



In this issue:	President's Message By Stephanie Higgins, President
President's Message 1 Local Council News 2	<p>The look on the child's face as he peered excitedly from the car window was impossible to miss. Awash in the ambient glow of our community's drive-through holiday lights display, he was among the multitudes of visitors this season enjoying a decades-long tradition, made possible year after year by faithful volunteers. Our community learned that the lights will go dark permanently at the end of this year's display, citing a dwindling cache of volunteers to keep the program going. A familiar lament.</p>
Coordinator Reports: Children's Literature 6 Families and Reading 8 Research & Studies 9 Secondary Literacy 10 Secondary Literature 12 Special Edition 14	<p>As with so many other worthwhile efforts, the work of OSLA rests fully in the hands of its volunteers. With every conference, online engagement, board meeting, and program offering, I am at once both humbled by and impressed with the breadth of insight, commitment, and talent our members - all volunteers! - contribute to the advancement of literacy causes throughout Oregon and beyond. It is noble work, with far-reaching impact for the children and families we serve.</p> <p>We know that our OSLA members wear many hats. Lives are busy, discretionary time is precious. And yet! Look at the many things happening across the state! This issue of the ORacle is sure to inspire with the variety of opportunities made possible by its faithful volunteers. And whether you are the person supporting that work with your membership dues, taking a leadership role in your council or at the state level, or showing up anywhere in between, YOU are what keeps OSLA shining bright, year after year. Thank you.</p> <p>With gratitude, <i>Stephanie</i>, OSLA President </p>

Local Council News

Mid Valley Literacy Council

Submitted by Tonya Rosling, Mid Valley Literacy Council President

As I was decorating this December, I pulled out a collection of holiday books gathered from my children's younger years. How lovely it was to wax nostalgic over a time when my children fit snugly into my lap and I could read to them until my eyelids started to droop! Each year, I would add another book to the collection. Now that my children are teenagers the picture books serve more as decoration, but my friends and I at Mid Valley Literacy Council are finding ways to spread the love of literacy beyond our homes. Our council partnered with our local community center to donate books to children this December. We even found some time to celebrate all of our hard work over tacos and other treats! I hope you and yours are enjoying good food, good books and the good company of your local reading councils this season!



Local Council News

Mountain Valleys Reading Council

Submitted by Carol Lauritzen, MVRC Board Member

Mountain Valleys Council has had a fall bonanza of giving books away. Our first event was the La Grande Resource Fair, followed by the Festival of Trees and finally Santa Mall. In these three events, we gave away a total of about 1000 books. We were lucky to partner with others who are not members to make these events possible. We are appreciative of all the volunteers who helped hand out books. We were also able to provide books to the program, Shop with a Cop.

This fall we partnered with the housing authority to install a little library at one of the affordable housing apartment complexes. We bought a little library from the Little Free Library organization and provided the books. The housing authority installed it in front of the community building. Another complex is being constructed and in the spring we will partner with the housing authority so this complex will also have a little library.



Local Council News

Portland Reading Council

Submitted by Penny Plavala, PRC Board Member

Supporting Multilingual Learners

The Portland Reading Council is hosting a 3-session virtual series open to all Oregon educators: **Supporting Multilingual Learners**.

The sessions feature national literacy leaders sharing practical, research-based classroom strategies for K-12.

Our October session featured Pam Allyn, author of *Every Child a Super Reader: 7 Strengths for a Lifetime of Independence, Purpose, and Joy*.

• Feedback from Participants:

The session was very informative and helpful in bringing new strategies to better support our multilingual students.

Great reminders and insight as well as some great resources.

I appreciate the tips and techniques I can bring to my classroom tomorrow.

You are invited to attend our next two complimentary sessions from 4:15 – 5:30 pm via Zoom.

February 6th with author Jen Jump and April 16th with author Jim Cummins

Learn more and register:

<http://bit.ly/47QommA>



Authentic Opportunities to Build English Language Proficiency

Presented by: Jen Jump

Discover ways to engage multilingual learners in rich experiences that develop language skills in all four domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Session takeaways include:

- Explore ways to build context and understanding through rich text, visual, and audio experiences
- Learn strategies that will allow students ample opportunities to talk about what they are learning, building English language proficiency
- Identify scaffolds that support students right where they are



Multilingual Learners Thrive in Language-Friendly Schools: Instructional Strategies to Promote Literacy, Identity Affirmation, and Academic Success

Presented by: Jim Cummins

Jim will draw from the instructional innovations implemented by educators to highlight creative ways in which schools can support multilingual learners.

