


# Archives: NCTE Media Literacy Award Winners

## NCTE Annual Media Literacy Award

[link to the criteria and call for applications](#)

Previous recipients:

<p><b>2021</b></p>  <p>Emily Sendin, Miami Dade College</p>	<p>The committee noted the breadth and range of ways Professor Sendin engages media literacy in her courses at Miami Dade College. The student project exemplars exhibited strength within and across the four award criteria, particularly in terms of community collaborations and the ways students are invited to create and analyze media texts. Media literacy principles were embedded throughout the projects described, and the applicant's candid descriptions of successes and ongoing goals speak to the challenges of enacting this work. The committee appreciates the wide range of student projects and candid reflections present in the digital portfolio.</p>
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2020



Julie Griggs Bentonville High School, Arkansas,






Heather Hooks Bentonville West High School, Centerton,  
Arkansas

2019

The two educators use Arts-enriched empathy lessons at the heart of their shared curriculum, exploring and expressing diverse perspectives and experiences through a number of mediums – visual art, performance, movement, and music – resulting in a strong media literacy focus in their secondary ELA courses. The selection committee noted in their decision, “The strength of this application both within and across all four award criteria. Media literacy principles were embedded throughout the courses described, and the applicants’ sustained foci on professional reflections (for continued improvement and growth as they worked through obstacles) and course/project revisions (to meet the evolving needs of students and landscapes of our world) received much praise in the reviews. The committee described the application as “clearly organized,” “well-polished,” and “simply phenomenal.”

No award given

<p>2018</p>  <p>Sarah Bonner, Heyworth Junior/Senior High School, Illinois</p>	<p>Sarah is a veteran teacher, author, and presenter. She is driven by a desire to help students seek positive literacy experiences with a focus on integrating media literacy. What she most wants for students to get out of her class is motivation, a passion for lifelong learning, as well as practice continuous curiosity. A classroom teacher for fifteen years, Sarah is currently an 8th grade Language Arts teacher. In addition, she is an Instructional Assistant Professor for the School of Teaching and Learning at Illinois State University. She has coauthored numerous articles about literacy teaching and learning – specifically connected to inquiry methods and media literacy. Sarah enjoys speaking, presenting, and working with teachers in her district, regionally, and nationally at the annual NCTE National Conference. She is a doctoral candidate at Illinois State University.</p>
	<p>No Award was given in 2017</p>
 <p>2016 Carl Casinghino Suffield High School, Connecticut</p>	<p>“Through media literacy curricula that I have developed for the Suffield Public Schools and international media literacy education publications and presented at regional and national events, including NCTE and NAMLE conferences, students are compelled to function as multifaceted communicators, media evaluators, and creators through multiple modes of expression. As will be expressed through the criteria of this portfolio, this includes modules in courses that I teach and in cross-curricular units that I have developed with colleagues, including English, agriscience, social studies, special education, world languages, and health teachers at both middle and high school levels. All of this work enables students to become competent writers, analysts, and producers through multi-faceted communicative platforms, including text, moving images, and oral presentation.” Read more from the NCTE <a href="#">press release</a>.</p>
 <p>2015 Mary Ressler Centerville Middle School, Lancaster, PA</p>	<p>Mary holds a Master of Arts Degree in History and a K-12 Reading Specialist Certification from Millersville University. Read more about Mary <a href="#">here</a>.</p>



