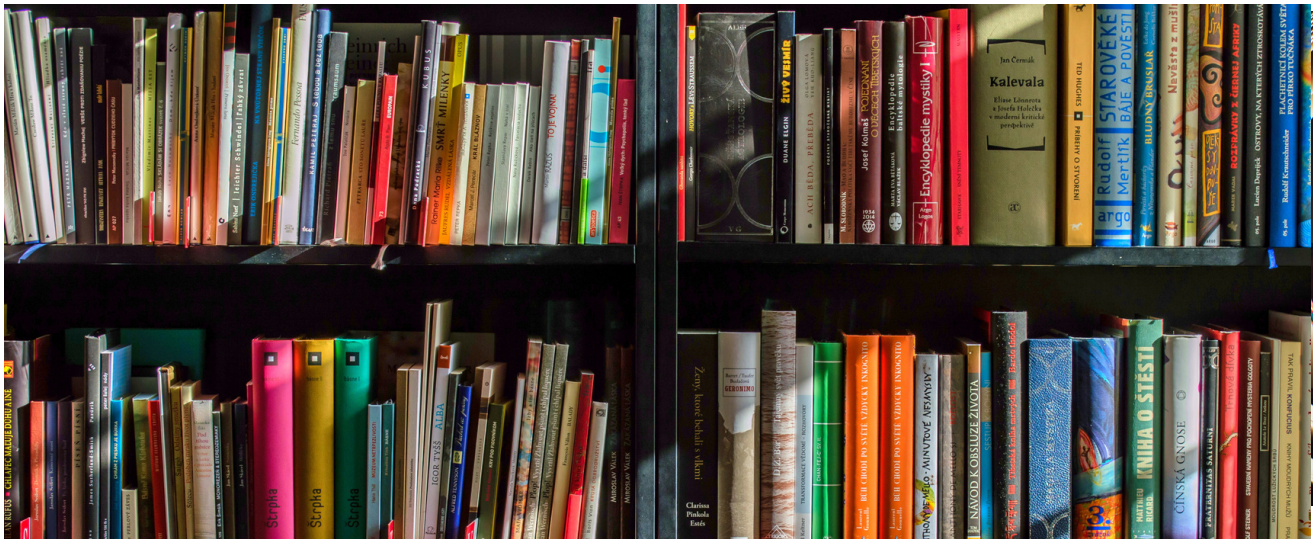


Chalkboard

Quarterly Newsletter for the Oregon Council of Teachers of English

www.octe.org



Chalkboard is a digital publication produced four times a year to communicate news from language arts teachers across Oregon, as well as book reviews, conference reflections, announcements, lesson ideas and more.

Publicity accorded to any particular point of view does not necessarily reflect or imply endorsement by the Council, its officers or members.

Chalkboard was awarded NCTE's Affiliate Newsletter Award of Excellence in 2021, 2020, 2019, 2017, and 2003 and won Honorable Mention in 2008.

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OREGON
COUNCIL of
TEACHERS
of ENGLISH



OCTE

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Message from the President

Here for you



What do language arts teachers need? As educators, language arts teachers are innovative and passionate; we fuel our classrooms with empathy, relevance, and hope. At this moment, we are all very aware of what our students need. We know that they need differentiated and effective literacy support and they need to see themselves in the classroom. This year, with the governor's executive order, we know that they will need our support as many of them decrease their cell phone use during the school day. And, as always, we will open our classrooms with relationship at the forefront, as we know this need is what everything is built upon.

Your OCTE board knows that our task ahead as educators is challenging and that we need each other more than ever. OCTE is here for you.

Our two members-only publications, Chalkboard and Oregon English Journal, provide you with updated information and opportunities, including the opportunity to publish your ideas. Consider making a goal to share a great practice from your classroom this year. We would love to hear from you!

Once a month we co-facilitate the Oregon Literacy Leaders Network online. Please join OCTE, ODE, and other Oregon literacy thought leaders to gather ideas and create connections to support your classroom. Consider sharing an idea or leading a book talk. LLN is a great way to collaborate and build relationships to sustain you as you develop your practice. Please join us.

