

## *In Memoriam*



Arthur N. Applebee  
July 20, 1946 – Sept. 20, 2015

Arthur N. Applebee, a leading scholar of literacy and language learning who earned international renown for his seminal work on how students become literate thinkers, died Sunday, Sept. 20, 2015, in New York. He was 69.

Applebee was a distinguished professor emeritus in the School of Education at the University of New York at Albany, chair of its Department of Educational Theory & Practice, and, since 1984, co-director of the Center on English Learning & Achievement, a federally funded research institute focused on how students best learn the language skills they need to succeed in school, work and life.

Applebee's work deeply influenced the teaching of English and language arts. He was called on by policymakers at the national, state, and district levels to advise on effective approaches to curriculum, instruction, and assessment. He was a long-time advisor to the National Assessment of Educational Progress and coauthored 14 of its "Reading Report Cards" on student achievement in American schools.

Applebee was lead author of a series of English literature textbooks for grades 6-12 that have been widely adopted by school districts across the United States since 1992. Millions of students have learned literate thinking through "Responding to Literature," "Literature Language," and "The Language of Literature," among other titles in the series.

Born in Sherbrooke, Canada, Applebee earned degrees from Yale, Harvard, and the University of London. His work focused on how children and adults achieve literacy – the interconnections between reading, writing, discussing, thinking and learning across subjects and topics. His research reframed the ways in which both scholars and practitioners think about critical issues in language learning.

The first of his 25 books and monographs, “Tradition and Reform in the Teaching of English,” became a classic in its field and remains in print more than 40 years after its publication in 1974. His most influential work also includes “The Child’s Concept of Story” (1978), “Writing in the Secondary School” (1981), “How Writing Shapes Thinking” (1987), “Literature in the Secondary School” (1993), and “Curriculum as Conversation” (1996). His last book, “Writing Instruction that Works: Proven Methods for Middle and High School Classrooms,” was published in 2013.

Applebee also produced more than 100 reports, articles and book chapters, becoming the most frequently cited author in the research handbooks in English language arts.

Among other professional activities, Applebee served as editor of the academic journal “Research in the Teaching of English,” as president of the National Conference on Research in Language and Literacy and as a member of the Validation Committee for the Common Core State Standards. He was recognized for the cumulative contribution of his work by election to the International Reading Hall of Fame, the David H. Russell Award for Distinguished Research in the Teaching of English, and his appointment as a fellow of the American Educational Research Association. He was a fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation Study Center in Bellagio, Italy, and received the SUNY Chancellor’s Award for Research Excellence.

Applebee, who lived in New York, N.Y., and New Scotland, N.Y., shared his life’s work with his wife and research partner, Judith Langer; the pair were the first husband and wife to hold the position of distinguished professor, the highest rank in the state university system. He is survived by Langer, two stepsons, four step-granddaughters and four brothers.

Applebee died of complications from Lewy Body Dementia, a form of Parkinsonism. Two memorial services are being held:

- Monday, Oct, 26, from 2-4:30 p.m., at the Skinner Room, Science Library, University at Albany, 1400 Washington Ave., Albany, N.Y.
- Thursday, Oct. 29, from 6-8:45 p.m., at the Cosmopolitan Club, 122 E. 66<sup>th</sup> St., New York, N.Y.

Donations may be made to the Arthur N. Applebee Memorial Fund at the University at Albany School of Education, via <http://albany.edu/give> (note “Applebee Fund”), or the Lewy Body Dementia Association, <http://ww.lbda.org>.