2014  
Denise Grandits  
St. Amelia School Tonawanda, NY

This school year, I will be beginning my 7th year as an educator. I currently teach 7th and 8th grade Literature at St. Amelia School in Tonawanda, NY, a suburb of Buffalo. Prior to becoming a teacher, I worked in health care for over 15 years before finally gaining the courage to pursue my dream of becoming an English teacher. I earned a Master of Arts in Teaching degree from State University of New York Empire State College in 2010. It was at Empire State College that my interest in media literacy was born. I knew there was more to explore and, after graduating from ESC, I decided to pursue a PhD at the University at Buffalo. UB's Department of Learning and Instruction and, in particular, my department, English Education, firmly believes in the power of media literacy to build exciting, engaging classrooms where students experience literacy in multiple modes. Dr. David Bruce and Dr. Suzanne Miller have been instrumental in mentoring me to better understand how media literacy can be employed in an English Language Arts classroom to foster literacy for all students. As I begin to finalize my dissertation study idea, I plan to take what we know about media literacy and explore student outcomes in multiple measures including high stakes tests results. I believe that media literacy is a pedagogical stance that teachers can develop to help all students develop critical reading, writing and thinking necessary for success on tests and, more importantly, in their lives. Unfortunately, as far too many media literacy advocates have experienced, work in such classrooms can seem "too fun" for it to be the real work of school. Until there is some evidence that students who are exposed to reading, writing and thinking in multiple modes can transfer those skills to test-taking, I fear teachers, many of whom now are evaluated on their students' test scores, will shy away from media literacy in favor of traditional pedagogy. I personally have seen the power media literacy has to engage, excite and educate all students and I want to share these experiences with colleagues. I live in Kenmore, NY with my husband of 25 years, Jim, our three college-aged sons, Scott, Ryan and Tyler, and our very spoiled dog, Samantha. In my free time, I enjoy basketball, football and spending time with my extended family.



2013  
Laura L Brown  
Adlai E. Stevenson High School Lincolnshire, Illinois

For the past 13 years, I have been working as a leader and resource in my department for the integration of technology into the curriculum. At Stevenson High School, my department is called the "Communication Arts" department, not the "English" department. As a teacher of "communication arts," I have always considered it my responsibility to teach my students to communicate effectively and have sought to define literacy in the broadest possible terms. Technology has certainly changed the way many of us view literacy and has certainly created opportunities for students to not just view and analyze media, but create media for themselves. It has also moved us to redefining our role as "English" teachers and the role of media in our classrooms. As a result, I have worked to integrate media literacy throughout our English/Language Arts curricula. I believe Media literacy should not be relegated only to specialty electives, but should be a part of what we do in every English class. It is time for media to move out of the margins of our English curriculum.





2012

Kara Clayton/Erin Ferris  
Thurston High School Redford, Michigan

Kara and Erin's award winning entry focuses on their development of a comprehensive media studies program at Thurston High School in the [South Redford School District](#) in Michigan. This program has grown from a single section of a mass media course in 1996 to the present multiple-teacher program that encompasses courses for freshmen through seniors and includes both media analysis and production courses.



2011

Georgia Institute of Technology's Writing  
and Communication Program

The Writing and Communication Program, serving all of Georgia Tech, is directed by Dr. Rebecca Burnett. In representing Georgia Tech's program to NCTE, she collaborated with a team of Brittain Postdoctoral Fellows, lead by Dr. Jesse Stommel and including Dr. Lauren Curtright, Dr. Melanie Kohnen, and Dr. Roger Whitson.



2010

Elizabeth Boeser,  
Communication and English teacher  
Jefferson High School  
Bloomington, Minnesota

Biography: Elizabeth Boeser's teaching career began in 2003 at Bloomington Jefferson High School where, in addition to required English courses, she has taught several elective classes including College Writing, Creative Writing, Teen Literature, Public Speaking and TV Production. She is the executive secretary for the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English and a teaching consultant for the Minnesota Writing Project. In 2009 she received an NCTE Teacher of Excellence Award and was a semifinalist for the Minnesota Teacher of the Year.



2009

Guofang Wan  
professor,  
College of Education,  
Ohio University,  
Athens, OH

Media Statement: Since the mid-1990s, media literacy has been the focus of my research and teaching efforts. I have published three books and a dozen of journal articles on media literacy education, and designed a number of curricula that have integrated media literacy education in schools and colleges. Addressing all media literacy principles – access, analysis, evaluation, and creation of information, my efforts include research publication, curriculum development, collaboration with community members and media producers, mentoring teachers and graduate students, as well as advocacy of media literacy locally, nationally, and internationally. Biography: Currently, I am a professor at College of Education, Ohio University working with both undergraduate and graduate students majoring in teacher education. Prior to this, I taught at Department of Teacher Education, Bradley University for several years. Media literacy is a topic addressed in various language arts method courses and general secondary method courses that I teach. My students learn about the theory of media literacy and practice it through hands on activities.