OCTE will continue to support programming and events. Local bookshop events, speaker conferences, and the Oregon Writing Festival are on the horizon. Check the website or publications to learn more about what is happening around you.

Teaching language arts is an opportunity to nurture hope. Along with the entire OCTE Board, I am excited that you have chosen this place to learn and grow alongside your colleagues across the state. We are here for you, and would love to hear what you need to make this school year the best it can be. Welcome to the 2025-26 school year! - Jeanne Sheets-Sagoo



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GET INVOLVED WITH OCTE!

If you are interested in supporting the work of English teaching excellence across the state, please consider joining an OCTE committee!

As a member of OCTE, you are invited to serve on a subcommittee of your interest and expertise. Please consider any of these committees to join.

Contact info@octe.org with inquiries.

• Oregon Spirit Book Awards

OCTE chooses winners in multiple categories to promote the accomplishments and contributions of Oregon authors. Would you like to be part of a committee to read books and choose our annual winners? Promotion of the book awards would be part of this work as well.

• Professional Action

Are you concerned about intellectual freedom? Join our professional action committee and learn more about how to engage in meaningful work to support intellectual freedom in Oregon ELA classrooms.

• Programs

As a program committee member, you could take part in planning exciting and relevant conferences and professional development for ELA teachers across the state, as well as lead book groups and smaller workshops.

• Social Media

As a member of our social media team, you could lend your expertise to expand the online presence of OCTE, supporting your colleagues across the state. We would love to hear your ideas of ways to deepen our reach.



Don't have time for a committee? Consider a writing submission instead!

Are you interested in publishing your ideas? Please consider submitting an article, review, or creative work to either our Chalkboard Newsletter (chalkboard@octe.org) or Oregon Writing Journal (oregonenglishjournal@octe.org). Visit octe.org for more information.

Oregon Teachers for the Dream Scholarship

We seek to support and encourage pre-service English Language Arts teachers of color and other underrepresented educators in obtaining their licensure to teach in Oregon.

This year, our scholarship committee reviewed more than 20 applications for the Oregon Teachers for the Dream scholarship. The stories of each of these applicants were compelling and it was heartening to see the high caliber of teachers entering the profession. In this second year of our scholarship, we were able to grant two recipients \$1000 each for use during their student teaching. This year's winners are Andrea Farias Verduzco and Jaquelin Mendez-Cruz.

The following is a little about one of our scholarship recipients. Jaquelin Mendez-Cruz is enrolled in the Bilingual Teacher Pathway College of Education at Portland State University. Her story reflects the challenges that many of our applicants face.

Jaqui shared, "As a student whose primary language was Spanish, entering an education system built predominantly for white, English-speaking students was profoundly challenging. I experienced firsthand the reality of educational oppression, marginalization, and racism. My linguistic background became a barrier rather than the asset it truly was, simply because I couldn't yet speak English. These struggles aren't abstract concepts to me—they're formative experiences that have shaped my identity as an educator.

This personal journey gives me a unique perspective and deep empathy for students of color, especially those being marginalized and profiled within our educational system. When I work with bilingual students and those with special needs, I see reflections of my own journey and bring an authentic understanding of their challenges that cannot be taught in teacher preparation programs."

We are pleased to recognize these pre-service teachers and wish them all the best as they embark on their teaching careers.

OCTE's Oregon Literature Series

Ulrich H. Hardt,
OCTE Board of Directors



Editor's Note: With six volumes (four still in print), and totaling over 2,000 pages, the OCTE Oregon Literature Series showcases the best of Oregon's writing across history, culture, and genre.

