced was a compromise between the task of standardizing a dynamic subject and accommodating the desires of policy makers for an easy means of accountability. The government rejected the NCTE/IRA (1996b) standards because they were “too vague”—meaning too hard to assess with objective testing—and ultimately cut both NCTE and IRA out of curriculum and standards discussions (Wixon, Dutro, and Athan, 2004).

The 1996 NCTE/IRA standards were published, but not formally adopted or sanctioned for use in state or national education policy, even though local institutional programs may choose to use them as an aid in curriculum design. This is the situation we find ourselves in today. As one member of the NCTE Standing Committee on Teacher Preparation noted at their 2003 annual convention, NCTE will be powerless in national accountability conversations unless and until it begins to speak using discourses that lead to a standardized, quantifiable, and easily testable curriculum for all students.



In addition to being excluded from state and federal policy discussions, NCTE has also developed a complicated relationship with the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education—the nation's largest accrediting body for teacher education programs. In collaboration with NCATE, the NCTE developed performance standards that will be used for the accounting of university programs of English Education (NCTE/NCATE, 2003). Schools are asked to review NCTE's *Guidelines* as a prerequisite for accreditation review, making the voluntary "guidelines" function as de facto standards—an application of the Guidelines that runs counter to what Vinz (1997) notes was the particular strength of labeling the policies as "guidelines." NCTE has been distinctly uncomfortable about its relationship with NCATE, because its experience has led to the appropriation of professionally designed performance standards instead of a collaborative relationship with accrediting bodies. Given NCATE's relationships with for-profit organizations such as the Educational Testing Service, NCTE may be right to feel uncomfortable. They have had their work co-opted in the interest of practices that take authority for the governance of English education out of their hands and place it in the hands of those seeking to profit from the standardized testing movement.

The complicated inter-relation of assumptions for accountability reform and scholarship about the nature of literacy and English education raises a number of important questions about the discursive functions of a text like the 1996 NCTE *Guidelines*. First, how do professional guidelines for English language arts teacher preparation represent the English language arts, literacy,

and teacher education? Second, what are the consequences of these representations given developing knowledge about literacy and education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? And third, how might English teachers and teacher educators manage their discursive practices in ways that increase their ability to achieve goals and support equitable practices in public contexts, while accommodating the perceived need for accountability measures?

These questions are all important to answer if professional teaching organizations like NCTE intend to gain access to and influence in discussions about educational policy at the state and national levels. As of now, our largest and most powerful professional teaching organizations are not participants in the reform movement as a result of conflicting ideological positions. Instead, their fate is being determined by others.

#### *Purpose, Site of Study, and Significance*

What follows is a critical analysis of the National Council of Teachers of English's teacher education policies and their implications for curricula in both teacher education and K-12 schooling. This study is undertaken with the assumption that any satisfactory and effective reform of English language arts, teacher education, or of literacy education in the United States ought to include and in fact be led by those professionals who will deliver and administer the instruction—those who create, develop, and refine the knowledge of the field: English teachers at the K-12 levels, literacy teachers, teacher educators, and researchers in university contexts. Without these groups' participation, no reform

is likely to be adequate, accurate, or sustainable. As such, these groups constitute the primary audiences for this work, particularly teacher educators interested in curriculum design and both literacy and English language arts teachers who are interested in an alternative conception of their subject areas that may help increase their professional agency.

A study such as this one is significant because the discourses of accountability used at the national and state levels appear to increasingly restrict what counts as “English” in our schools, what counts as “literacy” in our lives, and what counts as good teaching in our classrooms. By examining a set of standards designed and written by English language arts teachers and teacher educators in a context of standardization, it may be possible to demonstrate how insider discourses of English and literacy education are interacting with outsider discourses of accountability so that educators can begin the work of controlling and shaping both professional and public discourses about the work they do.

In order to understand the kinds of interaction described above, this study examines the National Council of Teachers of English’s work around standards, guidelines, and curriculum development for the preparation of English teachers. Secondary English language arts constitutes one of the major sites of literacy and language instruction in K-12 education, and its roles in the culmination of K-12 education and the transition to higher education make it a key site for research on educational reform. As producers of the teachers who work in secondary contexts, it is important and worthwhile to study the policies that help govern English language arts teacher education programs. Moreover, NCTE’s

*1996 Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of the English Language Arts* is a text created by a committee whose members included an exclusive combination of university English teacher educators and English language arts classroom teachers. By examining standards for English teacher preparation developed by a committee of professional insiders, this study seeks to understand how discourses and curricula in English education might affect or be affected by discourses related to literacy, language arts, and accountability policy in the larger sociopolitical context of literacy education and reform.

The purpose of this study is not to argue that standards are the boogeyman, waiting in the dark beneath our collective bed with tentacles uncoiling to clutch our legs and drag us off to Reform Hell. Instead, the intention is to create a space for critical discourse around the problem of standardization for literacy and English teacher preparation programs, and thereby open the way to changing, broadening, and balancing our professional discourses and our engagement in the processes of reform. This study is based on the belief that guidelines and standards for literacy teaching have far-reaching effects on the order of discourse in English education (Fairclough, 1995); that is, standards, guidelines, and other policy texts function to legitimize certain ways of talking, thinking, and acting as professional teachers. Given that standards and policy are often presented as neutral products of consensus about what is “best,” they are extremely powerful, frequently exclusive, and often subtle in the ways they shape thought, values, and behavior.

The following describes the plan and rationale for a critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995) of the National Council of Teachers of English's *Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of the English Language Arts* (1996a) and the ways that text represents discourses of English language arts and English education. Critical discourse analysis, which I will discuss in Chapter 4, involves textual analysis designed to uncover ideologies in social groups, using a blend of neomarxist and poststructural concepts of discourse. The central questions of this study are:

1. How do the 1996 NCTE *Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of the English Language Arts* represent discourses of English language arts and English teacher education?
  - a. Which topics and themes are included in NCTE's vision for curriculum and instruction, and which are excluded?
  - b. What rationales are used to justify these representations?
  - c. Who is represented in this policy text, and who is not?
  - d. How are people, groups, and practices represented, and with what effects?
2. What discursive processes operate in NCTE's *Guidelines* as a policy text?
  - a. What beliefs, values, activities, and ways of knowing are included in and excluded by these guidelines?
  - b. Who is advantaged and disadvantaged by that text's inclusions/exclusions?

- c. How do discursive processes related to the NCTE Guidelines affect power relations in literacy, English language arts, and English teacher education contexts?
- 3. What are the potential consequences of the NCTE *Guidelines*' representation of literacy, English language arts, and English teacher education curricula in light of A) continuing research and developing knowledge in The New Literacy Studies (Street, 1984), English language arts, and teacher education, and B) national accountability movements related to literacy, teacher training, and student achievement?
  - a. What is the relationship, if any, between discourses of accountability and discourses in the 1996 NCTE *Guidelines*?
  - b. How do the processes and structures involved with accountability, if present in the *Guidelines*, affect literacy and English educators' discourses?
- 4. What alternatives, if any, exist that might aid in the formation of effective, inclusive, and relevant curriculum and policy for literacy and English language arts education?
  - a. What alternatives and considerations should be involved around discussions of accountability in English education?

I begin addressing these questions in Chapter 2 by synthesizing reviews of the literature in four areas:

1. The New Literacy Studies

2. The history of NCTE and the teaching of English
3. Standards-based reform in the English language arts
4. Ethical and technological liberal frames for accountability

This review (Chapter 2) focuses primarily on scholarship about the changing nature of literacy in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries from the perspective of the New Literacy Studies (Street, 1993; New London Group, 2000; Lankshear & Knoble, 2003; Gee, 1996), the history of English as a school subject and the development of the National Council of Teachers of English, and an analysis of accountability theory (Kuchapski, 2002). The purpose of these reviews is to represent the sociocultural and sociopolitical context for the textual analysis that constitutes the main focus of this study. Following Chapter 2, I use Chapter 3 to discuss the methodology of this dissertation study, including the nature of critical discourse analysis theory and its function in activist scholarship, the analysis of ideologies, the creation of spaces for difference, and the development of counter-hegemonies. In Chapter 4, I discuss the methods used to complete this research project, including a re-statement of the research questions, a description of data selection, transcription, and coding processes, and a discussion of the analysis used to develop findings. To close Chapter 4, I discuss my framing of this study and my situated position as an English teacher, English teacher educator, and literacy researcher who is a member of the National Council of Teachers of English. Chapter 5 offers a descriptive analysis of the 1996 NCTE Guidelines, followed by discussions of the social actors represented in the text. Chapter 6 traces the use of language in the Guidelines and highlights patterns in the use of

terms central to literacy curricula, while Chapter 7 illustrates the ways in which the Guidelines' use of "the effective teacher" as a central construct, its explicit intention to accommodate the discursive requirements of the national accountability movement, and its deployment of technological and ethical liberal philosophies function ideologically to produce a potentially inequitable framework for teaching literacy. The study concludes in Chapter 8 with a discussion of the findings from Chapters 5, 6, and 7, and traces their implications for curriculum design and professional activity in both the National Council of Teachers of English and the field of literacy and English language arts in general.

Throughout this study, I will refer to English teacher educators and English language arts teachers in a variety of ways. Across elementary, middle, and secondary school contexts, I consider all English language arts teachers to be teachers of literacy; that is, this group of teachers may be considered as the primary group that has traditionally been viewed as responsible for teaching children about language, reading, writing, speaking, and so on. Because of this, I frequently refer to English language arts teachers as "literacy teachers." In addition, readers may notice that I use the following terms interchangeably: "teacher," "English teacher," "language arts teacher," and "language arts educator." At the level of teacher education, I also use the following additional terms interchangeably: "teacher educator," "English educator," and "language arts teacher educator." Finally, I occasionally refer to all of these categorizations collectively as "literacy educators" and/or "educators." Others in the field make distinctions among these various labels, for example labeling elementary



teachers as “reading teachers,” middle-level teachers as “language arts teachers,” and secondary teachers as “English teachers.” I also acknowledge that teachers across all subject areas ought to consider themselves teachers of literacy; that is, reading and writing occur in all school subjects, and as such all teachers should consider themselves teachers of reading and writing. However, in the context of this discussion and this study of English language arts teacher preparation guidelines, I do not find such distinctions useful. Instead, my use of these various labels is frequently simply an issue of style, and where necessary I have attempted to provide context in order to clarify when my use of a term is dependent on teaching level or context.

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Right now, there are changes afoot in the field of literacy, and the implications of these changes for language arts curricula are important for literacy educators to consider—especially if they are involved with the preparation of teachers. New knowledge about the nature of literacy and the literate activities of young people is emerging at a time when school accountability movements are working feverishly to narrow and assess curriculum, pedagogy, and student learning in literacy. In addition to this set of conflicts, the idea that young people today think, read, and communicate differently from their parents often meets with hostility and cries for the protection of traditional print skills and activities that older generations value.

To illustrate the flavor of these cries further, Dana Joya, president of the National Endowment for the Arts, recently toured the country with a Chicken Little routine about “the reading crisis” in the United States (The Diane Rehm Show, National Public Radio, 9/7/2004). Specifically, Joya used national data on declining rates of literary (print) reading to argue that Americans were consuming (and therefore producing) less art. Additionally, Joya connected declines in print reading to declines in “civic participation.” Essentially, Joya argued that low democratic participation is a function of low literacy. Claiming that reading literature provides individuals with “pleasure, consolation, and wisdom,” Joya made a number of implicitly disparaging remarks about the proliferation of video games, television, the Internet, and other digital/electronic media. In his high culture/low culture rhetoric, digital media were represented as “entertainment,” “distractions,” and “passive activities” in opposition to the “active,” “pleasurable,” and intellectually/ethically/civically superior qualities of reading printed “literature.” This is not a new argument, but it is one that is increasingly troubling and problematic in deliberations about literacy curriculum and instruction.

Over the last 20 years, a growing number of researchers, theorists, and cultural commentators have begun to remark on and study literacy activities beyond the realm of traditional print. Many of these inquiries are particularly tied to technological advancements in computers and digital media, while other activities have been described in the realm of “popular culture” (Alvermann, 2002; New London Group, 2000; Fiske, 1989). One example currently gaining prominence in literacy studies is the function of video games in the cognitive and

social activities of young people as they acquire literacy (Cole, 1996; Gee, 2003); where, if anywhere, do video games fit in the scheme of “literacy” education? While Joya and my teacher friend at the mechanic’s garage, for example, acknowledge that video games are popular and widely used by young people, they argue that the form and function of those games makes them inappropriate for school learning and inferior to the “active reading” of printed literary texts, even though video games today often involve complex narrative lines, require the active participation of the user (or “reader”), and feature their own elements of “style” and “grammar” that convey sophisticated semiotic messages. Joya’s commentary underscores a rift between “high” and “low” culture when it comes to literacy instruction in schools, and the beliefs of the teacher I encountered at my mechanic’s garage illustrate how a traditional approach to literacy reinforces Joya’s artificial split. New literacy practices appear to be rejected on the grounds of everything from academic rigor to aesthetics to morality.

This divide between “old” knowledge and “new” knowledge about literacy is important, not least because of its implication of differing ideological systems competing in our education system and particularly in terms of how people conceive of “literacy.” Still, it is very important to stress that even students who may be classified as members of what Tapscott (1997) has called the “Net Generation” still engage in a wide range of print-based reading and writing activities. Web-pages contain large amounts of print, and video games may utilize print extensively, too.

Although literacy is clearly expanding as a domain, it might be more appropriate to say that literacy is becoming a multi-layered domain. Literacy still requires the teaching of alphabetic coding and decoding skills; however, these skills are no longer always sufficient by themselves. Moreover, if we seek to help students acquire print literacy skills, it will be necessary for teachers to understand how students today engage print differently than is traditionally conceived. In order to make the teaching and learning of print literacy relevant to students in the Net Generation, it will be necessary to fold the academic use of print into a pedagogy of multiliteracies that provides today's students with a more authentic spaces in which such skills will be seen as important to their interests and literate activities in everyday life. The printed book may longer be able to stand as the center of literacy curricula. But that doesn't mean that print literacy is no longer important for us to teach in schools, or that children should no longer learn to read novels, for example.

In addition to the important recognition that print literacy is most certainly still relevant to literacy education, it is also necessary to point out that the current shifts we are experiencing in our society's literate practices and technologies do not constitute a particularly "new" phenomenon. This is not the first time that the world has experienced a literacy "revolution." The current generation is not the first to witness an advancing technology as it actively transformed what it means to be literate. Literacies are always new and changing, and they are always defined in terms of the requirements for using the latest communications technologies. As Morrell (E. Morrell, personal communication, July 2, 2005) has

commented, "It is important to contextualize our literacy revolution within a history of literacy revolutions."

But today, young people really do read fewer printed texts than they ever did before. They really do spend more time playing video games, surfing the Internet, and instant messaging their friends. They really do have attention spans that are tuned for the rapid consumption of modern media rather than traditional print texts. Their activities constitute a real and significantly different literacy environment. Schools, and specifically literacy curricula, need to be adjusted so that they teach the relevant skills that young people need to navigate these new literacy environments. At the same time, our society's communications systems really are still dominated by and founded on print literacy. And, in the current context of school accountability and standards, teachers are being held directly responsible for making sure that curricula focus on the basic instruction of print literacy skills.

One of the maxims of school teaching is that people tend to teach as they were taught (Lortie, 1975; Grossman, 1990; Marshall, Smith, & Schaafsma, 1997; Cuban, 1993; Jackson, 1968). In a limited way this makes sense. It makes some sense to believe that children today need to learn the skills for literate practices that dominate the current social context of the parents' generation. However, there is a danger in taking this position that the concept of literacy will become frozen and monolithic. Recent scholarship demonstrates how literacy is diverse and fluid in concept and function, and points out the

dangers of assuming that A) literacy learning is universal and sequential and B) our children experience the same literate world as we perceive ourselves.

In spite of these dangers, current language arts curricula and teaching guidelines are based on the belief that print literacy is the central goal of English as a school subject, and that achievement of literacy should be measured using large scale standardized assessments. Given that this is the case, a number of complicated challenges are arising in the field of English education. What do teachers need to know and do in order to be skillful in teaching children literacy and the language arts? As today's young people move more and more towards new information economies, digital media delivery systems, and new attention economies that merge print with other semiotic systems, how are traditional approaches to language arts curricula and assessment relevant to their literate lives? And, as the actual literacy practices of young people continue to expand away from traditional print literacy, what are the consequences of current accountability measures? How, if at all, do accountability measures account for new knowledge about literacy and learning? Finally, how do the discourses of accountability interact with attempts to deal with new knowledge about literacy?

To address these kinds of questions, I begin by reviewing a branch of research that has come to be referred to as the "New Literacy Studies."

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

*“Becoming Something Other”:*

*New Literacies, Old English, Accountability,  
and the National Council of Teachers of English*

Traditional and new media literacies are intimately connected. It is not as though print-based literacies suddenly ceased to be relevant. To the contrary, the cognitive and strategic skills used to decode and encode language in symbolic systems have continued to be central in “new” literacy practices. Hypermedia and multimedia texts, like print-only texts, are founded on the same linguistic and symbolic systems; for example, reading hypermedia texts composed in English and reading printed novels written in English both require that the reader is able to decode alphabetic symbols, follow English syntax, and make meaning from the linguistic units they see on the screen or the page.

It is also important to recognize that many strategies that now dominate hypermedia texts—nonlinear reading, skipping ahead, re-reading, reading overlapping texts simultaneously, and so forth—are also used in print-based reading, especially as elements of metacognitive processes that fluent readers use to gauge understanding and foster engagement and intertextual meaning making toward improved comprehension (Pressley, 2002). It is tempting to overstate the “newness” of New Literacies in modern society, but it is important to remember that the ongoing literacy revolution does not involve the aggressive overthrow of “orthodox” reading skills in favor of some new and radically different

skill set that then comes to be defined as “literacy” to the exclusion of what has come before.

But although the literate practices of students in schools today may have much in common with the practices of their teachers and parents, it is a mistake to assume that all other things are also equal. While the skills of “traditional” literacy are still relevant and even central for reading instruction in schools, it has long been posited that these skills cannot function autonomously. As Street (1984) has described, “autonomous” models of literacy are based on the assumptions that A) the skills involved with literacy—defined as the ability to read and write—are clearly bounded, cognitive, universal, and neutral, and B) this autonomous brand of literacy is sufficient in itself to empower individuals; that is, when one learns to read—regardless of any other social, cultural, economic, and political factors—one will be able to gain access to greater opportunities, knowledge, social advancement, and social equity simply by virtue of being able to read. However, Street argues, literacy has never been actually autonomous either as a discrete skill set or as a means of social empowerment. Rather, literacy is and always has been ideological; it operates in and on power relations in social systems, and is culturally defined and determined. Access to literacy is frequently limited, and strongly tied to economic conditions, race, social class, gender, geography, dialect, and numerous other contextual social factors. As such, literacy is not and has never been neutral. And although there has been some evidence that literacy acquisition may lead to greater empowerment and



access to opportunity, this is not always the case, and does not occur neutrally or without potentially inequitable or even oppressive consequences.

Scholarship on the nature of literacy as an ideological apparatus has been generated for at least the past forty years; however, autonomous models of literacy have continued to dominate social conceptions of literacy, and are pervasive in school curricula and policy texts and conversations. The advent of hypermedia technologies and the new literate practices that accompany them has begun to raise serious questions about access even in the context of literacy as an autonomous concept. Given the computer-based nature of new literacies, there are significant economic considerations that educators must account for in curriculum design for literacy instruction, certainly. But the new literacies that have emerged with hypermedia and new technologies have also had a significant impact on the ways in which literacy is being used in society today. It may be true that there has never been much agreement about what “literacy” is or what it means, but the new technologies evolving right now have resulted in dramatic shifts in the kinds of texts students are reading and the kinds of activities they engage in where literacy plays a key role. These technologies have contributed to shifts in the ways young people attend to and process information, the ways they engage different kinds of literate tasks, the ways they determine relevance, and, significantly, the ways they do *not* do these things. Where most of their teachers continue to emphasize the reading of print-based literature and extended linear printed texts along with traditional academic writing genres, young people today have begun to move away from, through, and beyond those

literate practices toward engagement with texts and practices that are not consonant with the academic literacy practices usually emphasized in schools. The result, at the least, has been a crisis of relevance for literacy instruction—and therefore English language arts curricula—in schools today. As Alvermann (2001) has argued, what we have is not the displacement of traditional literacy practices, or a decrease in the literate capacities of today's young people; rather, she reframes the "crisis" to point out that contemporary society is experiencing a rapid increase in literate demands. Young people today are more literate than ever as a group, but they are entering into a professional and civic arena couched in social, cultural, and economic structural systems where advanced literacy skills are needed more than ever and require more than attention to the academic literacy practices traditionally taught in schools.

As I asked in the conclusion of Chapter 1, what do teachers need to know and do in order to be skillful in teaching children literacy and the language arts today? As today's young people move more and more towards new information economies, digital media delivery systems, and new attention economies that merge print with other semiotic systems, how are traditional approaches to language arts curricula and assessment relevant to their literate lives? And, as the actual literacy practices of young people continue to expand away from traditional print literacy practices, what are the consequences of current accountability measures?

The following series of interconnected literature reviews is intended to begin addressing these questions. I begin with a more detailed discussion of

what have been labeled the “New Literacy Studies,” leading into a review of the history of English as a school subject and the development of the National Council of Teachers of English. These reviews attempt to account for the historical foundations of current ideological positions operating in the discourses of English language arts and literacy teaching today. The chapter continues with a review of standards and accountability in the English language arts, and concludes with a discussion of the accountability theories used in this study. I begin with a review of scholarship in the New Literacy Studies.

### *New Literacies*

*“We have trouble conceiving that we could become something other than what we are today” (Bruce, 2002, p. 15).*

Ask a fifteen-year-old kid if he’s read any good books lately, and you might not be surprised to find out that he only cracks a book when forced at gunpoint by a teacher with a grade book and a bazooka. Recent studies have shown that, although functional literacy is at an all-time high in the United States, book reading is at an all-time low. For many Americans, and particularly many English teachers, this is believed to constitute a problem of epic proportions. This is not a new idea, and certainly many English teachers embrace it because they value book reading highly as a central activity of their professional and personal lives. In fact, the National Council of Teachers of English insisted less than ten years ago that literature *must* be maintained as the core of its language arts curriculum guidelines for both teachers and students because of its perceived value in

communicating social values and critical thinking skills (1996a). The decision to do so frames literacy education in English classrooms as a project centered on print literacy and oriented to the teaching of basic decoding skills, morals, and aesthetic appreciation. But literacy has changed dramatically in the last thirty years, and our understanding of literacy issues has grown, while “[l]iteracy pedagogy...has been a carefully restricted project—restricted to formalized, monolingual, monocultural, and rule-governed forms of language” (New London Group, 2000, p. 9).

Since the 1970’s, researchers, theorists, and cultural commentators have begun to focus on literacy issues related to technological advancements in computers and digital media. Others have explored literacies in the realm of popular culture, for example, studying the functions of sports or hip-hop music in the meaning-making literate activities of young people (Dyson, 2001; Morrell, 2004). Still others have studied the ways in which community memberships, racial and ethnic backgrounds, class relations, and geographical dialects all interact to influence children’s relative literacy skills and understandings (Moll & Gonzales, 2001; Purcell-Gates, 2001; Heath, 1983). Collectively, these investigations, focused on the sociocultural nature of literacy, have contributed to discussions of a “new” conception of *literacies* that remains mostly unaccounted for in our nation’s public school curricula. English language arts curricula have in some ways recognized that the subject has changed—that technology and increased cultural diversity, in particular, have complicated the work of teaching children the skills they need to be literate citizens. But in general, education

policy related to the language arts and literacy has failed to deal with the reality of “new literacy.” Our curricula do not reflect the literate practices of the children we are purporting to teach.

### *Expanding “Literacy”*

It may be true that many people—especially many *young* people—are reading fewer print books today than they used to read. However, it does not necessarily follow logically that they are less literate than older generations because they read fewer books, or that their lack of traditional reading has caused a decline in political awareness, creativity, or civic participation. As the Fresh Prince (DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince, 1988) once rapped, we might say that, “parents just don’t understand” what kids are up to today.

In terms of surface activities alone, the literate practices of young people today are *different* from, and not inferior to, the literate activities of their parents. I don’t wish to argue that young people should not learn the basic skills of reading and writing. They should. However, I do wish to argue that young people read differently. They undertake literate practices differently because the array of technologies, texts, and text formats in today’s culture are different than they were even a decade ago. One prominent example of these differences has to do with the proliferation of hypermedia and multimedia technology.

Reading on the Internet is different from reading a printed page. On the Internet, text appears on the screen much as it would appear on a printed page, but the text is more fluid and the reader has much more control over how the text

is received and processed; that is, the reader gets to choose what order to read the document in, and has a number of “hyperlinks” (highlighted words or icons that take the reader to other pages and websites that might be external to the text originally accessed) that s/he can click on in order to pursue information. In other words, where traditional print reading is (mostly) linear and author-centered, hypertext reading is not. While hypertext *can* be engaged linearly, this is only one way. It is also possible, and sometimes desirable, to access one document, read the first section, click on a hyperlink that leads to another document, read a paragraph from the middle of that text, and then take another hyperlink and another, and another until you are far from the text you originally accessed to read. This would be absurd in the mode of traditional reading, where one is usually expected to read a text from beginning to end in order to fully understand the meaning and intention of the *author*. But in hypertext reading, the *reader* has the freedom to make meaning out of a range of interconnected texts, in many ways blurring the distinctions between authoring and reading. While Barthes (1977) may have argued that the concept of a single “author” for any text died more than fifty years ago, the advent of hypermedia communications technology has placed more control than ever in the hands and head of the reader.

People who were socialized in a world of traditional print may see the process of reading hypertext as too messy and intuitive, and in some key ways hypertext reading *is* a radical departure from sitting down and reading a novel beginning with “Chapter 1.” In a study of the effects of hypertext on processes of

reading and writing, Charney notes that hypertext “violates standard assumptions of what texts are like” (2002, p. 93). From a traditional print perspective, Charney also writes that, “The belief that readers can select for themselves which links in a network to follow rests on the assumption that readers know best what information they need and in what order they should read it” (p. 87) and that “[h]ypertexts, by shifting a large portion of [the organizing] burden to the reader, by proliferating the readers’ choices about what portions of a text to read and in what order, compound the difficulties of creating a coherent mental representation” (p. 91).

For someone who grew up reading books, then, hypertext can present difficulties and may seem inappropriate or uncomfortable. But for a young girl who has grown up reading hypertext, there is no problem at all—it’s just the way reading is. Young people today have grown up with cell phones, pagers, and instant text messaging as things they take for granted. “Texting” alone—the practice of sending text messages peer-peer via cellphone—has evolved its own complex symbol systems by using a mix of symbols that allow for abbreviated conversations suitable for the small screens of cell phones. Access to video technology is now commonplace in public spaces; access to computers and the Internet is widespread in the middle and upper classes. Both of these changes have resulted in the easy integration of image, text, and sound in both public and private spaces. Even in contexts where computer technology is not so readily accessible, for example in impoverished urban and rural environments, young people are influenced by the popular culture and mass media they consume.

Broadcast media—television, music, film, and radio—have responded to technological advancements by incorporating multimedia displays so that video, audio, and text are blended together in formats that capitalize on rapid shifts in attention. Radio stations now broadcast on the Internet and supplement their audio broadcasts with links to all sorts of resources that can enhance the experience of the “user” (who used to be just a “listener”). Television programs (for example news programs) employ a broad array of banners, scrolling headlines, graphics, sound, and commentary in a 24-hour up-to-the-minute format that requires the viewer to interpret a vast amount of information simultaneously and to cope with constant shifts in topic. Musical genres like hiphop constitute new uses of literacy by presenting lyrics that are often improvised, that often communicate political messages and social commentary, and that are often not written down at all. This is not your father’s Oldsmobile. It’s your grandbaby’s hybrid SUV.

### *What Is “New” Literacy?*

In addition to thinking about changes in literacy *practices*, it is also important to consider how *understandings* of literacy have changed beyond the advent of media technologies to constitute a “new” literacy. Although acquiring technological literacies is crucial, changes in our institutional structures and economy don’t necessarily involve using those new technologies, at least not foremost (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003). In addition to the acceleration and proliferation of media, understanding literacy includes the need to recognize



literacy as social and ideological. Considerable efforts have been made to understand literacy as more than a functional technology, more than “just” a tool. Many have also theorized that a “new” conception of literacy is necessary in order to deal with large-scale economic, social, and institutional changes in our society.

Since the 1970's, economic shifts toward globalization have changed the nature of public and private life—particularly as related to work—and in many ways these changes involve changes in the use of language. According to Lankshear and Knobel, “...with a new work life comes a new language, with much of it attributable to new technologies like ‘iconographic’, text, and screen-based modes of interacting with automated machinery and to changes in the social relations of work (Kalantzis and Cope, 1996: 5; see also Cope and Kalantzis, 1999)” (2003, p. 12). These social changes include what might be called a “flattening” of corporate hierarchies that appears to empower workers by placing them in cooperative “teams” that are encouraged to innovate and share. Flattening hierarchies has changed social relations in the workplace, but many argue that the nature of power in the workplace is still oppressive; for example, it could be argued that the developing corporate practice of “teaming” workers is one means of increasing the responsibility of individual workers without giving them any real power or authority. In the shift to cooperative work teams, workers are required to develop new skills, especially communication and literacy competencies, and they are expected to be more productive and adaptive, but their position in corporate structure may be weakened. Lankshear and Knobel

point out that “[t]his new work life can be even more highly exploitative and unjust than its predecessor,” (p. 12) via its manipulations of language.

In developing their concept of “multiliteracies” (an approach that attempts to characterize literacy as a blend of technical and social competencies related to multiple modes of communication), the New London Group (2000) has expressed grave concerns about the nature of language use in the “fast capitalism” that is driving the current neoliberal movement towards global market economies. They characterize these changes as a “nightmare,” stating,

Corporate cultures and their discourses of familiarity are frequently more subtly and more rigorously exclusive than the most nasty—honestly nasty—of hierarchies.... And fast capitalism, notwithstanding its discourse of collaboration, culture, and shared values, is also a vicious world driven by the barely restrained market. (2000, 12)

In addition to its examination of corporate discourses in fast capitalism, the New London Group notes other changes that have increased the necessity of expanded literacy skills in our society. They remark that the culture of interventionist welfare states is being reversed, that citizenship and public space have been reduced and replaced by consumerism, and that schools and universities are being deregulated and privatized as markets. They point out that many changes in language use involve an institutionally motivated simulation of conversational language that can be regarded as

cynical, manipulative, invasive, and exploitative, as discourses of private life and community are appropriated to serve commercial and institutional ends. This is a process...that in part destroys the autonomy of private and community lifeworlds. The challenge is to make space available so that different lifeworlds can flourish. (16)

Given the magnitude of these shifts in our society, researchers and educators have called for a re-vision of literacy education that accounts for such changes. According to Lankshear and Knobel (2003), the idea of “literacy” has changed in four ways since the 1970’s, although educational policies and standards have not kept pace. In their book, *New Literacies*, they trace the historical development of literacy as an educational concept from its initial reference to the mere decoding and encoding of printed text. The first shift in conceptions of literacy comes from Paulo Freire in the 1960’s and 1970’s, whose work with South American peasants led to the conception of literacy as a political project for “critical social praxis” in oppressed populations—learning to use language to resist oppression in a cyclical and reflexive process of reflection and action against social and political institutions in everyday life. The second shift came with the perceived literacy crisis of the 1970’s, when another restructuring of the labor market and widespread institutional changes began to be tied with demands for greater communication competencies, especially the abilities to read and write. At the time, this crisis led to calls for more large-scale standardized testing and a focus on basic literacy skills, a pattern that persists today as literacy becomes an increasingly central target in accountability reforms. The third shift came when many researchers began to develop a sociocultural perspective on literacy—a range of approaches that viewed reading and writing not simply as matters of cognitive processing and technical skill but also of social construction and cultural variation that can be summed up in James Gee’s assertion that literacies “can only be understood when they are situated within

their social, cultural, and historical contexts” (Gee et al. 1996: xii). Lankshear

and Knobel write that,

From a sociocultural perspective, it is impossible to separate out from text-mediated social practices the ‘bits’ concerned with reading or writing (or any other sense of ‘literacy’) and to treat them independently of all the ‘non-print’ bits, like values and gestures, context and meaning, actions and objects, talk and interaction, tools and spaces. They are all non-subtractable parts of integrated wholes. (8)

*Fourth*, with the sociocultural shift in literacy research, it was further recognized *that if* literacy was not just a matter of cognition—if it included social activity, *values*, cultural artifacts, and activity systems, then it was also, ultimately, always *ideological* (Street, 1994).

Lankshear and Knobel summarize the shift toward “new” literacy by *characterizing* its meaning in paradigmatic and ontological senses. They write *that the* change, in a paradigmatic sense, “occurs in talk of the New Literacy *Studies* (Street, 1993; Gee, 1996, 2000) to refer to a specific sociocultural *approach*.... In all such cases, the proponents think of their project as *comprising* a new and different paradigm relative to an existing orthodoxy or *dominant* approach” (2003, p. 16). In other words, “new literacies” exist because *researchers* in the field say so and are developing a body of literature to support *their* claims. However, these researchers also describe the ontological sense of *change* in literacy as referring to the idea that

changes have occurred in the character and substances of literacies associated with changes in technology, institutions, media, the economy, and the rapid movement toward global scale in manufacture, finance, communications, and so on. These changes have impacted on social practices in all the main areas of everyday life within modern societies: in work, at leisure, in the home, in education, in the community, and in the public sphere. Established social practices have emerged and continue to

emerge at a rapid rate.... In this ontological sense, the category of 'new literacies' largely covers what are often referred to as 'post-typographic' forms of textual practice. These include using and constructing hyperlinks between documents and/or images, sounds, movies, semiotic languages [...], manipulating a mouse to move around within a text, reading file extensions and identifying what software will 'read' each file, producing 'non-linear' texts, navigating three-dimensional worlds online and so on. (16-17)

Having characterized the nature of new literacy, I turn next to the relationship between literacy and the English language arts—the field and school subject where literacy skills are most widely taught. Although it may be the case that “English” classes are the main sites of literacy instruction in secondary school settings, the school subject called English is not primarily characterized by a focus on literacy instruction, even in terms of attention to the development of print-based reading skills. Rather, English language arts instruction, particularly in secondary school settings, has traditionally been characterized by a focus on literary studies, supported by instruction in traditional genres for written response to and criticism of literary texts. Given the shifting nature of literacy in contemporary society, it is useful to explore the ways in which English language arts and literacy might interact (or not).

### *New Literacy in the English Language Arts*

Although there has been a significant effort to understand literacy in contemporary society, and although “English” is the school subject where students are thought to learn and practice reading and writing skills, most of the research and theorizing on literacy has come from outside of the English language arts. The majority of such scholarship has been conducted by

linguists, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, and cultural theorists, only some of whom are directly involved with literacy education; English education, as I will detail below, has approached literacy issues from a different perspective, one that remains caught up in a traditional literary (and therefore print-based) mode. However, in American schools, English language arts is the subject most concerned with literacy, and any discussion of literacy instruction must eventually deal with the concerns of English education. Indeed, the shift in meanings of *literacy* toward sociocultural perspectives requires that English educators look closely at the ways in which English teachers are prepared to teach the subject. As Carmen Luke has suggested, “What better site to *begin* developing new frameworks for knowledge and critical literacy than in teacher education?” (2000, p. 425, cited in Lewis and Finders, 2002, p. 107, italics added).

According to Alan Luke (2004), English education and language arts curricula need to face the problem of accounting for New Literacies. He points out, however, that doing so is not a simple matter. English, as a discipline and as a school subject, has a complex history and constitutes a highly contested space in our society. There are serious disagreements in the field about how to identify English studies which can be summed up (though oversimplified) by a division between traditionalists, who wish to structure English as a clearly defined “discipline” with a rule-based approach to language and an aesthetic-based approach to reading literature, and reformists, who see English as a very broad project that should be oriented around the concept of literacy rather than founded on fabricated disciplinary roots. Luke suggests that it is possible for English to

have it both ways by adjusting its orientation to include new visions of literacy.

He writes,

First...the future of English as field and curricular practice depends less upon a sovereign host discipline, and more on changing sociologies, economies, and demographics of English speaking and learning communities, and our travels as teachers and English speakers across and through them. Second...to respond to these new material and discourse conditions, we need to reassemble the field from a host of disciplinary knowledges and epistemological stances. This includes varied kinds of linguistics, English and other literatures, but also, broadly conceived, cultural studies, sociology (and perhaps economics and geography), semiotics, multiliteracies, and other work in media and communications studies. Third...we can then return to the question of pedagogy with a much stronger teleological sense of the purposes and consequences of English for students, for populations, for communities, and for nations—for communication and exchange, for power and knowledge. This needn't mean a discarding of literary theory, aesthetic theory, language acquisition theory, and so forth (which we may need now more than ever), but a reframing of them as part of a trans-disciplinary response to new contexts and conditions.... [Without these adjustments], we risk becoming a profession involved in the systematic production and distribution of particular brands of linguistic capital, without an ongoing critical appraisal of the force and consequences of our actions. (2004, 87)

As Luke concludes, "'English' can no longer be equated with a national language teaching" (2004, p. 92). What he and other educators are beginning to recommend involves the re-casting of English language arts curriculum so that it includes "a renewed sense of the purposes and consequences, powers and practices of English, of the intellectual, ideological, and moral force of all forms of representation and equally, a strong sense of 'English' as language, as mode of information, as a multifaceted and ambivalent cultural force within and across the practices and technologies of economic and cultural globalization" (p. 94). The New London Group echoes Luke's vision of English language arts as literacy instruction, stating that the goal of their multiliteracies perspective is

to extend the idea and scope of literacy pedagogy to account for the context of our culturally and linguistically diverse and increasingly globalized societies; to account for the multifarious cultures that interrelate and the plurality of texts that circulate. Second, we argue that literacy pedagogy now must account for the burgeoning variety of text forms associated with information and multimedia technologies. (2000, 9)

This shift in perspective on English language arts curricula flies in the face of current movements to standardize the English language arts in particular, and to standardize school accountability systems in general. At a time when federal and state policies are forcing English teachers to narrow their curricula and focus on easily testable and quantifiable skills associated with traditional print literacy, literacy researchers and theorists are producing new knowledge which indicates that such standardization misrepresents the nature of language and language education in serious ways. For the literacy educators who attend to expanding knowledge about literacy, current accountability measures are extremely negative. Standardization, they argue, precludes the kind of ongoing critical dialogue and reflection about literacy curricula that is essential if schools are to help students understand the constantly evolving nature and context of literacy in English speaking countries. For the New London Group, "There can be no standard, only negotiation" (2000, p. 15). They call for states to be strong supporters of education without imposing standards; instead, they argue that states should be strong

as neutral arbiters of difference.... Instead of core culture and national standards, the realm of the civic is a space for the negotiation of a different sort of social order; an order where differences are actively recognized; where these differences are negotiated in such a way that they complement each other; and where people have the charge to expand their cultural and linguistic repertoires so that they can access a



broader range of cultural and institutional resources. (Cope and Kalantzis 1997, cited in New London Group, 15)

Still, those who seek to standardize public education, especially those concerned with English education, often view diversity as a problem. Consequently, they believe that curriculum designs that account for new literacies, which is supportive of diversity, appear as “evidence of a distressing fragmentation of the social fabric” (New London Group, p. 15). They tend to not acknowledge that schools regulate access to knowledge and power in ways that are inequitable for students who do not come from the mainstream and dominant social and cultural groups on whose language practices academic languages are usually based. Instead, they believe that the goal of education is to unify and homogenize the citizenry and reduce differences by adhering to a national language system and a basic set of cultural, aesthetic, and moral values. They are in direct conflict with those who argue that “what seems to be a problem—the multiplicity of cultures, experiences, ways of making meaning, and ways of thinking—can be harnessed as an asset” (New London Group, 2000, p. 13).

### *Generation Gaps, Literacy, and English*

It is important to stress that there is much that we still have to learn about how new technologies and social changes will impact literacy practices. For example, as Baron (2002) has noted, it remains to be seen exactly how and to what extent the expansion of digital media technologies will eventually alter the ways we read, write, and think. However, it is difficult to ignore the fact that literacy practices have changed when students spend more time playing video

games and surfing the web than they do reading books. It is difficult to ignore the fact that while many students today perform poorly on traditional standardized measures of literacy, there is evidence that these same students are extremely effective language users capable of producing sophisticated texts for their own purposes (Alverman, 2001). As Gee (2003) discovered in his study of literacy in video games, children today learn to read and to practice literacies that draw on an array of semiotic technologies and multimodalities that are simply not featured in the kinds of reading texts and activities featured in school English. They are conditioned to read in a much narrower “attention economy” where texts compete for the reader’s time and rapid shifts are the norm instead of sustained attention to a single narrative. As a result, language arts curricula that are centered on reading printed literary texts simply do not match the kinds of practices that young people engage in during their literate lives. Essentially, we are faced with a present set of language arts curricula that are outdated, designed by and for those of us from older generations who expect all people to read and learn the ways that we did ourselves. To echo the epigraph to this section, we have difficulty imagining that we might become different than we are now.

Lankshear and Knobel label the generational split described above as a conflict between ‘newcomer/outsider’ and ‘insider’ perspectives on literacy and technology. The ‘newcomer/outsider’ perspective describes, in very broad terms, individuals over the age of 25-30 who “affirm the world as the same as before, only more technologized” (p. 32); these individuals are ‘newcomers’ in that emerging technologies are “new” or foreign to them, and they frequently have

less experience with and understanding of them. 'Insiders'—individuals under the age of 25 who grew up after the advent of digital media technologies— “affirm the world as radically different, precisely because of the operation of new technologies” (p. 32); having acquired their literacy skills while immersed in a culture of digital technology, insiders are generally comfortable and familiar with reading and writing using new technologies. Unfortunately, the older generation of newcomer/outside is the one that is responsible for designing present language arts curricula that are supposed to serve the needs and practices of the younger insider generation. And newcomer/outside often proceed with either lower or incomplete awareness of the ways in which new literacies might influence language arts curriculum and instruction.