Session takeaways include:

- Learn practical ways to create language-friendly schools
- Discover strategies to promote students' academic potential
- Meet students' needs by combining research with educators' knowledge

Local Council News

Umpqua Literacy Council

Submitted by Gail Jackson-Francis, ULC President

The Umpqua Literacy Council is gearing up for the 2024 Celebration of Literacy in February 2024. The Roseburg Elks awarded ULC with a \$700 check for the purchase of books. We always like to honor Joy Malone who was president when we were chartered. This month of January 2024, we are sponsoring a Poster Contest where grades K–5 turn in posters for the theme, Magic in Books, where each grade level will win gift certificates from our local bookstore, Roseburg While Away, for 1st to 3rd place.

Our big event at the Wildlife Safari will be on February 17th , 2024 from 10-2. We have a Book Exchange through Umpqua Literacy Council along with animal encounters, face painting, a book walk, Japanese paper folding and more in the walking area & petting area of the Safari. We gave over 4500 books away last year at this event.

ULC keeps a Little Library filled with children's books and a few adult books too at Eastwood Park (near where Joy and I taught for many years). The OSLA gave Altrusa and ULC a \$100 community grant that supported the cost of five Little Libraries at 5 Roseburg Parks. We have found a partnership with Altrusa International of Roseburg that is very positive for both organizations. We love getting books into the hands of children!

ULC members are very active in the community. Luann Basque is active with Battle of the Books-T-shirt purchases and Nancy Anderson with the Sutherlin Library activities.

We purchased two sets of Patricia Gallagher books to send around to schools in Douglas County. We will be loaning one of the sets to a teacher in Coos Bay to send to her school classrooms.

Children's Literature

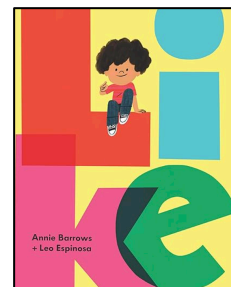
By Cara Miller and Christy Koegler

Cara Miller is the Library Media Technician at Bessie Coleman Elementary School in Corvallis, Oregon. Her love of literature was sparked young, as her mother, a teacher and later principal, shared with her a passion for reading. Cara earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Literature from CSU Sacramento, and has spent the years since working for book stores, libraries, and schools. She now spends her free time reading, hiking, and enjoying time with her husband and three children.

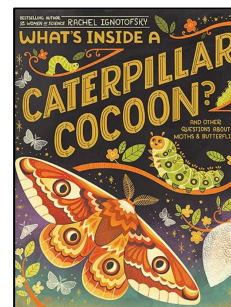
Christy Koegler is the Library Media Technician at Letitia Carson Elementary School in Corvallis, Oregon. Christy earned her B.S. in Human Development from OSU and her teaching licensure from WOU. A former elementary teacher, she loves sharing read-alouds with students in the library and getting kids excited about books. In her spare time she hikes, knits, bakes, gardens and spends time with her husband and three girls.

In this edition of the Children's Literature Connection, I have the honor of introducing you to an exceptional colleague of mine. Christy Koegler is helping co-write this article while I am in a particularly busy season of life. Her knowledge and understanding of children's books is amazing, and I am so grateful for her input. I hope you find our recommendations exciting and a great jumping-off point as we start the new calendar year!

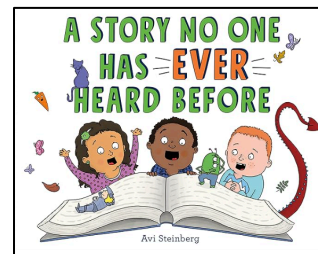
In ***Like*** by Annie Barrows, illustrated by Leo Espinosa (*Chronicle Books*), cute, brightly-colored illustrations and a main character speaking directly to the reader compare humans to a tin can, a swimming pool, a mushroom, an excavator, and a hyena, exploring the ways we are similar to and different from these objects. The text then compares humans to other humans, concluding that even though other people are not exactly like us, we are more alike than we are different. Perfect for K-2, this book helps students build empathy toward others. I see a writing assignment coming after reading this book...what other comparisons can students make between living and non-living things?