"The most remarkable endeavor in the state's literary history."
-The Oregonian

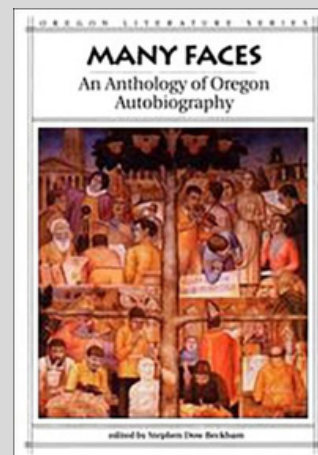
"There is nothing else like the Oregon Literature Series. I wish more states could do the same." -Gigi Bradford, Director of Literary Programs, The National Endowment for the Arts.

These volumes are available from Oregon State University Press and can be ordered at <https://osupress.oregonstate.edu/series/oregon-literature-series>.

Click on each image for specific information on each title.



The World Begins Here:
An Anthology of Oregon Short Fiction
Glen A. Love, Editor (\$24.95)



Many Faces:
An Anthology of Oregon Autobiography
Stephen Dow Beckham, Editor (\$21.95)

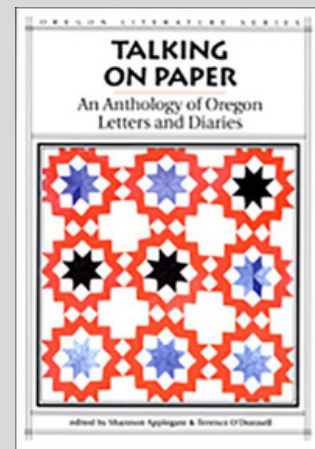
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OCTE's Oregon Literature Series (cont.)

Ulrich H. Hardt,
OCTE Board of Directors



Varieties of Hope:
An Anthology of Oregon Prose
Gordon B. Dodds, Editor (\$24.95)



Talking on Paper: An Anthology of Oregon
Letters and Diaries
Shannon Applegate
and Terence O'Donnell, Editors (\$24.95)

“Although the Oregon Literature Series was produced by the Oregon Council of Teachers of English (presumably for English studies), the series would be equally (if not more) useful in an American history or culture class.”

–Western Historical Quarterly

“The Oregon Literature Series revised the traditional literary canon, opening the definition of literature to include many kinds of work ... and connecting it to community. Literature interprets the depth and complexity of our lives ... validates us as a people.”

–George Venn, General Editor

Terms of Engagement: Building Community

Elizabeth McNamee, OCTE Board of Directors, Chalkboard Editor

It all feels so big right now, the crushing reality of what it means to be an educator in 2025 America. We face the possibility of shootings, censorship, and having to help protect our most vulnerable students. All while also wrapping our heads around new curricula, new policies, and getting spaces and students ready for another year of learning. And yet, we keep going. The work is important. The students and families we serve are important. The moments of magic that we are able to create, in the spaces between the impossibilities of this world, are important.



I've been reflecting on what has kept me, and many of my colleagues, moving forward with such uncertainty. It all boils down to community. It could be that one friend who we sneak a quick laugh with in the hallway, the ones who just know when you need a lift, these moments and connections we make with colleagues and/or friends.

As a statewide organization, OCTE is a great place for making connections beyond our buildings. What is challenging in creating that community is the massive geography of this wild and wonderful state. Although there isn't a perfect way to pull us all together in a common physical space, we've been thinking creatively about other options.

A lovely virtual space in which we can all come together is through the Literacy Leaders' Network- something all educators (including paraprofessionals and administrators) are welcome to attend. It is great to be in a space with not just fellow OCTE members, but representatives from Oregon Department of Education, Oregon State Literacy Association, Oregon Association of School Libraries, and WestEd.

I know, I know... it feels like another thing to add to the pile. That said, regular attendance is not necessary, and when I have been able to attend, I leave inspired thanks to the rich discourse and wealth of resources. Thanks to LLN, I learned of a literacy grant that brought significant financial resources to my district to support literacy instruction. There is power in connection, power in community.

As fortunate as we are to have access to this online community, there is no substitute for meeting in person. We are also excited about hosting some local in-person events where we can create community. We have ideas for events in Joseph, Newport, Southern Oregon, Seaside, and Portland. Our focus will be on hosting events where we can simply gather, chat, and get to know other educators in our communities.