Lankshear and Knobel (2004) argue that school literacies are a part of a credentials system that helps allocate social goods; because of this, school literacies play an important role in excluding some students from access to power and knowledge and also help to legitimate that exclusion. Whether one decides to believe such exclusion is intentionally built in or incidental to our education system, Lankshear and Knobel assert that the “deep grammar” of school (administrative hierarchies, policy implementations, curriculum development, etc.) institutionalizes the privileging of the newcomer/outside mindset over the insider mindset. Using an outdated map, newcomer/outside tend to design curricula that are inadequate to the literacy needs of students today. As Lankshear and Knobel ask, “What happens when the new is faced through the lenses and filters of the old?” (p. 18). They suggest that schools tend to “bring

the stamp of the 'old' to bear upon what should be 'new'" (p. 18-19); even when newcomer/outsider educators do attend to issues involved with new literacy, "Many simply accommodate new motifs to old ways" (p. 24). If, as these researchers and educators argue, the purpose of English education has been to provide students with the literacy skills they need in order to live in contemporary society, then the effectiveness of literacy instruction in American schools is in doubt. One result of excluding insider perspectives on literacy from current language arts curricula is a degree of irrelevance that results in the exclusion of many students from opportunities to acquire the literacies they need in order to be successful in either new or old terms.

*The Teaching of English and the National Council of Teachers of English:  
A Brief History*

In order to help further establish the context of this discourse analysis of the 1996 *Guidelines*, I next turn to an examination of English education, including the development of English as a discipline and as a school subject, and concerning the production of English teachers in university teacher education as framed by accountability reform. The project of English education currently involves a range of policy documents and education guidelines that span national, state, and professional organizations. The foci of study in the English language arts, the underlying value assumptions of the school subject, and philosophical motivations for teaching English as a subject in American public schools require a review of historical documents to understand how what might be called "discursive residues" continue to interact in literacy curriculum and

policy today. Moreover, a review of these topics contributes to the production of an *archive* (Foucault, 1972)—a collection of texts and artifacts that may be used to more fully represent how discourses both disperse and coalesce across time and space to influence the *episteme*—the discursive network of language, values, activities, and affiliations that constitute a particular social time or historical period. The review work presented here is by no means comprehensive, and is not intended to represent a definitive history. Rather, it attempts to represent major movements and shifts in the field of English language arts and literacy over the last 100 years.

Almost from the inception of public schooling in the United States, literacy curricula have been inextricably bound with school accountability movements. English education, largely through the work of the National Council of Teachers of English, has developed a relationship to the accountability movement that reflects many of the problems discussed above in the sections on new literacy. Efforts to develop viable curricula for language arts teaching have been marked by splits between technological newcomers and insiders, by those who see English as a national language for homogenizing the population and those who seek to represent English as a diverse and fluid language marked by difference, and those who see language arts learning as a linear and neutral project as opposed to those who recognize literacy and the language arts as contextual and ideological projects that must involve a critical component. While these binaries are not stable or consistent, they are convenient ways of characterizing contentions in the field.

Before detailing the historical background on the development of the language arts and the progress of NCTE as a professional teaching organization involved with accountability, I want to stress that many English educators have worked hard to represent the complexity of their subject in discussions of teacher preparation, standards, and accountability. In fact, English educators have in many ways been highly resistant to the demands of the standards movement in the US. Anecdotally, many, even most, English educators subscribe to the idea that English is a fluid language, that English speakers are a diverse group characterized by differences, and that linguistic diversity should be cast as a strength and not a problem in our society. This is certainly a dominant theme in the 1996 *Guidelines*. Many English educators recognize that technological and institutional changes require our field to develop new curricular approaches to literacy. And, perhaps to a lesser extent, some English educators recognize that literacy and the language arts are difficult ideological projects that require a high degree of critical awareness (in the Frierian sense of liberation and reform), reflexive negotiation, and ongoing attention to equitable change. However, in spite of the awareness of some English educators, these issues are frequently either missing from or inadequately addressed in English education policy texts.

There are likely to be a number of reasons for this difference between educators' beliefs about English and the content of published policy/curriculum texts, some of which are documented in the review below. Many of these reasons are attributable to the discursive processes involved with creating standards for the language arts. First, federal guidelines for school accountability

and language arts/literacy curricula have largely been developed without the input of literacy and English specialists or English educators affiliated with NCTE. As a result, English education standards and demands for accountability are framed by an externally imposed ideological approach to language that often fails to reflect the complexity or depth of knowledge in the field, and in fact such complexity and depth are generally excluded from conversations about accountability. In order to be recognized outside of their parent organization, curriculum policies produced by NCTE have been marked by compromises that reflect how discourses from national standards projects have colonized the work of NCTE. Forced out of national and federal standards projects, NCTE's policies sometimes reflect the organization's concessions to an outsider perspective that misrepresents practitioners' understandings and beliefs about literacy and language instruction. Second, curriculum policies are usually developed within institutional bureaucratic structures. NCTE is a large organization marked by committee systems that involve hierarchical structures and bureaucratic controls that can stifle innovation and change in spite of individual agents' or even groups' intentions. Third, policy development has generally proceeded based on a model that privileges consensus, which is difficult if not impossible to achieve in a field as broad and value-laden as literacy and the language arts. Finally, accountability at the federal and state levels generally does not recognize language education as a political or ideological project. When concerned and aware English educators have attempted to introduce their concerns about complexity, diversity, and ideology into conversations about English education

accountability, they have often found themselves excluded from the process entirely.

This study is designed in part, then, to understand how the discursive processes involved with accountability in English education have resulted in a narrowing of what it is possible to say about English education and literacy instruction in the United States. It is also designed to make sense of the ways in which English education's historical development as a subject centered on the study of literature has positioned it for dealing with new knowledge about language and literacy. Finally, the study is designed to explore the choices English educators have as they continue to deal with the problem of accounting for language instruction in an increasingly diverse society.

It is likely that portions of this study and its commentary will seem critical of English educators in the past and present. It is possible, too, that these criticisms will seem harsher than they actually are. My intention is to offer 'friendly fire' and to be a critical insider. My goal is to do some 'culture jamming'—to interrupt the conversation in English education about accountability so that we can interrogate it more completely and critically than we have perhaps done in the past, to point out contradictions and weaknesses in the policies we have developed for ourselves, and to seek out ways that English educators can take greater control in conversations about literacy accountability and exercise more agency as that discussion continues nationally.

So, recognizing that English educators have in some ways resisted a rigid status quo and resisted efforts to standardize the subject with varying success, I



next offer a review of the history of English education in America and a review of the development of the National Council of Teachers of English.

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Currently, the United States is undergoing a movement toward “accountability” in education that focuses on teacher quality (Linn, 2000; National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 1996). Numerous sets of standards, both coordinated and competing, have been produced by federal, state, and professional education organizations in attempts to represent what teachers and students should know and be able to do. These standards are represented as common sense, current, up-to-date “best” practices that reflect large-scale consensus about knowledge in the field of education and its various subject areas. However straightforward they may seem on the surface, standards-based reform projects in the English language arts involve complex ideological work; they involve representations of disciplinary knowledge, articulation with research and theory on teaching and learning, choices regarding methods of assessment, approaches to understanding technology and literacy, paradigms for dealing with diversity and culture, and a host of other political and rhetorical concerns that are frequently invisible in policy and curriculum debates.

According to Koziol (2004), the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) must quickly face the basic issue of defining a role for itself in the credentialing of teachers, a central issue in the accounting of teacher education

programs. This goal may be particularly important after NCTE's failed struggle, alongside the International Reading Association, to play a leading role in the development and implementation of national language arts content standards during the 1990s (Diegmuller, 1994). It is also important as the National Association for the Accreditation of Teacher Education has moved to de-emphasize its relationships with subject matter specialty organizations like NCTE. As Koziol writes, NCTE should either "take control of or at least primary responsibility for identifying what English teachers should know and be able to do..." (p. 1), and it seems logical for the nation's largest professional teaching organization to be involved in developing standards for the subject it represents.

The exclusion of English educators from the process of developing content and teacher preparation standards for their own field is both irresponsible and illegitimate. Yet today, standards for teaching and learning English are becoming increasingly oriented to a de facto model dictated from outside of English language arts and literacy, resulting from a winner-take-all competition of ideological values instead of more balanced critical deliberation (Wixon, Dutro, & Athan, 2004). According to members of NCTE's Standing Committee on Teacher Preparation and Certification at their 2003 annual convention in San Francisco, California, in the current competitive model teachers and researchers are being shut out unless they consent to "speak the language of achievement"—a language employed widely in current accountability movements that presently dis-empower educators.

Given the extreme breadth and instability of English as a school subject (Grossman & Shulman, 1994), constant cries for a return to an imagined golden age when the language arts had “content,” and English’s dominant position in administering two of the three “R’s” of “basic” education, it is important to understand the ideological history of the subject. “English” was never a politically neutral course of study, and a look at its history along with an examination of the development of the National Council of Teachers of English offers several insights into the present discourses of English that reflect these historical ideological trends and contradictions that shape the ways we think about and practice language arts education.

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As moldy as it may seem to some 10<sup>th</sup> graders, English is not a particularly mature school subject. It is even younger as an academic discipline, and its construction out of a number of language-related subjects has made it far less stable than it might have appeared in classrooms over the last century. Historians have frequently noted the tendency of English to “come unglued” throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Nelms, 2000). In fact, “English” was not a recognized subject at all in the United States until the 1890’s (and even later in the United Kingdom), when a group of university administrators and education leaders known as the Committee of Ten attempted to unify “English” along with a number of other curriculum concerns under a rubric dominated by literary study. At that time, students variously studied grammar, rhetoric, elocution, spelling,

reading, and philology, but these were treated as separate subjects; literary studies were barely established as a legitimate scholarly pursuit, but in a move whose aftershocks continue to this day, the Committee of Ten determined that literature should function as the centerpiece of language education in America.

In spite of its controversial status at that time, it is impossible to understand English education without accounting for the influence on curriculum that literature has exerted from a high cultural position that it still maintains today. To oversimplify, at least three powerful ideological forces around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century involved utilizing literature as a key instrument, and therefore contributed to its selection as the dominant feature of English studies. First, many educators viewed literature as a potential tool for indoctrination in the interests of Americanizing immigrants and the preserving “American” culture. Second, many believed that literature could help to promote spirituality in the face of industrialization. Third, as literature became a more powerful cultural tool and a perceived repository for “quality” language, some educators and many members of the public began to regard English literature teachers as guardians of the English language and “the preachers of culture,” as they were dubbed by Matthew Arnold (Mathieson, 1975).

These ideological movements around literary study are significant to the history of English language arts curriculum. Protherough and Atkinson (1991) point out that from its earliest stages, the teaching of “English” entailed a missionary role to “confront the forces of industrialism and to counter the growing influence of the media” (p. 9). With industrialization came the movement of

populations into urban centers, the introduction of electronic communications, and a concurrent decline of agrarian society and social values. In addition, industrialization brought fundamental changes in the organization and conception of work, time, and subjectivity, including a perceived movement away from religion and toward secularism (Mathieson, 1975). Fearing a total moral decline, many viewed literature as a way to “feed, to purify, to unify, and to redeem” America spiritually and fulfill religion’s functions (Protherough & Atkinson, 1991, p. 9). The religious fervor that was tied to literature early in its history still echoes in today’s policies, for example when NCTE claims that literature must be seen as the core and “the humane center” of the English curriculum...adding delight and wonder to [students’] daily lives” (1996a, p. 18, emphasis added).

A second ideological aspect of literary study involved the explicit desire of many educators at the time to Americanize new immigrants. The idea of a “standard” English is hardly new, dating back to England in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and the expression “speaking the King’s English.” Such a conception of aristocratic English as “standard” reflected a classist society with a “tacitly directing norm,” as Sapir deemed it (1949,p. 148)—that is, the biases inherent in standard English were not necessarily explicit, but in practice these class and race biases served to solidify a hierarchical social system by using language as an ideological apparatus. In spite of vigorous attempts, for example by NCTE, to impress a liberal tolerance toward language variation on the US populace, by 1970 it was reported that Americans were still “afflicted” with “a somewhat unwholesome state of mind linguistically speaking” (Markwardt, 1971, p. 28, cited

in Bailey, 1991, p. 15). With waves of immigrants entering the United States in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, many “natives” believed that it was necessary and even morally right to compel non-natives to learn and speak “proper” English. Advertisements of the day read “Good English and Good Fortune Go Hand in Hand,” a racist and classist mantra that is still repeated blithely today (Bailey, 1991) alongside bumper stickers that read, more coarsely, “Welcome to America. Now Speak English!”

A third ideological position related to the idea of “standard” English (aided by the dominance of literary study) was forwarded by F.R. Leavis, who wrote in 1930 that it was the responsibility of English teachers to safeguard the language and make sure it remained healthy for the preservation of the culture, “the growth of moral values and...the whole quality of life itself” (Protherough and Atkinson, 1991, p. 9). It is not clear how speaking standard English leads to moral behavior, a higher quality of life, or the preservation of an “American” culture, but the missionary position slotted for English teachers as a result of these religious, nationalist, and moralist foundations was certainly pregnant with hegemonic potential. Many people believed in the sanctity of “proper” English and “good” literature then, and many still do today.

It was with the ideological forces described above swirling around in the American imagination that English came into its own as a school subject, but it was only when university administrators began using sanctioned reading lists as a convenient assessment tool and requirement for admission to higher education that literature began to receive widespread attention in schools as an object of

study. Since then, the history of English has reflected the challenges of maintaining unity and stability, often characterized by an exclusive emphasis on literary study and the marginalization of other language arts (Applebee, 1974). In K-12 school curriculum, philology is defunct, rhetoric has gone into hiding, literature has ascended to a supreme position, and grammar has left a bloody trail of dead in the wake of battles fought over whether or not 15-year-olds ought to be able to identify appositive phrases. Speech, drama, and linguistics huddle under the umbrella as well and help to constitute what can be referred to as “the language arts.” In university English departments, literature remains the primary focus of scholarly work (although it is split into diverse theoretical factions), rhetoric was absorbed into composition and relegated to the lower rungs of the departmental hierarchy as “the sad woman in the basement” (Shumway & Dionne, 2002; Miller, 1991, p.121), reading has been appropriated by schools of education and psychology, and linguistics, speech, and drama have been marginalized as separate pursuits (for excellent historical narratives on the development of English, literature, and rhetoric in academia, see Berlin, 2003; Scholes, 1998; Graff, 1987; and Ohmann, 1976). As Alan Luke argues, “the dependency relationship between subject English in schools and university-based English was broken long ago” (2004, p. 90).

Especially in the present context of standardization and accountability reform, and given the instability of school English from its inception, it is interesting to note that the National Council of Teachers of English was founded in 1911 as a result of the desire to achieve some level of consistency in the

curricula of the US school system. Many leaders in the teaching of English were growing uncomfortable with the institutionalization of mandatory reading lists which students were required to study in order to gain admission to universities. Each university maintained its own list of literary works, and while there were often texts in common across lists, a serious level of inconsistency made it difficult for teachers and schools to arrange their curricula in ways that could efficiently prepare all students. Many teachers argued that the university reading lists were geographically biased, elitist, and arbitrary, putting students at a disadvantage if they were not from the East coast urban centers, or if they did not intend to pursue higher education. A group of interested English teachers and NEA members attended the 1911 meeting of the National Education Association with the intention of lodging a protest with the College Entrance Examination Board, which had become a leading proponent of using reading lists for college entrance. However, rather than lodge a protest, the group of concerned English teachers established a committee to survey college entrance requirements. This turn to bureaucracy led quickly to the founding of a national English organization whose

supreme consideration is to unite the teachers of the country in support of sound principles of secondary education, in order that boys and girls passing through high school may receive the kind of training in English best fitted to develop them and to prepare them for life. (Hook, 1979, 283)

This language is significant in a number of ways. First, it establishes NCTE as an organization for secondary level English teachers, a focus still maintained today in spite of journals dedicated to elementary, middle, secondary,



and post-secondary English, as well as composition studies and English education. Second, the language of the proclamation makes it possible to assume the existence of a kind of best practice suitable for the “training” of all students. Third, it assumes the desirability of “uniting the teachers of the country” and gaining a consensus about what it means to teach English as well as how to teach it. These implications—a focus on high school, a valuing of unity, and an assumed consensus—can all be found in the standards NCTE uses today. Along with English’s emphasis on literature, they have not been without consequences.

The focus on secondary English education within NCTE has arguably exacerbated fault lines between school/university English and between language arts specializations. Within 5 years of its founding, a group of NCTE members specializing in public speaking split from the organization entirely. Barely twenty years after “uniting” the language arts in school curricula, subject matter specialists were already struggling to carve out independent territories. In the interest of maintaining a place at academia’s table, speech teachers felt it was necessary to have their own independent organization, free from the constraints of a more cosmopolitan organization where they would be marginal.

Speech teachers were not the only potential members who chose to stay away from NCTE. Although NCTE strongly desired the participation of members from all levels of education, Nelms (2000) reports that university English faculty members have generally shunned membership in NCTE in favor of aligning with the Modern Language Association, which they perceived to be more prestigious

and more focused on both literary studies and their theoretical specializations. In this way, the operative word in National Council of Teachers of English can be argued to be *teaching*, rather than *English*.

Within NCTE, at least two significant groups have been formed in an attempt to create spaces for specialization and address perceived needs of the membership at the college level—the College Conference on Composition and Communication (CCCC) established in 1949, and the Conference on English Education (CEE) formed in 1963. Both organizations have maintained a presence within NCTE proper, offering sessions at annual conferences and publishing through the organization’s press. However, “the 4 C’s” operates a separate conference addressing the specific concerns of college composition, and CEE effectively runs an annual convention dedicated as the research assembly of NCTE—neither conference is well-attended by NCTE’s main constituency of public school teachers. As a result, the main body of NCTE has become characterized as the “practical” forum for English teachers vs. the “theoretical” orientations of CCCC and (to a lesser extent) CEE, and its conventions are notable for their lack of focus on theory and research. NCTE is ecumenical but fragmented.

NCTE’s desire to develop “sound principles” of education has also had significant effects on the teaching of English and the movement toward accountability. Responding to the national concerns related to Russia’s Sputnik launch in 1957, NCTE followed suit with other subject organizations in math and science by engaging in its own curriculum study. With the federal passage of the

National Defense Education Act in 1958 and the initial Elementary And Secondary Education Act (now known in its present incarnation as “No Child Left Behind”) in 1965, NCTE sought to establish the English language arts as an equal to science and mathematics in terms of its role in national defense (Hook, 1979). Such a move was deemed necessary in order to maintain English’s position in secondary school curriculum, and also because significant federal funds were being tied to the concept of principled linear curricula geared for national defense.

While NCTE’s project, referred to as *The National Interest and the Teaching of English* (1961), was in part an attempt to thwart federal de-emphasis of English curriculum, its adoption of and response to federal education concerns effectively required NCTE to define English as a positivist discipline with clear boundaries and “scientific” methods. NCTE chose to articulate English as “language, literature, and composition,” and to characterize the English curriculum as a linear sequential project. Along with these moves came the development of scientific projects designed to produce controlled experiments for assessing the effectiveness of pedagogical techniques in ways that were generalizable across classrooms, schools, and communities. The *National Interest* report is notable for its argument that teachers and students must learn to think critically about civic issues in order to participate in a Democratic society, a call to engage popular media literacy in English studies, and perhaps most significantly another explicit call for consensus on the unity of English and the need for local, state, and federal cooperation in standardizing the curriculum.

The attempt to treat English as a measurable and unified content area continues today in the discourse of accountability, an issue that this study will address.

Along with its report on the teaching of English, the National Interest Committee produced a supplementary text called *The Continuing Education of Teachers of English* (1964). Having established that English teachers at the time were increasingly poorly prepared, and that the nation at large perceived a crisis in literacy, NCTE argued that English teachers required more and better pre-service training and education, more and better in-service training, and more and better supervision. Some of the findings of the commission, led by James Squire, were indeed alarming. For example, at the time, only 50% of all English teachers majored in English during their college education, 66% of all secondary English teachers felt unprepared to teach composition (due to heavy emphasis on literary studies in university departments), and 90% felt unprepared to teach reading (1964, p. 20). The *National Interest* reports recommended greater access to continuing education opportunities, the development of coordinated state and national training institutes along with local in-service programs, greater access to texts about the teaching of English, and, not insignificantly, greater participation and incentive for all English teachers to participate in English teaching organizations like NCTE.

Two other landmarks in the history of English education are important to consider—the Dartmouth Conference, described in John Dixon's book *Growth Through English* (1967), and the English Coalition Conference, described in Lloyd-Jones and Lunsford's *Democracy Through Language* (1987) and Peter

Elbow's *What Is English?* (1991). Each of these conferences presents important snapshots of English education that speak to the discourse of English education today. In particular, the records of both conferences provide evidence that demonstrates the continued dominance of literature over curriculum, the role of tradition, and the problems of consensus and ideology in our field.

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The Dartmouth Conference marked a major meeting between American, British, and Canadian English teachers designed to open conversation and cooperation around methods and content for the teaching of the language arts. Important findings from the conference included a recognition that English was a living language—"a quicksilver among metals"—that should not and could not be treated as a static, rigid content to be developmentally packaged in neat sequential bites for children to consume. Dartmouth also introduced American English teachers to the use of drama as a mode of inquiry—a common and even central component of language and literature instruction in Britain and Canada. Further, the conference produced a picture of English that foregrounded practice with language in authentic situations rather than instruction in isolated skills development, a focus on individual engagement and development versus whole-class emphasis, a developmental conception of language development (thus "growth" through English), and a focus on learner-centeredness that reflected a Deweyan constructivist approach to language and literacy learning. Importantly, the Dartmouth Conference brought classroom discussion about language and

usage to greater prominence, and called for a movement away from skills-based instruction toward more integrated and holistic curricula. As Dixon wrote, attendees sought to emphasize that, “language is learned in operation, not dummy runs” (1967, p. 36).

Unfortunately, although many educators value more learner-centered, inquiry-oriented holistic approaches to English teaching, and although many also support the conception of language learning as contextual and developmental, the Dartmouth Conference had an additive impact on actual teaching practices in the US rather than a transformative effect. Discussion, drama, and individual inquiry in a learner-centered frame required a significant investment of time and energy that schools were not structured to provide for either teachers or students. The perceived need to compete nationally, internationally, and economically led educators to admire but abstain from adopting the recommendations made at Dartmouth in favor of maintaining a normative, objective assessment system of large-scale standardized testing. This is not to say that the conference was without influence. In particular, James Moffett’s work in the late 1960s, perhaps especially *Teaching the Universe of Discourse* (1968), reflected Dartmouth’s conception of language learning and English curriculum. Certainly, Moffett’s work has resulted in a higher value for discussion, drama, and inquiry in English classrooms via his designs for K-12 curricula. Further, the 1996 NCTE *Guidelines* include a heavy emphasis on the fluid nature of English and an explicit value for student-centered instruction.

Twenty years after Dartmouth, English educators in the US convened once more to deliberate on the nature of the English language arts and to articulate guidelines for curriculum and instruction across elementary, secondary, and college contexts. The English Coalition Conference, like Dartmouth, sought to move beyond traditional conceptions of the subject and reflect new knowledge and theory about the language arts. Participants at the conference adopted the theme of “Democracy Through English,” a move that is significant in at least two ways. First, the framing of English as a key to Democracy represented the language arts as a central component of curriculum in US schools. Second, this framing marked the political nature of language learning and language teaching, although it lacked important elaborations and articulation.

One aspect of Democratic participation that the coalition did emphasize was the need to develop critical literacy skills—the ability of children to actively produce and consume texts in order to participate in civic society. In addition, the Coalition Conference marks one of the first moments in which English teachers began to recognize and anticipate the role that computer and digital technology would begin to play in literacy and cognitive development—a remarkable insight given that, in 1987, the Internet, hypermedia, and advanced digital communications media did not yet exist to a significant degree. Participants also called for an end to academic tracking, teacher design and control of mass testing, systematic cooperation amongst school professionals in designing and monitoring teacher education programs, and the use of a “judicious” mix of theories associated with language, rhetoric, writing, literature,

and reading. They called for systematic observation of K-16 teaching for all prospective teaching candidates, and frequent opportunities for teachers to read, write, talk, and reflect about classroom practices and teaching processes.

Importantly, the English Coalition Conference noted that,

Those designing teacher education programs in English language arts *must acknowledge the political constraints* represented by state departments of education, certifying agencies, and assessments.... These political constraints must be dealt with in the establishment of new, cooperative programs...because the ideals and goals of these programs can be undermined by external forces. (44, emphasis added)

A number of other elements of the Coalition Conference are useful to note. In his account of the proceedings, Elbow (1991) argues that the majority of participants viewed students as autonomous subjects, and took a more or less expressivist approach to thinking about English. From an expressivist perspective, the purpose of language arts education is to engage students in individual exploration of language and literacy toward personal growth and self-understanding, a desire to provide students with choice and freedom of expression, and to promulgate a belief that Literature and writing are keys to personal fulfillment and critical awareness; in many respects, this re-states the intentions of the Dartmouth conference and underscores Dartmouth's limited impact with the need to repeat these commitments. Elbow argued that children are active writers, countering the arguments of participant Kathleen McCormick, who argued that students are written themselves more than they write due to ideological forces in schools and society. Elbow's language in characterizing discussion at the conference also suggests that, while a component of conversations, poststructural and critical theory terminology such as the use of



the term “difference” was treated as a “jargon cliché” and thus was marginal. Elbow argues that “of course, people did not fail to acknowledge that democracy is an ideology—not built into the universe as natural or neutral” (p. 41); however, Elbow treats “democracy” only in terms of classroom dynamics around the relativity of teacher authority and student passivity. Discussions of ideology in the context of language, literacy, teaching, or English curricula do not seem to have played a substantial part in the Coalition’s conception of what it meant by “Democracy,” whether or not some participants wished it to do so.

In addition to the dominance of cognitivist and expressivist approaches, as well as the decision to focus on Democratic values in classroom contexts, Elbow’s account of the English Coalition Conference emphasizes consensus, unity, and the role of theory in developing curriculum policy. While Elbow at times appears to treat theory and practice as distinct, and while he worries considerably that postmodern relativism will contaminate discussions of theory, it is clear that the conference participants thought about how differing epistemological stances might affect approaches to curriculum. As I will make clear later, this attention to theory is significant because it is largely absent or invisible in official policy documents—a fact that has consequences. The focus on theory at the Coalition Conference led people to take “an activist interest in changing how we teach and how schools function,” (1991, p. 77), and that interest has not translated into official language in policy texts.

With regard to the dominance of literature in the language arts, Elbow (1991) claimed that participants at the conference saw the advantages of de-

centering literature in the curriculum. Doing so would demonstrate educators' recognition of important theoretical shifts about the nature of literacy, learning, and language—especially shifts toward the social and ideological nature of language and schooling. Unfortunately, in a reflection of a deeply held religious faith in Literary power, Elbow reports with some satisfaction that everyone also seemed to feel that literature was “special” and “precious” (p. 99). Because of the dissonance they felt between their intellectual and emotional assessments of literature's place in the language arts, Elbow reports that the Coalition barely addressed the study of literature at all. He writes, “By avoiding working out the literature question, we were avoiding potential violence.... literature, in such a short portion of our history, has gotten into the soul of the English profession” (p. 101).

The history of English education in the US, tied to the development of the National Council of Teachers of English, shows that English is still uncertain even after a century of institutionalization. Divorced from its roots in academia, school English has become “the language arts”—a hodgepodge of subjects mixed together for a variety of purposes and dominated by literary study. The links between this literary study and larger ideological state apparatuses designed to reproduce cultural capital, class- and race-based “moral” values, and the reification of class- and race-based linguistic standards have made it difficult to shift curriculum toward more contemporary understandings of language, learning, and literacy. In addition, moves to align English language arts education with other subject areas like math and science in the interest of economic competition

via claims to Democracy and disciplinarity have led educators to frame language arts curriculum as a linear and positivist project that does not adequately support characterizations of English as fluid, diverse, and changing.

Having framed English language arts curriculum and education, I next describe the development of policy in the field of English that brings a number of discourses around school, learning, and subject matter into conflict. These conflicts have resulted in a number of contradictions in English language arts policies that are the focus of this study, contradictions that have consequences for equity and literacy in modern American culture.

### *Standards and Standardization in English and Education*

According to Delandshere & Petrosky (2004), what little research exists on accountability reform in the US focuses on *how* to develop standards-based performance assessments that are consonant with the dictates of the reform movement. The bulk of this literature treats the process as relatively unproblematic. Delandshere and Petrosky write,

From the reformers' perspective, standards-based reform in teacher education appears logical and straightforward. Working backward, in order to produce the expected student outcomes, teachers need to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions (language used in many professional standards) that are known to be related to student achievement. ... Ensuring a common vision for teacher education is perceived as necessary in order for all teachers to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are assumed to have a positive effect on the achievement of all students—the ultimate goal of the reform. (2004, 4-5)

According to their analysis of both content and teacher preparation standards and accountability models in the US, the accountability reform movement follows

from a historic assumption (referred to in the history section above) that “knowledge is a commodity that can be objectified and measured in terms of immediately visible outcomes,” that what teachers know and do is “*the most important*” influence on student learning, and that it is possible to reach consensus about what should be taught in schools (pp. 5-6, 8).

Based on their study, Delandshere and Petrosky find that standardization of teaching and subject matter content reduces attention to issues of equity and ideology in education. Further, although many educators have characterized the accountability movement as an opportunity for teacher professionalization (National Council For Teaching and America’s Future, 1996), Delandshere & Petrosky argue that accountability reform increases teachers’ responsibility and accountability while actually reducing their power, participation in policy making, and status, a finding shared by Smagorinsky in his study of language arts teachers (1999). They note that a focus on teachers as the single most important factor in determining student achievement represents a simplistic and uni-dimensional attempt to resolve a complex, multi-dimensional problem. They write,

...an organization of teacher education programs that prescribes alignment, consensus, and consistency through bureaucratic and authoritarian control is antithetical to learning, inquiry, and true democratic participation. (6)

Such prescriptions for teacher preparation and curriculum implementation circumscribe the complexity of teaching, and impose “a fixed political will that shapes [teachers] capacities, who they become as teachers, and positions them primarily as implementers of content and pedagogy as defined by the standards”

(p. 7). Delandshere and Petrosky question whether it is desirable to define criteria for teaching that ignore the plurality of meanings and purposes of education and its place in society and in the construction of knowledge. They question whether it is possible or desirable to reach consensus on such an issue, and they question whether it is appropriate to subordinate teaching and learning to the perceived needs of any current social or economic order, which is likely to be transient. They worry that accountability as it is presently conceived of represents “a monopoly on thought” in the teaching profession, and argue that standards tend to coerce educators into maintaining a negative status quo even as they use progressive language and ideas. Given the concerns they outline, Delandshere and Petrosky argue that “a critical analysis of the reforms seems imperative, as [standards] represent ideological stances on teaching and learning that have major consequences for the work of teachers” (p. 2).

While there is little research or analysis of standards for teacher preparation, a recent review of research and the development of English language arts content standards also indicates that the issue of accountability is fraught with ideological concerns (Wixon, Dutro, and Athan, 2004). Tracing the development of content standards for the language arts in American schools, Wixon et al. echo Delandshere and Petrosky by noting the complexity of school subjects like English and commenting on the desire of some educators and many education outsiders to impose a model of “rigor” on the language arts that would result in a measurable, linear, easily assessable list of skills and competencies as the basis for curriculum and instruction. Although the National Education

Goals Panel of 1991 expressed doubt about the possibility of reaching consensus about content standards, Wixon et al. report that other organizations like the National Council on Education Standards and Testing (delightfully acronymed as “NCEST”) argued that content standards were “critical to the nation” for promoting equity, preserving democracy, and improving economic competitiveness. Wixon et al. write that, “Those who viewed standards as the cure for the ills of public education expected standards to be precise statements of the content to be mastered and measured” (p. 76).

The development of language arts content standards is intimately tied to the politics of the “Reading Wars” of the 1990s that resulted in an extreme narrowing of definitions for what counts as “reading” and also perhaps more importantly a narrowing of definitions for “scientific” research by Reid Lyon and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development—both of which resulted in increased restrictions for federal funding that have created de facto standards that educators must follow in order to maintain federal support. During this time, the National Council of Teachers of English, along with the International Reading Association and the National Education Association, all found themselves excluded and/or marginalized in national conversations about curriculum standards and teacher preparation because they were not in complete accord with Lyon. None were invited to testify at hearings on the Reading Excellence Act legislation, even though they represented the most prominent reading specialist organizations in the nation. According to Wixon et al., the NICHD’s narrow definitions and the exclusions of teaching organizations that

resulted are still in effect today via the No Child Left Behind Act, which further institutionalizes de facto national standards based on an ideological model of literacy that trumps any space for critical deliberation or change. As the authors note, “The emphasis on accountability through annual testing in NCLB virtually dictates a view of content standards as measurable objectives... What began in the standards movement as the promise of moving beyond behaviorist thinking in teaching and learning now threatens to bring us right back to where we started” (p. 82).

Wixon et al. describe cases at both the national and state levels wherein subject matter specialty organizations and university literacy researchers were ultimately excluded from policy-making processes around standardization due to ideological differences. At the national level, the Standards Project for English Language Arts (SPELA) involving a joint commission of NCTE and the IRA resulted in federal rejection of what became the NCTE/IRA Content Standards for the English Language Arts (1996b). At the state level in both Texas and Michigan, what began as cooperative endeavors between subject matter specialists, business/economic interests, and state bureaucracies also resulted in the exclusion of input from teachers and researchers who argued that standards should reflect new knowledge and theory about complexity in literacy, the need for flexibility, and an overtly political concern for equity issues around language instruction. In each case, educators sought to produce flexible standards that would function as guidelines rather than prescriptions. And, in each case, state policy makers and business representatives rejected educators' proposals as

“soft” and “vague.” But rather than deliberate, educate, or compromise, policy makers simply rejected educators’ proposals because they did not match the perceived bureaucratic needs of standards-based accountability reform.

Wixon et al. report that newer standards reflect some incorporation of advancing knowledge about literacy learning and language, for example including language about critical theory/cultural studies, the cognitive revolution, constructivism, poststructural thought, feminism, and multiculturalism. However, Petrosky and Delandshere found that while policies often contain some language about progressive or contemporary theory and knowledge, such language often masks a high level of reductionism and an anti-intellectual orientation that discounts theory and expertise. Confirming this, Wixon et al. cite a study of standards building efforts in Texas by Shepley (2002). In an interview with one policy maker, Shepley captures their perception of educators who attempt to influence curriculum policy:

We think that the schools belong to the people, not the teachers, not the professors. So frankly, we’ve never been concerned about what professors think. They fought us vigorously in the beginning on testing. They fought us on all variety of things. And so we invited them out of the meetings. We don’t even talk to them. (Shepley, 2002, 19, cited in Wixon, Dutro, & Athan, 2004, 94)

Both Delandshere & Petrosky’s analysis and the review work by Wixon, Dutro, and Athan demonstrate the ways in which ideological concerns around economic competition, management discourses, and orientations to absolutist models of knowledge influence the process of constructing education policies, whether they are guidelines for teacher preparation or content standards. Instead of involving critical deliberation about theory, knowledge, purpose, and



outcomes for teaching and learning, contemporary discussions around standards tend to involve a competitive ideological model wherein a positivist approach to teaching and learning is masked by imposed consensus, legislated definitions of content and research, and uncritical, unreflexive language about democracy, critical literacy, constructivist learning, and equity that fails to account for the real structural, institutional, and cultural constraints of the American school system.

Delandshere and Petrosky write,

In the face of uncertainty, contradictions, and the unknown, reformers have rallied around predefined standards, strict policies, and strategies, so that we have the illusion of knowing where we are, where we are going, and what and how we should teach. Evident here is a need to control the unknown, to manage the unmanageable, and to create certainties in a world where there are so few.... The reforms' call for alignment and the control mechanisms it uses (i.e., program accreditation and licensure and certification assessment) require that teacher educators comply with a certain way to organize their courses and to prepare their students' presentation of competence.... This level of compliance is not compatible with the nature of teaching and learning because it takes away the intellectual autonomy necessary to engage in open and free inquiry. (2004, 11)

Koziol's (2004) discussion of the need for performance assessment designs created and implemented by English educators helps offer some insight into the kind of situation that Delandshere & Petrosky worry has developed in current discourse. Recognizing the direction that the national conversation on standards has taken, Koziol offers a number of reasonable goals, tasks, and changes for English educators to engage in if they are to be involved and in compliance with national and state accountability reforms. Koziol's recommendations include developing clear distinctions between beginning and advanced professional performance criteria, a realistic scope for teaching

standards, an articulation of the research base in order to allow for evidence-based performance assessment, and NCTE-administered performance assessments based on state-level certification criteria. In many ways, these recommendations are consonant with other mainstream work on standards done by the Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium, one of a few educator-driven reform efforts that has received support outside of education.

However reasonable these suggestions are in the context of standards-based accountability reform, they assume that the current direction for such reforms is either appropriate or inevitable, and they reflect a pragmatism that silences the critical concerns that Delandshere and Petrosky raise by invoking a skills-based approach to teaching that risks missing the ethical and political aspects inherent in the field. If the profession institutes a set of performance assessments based on compliance with national standards, what will prevent those policies from “freezing” professional discourse and reifying a vision of education that doesn’t account for the complexity of teaching, learning, and education as an ideological apparatus?

To make the issue even more complicated, it is important to point out that Koziol’s observations about teaching standards—that they need to be realistic in their scope, and that they must somehow account for the life-long nature of teacher learning in ways that involve consensus and measurable outcomes—are in themselves not at all unreasonable. In a study of Australian teacher education standards, Gore and Morrison (2001) find that standards too often promote a

construct of the “super teacher” that is particularly unreasonable in the context of the accountability movement, and Koziol’s recommendations are wisely designed to avoid over-reaching. However, in addition, Gore and Morrison also warn that standards for teaching are particularly inappropriate in that they are designed in part to impose a professional model onto a field that has not yet achieved professional status. The consequence, they argue, is an enormous increase in responsibility and accountability for teachers without the presence of certain requisite conditions and powers that come with professional status—like the power to review, change, and approve of the policies that dictate their practice. In addition, Gore and Morrison’s analysis shows that, by representing such policies as an advancement for the profession based on current knowledge and “best” practices culled from a process of consensus, accountability measures are often deeply flawed and based on faulty assumptions, even when they include language that would suggest a recognition of complexity in the issues at hand.

In his analysis of Minnesota language arts content standards, Richard Beach (2003) also notes that there are a number of dangers involved with accountability reform, even when standards are based on constructivist models and articulated knowledge about teaching and learning. According to Beach, the national context of standardization contains a number of problematic ideological discourses that colonize accountability reform projects and marginalize discussions of complexity, equity, diversity, and critical perspectives. Beach demonstrates how discourses of crisis, consensus, economic competition, business management, privatization, and absolutist knowledge all have entered

the discourse of English education and made it difficult to develop equitable and workable standards even when those standards employ additional discourses about race, class, democracy, and the need for social change. In these cases, language from the latter discourses tends to mask the former discourses while actually serving to maintain an inequitable status quo. Beach argues that there is a need for critical research on the discourse of accountability in order to better understand how standards-based accountability reform is affecting discourse within education, and also to understand how educators might play a more powerful role in national conversations about the work they do.

A review of English language arts history, the historical development of NCTE, and an overview of standards-based reform in teaching and the language arts shows that ideological concerns are at the heart of the present discourse. Both inside and outside of the field, a dubious consensus model has developed and overshadowed the need for complex understandings of knowledge and theory in any curriculum project. Due to pressures from outside, English educators have been forced to either conform to national models of standards and curriculum or risk exclusion.

One result of the exclusion risk of standards-based reform in English has been a tendency to maintain the status quo. The demands of accountability testing that led educators to frame English as an absolute and linear set of content, the process of literature “getting into the souls” of English teachers, and the desire to achieve/impose consensus on the profession for what counts in English have resulted in a tension between conservation and reform in the

language arts that puts the field behind the curve of literacy theory and research. As noted earlier, since 1970 there have been major shifts in orientations to literacy theory and research, proliferation in digital technology and communications, and shifts in population and diversity that have implications for the teaching of the English language arts. While most of these shifts and changes have been recognized to some extent in discussions of accountability, policy projects have done a poor job of accounting for the ways in which they might change traditional practice and conceptions of language instruction. More seriously, policy documents mask these issues and represent particular political visions as universals, treating them as common sense and closing spaces for dialogue and difference.

#### *A Framework for Accountability*

In "Conceptualizing Accountability for Education," Kuchapski (2002) reports that the obvious motivational assumption behind accountability reforms is that they will improve education. However, opponents claim that accountability reforms have the capacity to damage educational quality. In fact, citing a study by Sykes and Elmore (1988), Kuchapski notes that opponents argue that accountability reform can be "profoundly anti-educational (p. 91)" (2002, paragraph 2). She states that opposed groups rarely disagree about the abstract value of accountability; rather, debates about reform are about "conflicting visions of what public schools, and society, ought to look like" (paragraph 3). In other

words, debates about accountability reform are ideological conflicts. She offers a fundamental example of such a conflict:

...the debates over standardized testing are embedded in differences of opinion over whether schools should give priority to a uniform education (which is necessary if standardized tests are to be legitimate) or whether they should give priority to flexible programs that can be adapted to meet the unique needs of individuals. (paragraph 3)

As the analysis in Chapter 5 will demonstrate, ideological conflicts such as this one are not necessarily clear cut in terms of their division across groups. Within the NCTE *Guidelines*, for example, there are clear attempts to accommodate both positions: uniformity and flexibility. It is the interplay between these two apparently opposed positions that power relations across ideologies play themselves out.

Kuchapski offers a set of “key components” (paragraph 5) from her research, and particularly focuses on a set of variable “liberal” positions derived from a historical analysis of accountability reform. Her intention is to “provide a common point of reference for disparate accountability procedures” (paragraph 4). For the present study, Kuchapski’s analysis and models for accountability provide a useful set of constructs for the analysis of accountability discourses found in the 1996 NCTE *Guidelines*.