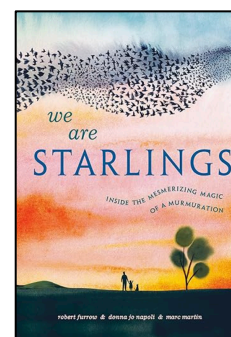
In case you missed her first book, *What's Inside a Flower*, now is the time to really take notice of Rachel Ignotofsky. Her new book, ***What's Inside a Caterpillar Cocoon? And Other Questions About Moths and Butterflies*** (*Crown Books for Young Readers*) is a phenomenal follow up to her previous work. Chock full of beautiful and engaging illustrations and information concerning the similarities and differences between moths and butterflies, this book is sure to delight. It would be an excellent pairing with a study of life cycles. Her next book in the series, *What's Inside a Bird's Nest* will be released in March.



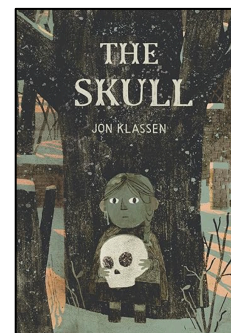
If you are looking for a book to introduce story structure, then look no further than ***A Story No One Has Ever Heard Before*** by Avi Steinberg (*Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux*). This lively picture book explains how a story is put together. From character creation to finding a problem (and having the problem get worse) to a solid conclusion, this book walks the reader through the writing process, with some funny ideas along the way. The reader is invited to create a character (such as a talking carrot, an alien who needs a vacation, or a knight in the family business) and then craft a story around them. This book would be an enjoyable introduction to story elements or fictional writing, and is highly interactive.



We Are Starlings: Inside the Mesmerizing Magic of a Murmuration by Robert Furrow and Donna Jo Napoli, illustrated by Marc Martin (*Random House Studio*) is an immersive look at an interesting natural occurrence. Many of us have witnessed the large groups of birds where the individuals work together as a group, creating fascinating and undulating shapes as they fly. ***We Are Starlings*** elicits a feeling of being a part of this murmuration, through both its vibrant, textured watercolors, and its simple but descriptive language. While more centered on story and experience than a book of facts, this book will ignite curiosity in readers, and invite them to learn even more about starlings, or even birds in general. The book also includes back matter with some great information about starlings.



Jon Klassen's books never disappoint. From the amazing artwork to the well-told stories, with a touch of dark humor, they are well loved. ***The Skull*** by Jon Klassen (*Candlewick Press*) differs a little from most of his other picture books in that it is 105 pages divided into five sections and is the perfect level for students who are beginning to read chapter books. The text is simple, and it is just the right amount of scary. *The Skull* is Klassen's version of a Tyrolean folk tale, which he explains in the back matter. I read this aloud to 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade classes during their library time and they all listened with rapt attention and were very impressed when I told them I had just read them 105 pages. (I then had to go purchase several more copies because so many students wanted to check it out immediately. There are currently 14 students in the hold queue for this!) A must-have for your classroom library, *The Skull* would also make a great lower level lit circle book and a good book to use as part of a unit on folk and fairy tales.



Soren's Seventh Song by Dave Eggers, illustrated by Mark Hoffmann (*Cameron Kids*), is an entertaining story of perseverance and encouragement. Soren is a humpback whale who, like others his age, thinks the songs of the older generation are boring. He thus sets out to create his own type of whalesong. However, his attempts are not simply unpleasant, they are downright horrible. But after repeated encouragement from his friend, Soren revises his work, and on the seventh time, creates something great. Filled with laugh-out-loud moments, this book will make an excellent read aloud.



"We come from place, language, and spirit. And each of us comes from story." In a line of thinking similar to ***Like*** (reviewed above) but better-suited for 3rd through 5th graders, ***Where We Come From*** by Diane Wilson, Sun Yung Shin, Shannon Gibney, and John Coy, Illustrated by Dion MBD (*Carolrhoda Books*) explores the origins of humans, our differences, and our similarities. Four authors contributed to this book, and they each come from different backgrounds- Native American, Korean, African/Irish, and Irish/Scottish. The book begins with "We come from stardust..." and moves on to single-celled organisms, plants and animals, and finally humans spreading out all over the world. Filled with poetic text and gorgeous illustrations, the pages alternate between the different authors and their heritages. An extensive back matter includes further explanation of the scientific and historical topics covered on each page. This book could be used as a way to get students thinking about the heritage, ancestry, history, and culture that is a part of them today.