Our first event will be October 15 from 4:30-5:30. OCTE will be hosting an event at Beach Books in Seaside. There will be snacks and beverages, and a chance to learn more about recently published children's literature. Attendees don't have to do a thing but show up, nosh, and talk about books. There isn't a presentation in the conventional sense, you don't need to do icebreakers, or post things in a parking lot. It's a chance for all educators in this region (it is not necessary to be an OCTE member) to join up and start building community. **Then, on October 23 we'll be at Maggie Mae's in Portland for a fun event. We will have an author talk with Leslie Barnard Booth.** Books will be available for purchase and signing by the author, along with light refreshments. We will keep you posted as more events are planned throughout the state. **Community is everything. It is the best way to keep us informed, supported, and safe.**

SAVE THE DATE!

Oregon Literacy Leaders' Network

The first meeting of the 25-26 school year is
Thursday, October 2 at 3:30 pm.

Click [here](#) to learn more about joining this amazing group of educators across agencies and organizations. All are welcome!



OREGON LITERACY LEADERS' NETWORK

The goal of the LLN is to build a diverse community of literacy practitioners working together to share inclusive literacy practices that align to the needs of all students.

**First Thursday of every month,
3:30 online**

OCTE Members Present Professional Development

Delana Heidrich, OCTE Board of Directors

Educators nationwide enjoy the excitement of new beginnings at the start of each school year. Two OCTE members were honored to be part of Klamath County School District's annual fresh start as presenters at the district's August 26 inservice. Board member Delana Heidrich presented a workshop and co-led an ELA PLC gathering. Jay Schroder, recipient of OCTE's 2021 Oregon Excellence Award, powered through the offering of six sessions.

In her workshop, "Make Space for Creativity," Delana presented practical ideas for incorporating creative activities into middle and high school classes. Ideas explored were primarily based on lessons from the MakeSPACE professional development program. One fun metaphorical thinking activity invites students to select picture cards to represent character, theme, storyline and tone of a text. With tableaux, students review the plotline of a literary reading through group freeze frame poses. **You can learn more about the exceptional work of MakeSPACE at <https://www.makespaceproject.org/>.**

With her co-presenters, Delana encouraged Klamath County School District's ELA educators to partner on a shared unit of study. Partnerships will comprise ELA grade-level colleagues within and across buildings as well as teachers cooperating across grade levels and even across content areas. The year-long focus promises to yield deep reflection and learning as well as meaningful collaboration.

Jay's workshops were designed with the whole educator in mind. Participants in "Lead from Your Best Self: Support for Administrators and Educational Leaders" discussed the importance of reflection, home-work balance, and the development of "inspiring visions for themselves and their schools."

Jay's workshop titled "Teach, Lead, Educate, from Our Best Selves: Bringing Sanity and Sustainability to Education," introduced participants to the Teach from Your Best Self model, designed to help teachers "retain their spark, avoid burnout, and consistently bring their best over the course of a long, fulfilling career."

Jay works with Southern Oregon Regional Educator Network (SOREN) and serves as an affiliate faculty member at Southern Oregon University. **To learn more about the TFYBS philosophy, look for Jay's book *Teach From Your Best Self: A Guide to Thriving in the Classroom* or check out Jay's professional development opportunities, at the website *Teach from Your Best Self* (<https://www.teachfromyourbestself.org/teacher-centered-professional-development/>)**

Look for more OCTE members-led professional development opportunities throughout the state; or organize a gathering yourself, and tell us how it goes.

Strategy Spotlight: *Cycle Reading by Wade McJacobs*

Cycle Reading: Structured Re-Reading for Secondary Students to Improve Engagement

Research on the benefits of re-reading is quite compelling, but student engagement with reading a passage twice, ... not so much. We know from research and our own experience that reading twice helps with fluency and comprehension, so how can we convince students to use this well-proven strategy?

This article is a description of a particular type of re-reading that may improve student engagement and thus enhance comprehension. I refer to this strategy as Cycle Reading. It is one of the four components of the Read Through It Strategy and is more thoroughly discussed in my book *The Read Through It Strategy: Building Confidence First Then Comprehension in Secondary Struggling Readers*.