According to Kuchapski’s research, accountability reform can be traced across a progressive series of liberal philosophical stances: *political liberalism*, *economic liberalism*, *ethical liberalism*, and *technological liberalism*, “genres” that emerged over time as education systems evolved in Great Britain, Canada, and the United States. The earliest form, *political liberalism*, is based on a value for

“basic, practical education” and developing both “patriotic virtue” and assimilation into “the common culture of the nation” (paragraphs 20). This *political liberalism* introduced a value for uniformity, and led to state produced prescriptive syllabi for use in schools, accompanied by regular inspections of schools by the state in order to ensure compliance. Although administration was initially a matter of local control, advancing economic interests eventually led to more and more state oversight of local trustees (paragraph 22)

By the beginning of the twentieth century, *political liberalism* shifted to a more economic focus as “access to education became equated with access to jobs. This economic liberalism led to greater emphasis on equal opportunity as “equal access to different educations” (paragraph 25). In the movement toward equal opportunity, an acknowledgement of different student needs emerged and began to result in differentiated educational programs, for example the use of academic and vocational tracks. According to Kuchapski, “The focus on meeting the needs of students as prospective members of occupational classes helped to prepare the way for a philosophy of liberalism directed at meeting the complex needs of individual students” (paragraph 31). Kuchapski goes on to report the development of an *ethical liberalism* in the 1930s that coincided with Progressive reforms based on concepts of child-centeredness. *Ethical liberalism* concerned itself with “developing the unique capacity of individual students,” “the importance of the cultural community as the basis for individual development, access to denominational and linguistic choice, and a value for the interests and beliefs of individual students” (paragraph 33). In *ethical liberalism* a concern for equality

became a concern for difference—that is, a concern for equity. As Kuchapski states, “...the most important criterion of policy evaluation for ethical liberals came to be defined in terms of diversity, not uniformity” (paragraph 33). *Ethical liberalism* complemented and perhaps provided the basis for emerging knowledge about constructivist learning and social psychology at the time, and affected education in significant ways. Student-centered pedagogies became central to classroom instruction, and the role of the teacher shifted from that of a director to that of a facilitator focused on supporting experiences rather than transmitting factual knowledge in the abstract (paragraph 36). According to Kuchapski, *ethical liberalism* reached its height during the 1960s, and continues to be influential today. As will be shown in Chapter 5, the NCTE Guidelines reflect a strong *ethical liberal* stance. However, the philosophical positions described here are not discrete either historically or ideologically. For example, elements of *economic liberalism*, with a concern for how schools support state economies, did not disappear with the emergence of *ethical liberalism*. Likewise, when a *technological liberalism* began to emerge in the 1960s, it did not supplant *ethical liberalism*, but rather developed alongside it.

Kuchapski reports that *technological liberalism* gained prominence as economic and technological changes began to accelerate, and as globalization began to cause concern for nations as they found themselves in more vigorous economic international competition. As the perceived need to compete grew in the minds of many citizens, technological liberals began to seek ways of holding schools accountable “for providing students with an education that will serve



them all equally in their future pursuit of employment” (paragraph 40). Kuchapski states,

Consequently, public schools [were] increasingly being held accountable for teaching a common body of requisite knowledge, and equal opportunity became [as in *political liberalism*] defined as equal access to the same education. (paragraph 40)

She notes that a technological liberal focus on measurement as the primary engine of accountability led to a further emphasis on efficiency and the use of standardized tests. While technological liberals “tolerate” diversity and choice, they are concerned about social fragmentation, and frequently either ignore or dismiss diversity; instead, technological liberals expect social diversity to “co-exist with requirements which ensure that certain standards are met and that certain curricular elements form a part of every child’s basic education (British Columbia Royal Commission on Education, 1988, p. 9, cited in Kuchapski, 2002, paragraph 41). In the *technological liberal* view, accountability means commonality, with policy decisions and administrative control placed solidly in the hands of the state, while day-to-day management is left to local communities. Under *technological liberalism*, the job of teachers is to comply with state policies and ensure that common goals are met. Rather than active participation in decision-making, teaching becomes prescribed and merely technical work.

As Kuchapski recognizes in her own summary, as each genre of liberalism emerged, the various stances included values for different educational purposes and different understandings of how schools and teachers should be

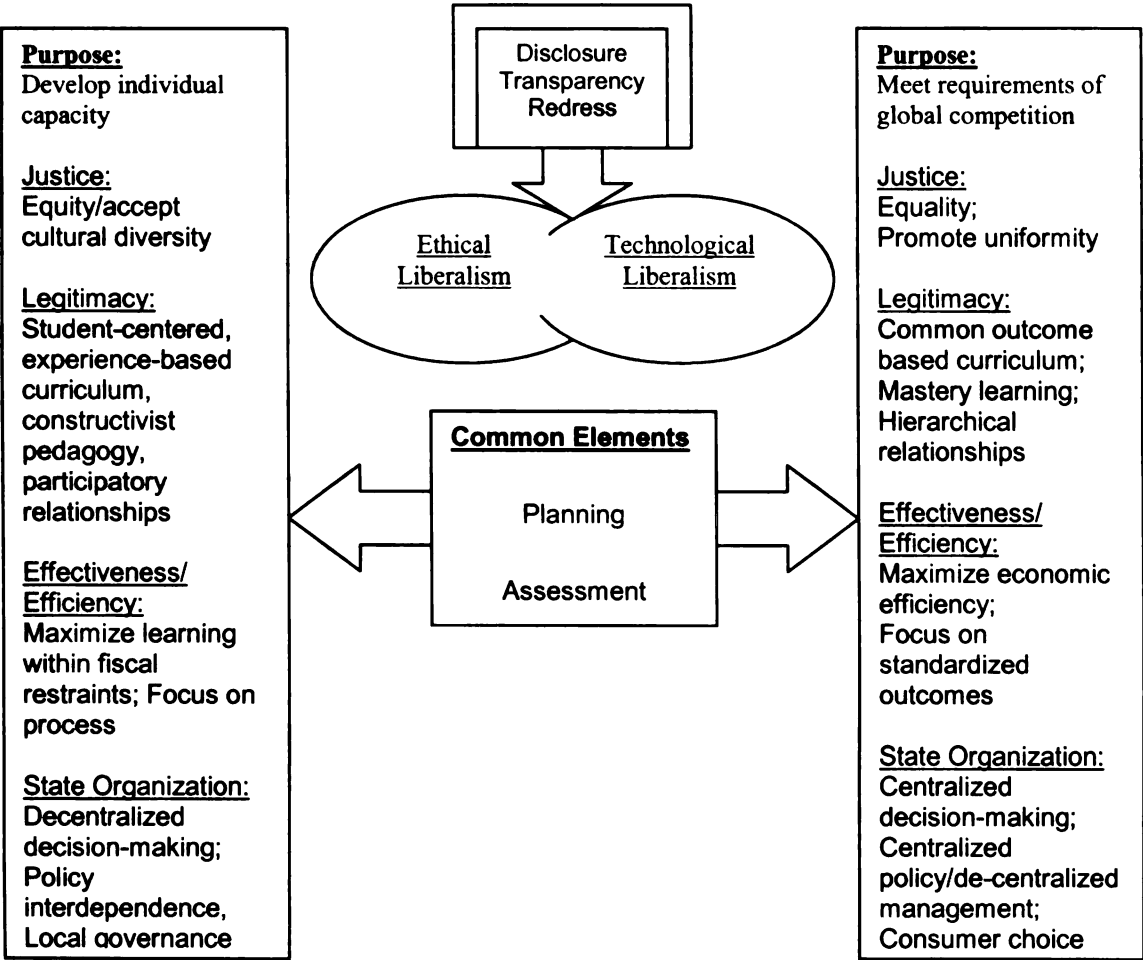
accountable. She further notes that an insistence that accountability reform is fundamentally intended to improve education misses the fact that

notions of improvement and education are themselves dependent upon visions of the public good. Increasing standardized testing improves accountability as defined by technological liberals but falls far short of an accountable education as envisioned by ethical liberals. For ethical liberals, the trend toward uniformity and increased control makes education less responsive to individual student needs, and less able to involve the grassroots in important policy decisions. (paragraph 43)

Kuchapski's framework for education accountability is extremely useful in analyses of policy texts like the 1996 NCTE *Guidelines* text, which may be viewed from a historical perspective and which, via intertextual relationships with earlier versions of itself, is likely to include echoes and elements of the liberal positions she describes. Figure 1 shows Kuchapski's model in graphic form.

For the purposes of this study, I draw on Kuchapski's model of educational accountability in which ethical and technological liberal positions overlap and compete in contemporary curriculum and reform texts. As the analysis in Chapter 5 will demonstrate, the interaction between these two philosophical positions has significant consequences for teacher preparation and curricular content in the English language arts.

**Figure 1: Kuchapski's Accountability Framework (2002)**



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The elements of this review establish a clear need for the kind of research presented here. Research from the New Literacy Studies indicates that there is a growing body of knowledge about language and literacy currently unaccounted for or misappropriated in literacy and language arts curriculum policy that cannot be accounted for by a consideration of the historical context. Elements of the developing New Literacy Studies have been playing out in the field for over thirty years, and both research and theory about sociocultural perspectives on literacy learning particularly accelerated during the time in which the 1996 *Guidelines*

were being constructed. Historical texts in English education suggest a number of ideological issues that are also largely unaccounted for or unarticulated in the *Guidelines*. Finally, research on accountability measures suggests a need for critical analyses of policy texts related to accountability reform in the US. In the next section, I describe the method used to conduct this study. Chapter 3 describes the data sources and research instruments used for the analysis of the *Guidelines*, and Chapter 4 involves a detailed methodological discussion of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995) and the key terms and concepts related to CDA theory and method.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

### *Critical Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method in Literacy Research*

**(NOTE:** Portions of this chapter are derived from the National Reading Conference 2005 Yearbook chapter, “Critical Discourse Analysis in Literacy Research,” written by Burns and Morrell. A version of this paper was delivered in December, 2004 at the National Reading Conference annual convention in San Antonio, Texas.)

#### *Why Critical Discourse Analysis in Literacy Research?*

While students in America’s schools are acquiring literacy at unprecedented rates and levels, we know that a divide grows between the literacy skills of marginalized students and the increasing literacy demands of a print and technology-rich society (Alvermann, 2001). Those who are unable to acquire literacies of power are significantly hindered in their ability to enjoy engaged citizenship or professional membership. We also know from social theory (Morrow and Torres, 1996) and educational sociology (Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Oakes, 1985) that the gap between the “haves” and “have-nots” is largely determined by race and class, and that schools often reproduce the very inequality they might intend to eradicate (Kozol, 1992; MacLeod, 1987).

At the same time, we have witnessed the twentieth century’s “linguistic” turn in philosophy and find ourselves drawing heavily upon theorists and social scientists such as Vygotsky (1962), Bakhtin (1986), and Foucault (1972) who

have argued that meanings are constructed through language. It then becomes important for literacy researchers and educators to understand how classroom discourses shape meaning in ways that promote the social reproduction of inequality. Additionally, we need to understand how classroom discourses are situated within larger meta-institutional discourses that shape, limit, or preserve problematic representations of reality.

However, it is not merely enough to understand the role of discourse in social reproduction. Literacy researchers are also called to intervene in, challenge, and deconstruct oppressive discursive structures to facilitate more empowering engagements with institutionalized discourses or the creation of alternative ones. This language study and language praxis is associated with the term critical discourse analysis.

This chapter explores the relationship between critical discourse analysis (hereafter CDA), literacy research, and literacy education. It begins by theorizing discourse, discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis. It then discusses some of the various roles that CDA can play in literacy research.

### *Critical Discourse Analysis: An Introduction*

CDA is one variant of a number of practices that fall under the rubric of “discourse analysis.” These variations overlap in terms of method and methodology, and are used across disciplinary boundaries. Given their appearance in a number of contexts, along with the multiplicity of ways in which

the term *discourse* can be used, it is useful to briefly review what is meant by “critical” “discourse” analysis, beginning with the latter term.

Meanings for *discourse* are diverse and contested. In her exploration of *discourse* as a concept in academic research, Mills (1997) reviews the ways in which it has been defined across competing theories. She points out its broadest definition as simply ‘verbal communication’. Additionally, *discourse* has been defined as conversational talk, formal speech or writing on a particular subject, or a linguistic unit greater than one sentence, reflecting the origins of the word as a linguistic concept.

In its linguistic applications, Mills offers further evidence showing that *discourse* can be used to describe transactions between a speaker and a listener, or it can be used as a synonym for “text.” She mentions at least one theorist who argues that discourse must be understood to include every utterance, variety of oral discourse, piece of writing, and communicative act that conceives of a speaker and an audience—a view which some would argue makes *discourse* a meaningless term. During the 1960’s, however, particularly in Europe, definitions of discourse began to diverge from general linguistic meanings to take on an array of theoretical and philosophical inflections across fields such as cultural theory, literary studies, and social psychology.

Given the range of fields in which discourse is relevant to research, the term cannot be assigned a single meaning; rather, it is important to determine the context in which *discourse* is being used (Mills, 1997). In CDA, the term frequently takes on Foucaultian inflections and refers to the production and

circulation of rule-governed statements—a usage consonant with cultural theory. Within this context, the ‘discourse’ of critical discourse analysis refers to “a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements” (Foucault, 1972, p. 80). It refers not only to language, but also to the social practices involved with its production and consumption, the uses that language is put to in a social group, and the effects (intentional or otherwise) that the text has on social interaction and meaning-making. As stated by Jaworski and Coupland (1999), “Discourse is language use relative to social, political, and cultural formations—it is language reflecting social order but also language shaping social order, and shaping individuals’ interactions with society” (p. 3). The movement from a solely textual examination to the articulation of its socio-historical and socio-cultural contexts allows analysts to move from the more descriptive frames of traditional discourse analysis to a critical frame in which texts can be more clearly seen as the products of ideological discursive practices.

The other term involved with CDA, *critical*, is contingent on the view of discourse above as it relates to ideology. CDA construes discourses as ideological because they are used to represent the systems of thought, manifested in language, that groups and individuals use to identify themselves, filter information, and interpret meaning. As ideological systems, discourses tend to reproduce themselves along with the conditions necessary to sustain them. However, rather than accepting the deterministic definitions of ideology found in vulgar Marxism, CDA treats ideology as a complex structural concept. Drawing on poststructural theories, CDA treats ideologies as historically situated, multiple,



changing, overlapping, competing, and conflicting. Further, CDA does not treat ideology as either “good” or “bad”; rather, it recognizes that *ideology* is not intended to be opposed to some concept of “the truth” that would otherwise render the term biased. At the same time, CDA asserts that an ideology *is* positive or negative depending on whether it helps to achieve some desirable end in a desirable way. This is a matter of perspective that highlights a mostly “inescapable Us/Them dichotomy” in CDA and an underlying belief that, from a critical perspective, some ideologies are “better” than others when the social project involves an attempt to achieve equity (van Dijk, 2003). The key is to maintain a stance wherein the researcher recognizes that ideologies and discourses interact in unpredictable ways, and that even “positive” ideologies may have negative or unanticipated effects.

In CDA, the term *critical* also distinguishes this method from others because of its interest in change and intervention. While it is true that all forms of discourse analysis pay attention to the social implications of the texts they study (Jaworski & Coupland, 1999), not all forms of analysis are focused on affecting practice. As such, it is significant that CDA places the term “critical” at the fore. Whereas other types of discourse analysis are primarily designed to *describe* discourse, *critical* discourse analysis seeks to understand and change discourse processes in order achieve equitable social relations. Because of this, it is aligned with the brand of “critical” associated with the Frankfurt School, which emphasizes an emancipatory agenda.

Before proceeding with a discussion of CDA as a research method, it is also important to examine its use of ideology as a central concept for understanding how discourses embody relations of power. In the next section, ideology is examined in terms of its function as a social structure.

### *Ideology in Discourse*

The use of a term like *ideology* is perhaps the central point of criticism for all critical theories, and CDA is no exception to that rule. However, although “ideology” is a term that has particular meanings in popular parlance (largely as a pejorative term used to connote extreme and inflexible political positions), it has other meanings that are still relevant for social science research.

Ideology was first described as simply the science of ideas (Felluga, 2003). In Marxism, the term came to refer to the systems of ideas that exist in a culture—multiple religious ideologies, political ideologies, and aesthetic ideologies used by social groups to make sense of their lives: what is real, true, good, and moral (Marx & Engels, 1968). In the sense of early Marxism, ideologies articulate what and how people think about everyday life. According to early theory, “ideologies supply all the terms and assumptions and frameworks that individuals use to understand their culture, and ideologies supply all the things that people believe in, and then act on” (Klages, 2001).

Contention around the use of the term “ideology” emerged when Marx’s colleague Friedrich Engels began to argue that ideologies were illusory—fabricated filters for thought that masked the “true” nature of reality and misled

those who held them. For Engels, and for Marx, the illusions created by ideology created “false consciousness” in people so that they misperceived reality and were deluded into thinking they were not exploited by the capitalist system when in fact they were.

Early Marxist thought, then, suggested that ideology was a monolithic system for governing the thoughts, beliefs, and actions of individuals in a society, mainly as a mechanism by which the capitalist bourgeoisie persuaded the proletariat to accept the conditions of their own oppression. Workers unwittingly perpetuated their own oppression by adopting the very ideologies that facilitated that oppression. It is especially this deterministic characterization of proletarian ignorance and complicity that has driven most criticism of the use of *ideology* as a term and concept in the social sciences.

If Marxist theories had failed to continue in their development, ideology would not be a very useful or valid concept. However, numerous theorists continued to work with the concept in order to develop a more refined and practical understanding. Chief among these may be Althusser (cite), who maintained ideology as a structural concept but also extended its usefulness. His conception of “particular ideologies” is more useful than earlier Marxist representations, and his is the one that corresponds to the concept of *discourse* found in Foucault’s work as well as the work of critical linguists such as Gee (1996) and Fairclough (1995).

In an Althusserian view of ideology, a given ideology or constellation of ideologies offers individuals and groups the means to identify themselves and

other members of a social group, and also to distinguish non-members; in many ways this definition is related to what Gee has referred to as the “identity tool-kit” used by members of a Discourse community (1996). As such, ideological constellations are used to provide and gain access in a social group and are therefore essential if one is to act within a group or be identified as a member. Arguing that language mediates thought, belief, and action for all people, Althusser (1971) believed that *no one* has a clear connection to “Truth” and/or “Reality”. People can only develop *representations* of the real and the true, and they use socially constructed ideologies to filter meaning and create codes, patterns, vocabularies, and perspectives for discerning what is correct or identifiable as “reality.” In other words, representations of reality can and do vary according to perspectives in social systems.

For Althusser, ideologies do not result in “false consciousness”; rather, ideologies can come to function as “common sense” for their adherents. Adopting a set of ideologies, whether consciously or via implicit socialization, requires individuals to subject themselves to certain rules, logics, and ways of being that are largely unquestioned by members of the social group. This may explain why ideology is frequently seen as pejorative—we tend to see our own beliefs as “true” while labeling the beliefs of others as “ideological” and false, when in fact there is no escape from ideology for anyone, including ourselves. In this way, ideology is neither good nor bad, except in that some ideologies have more equitable effects than others depending on one’s philosophical perspective.

When I use the term ideology, I mean the particular, historically situated

systems for thinking and acting that supply individuals and social groups with the frameworks needed to identify themselves as members, identify and recognize other members, understand culture, interpret meaning, access resources, and act to achieve goals. This is not the same as the original mechanistic ideology of vulgar Marxism. Individuals and groups can adopt multiple ideologies at the same time, and they can adopt and maintain conflicting ideologies at the same time as well. Further, it is possible for members of a single discourse community to hold different sets of ideologies while still recognizing each other as members of the same general community. In that sense, a discourse community can be composed of a number of sub-discourses (for example, proponents of whole-language and phonics in the language arts can still recognize each other as “English teachers”). Because of this condition, ideologies do not operate mechanistically to determine thought and behavior, but instead work chemically to produce a range of thought and behavior around some dominant center. It is at this center that ideological struggles occur, as the majority or the powerful attempt to maintain control while marginal members work to gain access and power themselves.

### *CDA as Method*

Having situated CDA through a discussion of its constituent terms, the next section discusses CDA as a research method. As Fairclough describes it (1992, 1995, 2003; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999), CDA attempts to bridge the divide between direct and indirect forms of discourse analysis. “Direct” forms of

analysis refers to those forms that deal “directly” with close linguistic analysis, while “indirect” analysis refers to those forms of discourse analysis that deal with the contextual aspects of discourse. In CDA, the analyst is just as likely to use the tools of linguistic analysis at the grammatical level as she is to use tools from cultural theory to examine social implications and power relations involved with textual processes. Norman Fairclough, whose version of CDA is applied in this study, distinguishes CDA from other kinds of research and discourse analysis and explicitly situates CDA as a kind of activist research methodology, stating,

“The objective of CDA is to uncover the ideological assumptions that are hidden in the words of our written texts or oral speech in order to resist and overcome various forms of ‘power over’ or to gain an appreciation that we are exercising power over, unbeknownst to us.” (Fairclough, 1989)

The method of CDA involves a triad structure to guide research. It assumes that discourse is both constrained and enabled by social structures and by culture, and proceeds by examining relationships between 1) texts as speech acts (texts as ideological recordings of communication events), 2) discursive practices around a text (processes of producing, writing, speaking, reading, and interacting), and 3) the sociocultural context in which these practices occur and within which resulting texts circulate and regulate (contexts as coming with their sets of rights and obligations that affect what is likely to be said [or not said]) (Fairclough, 1995). Fairclough’s triad can be represented as follows:

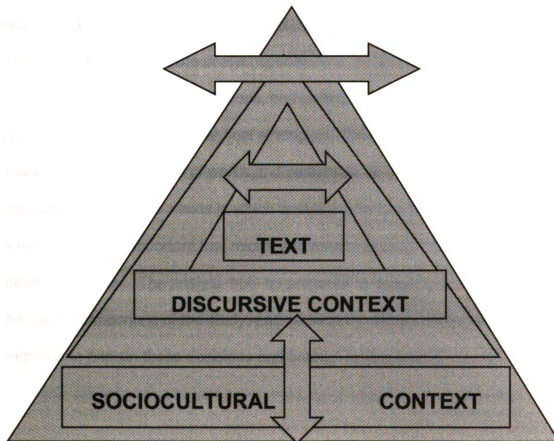
- **Level 1:**     **The Text**—analyzing the linguistic constructions, forms, and meanings of the text itself.
- **Level 2:**     **Discursive Context**—analyzing the production processes

involved with the creation of the text in a social group. This may involve an examination of generic constraints, composition processes, distribution processes, and so forth.

- **Level 3:** **Sociocultural Context**—analyzing the use of the text in its wider social, political, and cultural context. This level includes analyzing the relations of the text in a social network, analyzing the text in terms of its historical position, and/or analyzing the text in terms of its effect on power relations across social groups.

Below, Figure 2 illustrates Fairclough's Triad graphically.

**Figure 2:** *Fairclough's Analytic Triad for Critical Discourse Analysis*



CDA views texts as speech acts—that is, they affect how language gets used and how meaning gets made. Texts are further viewed as both products of discourse communities and as producers of discourse communities, operating dialectically to aid in the identification and representation of the group. Texts get used to talk desired realities into being, and in doing so they develop and set forth the terms and norms for who gets to talk, what they may say, how they may say it, what they should value, how they may think, and how they may behave. Given the powerful effects that a text can have in shaping subjectivities, it becomes important to understand how texts reify ideological discursive positions and tools (Fairclough, 1989).

Much to the chagrin of some researchers and theorists, particularly representatives of mainstream linguistics, CDA rarely proceeds along the lines of a strict method. Rather, the analyst spends time immersed in the data, playing to find categories, themes, articulations, and patterns, and gradually developing a systematic set of relevant analytical strategies. These strategies may involve analysis at the micro-level of words and sentences, or at the macro-level of the structures and social contexts in which textual production takes place. Further, it is not necessarily important that micro- and macro- analyses take place in a hierarchical order. The analyst must be prepared to make decisions based on the needs and context of the study, and as such the analyst must also be prepared to explain those decisions and bracket his/her biases.



The work of CDA proceeds from the identification of a text as part of a social event or a chain of events that occur in a network of social practices. The text is then articulated with other texts that may come before or after it in a discursive chain in order to help establish the context of the analysis. After identifying the genre or mix of genres that constitute the text, the analyst might next characterize the text's orientation to difference and also attempt to determine the level of intertextuality in the text—that is, whether and how other relevant texts and references are included or excluded by the text being studied.

Having described the context, genres, orientations to difference, and levels of intertextuality, the analyst might identify the assumptions at play in a text that have implications for the representation of reality, truth, and value—a focus on the ideological orientations of a text. In addition to these moves, a critical discourse analyst might describe the semantic, grammatical, and lexical relations of a text—that is, how the actual construction of words, clauses, and sentences is accomplished. These activities may be accompanied by efforts to determine the grammatical mood, the kinds of statements a text makes, and the purposes of those statements in the context of the social event. Next, the analyst might identify the discourses a text draws on and discuss the features that characterize those discourses and represent social events in particular ways. Finally, a critical discourse analyst might identify and evaluate the styles involved with the construction of a text, truth claims and their modalities, and values that a text conveys.

To summarize, critical discourse analysis involves the study of written

texts in the contexts of their use in order to understand how they function as ideological instruments. It helps develop awareness about how texts shape discourses, and it may be used to support efforts to deal with difference and create spaces for equitable interaction and change among social groups. The method is essentially a structuralist, neo-marxist approach to the analysis of language. It assumes that social and institutional systems can affect social groups and individuals in particular ways, shaping thoughts, values, and behaviors. CDA focuses explicitly on issues of power. A key intention is to promote positive social change, which in this study is defined as change that increases equity and cooperation across different social groups to the benefit of all.

In this study, power is conceived as dependent on social relations, aligned with Foucault's assertion that power is not a material possession. However, this study proceeds under the structuralist assumption that people can and do exert power in ways that dominate and marginalize others in the interest of controlling a situation. And, while no group or individual is ever completely powerless or all-powerful, this study is undertaken with the assumption that dominant discourses can silence minority voices by controlling language and access to public discourse.

It is important to repeat that the process described above is not intended to totalize the practices of CDA, and the sequential organization of this overview is artificial; CDA is not intended as a rigid procedure. Depending on the level of analysis and point of entry into a text, a critical discourse analysis may or may

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not involve detailed linguistic analysis. Many discourse analysts focus on the use of social theory to construct explanatory critiques of texts (Bhaskar, 1986, cited in Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999) rather than linguistic descriptions of them. Both types of analysis are useful, and any given analysis is likely to include a mixture of the two, but in these latter cases, the focus of analysis will be on the identification of ideological positions, discourses and styles, and the value systems and power relations set up within a text and the social event it accompanies.

### *CDA as a Policy Tool*

In addition to potential functions as a tool for research and pedagogy (Burns & Morell, 2005), CDA holds promise as a policy tool. A major implication of the present work analyzing teacher preparation guidelines is that, complementary to its function as a research tool, CDA has the potential to be used *in the process* of text construction to address the complexities inherent in the production of policy texts, which are intended to shape, direct, sustain, and reproduce educational practice. In this context, CDA becomes a tool for aligning textual components, addressing problems of intertextual representation, and mitigating or resolving the problems and limitations of various policy genres, for example. The reflexive role of CDA allows it to play a powerful role in the pragmatics of educational policy and curriculum design.

One of Fairclough's primary goals in the use of CDA is the creation of spaces that allow for talk across difference (1989, 1995). Particularly in policy

discussions, where consensus models frequently prevent the articulation of differences, CDA can help to ensure that discourse proceeds along lines that lead to *more* if not *total* critical discourse. As described by Habermas (1973), a context of absolute critical discourse is one in which all parties and interests are represented equally and free of hierarchical relations of power. According to Habermas, this totally inclusive critical discourse is impossible to achieve; however, a context of critical discourse is still a worthy goal, and an ideal worth striving for. CDA provides a set of tools and dispositions that enable social groups involved in conversations across difference to *better* and *more* completely involve concerned parties and to place them on more equal footing toward the achievement of equitable outcomes.

In addition to the potential for CDA to function as an inclusive device for policy conversations, it also has the capacity to allow for the pragmatic design and administration of curricula and policy. As Cherryholmes (1988, 1999) has noted, *all* curricula are temporal, contingent, flawed, and historical; as such they are limited in their sustainability—what was desirable fifty years ago (or twenty, or ten, or even five) is unlikely to be desirable now. By using critical discourse analysis as a means of periodically revisiting curricula and policy, it becomes possible to make judgments about what needs changing from a given perspective, how it might be changed, and what the consequences of change might be. As Fairclough states, any change in policy that might result in social transformation has winners and losers (2003). As educators making curricular decisions that affect millions of people's access to literacy and opportunity, CDA

should be indispensable. Particularly when it is used in combination with resources from the various social sciences, CDA can be a powerful instrument for social equity from *within* the construction of education policies, not just a powerful instrument for reaction *to* them.

In the next chapter, I discuss the method of CDA used for this analysis of the 1996 NCTE *Guidelines*, including data collection, transcription, analysis procedures, data codes, framing of the study, and positionality of the researcher.

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## CHAPTER 4: METHOD

### *Data Selection, Coding, Procedures, and Framing*

The purpose of this study is to engage in a close reading and analysis of one attempt to create curriculum policy for teacher preparation within a discourse of accountability. What are the consequences of blending, on the one hand, a desire to accurately represent the knowledge and activities of “English language arts” to professional classroom teachers and university teacher educators, and, on the other hand, a desire to enable university English language arts teacher education programs to negotiate national accountability processes in ways that are recognized and valued by outsiders? How do NCTE’s own professional guidelines represent the English language arts, literacy, and teacher education for the organization? What are the consequences of these representations, given what is known about the nature of language, literacy, education, and standards-based accountability reform?

Centering this study on a textual analysis of NCTE’s 1996 *Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of the English Language Arts* makes sense. NCTE’s teacher preparation policy document is intended for use by university English education programs to guide curriculum design according to “what teachers of the English language arts should believe, know, and be able to do in classrooms” (1996a, p. 4). Prepared by NCTE’s Standing Committee on Teacher Preparation and Certification, the 1996 *Guidelines* describe what the committee believes is necessary to teach the English language arts via three clusters of guidelines and



a set of underlying guiding principles. The authors assert that the guidelines are voluntary, and that guidelines are necessary in order to create a shared vision for English education that will lead to the production of “effective” English language arts teachers; in addition, the authors state that the guidelines are written to help English language arts teacher education programs obtain national accreditation from governing bodies like the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education. The Standing Committee states that it intends the guidelines to be treated as integrated rather than hierarchical, and they are to be considered as overlapping and contextual rather than prescriptive. The committee offers underlying principles for diversity, content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and skill, opportunity, and dynamic literacy. Its forty-nine guidelines are grouped into clusters around attitudes, content knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge/skill.

It is interesting to note that very little has been written about the NCTE *Guidelines*, and no one has engaged in a methodical inquiry or research project related to the 1996 text. Shortly after its publication in 1996, the Conference on English Education’s journal *English Education* dedicated a volume to commentaries and responses to the *Guidelines*, including a reflection on the process by Robert Small, the chair of the Standing Committee at that time (1997). In addition to Small’s remarks, the volume also included a commentary by Ruth Vinz (1997), and a conversation-style piece by Fairbanks et al. (1997), a group of classroom teachers and teacher educators seeking to map the contents of the Guidelines onto their own pedagogical practices and perspectives. For the

most part, the papers included in the special issue offer positive characterizations of the Guidelines; however, no research projects or methodical critiques were included. The present study seeks to contribute these latter two “missing pieces” in order to initiate a research-based critical dialogue about NCTE’s accountability project.

### *Data Selection*

The identification and selection of the 1996 *Guidelines* as an important site of study for English education is important for many reasons. First, the NCTE *Guidelines* represent the efforts of a major professional teaching organization to establish a coherent curriculum policy for use in public institutions. As such, the *Guidelines* also represent an attempt by a non-state entity to influence the curricula of public institutions via participation in state and national discussions about education accountability and the purposes of teacher education. At a time when national accountability movements have moved teaching organizations to try and establish themselves as more professional—that is, warranted and capable of articulating and managing educational policy and curriculum for their own governance—the publication of a text like the 1996 *Guidelines* carries a high degree of significance.

The issues of accountability and professionalization in teacher education are important contextualizing issues that help to frame any examination of the NCTE *Guidelines*. Recently educators, economists, businesspeople, policy makers, and other researchers have engaged in ongoing debates via public

forums and professional journals about the nature of accountability and its relation to professionalization in the field of education. To encapsulate this partisan debate, I will refer to the recent publication of a series of articles by Cochran-Smith and Fries and other commentators in the journal *Educational Researcher* (2001, 2002). In these articles, Cochran-Smith and Fries make an effort to represent two conflicting discourses about accountability, standards, and professionalization in education.

On one hand, teachers and teacher educators are interested in increasing the professional nature of education in order to increase the power of teachers to control curriculum and policy, make autonomous pedagogical and assessment decisions, and set political agendas for their own work. This group uses research evidence to argue that classroom teachers at all educational levels make a significant difference in improving educational quality, and that the key ingredient to their success is participation in formal programs of university teacher education (for a representative study, see Grossman's 1990 study of university- and alternatively-certified English language arts teachers). As such, this pro-teacher group is attempting to create a powerful and more consistent role for classroom teachers, university teacher education program representatives, and education researchers in national policy conversations.

On the other hand, Cochran-Smith and Fries describe a second group that opposes university teacher education, a group arguing that entrance into the profession must be broadened beyond the realm of universities to make it easier and more desirable for "the best and the brightest" to become teachers. Also

using research data (sometimes using the same evidence as its opposition) this group argues that university teacher education has little impact on student achievement, and that such programs are unnecessary hurdles to classroom teaching. While they believe that teachers are important, this group stresses the need for tightly controlled curriculum and assessment to govern teachers' classroom activities, "academic rigor," "standards for excellence," and the need to make teachers and schools "accountable" for what they're students learn (or don't learn). This group believes that accountability standards and testing will compel teachers and schools to improve; those that fail to improve will risk sanctions and even privatization.

These two groups are significant. The group in favor of "accountability" for compliance brings a particular set of ideologies to the project of education, and consists mostly of education outsiders—often politicians, business leaders, and economists who apply corporate models of efficiency and productivity to the "business" of education. The group in favor of accountability toward professionalized teaching consists mostly of education insiders—teachers, education researchers, and teacher educators. Currently, the former group appears to be controlling the national public discourse and implementing its agenda to curb university teacher education, while the latter group works to gain access to the national conversation. In doing so, those in favor of teacher professionalization have tended to adopt the discourse practices of standardization in order to accommodate what they perceive to be the political inevitability of the accountability movement—teachers can "play ball," or they can

watch from the sidelines as others re-design the playing field and change the rules of the game.

Given educators' efforts to either initiate or enter national conversations about accountability, the NCTE *Guidelines* for teacher preparation become extremely relevant. The *Guidelines* are a curriculum policy text written by teacher educators, educational researchers, and classroom language arts teachers for use in the political context described above. In order to better understand the discursive interactions between accountability and teacher professionalization, it is useful to analyze the *Guidelines* in order to determine whether and how various ideological strands contribute to its activity.

Further evidence of the *Guidelines'* use in national education accountability makes analysis of this text even more important. Through a partnership with the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the NCTE *Guidelines* are currently used as a pre-requisite for all university teacher education programs that choose to undergo NCATE accreditation review (NCATE, 2003). In this capacity, the "guidelines" function as de facto standards used by NCATE and client universities to frame the accreditation process and assess programs' readiness for accreditation review. In such a capacity, the *Guidelines* gain some force as a legitimizing discourse for both the process of national accreditation and also for particular visions about the nature of teaching and learning in the English language arts. An analysis of the *Guidelines*, then, offers an important point of entry into discussions about both

standards-based reform and accountability, and also a crucial site for discussion about what counts as “English language arts.”

It is important to acknowledge that NCTE will soon issue its 2006 revision of its teacher preparation guidelines. While this fact might lead some to argue that an analysis of the 1996 *Guidelines* is irrelevant, it is important to recognize the intertextual nature of the *Guidelines* as a historical and political document. According to the authors of the 1996 version, the *Guidelines* maintain many strong links with previous versions, and represent a relatively stable and ongoing discourse about English language arts teacher education. Furthermore, in communications with members of the current Standing Committee for Teacher Preparation and Certification, the 2006 *Guidelines* will change very little in comparison to the 1996 version (personal communication, 2004).

In addition to the 1996 *Guidelines*’ links to historical documents, current national accountability processes, and the upcoming revision in 2006, it is also necessary to look beyond the temporal aspects of this discourse analysis. While one goal of this study is certainly to describe a particular discourse about English education during the period of the last ten years, other goals of this study include developing a greater understanding of how discursive processes and textual activity in policy and curriculum operate to enable and/or constrain activity in the field of English education. While some details about particular kinds of work or specific issues may change over time, the processes and contexts in place for the production of those policies have remained relatively stable; therefore, a study of the 1996 *Guidelines* can be informative for work and policy in the future.

Additionally, a study beginning with the 1996 *Guidelines* initiates an ongoing inquiry into English education curriculum and policy, and contributes to the archive of historical texts and policy documents useful for the study of such issues. In short, a critical discourse analysis of the 1996 NCTE *Guidelines* is relevant to the field beyond its description of a single temporally bounded policy text.

Fairclough (2000) has offered a series of reasons justifying the use of textual analysis in social science research that solidify the case for the kind of research represented by the present study. In “Linguistic and Intertextual Analysis in Discourse Analysis,” Fairclough (2000) outlines five reasons why textual analysis “ought to be more widely recognized, within a framework for discourse analysis, as part of the methodological armoury of social science....” (p. 203). First, Fairclough notes that the social structures that many social scientists study are in “a dialectical relationship with social action (the concern of ‘micro’ social analysis), such that the former are both conditions and resources for the latter....” (p. 204). Second, he notes that “language is widely misperceived as transparent, so that the social and ideological ‘work’ that language does in producing, reproducing, or transforming social structures, relations, and identities is routinely ‘overlooked’” (p. 204). Third, Fairclough asserts that, “texts constitute a major source of evidence for grounding claims about social structures, relations, and processes” (p. 204). Fourth, he claims that, “texts are sensitive barometers of social processes, movement and diversity, and textual analysis can provide particularly good indicators of social

change” (p. 204). Finally, he connects social scientific research to critical objectives, stating,

It is increasingly through texts...that social control and social domination are exercised (and indeed negotiated and resisted). Textual analysis, as a part of critical discourse analysis, can therefore be an important political resource, for example in connection with efforts to establish *critical language awareness* (Clark et al., 1990; Fairclough, 1992) as an indispensable element in language education. (205, italics in original)

### *Data Analysis*

Having identified and established the 1996 *Guidelines* as an important site for study about discourse and accountability in English education, I read the text several times and developed a high degree of familiarity with its contents. Table 3 below lists the twelve sections of the *Guidelines* as follows:

**Table 3: 1996 NCTE *Guidelines* Chapter List**

Chapter 1:	Introduction
Chapter 2:	Statement of Underlying Principles
Chapter 3:	Attitudes of Effective Language Arts Teachers
Chapter 4:	Content Knowledge for Effective English Language Arts Teachers
Chapter 5:	Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills Demonstrated By Effective Language Arts Teachers
Chapter 6:	Interrelations: Attitudes, Knowledge, and Pedagogy
Chapter 7:	Relation of the Guidelines to Standards Projects
Chapter 8:	Characteristics of Effective Teacher-Preparation Programs for English Language Arts
Chapter 9:	Effective Transition to Teaching
Chapter 10:	Inservice Education: Ten Principles
Chapter 11:	Continuing Issues in the Preparation of English Language Arts Teachers
Chapter 12:	Appendix: A Personal View from a Beginning Teacher

This study concentrates only on the portions of the text that directly concern the curriculum policy guidelines—chapters 1-5, chapter 7, and chapter 11. It does not address the chapters on model programs, transition to teaching, or inservice education. Chapters 8 and 9 on induction and inservice were not



authored by the Standing Committee; rather they may be regarded as supplemental chapters that were included by the Standing Committee in order to offer a vision of English teacher education as a long-term, ongoing process that extends beyond the confines of university teacher preparation.

After reading and notating the text in several iterations, I conducted an extensive review of the literature on English language arts history and curriculum, the history of NCTE, and literacy theory. Some representative texts from this review are Berlin (2003), Scholes (1992), Graff (1987), Ohmann (1976), Hook (1979), Applebee (1974), Dixon (1966), Lloyd-Jones & Lunsford (1987), Smagorinsky & Whiting (1995), and Street (1984). This review allowed me to identify an archive of relevant artifacts for this study, and helped to characterize the episteme of English language arts education. As defined by Foucault, the archive and episteme are important discursive structures. The episteme consists of “the sum total of the discursive structures which come about as a result of the interaction of the range of discourses circulating and authorized at a particular time” and which “include the range of methodologies which a culture draws on as self-evident in order to be able to think about certain subjects,” and the archive consists of rules which limit “the forms of expressibility,” “forms of conversation,” “forms of memory” and “forms of reactivization” at “a given period and for a definite society” (Foucault, 1978, cited in Mills, 1997, p. 57, 63). Once these texts were reviewed and synthesized, creating a contextual and sociocultural frame for the study, I returned to the text of the *Guidelines* and coded them

systematically using critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992, 1995, 2003; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999).

In order to code the *Guidelines*, I designed a system aligned with Fairclough's (2003) method of CDA. Each chapter of the text was transcribed and "chunked" according to sentence structure. Subjects, verbs, and modifying phrases were separated in order to enable searches for verb patterns, diction and tone, social actor patterns, assumptions, orientations to difference, genre elements, and statements of ethical liberalism and technological liberalism as described in Chapter 2.

In a series of passes, the text was coded for each auxiliary verb phrase, diction and tone, the representation of social actors, the presence of value, propositional, and existential assumptions, the use of nominalizations, statements aligned with ethical and/or technological liberal philosophies (as described in Chapter 2), orientations to difference, and genre markers in the text such as the use of numbered lists, absolute statements, statements of consensus, etc., which Fairclough notes as functioning,

to limit policy options by portraying the socioeconomic order as simply given, an unquestionable and inevitable horizon which is itself untouchable by policy and narrowly constrains options, essential rather than contingent, and without time depth. Moreover, these texts often appear to be promotional rather than analytical, concerned more to persuade people that these are indeed the only practicable policies than to open up dialogue (2003, 95-96).

Table 4 in the Appendices shows how these codes were operationalized.

Once the transcript had been fully coded and reviewed (See Appendix A for samples of data transcription and coding), discourse segments were extracted from the text and organized according to pattern and function.