2008

James Brooks, English/Latin/  
Video Production/  
Introduction to Cinema Teacher,  
West Wilkes HS,  
Millers Creek NC

**Biography** Jim Brooks teaches English, Photojournalism and Introduction to Film at West Wilkes High School in Millers Creek, NC where he began teaching five years ago. He received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in English from Appalachian State University and is a National Board Certified Teacher (AYA English/Language Arts). He is currently pursuing a doctorate in educational leadership with a concentration in media and technology

**Media Statement** Technology and media literacy strategies have had the biggest impact on my teaching. I began teaching when an overhead projector was standard issue and film projectors and record players came at a premium. Now computers, the internet, presentation software, distance learning equipment and digital video cameras are tools at my disposal. More than ever, students need skills to navigate the digital landscape they find themselves in. Books are no longer the only texts my students must be able to read, analyze and apply. Through engaging my students in learning about and through media and technology, I have been able to reach more of my students, more effectively motivating learners at all levels. Through technology I am able to differentiate my instruction meeting both the needs of the reluctant learners and the naturally curious.

**Testimonial Statement** Receiving NCTE's Media Literacy Award has legitimized the work I value and my priorities in the classroom. It has given me the confidence to integrate even more media literacy activities into my curriculum.

**Local Publicity:** Public education in Wilkes County (North Carolina) gained the national spotlight when a local educator recently won a nationwide award for innovative teaching. Jim Brooks of Millers Creek won the NCTE- Commission On Media's annual Media Literacy Award for 2008 in November. Details [here](#).



2007

Abigail Kennedy,  
Pasco High School,  
Dade City, FL

The Tampa Tribune article "[Students Use Technology For Critical Thinking](#)" describes many of the classroom activities of Abigail Kennedy, winner of the 2007 Media Literacy Award, which is presented by NCTE's Assembly on Media Arts. Kennedy, who teaches at Pasco High School in Dade City, Florida, explains the goals for her teaching: "With media being so prevalent in the world," Kennedy said, "if they're not taught how to view it, they can be passive viewers, and can be taken advantage of." So naturally, Kennedy was thrilled earlier this year when a student told her the young teacher had "ruined" the girl's enjoyment of television commercials. Watch a [TV news story](#) featuring Ms Kennedy and her class work

**Testimonial Statement:** "The NCTE Media Literacy Award has opened numerous professional doors for me. Not only am I embraced and love through the Media Commission of NCTE, I've been tapped by journal editors for submissions, as well as professional development coordinator to share and highlight my work on NCTE's websites."

**Abigail's bio:** Teaching for about six years now and currently teach AP Literature, English IV Honors, English IV, Yearbook and Multimedia Productions. I also teach Comp II at a local community college. I'm involved with NCTE, FCTE (our state affiliate) and also a local affiliate of the National Writing Project.



2006  
Jean Biebel  
Wauwatosa East High School  
Wisconsin

Jean Biebel was the first recipient of the Media Literacy Award. A National Board Certified A/YA English language arts teacher, Jean developed a media literacy course for the students of Wauwatosa East High School in Wisconsin. Jean has presented her achievements in media literacy at the 2006, 2007, and 2008 NCTE Conventions

"The development of my media class has been an uphill climb, but my students and I are definitely reaping the benefits of my labor. We started with outdated instructional resources and dilapidated technology, but we now showcase impressive student video productions each year at a locally owned theater for our entire community to enjoy and appreciate. Without the recognition and sway the Media Literacy Award offered me, I would still be climbing up my hill with a 30 pound vhs video recorder on my back.

Tip: While analyzing your teaching of media literacy, remember to keep in mind that students respond to our instruction as teachers. They don't learn or create despite us. Teaching matters, so let your analysis show that.

Media literacy is critical thinking. As a teacher, I need to work with my students to develop the criteria we need to use to analyze and evaluate the media messages we consume everyday. The creation of media messages allows for a thorough understanding and heightened appreciation for the complexity underlying seemingly simple messages."