Cycle Reading Steps

Let's begin with a brief 5-step description of the strategy and a couple complications to keep it clear and effective.

1. Read a paragraph.
2. Read the paragraph again, "cycle back." Get clarification of troublesome words if needed.
3. Read the next paragraph.
4. Read the second paragraph a second time, "cycle back" just one paragraph.
5. Move on to the third paragraph and continue in this manner of cycling back just one paragraph with the third paragraph, and then the fourth, etc.

The first complication is that some passages are not written with uniform paragraphs. The important element is to read about 20-30 seconds of material before cycling back. It is, therefore, okay to read multiple short paragraphs, such as dialogs, or parts of long paragraphs. Short sections help to keep students engaged.

Continued next page

Strategy Spotlight: *Cycle Reading by Wade McJacobs (cont.)*

The second complication is what to do about difficult words and particularly proper nouns. Standard pre-reading activities, like vocabulary checks, are always appropriate, and I always allow students to make simple substitutions for proper nouns. For example, I would let them read “McJ” instead of my full last name.

Comprehension develops

Comprehension is not a singular event. Just like a painter adding strokes and shapes to a canvas, the author adds new phrases and sentences to create an image and develop a message. We respond with satisfaction of clarity as the pieces come together.

Having students read sections without interruption, allows their brains to use context effectively. Tiffany struggled with the word “companies,” so I instructed her to ‘read through it’ rather than ‘sound it out.’ When the word appeared a second time in the passage, she read it perfectly without any hesitation. Afterward, she looked me in the eye and said, “I got that word, didn’t I? My brain figured it out while I was reading.”

The mind cannot help but to seek understanding. Therefore, we must provide opportunity to let the mind do its natural work. If I had stopped Tiffany’s mind to focus on that single word, to “sound it out,” she may not have independently derived understanding from the context. Notably for Tiffany, was that she gained confidence from realizing the powers of her mind.

The first reading of a passage allows the student’s mind to use its natural tendency to strive for comprehension and to identify areas of struggle, but not necessarily to fix these struggle points. The second reading of the same paragraph then gives the mind the opportunity to use context to develop comprehension and sometimes to fix the struggle points.

For more information on Cycle Reading, click [here](#).

Wade McJacobs taught special education for 31 years in the Tigard-Tualatin School District and is the author of numerous articles and two books on the Read Through It Strategy: *The Read Through It Strategy: Building Confidence First Then Comprehension in Secondary Struggling Readers* and *Dare to Read: Improving Your Reading Speed and Skills*. He is the founder of Student Empowerment Group, LLC. Please contact Wade with stories and questions at wademcj@gmail.com.

Bookmarks



NCTE grant opportunity:

The Research Foundation Teacher Research Grant Program offers grants up to \$3,000 to support PreK-12 teacher-researchers.

From NCTE: "The Trustees of the NCTE Research Foundation seek proposals that reflect the diverse interests of our NCTE membership, including but not limited to proposals focusing on better education for underrepresented populations; equity pedagogies; curriculum changes; the effects these changes have on students, school policies, teaching methods, student interaction and learning, community literacy, home-school literacy relationships, after-school programs, student literacy practices in and out of school; and other relevant topics of study."

Click [here](#) for more information.



Explore the [Oregon Encyclopedia](#)!

Hispanic Heritage Month is from September 15-October 15, and there are a wealth of resources in the Oregon Encyclopedia about Latino communities and history in Oregon.

[This entry on the history of Latinos in Oregon](#) (starting in 1542) is a great place to start!

Call for submissions:

Chalkboard would like to publish you!

If you have lessons, strategies, or inspirations for the ELA classroom, please share them with us at chalkboard@octe.org.

We are open to articles in all areas, including Science of Reading, book reviews, and upcoming events! Submissions for the Winter issue are due on November 15th.

Follow us on Instagram
and Facebook [@octe.org](#)