1. Auxiliary verb phrases, functioning to establish a set of obligations for teachers and students in the English language arts, were extracted and used to characterize the roles and activities of these groups in the NCTE accountability framework, and helped to establish the ways in which guidelines were used to enable or constrain certain ways of being, thinking, knowing, valuing, and acting in English language arts classrooms and teacher education programs.
2. Similarly, items coded for diction and tone were extracted and categorized to understand how particular constructions were used to reify assumptions about teaching, learning, and language, to project particular values as universals in the teaching of English language arts, or to mark a particular style or tone reflecting the authors' attitude toward a given topic. For example, repeated constructs such as "effective teaching," "effective instruction," "appropriate language use," "appropriate use of technology", "providing environments," "creating environments," etc., were extracted from the text and grouped by patterns of use and topic focus (See Appendix B for Samples of Diction and Tone Categories).
3. Statements concerning social actors in the text were counted and categorized for use in representing the functions of various agents in the

text of the Guidelines. These social agents were analyzed according to a number of variables, including

- Number of references in the text
  - Whether the social actor was realized in the text by a pronoun
  - Whether the social actor was present, absent, or backgrounded in the text
  - Whether the social actor was represented personally or impersonally
  - Whether the social actor was named or categorized
  - Whether the social actor was represented specifically or generically.
4. Value assumptions, propositional assumptions, and existential assumptions were highlighted and linked to elements of ethical and/or technological liberal philosophical stances in the text in order to develop patterns of inter-discursive activity that helped establish power-relations between curriculum and accountability interests.
5. Finally, the text was analyzed for statements that revealed varying orientations to difference with regard to teaching practices, subject matter content, the nature of teaching, learning, and language/literacy, and the functions of the *Guidelines* as a policy document.

In Fairclough's framework for critical discourse analysis (1995, 2003), the text constitutes only the first level of analysis. In addition to close reading and linguistic analysis, critical discourse analysts also attempt to study the layers of discursive practice and sociocultural context in order to fully situate their analyses and develop more robust evidence for claims and conclusions. This study was initially designed to include both interviews with members of the 1996 and 2006 NCTE Standing Committees in order to better understand the

processes involved with the writing and publication of the *Guidelines*, and also a meta-analysis of survey data gathered by the Conference on English Education about professionals' understandings of "quality English teaching." In each case, these two additional levels of inquiry were intended to help triangulate findings from the textual analysis. Unfortunately, in each case, the available data was insufficient for use in this study. Across the 1996 and 2005 committees, less than 15% of the members responded to invitations for interviews. Similarly, the number of respondents to the CEE survey was too small to generate reliable data.

In spite of these limitations, an analysis of the *Guidelines* at the level of the text may still be valuable. The text includes numerous references to the processes used by the committee to write the *Guidelines*, and the use of research and scholarship involved with the archive described earlier provides a significant amount of information about the sociocultural context in which the *Guidelines* were produced. In short, while it would have been desirable to incorporate the interview and survey data described here, its absence does not preclude a rigorous analysis of the *Guidelines* text; neither does its absence necessarily invalidate claims and findings from the perspective of textual activity. Future studies may improve upon existing textual evidence to solidify and complicate our understandings of how accountability and curriculum interact in texts like the NCTE *Guidelines*. For this study, my analysis focuses both on the content and meaning of the published text, attending to the discursive structures (generic structures, framing, orientations to difference, etc.) that organize and

drive it while also accounting for contextual issues and discursive processes around the production of the *Guidelines* as much as possible.

### *Positionality and Advocacy in Critical Discourse Analysis*

There are limitations to any research methodology; Critical Discourse Analysis is no exception. Although my intention is to offer this study as “friendly fire” for my profession, I am aware that a large-scale critique of discourse in English education, conducted by an insider junior member of the profession and a member of NCTE, requires close attention and care regarding audience and rhetoric. Given the tendency of discourses to “nudge” insider dissenters back into the mainstream, to ignore them, or to remove them entirely (Gee, 1992), the first task of representing discourses in the NCTE *Guidelines* involves cultivating balance, care, and respect for the community under study. The “missionary work” that is explicit in Critical Discourse Analysis theory, and the inherently critical orientation of rhetorical inquiry can be problematic. Like Segal et al. (1998), I am uncomfortable with looking in “for a brief time on the tacit knowledge that others have acquired over a lifetime and then [telling] them what it is” (p. 82-83).

It is important to develop methods of rhetorical inquiry that are acceptable for use in professional self-critique, and yet rigorous and critical enough to yield useful findings and feasible plans of action from a position inside of the discourse community, particularly because of the challenges involved with analyzing a discourse from the inside. For example, although I am a member of NCTE, that

identification must come with an acknowledgement that NCTE includes members who hold a wide range of values and beliefs. Given that, it would be disingenuous for me to claim that I am representative of the NCTE membership. Rather, my research, as is any research, is founded on a standpoint. This study is an attempt to analyze discourse in a manner that is methodologically sound according to critical discourse analysis theory. But critical discourse analysis is an advocacy methodology—it inherently involves the maintenance of a particular position from which the analyst ‘reads’ the discourse with the intent of creating spaces for dialogue across different positions and a movement toward equitable social change. In the case of this study, my intention is first to describe the discourse of the NCTE *Guidelines*. That intention is founded upon and followed by an intention to engage in and alter that discourse in the interest of increasing NCTE’s access to and control over state and national policy talks. It is also an attempt to introduce new developing perspectives on literacy theory and practice into NCTE’s policy and curriculum conversations so that members of the organization can A) respond to changing literacy practices and cultural contexts for English language arts teaching and learning, and B) represent the range of “English language arts” in a way that is both more inclusive and fluid than current policy discourses and genres account for.

My position, then, is decidedly tied to perspective and epistemological assumptions. Specifically, I take the perspective of the New Literacy Studies to frame my analysis of the NCTE *Guidelines*, and assume the neo-marxist structuralist and critical position of a critical discourse analysis. It is an advocacy

position with a strong relativist component (Cameron et al., 2000), and it assumes that, while social structures function to enable and constrain social interaction, they do so in complex ways that can be characterized as ideological.

Terms like *ideological* and *rhetorical* that are commonly used in CDA are highly charged and loaded in ways that can alienate the subjects to whom they are applied. The question of ideology, in particular, is terribly important. Used carelessly in an analysis like this one, it could naïvely imply that the members of the NCTE Standing Committee were involved in deliberate acts of exclusion intended to maintain their power. I do not believe nor intend to imply that such was the case, and yet it is essential to ask questions about how ideologies positioned the authors of the *Guidelines* as both witting and unwitting agents; the exercise of power always has unintended consequences. Still, these are difficult matters to talk about in a professional discourse community, and they pose difficult compositional challenges. According to Segal et al. (1998), without a respectful and cautious approach to communicating findings from rhetorical analysis to the community being studied,

...[I]t is possible that when we say 'rhetoric,' they will hear 'your writing is all manipulation.' When we say 'social construction,' they will hear, 'you're all a bunch of frauds.' When we say 'ideology,' they will think 'political correctness.' So, how do we go about challenging traditional mind-sets while still showing respect for the people we study? (1998, 82).

This study will in part involve an exploration of the issues that Segal et al. raise. By engaging in the discussion above, my intention is to help articulate and bracket my own biases to the extent that such a thing is possible in any research study. Although Creswell (1998) warns against studying "your own backyard," I



believe that attempts within a social group like NCTE to describe, understand, and control the group's discourses are important and desirable (p. 114).

Certainly, activities designed to control discourse in social groups go on all the time; in this case, the difference is an attempt to be explicit about those intentions, and to enact them in ways that avoid marginalizing other members or sub-groups. Indeed, a central goal of this project is to open up a space where diverse positions related to the English language arts can be recognized, articulated, valued, and applied to the development of quality programs of English language arts teacher education. As such, I would assert that I have made a strong case for studying "my own backyard."

### *Limitations*

In a commentary discussing critiques of Critical Discourse Analysis, Haig (2004) alludes to the criticism of mainstream linguist Henry Widdowson, who has offered

"a sustained argument against critical approaches to discourse analysis, particularly Faircloughian CDA. To summarize his main arguments, he charges that:

1. CDA is not analysis in support of theory but (merely) interpretation in support of belief.
2. The beliefs of analysts are ideologically biased, leading to analysts reading meaning *into*, rather than *out of* texts.

3. This bias is further compounded by the fact that the analyst selects only those texts which will confirm his or her beliefs.
4. The distinction between the interpretation of the analyst and that of the lay-reader is ignored" (p. 14).

I believe that these critiques are skewed but that they still have merit and require the attention of CDA practitioners. In particular, there is a perception among applied linguists that critical discourse analysis is not a valid form of discourse analysis as it is understood in their field. Many linguists accuse CDA of not being discourse analysis at all, and complain that published research in CDA involves a kind of black box research in which the researcher does not conduct rigorous linguistic analysis at the level of text that they believe is required to produce rigorous, valid, scientific knowledge. As Antaki, Billig, Edwards, and Potter (2003) have asserted, "discourse analysis means doing analysis." Among linguists, there is a suspicion that CDA's use of cultural theory for textual interpretation often obscures what they consider to be essential objective analysis that is free of bias. More strongly, linguists like Widdowson suspect that CDA practitioners use CDA theory to avoid doing "real" analysis at all, instead using theory and "interpretation" to make a "rhetorical" argument that is invalid.

While I disagree with the premises of these critiques, particularly the implication that other research methodologies obtain objectivity and escape author bias via an arbitrary definition of "rigor," I recognize that their criticisms

raise legitimate points for CDA practitioners to consider. It is my goal to develop a CDA study that offers a clearly articulated relationship between the linguistic analyses, cultural theorizing, and rhetorical interpretation that I believe make CDA a powerful method for literacy research. Achieving this goal will require that I offer explicit evidence of my analysis (so that it does not occur “backstage,” as it were) and that I also make an argument for the legitimacy of interpretation and rhetoric as valid aspects of knowledge construction in my work. It is my contention that these two tasks are incumbent on any researcher working in any methodology. I believe that a significant source of the critiques discussed above is the matter of academic territoriality and narrow disciplinary construal of knowledge, method, rigor, and analysis.

Critical Discourse Analysis has faced criticisms from some quarters charging that the method leads researchers to project their own biases onto data and thereby fails to produce legitimate knowledge. Generally, these kinds of critiques come from researchers with positivist, scientific, and objective epistemological beliefs based on their disciplinary perspectives. The advocacy component of a method like CDA leads many positivist and “scientific” researchers to accuse CDA practitioners of a lack of objectivity. However, accusations regarding a lack of objectivity are limited, given the fact that *all* research methodologies carry limitations and biases due to the particular traditions and perspectives they originate from—including those methodologies that are deemed “scientific.” As Kuhn (1962) has demonstrated, even research in the sciences involves a high degree of intuition, messiness, and fuzzy

experimentation. It is useful for scientists and “objective” researchers to remember, for example, that the discoveries of penicillin and X-rays were accidental, hardly the results of completely systematic inquiry. Likewise, in other social sciences like anthropology, participant-observation research was long believed to be “objective” and “scientific” in spite of clear cultural and colonial biases inherent in the assumed position of the researcher in the field as related to the “other” of his subject population. In the case of this study, I do not claim objectivity; rather, I assert that, through the use of a systematic method and a clearly defined methodology, my findings are valid according to the established traditions of qualitative research; moreover, my inquiry is consistent with other studies produced using CDA, and so contributes to an established (though still developing) research community. By this attempt to identify and bracket my own position, I seek to avoid unexamined biases that might corrupt the present analysis.

In the next Chapter, I present a full analysis of the 1996 NCTE *Guidelines*. First, I summarize the content of the *Guidelines* to begin describing the ways that the Standing Committee's guidelines represent the English language arts and English teacher education. This summary is followed by the *Guidelines'* representation of social actors in the guidelines, focusing on teachers, students, and the NCTE Standing Committee for Teacher Preparation and Certification, along with a number of other significant social actors. Following Chapter 5, Chapter 6 discusses findings regarding patterns of discourse related to the use of specific terms in the NCTE *Guidelines*, specifically focusing on the representation

of the English language arts as a *discipline*, and exploring discourses of *integration* and *holism* in language arts curriculum. The analysis also deals with six other strands of discourse that run throughout the text: the nature of 1) *discourse* and 2) *literacy* in the *Guidelines*, 3) the representation of *critical* approaches, 4) the use of *diversity*, 5) the centrality of *literature* and the relation of *media* and *non-print* texts, and 6) the consideration of equity and the discourse of *appropriateness*.

## CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS, PART ONE

### *Social Actors in the NCTE Guidelines*

#### *Big Backyard*

As I discussed briefly in Chapter 4, an analysis of one's own discourse community should be undertaken with some trepidation. James Gee (1996) has argued that it is not possible to critique a Discourse from the inside, and Creswell (1998) similarly warns would-be researchers about the dangers of doing research in one's own backyard. While valid caution flags, though, they are dependent on the extent to which one is willing to extend particular conceptions of discourse that conceive of a particular Discourse community as well-defined, bounded, governed by consensus, and capable of micro-determining the behavior and perception of its members.

Since advancing the idea of capital "D" discourse communities that provide "identity tool kits" for members, and which regulate group behavior such that all members can be identified by each other, Gee has tempered his own theories. Recognizing that members of any Discourse community are likely to *also* be members of many *other* Discourse communities, Gee has described how "affinity" with social groups can be affected in much broader terms—an individual can be considered "inside" the Discourse if one can be *recognized* by other members of that community. In the case of English education and the English language arts, the looser conception of discourse communities is more realistic than the rigid deterministic concept of membership that initially emerged with

Gee's concept of Discourses. It highlights the ways in which Gee has consistently emphasized how members of a Discourse community are always also members of overlapping, competing, and even opposed social groups whose values are not always compatible or complementary. If we think of the field of English studies as one of Creswell's "backyards," then it could be said that there is room in that yard for people to play a variety of different but related games.

There is tremendous diversity across the groups and individuals who identify themselves as members of the fields of "Literacy" and "English." These groups include cognitive psychologists, literary critics of all theoretical stripes, cultural theorists, high school "English" teachers, elementary "language arts" teachers, reading teachers, linguists, and more. Within these groups, distinctions can be made based on epistemological stances and theoretical orientations, and also based on the specific foci of their daily work and interests. As Grossman et al. (2001) have suggested, broad fields like "English language arts" are constituted by clusters of "pseudocommunities"—groups within the larger discourse formed by individuals who have an affinity based on their interest and interaction with like-minded colleagues. This is not to say that members of pseudocommunities are unable to identify or even affiliate with members of different pseudocommunities, recognizing each other as fellow "English teachers," for example. Still, Grossman et al.'s work suggests that a given "Discourse" may not be as cohesive as initially theorized.

Given Grossman's concept of pseudocommunities, I suggest that it is quite possible to position oneself within a larger Discourse community like "English language arts" and construct a legitimate critique. In this case, although I am a member of the wider Discourse called the field of "English language arts," and although I am a member of the National Council of Teachers of English, I have only limited affinity with the communities bounded by NCTE's official organizational structure at this time. I am a member of the Conference on English Education, a founding member of CEE's graduate student strand (which has yet to fully develop), and an occasional participant in CEE's commission on English language arts methods. I have presented at national and state-level NCTE conferences, and have studied with a number of NCTE national officers as a graduate student. Beyond these points of contact, I have had no official contact with the NCTE bureaucracy, and no prior contact with groups like the Standing Committee on Teacher Preparation and Certification that determine curriculum policy outside of the context of this study.

From this vantage point, CEE and the CEE Graduate Strand, for example, constitute pseudocommunities of which I am a part; the members of the Standing Committee, though I can recognize them as members of my larger Discourse community, are a group that I am not affiliated with, even though members of the Standing Committee may also be members of CEE. From this perspective, it is possible to conduct an analysis of the Standing Committee's discourse as a pseudocommunity from what might be called a "native outsider's" point of view, understanding that any critique I might offer will be based on my



situated perspective. In this case, I assume the perspective of a researcher and English educator aligned with the New Literacy Studies and Critical Discourse Analysis.

### *Friendly Fire*

However legitimate my warrant for study and critique of my own community, it is not my intention to simply criticize the Standing Committee from my view in the peanut gallery. To the contrary, I agree with Gore & Morrison (2001), who, in their critique of Australia's Adey Report on teacher education, quote Foucault as they note that, "A critique is not a matter of saying that things are not right as they are. It is a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practices we accept rest" (1988, p. 154, quoted in Gore & Morrison, 2001, p. 568). In this chapter, I describe the contents of the 1996 NCTE *Guidelines* in discursive terms—describing how they represent the content and teaching of the English language arts, and describing the ways in which social actors are portrayed in this accountability text.

I begin with a descriptive summary of the *Guidelines*. Following the summary, I describe how the *Guidelines* depict social actors in the context of English language arts and English language arts teacher education, focusing on teachers, students, members of the Standing Committee, teacher educators, literacy communities, ethnic groups, researchers, readers, and writers. Next, in

Chapter 6, I lay out a number of discourses that may be identified in the text of the *Guidelines* by identifying patterns of diction, including the following:

- The English language arts as a "discipline"
- *Integration* and *holism* in ELA curriculum
- The nature of *discourse* and *literacy*
- The representation of *critical* activity and the use of *diversity*
- The centrality of *literature*
- A discourse of *appropriateness* related to variations of the English language

First, I describe the 1996 *Guidelines*' representation of English language arts teaching.

### *What do the Guidelines Say?*

In Chapter 2 of the *Guidelines*, the Standing Committee outlines a series of "underlying principles" they claim were used to guide their work. Following are summaries of the Standing Committee's Underlying Principles, and a summary of the *Guidelines* based on a synthesis of statements the committee placed in numbered and bold-face typed lists. By providing these summaries, my intention is to represent the basic guidelines articulated by the Standing Committee "on the surface." Another intention is to help begin demonstrating the ways in which such "basic" statements, founded on claims of consensus, mask important contradictions and competing ideologies by projecting particular ways of thinking and believing as universals.

The 1996 NCTE *Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of the English Language Arts* may be summarized as follows.

### ***Underlying Principles For Teacher Preparation:***

#### ***1. Diversity***

- Recognize and value student diversity, promote communication and understanding across cultures, use diversity to enhance academic achievement, enable students to construct meaning from multiple sources, and encourage multiple ways of knowing.

#### ***2. Content Knowledge***

- Understand the role of literature in understanding human cultures, understand that composing involves a wide range of processes/functions, display a broad view of what constitutes a text (both print and non-print media), know and use a wide range of critical and interpretive approaches to literature, know that the uses of language and literature vary among cultures, know that media and technology are integral to teaching, understand the nature of English, and value students' native languages.

#### ***3. Pedagogical Knowledge and Skill***

- Understand and be skillful in planning and implementing learner-centered instruction, employing authentic assessments of student learning, and knowledge about the multiple positions and orientations for teaching the English language arts in context.

#### ***4. Opportunity***

- Develop teaching/learning processes with a wide range of media, expand as a critically literate individual who participates in a

democratic society, experience a wide range of literature, participate in model classroom learning communities, experience multiple means of assessment, develop professional communities, and reflect on one's own and other's instruction as a means for self-improvement.

#### ***5. Dynamic Literacy***

- Write with proficiency and pleasure, read widely, participate in cultural events, and write about experiences as a writer and a reader alongside students

### ***Guidelines for the Preparation of English Teachers***

#### ***1. Attitudes***

- a. Teachers should recognize that all students can learn, desire to promote human diversity through curriculum, promote respect for individual languages and dialects, encourage growth through appropriate use of language, believe in the need to match student needs and teacher objectives, encourage students to respond critically to different media and communications technology, commit to continuing professional growth, take pride in teaching English, be sensitive to school and community contexts, develop habits of critical thinking, recognize the value of diverse opinions, desire to promote the arts and humanities to students, and encourage students to read and write about their literary understandings.

#### ***2. Content Knowledge***

**a. Language Development**

- i. Teachers should view growth in language as a developmental process related to home language, native language, dialect, and second language acquisition. Reading, writing, speaking, listening, observing, and thinking should be treated as interrelated, and social, cultural, and economic environments should be seen as integral to language learning.**

**b. Language Analysis**

- i. Teachers should think of English as a dynamic language rather than static, and they should understand that there are many viable and valid versions of English.**

**c. Language Composition**

- i. Teachers should understand that oral, written, and visual composition requires an understanding of multiple processes, and that verbal and visual language influence thought and action.**

**d. Written Discourse**

- i. Teachers should treat writing as a form of inquiry, reflection, and expression.**

**e. Reading and Literature**

- i. Teachers should treat reading as a constructivist and transactional process. They should know that proficient**

readers are conscious of their own comprehension processes. They should believe that effective teaching requires knowledge of literature and literary genres representing a worldview appropriate for the classroom, and that literature is a source for exploring and interpreting human experience.

**f. Media**

- i. Teachers should believe that knowledge of the power of print and non-print media is necessary to understand contemporary culture.

**g. Instructional Media**

- i. Teachers should believe that instructional media can aid and add to the English language arts.

**h. Assessment**

- i. Teachers should believe that student learning ought to be assessed in multiple ways; they should understand that standardized testing alone does not adequately reflect student learning.

**i. Research and Theory**

- i. Teachers should believe that knowledge of major trends in research and theory from both education and English is essential for effective teaching.

**3. *Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills***

- a. **Instructional Planning**
  - i. Teachers should treat English instruction holistically, involving both collaborative and independent student learning and using a variety of materials and media to work on interdisciplinary instructional units.
- b. **Instructional Performance**
  - i. Teachers should promote respect for and understanding of academic, ethnic, racial, language, cultural, and gender differences in the classroom, stimulate students in active learning processes, use students' work as part of instruction, and incorporate technology.
- c. **Instructional Assessment**
  - i. Teachers should promote respect for challenging student discourse, use feedback to teach students, develop ways to communicate assessment results to diverse audiences, and use assessment to improve instruction.
- d. **Instruction in Oral, Written, and Visual Languages**
  - i. Teachers should enrich and expand language resources for different social and cultural settings, engage learners in discussion, interpretation, and evaluation of ideas, and design instruction that reflects language as a human creation.
- e. **Instruction in Reading, Literature, and Nonprint Media**

- i. Teachers should build a reading, listening, and viewing community where students respond, interpret, and think critically. They should engage learners in literary transactions, and promote media literacy

### *Who is in the Guidelines?*

Before delving into an analysis of the NCTE curriculum, it is necessary to establish who the players are in the script of the *Guidelines*. By demonstrating the ways in which social actors are portrayed in the text, it is possible to draw conclusions about who has the right to speak and act, and both when and where they have the right to do so. These, in turn, can help to demonstrate the power relations at play in the *Guidelines*' discourse. In this section, I sketch the roles and presences of ten significant groups in the text. These groups were identified and selected based on the frequency of their appearance in the text and the identification of patterns that accompanied their representations. The ten groups are listed below in Table 5 as follows.

**Table 5: Groups Represented in the NCTE *Guidelines***

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teachers</li> <li>2. Students</li> <li>3. The Standing Committee</li> <li>4. Teacher Educators and Teacher Education Programs</li> <li>5. NCTE/Professional Organizations and The English Language Arts as "the profession"</li> <li>6. Audiences, Parents/Families, and critics</li> <li>7. Learning and Literacy Communities</li> <li>8. Ethnic groups</li> <li>9. Researchers and theorists</li> <li>10. Readers and writers</li> </ol> |
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### *Teachers in the Guidelines*



Not surprisingly, teachers are the focus group of the *Guidelines*.

Throughout the text, teachers are referred to generically and categorically—a practical representation for the genre of accountability standards, which are intended to apply to entire classes of people. Although teachers are very much present in the text of the *Guidelines*, they are often represented as objects rather than as active agents. For example, the text frequently represents teachers as “produced” by teacher education programs, a representation that characterizes teachers as de-personalized and even manufactured goods created in a factory setting.

In spite of these periodic references to the *production* of teachers, this class of social actors is described in a variety of ways. Across the *Guidelines*, teachers are variously referred to as *professionals, scholars, decision-makers, agents of change, models, supervisors, mentors, colleagues, practitioners, and reformers*. Several of these appellations are important in that they represent teachers as agents who act in powerful ways. Most significantly, perhaps, is the representation of teachers as “professionals”—a label that implies high degrees of specialized knowledge and autonomy. The label of “scholar” represents teachers as knowledge makers, and labels such as “decision-maker,” “supervisor,” “mentor,” and “practitioner” all suggest that teachers are important actors who both initiate and govern activity in their social environments. The labels of “mentor” and “colleague” imply that teachers function in a stable community with well-developed mechanisms for induction and collaboration, and labels like “reformer” and “agent of change” suggest that teachers play an

important role in social activism and transformation toward equity in schools; in this capacity, teachers are represented as political actors.

In addition to representations of who teachers *are* in the Guidelines, there are, of course, numerous representations of what teachers *do*. These representations allow us to describe how the *Guidelines* represent the activity of English language arts teaching, and as such they are important discursive markers for “what counts” in the field. Judging by the 294 references to them in the chapters analyzed for this study, teachers are *the* central referent of the text. The tendency is to represent them either as objects who are acted upon, or as agents who are under obligation to act in certain ways; if the *Guidelines* are to be taken at face value, then teachers are a highly governed social group. That is, the majority of statements about teachers in the text of the *Guidelines* articulate what the Standing Committee believes teachers “should know,” “must understand,” or “need to be able to do” in order to be “effective.” They are rarely represented as independent agents; instead, they are agents whose activities are determined by the curricula of their university teacher education programs and the curricula of the schools where they teach. The dominant structure of statements concerning teachers can be represented by the following pattern, which appears throughout the *Guidelines*:

SUBJECT [Teachers] + AUXILIARY VERB [should, must, need + infinitive]  
+ MAIN VERB [e.g., understand, believe, value, etc.] + OBJECT [attitude  
phrase, content phrase, pedagogical phrase, student phrase,

epistemological phrase] + MODIFIER [often a prepositional phrase that provides context].

In this structure of obligation, teachers do many things, and as such may be characterized to some extent as active agents. They variously *recognize, value, enable, promote, draw upon, encourage, foster, know, understand, respect, develop, expand, experience, participate, reflect, consider, write, read, and share*. Although these actions represent a range of specific activities, they are presented within constructions stating what teachers *will do* or *should do* when they are trained according to the NCTE *Guidelines*. They are represented as objects who must be acted upon before they may act themselves. Further, they are almost always “provided” with the skills, tools, and knowledge necessary for action by English language arts education programs.

In the main body of the guidelines, teachers are represented as obligated to do, know, or believe a range of things in value and propositional assumptions about English language arts activity—assumptions that are based on particular perspectives but projected in the *Guidelines* as universal. Teachers are variously expected to *understand* particular concepts and issues related to educating students in the language arts, *realize* student needs, *respect* students, and serve them by *providing access* to information and opportunities while *tailoring instruction* and *helping them to engage content* by *fostering their interests* in the language arts and *being sensitive* to students’ cultural needs. They are expected to *believe in their students’ abilities* to learn and succeed, and to *nurture students*

toward success; this nurturing involves *maintaining an awareness of and concern for students' individual needs, committing to the work of English language arts teaching, respecting ELA subject matter, and drawing on a variety of resources to build effective learning environments*. Further, teachers are expected to *help their colleagues, acquire new knowledge by participating in professional learning communities, and create instructional plans that integrate content, promote the subject and values of the discipline, and address contextual issues of community, teaching, and learning*.

With regard to content knowledge, the Standing Committee expects teachers to exit ELA Education programs with a *comprehensive understanding of developmental theories and processes by which people acquire, understand, and use language*, and they should know *the relationship of language development to the fundamental principles and characteristics of human growth* so that they are able to *set expectations for student achievement*. They should know *processes of language acquisition and development* so that they can *strengthen their students' language abilities*. In doing so, they need to *understand how language varies*, and also know *how to learn about their students' home, community, cultural, and environmental factors* as they affect literacy, especially *understanding how language varies across cultures, understanding differences in semiotic representation across cultures, and distinguishing between "academic/formal" and "non-academic/informal" English*. They should use *integrated approaches to provide students with opportunities to practice with language*. They should *understand semantics, linguistics, and grammar, know*

*the history of change in English, and teach their students that English is a dynamic language by providing productive ways of talking about how language works. Further, the Standing Committee expects that teachers should understand and value multiple definitions of “text,” introduce a wide range of processes for writing, and make literacy public while accounting for issues of equity that affect students’ opportunities to acquire literacy skills. Teachers ought to learn about how to write by participating in communities of writers themselves.*

In teaching reading, teachers are expected to *take an expressivist reader-response approach that relies on literary study*. In doing so, teachers should *have a broad understanding of textuality and genre by acquiring extensive experience with and knowledge about a wide range of literature, a range of diverse authors, especially in terms of gender and multiculturalism, and young adult texts, which they should then use to provide access and learning opportunities for students*. While they need to *know about the range of texts, especially media, visual texts, and instructional technology*, they are expected to *treat literature as the core of the ELA curriculum*. They should *use non-print texts in support of literary study*, and also as texts unto themselves. In delivering instruction, teachers are expected to *be able to create environments that support critical responses by students*. Finally, teachers are expected to *know about, be able to design, and use a range of assessments* in addition to standardized tests in order to assess students’ instructional needs. They should also *work to be familiar with current and seminal research and theory* in the field of English language arts.

In the pedagogical guidelines, the Standing Committee asserts that teachers should *take a student-centered approach* to the language arts, which fundamentally affects the roles a teacher will play in the classroom; here, the teacher is expected to be able to *create a learning environment in which students can be immersed in language learning and language use*. They are expected to *design classroom environments and seek opportunities for language practice and communication, valuing both individual and collaborative activities*. To create such classrooms, teachers are expected to have a deep *understanding of planning, performance, assessment, and instruction in oral, written, and visual languages*, as well as knowledge about *instructional techniques in reading, literature, and nonprint media*. They are expected to be able to *understand and articulate the ways in which these instructional domains are interconnected*, and also to *demonstrate that interconnectedness* as evidenced through planning and instructional design. They are expected to *utilize a variety of print and nonprint texts, including texts by authors from diverse ethnic and racial groups*.

In addition to *utilizing a range of multicultural texts and genres*, teachers are expected to *give students frequent opportunities to practice* using a variety of language forms, *helping students to take pride in and respect language varieties* in the classroom and community, and *draw on that language variety* as an instructional resource. They are expected to *create opportunities* for students to *practice using oral, written, and visual communication* in real-world activities that connect to students' everyday experiences and result in *real communication*. Teachers are expected to *demonstrate how English is dynamic and changing*,

and to *create environments* where students can *understand how uses of that language vary across cultural contexts and situations*.

With regard to specific subject matter, teachers are particularly expected to know how to *stimulate student transactions with and responses to literature*, prepare students to *create nonprint media*, and help students *explore media as an extension of literary understanding, and also as a subject unto itself*. The Standing Committee asserts strongly that teachers should help students to *understand the possibilities and limitations of non-print media*.

The pedagogical guidelines also specify instructional modes that English teachers are expected to know about and use. Teachers are expected to *draw on students' interests for instructional planning*, and they are supposed to *understand the connections between English and other disciplines* and use those other subject areas to teach the language arts. To enact collaborative teaching situations, English teachers are expected to *know how to teach in teams* and *understand cooperative teaching roles*. As they work with students in such situations, they are expected to *explore themes from multiple cultural and intellectual perspectives*, and *construct an environment that supports frequent collaboration and opportunities for independent student work*. In order to teach effectively in these environments and sustain them, teachers are expected to *know their students' cultural and cognitive backgrounds*, *understand how group learning works*, and create an environment where students can share ideas by *using their own texts as instructional materials in ways that are public and explicitly valued through sharing with parents, community members, and others*.

In teaching students how to work collaboratively, teachers are expected to *know how to promote and assess student discourse, help students connect learning to their personal experiences, and teach them how to function as a critical audience* that respects and challenges the views and ideas of others. Further, teachers are expected to know enough about technology to *assist their students in using technology*; they are expected to know how to *evaluate the use of technology for instruction*, and to be able to *judge the value of tech products*. They are expected to *integrate assessment* into everyday instruction and *design environments where students are participants in the assessment process*. They should be *skilled at monitoring students* at all stages of the learning process, and should *know how to make and use appropriate forms of assessment* for student learning. They should be able to *articulate standards for learning* to parents, administrators, students, and others.

In discussions about continuing issues related to the teaching of English language arts, teachers are represented as obligated to *have a strong academic background in the English language arts, and the performance of their students is expected to be central to teaching and learning* in their classrooms; as such teachers are obligated to *understand the contexts in which learning takes place*. Teachers are obligated to *translate a variety of conceptual frameworks* into coherent classroom practices, course plans, and programs, *be knowledgeable about the uses and abuses of technology* as it replaces traditional teaching approaches, *follow developments in learning and brain research*, and *develop*



*awareness and appreciation of their students' backgrounds, language, and needs.*

Teachers are expected to *ground their attitudes toward the profession in scholarly practice*, as reflected in their *creation of rigorous and challenging lessons, courses, units, and programs of study, design curricula and approaches based on student interests* that challenge students at “the highest levels” in English, *enable students to think and use language* in order to develop as individuals and interact successfully and respectfully in the world, and *develop open and responsive understanding of local communities, and strong working relationships with patrons and parents.*

This summary contains over 100 statements of obligation subsumed under 41 “guidelines.” In Chapter 7, I will discuss some of the patterns and issues that can be identified across these representations. Next, however, it is useful to describe the representations of students and other social actors in the text.

### *Students in the Guidelines*

Again as a matter of course, it makes sense that the *Guidelines* spend a significant amount of time discussing the activities of students in English language arts classrooms in conjunction with the obligations of English language arts teachers. Similarly to teachers, students are represented according to their obligations for learning in the classroom—what they are expected to know and do, and what they need from their teachers that contributes to the Standing

Committee's understanding of curricular requirements for English teacher education. Across the *Guidelines*, students are represented in the following ways.

Students, like teachers, are present in the text of the *Guidelines*, but referred to impersonally, generically, and categorically according to the demands of the accountability genre. They are referred to in relation to concepts, dispositions, and other language arts content that they “need to,” “should,” or “must” know, and often appear as the direct objects of teachers' actions in auxiliary constructions. They are referred to in relation to what is necessary for *effective* teachers to teach *effectively*.

Students variously *receive instruction and opportunities* so that they are led to *explore, engage, and become familiar* with ELA subject matter. Teachers are expected to make sure that students *learn, achieve, grow, and acquire knowledge and a value for the language arts by experimenting, taking risks, trying out ideas and processes, reading, writing, using their home literacies, thinking critically, drawing conclusions, expressing ideas, and demonstrating their learning* for others. Students are referred to 235 times in the text of the *Guidelines* in connection with 71 statements regarding their obligations to do, think, believe, and value in the context of the English language arts curricula.

According to the *Guidelines*, students need help from teachers to *develop linguistic maturity through the use of language in multiple contexts*, and should learn how to *closely monitor their own personal development in that language use*. They need the teacher to help them *develop language skills* and learn to

both *respect and appreciate variations in language use* among others, including the *application of academic/formal and non-academic/informal forms of English*. They should work to *develop an interest in the English language by bringing their own languages to the classroom, use non-academic forms of English in class to understand how languages function and study the relations between those functions and the relations between different types of discourse* such as reading, writing, and speaking.

As teachers help students to *develop their communications skills*, students should have *opportunities to practice creating and evaluating visual texts, participate in public discussions that involve the uses of literacy, and gain experience acting effectively in their immediate environments through the uses of literacy*. Further, students need the teacher's support as they learn to *respond personally to literature, deal with their personal responses to literature by analyzing them, value multiple ways of responding to literature, and select appropriate stances for response to literature*. They should learn to *read critically, use their imaginations, and become independent and engaged readers who use literature to develop an understanding of both human nature and themselves*. Ultimately, students need to learn *how to read for information, understanding, and pleasure*.

In addition to reading literature, students need the teacher's help in learning to *understand and evaluate media* so that they learn to *not accept media as unmediated reality*. The Standing Committee asserts that students need to

*become aware of the range and power of media, and know how to construct media texts without being controlled by media themselves.*

In Chapter 5 of the *Guidelines*, students are represented in ways that convey a particular perspective on the nature of teaching and learning. They are described in ways that communicate a constructivist orientation to pedagogy that emphasizes both cognitive and social orientations to learning, and particularly emphasizes the social nature of meaning making, communications, and learning processes. In the text, students are described as already knowledgeable when they enter the classroom; *they are not empty vessels*. Rather, students *use their prior experiences to make new meaning*. As they learn, they should *transform knowledge through constant practice and active engagement to construct personal and shared social meanings through both collaborative and independent work*.

Learning through their shared experiences in the classroom, students are believed to learn best when they *form learning communities* where they are able to *challenge their own ideas and the ideas of others* in respectful ways, learning to *function in that community to create products and texts that are praiseworthy not only as classroom work but in contexts outside of the school*. They are believed to need plenty of *practice engaging in discussions about language* so that they can *learn to step outside of themselves* and both value and *understand multiple perspectives*. As a result of *working with literature*, they should be able to *recognize and distinguish multiple genres and styles of literature, perceive thematic patterns, and understand the importance of historical contexts for*

*literature*. Finally, the standing committee asserts that students should learn how to *construct meaning through the use of media*.

When Chapter 6 discusses the relation of the *Guidelines* to other national standards projects, students are represented in terms of what they do. Students are expected to *use their home literacies as they participate in literacy communities* where they *learn to use strategies for reading a variety of texts and genres, conduct research, use technology, and adjust their understandings* in order to *apply their learning* in ways that lead to a *respect for diversity* and the ability to *use language for their own purposes*.

In the Continuing Issues chapter that concludes the *Guidelines*, students are believed to be best served by a broad consideration of “the psychological process of how individuals represent themselves and are influenced by the social contexts in which writing occurs” (p. 63). The Standing Committee also asserts that students must be treated by teachers as “free agents” who have the ability to think and act according to their own interests. They are represented as vulnerable actors who subject themselves to the mercy and sensibilities of their teachers when they respond to a wide range of texts and audiences through composition and literary study. Above all, repeatedly, the Standing Committee emphasizes that teachers are obligated to respond to the needs and interests of their students.

### *The Standing Committee in the Guidelines*

As the authors of the *Guidelines*, the members of the Standing Committee are very much present in the text, represented as active agents in terms of their beliefs, decisions, and actions to shape the text and determine what English teachers should know, believe, and be able to do. As authors, they also determine and represent the roles of all other actors in the text, and are the only significant social agents who are named, personalized, and specifically referenced. Their activities are particularly apparent in Chapters 1, 6, and 7—the introduction of the text, the discussion of the *Guidelines*' inter-relation with other standards projects, and the discussion of continuing issues for the *Guidelines* that concludes the text. It can be said that, given the pattern of their appearance in the *Guidelines*, references to the Standing Committee most frequently mark passages that are intended to introduce, legitimize, and rationalize the use of the *Guidelines* as an accountability framework.

In Chapter 1, the Standing Committee represents itself as responsible for determining and producing guidelines for teacher preparation in response to a number of contextual pressures. In particular, they frame the construction of the *Guidelines* in response to “critics” from outside of education who accuse schools (and by association, English teachers) of failing to educate children. They assert a growing body of criticism about literacy and public education, and note a lack of consensus about the purposes of school and the nature of literacy both between education insiders and outsiders, and within the context of English language arts.

In spite of serious disagreements, the Standing Committee claims a responsibility for “finding the voice” of the profession, and for offering its “best view” of what “might be said” about what teachers should know, believe, and be able to do in order to be effective. In doing so, they differentiate between curricula that are designed to prepare people who choose to be English *majors* and curricula that are designed specifically to prepare people who will become English *teachers*. They offer suggestions about how the *Guidelines* ought to be used—specifically stating that the *Guidelines* are intended to be voluntary and flexible. They also attempt to specify their intended audiences for the *Guidelines*: teacher educators, classroom teachers, school administrators, school board members, policy makers, parents, and concerned citizens.

In Chapter 6, where the Standing Committee discusses how the *Guidelines* interrelate with other standards projects, the committee represents itself in dialogue with a number of other professional organizations. The committee aligns itself with these organizations, and represents its guidelines as parallel with other standards frameworks; essentially, the Standing Committee argues that each organization’s standards are in general agreement and that the content, rationales, and functions of these accountability frameworks rest on common ground. Doing so allows the Standing Committee to assert consensus across a wide cross-section of organizations concerned with designing curricula for what teachers should know and be able to do. The committee is explicit in recognizing that other standards frameworks deal with teacher preparation differently than the *Guidelines*. They state that they benefited from the

opportunity to learn from these alternatives and expand their conception of the skills necessary for effective teaching. They also claim that studying these other frameworks allowed them to develop confidence in their own guidelines by establishing common ground with other standards frameworks.

In Chapter 7 of the *Guidelines*, the committee makes a number of claims about its beliefs and intentions with regards to curriculum policy in English language arts teacher preparation. They state explicitly that they developed the guidelines with the intent to balance between a cognitive and social context, assert that pedagogy must be morally defensible, and claim that students must be respected as competent free agents. They assert that they purposely avoided associating specific terminology used in the *Guidelines* with specific movements and schools of thought found in scholarly literature, and do not name, elaborate, or recommend specific conceptual frameworks used to develop particular guidelines or components. They claim that the lack of reference was intentional in order to acknowledge the breadth and depth of the knowledge base for English education and to avoid being over-prescriptive of the content in English teacher education programs; instead, the committee claims to refer only generally to structures that inform the accreditation process, because they preferred to leave decisions to the discretion of individual programs situated in local contexts.

Throughout these discussions, the committee asserts a fundamental intention to produce an inclusive document, forwarding a belief that “diverse conceptual frameworks that inform English education share important common ground in terms of both theory and practice.” The committee articulates its



determination to draw attention to the importance of seeking commonalities among “diverse, sometimes opposed theories and their attendant practices,” asserting that programs seeking accreditation need an accountability framework that takes a pluralistic, inclusionary approach in order to leave many areas open to interpretation.

In addition, the authors claim that they made an “earnest attempt to seek explicitly and openly a balance between conservation and reform that will encourage teacher educators to develop a balance between rigor and student-centeredness.” They encourage programs seeking accreditation to emphasize connectedness and common ground across conceptual frameworks that “often seem, on the surface, to be contradictory.” They state that connections are important because of the “fact” that many teaching practices are central to enacting several different conceptual frameworks in the classroom.