We hope these books inspire you and spark your creativity! Happy New Year!

Families and Reading

By Maika Yeigh

Maika Yeigh is an Associate Professor at Lewis and Clark College, Graduate School of Education and Counseling.

Building Literacy in the Kitchen

Spending time with your children in the kitchen is a great opportunity to build literacy skills and strengthen family relationships. And, parents and caregivers can get the bonus of prepping dinner in the meantime! Not only do teens and younger kids love to help, but engaging in a neutral task is one way to get kids talking. Talking supports literacy in a variety of ways, including building background knowledge, vocabulary, and storytelling. Here are a few ways to support literacy while working in the kitchen:

Babies: There are plenty of opportunities to develop language and literacy with young children. Set up the baby in a bouncy-chair or a toddler in an exer-saucer while you work nearby. A few simple ways to support early-reading is to play with *onset* (the first consonant/s of a word) and the *rime* (the first vowel plus everything after). For example, see how many words—real or made up—you can make by changing the onset of a word (e.g.: pan, ran, can, tan) or the rime (e.g.: pan, pun, pip, pose). Or, while you chop vegetables, make up some simple songs; singing is an easy way to build literacy skills. And, any activity can involve a song when it comes to little ones – you can sing about chopping vegetables, washing dishes, or measuring ingredients.

Young children: Children love to help out in the kitchen. Find a few kitchen activities they enjoy doing. For example, maybe your child enjoys peeling a cucumber while you chop the onion. During this neutral time, you're talking about the day—sharing something you read or heard and then asking for their opinion. You can also use this time for storytelling; tell them about your parents or tell them a story about themselves that they may not remember. Ask them to tell you something, too. Every time you have a positive conversation while sharing an activity, you are building your relationship and also navigating language together.

Teen: The key to working in the kitchen with teens is truly finding *neutral* topics in which to engage. “How was your day?” will typically be met with “fine” ... and the conversation lags. Again, you can talk about things you read and heard and ask for their thoughts. But you can also support their interests. Consider encouraging kids to cook something that they loved at a local restaurant or food cart. Together, figure out the ingredients and find a recipe. You can assist as their “sous chef” (chopping, washing pans, etc.) which provides an excuse to be in the kitchen while they lead the cooking. Meanwhile, you can talk about the food and where it was from (e.g.: My daughter loved tofu, which led us to learn more about soy production and products) or you might casually end up talking about their day, their relationships with others, and things on their mind. While the meal itself may not be a success, the experience can build background knowledge about all kinds of topics, increase their confidence, and reinforce your relationship. Plus, eventually your child might have a “signature” dish that they love to make.

When families and caregivers spend time with their children, it is always an opportunity to support literacy *and* relationships. The key is to turn off the television and put away the electronics, and instead focus on oral language development and strengthen your relationship with your kids. Remember, they want to spend time with you – even if they don’t always act like they do!

Research and Studies

By Carol Lauritzen

Eastern Oregon University, College of Education, Emerita

Print or Screen, First Language or Acquired Language

This column will feature one systematic review of research and one meta-analysis. (A note of interest to word-lovers is that the term meta-analysis was first used in 1976.) What is the difference? A review of research entails finding all (or as much as possible) of the research done on a particular question. The reviewers draw conclusions based on the patterns that are found in the studies. On the other hand, a meta-analysis is a statistical analysis that combines separate experiments often done by various researchers. The meta-analysis pools the data from these separate experiments to test the results. A meta-analysis can be performed when there are several studies considering the same research question. Since all findings are subject to error, a meta-analysis can reduce the error by having a more robust sample. The findings of a meta-analysis are generally more valid than any of the individual studies. Thus, practitioners can be more confident that the findings are useful to them in educational implementation.