Finally, the committee claims that it articulated what it knew about technology during the three year period of the revision process, learning and thinking as much as was possible during that time about including the use of the Internet, the increase of graphic interfaces for instructional delivery, expanded technological resources, and interaction among diverse populations around technology in English language arts contexts. They conclude the *Guidelines* by acknowledging that one function of the *Guidelines* intended specifically by the Standing Committee was to help initiate reform by educating teachers and then placing them in schools as agents of change. They articulate a belief that preservice teacher education effects school policies and teaching practices, and

that fundamental student-centered principles represent the values of NCTE and English educators in general.

#### *Other Social Actors in the Guidelines*

*Teacher educators, teacher education programs, NCTE, professional organizations, and the English language arts as “the profession.”*

References to English teacher educators and English language arts education programs appear throughout the text of the *Guidelines* in relation to aligning curricula and programs. Although English education *programs* are institutions, not people, they are represented in the texts as social agents, doing things in the world such as *providing teachers with access* to resources believed to be necessary for effective teaching. These groups are referred to categorically and generically, although the Standing Committee repeatedly makes the point that the *Guidelines* have been written for flexible applications across unique local programs.

English teacher educators are variously referred to in the text as *teacher educators, professionals, and educators*. Occasionally, especially when the Standing Committee seeks to express solidarity within NCTE, teacher educators are referred to along with classroom teachers, particularly through the use of pronominals such as “we” and “our” (for example, “our profession”). “NCTE” and “accreditation authorities” are also represented as social actors. This grouping is generally represented as responsible for determining English education curricula,

developing knowledge about English teaching, developing relationships with stakeholders in schools, and delivering instruction to teachers. They engage in discussions about policy and issues important to language arts professionals, and are considered to be obligated to account for local and regional variations in culture, language, and dialect related to English education. When considering the role of the *Guidelines* as a conservative document, this group is believed to gain an opportunity to focus on disciplinary history so that the profession can maintain contact with long-held values, language, and terminology that define central disciplinary concerns and practices; it is assumed that there is recognition and agreement about this terminology across the Discourse community, and that all English educators recognize and relate to this terminology in discussions of specific issues and classroom practices.

Teacher educators are represented as those who, historically, have determined which practices are acceptable for English language arts teachers, working to balance “rigor” with “student-centeredness.” They are characterized as serving broad and varied communities and existing in bureaucratic institutions that are, by definition, slow and difficult to change. Finally, this group is represented as responsible for anticipating the needs of preservice teachers in the future, particularly with regard to developing technologies, and they are assumed to be obligated to develop understandings and partnerships with parents and patrons in local communities.

*Learning groups and literacy communities.*

Social actors such as *classes, learning groups, cooperative teams, individual students, and learning communities* are referred to frequently in the *Guidelines*. They appear as generic actors in the context of discussions that emphasize the value of learning in collaborative social spaces where students work together as well as independently in order to practice language use, literary study, and communication skills. The descriptions suggest a Vygotskian (1978) or Deweyan (1904/1965) orientation to learning, wherein the individual student is the focus for pedagogical practice while she operates in a supportive and collaborative social context for learning.

While cooperative learning appears to be prominent in literacy communities, it is mitigated by a constant reminder by the committee that some students prefer to learn on their own. As such, there is a blend of cognitivist and social constructivist perspectives at play in the authors' description of literacy learning. References to learning and literacy communities in the *Guidelines* frequently mark passages concerned with a value for multiple audiences in literacy activity, the need to represent diverse ethnic groups in subject matter, and a value for public literacy learning that involves parents and communities outside of the classroom. Each of these values serves to emphasize a social constructivist view of language arts learning, assert that learning and teaching are social, and emphasize diversity and multiculturalism across all standards frameworks referred to in the *Guidelines* text. Given this, it is possible to argue that Standing Committee is accurate in claiming that there *is* common ground

across standards frameworks, both in terms of how they represent what teachers do and how they represent teaching and learning.

*Ethnic groups, people of color and “others.”*

In relation to the Standing Committee’s assumed values for diversity and multicultural curriculum in the English language arts, it is worth noting that they often refer to social actors labeled as *ethnic groups*, *people of color*, and *others* within the context of the Standing Committee’s belief that language study must include consideration of a range of diverse groups of people, particularly in terms of ethnicity, race, and cultural or intellectual differences and perspectives related to language use. The Standing Committee asserts that students need experience studying and communicating in these diverse groups in order to learn how to think critically about their own ideas and perspectives on language.

*Critics.*

One important group whom the Standing Committee claims motivates the framing of accountability guidelines is a group they label “critics.” This group, discussed in the Introduction, is represented primarily as outside of English language arts education. Critics are presented categorically and generically as “detractors,” “self-appointed experts,” “home schoolers,” “talk-show hosts,” and “politicians.” The representation of critics as outsiders promotes an Us/Them binary and helps establish a margin between those who have a right to speak authoritatively about curriculum policy (Education professionals, especially the

Standing Committee, teacher educators, and English teachers) and those who do not (Education outsiders).

*Peers, parents, families, and community.*

Students' peers, parents, families, and community members constitute a second group worth mentioning here. In each case, these sub-groups are represented impersonally, categorically, and generically; however, their inclusion is important, since it represents an acknowledgement by the Standing Committee that students' family literacies are important for teaching and learning, and implies the need to understand students' funds of knowledge (Moll & Gonzales, 2001). In addition, these groups comprise audiences for students to interact with while demonstrating their achievements, and as people who may collaborate with the teacher in order to support student learning. The Standing Committee's inclusion of these social actors emphasizes the social constructivist framework used to create the *Guidelines*, particularly in relation to the committee's belief in the social nature of learning. Parents, community members, and others are all expected to engage in the work of the students in order to provide them with authentic literacy contexts and a sense that their learning and work are relevant outside of academic environments. Further, parents, patrons, and other community constituents are represented in the text as those groups to which teachers are most responsible, in addition to students.

### *Researchers and theorists.*

Although the Standing Committee claims that it intentionally avoided specific reference to research and theory, Chapter 7 in particular includes a number of specific research citations that belie those claims and reveal a number of the committee's specific situated perspectives via the representation of social actors. Researchers are first represented negatively as "competing with practitioners and other 'knowledge maker' groups (presumably theorists), as characterized by Stephen North. These references are made in the context of the committee's notes about the fact that many groups contribute to the knowledge base of English language arts teaching and learning. A second researcher is referred to for her comments that cognitive and social interactive approaches to the teaching of writing should be balanced and attend to social context, and the Standing Committee explicitly states its agreement with a third specific researcher that pedagogy must be morally defensible and that teachers must respect students as free agents who have the ability to think for themselves, especially since classroom systems and teacher responses can "crush" the personal investment and motivation of students if they are not thoughtful and carefully designed.

In addition to these and other references to the work of specifically named researchers, the Standing Committee emphasizes certain theoretical groups in ways that contradict its claims to balance and neutral representation. The Standing Committee specifically aligns itself with an expressivist orientation in its composition guidelines, and cites Rosenblatt's transactional theory of literature to

emphasize a value for “more general reader-response approaches to literary study.” The committee refers to Smagorinsky and Whittings’ (1995) study of teacher education methods courses to warn against the risk of inclusionary or additive curricula that might lead to “superficial” survey courses in teacher education, and uses Applebee’s (1974) historical analysis of English literature in American high schools to characterize a “pendulum” effect in curriculum reform for the language arts, taking the stance that reform efforts can be detrimental. They also cite specific education historians to argue that reform has traditionally achieved only “mixed” success (p. 67).

While the committee explicitly aligns itself with some specific researchers and theoretical perspectives in Chapter 7, it also aligns itself *against* certain specific groups, though it does so obliquely. Using references to social constructionists, literary scholars, ed theorists, rhetoricians, and other “knowledge makers,” the committee refers to groups that are related to but distinct from the formally cited researchers and explicit theoretical alignments referred to in Chapter 7. The committee refers to these groups of social actors in order to further articulate rationales for particular decisions about content and rhetoric in the guidelines more broadly than references to specific research could accomplish. Where formally cited researchers are treated as essentially neutral in the text (represented as neutral), other categorized groups of theorists and specialists are characterized as highly contentious and represented in undesirable conflict with the mainstream. Still, in the text, the Standing Committee recognizes that each of these groups contributes to the knowledge



base that supports the *Guidelines*, even though “fundamental differences” often can be identified between them. The committee asserts that even though there may be differences, these different groups jointly use a common set of teaching practices. The authors claim that since various conceptual frameworks can lead to common practices, these competing groups therefore share common grounds and interests, and should not operate in conflict.

The Standing Committee states explicitly that it takes a stand on cognitivism and process pedagogy within these groupings of research and theoretical communities, because those particular stances establish a “strong link” with previous revisions of the *Guidelines*. While they make this stand, the authors also claim that they do not overlook the work of literary scholars, educational theorists, and rhetoricians who “see themselves” as representatives of “more explicitly postmodern” points of view such as social constructionism that posit a “liberatory” role and “vigorous” social activism for teachers of “literacy.” These groups are characterized as operating on the bases of a broader “anti-foundationalist” agenda against what “they” understand to be the “foundational” tenets of cognitivism and process pedagogy (p. 66). The committee places these other groups in rhetorical opposition to its own implicitly “foundational” values and perspectives. Still, the committee argues that although its disagreements with these groups are “very real” with respect to pedagogy and content, the committee “strongly encourages programs seeking accreditation to emphasize connectedness and common ground across conceptual frameworks that often seem, on the surface, to be contradictory” (p. 67).

*Readers and writers.*

Two other groups of social actors are represented in the text and worth mentioning: readers and writers. These groups are particularly relevant to discussions about how *literacy* is represented in the *Guidelines*, and will be referred to in later discussions on that topic.

Readers are represented as a generic category of people who *interpret and respond to texts in constructivist processes, use textual structures, use personal experiences, and activate prior knowledge to understand texts and construct their own meanings through transactions* with those texts. In addition, readers *monitor their own comprehension* of what they read.

Writers and authors appear in the text as generic categories as well; they are mentioned as the Standing Committee emphasizes the need for teachers and students to *work with a wide range of authors* in terms of gender, social position, cultural background, and so forth. The intent of reading such a range of authors is based on the assumption that reading a broad array of literary texts leads to a greater understanding of human beings, people from different historical periods and cultural backgrounds, and developing an appreciation and respect for “others” who may be different from student readers in a given language arts classroom. In addition, teachers are encouraged in the guidelines to affiliate with groups of writers to learn about and practice different composition processes. The text does not specify the sorts of compositions that “writers” create—print or non-print.

## *Summary*

The summary of the Guidelines in this chapter helps to demonstrate the tremendous scope of the educational project we refer to as the English language arts. The summary also helps to demonstrate how the Standing Committee accomplished what must have been an especially daunting task—making a coherent and cohesive curriculum document that addressed what it viewed as the major concerns and themes of the field.

The 1996 *Guidelines* communicate a vision of the English language arts that is founded on theories from social constructivism. Teachers operate mostly as “more experienced others” (Vygotsky, 1978); they are facilitators, coaches, guides, monitors, and adult experts, rather than “teachers” in the traditional mode of the school-marm leading recitations and relying solely on lectures and drills. They create environments and provide opportunities so that students can experience, explore, grow, and learn in a culturally diverse literacy community where they read, write, talk, listen, and view together in order to gain the ability to use language for their own purposes. They teach about language, composition, literature, speech, and media, working to integrate those topics in the context of language use as the production and consumption of texts in social activity. In the English language arts of the *Guidelines*, “text” refers both to literary and non-literary books, young adult novels, poetry, music, film, video, television media, and digital hypermedia. Students read both fiction and non-fiction, their texts are selected to represent cultural, racial, and gender equality, and they are helped by their teachers to use their primary languages and home dialects in their studies

of English as a wider mode of communication. Teachers value, recognize, respect, and encourage student differences, emphasize the diversity and dynamics of the English language, and try to both teach and assess students in multiple ways in order to meet the needs of both individuals and groups.

Teachers work with each other to improve student instruction, they seek out the latest research and theory to revise their practices, they engage in professional development and learning throughout their career lives, and they work with school administrators, parents, community members, and teacher educators in order to make sure that they are meeting the needs of the communities they serve while maintaining the integrity of their profession.

Encapsulating these activities in a single policy text is an accomplishment that should be applauded with all due respect. The 1996 *Guidelines* represent an enormous amount of work and negotiation. Furthermore, the Standing Committee's repeated desires to maintain the *Guidelines* as a flexible document open to interpretation for programs seeking to obtain national accreditation indicates that the committee was aware of how policy texts can normalize discourse and legitimize particular ideological positions in ways that contribute to cultural hegemony. That is, once such a curriculum policy is published and in print, it has the capacity to be represented as authoritative in play, to be used as a governing tool, and ultimately to become viewed as communicating common sense. The Standing Committee's attempts to maintain the *Guidelines* as voluntary are evidence of their concern to avoid such hegemonic consequences.

Despite the committee's concerns and efforts, and despite the many admirable qualities of the 1996 *Guidelines* as a curriculum policy text, an examination of that text involving close reading and systematic critical discourse analysis reveals a number of internal contradictions, inconsistencies, and especially ideological cross-currents that affect the ability of the *Guidelines* to function as an inclusive document that promotes equity in English language arts teaching and teacher education.

In Chapter 6, I examine a number of discursive patterns found in the *Guidelines* that help to demonstrate some of the text's ideological activity. First, I examine the *Guidelines*' definition of the English language arts as a "discipline." Second, I explore discourses of holism and interconnection in ELA curriculum, and demonstrate how the guidelines project particular definitions of "literacy" and "discourse"—terms that are central to conflicts about the nature of English as a school subject. Third, I demonstrate the *Guidelines*' particular use of the terms "critical" and "diversity," leading toward a discussion of literary study as the core of English language arts curriculum. Finally, I demonstrate a discourse of "appropriateness" in the *Guidelines* that is crucial for understanding how progressive and ethical ideologies interact with more traditional and technological conceptions of curriculum and language use.

## CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS, PART TWO

### *Words, Words, Words, and Things*

So far in this analysis, I have presented data that represent the essential narrative that the 1996 *Guidelines* constructs for telling the story of English language arts teacher education. In the following sections, I will offer several examples from an analysis of the diction of the *Guidelines* that underpin that narrative and act as ideological markers in the discourse. The first pattern to explore is the portrayal in the *Guidelines* of English language arts as a disciplinary field.

#### *The English Language Arts as a "Discipline"*

According to Shumway and Dionne (2002), a *discipline* may be defined as a "historically specific for[m] of knowledge production, having certain organizational characteristics, making use of certain practices, and existing in a particular institutional environment" (p. 2). Using such a definition, Shumway & Dionne refer to English, without intending to either praise or criticize its claims to disciplinary status. In the 1996 *Guidelines*, the term *discipline* is used in ways consistent with Shumway & Dionne's definition to represent English language arts as a historically stable activity, a site of knowledge production with well-defined traditions of inquiry, and existing in an institutionalized context that includes professional and educational systems. For example, the Standing

Committee states that teachers “must develop a commitment to lifelong learning of the content and methodology of their discipline” (p. 12). They also refer to the “content” and “content and pedagogy” of “the discipline” (p. 21), as well as to the “meaning” of disciplines (p. 24), and the “traditions and underpinnings” of the discipline (p. 66).

In addition to these references to the English language arts as an institutional discipline with a traditional set of boundaries, underpinnings, content, particular pedagogy, methodology, and meaning, the *Guidelines* also make reference to ways in which a discipline may be acted upon or within. For example, teachers are obligated to commit themselves to learning within the discipline of English (p. 12). The *Guidelines* further state that it is possible to create curriculum out of the discipline (p. 21), and to use policy texts like the *Guidelines* to “define and redefine” the discipline (p. 65). Finally, members are considered to be capable of operating within the discipline to orient it (p. 65), and even to risk “dislodging” it (p. 66). Appendix B lists the discursive segments from which these examples are drawn.

The representation of the English language arts as a discipline is significant. First, representing English as a discipline in the NCTE teacher preparation guidelines is a move to legitimize the NCTE curriculum. While, as Shumway and Dionne note, professional organizations typically do not hold significant power (or at least do not exert power directly), affiliation with the field of English as an academic discipline does assume a certain high level of status and legitimacy for the Standing Committee’s curricular framework. This affiliation

with *disciplinary* knowledge and structures implies that the contents of the *Guidelines* are fully derived from well-established, rigorous, stable traditions of content and methodology, and that they are the result of knowledge-making inquiry in institutional settings. Viewed in this light, claiming disciplinarity for the 1996 *Guidelines* is important in order for them to be viewed as valid.

Affiliation with English as a discipline provides the Standing Committee with a warrant for offering teacher preparation guidelines, and helps represent the English language arts as an unmediated extension of institutional English into the K-12 school system—using a well-defined set of disciplinary structures to introduce a sanctioned body of knowledge to novice learners for the purpose of transmitting basic skills and building student capacities for future apprenticeship. The representation of ELA as a discipline also serves to lend the school subject an air of institutional authority. In these ways, the use of the term *discipline* in the *Guidelines* operates simultaneously to mark the English language arts as part of a larger discourse and also to conserve that discourse.

Although it may be valid to call university English a discipline based on Shumway and Dionne's general definition, it is important to remark that the extension of disciplinary status to the "English language arts" is another matter entirely. By claiming the classification of *discipline*, the NCTE *Guidelines* require readers to accept the assumption that K-12 English language arts are in fact equivalent to the academic discipline of English located in higher education institutions. On such grounds, the claim of disciplinarity becomes less certain.



A number of scholars and researchers have noted that, of all the academic disciplines, English is perhaps the most fragmented and unstable of them all (Berlin, 2003; Scholes, 1992; Graff, 1987; Ohmann, 1976; Applebee, 1974; Nelms, 2000). It is also one of the youngest, only having emerged as a subject for study in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Initially, “English” was fairly bounded and well-defined as literary study; while it also absorbed rhetoric into the teaching of composition, rhetoric was not considered to be a part of the English project. In spite of this initially narrow definition, the discipline of English expanded in a relatively short period of time to include a number of activities: philology, criticism, rhetoric, creative writing, grammar, linguistics, speech, and cultural studies. English departments in academic institutions have tended to maintain a powerful and central component of literary studies, but they now accommodate any number of individuals whose work and interests have little to do with traditional literary history and criticism. Even among literary historians and critics (who do not always see eye to eye themselves), a number of theoretical and methodological divisions exist that prevent the discipline of English from being classified as a uniform pursuit. Given its fragmentation within and across departments in academic institutions (recognizing that speech, linguistics, theater, and other subject areas are usually not housed in English departments), English is a discipline in name only. Accepting this, it is difficult to claim disciplinary status for K-12 English language arts.

In his research on the “alchemy of school subjects,” Popkewitz (1996, 2000) argues that K-12 school subjects have little or nothing to do with their

institutional academic namesakes. For example, in the English language arts, children may read literary works, practice composition, and study the structures of language and literature. But these are only a few among many English language arts activities, and children do not engage in such activities for purposes of knowledge production, or even for the purpose of gaining membership as apprentices in the discipline. Rather, Popkewitz has theorized that school subjects like English language arts much more commonly function to govern children, shaping their subjectivities and controlling their behaviors through the presentation of dominant ideological perspectives and values. Literature is not used so much to teach children how literature works as it is used to communicate standards of morality, inculcate mainstream cultural values, and teach children to monitor their own behaviors and beliefs. Similarly, composition is not taught so that children can learn to use language as a tool for their own ends so much as it is taught to socialize children in ways that lead them to consume and produce information in particular socially sanctioned and valued ways. Likewise, grammar is not taught merely to help students understand how language works; such instruction also serves to control students through closely monitored seatwork, and has traditionally been taught in ways that legitimize the language practices of the dominant mainstream as “standard.” Furthermore, activities such as engagement in speech, drama, group learning, and reading comprehension examinations have little to do with engaging the disciplinary content of English but much to do with socializing children to use language and

behave in certain institutionally sanctioned ways that are frequently biased in terms of race, class, gender, and culture.

Given these conditions: the fragmentation of academic English and the loose connection between that discipline and K-12 English language arts, the 1996 *Guidelines* appropriation of the term *discipline* can be seen to serve the ideological purposes of normalizing a certain approach to the study of the English language that is neither natural nor neutral. Rather, it is political and socially constructed. Whether the Standing Committee intended this play of meaning seems unlikely; but there is evidence to show that these effects play out in the text.

It is not my intention to argue that calling the English language arts a discipline is wrong, misguided, or some sort of nefarious lie. Rather, my point is that terms such as *discipline* are not neutral. They have powerful effects, and operate ideologically. Without clear articulation of their meaning in context, the application of such terms can reinforce hegemonic conditions in ways that may be inequitable. In the case of the 1996 *Guidelines*, the use of the term *discipline* without elaboration projects a particular vision of English language arts as universal, and therefore by definition brackets important differences in favor of fabricating uniformity. If anything can be said about English as a discipline, it is that English is no longer (and probably never was) a uniform or stable field. When we teach children to accept a uniform representation of the subject, we are doing ideological work that not only masks difference, but that also represents difference as undesirable.

In order to demonstrate how the 1996 *Guidelines* represent English as a uniform discipline, I turn next to a demonstration of how discourses of holism, integration, and interconnection operate in the text.

### *Integration and Holism in ELA Curriculum*

Repeatedly across the *Guidelines*, the Standing Committee makes reference to the *holistic, integrated, and interconnected* nature of the English language arts (for full examples, see Appendix B). This perspective is established early in the document when the committee draws from the 1986 version of the *Guidelines* to state that English “programs, but especially [programs] for teachers, should produce individuals whose experiences have been such that they know that ‘all language processes are integrated and, hence, that language study should be approached holistically’” (p. 3). The Standing Committee claims that language is “a process that is holistic (itself a controversial term)” (p. 3), that it “integrates the traditional language arts” (p. 3), and that “Teachers of the English language arts must seek ways to integrate elements of the arts and the humanities” (p. 13). The first guideline for content knowledge in the *Guidelines* obligates teachers to “structure English language arts holistically” and demands that “the interconnectedness of [content, skills, and processes] must be reflected when teachers select, design, and organize objectives, strategies, and materials” (p. 23).

Although the committee claims in the *Guidelines* to avoid privileging particular theoretical or pedagogical perspectives, they state that “Teachers must

keep in mind that some instructional practices— such as whole language approaches to literacy, integrating the curriculum, and thematic teaching— are more process-oriented and require forms of assessment different from those used for more traditional ways of teaching” (p. 25-26), and that “the interconnectedness among attitudes, knowledge, and pedagogy—like the holistic structure of language itself—must be acknowledged and understood by the teacher of English language arts” (p. 30). Such statements belie the committee’s claim that local programs are free to interpret the *Guidelines* in ways that suit their needs. Unequivocal statements that all English language arts teachers *must* accept a process approach to language study imply that the matter is not open to interpretation.

It is informative to note the ways in which this discourse of holism and interconnection intersects with the issue of consensus in policy texts. The Standing Committee makes a specific comment about the controversial nature of the term “holistic” in its introduction to the *Guidelines*. In spite of this recognition, a significant portion of the text is founded on truth claims about the “holistic” nature of language, a move that implicitly brackets controversy and marginalizes members of the community who might disagree. Moreover, absolute statements about the holistic nature of language close particular avenues of inquiry and serve to stabilize a conception of English as a unified project.

Two other consequences of this “holistic” discourse are worth mentioning. First, the assumption of English as holistic and interconnected extends to a representation of English language arts pedagogy as also holistic and

interconnected. Teachers are not only obligated to “use integrated approaches in teaching,” (p. 15) but such holistic teaching is connected in the text to claims that language arts learning is a “constructive process” (p. 28). This integrated constructivist orientation extends to issues of assessment, where teachers are obligated to “integrate various forms of assessment into the everyday learning experiences of students” (p. 25). The assumption of holism involves an underlying assumption of social constructivism in which students are believed to benefit from participation in the processes of their own evaluation. It also leads to an assumption of the need for less formal “integrated” assessments and the relative inadequacy of abstract and artificial “objective” tests, which, while not excluded by the *Guidelines*, become significantly de-emphasized and suspect as valid assessments for individual student learning.

The *Guidelines*’ uses of disciplinarity and holism to represent the English language arts are not the only ways in which it works to project a particular vision as universal. In the next section, I demonstrate how the authors’ use the terms *literacy* and *discourse* in ways that further contribute to a narrowing of “what counts.”

### *The Nature of Discourse and Literacy*

It may well be that no two words are more central to a discussion of language use than *discourse* and *literacy*. It may also well be that there are no two other terms in any discipline that are more fluid and versatile in their meaning. Finally, it may well be that there are no two other terms related to the

English language arts that require more careful application and framing.

According to Mills (1997), “discourse” can mean simply ‘verbal communication’ (p. 2), or it can be defined as conversational talk, formal speech or writing on a particular subject, or a linguistic unit greater than one sentence, reflecting the origins of the word as a linguistic concept. Discourse is a term that is also used beyond the context of linguistics, especially in social and cultural theory. For example, in Critical Discourse Analysis, which attempts to blend linguistic and cultural theories of language, Fairclough (1992a) has defined discourse as “the social.” He continues,

Three dimensions of the social are distinguished—knowledge, social relations, and social identity—and these correspond respectively to...major functions of language...shaped by relations of power and invested with ideologies. (8)

Similarly, as noted in Chapter 2, Street (1984) has described major differences between “autonomous” models of literacy and “ideological” models of literacy. Autonomous models of literacy characterize literate practice as a matter of applying universal, politically neutral, merely technical skills, and lead to forms of language instruction that elide, mask, or marginalize differences in linguistic practices that result from differences in culture, race, class, and dialect.

Alternatively, more socio-culturally oriented research has led to the definition of literacy as always already ideological—that is, language use is always socially situated and marked by contextual relations of power based on culture, race, class, gender, sexuality, and so on. Given such radically opposed conceptions of the same term, it is impossible to apply the word *literacy* in a way

that is value-free; even the claim that literacy is a neutral technology has political consequences.

In the *Guidelines*, the term “literacy” first appears in the context of “computer literacy,” and is used to refer to the functional, technical skills involved with operating computer technology (p. 2). However, in Chapter 2 of the *Guidelines*, the committee presents “Dynamic Literacy” as one of the underlying principles for the entire text. Based on this principle, literacy involves writing, reading, participating in cultural events, and sharing experiences as a reader and writer with others (p. 9). Elsewhere, *literacy* is characterized as public written and oral discussion involving the active search for and location of information (p. 16-17). *Literacy* is also used to refer to preparing and understanding non-print media texts (p. 27). While one reference to multiple literacies (p. 32) suggests some awareness of the layered nature of literacy, the use of *literacy* in the *Guidelines* suggests an orientation to language that essentially adopts an autonomous model: literacy in the *Guidelines* refers to the technical skills involved with reading, writing, and speaking, whether the texts involved are print or non-print.

One reference to literacy in particular demonstrates the Standing Committee’s autonomous model of literacy. In Chapter 7, the committee makes reference to groups of theorists who take “more explicitly postmodern points of view that posit a ‘liberatory’ role as well as vigorous social activism for teachers of ‘literacy.’” (p. 66-67). These comments will be addressed elsewhere, but in the context of a discussion about literacy they demonstrate the committee’s implicit



skepticism about such “points of view.” First, the use of a label such as *postmodern* in this context implies that a liberatory role for English teachers is inappropriate, projects that belief to imply that social activism is outside the bounds of English language arts teaching, and suggests that “literacy” teaching is different from teaching the English language arts. The terms *liberatory* and *literacy* are marked by scare quotes, and as such are distinguished as concepts used in ways that are outside of the discourse of English language arts, or at least used in ways that are not valued by the Standing Committee.

Similarly, the use of the term *discourse* in the *Guidelines* further establishes the autonomous and neutral conception of language held by the Standing Committee as they formulated the text. The text frequently refers to “categories of discourse” (p. 8): “written discourse” (p. 14), “oral, visual, and written discourse” (p. 16), “oral and written discourse” (p. 16), “visual discourse” (p. 16), and “academic discourse” (p. 16). Given this usage, it is evident that the Standing Committee employs “discourse” to mean a particular mode of communication. Their use of the term conveys no sense of social, cultural, or ideological overtones; rather, the term is presented as neutral.

In the process of describing the advantages of reading the *Guidelines* as a conserving document, the committee claims that

One way of looking at the [Guidelines] as it has developed over the years is to see it as a cumulative, evolving text with its own characteristics, priorities, and language. In such a view, this is a conserving document that gives English educators the opportunity to focus their attention on disciplinary history and to maintain contact with long-held values. Such a view also encourages English educators to maintain contact with language and terminology that have helped define central disciplinary concerns and practices. For example, successive revisions of the *Guidelines* have used

words like “process,” “content”, “media”, and “discourse” that all English educators are able to recognize and relate to specific issues and classroom practices. (65)

This passage offers considerable evidence that the Standing Committee views the *Guidelines* as a conserving document that operates particularly through its use of supposedly universal terminology. The absence of any discussion about the contested nature of terms like *process*, *content*, *media*, and *discourse* implies that the discipline is free of conflict.

In fact, none of the terms listed by the committee is currently uncontested. Readers have only a few options. They may accept the claims of the *Guidelines* text as it is written, they may assume that the Standing Committee was unaware of conflicts around words that they say “all English educators are able to recognize and relate,” or they may assume that the Standing Committee intentionally represented particular meanings as universal in order to accomplish certain goals, such as fabricating consensus about the nature of the English language arts.

In the next section, I demonstrate how the use of two more terms—“critical” and “diversity”—are represented neutrally in the *Guidelines* in spite of their contested nature.

### *The Representation of “Critical” Activity and the Use of “Diversity”*

As discussed in Chapter 3, when using a term like *critical*, it is important to distinguish the intended meaning of that word in the context of its use. In recent years, *critical* has become a “buzzword” in the English language arts, and

appears as “critical thinking,” “critical reading and writing skills,” “critical discussion,” “critical theory,” and “critical pedagogy,” among other forms. Its flexibility has resulted in its application as a blanket term for a whole range of structuralist critical theories based on the work of Marx, diverse postmodern theories, and poststructural theories that explicitly critique and deconstruct Marxism. *Critical* is also a popular term used in describing higher cognitive functions according to Bloom’s Taxonomy: the range of “higher order” thinking that includes application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of information. As such, *critical* thinking refers to systematic, rational analysis and judgment. This definition is quite different from the use of *critical* in critical theory, where it is used to mark a value for understanding power relations in order to alter them in favor of social equity, often across boundaries of race, class, gender, and sexuality. Depending on the context of its use, the meanings of the term *critical* have significantly different implications.

In the *Guidelines*, the term *critical* shows up often, first in the context of teachers’ obligation to “Know and be able to use and teach a wide range of critical and interpretive approaches to literature” (p. 8). English teacher education programs are expected to provide opportunities for teachers to “expand themselves as literate individuals who use their critical, intellectual, and aesthetic abilities to participate in a democratic society” (p. 8-9). Students are expected to learn how to “receive respectful and critical response from teachers and peers,” and “learn to accept responses and criticism that help them improve their language abilities” (p. 11). Teachers are obligated to maintain a “willingness

to encourage students to respond critically to different media and communications technology” (Attitude Guideline Six, p. 12), and “an enthusiasm for developing lifelong habits of mind to facilitate clear thinking and critical judgment” that leads them to “foster and nurture the cognitive and metacognitive processes required for clear thinking and critical judgment” in students (Attitude Guideline Ten, p. 12). Students are characterized as developing “critical insights” from reading literature (p. 17), and responding, interpreting, and thinking “critically” with others in a “reading, listening, and viewing community” (p. 27).

The committee states that,

*NCTE’s Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of the English Language Arts* Emphasize cultural diversity, second language usage, and the reflective teacher’s critical reasoning skills, all of which are prominently featured in various other standards frameworks. (32)

What does the Standing Committee mean when it calls activity “critical”?

Given the range of usage and the absence of a clear theoretical framework to ground understanding of the text, the meaning of *critical* across these segments is unclear. A “wide range of critical and interpretive approaches to literature,” using “critical, intellectual, and aesthetic abilities to participate in a democratic society,” and responding “critically to different media and communications technology” *could* employ the word “critical” to reflect a concern for power relations in texts and social interaction. However, learning to “receive” and “accept” critical responses and criticism imply more pedestrian definitions of “critical” as potentially finding fault or merely judging carefully. The *Guidelines*’ calls for teachers to “foster and nurture the cognitive and metacognitive

processes required for clear thinking and critical judgment” and the need for teachers to possess “critical reasoning skills” frame *critical* as a term that refers to logical, systematic thought in line with higher order thinking skills.

None of this is to argue that one definition of *critical* is more important, central, or valid than another. Critical thinking as higher order cognitive activity is important in the English language arts, as is a concern for critical approaches to literature that focus explicitly on how literary works communicate particular ideologies and power relations in ways that can affect a reader’s subjectivity. The variation of *critical* across the text of the *Guidelines* is not the point. The point is that, without clear definitions and clarifications of how the term is applied in context, the *Guidelines* cannot communicate a clear meaning that will be understood in the same ways across different groups of constituents. In this view, the failure to define *critical* in the *Guidelines* complicates the problems resulting from the Standing Committee’s assumption that the *Guidelines* keep teachers and teacher educators in contact with shared traditions and vocabulary that help to unify the discipline. The lack of definition allows readers to interpret “critical” in ways that make sense to them from a particular perspective.

While some might argue that space for interpretation is desirable in this case, there are significant differences between interpreting *critical thinking* as a matter of cognition versus interpreting it as a matter of concern for power relations. These interpretations lead in radically different directions both in terms of subject matter content and pedagogical approach. To avoid defining the term risks, on the one hand, missing important access to social critique and activism in

literacy classrooms, and, on the other hand, neglecting the need for systematic development of higher order thinking skills.

Another term that underpins many of the guidelines is *diversity*. As Menand (1995) notes, diversity is in itself not an especially political term on its surface, referring simply to difference and variety. Its meaning begins to disperse and play depending on whether difference and variation are viewed as a problem or an asset. In the English language arts, it is frequently used in the context of references to diverse cultures, diverse students, diverse groups, diverse audiences, and diverse texts, and in doing so it can mean simply “a variety of different” cultures, students, groups, audiences, or texts. However, particularly in relation to critical perspectives in literacy and the English language arts, use of the term *diversity* takes on political overtones because it is connected to power relations between social groups and the belief amongst critical theorists and critical pedagogues that teachers and curricula ought to account for and represent diverse cultures, texts, social groups, individuals, and theoretical/epistemological approaches in ways that do not characterize one kind as inferior to another. Their assumption is that diversity has been historically treated as a problem to be eradicated in schools and classrooms, particularly via language instruction that promotes uniformity and conformity to a dominant “standard” of the mainstream that, by definition, characterizes ethnic-, geographic-, class-, and culture-based variations in language use as inferior and “incorrect.”

From this perspective, talk about teaching that is concerned with diversity involves a consideration of equitable representation that goes beyond a mere desire for inclusion to entail a value for the empowerment of minority groups and/or marginal perspectives that might otherwise be excluded and therefore invisible or oppressed in classroom environments. Because significant groups within the field of the English language arts hold such critical views of literacy and language, it is important to examine the ways in which the term *diversity* is employed in the NCTE *Guidelines*.

The *Guidelines* make reference to the importance of providing a “diversity of situations” in which students can practice language use, as they “move into a world that is becoming more and more heterogeneous” (p. 3). In fact, the Standing Committee places heavy emphasis on accounting for cultural and textual diversity by stating several explicit “principles of diversity” (p. 7), including the need to account for student diversity, cultural diversity, multiple information sources, and multiple ways of knowing. Attitude Guideline 11 obligates teachers to recognize “the value of diversity of opinion” (p. 13), and the Standing Committee notes how the *Guidelines* “emphasize cultural diversity” in ways that are similar to representations of diversity in other standards frameworks (p. 32). In Chapter 7, the committee asserts that it is unnecessary to specify the professional or political points of view associated with the use of terms like diversity because it is more important to “acknowledge the breadth of the knowledge base for English education and to avoid being over-prescriptive of the content in English teacher education programs” (p. 64).

This last reference to diversity is significant. The statement is evidence that the Standing Committee was aware of how terms like *diversity* vary in meaning, and “deliberately” chose to “avoid associating such terms with specific movements and schools or thought” or “name, elaborate, or recommend specific conceptual frameworks” (p. 64). As in the case of the term *critical*, their decision leaves the contextual meanings of *diversity* open to a level of interpretation that is extremely relative. Instead, teachers are obligated to *recognize, value, promote, draw upon, enable, encourage, emphasize, and understand* diversity as a central consideration in the teaching of the English language arts (pp. 7, 32, 34).

Without definitions or elaborations of *diversity* in context, it is impossible for teachers and teacher educators to know *how* they might do any of these things. What does it mean to “recognize diversity,” to “value diversity,” to “enable diversity,” or to “draw upon diversity,” let alone “understand diversity” without knowing how the authors of the *Guidelines* associated the term? Readers may simply draw on their own pre-existing and independent understandings of the word, or they can interpret diversity at its most basic level as “difference and variety,” particularly in terms of obvious differences such as race and language. Furthermore, without a sense of whether diversity is meant to be associated with power relations in the *Guidelines*’ vision of English language arts instruction, it becomes unclear what it might mean for a teacher to respect, value, encourage, or draw upon diversity to improve language instruction. Given that the Standing Committee claims that “English language arts teachers are as diverse as the



students and the language they teach” (p. 28), the lack of elaborations of the term *diversity* is troubling. The *lack* of diversity in the teaching profession, and the accompanying mismatch between teachers’ and students’ cultural understandings of language, has been a primary concern of researchers interested in equity for at least thirty years, dating back at least to the Conference on College Composition and Communications’ (1974) statement “Students’ Right To Their Own Language,” which noted many of the ways in which mismatches between teachers’ and students’ perspectives related to social and cultural diversity led to inequitable forms of language instruction and assessment.

So far, I have concentrated on how particular terms and diction used in the *Guidelines* reveal fault-lines in what the Standing Committee represents as a consensus view of what counts in the preparation of English language arts teaching and the teaching of the English language arts. Across these examples, a pattern emerges in which the Standing Committee fails to define or elaborate on a term in order to provide space for interpretation in local programs of teacher education, with the consequence that significantly contested political terms are represented as neutral and thereby lose significance in shaping curriculum outcomes and influencing the overall goals and purposes of English language arts instruction. In the next section, I demonstrate how another assumption in the text—a belief in the centrality of literary studies—functions similarly to marginalize alternative ways of thinking about English language arts curriculum.

### *The Centrality of Literature in the Guidelines*

It is, of course, no surprise that literary study plays an important role in the NCTE *Guidelines*. Literature, after all, was the original focus of English as a discipline and a school subject when it was institutionalized in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, changes in literacy and technology during the 20<sup>th</sup> century are affecting the ways people read and the forms that text can take. In turn, these developments, along with increased cultural diversity, have increased the number of forms that narratives and non-fiction texts can take, and many have questioned the centrality of literature in language arts curricula for years (Elbow, 1991). Given that the Standing Committee defines the language arts as reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing, it makes sense to explore the effects of the Standing Committee's insistence on a print-based literary center.

At first glance, literature appears in the guidelines as one subject among many. The *Guidelines* outline ELA curriculum as the study of language, composition, literature, and the study of both print and non-print texts, oral, written and visual texts, and both fiction and non-fiction written by authors who represent both genders and a wide range of cultures and races. As such, "literature" appears to be an inclusive construct founded on principles of multicultural pedagogy. However, in the support passage for Content Knowledge Guideline 10, one statement leads to a privileged position for literature as "first among equals" (Burns and Francis, 2005) in English language arts curriculum. The Standing Committee states, "Teachers of the English language arts must see literature as the core, the humane center, of the English curriculum. They

must be aware of the unique opportunities literature provides for understanding human experience” (p. 18). Obligating teachers to treat literary study as the center of ELA curricula severely constrains the ability of teacher educators and classroom teachers to interpret the *Guidelines* for local contexts, and affects the ways in which language arts study can be structured.

This is not to say that the study of literature is no longer important to English language arts as a school subject, or that the Standing Committee’s representation of literary study is necessarily negative. There is no implication in the *Guidelines* that literary instruction should revolve around a Great Books model of traditional canonical texts written by dead white men, and in fact there are many references to the need for literary study to include a range of different genres and a value for the study of cultural variation that underscore the Standing Committee’s value for multiculturalism. But although this is the case, the committee’s multicultural stance, along with its insistence on a literary core to the curriculum, does have consequences that constrain what counts in the English language arts.

Under the *Guidelines*’ rubric for literary study, students “respond personally” to works of literature, and study “how these personal responses create their interpretations” (p. 17). Although the support passage for Content Knowledge Guideline 7 states that teachers are obligated to know “how a text operates, how it shapes thought, and how it manipulates emotion” (p. 18), it is not clear that *students* should be taught these things; rather, the teacher is obligated to use such knowledge as a vehicle for asking questions that

“encourage students to analyze their responses and the causes of those responses” (p. 18). This single statement acknowledging how texts operate to shape thought can be contrasted by overwhelming statements about the positive power of literature. Across the Content Knowledge Guidelines, the Standing Committee claims, “Literature that captures the imagination of children and adolescents is as diverse as youth” (p. 18), and Content Knowledge Guideline 10 proclaims that “Literature is a source for exploring and interpreting the experiences of human beings—their achievements, frustrations, foibles, values, and conflicts” (p. 18). In this conception of literary study, teachers are obligated to believe that literature provides “unique opportunities,” aids in “understanding human experience,” “broaden[s] insight,” and allows students to “experience vicariously places, people, and events otherwise unavailable to them, adding delight and wonder to their daily lives” (p. 18). Furthermore, literature is believed to “affirm our common humanity,” “illuminate our differences,” and “document how different people at different times have perceived and approached an infinite variety of human problems and aspirations” (p. 19). Literature consistently “celebrates humanity” (p. 19). It is represented as a very powerful technology in the *Guidelines*, and one that is almost entirely positive and beneficial for students to engage.

The treatment of literature as *the core* of English language arts curriculum, and its portrayal as a benign object of study for the understanding of “humanity” is cause for many groups within the community of English language arts to be concerned. The first layer of concern has to do with the connection between

literary study and understandings of diversity and difference, noted earlier in this chapter.

In the previous section I demonstrated how the *Guidelines*' use of the term *diversity* generally fails to account for uses of the term related to power relations and critical theory. The Standing Committee's representation of literature from a multicultural perspective further entrenches a view of diversity as valuable but generally unproblematic. The text conveys a discourse of "cultural understanding" (McCarthy, 1994).

In McCarthy's (1994) analysis of discourses of multiculturalism, he defines the discourse of cultural understanding as one that places

a premium on 'improving communications' among different ethnic groups. The fundamental stance of this approach to ethnic differences is that of cultural relativism. Within this framework, all social groups are presumed to have a formal parity with each other. The matter of ethnic identity is understood in terms of individual choice and preference—the language of the shopping mall. (84)

According to McCarthy, the discourse of cultural understanding leads to "a discourse of reciprocity and consensus: *We are all different but we are all the same*" (p. 84)—a discourse that fails to account for real differences and social inequities that mark divisions between racial and gender groups, and social classes.

When such a discourse of equality, equivalence, and relativity is combined with an emphasis on the effects of literature as always positive and natural, it becomes difficult for teachers to talk about the ways in which literary texts can also be used to suppress ideas, reproduce ideological systems, and otherwise govern individuals' morality, value systems, epistemologies, and perceptions of

how society works. In the NCTE *Guidelines*, the core of literary study functions as a device that brackets difference and re-casts diversity as a concern for equivalence and consensus. While a value for such a function is a matter of perspective, the fact remains that when such a position is operative but unarticulated in a policy text like the *Guidelines*, it becomes difficult for teachers and teacher educators to operate based on alternative discourses. For example, the *Guidelines*' conception of literary study constrains teachers' ability to operate from a multicultural discourse that McCarthy has labeled "critical multiculturalism" which,

emphasizes antiracist and antisexist changes in understanding and in social reorganization and draws from the points of view and experiences of oppressed minorities and working-class women and men as the primary bases for a transformative curriculum (96)

that he says constitutes "a fundamental step in the direction of preparing students for democratic participation in a complex and differentiated world" (p. 96), rather than simply a movement to "paste over the central contradictions associated with race and the curriculum" with a "professional discourse of content addition" that leads to the inclusion of literature from minority sources and viewpoints (p. 94).

The placement of literature at the core of English language arts curriculum also has consequences for how the committee represents the study of other kinds of text in language arts classrooms, particularly the study of media texts and digital technology. While media study is recommended as a subject in its own right (p. 20), media is more strongly represented as an object of study subordinate to the study of literature, a source of extending literary study for

enrichment. Furthermore, where literature is almost always characterized as a powerful positive force, media texts are almost always characterized as only *potentially* positive, limited in particular ways where literature is not.

To demonstrate this contrast between media and literature representations, I turn to an examination of the content and pedagogical guidelines concerned with media and non-print texts. The Standing Committee stresses that students must be taught to view non-print media texts as sources for interpretation, rather than as “transmitted reality” (p. 19). Judgment of media texts is characterized not as a way to “celebrate humanity,” as it is for literary texts, but rather to “separate fact from opinion, logic from fallacy” (p. 19). There is an implication that where literature reveals truth, media twists it. Various media, including print and electronic news, television, advertisements, music, video, and digital games, are characterized as having both “negative and positive influences” (19), and media is marked by “possibilities and limitations” (p. 20) where literary study has only possibilities.

From the perspective of New Literacy Studies outlined in chapter 2, the implicit subordinate relation of media studies to literary studies in the language arts, and its accompanying suspicion and skepticism about the educative capacity of media (or the accompanying inflation of literature’s educative capacity, if you will), is cause for concern. If today’s students are operating in a different attention economy and processing textual information differently than their parents and teachers do, then the placement of literature at the core of English language arts is potentially inappropriate and even alienating for

students, who do not then find their own literacy practices and understandings of language represented in the English language arts classroom. In that case, English language arts study loses relevance for students, and the imposition of print-oriented literary texts as the dominant textual structure for academic study alienates students from classroom and academic participation, turning reading from a positive and pleasurable experience into a negative.

It is worth repeating here that I am not arguing for the elimination of literary study from the English language arts. As an English teacher and an individual, I value literary reading highly. Rather, my intention here is to point out how a particular traditional view of the English language arts results in a severe narrowing of “what counts” in the curriculum and contributes to the alienation of young people from literary study by imposing it on them as a moral good in contrast to the media forms that they are immersed in during their own literate lives. Moreover, it is important to acknowledge that *both* literature and non-print media texts, as social linguistic constructions, always have the capacity to have both positive and negative effects; therefore, it is important to represent them both as objects for critical analyses in both senses of that term—analysis as systematic evaluation of components employing higher cognitive functions, and analysis as systematic evaluation of components involving a concern for power and ideological activity.

The case of contrasts between literature and media studies in the guidelines raises an issue of appropriateness in the 1996 *Guidelines*. In the final section of this chapter, I demonstrate *appropriateness* as a fundamental



discourse in the *Guidelines* that exerts tremendous influence on how readers can conceive of the language arts, and which contributes to an overall conservative ideology for teacher preparation and language arts instruction.

### *The Discourse of Appropriateness in the Guidelines*

The 1996 *Guidelines*, based on principles of diversity and “dynamic literacy,” repeatedly state that English is a diverse language that takes many forms, can be used in many ways, and includes numerous dialects that are each linguistically valid and viable. The *Guidelines* further stress the need for teachers to give students multiple opportunities in many social situations and contexts to experience this diversity of the English language so that they come to value and respect English in all its forms, and by extension to respect individuals from different cultural groups who use language differently. The authors’ statements about the dynamic nature of English imply that there is no “correct” English for teachers to teach. Rather, the teacher’s job is to help students use their language skills to operate across social groups and contexts to achieve their goals. Using language in this way involves adapting language use across groups and contexts in order to obtain recognition and communicate in various contexts. In the *Guidelines*, this adaptability is represented as a matter of *appropriateness*.

In fact, *appropriateness* operates as a strand of discourse throughout the *Guidelines*, extended from appropriate language use to appropriate teaching, knowledge, worldviews, reading, and assessment. Its pervasiveness is further related to the construction of a set of binary representations of language use

associated with the concept of appropriate and inappropriate language use: standard/non-standard, academic/non-academic, and formal/informal. Although the language of appropriateness deployed by the Standing Committee may have been intended to underscore the situated nature of literacy practices, like other assumed meanings it results in potential unintended consequences.

Across the *Guidelines*, the committee makes statements concerning appropriate language many times (See Appendix B). Teachers are obligated to recognize that “every dialect has an appropriate use” (p. 10), to believe that language arts teachers “help students grow by encouraging creative and appropriate uses of language” (Attitude Guidelines Four, p. 10), to believe that teachers should “help students recognize and use language appropriate to different occasions” (p. 15), and to believe that teachers are obligated to help students understand “when to use formal structures and when informal structures are appropriate” (p. 16). There is a statement that teachers should select literature “representing a worldview appropriate for the classroom” (p. 18), and that there are such things as “appropriate choices,” (p. 18), “appropriate literature” (p. 18), and “appropriate texts” (p. 28). Statements about appropriateness also extend to appropriate instructional methods and assessments (pp. 20, 25).

Discussions in the *Guidelines* about appropriate language characterize language use in ways that privilege certain uses without engaging in discussions of “correctness.” For example, teachers provide students “access to standard oral and written forms of English,” which implies the existence and inferiority of

some “non-standard” forms of English that are not taught (p. 10). Similarly, teachers are obligated “to provide opportunities for students to practice language beyond the academic environment of the classroom,” implying the existence of “non-academic” language that is less valued in the classroom (p. 16). This view of academic and non-academic language use is solidified by the committee’s statement that teachers are obligated “to provide opportunities for students to use nonacademic as well as academic English. In doing so, they can help students understanding when to use formal structures and when informal structures are appropriate” (p. 16). Further references to “informal,” “formal”, and “standard” English (p. 16) interrelate to create an extensive underlying discourse of appropriate/inappropriate language use.

There are some dangerous potential consequences to the discourse of appropriateness. Even when the Standing Committee explicitly attempts to frame non-standard, non-academic, informal language as something to be respected and even used and valued in classroom situations, the notion of appropriate use-in-context renders the second half of each binary—non-standard, informal, and non-academic—into a subordinate form of language, legitimate as a dialect of language but inadequate, or “inappropriate,” in situations where power relations are characterized by the discourse practices of the dominant race, class, gender, and so on. These situations are frequently located in academic and economic contexts that privilege the language codes and customs of the white middle and upper class, whose representation of their

own dialects as “standard” English determines what constitutes “appropriateness.”

Some may argue that it is a simple fact that minority speakers, especially, must learn how to shift registers and codes in order to negotiate communication and power in different social contexts. However, arguments along those lines assume that the status quo in which such skills are required is natural, inevitable, and ahistorical. Such arguments assume that “appropriate” language use is a matter of common sense, and in this way it can be demonstrated that such arguments serve to reproduce a negative ideological status quo in which a dominant group’s language takes on hegemonic force and cultural capital to the exclusion and disenfranchisement of minority language groups, who then must adopt the language and customs of the dominant group and operate from an inferior social position as they compete for access to goods, services, and power. It is possible and even desirable for minorities to do so in that context, but hardly equitable.

Although the Standing Committee’s adoption of appropriate language use as a primary discourse in its guidelines may be intended to mitigate debates about the existence of “correct” or “standard” English, the use of an appropriateness stance may have negative consequences that constrain the ability of teachers and students to achieve equity in their communities, and prevent them from conceiving of social reform. (For an extended critique of the appropriateness stance, see Fairclough, 1995).

## Summary

In this chapter, I have demonstrated how the 1996 NCTE *Guidelines* deploy terms such as *discipline*, *holism*, *interconnection*, *literacy*, *discourse*, *critical*, *diversity*, and *appropriateness*. Although the authors claim that the *Guidelines* are flexible and constructed for easy interpretation across a range of contexts, the use of these terms along with a privileging of literary studies as the center of the curriculum reveals that the text projects a particular view of the English language arts rooted in theories of process language, social constructivism, and a discourse of cultural understanding as a universal and neutral representation of linguistic and cultural diversity for the profession.

What is remarkable is that none of these terms or positions in itself gives the text a conservative inflection; rather, it is their collective interaction that does so. Claims of English language arts as a disciplinary pursuit involve particular claims to authority that are contested among members of the profession, while the foundation of social constructivism functions to exclude alternative ways of thinking about and inquiring into language and language teaching/learning. The conscious decision to leave out definitions and elaboration of key terms in favor of the assertion that English language arts involves a stable and universally recognized tradition including a shared vocabulary helps to fabricate a consensus about the nature of English language arts and teaching. This is ideological work that normalizes a uniform vision of the field. Finally, an attempt to mitigate arguments in the field about language correctness by turning to “appropriateness” results in the reification of existing power relations between the

dominant language of the white mainstream in American society and minority language speakers, who, under this rubric, must adopt the language of the dominant group in order to gain access to power and opportunity while bracketing their own languages for use only in non-academic and informal contexts in non-standard ways.

How could these things be true? Accepting the assumption that the members of the Standing Committee approached the construction of the *Guidelines* with the intention of producing a curriculum for the equitable education of all children toward the betterment of society, how did their document come to function as a conserving document that uses progressive language and ideals to mask reproduction of an inequitable status quo?

In the next chapter, I attempt to address these questions by examining the ways in which the *Guidelines* represent the interaction of ethical liberalism from the field of English language arts and technological liberalism from a discourse of accountability that has been appropriated by the English language arts from the outside. This interaction, I argue, results in a trumped progressivism in the English language arts that serves the conservative interests of the accountability movement in the United States, characterized by the construct of the “effective teacher.”

## CHAPTER 7: FINDINGS, PART THREE

### *Ideological Relations:*

#### *The Effective Teacher, Accommodating Accountability, and the Technological*

#### *Trumps of the NCTE Guidelines*

In Chapter 6, I demonstrated how the deployment of terms in the NCTE *Guidelines* functions to project a particular set of meanings as universals for the preparation and practice of teachers of the English language arts. In each case, the deployment of particulars as universals contributes to an ongoing normalization of particular ideological positions related to accountability and the language arts that are masked by progressive ideals and inclusive language that extends from a social constructivist orientation to learning and literacy. While it is important to refrain from arguing that these positions are “wrong” for the profession, it is necessary to bring them into the open by describing them so that English educators can determine how they influence curriculum, knowledge, thought, behavior, and activity in the English language arts. In doing so, it becomes possible to develop a more critical and inclusive policy conversations around both the issues of whether and how to modify discourses and curricula by articulating policy differently or more fully.

In this chapter, I argue that the analysis of diction from the *Guidelines* in Chapter 6 helps describe an orientation to the English language arts in which progressive ideals related to ethical liberalism interact with aspects of technological liberalism associated with the genre of accountability in ways that

make those progressive ideals difficult to operationalize and achieve, regardless of the intentions motivating policy construction. The result of interactions between ethical and technological liberalism is a set of policies that limit the interpretation of curricular content, constrain the range of pedagogical choices that teachers and teacher educators can make, and marginalize a host of theoretical orientations that might otherwise provide useful alternatives in the national discourse about English language arts education. The limits placed on what and who counts in English education lead to a kind of default conservatism in NCTE's guidelines for teacher preparation, at times in spite of the authors' explicit contrary intentions to produce a document that supports reform.

In some ways, it makes sense that a document like the NCTE *Guidelines* functions as a conservative document. It is, after all, a text that is intended to guide curriculum design across contexts, and it is also a document associated with the accountability movement, which inherently involves the development of common standards for all. Even when common standards include space for flexible interpretation, they are based on assumptions that there is agreement and stability about the nature and purposes of English language arts teaching and learning, and that it is desirable to reproduce those qualities and purposes in diverse institutional programs. In reality, the field is too complex and unsettled to formulate and successfully implement the kinds of standards used in the 1996 *Guidelines* and other standards documents that were produced concurrently.

The difficulty in creating uniform standards for English language arts teacher preparation can be illustrated by considering some of the ways in which



the language arts can be represented. First, at a minimum, ELA can be understood based on autonomous or ideological models of literacy. Second, ELA can be understood as a neutral academic project or as a site for particular kinds of socialization and governmentality. Third, English as a language can be described as having a stable and “standard” center from which some social groups deviate, or it can be described as an open and dynamic system that changes across time and space depending on the needs of individuals and social groups in particular contexts. These factors each offer a range of possible avenues for curriculum designers.

Depending on how these avenues are perceived, English language arts can be used to promote the development of uniformity or support for diversity. Curriculum for teacher preparation can be characterized by a focus on reform and critical pedagogy, or it can be characterized by a focus on transmitting traditional knowledge and reproducing cultural capital. And, of course, in the real contexts of social interaction and discourse, these positions can co-exist, blend, compete, and conflict. This is especially true when desires for consensus, flexibility, and inclusion in the context of accountability lead to a bracketing of difference, the representation of accountability texts as neutral, and a desire for predictability in curricular outcomes.

Given the Standing Committee’s emphasis on the voluntary and flexible nature of the *Guidelines*, as well as their claims to a balance between conservation and change, it seems counterintuitive to argue that the ultimate function of the NCTE *Guidelines* is the generation of predictable outcomes. The

key to uncovering this function's conservative ideological effects is what I refer to as the transcendental signifier of the NCTE *Guidelines*: the construct of the "effective teacher."

In this chapter, I will demonstrate how the NCTE *Guidelines* communicate a vision of the "effective teacher" in the English language arts that runs counter to NCTE's assertions within the *Guidelines* that English language arts teaching is highly dependent on heterogeneity, a dynamic conception of language, and a dependence on local context and student-centered pedagogical principles to determine practice. In addition to illustrating how the *effective teacher* operates as a conservative ideal, I will also demonstrate five moves in the *Guidelines* that solidify its underlying conservative ideology, regardless of authorial intent. These moves include 1) excising research and theory, 2) privileging the mainstream, 3) excising activism, 4) taking an additive approach to reform, and 5) fabricating common ground to project consensus.

To begin, I examine the *Guidelines*' use of the term "effective" as a framing device for the purposes of English language arts teaching and learning.

### *The Concept of the "Effective" Teacher*

The text of the *Guidelines* begins with the following statement:

At ten-year intervals for most of its eighty-five years, the National Council of Teachers of English has presented the profession with a statement of what effective teachers of the English language arts need to know and be able to do; these regularly updated statements also discuss the attitudes that effective teachers should possess. (1)

As the text continues, the phrase “effective teacher” is used repeatedly to communicate the desired outcome of teacher education programs that use the guidelines to create curriculum. What does it mean to be “effective”?

*Effective* is primarily defined as “Having an intended or expected effect” (American Heritage Dictionary, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition), and therefore connotes predictability. An “effective teacher,” then, is a teacher whose actions have predictable results—that is, desired effects that can be reproduced across time and space. In the NCTE *Guidelines*, this construct is referred to in terms of “the potential [for individual practitioners] to become models of effective teaching” (p. 4), a set of “attitudes of effective language arts teachers” (p. 10), a bounded field of “content knowledge of effective language arts teachers (p. 14), a common set of “pedagogical knowledge and skills demonstrated by effective English language arts teachers” (p. 23), and the “knowledge base of effective language arts teachers” (p. 14). Desirable teachers are characterized as those who provide opportunities, design activities, create environments, use knowledge, demonstrate attitudes, and use instructional techniques “effectively” (pp. 10, 15, 19, 27, 34, 67; for details, see Appendix B). Similarly, desirable teacher education programs are those that are “effective” in producing certain kinds of English language arts teachers (pp. 7, 63).

In each case, the use of the term “effective” leads to a stable and reproductive representation of teaching and teacher education. Based on this language, it is desirable for English language arts teachers to know, do, and believe in uniform ways that are reproduced across space and time. Given the

need for documents produced in the accountability genre to produce equivalence and allow for assessment via comparison to standards, the discourse of effectiveness in the NCTE *Guidelines* makes sense. But what are the consequences?

It is reasonable to argue that it is desirable to produce *effective teachers* in the sense described here. It is also reasonable to argue that the use of the term “effective” in the guidelines is primarily intended to refer to a desire for teacher education curricula to result in the production of teachers who in fact *succeed* in helping students learn how to use the English language arts. In this sense, however, *effective* functions as a proxy for “successful,” a word that means something different from “predictability” in the context of English language arts teaching, and which is not operative in denotations of the word *effective*.

One factor that allows the construct of the *effective teacher* to operate as a conservative and constraining force in the *Guidelines* is the lack of a definition in the text for what it means to be “effective.” The Standing Committee assumes that the meaning of the word is clear and obvious, and so does not elaborate. Left undefined, the meaning of *effective teaching* is open to play. In the context of accountability, its play tends toward connotations of uniformity. While the popular perception of “effective” as “successful” may be present in the text, it also potentially masks conservative effects.

The representation of teachers as “effective” also contributes to a faulty assumption in the *Guidelines* that teachers are sufficiently positioned to control the context of their work. This is particularly apparent in references to the

effective teacher as one who creates environments and provides opportunities—two common activities represented in the text.

Classroom environments are decidedly complex domains (Spiro et al., 1988). Such environments are not easily bounded, and change from moment to moment and day to day depending on who enters them, how they participate, what resources are available, what time interaction occurs, and so forth. These immediate environmental factors are further complicated by a host of variables ranging from the personal beliefs and prior experiences of the individual participants in a classroom activity to the efficiency of the climate control system in the classroom's building. That is to say, although a teacher may plan activities, group students, arrange the physical space, and use a range of textual resources (assuming they are available), no combination of teacher behaviors and activities can result in complete control over the classroom environment.

In addition to the impossibility of any teacher creating the entire warp and weave of a classroom environment, it can be said that it is also frequently difficult or even impossible for teachers to provide an adequate range of opportunities for students to practice the range of activities and skills involved with the language arts as represented in the NCTE *Guidelines*. Any teachers' ability to do so is constrained by the quality and accessibility of school and community resources, which are highly variable across school contexts. The language of creation and provision in the *Guidelines* involves an assumption that all schools and classrooms are equally equipped in order to help teachers create environments and provide opportunities. Such equivalence does not exist. To institute policies

in which teachers are obligated to control the creation of environments and provision of opportunities for learning disregards this fact.

This is not to say that teachers have *no* control over environment and opportunity. Teachers can act in a number of ways to capitalize on available environmental resources and learning opportunities to maximize students' literacy learning. But the language of the *Guidelines* does not make a distinction between teachers' ability to *modify* or *influence* environments and opportunities and teachers' ability to control them. By obligating teachers to create and provide such things, the NCTE guidelines place teachers in an untenable position and assign them more agency than they actually have.

The play of meanings in the construct of the *effective teacher* that leads to an implicit value for uniformity reflects the central discursive issue in the NCTE *Guidelines*, what I have referred to as the interaction between ethical and technological liberal philosophies. In the next section I discuss how differing interpretations of *effective teaching* in the guidelines relate to this philosophical interaction. I go on to argue that this interaction reinforces the conservative activity of the NCTE *Guidelines* and undermines its own representation of the English language and the language arts as dynamic subjects characterized by diversity and attention to context.

### *Interactions Between Ethical Liberalism and Technological Liberalism*

Recalling the discussion in Chapter 2 about Kuchapski's (2002) framework for accountability, ethical liberalism is a philosophical stance toward educational policy characterized as a belief that the purpose of educational accountability is

to develop individual capacity. Ethical liberalism is marked by a high value for equity and cultural diversity, legitimated by student-centered, experience-based curricula, constructivist pedagogy, and participatory relationships. It emphasizes the efficient maximization of learning, a focus on process, and an interdependent orientation to policy that relies on local governance. Technological liberalism is characterized by a belief that the purposes of educational accountability are to meet the requirements of globalization, promote equality and uniformity rather than equity, and emphasize common curriculum and universal outcomes for learning. It is characterized by an emphasis on hierarchical relationships, effectiveness, and a reliance on centralized policy, along with the decentralization of management and a value for consumer choice.

Throughout the *Guidelines*, it is possible to identify statements that reflect both ethical and technological liberal philosophies. In doing so, a pattern emerges in which discussions about the nature of language and learning are especially marked by an ethical liberal position. However, these segments are framed by an overarching context of accountability represented by language that reflects a value for technological liberalism. In many cases, this technological frame trumps the ethical philosophy that underlies the Standing Committee's representation of the English language arts. In other cases, language reflecting ethical liberalism actually masks an underlying set of technological liberal values. These interactions provide evidence of the ways in which the ethical philosophy of the Standing Committee is constrained and even subverted by the demands of

creating the *Guidelines* using the genre of accountability currently popular in the national discourse of standards-based accountability reform.

By “a genre of accountability,” I mean that the Standing Committee’s assigned task is first to create a policy text that is identifiable in the genre of education standards currently used at the state and national levels of education bureaucracy. This purpose is apparent in Chapter 6 of the *Guidelines*, where the Standing Committee compares its guidelines with the standards frameworks of several other national standards projects and expresses a value for the ways in which those documents share language and content. That is, the *Guidelines* use the structures and language common to standards documents, which are typically constructed for ease of reference, brevity, and concreteness. They are also written to convey a uniform (*standard*) set of expectations, and are explicitly intended for use for regulating activity in a socio-political context. They usually consist of a list of concrete and directive statements that obligate certain ways of being, thinking, knowing, and doing, and they offer little or no space for elaboration. Further, they are usually presented as neutral documents based on principles of “best practice” and consensus. They are documents intended to emphasize uniformity, efficiency, equality, centralization, and universality; that is, they are very much the products of technological liberalism.

Although this is the primary task of the Standing Committee—production of an accountability text—they also have a responsibility to represent the subject matter content, pedagogy, and contextual factors involved with teaching and learning the English language arts. This second project, as indicated by the



committee's discourse, involves representing these subjects as concerned with individual students' needs, a value for social and cultural diversity, attention to issues of local contexts, constructivist learning and pedagogy, social equity, and individual experience; that is, the subjects the Standing Committee writes about are inherently based on ethical liberalism. What happens when a subject based on ethical liberalism is treated in a genre spawned by technological liberalism?

It is not unreasonable to assert that the majority of the Standing Committee's discourse about the English language arts is founded on ethical liberal philosophy. Using social constructivism as its foundation, the Standing Committee is extremely consistent in its representations of learning, language, and pedagogy. Examples of this consistency are plentiful. In the remainder of this section, I will provide only enough examples to make the point. An exhaustive accounting of every ethical liberal statement would be both tedious and unnecessary.

Beginning in the introduction to the guidelines in Chapter 1, the committee makes a number of statements that mark its ethical liberal philosophy. They write, "We were careful to keep in mind that the distinction [between programs for English majors and programs for English teachers] was not one of the programs' worth but one of differing purposes" (p. 3). They continue by stating, "We agreed that both programs, but especially the one for teachers, should produce individuals whose experiences have been such that they know that 'all language processes are integrated and, hence, that language study should be approached holistically'" (p. 3). These statements include explicit values for holism,

integration, experiential learning, a concern for individual learners, and a value for diverse purposes in language study—each marking aspects of ethical liberal education philosophy.

Still, even though the statements above reflect a value for ethical liberalism, their context causes these values to blend with certain technological liberal concerns. For example, in this context, the committee is suggesting that it is important to produce a set of uniform graduates who learn certain content in order to teach effectively, even as the committee argues that there are multiple ways to learn English. From this perspective, the very activity of teacher education is a technological liberal endeavor geared for efficiency and uniformity. On the other hand, the committee seeks to produce this uniform group in order to promote an integrated, holistic curriculum for language, which is an ethical liberal position valuing difference, constructivism, and process.

Elsewhere in the introduction, the committee writes that, “Teaching English and language arts as process and activity, then, requires the building of student-centered, interactive classroom environments...” (p. 3). They go on to state that.

We do concur that teachers at all grade levels need to understand what language is, how it is acquired and developed, and how to provide students with experiences and opportunities to use their language in order to develop expertise in communication. And we agree with the earlier committees that diversity of situations is important, especially as students move into a world that is becoming more and more heterogeneous. (3)

The committee continues in these introductory passages to emphasize student-centeredness, experiential learning, a value for cultural and pedagogical

diversity, and other ethical liberal values. At the same time, it is possible to identify a concern in their comments for the development of globalization, for example in their reference to “a world that is becoming more and more heterogeneous.” Such comments involve tying a technological liberal view drawn from the wider discourse of accountability to an ethical liberal value for experiential curriculum in diverse situations for English language arts students. A pattern emerges in which the English language arts requires an ethical liberal perspective, but teacher education requires a more technological liberal approach in order to maintain uniform instruction that legitimizes standards and enables institutionalized accountability.

Similarly blended ethical and technological liberal positions can be found throughout the *Guidelines*. Later in the introduction, the committee states,

The preservice teacher education program should initiate and develop certain knowledge, pedagogical abilities, and attitudes which will be the foundation for the teacher’s subsequent professional career—for the English language arts teacher as scholar, decision-maker, and agent of curriculum change. Consequently, the present document advances recommendations for the essential elements of a preservice education program. Our guidelines, then, state what English language arts teachers should believe, know, and be able to do as teachers. (3-4)

This passage restates the technological liberal goal of uniformity for teacher education that grounds the *Guidelines* as an accountability document—there are certain attitudes, abilities, and knowledge that every single teacher in every classroom must possess in order to be effective. Interestingly, this uniform knowledge of what English language arts teaching consists of includes an explicit value for teachers as change-agents, a value reflecting ethical liberalism. A curious interaction can be seen to develop. The *Guidelines* appear to be

intended to function as a governing document for accountability and the development of a flexible but uniform curriculum for English teacher preparation. At the same time, the teachers prepared in such programs are expected to operate in ways that will challenge established knowledge and practice, in effect de-stabilizing the very idea of uniform preparation and instead suggesting a value for diverse approaches and teachers as professional decision-makers who are expected to operate in ways that could undermine the tenets of standards-based reform.

It is important to note the ways in which the Standing Committee worked in the *Guidelines* to resist the technological liberal tendency toward uniformity. They explicitly state that,

The guidelines do not try to set levels of attainment for each attitude, each type of knowledge, each set of skills. They assume that teacher education programs, and the professionals who act in them, will be able to set reasonable levels of achievement for the beginners and help classroom practitioners to set reasonable goals for themselves. (4-5)

They continue, stating,

As has been true in earlier versions of the *Guidelines*, the committee has not attempted to establish an English language arts teacher-education *program* with a predetermined set of courses or other experiences. ... Rather, the committee has identified the outcomes that any program designed to prepare English language arts teachers should produce, recognizing that there are many alternative ways for programs to reach those outcomes. At the same time, the committee looked at several model programs and attempted to determine what they have in common. (5)

These passages reflect the competing ethical liberal stance that each teacher education program will and ought to be different according to the needs of the local context; it also reflects the status of graduates and classroom practitioners

as self-directing agents. Further, the committee argues that the guidelines are not intended to prescribe experience and curriculum. They identify uniform outcomes for teacher education, but allow individual programs to determine curriculum alternatives; at the same time, though, the committee states that it did attempt to establish uniform “common” elements of such programs, which re-emphasizes a technological liberal position. Again, the pattern of ethical liberalism embedded in a technological liberalist framework is apparent.

Rather than continue to detail each instance of ethical or technological liberal markers, it is useful to examine the Standing Committee’s Statement of Underlying Principles (*Guidelines* Chapter 2). In this section, the committee assumes that principles exist which underlay particular decisions about curriculum design. They assert that these principles underlay three basic organizing areas: attitudes, knowledge, and pedagogy, which govern the beliefs, understandings, and skills that all teachers must have if they emerge from “effective” teacher education programs. This kind of assertion reflects the technological liberalism of accountability and curriculum projects, which seek to create hierarchies and uniformity. The committee expresses its value for such projects here. However, as the description of principles continues, the committee expresses a value for diversity in students, cultures, and understanding. These are ethical liberal values, expressed with regard to the activities of English language arts classrooms, but *not*, interestingly, for teacher education. The committee’s Principles of Content Knowledge emphasize diversity, individual growth, and constructivist learning (p. 8). The committee further asserts that

“text” is a term to be broadly defined as including print and non-print, visual, electronic, digital, and oral communication. It emphasizes a value for multiple perspectives rather than uniformity, and introduces the concept of “critical” approaches to reading and writing. Content principle 5 emphasizes and values cultural variation, and principle 7 expresses a value for linguistic variation in the classroom (p. 8). Once again, these principles reflect a generally ethical liberal stance toward the content and functions of the English language arts, but not teacher education.

This pattern continues in Chapter 2. The pedagogical principles articulated by the committee emphasize value for a focus on student interests and abilities, the concept of “authentic” assessment (which implies devaluing “inauthentic” standardized assessments in favor of assessments that focus on individual growth in context), and an emphasis for the value of accepting multiple ways to teach English. The Opportunity Principles emphasize an experiential orientation to teacher education, and a value for individual development and personal growth for teachers and students alike. However, they also refer to “model” classrooms, and principle 7 emphasizes a value for professional growth and the existence of a uniform category that identifies individuals as members of a group labeled “English teachers” (pp. 8-9) who are presumed to share a common set of values and beliefs. There are attempts here to blend ethical and technological standpoints, with the ethical position dominant. The Principles of Dynamic Literacy the committee maintains are representative of an ethical liberal stance that emphasizes a value for personal growth, local contexts, and

experience. These are all ethical liberalist positions, and run counter to the overarching discourse of uniform curriculum that governs the *Guidelines* as a document related to standards-based reform.

It is interesting to view the Standing Committee's Underlying Principles in this light. Although these principles are overwhelmingly oriented toward ethical liberal educational philosophy, they are introduced by the authors using the following statement,

As members of the Standing Committee on Teacher Preparation and Certification developed these guidelines, we identified a set of principles which underlay the more detailed and specific items of the three organizing areas of attitudes, knowledge, and pedagogy. These general principles govern the detailed beliefs, understandings, and skills that we believe must mark the teacher who emerges from an effective English language arts teacher-preparation program. (7)

By asserting a fundamental set of principles for curriculum design, the committee defaults to a technological liberal frame for its guidelines that potentially undermines the ethical liberal values those guidelines express.

It is necessary to remark that any attempt to develop generic curriculum for use across contexts at the level of state and national institutions will involve some type of technological liberal stance. Standards-based accountability is by definition an attempt to develop a uniform program that can be reproduced. In this light, it becomes easier to see that maintaining a technological liberal stance is not a bad thing in itself. Still, what these interactions within the NCTE *Guidelines* highlight is the way that the technological liberalism of standards-based accountability can over-ride the ethical liberal orientations of subjects like

the English language arts, affecting the ability of educators to maintain the integrity of their own values.

So, while NCTE and the Standing Committee for Teacher Preparation and Certification represent the English language and the language arts as dynamic, flexible, social, constructivist, student-centered, and valuing cultural, social, and textual diversity toward individual growth and learning through experience, they represent teacher education as a project for developing uniformity, efficiency, commonality, and effectiveness. To make this even clearer, it is worth looking at additional statements by the Standing Committee in their introduction to the guidelines.

The authors state,

Through recent and ongoing efforts to create standards for what students acquire through language arts education, the profession itself has become conscious of many areas of contention among teacher educators. However, as stated in the 1986 Guidelines, '[I]t is important for NCTE to affirm what it believes to be significant in the preparation of teachers of English language arts; at the same time, NCTE is obliged to suggest guidelines for others to follow in developing programs that prepare teachers of English language arts at all instructional levels.' (2)

As will be made clear later in this chapter, the committee's explicit awareness of contention within the field of English, and its subsequent decision to "affirm what it believes to be significant" independently of these contentions, allows them to "suggest guidelines for others to follow in developing programs" without having to account for difference. The fabrication of uniformity is key to the operation of the *Guidelines* as an accountability text. This is technological liberalist language that



emphasizes a value for creating standards, which, although it has allowed the profession to become aware of disagreements, has also enabled the Standing Committee to engage in work designed to reach agreement. That is, it allows the committee to fabricate consensus. Thus, the committee becomes able to assert and emphasize NCTE's "obligation" to suggest guidelines that enable a common curriculum for accountability. Although the document includes language designed to mitigate and even build in space for resisting uniformity, the *Guidelines'* normalizing properties as an ideological instrument become clearer.

*Five Moves: The Fabrication of Consensus for Accountability in the Guidelines*

In addition to the blending of ethical and technological liberal philosophies described above that results from the intersection of discourses from English language arts and discourses from standards-based accountability reform, there are five additional moves that are useful to elaborate in the *Guidelines* text. These moves include excising research and theory from the *Guidelines*, privileging the mainstream, excising activism, taking an additive approach to reform, and, ultimately, fabricating "common ground" in the field of English language arts in order to project consensus and legitimize the project of standards-based reform. In the following sections, I trace each of these moves and demonstrate how they affect the discourse of English education presented in the *Guidelines*.

*Move 1: Excising research and theory from the Guidelines.*

Chapter 7 of the *Guidelines*, titled “Continuing Issues,” offers a number of instances in which the committee discusses topics that it did not resolve in formulating its guidelines for teacher preparation. The authors describe seven areas that they believe should be addressed in ongoing discussions of curriculum and policy in the English language arts and NCTE: 1) the “breadth of reference” in the *Guidelines*, 2) “Common ground for the knowledge guidelines,” 3) “Balance between conservation and reform,” 4) “Conceptual frameworks,” 5) “New technologies,” 6) “Educational reform,” and 7) “Sensitivity to students’ needs” (pp. 64-69). In particular, the first four of these “continuing issues” offer significant insights into the discursive processes engaged in by the committee around its use of research and theory in the construction of the *Guidelines*.

As has already been noted, the Standing Committee deliberately refrains from citing research or elaborating the theoretical bases for its guidelines. In Chapter 7, the committee offers its rationales for this deliberate action (or non-action). They write, “[W]e avoid associating...terms with specific movements and schools of thought, and do not name, elaborate, or recommend specific conceptual frameworks,” and also state, “We did this deliberately to...avoid being over-prescriptive of the content in English teacher education programs” (p. 64). They go on to claim that, “[T]he guidelines refer only generally to the structures that inform the accreditation process, because we prefer to leave interpretive decisions to the discretion of individual programs....” (p. 64, italics added).

According to the authors, content from particular research studies, theories, and conceptual frameworks did, in fact, influence the construction of the

guidelines. However, the committee states that it deliberately excised these references from the guidelines in order to “avoid being overly prescriptive” for programs that were seeking accreditation. By doing so, the Standing Committee enabled such programs to interpret guidelines in ways that were at least superficially aligned with whatever curricula the programs had in place. Where they do identify particular concepts or findings from research and theory, they claim to do so in order to “inform the accreditation process”—an explicit accommodation of standards-based accountability reform.

This finding is complicated by inconsistencies found between the authors' statements and their actual practices. While they claim that they only articulate theoretical positions in the interest of supporting accreditation, it is clear that some theoretical positions were privileged over others. In particular, the authors specifically note their own use and emphasis of cognitive theories in formulating the guidelines, as well as their use of process reading and writing theories that came under heavy fire from critical theorists and socioculturalists in the past fifteen years, a span that subsumes the time frame in which the committee did its work. For example, in its discussion of conceptual frameworks, although the committee acknowledges the text's use of “language and terminology from a wide range of professional and political points of view; for example, ‘expressive,’ ‘construction,’ ‘transactional,’ and ‘diversity’ (p. 64), it later admits that the guidelines rely on a cognitivist orientation as their foundation (p. 66).

The text's professed neutral treatment of particular research and theories is complicated by this explicit value for cognitivist orientations, and it is unclear

why the Standing Committee proves inconsistent in this matter. On the one hand, they claim to eschew referring to specific theory, research, and pedagogical orientations in the text in order to leave matters of “interpretation” up to individual programs, while on the other hand they deliberately claim to base their standards on an intentionally unarticulated set of theoretical and research orientations that have particular implications for both content and pedagogy in English language arts and teacher education. Their motive for doing so includes taking “a stand” that, “constitutes a strong link with previous revisions of the *Guidelines* while not overlooking the work of literary scholars, theorists, and rhetoricians who see themselves as representatives of more explicitly postmodern points of view...” (p. 66).

It is possible to conclude that the Standing Committee, aware of at least some of the ideological implications of their document, chose to include this section to highlight those implications. However, the placement of this discussion near the end of the document, rather than in a privileged or highlighted space near the beginning of the document where the issue could be more easily reviewed and accounted for by users, renders the Standing Committee's cognitive biases a footnote in its ideological project.

While the *Guidelines* do draw on “language and terminology from a wide range of professional and political points of view,” they do so in a way that privileges a reductive vision of theory and research in the interest of facilitating standardization and accountability, rather than representing the range of English teaching and literacy practices in schools and children's lives, and also rather

than accurately accounting for the diversity of research traditions and theoretical approaches in the various fields that comprise English studies at the university/disciplinary level. What is remarkable here is not the Standing Committee's use of specific terms from research and theory, or even its bias for a particular theoretical orientation; it is the absence of any association in the guidelines between these terms and the respective movements, theories, or the schools of thought they represent. Even more important to note is the way in which the committee's characterization of non-cognitivist groups marginalizes those who do not adhere to the values of cognitive theory and/or process pedagogy.

In the *Guidelines* text, the term "*Postmodern*" is used as a blanket label for professionals who subscribe to social constructionism, postmodern theory, critical pedagogy, rhetorical theories, and literary theories of all kinds. In this way, while they emphasize the centrality of a cognitivist framework, the authors make a powerful discursive move that de-legitimizes a whole range of theoretical approaches otherwise conceived to complicate cognitive theories of teaching, learning, and language.

Postmodernism is not a single uniform theory, but rather a loose conglomeration of theories that involve critiques of modernism. Similarly, critical theory is a vague term that refers to a host of Marxist and neo-marxist theories based on a concern for social activism, change, and issues of power in the oppression of minorities (or any marginalized group; the poor, for instance, are rarely a minority in the numerical sense of the term) in society. Literary theory is

also actually literary theories, a classification that includes multiple competing orientations to the understanding of texts, from New Criticism to feminism, colonialism, postcolonialism, queer theory, poststructural theories, and so on. Each of these perspectives is significant, well-developed, and distinctive. To refer to them collectively as 'postmodern' suggests a disregard for them, and practically renders the term 'postmodern' into a dirty word or, at least, a bracketing category for theoretical and research orientations that complicate curriculum development rather than enable it. In this way, even as the Standing Committee claims to include such groups, their values are made marginal in the text.

To further demonstrate how the Standing Committee marginalizes these groups, a closer look at the language used to describe them is helpful. The non-cognitivist groups mentioned by the committee are subtly characterized as dissenters who "see *themselves*" as "anti-foundationalist." "*They*" understand such anti-foundationalism to be essentially "anti-cognitivist," and see themselves taking a "liberatory role" involved in the teaching of "literacy" (not English language arts). In so many words, the Standing Committee represents these groups as "others," groups viewed by the tacit "we" of the Standing Committee members, who do not view such dissent from these others as significant enough to affect curriculum policy decisions.

The move to excise references to research and theory while emphasizing cognitivism over other perspectives privileges the mainstream and dominant discourses of education, and leads to a reproduction of the status quo. This

reproduction is not accomplished by a direct assault on “other” theories, and may be an unintended effect of the committee’s work. However, by referring to an ill-defined group of ‘postmodern’ theorists as “they” in comparison to a tacitly cognitivist “we,” the authors represent critical theorists, social constructionists, and others as insignificant, marginal, and of little relevance. Having characterized these groups as outsiders, the authors are able to state that, while they recognize “very real areas of disagreement,” such disagreements should be ignored in order to help programs seeking external accreditation to succeed. As in the interactions between ethical and technological liberalism, the desire to accommodate accountability processes like accreditation leads to a narrowing of not only what counts, but also who counts.

Their characterization as a single mass of like-minded dissenters communicates a dismissal of other groups’ “very real” areas of disagreement, as well as a disregard for the arguments of diverse constituents of NCTE. The language impresses the reader with the belief that critical, socio-cultural, and postmodern theories are essentially all the same—a misleading and even aggressive marginalization of others. The tacit “we” who do not see the dissenters or their arguments as significant is able to argue that important differences only “seem” to be contradictory “on the surface,” and is thereby able to neutralize differences by seeming to assimilate them. Most significantly, the text states that neutralization of these “very real areas of disagreement” is done in the interest of helping programs that seek external accreditation to succeed in the framework of standards-based accountability reform.

*Move 2: Privileging the mainstream.*

In addition to privileging a cognitivist, expressivist, and process pedagogy orientation to the English language arts that was dominant during their construction, and which continues to be dominant today in the context of accountability, there is further evidence in the *Guidelines* that the text functions as a conservative document reproducing the ideologies of the mainstream via ties to previous “traditional” positions in NCTE. By tradition, here, I mean to refer to the maintenance of historically valued practices in English language arts and teacher education drawn from earlier iterations of the NCTE *Guidelines*, particularly the use of orientations prominently featured in the 1986 version of the *Guidelines*.

This evidence contradicts the Standing Committee’s claim in Chapter 7 of its text that they “made an earnest attempt through this revision of the *Guidelines* to seek explicitly and openly a balance between conservation and reform....” (p. 66). Although the committee engages in a discussion of conservation and reform that articulates potential risks and benefits for both orientations, analysis reveals that, in practice, the committee privileges conservation even at the expense of its own value for reform. The committee openly admits a “strong link with previous revisions of the *Guidelines*” (p. 67), and notes that its work is “firmly rooted in the process pedagogy of the 1980s” (p. 66). Over thirteen passages in the guidelines sections (Chapters 3, 4, and 5 of the *Guidelines*—or a range of seventeen pages) demonstrate the Standing Committee’s reliance on previous



versions of the *Guidelines*, particularly the 1986 text. Given indications that little will change in the *Guidelines* from the 1996 version to the 2006 revision, a pattern of intertextual relations becomes apparent that results in a conservative tendency for the *Guidelines*, masked by claims that the authors account for new research and knowledge based on the inclusion of diverse groups' conceptual frameworks.

The Standing Committee's reliance on past versions of the NCTE *Guidelines* militates against change, even if it makes sense that "revision" of such a policy text necessarily involves the use of the previous document during construction of the "new." In spite of intentions to the contrary, tradition trumps reform at nearly every turn in these cases. This effect suggests that the articulation of English language arts teacher education curricula based on the discourse of standards-based accountability reform can cause a conservative ideology to coalesce in curriculum policy in such a way that those policies are predisposed to resist change. Such resistance should be cause for concern if NCTE seeks to base its understandings of English on ethical liberal philosophies, constructivist theories of learning, and the inclusion of diverse members with variable orientations.

*Move 3: "Reform" by curriculum addition.*

In this section, I will demonstrate the ways in which the resistance to change described above has already manifested. Although the Standing Committee works in the text to acknowledge the importance of new

developments such as hypermedia technology, multimedia texts, and increased cultural diversity, it does so in a way that is additive rather than integrative. The content and structure of the language arts and teaching remain the same regardless of these additions, in spite of calls to teach the subject holistically. Recalling Lankshear and Knobel's (2003) questions, referred to in Chapter 2, what happens when the new is faced through the lenses of the old? As Lankshear and Knobel suggest, one result is often the mere absorption of the new into the framework of the old, as outsiders spearheading curriculum reform fail to fully reconceptualize their work as a result of their encounters with elements indicating the emergence of new literacies.

This element of the present critique is particularly difficult to express, because it comes closest to personalizing the causes of contradiction and conservatism in the *Guidelines* by implying that the members of the Standing Committee are "outsiders" in the paradigm of new literacies and contemporary English language arts. Because of this, it is necessary to re-emphasize that the authors of the *Guidelines* do a remarkably good job in their attempts to account for new developments in the field. They make a highly prescient connection between the language arts and technological developments that were in their infancy when the committee began its work. In the early 1990s when the committee first began to meet, the Internet barely existed, and hypermedia technology was very new. Digital technologies were still unwieldy, expensive, and rarely available in public school settings. Globalization was a concern, but not as ubiquitous an idea as it is today, and the committee's anticipation of

issues of diversity is commendable. But in spite of their recognition of these emerging issues and others, the authors of the *Guidelines* approach the subjects as outsiders, using their prior conceptions of technology, media, and diversity in ways that simply add those concerns to existing curricula for teacher education. As outsiders, they do not account for the ways in which such developments might fundamentally transform the project of English language arts teaching.

For example, while cultural diversity has led to an enormous range of linguistic variations and literacy practices among our students outside of school, and while technology appears to be changing the ways that our students interact with texts, there remains in the NCTE guidelines a strong commitment to the role of literature instruction in our classrooms. According to the *Guidelines*, “Teachers of the English language arts must see literature as the core, the humane center, of the English curriculum” (p. 18). The presence of a literary center as an ultimatum in the *Guidelines* offers important clues about how to read the guidelines about technology, media, diversity, which might otherwise radically change ELA curriculum and teaching.

While the *Guidelines* mention technology, media, and diversity continuously, they do so in ways that are unlikely to challenge the primacy of NCTE’s literary center. When they are addressed, media and technology are referred to most often as either supplementary foci for the language arts, or as teaching aids. When they are discussed as subjects unto themselves, they are represented as “limited” or more passive activities in comparison to the universally good, liberating, active, and enriching capacities of literary study,

which are never referred to as limited, in spite of the fact that literary texts are also socially constructed and function ideologically (McCormick, 1994).

Similarly, while the guidelines could be said to emphasize diversity, they do so in a way that does not challenge traditional conceptions of literary instruction, composition studies, or, more importantly, the hegemonic functions of teaching Formal Standard English as the language of wider communication to students whose only recourse for using their home literacies is to do so in the service of acquiring FSE or maintaining their languages in informal, non-academic contexts in non-standard and therefore inferior ways. Teachers are expected to respect diversity, to celebrate it, to be aware of it, to be enthusiastic about it, and to use it in their teaching. However, diversity is never noted as a particularly political concept that has implications for *how* English teachers might talk about literature differently, or *how* they should approach the teaching of 'Formal Standard English' differently. Each of these topics would require significant restructuring if the concept of diversity were fully integrated into the curricular design of the NCTE *Guidelines*. By using positive but unelaborated signifiers such as 'respect' and 'value' alongside diversity, the *Guidelines* neutralize the political and social implications of the changing field of English studies in the interest of maintaining an accountable curriculum that accommodates the present system of standards. In these ways, the construction of the *Guidelines* makes the text resistant to change, since new developments are more likely to be assimilated into the existing framework than they are to be used for more thorough "re-vision" of the curriculum.

*Move 4: Excising activism from the Guidelines.*

The excision of activism in the NCTE *Guidelines* constitutes a fourth conservative move that contributes to the ideological functioning of the text. In some ways, this move may be the most startling of them all, because of its seemingly accidental nature. It's presence in the *Guidelines* offers evidence about how the discursive processes involved with publishing a policy text—in this case, the process of editing—can result in radical shifts in meaning from the intention of the authors.

As I have noted elsewhere, the authors of the *Guidelines* were conscious of the political nature of their work and the work of English teachers in general. They explicitly state a value for teachers who act as agents of curriculum change in their introduction to the text, and in Chapter 7 they discuss the *Guidelines* as a reform document at length. Considering the findings involving a conservative ideology in the *Guidelines* throughout this study, it is significant and surprising to find that the authors state,

The pedagogy guidelines focus attention on the many disparities among the *Guidelines*, teacher education programs, and language arts programs in secondary schools.... By drawing attention to these disparities, the Standing Committee acknowledges that one function of the *Guidelines* is to help initiate reform by educating teachers and then placing them in schools as agents of change. (67)

This is an extremely important statement and identification by the Standing Committee about how it believes the *Guidelines* should be used as a tool for reform; it also offers evidence of the Standing Committee's awareness of

political and sociological issues related to schools and literacy learning.

However, a review of the pedagogy guidelines chapter referred to in the passage above reveals that no such discussion of disparities, political activism, or the role of teachers as agents of change in schools actually appears in the text.

Apparently, although the committee intended this language to be included in the main chapters of the guidelines themselves, it was deleted from the text prior to publication, and the later reference to it in Chapter 7 was missed and left intact.

Whether this deletion of what the committee saw as an essential discussion was the result of efforts to achieve “readability” is not clear, but its absence in the published document demonstrates how discourse practices can anonymously affect meaning in dramatic ways.

In the Acknowledgements published in the front of the *Guidelines* text, the chair of the Standing Committee refers to an editing team who “eliminated jargon, redundancies, and ponderous sentences” so that, in the eyes of the chair, “the *Guidelines* improved in readability and style under their figurative red pens” (p. viii). While it is impossible without further data to draw conclusions about how an articulation of teachers as reformers and political activists disappeared from the text, it makes some sense to suspect that the red pens of the editing team were something more than “figurative,” particularly when viewed in light of other findings about the marginalization of orientations that involve “liberatory” approaches to the teaching of “literacy.”

The absence of this activist strand in the preparation of English teachers is important. Whether intentional or otherwise, its absence strengthens the

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conservative effects of the *Guidelines* by removing discussions about the politics of literacy education from teacher training programs, even when the authors of the guidelines believe such training to be important. It strengthens the impression that English is a settled and fixed school subject, that consensus exists, and that the current situation is equitable.

*Move 5: Fabricating consensus in the NCTE Guidelines.*

The previous four moves described in this section can all be said to contribute to an overarching fifth move, a move closely associated with the discourse of standards-based accountability reform. As Delandshere and Petrosky (2003) report, and as Apple (1990) has found, standards-based accountability reform and curricula are almost always based on a representation of consensus. Consensus—"An opinion or position reached by a group as a whole" (American Heritage Dictionary)—is central to the goals of standards-based accountability reforms to achieve uniformity across contexts and allow for comparison and assessment as conceived in that discourse. However, as Apple has argued, such consensus is rarely actual. Rather, I would argue that in the case of the *Guidelines*, the Standing Committee fabricates consensus in order to accommodate the demands of accountability discourses.

According to statements in the *Guidelines*, the authors express their awareness of the fact that there are, "many areas of contention among teacher educators" about their field (p. 2). Further, the committee states its awareness that language arts teachers disagree widely about what constitutes the subject,



and about what it means to teach English and literacy (p. 3). However, in spite of their explicit awareness as stated verbatim in the *Guidelines*, the authors go on to assert that agreement about the nature of teaching and the nature of the English language arts is “essential” to creating effective curricula (p. 3). This immediately places the authors in a quandary. How is it possible to develop standards when there is no agreement about what counts? Having asserted that agreement is a *must* for the project, the authors recount how one member of the committee noted that they were “shooting at a moving target”, and the rest of the committee agreed (p. 3).

In spite of their clear recognition that consensus was non-existent in the field and in NCTE, the authors of the *Guidelines* state that, “It is important for NCTE to affirm what it believes to be significant” (p. 2) for English language arts teacher preparation. Still, the question remains: How can NCTE affirm a single set of beliefs as significant at the expense of other belief sets? Such a move is by definition exclusive.

As a result of the perceived need to convey consensus, the Standing Committee asserts that the profession must emphasize the notion of “common ground.” Even where they explicitly employ multiple and conflicting theoretical frameworks for the guidelines, as admitted by the authors in Chapter 7, the committee continuously fabricates consensus by arguing that different frameworks often manifest in similar classroom practices, therefore sharing “important common ground” when they would otherwise be viewed as conflicting (p. 64). In fact, the notion of “common ground” becomes a key refrain in the

committee's rationales for the guidelines. In an explicit attempt to accommodate the demands of program accreditation based on standards, the committee states repeatedly that diverse programs "share common ground," "take an inclusionary approach," "rest on common ground," "seek commonalities," and "emphasize connectedness and common ground" even when their approaches and practices appear to be radically different or even opposed within a single guideline (pp. 64-67). The Standing Committee's arguments regarding common ground for consensus in the field of English language arts rest in part on their assertions that, for example, "Even though, for example, fundamental differences do separate social constructionists and expressivists, both groups jointly support a variety of teaching practices... (p. 64).

While these commonalities may exist, the authors' failure to discuss them at length or to refer to them directly in the body of the guidelines raises concerns, and may be tied directly to their efforts to make the guidelines flexible and open to interpretation in the interest of facilitating accountability processes.

Comparative study of social constructionism and expressivism alone (regardless of other theoretical positions) reveals significant differences. McCormick's (1994) analysis of these two along with cognitivism in the teaching of reading demonstrates that although they may share certain types of activity in common, such activities operate under fundamentally different philosophical and theoretical premises about how language, teaching, and learning work. Both their assumptions about the purposes of reading and writing as well as the nature of knowledge and activities used during reading and writing instruction are

different in ways that teachers must understand if they are to use them productively. The *Guidelines'* representation of these competing theories as more similar than different reflects an exclusion of knowledge and a bracketing of difference.

The *Guidelines'* neutralization of knowledge, theory, and research in favor of fabricating common ground and consensus might reflect several issues of discourse in English education. It is possible to argue that NCTE's guidelines are created in response to political pressures having little to do with knowledge in English but a great deal to do with the need to create a knowledge framework similar to other professions like law or medicine, based on the assumption that such equivalent professional activity is possible and appropriate (Lagemann, 2004). In addition to these forces, NCTE's decisions as represented in the *Guidelines* may reflect a perceived need to produce stable frameworks to match those being produced in supposedly more uniform, rigorous, and concrete subject areas deemed amenable to the current practices of widespread and high stakes standardized testing in schools, like mathematics and science. Organizations like NCTE face enormous pressure to conform to and comply with external standards and assessment models due to state control and funding of the public schools where English language arts instruction and assessment take place.

It seems unlikely that the *Guidelines'* neutralization of difference reflects a concerted effort to formalize the beliefs of mainstream practitioners as a part of the parallel activity of accrediting institutions of teacher education, or a conscious

attempt to exclude the competing political agendas of marginal members who hold postmodern, critical, or reform-oriented views. Less factionally, readers might interpret these moves in light of Popkewitz's (1994) analysis of the American movement to professionalize teaching. According to Popkewitz, professionalization is not a neutral activity, but rather one fraught with issues of power. As with historical movements to professionalize law and medicine, Popkewitz finds that moves to professionalize teaching are never as altruistic or neutral as practitioners would have themselves and others believe, and they frequently result in unintended consequences. By agreeing to the terms of externally imposed demands and frameworks for accountability, NCTE may have submitted itself to anonymous ideological forces; the *Guidelines*, even as they attempt to deflect some of the pressures of standards-based accountability reform and offer space for teacher educators to subvert standards to their own needs in the local contexts of everyday life (DeCerteau, 1988), may reflect normalizing forces in the broader educational discourse that run counter to knowledge and belief in English education.

### *Summary*

Over the course of the last three chapters, I have demonstrated the ways in which the 1996 NCTE *Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of the English Language Arts* function to represent curricular content for both English language arts teacher education and the English language arts. In doing so, the *Guidelines* deploy a number of unelaborated terms, including *critical*, *diversity*,

*discourse, literacy, discipline, holism, integration, and appropriateness* in particular ways, projecting them as universals to create a literature-centered curriculum based on principles of ethical liberal philosophy, cognitivist and social constructivist learning theories, and an autonomous model of literacy as a neutral technology. Although the *Guidelines* predominantly express a value for ethical liberal educational values, their construction using a genre and framework for standards-based accountability reform places that content and its accompanying values in a technological liberalist frame, which trumps ethical liberal values and leads to a conservative ideology that dominates the *Guidelines* and constrains what is possible to do, think, know, and believe in NCTE's officially sanctioned representation of the English language arts as professional activity.

The conservative, additive nature of the NCTE guidelines, constructed based on a fabricated consensus about what constitutes the field of English language arts and English teacher education, is inherently inequitable to those whose language, literacy practices, or beliefs about English, teaching, and learning fall outside of the mainstream. In spite of a thorough concern for diversity and equity, the *Guidelines* privilege tradition at the expense of new knowledge, and make it less likely that new knowledge or alternative approaches will traverse the boundaries between English as an academic discipline and English language arts as a subject taught in public schools.

In the final chapter, I will further discuss the implications of these findings and conclude with a series of arguments regarding the discourse of English

language arts and literacy education from the perspective of the New Literacy  
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## CHAPTER 8: IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

### *Moving Targets, Making Space, and Attending to Discourse in Literacy Teacher Education, Curriculum, and Policy*

As noted earlier, it is possible that the criticisms about NCTE's teacher preparation guidelines that result from this critical discourse analysis might seem overly harsh, especially to any groups or individuals who have engaged with the challenge of constructing equitable standards-based accountability texts. Such people are usually well aware of the conservative nature of those texts, and are mindful of the risks involved with standardizing a complex subject like English. But faced with the task of designing curricula within such frameworks, as many English educators have been obligated to do, those with experience in accountability reform might argue that my analysis here is naïve given what they view as their inevitable obligation as educators—to work within the official system to create curricula that will allow teachers and their students access to quality educational opportunities.

Others might call this analysis naïve for reasons beyond the issue of accountability. A major assertion of this study is that NCTE's current foundation on a literary studies curriculum and its focus on print literacy has led to a general failure on the part of NCTE and English language arts in general to account for new literacy practices, or worse, has led to an inadequate and inaccurate additive approach to accounting for new literacies, technologies, and student diversity. While I disagree with Peter Elbow's (1991) value for literature "in the



souls” of English teachers, I am certainly aware of the high value that many English language arts teachers place on literature as a vital component of the curriculum, due to their own enjoyment of and perceived enrichment by those texts. While I believe our fields’ value for literature is over-blown, I am sensitive to the fact that such value is deeply ingrained in our discourse.

Finally, some individuals may criticize this analysis for its representation of appropriateness in language as an inequitable stance. The view of Standard English as the language of wider communication has led to the development of various multicultural pedagogies that concentrate on using students’ home languages and literacies to acquire fluency with that language of wider communication, while simultaneously teaching minority speakers how to switch linguistic codes and thereby maintain and honor the richness and power of their dialects as they gain access to power in the mainstream of society. Many who hold this view value it highly for its attention to the maintenance of minority identities, and although they are critical of the white mainstream for its exclusion of non-whites or non-standard speakers, they implicitly view that mainstream as inevitable, and therefore see an unavoidable responsibility to teach students how to negotiate their positions in relation to that dominant discourse.

I recognize each of these criticisms and understand them. However, I disagree with each of them, essentially finding them to be valid from their own perspectives, but insufficient in the larger frame of educational discourse related to literacy. Let me deal with these potential criticisms in reverse order.

First, multicultural pedagogies that emphasize Delpit's (1988) position that students need to learn the codes of power of the white and dominant mainstream of society are important and useful. It *is* necessary for students to study language in terms of power relations in discourse as a way to achieve greater equity, as Delpit suggests. However, many educators who adopt this position neglect Delpit's elaborated perspective. She has argued that, while it is important for teachers to help students gain access to and fluency with the codes of the mainstream, the purpose of doing so is that, in gaining access, awareness, and fluency, students and their teachers will then work to *change* the discourse of the mainstream and open it up to the linguistic codes and discourses of marginalized groups.

The idea that a Black student might use her knowledge of Formal Standard English to change that discourse and introduce "non-standard" African American Vernacular constructions into mainstream linguistic practice in formal contexts makes some people uncomfortable. A colleague might (and has) asked, "What if an African American attorney were to ask a witness in court something like, 'Ms. Smith, I'd like to aks you to tell the court who be wit' you on the night of June 29, 2005.' How do we deal with that?" Or, "What happens when a young person from a rural Appalachian background speaks during a business meeting and says something like, 'Hey, y'all, I was thinkin' we might could set up a committee to talk 'bout raisin' our output' instead of using the more formal, 'I would like to propose that we establish a committee in order to discuss productivity.'?"

At first blush, this issue might give many English language arts teachers pause, causing them to shudder a bit as they do when they see the word “quick” spelled with a “Kw,” or when their students write “cuz” instead of “because.” Our common sense and aesthetic sensibilities tell us that these linguistic moves are inappropriate; but, it is important to recall that our “common sense” is only common sense because it has achieved a hegemonic state and functions ideologically to maintain a particular social status quo via the operation of language in positioning individuals in a network of power. It may be common sense, but it is neither natural nor neutral, and it is furthermore not necessarily equitable or appropriate to accommodate a system that uses a language hierarchy as a gatekeeping mechanism for access to social capital.

Moreover, in each example listed above, however contrived, I would assert that neither the meaning nor the structure of the utterances was difficult to understand. In each case, the individual speaks clearly and would elicit a response regardless of context. The *only* reason either construction would be questioned would be due to the perception that the utterance did not match the discourse of the socially dominant group in our society. If we actually choose to believe and accept the well-documented linguistic concept that English dialects each have their own valid and internally consistent grammars, vocabularies, syntaxes, and so forth, and if we further acknowledge based on these findings that there really is no such thing as “standard English” outside of our current ideological construction of such a thing, then any argument that the above constructions are unacceptable is not valid. The argument that some dialects or

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styles are more appropriate than others depending on context is only acceptable insofar as it enables teachers and students to explore the strategic use of language. As soon as such a precept is used to constrain the use of certain linguistic variations in formal or official contexts, as it is in the 1996 *Guidelines*, then we have undermined our belief in the diversity and dynamism of English.

Additionally, it seems unlikely that language users would necessarily resort to the kind of extreme juxtaposition of linguistic codes and social contexts illustrated in my examples above. In professional contexts, most individuals will experience a degree of socialization that will lead them to conform to the basic linguistic codes of the discourses they participate in. In doing so, they may still use their home languages and literacies strategically and powerfully. Anyone who has listened to Dr. Martin Luther King's or Malcolm X's speeches, for example, has experienced the power that can be projected from a skillful blending of mainstream and "non-standard" linguistic patterns and literacy practices. Anyone who has ever listened to the musical group Public Enemy rap its scathing political critiques of race and society in America knows how powerful code-switching and linguistic juxtaposition can be. Anyone who has ever deemed a politician to be more credible due to his "down-home" way of talking has experienced the powerful effect of an individual's strategic use of home literacies. At issue is the need to study and practice such code switching and intentional integration of linguistic practices in formal and official contexts. The matter of whether such integration is valid or desirable should not be in question

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if English is conceived of as a dynamic language, and if literacy education is understood in the context of educational and social equity.

Second, I have attempted to state repeatedly that this analysis, and even an acceptance of literacy as represented in the New Literacy Studies, *does not* mean a rejection of print literacy, knowledge gained from studies of cognition, and a value for literary studies as vital components of English as a school subject. Literary study can have great benefits, and can enrich students' lives. And it is certainly necessary to teach students phonics, grammar, and reading and writing skills in a text-rich environment that focuses on meaning-making activity (rather than skills in isolation). An acceptance of the findings from this study does not preclude these kinds of activity at all. Rather, these findings imply that a literary center can decrease the relevance of language arts study for students, who practice literacy differently than their teachers do, and value different kinds of texts.

Further, the treatment of literature in the current curriculum fails to account for literature as an ideological mode of communication that needs to be critiqued and examined with as much skepticism and care as any other medium or textual genre. Treating literature as a natural and universal good as it is in the NCTE *Guidelines* glosses its potential functions as an ideological apparatus of cultural reproduction. If we accept that literacy is always an ideological technology, then it is necessary to account for literary study within that view; it cannot be exempt. Furthermore, the themes, narrative structures, figurative language, and other elements frequently taught in relation to literature can also be taught using other

media ranging from film to video, hypermedia, television, music, graphic arts, and so on. While literature can play a useful role in that mix, it need not be maintained as the center in a textual hierarchy, as it is now. It is only one kind of readable text among many.

Finally, I would agree with educators who have worked on accountability texts and who argue that it is necessary to work within the officially sanctioned textual practices of the state. And in that context, it is likely that educators will continue to be constrained in their ability to communicate the complexity and richness of content in accountability documents without significant problems of the kind revealed in this study. I agree that educators should continue to engage in these processes, if only to continue attempting to mitigate their negative effects on professional teaching and students' opportunities to learn English well. However, it does not make sense to argue that these processes and projects are inevitable or monolithic. Further, in the present situation, educators working through professional organizations like the National Council of Teachers of English already have only limited access and power in state-level curriculum projects. I argue that, given its current status, it is useful for a professional group like NCTE to think strategically (that is, for the long term) rather than tactically (that is, responding to the requirements of the moment).

In the remainder of this chapter, I will more fully address the issue of strategic activity in curriculum design for the English language arts and the National Council of Teachers of English. I begin by discussing the ideological nature of curriculum design, focusing on the 1996 NCTE *Guidelines* and arguing



from a New Literacy Studies perspective. I will describe the need for re-vision of curriculum and professional activity in the field of English language arts, and conclude by discussing the implications from this study of opportunities to work beyond and to alter the present discourse of standards-based accountability reform in ways that could potentially increase the agency of individuals and groups like NCTE in relation to access and control of policy discussions within the field and at the level of the state. I will discuss these opportunities as long term strategic processes that can function as a scaffold for more systematic professional activity within organizations like NCTE for the advancement of literacy and the English language arts.

#### *Curriculum and the National Council's Guidelines*

As I have tried to highlight in this study, all curriculum is ideological. The issue is whether the ideology in operation is viable, equitable, and open to change and critical discourse. As Cherryholmes (1988, 1999) argues in his discussions of curriculum design and critical pragmatism, curriculum studies should involve the ongoing attempt among educators and policy makers to understand how power relations influence their ability to achieve desired goals and maintain effective social systems. Cherryholmes recognizes four important points about how educators might engage curriculum.

First, Cherryholmes points out that curriculum design must involve an accounting for constant changes in what is deemed good, true, and desirable by a group of people in a particular place at a particular time. Second, he argues

that all curriculum designs ultimately deconstruct due to changes in social relations and contexts. In this pragmatic view, all curricula are temporal, historical, contingent, and flawed (1988, 1999). Institutionalizing any set of curricular standards entails either a repressive or hegemonic set of power relations. Third, in order to avoid reproducing a negative or inequitable status quo, it is necessary for members of a social group to engage in attempts to achieve critical discourse, as characterized by Habermas (1973). That is, it is important to continuously attempt and promote dialogue within and across groups that may or may not agree with each other. In doing so, it is important to attempt a bracketing of unequal power relations in order to give all parties equal access and voice in the conversation. Fourth, while Cherryholmes readily acknowledges the impossibility of achieving complete critical discourse free of unequal power relations, he asserts that it is necessary to try in order to account for as diverse a range of ideological positions as possible, and thereby to achieve better balance in discourse about curriculum.

In examining contemporary education standards, Cherryholmes' critical pragmatism offers a useful lens for understanding conflict and power in our discourses, and for thinking strategically about how to move foundational thought, engage in teleological practices, and both revise and expand existing social spaces in ways that are complementary to the kinds of discursive work toward equitable change advocated in Faircloughian critical discourse analysis.

It is worth remarking that although curricula are always ideological, and that they also always implicates particular and temporal hegemonic conditions,

that does not mean that ideology and hegemony are negative by definition or not worth describing. It is important to think about ideology beyond its popular pejorative connotations, and to consider hegemony as something subtler than the proletariat's assent to its own oppression. Gramsci (1971, 1985), in developing his theories of culture and social activity, characterizes hegemony as a state in which social ideologies and their accompanying practices achieve the level of common sense and seem natural to citizens in such a way that they accept those conditions as a matter of reality instead of as socially constructed and negotiated. However, in his view, not all hegemonies are equal; some ideologies are 'better' than others in that they do not result in oppressive or inequitable social conditions, or they remain visible enough to be altered in response to social conditions when they have negative effects. Gramsci frequently talks about developing counter-hegemonies via the alignment of disparate groups who capitalize on common interests to confederate and increase their agency through collective activity toward more equitable social conditions. With regard to the situation related to NCTE's teacher preparation guidelines and the context of standards-based accountability reform in the English language arts, it is worth thinking about what counter-hegemonic activity toward more equitable social conditions might look like, and what other groups might form a confederation with NCTE toward those ends.

One approach to thinking about developing such counter-hegemony is to approach the NCTE guidelines from the perspective of the New Literacy Studies, as I have tried to do in this study.

### *New Literacies and the NCTE Guidelines*

From the perspective of the New Literacy Studies, the existing NCTE guidelines framework for teacher preparation is insufficient and inadequate. First, although they account for some aspects of “new” literacy, such as new technologies and increasing student diversity, they do so from the perspective of newcomers and outsiders. Second, due to their outsider perspective, the guidelines’ representations of “new” literacies are constructed by adding aspects to the existing “old” curriculum, rather than considering how these literacies function for insiders and working to fully integrate and revise the existing framework so that it accounts for “new” literacy content and activity in ways that are relevant to the needs of contemporary students. Third, as a result of its partial outsider representation of new literacies, the *Guidelines* fail to account for the ideological nature of literacy or attend adequately to issues of equity in language arts instruction.

Maintaining a literary studies core for the curriculum, the *Guidelines* function to exclude many ways of thinking about and teaching language and literacy; in particular, the *Guidelines* institutionalize an autonomous model of literacy as the basis for curricula. Although the authors claim that their document is inclusive, evidence from the *Guidelines* demonstrates how some groups are excluded or marginalized by the text’s representations.

The autonomous model of literacy that underlies the literary center of the *Guidelines* is significant because such a model fails to represent literacy as

ideological, and therefore frequently misses opportunities for teachers and students to study, understand, and practice language use as a political exercise central to the practices of their everyday lives. Evidence of the *Guidelines'* autonomous model of literacy can be demonstrated in the text's deployment of and stand on cognitive theories of literacy learning as the dominant orientation to teaching and learning literacy, and in its deployment of a discourse of appropriateness in language use. As with criticisms of the *Guidelines'* literary center, my criticism of its cognitivist bases does not include the implication that cognitivism should be rejected in considerations of curriculum design. Rather, the implications of this study are that cognitivist perspectives are privileged in the *Guidelines* to the exclusion of other valid alternative orientations to learning that English language arts teachers could benefit from knowing about and accounting for in their work.

Again, this does not mean that cognitive theories have nothing to contribute, or that they are tyrannically "foundational" positions that deliberately result in the marginalization of some groups. Rather, my intention is to argue that, based on the evidence from this study and further based on the perspective of New Literacy Studies, it is important for English language arts teachers to make space for sociocultural orientations that focus on social issues related to language and literacy that cognitive theories do not address as well.

Sociocultural theories do not deny the basic precepts of cognitive theory related to language and literacy. Literacy does involve cognitive processes that teachers need to understand in order to teach certain skills and develop useful

pedagogical approaches. At the same time, the cognitivist bases and the autonomous literacy model evident in the 1996 *Guidelines*, deployed with an outsider's perspective on New Literacies, do an insufficient job of integrating the social and ideological aspects of literacy into the existing curricular frame. For example, based on its cognitive, autonomous, outsider orientation, the Standing Committee treats crucial terms and concepts like *literacy*, *discourse*, *critical*, *Standard English*, *appropriate language use*, *diversity*, and the reading of media texts as straightforward matters of common sense. This orientation treats key terms as given and uncontested, when in fact close attention to their situated and socially negotiated meanings in use is highly significant to successful implementation of the curriculum.

Would a shift from cognitivism to socioculturalism as the basis for curriculum policy solve anything? It is possible to argue that replacing one theory with another simply changes the name of the game, but not the rules—a sort of “meet the new boss: same as the old boss” action that would equally constrain the discourse of literacy and ELA curriculum (Townshend, 1971). That is, admittedly, a possible result, but one that seems less likely given sociocultural and neo-Marxist theories' explicit attention to the ways in which discourses function in power relations. In this respect, socially oriented theories such as critical discourse analysis could provide powerful tools for English educators to assess, evaluate, and monitor curriculum and policy so that groups like NCTE can operate pragmatically to develop critical discourse amongst affinity groups related to literacy education.

The use of “appropriate” language use as a core focus of the NCTE Guidelines is more troubling, not because it reveals some sinister intent based on racist or classist values, but because it may function to create racist and classist conditions in literacy classrooms after the fact. When considered alongside the text’s deployment of the term and concept of “diversity”—which reflects a discourse of multicultural understanding—the appropriateness stance helps support the projection of a false parity between social groups that may exist in the spirit but not in the letter of the *Guidelines*. Combined with its privilege of a literary center and a tendency toward conservative leanings, this text may unintentionally leave minority and lower class children behind. And unintentional or otherwise, such a risk (which is often the reality of schools today) is unacceptable.

From the perspective of the New Literacy Studies, the implication of literacy as an ideological component of the state apparatus is that minorities “under-classes” really do experience educational opportunities at a disadvantage, because their literacies—in the global sense of that word—are not engaged adequately in school contexts (which are based in the literate codes and power relations of the white middle+ classes). Further, the treatment of academic literacy and its resulting inequities as unrelated to ideology—as just a matter of neutral “skills”—leads to literally fewer opportunities for marginal groups to learn. Even in schools where this consequence is not actual, the potential for fewer learning opportunities still exists depending on teacher and curricular orientations. As such, that means that if what English language arts is talking

about—which I suggest is, at its center, literacy—is really our primary interest as literacy educators, then literacy educators need to teach students to understand it in terms of its connections with race, social class, gender, sexuality, colonialism, and so on. Critique should be a part of the curriculum, not to tear down the present curricular structure, but to make it better and stronger and more powerful in its effect on students' understandings about language and society.

In addition, from the New Literacy Studies perspective, teachers really *do* need to learn how to bring students' home literacies into the classroom, and to draw on their funds of knowledge as we teach them the language of wider communication (Moll & Gonzales, 2001). It remains that variation in dialect and idiom by race and class should have little bearing on the worth or correctness of communication in any context (if we really believe in equality and value diversity), but pragmatically, it is unlikely that the present dominance and institutionalization of Formal Standard English will go away. Students don't need to use their home literacies in the classroom so that we can rebuild the Tower of Babel (although we should teach students how to use their dialects in larger contexts); and, they don't need to learn merely how to read in ways that will help them access and navigate video games and media (although they need these skills). Rather, teachers need to understand and use these kinds of things—these funds of knowledge—so that they are able to teach in more relevant ways the codes of power and the patterns of FSE successfully. And teachers need to do so in ways that make those race and class markers explicit, so that students can understand



how language is used on them and by them to do things in the world that include discriminating against others and making the social systems used in such discrimination seem natural or inevitable. This is perhaps especially true for white students, who are most likely to lack perception of racial or class tensions in their lives, or who see those tensions as natural, or who have a transparent but vested interest in maintaining the current system by way of willful "ignorance." Teaching language ideologically most certainly includes teaching print literacy and the basics, at its heart. It also includes learning to see how those basics are used to situate social spaces and human bodies, in terms of privilege, inheritance, rhetoric, access, opportunity, economics, and the perpetuation of the status quo.

The treatment of minority groups in the *Guidelines*—the gloss of the term "diversity," the absence of critical focus, the marginalization of critical theories focused on power relations, the discourse of multicultural understanding, the discourse of appropriateness, and the technological bias resulting from the framing of English in the larger discourse of accountability—results in a curriculum that potentially fails students who are not from the mainstream. The strongest of these marginal students may be able to "catch up" or "keep up" (thereby supporting the myth that school as purely meritocratic and a matter of hard work), but most will lack access and opportunity due to a lack of relevance between their literate understandings and the pedagogical barriers of the classroom literacy practices they encounter in schools that conceive of English as it is conceived in the NCTE *Guidelines*.

Attention to issues of race and class—of diversity—requires an attention to the language of curriculum and policy that is symptomatic of English language arts educators' concern for how such texts position social actors in schools to act. It is not enough to assume that undefined terms and the freedom to interpret guidelines will turn out okay in the end, especially when those assumptions are made not on the basis of our knowledge about language and schooling, but based on our desire to accommodate the needs of state-administered accountability measures that do not account for the scope of our subject matter or the nature of the education system. If we are serious about critical citizenship and democratic participation in the sense of teaching students how to work for a better, more equitable, more equal, more inclusive, more tolerant, more just, freer society, then it is important to position ourselves and our students in ways that are more likely to lead to our success.

And this doesn't mean the loss of freedom to differ, either across K-12 classrooms or across English language arts teacher education programs. The position I advocate here is not dichotomous. It is not about print or no print, appropriate or inappropriate, cognitive or social, phonics or whole language. It is about literacy—reading the word and the world (Freire & Macedo, 1987). There are many ways to learn about it and talk about it, but we need to be explicit about what those ways are, and if a standards document like the 1996 NCTE *Guidelines* cannot function adequately to communicate what we are talking about, then we should not use that standards document, but instead create some other kind of text that helps us meet our goals and practice in ways that are

pedagogically principled, caring and careful, and focused on creating educational equity for all students. A standards text written for convenience and brevity can summarize this larger text, but it should not be used to determine curriculum.

Might such a shift result in a “less efficient” assessment of schools due to bureaucratic constraints and fiscal policy in the wider governmental context? Might it require the investment of more time and energy for the appropriate and accurate assessment of university programs of English teacher education and the practice of individual teachers? Probably. But that is the larger point about equity in education, isn't it? From the perspective of the New Literacy Studies, the analyses involved in this study suggest that we have both the opportunity and the obligation to fix the real problems by teaching literacy differently and finding new ways to construct our professional policies so that our practice and knowledge are less constrained by purely bureaucratic considerations of efficiency, expedience, and convenience.

The use of CDA as a policy tool could enable the creation of spaces for change and revision specifically intended to maintain an ideology that is concerned with the provision of equity across difference and the inclusion of diverse groups for the benefit of all. Granted, such inclusion and critical discourse is likely to be complex, complicated, and messy. It is possible and even likely that groups will continue to experience marginalization even in a policy paradigm concerned with sociocultural theory and educational equity, but I would argue that in such a paradigm, at least there would be fewer and less extreme marginalizing tendencies, and those that developed could be more

easily addressed. As has been noted, some ideologies and hegemonies are better than others, and “difficult” is something quite different from “impossible.”

### *Implications for English Language Arts Teacher Education*

Another implication of this study is the increasingly important need for new teachers to learn *about* English and literacy teaching while they learn *how to* teach it. It is one thing to learn how to create lesson plans, teach the elements of literature, lead discussions, and give explanations about concepts in the language arts. These are skills that are important and will continue to be essential for the preparation of quality teachers in our field. However, without an understanding of *why* these skills are relevant, *how* and *why* our subject came to take the shape it takes today, and *how* new teachers can operate in different curricular frameworks, our field is likely to produce new teachers who are largely unable to appreciate the ideological nature of their work. As a result, they will be more likely to reproduce an inequitable status quo like the one described in this analysis.

This research implies the need to include systematic study and use of curriculum and policy texts in English education for new teachers and professional development for experienced teachers, including use of the NCTE *Guidelines*, in order to illustrate for English teachers the political and ideological construction of their field. In addition to teaching the “methods” of teaching English and literacy, this study suggests the importance of teaching teachers disciplinary and school subject history, foundations, principles, and curriculum

theory on a scale not usually seen at the undergraduate level in colleges of education and English departments, and certainly not seen in the context of professional development programs in public schools. Doing so could provide literacy teachers with the metadiscourses they need to make sense of their everyday experiences in literacy classrooms and curriculum implementation. Forewarned is forearmed. And again, while I certainly agree with the New London Group (2000) and recognize that teachers already have enormous demands placed on their time and energy, I would re-emphasize that "difficult" does not mean "impossible." There are spaces in our work with the potential to be used for supporting teachers expanded study of literacy and education.

One possibility is for university programs to revise their curricula so that attention is given to establishing new literacy teachers' understanding of discourse theory, the linguistic construction of meaning and culture, and the connections between language, culture, and subject matter specialties. That is, methods of discourse analysis could provide an important set of pedagogical tools for English and literacy teacher education. In doing so, it is important for teacher educators to avoid an additive approach ("More Classes = Better Learning"), but rather to consider how opportunities to learn discourse theories and methods can be integrated with authentic social interaction toward conceptual understanding through *use*. There are at least three areas that teacher education curricula could address in revising opportunities to learn toward these ends.

First, preservice teachers would benefit from scholarship about organizational systems, culture, disciplinary knowledge, social institutions, history, philosophy, power, and ideology. In integrating this study, preservice learners should practice analyzing curricular materials, textbooks, lesson plans, classroom discourse, student artifacts, and interactions with children (both individuals and groups) in school settings in order to equip themselves with concrete cases to use for comparison and scaffolding while they practice.

I do not wish to argue that teachers should be experts in discourse, linguistics, or critical theory. The purpose of learning to teach is to teach, not to theorize (although teachers need to theorize their teaching and subject matter as a part of their professional work). It is important for teachers to understand theories of discourse and ideology if they are to operate critically within education systems and do more than implement curricula as technicians. Learning about cultural theories, and studying social critiques *as they relate to the concrete practices of learning to teach and teaching*, would increase the ability of preservice learners to view their teacher-identities as situated in a complex network that is not neutral, universal, natural, inevitable, or merely personal. Realizing this would increase the capacity for preservice teachers to make sense of teacher education curriculum, as well as their personal knowledge and experience of schools up to and including teacher education—a key component of early development in the continuum for learning to teach (Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

The second area to be addressed is research and scholarship about schools, teaching, and learning to teach. Knowledge of these subjects is often occluded from preservice learners and even many of the teacher educators who work with them. Some scholars have argued that education as a field lacks the knowledge it requires to be classified as a true profession. In spite of these claims, educational studies as a field has developed a large body of quality research, but not all of this research is accessible to preservice learners. It is possible to argue that one reason teachers do not behave like other professionals is the fact that they are rarely presented with the knowledge they would need in order to view themselves through professional lenses and then act accordingly. But that is not because the knowledge does not exist.

Teacher education curricula should include opportunities for students to learn about the sociology of teaching, schooling, and learning and to relate the learning directly to their field experiences. Some representative works include Jackson (1969/1990), McNeil (1986), and Popkewitz (2000, 2001, 2002) on regimes of control and governmentality in schools, Labaree (1996, 1997, 2000) on orientations to school and learning to teach, Britzman (1991) and Feiman-Nemser & Remillard (1996) on the tensions and tasks of preservice teaching, and others. Preservice teachers should be exposed to literature on the sociology of teaching such as Lortie's (1975) classic study and Zeichner & Gore's (1990) synthesis of teacher socialization research. They should know about the culture of teaching in schools as characterized by Cusick (1992), and they should be

aware of how teachers have historically responded to reform and change (Cuban, 1993; Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Cohen, 1988).

I can think of no more important goal than equipping new English teachers with the knowledge they need to make sense of their work as it extends beyond their classroom walls, the bounds of state standardized tests, and the curriculum pacing guides that are more and more instituted in order to meet the requirements of standardization and to de-skill the work of teaching in the name of uniform efficiency. Doing so can help them recognize, use, and/or resist curricular issues that affect their abilities to teach children literacy. That knowledge and support can mean the difference between a teacher who leaves the profession after 3-5 years, and a teacher who leads the profession for a lifetime.

#### *Implications for Political Activity in NCTE, ELA, and Literacy*

One of the motivating factors behind this study is the fact that professional organizations related to literacy education have been excluded from top tier policy discussions that govern teachers' professional discourses. As reviewed in Chapter 2, groups like the National Council of Teachers of English have found themselves systematically excluded from policy talks at the state and national level. Their expertise and experience are not valued in the larger public and political discourse on literacy education. NCTE is being required to "speak the language of achievement" in order to participate at all in such talks. In addition, these talks occur at the committee level in NCTE at the highest levels of its bureaucracy, and as such are largely divorced and isolated from the main body



of the NCTE membership, who remain generally uninformed about particular issues and interactions. It seems unlikely that the dynamics of this situation are likely to change, and that NCTE will remain in a phase of impasse in terms of national discussions of standards-based accountability reform.

If this is the case, and NCTE is unlikely to achieve its goals at the national and organizational level, it is also true that the organization cannot afford to simply abandon those talks and abstain from participating. Negotiation between NCTE representatives, policy makers, and education constituents should continue. At the same time, it is important for NCTE and literacy educators in general to recognize that while the current impasse is decidedly negative, it is not without opportunities.

The impasse literacy educators are experiencing at the national level need not be the only point of access for NCTE and literacy educators to enter conversations about the work they do. While the conservative positions vis a vis literacy education among policy makers at the national level appear to be firmly entrenched, that is only the case in terms of interaction between diametrically opposed political factions in that context—for example, NCTE representatives and the policy makers who have “invited them out of the conversation” in state bureaucracies. While it may be necessary to continue negotiating at this level, the entrenched character of that negotiation requires NCTE and literacy educators to engage in the public discourse about their activity in other ways. One important way is to engage in more grassroots conversations and political activity related to the goal of more equitable and high quality literacy instruction.

Political activity at the grassroots level in public discourse does not necessarily mean mass demonstrations, picketing, and sloganeering in the traditional mode of protest. Rather, such activity requires that professional organizations like NCTE engage in broad strategic thinking and exert influence by treating their political action as pedagogical activity.

In the introduction of this study, I asserted that no one knows more about literacy, rhetoric, and the language arts than literacy teachers (defined as the collective group of reading teachers, language arts teachers, English teachers, literacy teachers, composition teachers, and so on). Accepting this as true, it makes sense that literacy educators could work, with the support of national organizations like NCTE, to educate both the public and policy makers about the ideological nature of literacy in ways that cannot be accomplished in top-tier, committee-style negotiations at the level of the state. One function of organizations like NCTE is the dissemination of information and knowledge. Another function is the promotion of professional development. A third is the development of coherent agendas for inquiry and professional activity. Capitalizing on all three of these functions, it is possible to envision a grassroots movement initiated at the organizational level of NCTE but executed in local contexts by individuals and small groups of NCTE members who represent the interests of their local school contexts, rather than the interests of a political body like NCTE.

From the perspective of New Literacy Studies, it would be useful to engage the organizational capacities of groups like the National Council of

Teachers of English to 1) initiate, support, and promote critical discourse across the NCTE membership and begin a long-term project for representing the range and complexity of English language arts and literacy teaching, 2) disseminate information and knowledge about literacy as an ideological technology and English as a dynamic language in an effort to educate the membership, within a context of critical discourse, and 3) use NCTE's capacity for professional development to educate teachers in strategies for multiliteracies pedagogy (New London Group, 2000; Lankshear and Knobel, 2003; Street, 2005) and political activity, especially for engaging local policy makers such as administrators, superintendents, school board members, and city, state, and national political representatives. In order to avoid historical tensions between these groups and professional teaching organizations like NCTE, it would be useful for teachers to engage these groups and individuals not as NCTE members, but as local teachers concerned with educational quality and social equity for the students they teach every day. In doing so, small groups of teachers trained within NCTE could learn to function in local contexts to shift the public discourse in ways that will trickle upwards and potentially influence the national discourse toward ending the ongoing impasse at that macro-level.

It should be obvious that this recommendation is not a matter of simple or quick fixes. Such activity is likely to be difficult, messy, and long-term. It involves strategic responses to the current discursive context of literacy curriculum and policy, not tactical reaction. It requires serious shifts within the National Council of Teachers of English to 1) develop critical discourse about its own activity, 2)

promote a New Literacy perspective that leads to more balanced representation of literacy as social, cognitive, *and* ideological within the organization, 3) professional development of NCTE members leading to the engagement of classroom teachers with curriculum policy, 4) a grassroots national campaigns in which NCTE members operate in their local communities to educate the public and policy makers about the nature of literacy, and 5) ongoing negotiation of policy at the national organizational level between NCTE and the state.

Some who will read this may well be laughing, out loud and derisively. What I am describing here is assuredly daunting. It is likely that many in the field will respond with claims that such a project is grandiose to the point of impossibility. But, as I have stated twice already, claims that large scale political and/or curricular change is impossible most often translate to mean that such change and work are “difficult.” I certainly agree. The activity I describe here would be extremely difficult, but also important.

Given that groups like NCTE are insiders on the outside looking in on the activities that govern their own work, it is possible that literacy educators are freer to act than they currently believe. Freed from the need to worry about gaining immediate and total access in top-tier policy discussions (which they are already excluded from), literacy educators have the opportunity to work outside of mainstream accountability discourses and produce internal organizational documents that will contribute to the development of counter-hegemonies within the profession that can then be used to initiate political work in local public contexts toward the transformation of national discourses. Within the dominant

discourse of standards-based accountability reform, NCTE may need its Standing Committee for Teacher Preparation and Certification to continue “shooting at a moving target” in order to maintain a voice at the national level. But it is also possible for NCTE to simultaneously work outside of that dominant discourse to move the target purposefully, emphasizing that education and accountability need not be primarily concerned with uniformity, consensus, simplicity, and efficiency. It is possible for NCTE to work in ways that both accommodate and subvert accountability reform policies and advance the interests of literacy education.

### *NCTE and “Literacy”*

Many readers may have noted the way this study has tended to represent language teaching as “English language arts *and literacy*.” This pairing is of course not incidental, but reflects the perspective of the New Literacy Studies that language study and literacy requires avoiding the characterization of “English” as a national language, and also to avoid making a distinction between the “English language arts” as a distinct disciplinary activity and “literacy” as a general set of technical skills. Recalling my review of Alan Luke’s (2003) essay “The Trouble With English,” the expansion of literacy practices over the last thirty years has made it desirable for educators to re-conceptualize language arts instruction under a new rubric, whether that rubric is labeled “English Studies,” “Literacies,” “Literacy Studies,” “Multiliteracies,” or something else. Regardless of its title, the field must open up the traditional institutional discourse of English

language arts to account for the contributions of linguistics, rhetoric, composition studies, media studies, cultural studies, women's and ethnic studies, literary studies, geography, sociology, anthropology, and other diverse subjects.

When Gramsci conceived of the potential for counter-hegemony, he recognized that the development of such a discourse requires the cultivation of relationships between disparate social groups that nevertheless share common interests, and so have the potential to develop affinities for one another. Using Gramsci's work, it is possible to envision a project initiated by NCTE to begin the cultivation of such relationships among the groups identified by Luke as related to or invested in aspects of literacy research and education. Developing affinities across these groups could allow professionals to increase their agency dramatically and gain significant momentum and influence toward shifting national discourses in ways that literacy educators find desirable—that is, in ways that lead to high quality equitable literacy education and learning for all students, and greater professional autonomy and agency for teachers and researchers alike.

Once again, a project like this one is likely to be extremely difficult, time consuming, and contentious, since professionals interested in the field of literacy come from so many different disciplinary backgrounds, theoretical paradigms, and so on. Still, engaging in this work is important in order to think as a set of affinity groups about how to best meet the needs of the students who come to our classrooms everyday to learn about how language and literacy work for and on them.

## *Conclusions*

In effect, the 1996 NCTE *Guidelines*' accommodation of accountability in English education curriculum and policy may prevent programs that use the *Guidelines* from accurately representing English, literacy, teaching, and learning to the point that professional educators are unable to adequately address the needs of students in both university teacher education classrooms and K-12 language arts classrooms. The findings from this study suggest that NCTE must become more strategic about its policy production and curricular designs. Before NCTE can satisfactorily deal with the challenges of accountability in public national contexts, it must first ground English clearly in English studies and literacies, not in a context focused on accommodating the demands of accountability.

Grounding English in English Studies and literacies requires difficult work across social groups to represent the range of discourse groups concerned with language and literacy. Representing the range of English within the field offers the opportunity for professional English and literacy teachers and teacher educators to come together and develop critical discourse about their work on a scale that has not occurred before. As Luke (2004) argues, we face the challenge of coming together and working across our differences within the field to accurately represent the range of English studies, purposes for studying English and literacy, and offering collaborative visions of curricula.

Luke's challenge means that those responsible for developing policy in

English and literacy must develop an understanding and respect for discourse and rhetoric in the field. Representing the ideological positions of various groups potentially involved with the teaching of English is extremely sensitive work fraught with the risk of authoritarianism. It is important to continuously attempt to achieve an ongoing dialogue within the profession that includes all interested parties toward cooperation in representing a range of perspectives.

My intention in this study has been to describe the present discourse of English language arts education and analyze it using Critical Discourse Analysis and a perspective based in the New Literacy Studies. Although I make assertions and claims based on this perspective, I recognize that it is one perspective among many, and that others may make important counter claims and contributions to the discourse about curriculum and accountability in literacy and the English language arts. If this study provokes or encourages further inquiry, discussion, or debate, I welcome it. To conclude this study, I outline some of the work that might be engaged in toward developing our understanding and contributing to that conversation.

#### *Further research.*

First, it is important to recognize that the present study is useful but not sufficient for understanding the operation of the NCTE *Guidelines*. Based on Fairclough's triad for critical discourse analysis, it is important to study the discursive context in which texts are produced, in addition to analyzing the text and its sociocultural context. While I have been able to accomplish the latter two analyses to some degree, the need to study the discursive context in detail



remains. One way to approach this work is via ethnographic study of the Standing Committee for Teacher Preparation and Certification while it engages in ongoing work to develop guidelines. Without a more detailed understanding of how this group interacts to produce its text, it is impossible to fully understand, describe, or explain the discourse that results. While analyses of the text and certain aspects of the sociocultural environment have allowed me to make some claims here, I do not pretend that this study is definitive or complete. Access to the work of the Standing Committee *in process* is essential to this research, and systematic studies of similar groups involved with curriculum and policy design will be extremely important.

Additional research on the history of NCTE, standards-based accountability reform, and literacy theory are also important to this line of work in order to further expand and enrich the existing archive of texts for understanding the discourses of literacy and English education. While there are existing histories of NCTE, for example J. N. Hook's narrative of NCTE's development in its first sixty years, it would be useful for other researchers to engage in more historical inquiry from a range of positions. Likewise, while scholars like Berlin, Scholes, Graff, and Ohmann have written historical texts about the development of English and rhetoric at the university level, there remains a need for historical studies of the development of English and literacy as public school subjects, particularly from critical and poststructural perspectives that concentrate on the ideological construction, genealogy, and deconstruction of these subjects rather than descriptions of K-12 language arts curricula.

A third strand of research indicated by this study is the need for critical discourse analyses of other standards documents and curriculum texts, both those related to literacy, and those using a national educational scope or originating in other subject areas like math, science, and social sciences. CDA's of other texts also contribute to the archive for study of standards-based accountability and curriculum in our field. They promote comparison across those texts and the fields they represent, allowing the description of even larger discursive patterns and hopefully leading to a greater capacity for educators, researchers, and policy makers to understand, anticipate, and influence the effects of their activity on educational quality and equity.

*Moving targets.*

If one thing can be said of curriculum and policy in English language arts and literacy education, it is that the target will never stop moving. Both literacy as a technology set and English as a linguistic system are dynamic, as are the societies and cultures that we participate in as teachers, researchers, and citizens. The fact that our targets move, however, does not mean that we should give up trying to hit them. To the contrary, it is important to remember that we can move targets ourselves in order to achieve goals we deem to be desirable based on negotiation and open critical discourse.

Given the present rush to accountability and standardization in our field, now is the time to come together and develop a vision for the field that looks beyond the present discourse and pressure to standardize. There is an opportunity here to develop praxis—that is, to make this broad profession a

space where theory, research, teaching, practice, and professional activity intersect and inform each other for the betterment of our work.

This opportunity for praxis includes an opportunity to teach people and organize curricula in ways that bring current accountability measures into question. Teacher educators have a responsibility to teach new teachers how to read standards and policy more effectively as ideological instruments, to make sense of their own classroom contexts, and to find new ways of integrating new knowledge and topics with existing knowledge so that institutionalized literacy education remains relevant for the diverse students who are coming to public school classrooms every day.

As we notice that our targets are always moving in the field of literacy education, that realization should also lead to the recognition that our targets are anything but monolithic and inevitable. They are socially constructed, and that means that they are subject to change via social interaction. Certainly, given the tendency for systems of power and ideology to reproduce themselves, change is never easy, and there is always the risk of slippage and abuse in social systems. Still, the goal of achieving counter-hegemony for literacy education in which the dominant ideology involves an explicit attention to language, a value for critical discourse, and an ongoing intentional effort to address shifting values, power relations, and issues of equity, seems like a worthwhile goal. The key appears to be not simply tracking our target, but moving targets purposefully.

An effort toward full praxis and moving targets in English education and literacy should be engaged in the interest of one over-arching goal: the effective

and successful education of children. That means teaching them how to read and write. It means helping them learn how to use and appreciate literacy in ways that will enable them to continue learning, adapt to change, and to both resist and change practices and situations that are inequitable or oppressive, not only for themselves but also for those who share their communities. That is our responsibility as literacy educators, and if now is not the time for this sort of action, then when? And if those of us who teach and study literacy do not take action, then who? I can think of no more important work than the work that we do, together.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

List of Data Codes

Table 4: Data categories, codes, and definitions

Discourse Structure	Data Code	Explanation
Auxiliary verbs	Auxiliary obligation	<p>Auxiliary verb constructions are used to construct evaluative statements about necessity or obligation, using verbs such as “should,” “must,” or “need + infinitive verb phrase.”</p> <p>Auxiliary verbs provide a useful marker for analyzing particularized value statements, assumptions, and evaluations that are projected as universals in a text. According to Fairclough (2003), “[A]chieving hegemony entails achieving a measure of success in projecting certain particulars as universals.” Analyzing patterns of auxiliary construction helps reveal ideological perspectives, patterns, and/or contradictions in a text.</p> <p>Auxiliary verbs function as deontic modalities— constructions that imply the desirability of acting according to particular (ideological) values.</p>
Diction and tone	DT-(+ word or phrase)	<p>Diction = connotation or denotation of terms; also abstraction/concreteness.</p> <p>Tone = the style and register used to imply purpose, audience, assumptions of perspective, use of neologisms, jargon, euphemism, etc.</p> <p>Diction and Tone frequently mark constructions that imply the authors’ orientation to difference at a given point in the text. This orientation may be shifting, overlapping, and/or contradictory. As such, analysis of diction and tone can lead to insights about power relations and ideological perspectives in a text.</p>

**Table 4 (cont'd)**

Representation of Social Actors	SA-( + noun)	<p>Coding for the representation of social actors helps develop patterns of social activity and power relations in a text (for example: Who is present in the text? Who is represented as able to act? What do actors do? Who is acted upon? Who is considered to be important?</p> <p>Analysis of the representation of social actors in a text can include answering the following questions:  Is the actor in the text, <i>present</i>, <i>absent</i>, or <i>backgrounded</i>?  Is the social actor realized as a <i>pronoun</i>?  Is the social actor represented as <i>active</i> or <i>passive</i> in the text?  Is the social actor personalized or impersonal?  --Is the social actor <i>named</i> (i.e. , "Mrs. Smith") or <i>categorized</i> (i.e., "Teachers")?  Is the social actor represented as <i>specific</i> or <i>generic</i>?</p>
Value Assumptions	VA	<p>Value assumptions are statements or other constructions that imply beliefs about <i>what is good or desirable</i>.</p> <p>Value assumptions are often marked by auxiliary constructions like "should," "must," or "need."</p>
Propositional Assumptions	PA	<p>Propositional assumptions are statements or other constructions about <i>what is believed to be true or possible</i>. Propositional Assumptions frequently overlap with value assumptions, but may occur independently as statements about what is true.</p>
Existential Assumptions	EA	<p>Existential assumptions are statements about <i>what exists</i>. They are most often declarative statements; however, existential assumptions may be implied within other constructions.</p>

**Table 4 (cont'd)**

Nominalization	Nom	A nominalization is a verb that has been transformed into a noun. Transforming verbs/actions into nouns eliminates apparent agency, abstracts a text, and can serve to make a particular ideological position appear to be neutral when it is not.
Ethical Liberalism	EL	Statements aligned with ethical liberalism mark a value for equity, diversity, difference, individualized instruction, moral and ethical development, community, etc.
Technological Liberalism	TL	Statements aligned with technological liberalism mark a value for equality, the maintenance of economic interest, the establishment of uniformity, efficient mass assessment, and academic excellence.
Orientation to Difference	OD[1-5]	Many statements or words reflect particular orientations to difference. Orientation to difference in a text can imply various ideological positions, ranging from a complete denial of difference to an explicit acceptance and value for difference. These orientations are useful for understanding whether and how a text allows for variation and change from the status quo, and thus reflect power relations and hegemonic conditions. Ratings for orientation to difference (Fairclough, 2003), are as follows: 1 = consensus, a normalisation and acceptance of differences of power which brackets or suppresses differences of meaning and over norms; 2 = a bracketing of difference, a focus on commonality, solidarity; 3 = an attempt to resolve or overcome difference; 4 = an accentuation of difference, conflict, polemic, a struggle over meaning, norms, power; 5 = an openness to, acceptance of, recognition of difference; an exploration of difference, as in 'dialogue' in the richest sense of the term.

**Table 4 (cont'd)**

Genre		<p>Fairclough: "Many [policy] texts can be seen to limit policy options by portraying the socioeconomic order as simply given, an unquestionable and inevitable horizon which is itself untouchable by policy and narrowly constrains options, essential rather than contingent, and without time depth. Moreover, these texts often appear to be promotional rather than analytical, concerned more to persuade people that these are indeed the only practicable policies than to open up dialogue. This form of report is what we might call 'hortatory report': descriptions with a covert prescriptive intent, aimed at getting people to act in certain ways on the basis of representation of what is" (p. 95-96).</p>
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## Appendix B

### Diction Tables

Each table below represents the collected discourse segments concerning key terms in the 1996 *NCTE Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of the English Language Arts*, used to demonstrate patterns of language use.

**Table 6: English Language Arts as an Academic Discipline**

<b>Page</b>	<b>Statements of English as a Discipline</b>
10	Teachers must build classroom environments characterized by both freedom and discipline.
12	Teachers must acquire a sense of belonging to their professional community. They must both contribute to it and be nurtured by it; therefore, they must be active participants in local, state, and national organizations that promote professional development. In addition, they must develop a commitment to lifelong learning of the content and methodology of their discipline.
21	Content Guideline 18: Knowledge of major research findings and theory in the content of the discipline and in issues and trends that affect curriculum is essential for creating a productive teaching and learning environment.
21	English language arts teachers must know the major sources—for example, books, periodicals, reports, and proceedings—of research, theory, and the issues and trends that influence the content and pedagogy of their discipline.
24	Instruction that calls for subject matter across subject lines is increasingly seen by the profession as important, both because the integrated curriculum will increase richness and because it will give greater meaning to each of the disciplines.

**Table 6 (cont'd)**

34	<p>The standards from the Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium (quoted and paraphrased from Model standards for Beginning Teacher Licensing and Development, 1992 draft, pp. 10-30) state that a beginning teacher:</p> <p>Standard 1: Understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline.</p>
65	<p>Another way of looking at the <i>Guidelines</i> is as a document that defines and redefines the discipline at regular ten-year intervals, and that responds to the professional, social, and political trends that are most significant during the time in which each revision is being composed. In such a view, <i>Guidelines for the Preparation of teachers of English Language Arts</i> is an activist document which seeks change and attempts periodic reorientation of the discipline and the language used to represent it.</p>
65	<p>[Referring to calls for conservation (as "tradition") and reform] Both of these views lead to important insights, though neither view is sufficient in itself. Looking at the <i>Guidelines</i> in terms of its continuity with the past can lead to stagnation, reduction, and reification of language and practice. Looking at the <i>Guidelines</i> in the context of current trends and movements, on the other hand, leads to short-sightedness, excess, and distortion. Also, both of these views operating independently and unmindfully of each other in the discipline contribute to the so-called "swinging pendulum" effect.</p>
65	<p>...oscillations in the orientations of the discipline from one extreme position to another.</p>

**Table 6 (cont'd)**

66	The long-term result of this well-meaning, highly student-centered orientation [Progressivism] was a de-emphasis of academic study and an embarrassingly weak curriculum that was discarded in favor of an "academic model" in the 1950s and 1960s. At the time, the academic model was interpreted as a reestablishment of traditional academic values that had been wrongly abandoned during the preceding period of reform. This model, in turn, led to a discipline-centered curriculum that ultimately also fell victim to its own excesses by failing to respond to the needs and interests of students. That academic model was swept aside in the turbulent political climate of the late 1960s and early 1970s (Applebee, 1974).
66	It would be just as impossible to argue that any good would be served by any revision of the <i>Guidelines</i> which would dislodge the discipline from its traditions and underpinnings. Such balance is particularly important since <i>Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of the English Language Arts</i> is used as a working document in the accreditation of English teacher education programs, which serve broad and varied communities and exist in bureaucratic institutions which, by their very nature, are often difficult and slow to change.

**Table 7A: Holistic, Integrated, and/or Interconnected ELA Content**

<b>Page</b>	<b><u>Statements of holism, integration, and/or interconnection</u></b>
3	We agreed that both programs, but especially the one for teachers, should produce individuals whose experiences have been such that they know that "all language processes are integrated and, hence, that language study should be approached holistically" (1986 Guidelines, p. 3).
3	Although "process" has become a negative word in many people's lexicon, these guidelines reflect a perspective that recognizes that language use <i>is</i> a process: a process that begins with the use of oral language in very young children, and continues throughout life; a process that is holistic (itself a controversial term) and integrates the traditional "language arts" of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

**Table 7A (cont'd)**

13	Teachers of the English language arts must seek ways to integrate elements of the arts and the humanities in their daily instruction in order to create a balanced academic experience for their students. By incorporating traditional and current music, art, philosophy, etc., in the students' academic lives, teachers support an understanding that such aspects of human culture are important for the individual student and for the health of the community.
23	<p>Content Guideline 1: Structure English language arts holistically.</p> <p>Because the English language arts curriculum is multidimensional and involves substance (literature, language, rhetoric), skills (reading, writing, viewing, listening, speaking), and processes (affective, cognitive, creative), the interconnectedness of these dimensions must be reflected when teachers select, design, and organize objectives, strategies, and materials. Organizational patterns such as themes, topics, and life experiences, as well as genres and similar types of approaches, will promote holistic structure.</p>
24	Instruction that calls for subject matter across subject lines is increasingly seen by the profession as important, both because the integrated curriculum will increase richness and because it will give greater meaning to each of the disciplines.
25-26	They must be able to articulate to students, parents, administrators, and other community members the standards of achievement established for the class, how achievement is measured, and the progress being made by individual students. Teachers must keep in mind that some instructional practices— such as whole language approaches to literacy, integrating the curriculum, and thematic teaching— are more process-oriented and require forms of assessment different from those used for more traditional ways of teaching.
31	The interconnectedness among attitudes, knowledge, and pedagogy— like the holistic structure of language itself—must be acknowledged and understood by the teacher of English language arts.

**Table 7B: Holistic, Integrated, and/or Interconnected Assessment**

25	To effectively evaluate student performance, teachers must be able to integrate various forms of assessment into the everyday learning experiences of students.
20	Teachers, therefore, must be familiar with authentic assessment techniques and procedures, such as reflective writing, student- and teacher-developed guidelines or checklists, learning records, portfolio presentations, and exhibitions. They need to know several ways of assessing student writing performance, such as holistic, primary trait, and analytic scoring of writing. They should be familiar with a range of systems, such as learning records, that describe student progress in all language processes.

**Table 7C: Holistic, Integrated, and/or Interconnected Teaching**

28	The teaching of English language arts is a holistic, dynamic, and constructive process.
15	Teachers at all levels not only to use integrated approaches in teaching the language arts but also to provide instruction that focuses on each aspect of language.

**Table 8: A Discourse About Literacy:**

<b>Page</b>	<b>Statements about Literacy</b>
2	Clearly "computer literacy" is now an essential tool for success in most schools, and increasing numbers of colleges and universities require students to come equipped not just with computer skills but with their own computer hardware; and once students are on campus, they may find their residence hall rooms equipped with access to electronic mail and online services.

**Table 8 (cont'd)**

9	<p><b>Principles of Dynamic Literacy</b></p> <p>English language arts teacher preparation programs should recruit, nurture, and graduate new teachers who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Write with proficiency and pleasure, read widely for enlightenment and growth, and participate in cultural events in their school and in the wider community.</li><li>• Write about and share their experiences as writers and as readers with their students.</li></ul>
16-17	<p>Teachers need to provide environments where “public literacy” practice may take place: where students learn how to take part in public discussions whether written or oral, where they participate in deciding issues and know how to find information which enables them to take part.</p>
26	<p>Teachers must keep in mind that some instructional practices— such as whole language approaches to literacy, integrating the curriculum, and thematic teaching— are more process-oriented and require forms of assessment different from those used for more traditional ways of teaching.</p>
27	<p><b>Content Guideline 18: Promote media literacy.</b></p> <p>Teachers must be able to guide students in preparing nonprint materials, such as storyboards or sound recordings, and in preparing and creating multimedia presentations. Students need to construct meaning through different media, analyze their transactions with media texts, and create their own media texts and performances. Teachers must help students to explore contemporary media as extensions of literature and as entities in and of themselves. They need to understand and to be skillful in teaching the possibilities and limitations of media texts, such as film, video, and television.</p>

**Table 8 (cont'd)**

32	<p>As we worked on these <i>Guidelines</i>, we also examined various standards reports, some in final form and some as drafts. While we found that the NCTE guidelines included all of the areas and issues addressed in the emerging standards documents, some parts of our Guidelines—particularly where reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and thinking are discussed—have benefited from the language and ideas found in various standards documents</p> <p>For example, the range of skills we define as necessary for a new teacher to have in order to teach content, to develop students' verbal abilities, to develop multiple literacies, and to develop curricula is consistent with the NCTE/IRA standards.</p>
34	<p>NCTE/IRA Standard 11: Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.</p>
66-67	<p>The stand on cognitivism and process pedagogy constitutes a strong link with previous revisions of the <i>Guidelines</i>, while not overlooking the work of literary scholars, educational theorists, and rhetoricians who see themselves as representatives of more explicitly postmodern points of view such as social constructionism. This latter orientation posits a “liberatory” role as well as vigorous social activism for teachers of “literacy.” Social constructionists also often operate on the basis of a broader “anti-foundationalist” agenda against what they understand to be the “foundational” tenets of cognitivism and process pedagogy. Despite these very real areas of disagreement, with respect to both the pedagogy guidelines and the knowledge guidelines, the Standing Committee strongly encourages programs seeking accreditation to emphasize connectedness and common ground across conceptual frameworks that often seem, on the surface, to be contradictory.</p>

**Table 9: A Discourse About “Discourse”**

Page	Statements about Discourse
8	<p>Principles of Content knowledge</p> <p>English language arts education programs should provide teachers with content knowledge so that they will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the role that literature plays in the development and understanding of human cultures.</li> <li>• Understand that composing is a practice that covers a wide range of processes, functions, purposes, rhetorical situations, and categories of discourse.</li> </ul>

**Table 9 (cont'd)**

14	The knowledge base of effective English language arts teachers can be divided into nine general areas: language development, language analysis, language composition, written discourse, reading and literature, media, instructional media, assessment, and research and theory.
16	There are processes and elements in the act of composing that are crucial to oral, visual, and written discourse.
16	Rich oral language experiences are closely related to writing performance. Although both speaking and writing usually take place in a social context, oral text is sometimes thought of as informal and as often preceding written discourse. In truth, both oral and written discourse contain like elements and follow processes that teachers need to understand in order to help students develop and extend communication skills.
16	Technology has enlarged these processes to include visual discourse through the use of digital media as well as through such traditional media as film, video, photographs, and pictures. Visual discourse, then, is closely linked with oral and written discourse.
16	Furthermore, all teachers must know that much practice with expressive language is necessary for the development of voice or style in all forms of discourse.
16	Teachers must also be aware of equity issues in language, such as the extension of language codes and registers beyond the limits of standard or formal English; the nature and use of academic discourse and other forms of writing and speaking to expand rather than inhibit student expression; and the use and, therefore, validation of global forms of English in classroom conversation.
17	[Teachers] also need to be aware of the usefulness of techniques to improve oral and written discourse, such as self- and peer assessment, as well as teacher assessment.
23	Knowledge created in discourse requires individuals to construct meaning and to engage in thinking with others.



**Table 9 (cont'd)**

25	<p>Guideline 9: Promote classroom discourse in which student thinking is respected and challenged by the teacher and other students.</p> <p>Although the teacher plays a central role in promoting and assessing classroom discourse, each student's reflections can create new understandings. Clarification, justification of ideas, and framing of questions that provoke students' thinking all promote classroom discourse and serve as evaluations of it. To facilitate discourse, the teacher must be skillful in helping students make connections among aspects of content and the learners' experiences, reading, ideas, and problems. The teacher also needs to be adept at helping students serve as the audience for one another's discourse.</p>
64-65	<p>Additionally, the guidelines on composing language and written discourse are primarily expressivist in orientation, while the guideline on reading and literature refers to Louise Rosenblatt's "transactional" theory of literature as well as to a more general reader-response approach to literary texts.</p>
65	<p>One way of looking at the [Guidelines] as it has developed over the years is to see it as a cumulative, evolving text with its own characteristics, priorities, and language. In such a view, this is a conserving document that gives English educators the opportunity to focus their attention on disciplinary history and to maintain contact with long-held values. Such a view also encourages English educators to maintain contact with language and terminology that have helped define central disciplinary concerns and practices. For example, successive revisions of the <i>Guidelines</i> have used words like "process," "content", "media", and "discourse" that all English educators are able to recognize and relate to specific issues and classroom practices.</p>

**Table 10: A "Critical" Discourse**

<b>Page</b>	<b><u>"Critical" Statements</u></b>
8	Know and be able to use and teach a wide range of critical and interpretive approaches to literature.

**Table 10 (cont'd)**

8-9	<p>English language arts education programs should provide teachers with opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop teaching/learning processes through experiences with a wide range of verbal, visual, technological, and creative media.</li><li>• Expand themselves as literate individuals who use their critical, intellectual, and aesthetic abilities to participate in a democratic society.</li></ul>
11	<p>Growth in language facility occurs when students experiment with language and receive respectful and critical response from teachers and peers. Teachers must build classroom environments characterized by both freedom and discipline. In such classrooms, students take risks by shaping complex ideas through language (both oral and written), and they learn to accept responses and criticism that help them improve their language abilities.</p>
12	<p>Attitude Guideline 6: A willingness to encourage students to respond critically to different media and communications technology.</p>
12	<p>Guideline 10: An enthusiasm for developing lifelong habits of mind to facilitate clear thinking and critical judgment.</p> <p>Teachers of the English language arts should employ instruction techniques that foster and nurture the cognitive and metacognitive processes required for clear thinking and critical judgment. The educational experiences that teachers provide should enable students to view their environments and the world in general from a problem-solving perspective and to draw conclusions from a wide variety of sources.</p>
13	<p>Respect for the points of views and opinions of others is critical to mental, emotional, and intellectual growth.</p>
17	<p>Teachers must also provide an environment that allows students to develop critical insights and that supports them in identifying their favorite pieces of literature.</p>

**Table 10 (cont'd)**

27	Build a reading, listening, and viewing community where students respond, interpret, think critically, and contrast ideas with others.
32	For example, the range of skills we define as necessary for a new teacher to have in order to teach content, to develop students' verbal abilities, to develop multiple literacies, and to develop curricula is consistent with the NCTE/IRA standards. Similarly, NCTE's <i>Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of the English Language Arts</i> Emphasize cultural diversity, second language usage, and the reflective teacher's critical reasoning skills, all of which are prominently featured in various other standards frameworks.
34	NCTE/IRA Standard 11: Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

**Table 11: A Discourse About Diversity**

<b><u>Page</u></b>	<b><u>Statements About "Diversity"</u></b>
3	And we agree with the earlier committees that diversity of situations is important, especially as students move into a world that is becoming more and more heterogeneous.
7	<p>Principles of Diversity:</p> <p>English language arts education programs should provide teachers with the attitudes, content, and pedagogical knowledge and skills so that they will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize and value the diversity of students.</li> <li>• Promote communication among cultures to foster mutual understanding.</li> <li>• Draw upon the diversity of students to enrich and enhance their academic achievement.</li> <li>• Enable students to construct meaning from multiple sources.</li> <li>• Encourage the development of students' multiple ways of knowing and understanding.</li> </ul>

**Table 11 (cont'd)**

13	Guideline 11: A recognition of the value of diversity of opinion.
32	For example, the range of skills we define as necessary for a new teacher to have in order to teach content, to develop students' verbal abilities, to develop multiple literacies, and to develop curricula is consistent with the NCTE/IRA standards. Similarly, NCTE's <i>Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of the English Language Arts</i> emphasize cultural diversity, second language usage, and the reflective teacher's critical reasoning skills, all of which are prominently featured in various other standards frameworks.
34	NCTE/IRA Standard 9: Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.
64	The 1996 <i>Guidelines</i> contains language and terminology from a wide range of professional and political points of view; for example, "expressive," "construction," "transactional," and "diversity." However, we avoid associating such terms with specific movements and schools of thought, and do not name, elaborate, or recommend specific conceptual frameworks. We did this deliberately to acknowledge the breadth of the knowledge base for English education and to avoid being over-prescriptive of the content in English teacher education programs.

**Table 12A: A Discourse of "Appropriateness"**

<b>Page</b>	<b>"Appropriate" Statement</b>
10	Teachers must treat respectfully the language and dialect that each student brings into the classroom, recognizing that every dialect has an appropriate use.
10	Attitude Guideline 4: A conviction that teachers help students grow by encouraging creative and appropriate uses of language.

**Table 12A (cont'd)**

15	Students learn language through use, their need to know, and their environments; in turn, they need to learn to respond to, respect, and understand the communication of others. Teachers need to understand language variation so they can help students recognize and use language appropriate to different occasions.
16	Teachers need to provide opportunities for students to use nonacademic as well as academic English. In doing so, they can help students understand when to use formal structures and when informal structures are appropriate.

**Table 12B: Appropriate Teaching and Instruction**

<b>Page</b>	<b><u>"Appropriate" Statement</u></b>
14-15	Teachers need to know the relationship of language development to the fundamental principles and characteristics of human growth so that they set their expectations of a student's language use and development according to student readiness and achievement levels. By providing developmentally appropriate experiences, teachers can reduce learning anxiety and help students become linguistically mature.
25	Teachers also need to be able to evaluate and determine appropriate uses of instructional technology and its products. They should be able to judge the quality and worth of materials such as computer software, videos, and commercial transparencies.
36	ETS Standards A4: Creates and selects appropriate methods, activities, and materials for instruction.

**Table 12C: Appropriate Knowledge**

<b>Page</b>	<b><u>"Appropriate" Statement</u></b>
14	In English language arts teacher-preparation programs, the curricula must include not only that knowledge of literature, language, and the process of composing suitable for majors in English, but also the specialized knowledge appropriate for teachers of the subject.

**Table 12D: Appropriate Worldview**

<b>Page</b>	<b><u>“Appropriate” Statement</u></b>
18	There is an extensive body of literature and literary genres in English and in translation—including the well-known and the little known, the commonly used in the curriculum and the rarely used, the traditional and the unusual— representing a worldview appropriate for the classroom.

**Table 12E: Appropriate Reading**

<b>Page</b>	<b><u>“Appropriate” Statement</u></b>
18	Teachers need to be able to guide students to become independent readers by providing them with appropriate choices and by encouraging self-monitoring of reading habits and processes; they must be familiar with a rich and varied store of literature that will engage their students.
	[Teachers] need to use contemporary children’s and young adult literature, and other appropriate literature written specifically for the age and interest levels of their students.
28	It is not enough for teachers of the English language arts to love literature, to value it as an art form and as a way of understanding the human experience; teachers also need sufficient knowledge of literature which will enable them to introduce students to appropriate traditional and nontraditional texts, and they need the pedagogical knowledge and skills to engage learners in meaningful transactions with literature and to assess students’ responses to it.

**Table 12F: Appropriate Assessment**

<b>Page</b>	<b><u>“Appropriate” Statement</u></b>
20	Given the complex and personal nature of language, no single test or other measure can give a comprehensive and accurate picture of what a student has learned. Teachers must understand the strengths and limitations of specific assessment instruments and techniques. They need to construct and provide models by practicing these assessment techniques with their own learning and be able to select the appropriate assessment vehicles for a particular classroom level or curriculum objective.

**Table 12F (cont'd)**

20	They also need to understand that qualitative measures such as observation and interview are as appropriate as quantitative measures such as tests.
20	Teachers, therefore, need to be able to determine the appropriate formal and informal ways to evaluate student growth in the English language arts.
25	Pedagogical Guideline 11: develop ways to communicate assessment methods and results to different audiences. Teachers must be able to select, create, and use testing methods appropriate to their instructional practices and their students; establish valid grading systems; and communicate a realistic picture of student progress.
36	ETS Standards A5: Creates or selects appropriate evaluation strategies.

**Table 13:   Equivalents of Appropriateness/Inappropriateness**

**Binary Discourses: ACADEMIC/NON-ACADEMIC, FORMAL/INFORMAL, STANDARD/NON-STANDARD**

<b>Page</b>	<b>Binary Statement/"Appropriate" Equivalents</b>
10	Teachers must treat respectfully the language and dialect that each student brings into the classroom, recognizing that every dialect has an appropriate use. While providing students' access to standard oral and written forms of English, teachers should establish an environment that encourages respect, enthusiasm, and appreciation for all forms of language.
15	...[T]eachers need to know how to acquire knowledge and understanding of the social and cultural environments of the communities from which their students come. In addition, to be effective, teachers must be able to provide opportunities for students to practice language beyond the academic environment of the classroom.

**Table 13 (cont'd)**

16	Teachers need to provide opportunities for students to use nonacademic as well as academic English. In doing so, they can help students understanding when to use formal structures and when informal structures are appropriate.
16	Rich oral language experiences are closely related to writing performance. Although both speaking and writing usually take place in a social context, oral text is sometimes thought of as informal and as often preceding written discourse. In truth, both oral and written discourse contain like elements and follow processes that teachers need to understand in order to help students develop and extend communication skills.
16	Furthermore, all teachers must know that much practice with expressive language is necessary for the development of voice or style in all forms of discourse. Such practice requires speaking and writing for various purposes in a wide variety of forms for many different audiences. Teachers must also be aware of equity issues in language, such as the extension of language codes and registers beyond the limits of standard or formal English; the nature and use of academic discourse and other forms of writing and speaking to expand rather than inhibit student expression; and the use and, therefore, validation of global forms of English in classroom conversation.
19	To help students understand how literature celebrates humanity, teachers must develop effective ways to allow students to talk and write about varied forms of literature. They need to model good reading habits for students, showing that reading can be done for pleasure as well as for academic purposes.



**Table 14A: A Discourse of “Effectiveness”**  
**Effective Teaching:**

<b><u>Page</u></b>	<b><u>“Effective” Statement</u></b>
<b><u>1</u></b>	At ten-year intervals for most of its eighty-five years, the National Council of Teachers of English has presented the profession with a statement of what effective teachers of the English language arts need to know and be able to do; these regularly updated statements also discuss the attitudes that effective teachers should possess.”
<b><u>4</u></b>	Teacher education programs should ensure that their graduates are knowledgeable, thoughtful, and skillful at the beginning of their careers, and that they have the potential to become models of effective teaching.
<b><u>10</u></b>	Attitudes of Effective English Language Arts Teachers (section heading)
<b><u>14</u></b>	Content knowledge for Effective English Language Arts teachers (section heading)
<b><u>14</u></b>	The knowledge base of effective English language arts teachers can be divided into nine general areas: language development, language analysis, language composition, written discourse, reading and literature, media, instructional media, assessment, and research and theory.
<b><u>15</u></b>	In addition, to be effective, teachers must be able to provide opportunities for students to practice language beyond the academic environment of the classroom.
<b><u>23</u></b>	Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills Demonstrated by Effective English Language Arts teachers (subject heading)
<b><u>27</u></b>	They must also be effective in designing activities that challenge students to step outside themselves and view situations from the perspectives of others.

**Table 14A (cont'd)**

<u>35</u>	The standards from the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (paraphrased from the booklet <i>Teacher Performance Assessment: A Comparative View</i> , published by the Educational Testing Service in 1995) maintain that an effective teacher demonstrates:
<u>36</u>	Finally, the Educational Testing Service, in its "Teacher Performance Assessments," uses domains and indicators to describe the effective teacher as one with significant skills in....
<u>67</u>	Educators are benefiting from that knowledge, but the misuse of [knowledge about instructional technology] could cause effective teaching and learning to be called obsolete before there is sufficient information to make that judgment.

**Table 14B: Effective Language**

<u>Page</u>	<u>"Effective" Statement</u>
<u>1</u>	They also take into account research findings and theoretical positions about the nature of language; its use in reading, writing, and oral communication; and the factors that support or inhibit effective language use.
<u>19</u>	Teachers must develop effective ways to allow students to talk and write about varied forms of literature.
<u>34</u>	Uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster learning. (a statement from the INTASC Framework)

**Table 14C: Effective Teacher Education Programs**

<b><u>Page</u></b>	<b><u>“Effective” Statement</u></b>
7	These general principles govern the detailed beliefs, understandings, and skills that we believe must mark the teacher who emerges from an effective English language arts teacher-preparation program.
63	Thus, the <i>Guidelines</i> refer only generally to the structures that inform the accreditation process, because we prefer to leave interpretive decisions to the discretion of individual programs, believing that such decisions must be situated in a local context (see, for example, the earlier chapter, “Characteristics of Effective Teacher Preparation Programs for English Language Arts”).

**Table 14D: Effective Professions**

<b><u>Page</u></b>	<b><u>“Effective” Statement</u></b>
10	In any profession, there are certain sets of attitudes to the effective conduct of that profession.

**Table 14E: Effective Instruction and Methods**

<b><u>Page</u></b>	<b><u>“Effective” Statement</u></b>
14	The preparation of teachers must include knowledge of and practice in the use of those instructional methods that research and best practice show as effective in promoting learning.

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