The Center of Excellence for Development Impact and Learning recently conducted [a systematic review](#)¹ examining the effects of native language-based education policies and Language of Instruction transition policies on students' literacy and multilingual literacy skill development. Based on 45 high quality studies, they found compelling evidence that teaching children in their native language first has many benefits. Specifically, children had higher reading scores both in their first language and later in reading in their acquired language. The authors recommended investment in teaching students in their native language. They also encouraged studies to determine how and why native-language programs impact literacy learning positively.

The meta-analysis² investigated whether readers understand text better on handheld devices or on paper. Previous meta-analyses found "screen inferiority effect" in terms of comprehension of text. However, most of those studies had compared reading on a computer screen to reading on paper. Currently reading on screen is more likely to be on tablets which are more similar to reading on paper. This current meta-analysis sought to determine if the "screen inferiority effect" applied to tablets, as it does to reading on computer screens. Results consistently showed a significant small size effect favoring print text comprehension. The authors discuss the need to continue fostering print reading in schools while developing effective ways to incorporate handheld devices for reading purposes.

The take-aways from these studies are: learning to read in one's native language has superior results both in initial instruction and in literacy learning in an acquired language; and, reading in print yields higher comprehension than reading on a screen, including handheld devices.

References

¹Nakamura, P. et al., 2023. Language of instruction in schools in LMICs: A systematic review | CEDIL Evidence Brief 11, Centre of Excellence for Development Impact and Learning (CEDIL). United Kingdom. Retrieved from <https://policycommons.net/artifacts/3532290/cedil-evidence-brief-11/4333420/> on 16 Dec 2023. CID: 20.500.12592/13w5dp.

²Salmerón, L., Altamura, L., Delgado, P., Karagiorgi, A., & Vargas, C. (2023). Reading comprehension on handheld devices versus on paper: A narrative review and meta-analysis of the medium effect and its moderators. *Journal of Educational Psychology*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000830>

Secondary Literacy

By Wade McJacobs

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. Wade lives in an empty nest with his wife in Beaverton. He can be reached at wademcj@gmail.com. Next issue: "Mindful Reading."

Mindful Reading

Have you ever read a passage and come to the end wondering, "What did I just read?" Sighing with exasperation, you return to the top of the passage and begin again. This phenomenon is surprisingly common especially for struggling readers. When reading is experienced as a chore, it is easy to forget that there may be exciting ideas inside the words.

Miguel was a student who was often called on to read aloud because he could do so very proficiently. Yet, when asked what he understood of what he read, he would draw a blank. In order to comprehend his reading, he had to read the passage a second time and at two-thirds the pace. Because of this frustration and the accompanying doubt of his abilities, he never considered college as an option. He simply did not trust his skills.

Mind as an additional source

Karen was reading aloud a passage and came across the word "little" in the text. She read, "small." Unaware she made this error, I wondered whether this is truly a mistake. After all, her comprehension was accurate.

More significantly, I became aware that Karen's mind was creating an additional source of information that helped her with comprehension. We read words and then create images that are associated with those words. As we read more words, the images change. The author fills in context with additional words, and we respond by painting more details in our mind.

For example, when we read "street" in a passage, we may imagine a busy downtown street in a big city. If the author, however, adds that someone waves from behind a white picket fence then our image shifts to the suburbs or a small town. The shift occurs so rapidly that we may not even notice.

Our mind creates a dynamic picture of the author's message, and this picture becomes a source of information to assist with comprehension as we read. Because of the power of our mind, we easily adjust to changes and additions the author presents as the passage continues.

Learning to read from the mind and not just the text

After my experience with Karen's comprehension of smallness, teaching students to be aware of this image-making capacity of their brains became the focus of my teaching. I taught them to focus on their mind images in addition to the words in the text. Be mindful of their reading. They had to change habits of how they worked with the words in the text.

As students made this change in habit, their performance improved and their confidence grew. Miguel initially had to slow to 90 words per minute (wpm) in order to comprehend the words that he was capable of reading aloud at 125 wpm. After 18 months of practice with a new focus on his mind-images, his reading improved to 160 wpm with no loss in comprehension. He applied to college before he graduated, a dream he had rejected because of his frustration with reading.

Karen went from 90 wpm with 4th grade level material to 125 wpm with 8th grade material. Karen's teachers saw improved performance in quality and quantity in all of her classes. Just before she graduated, Karen, a new mom, came to me and declared with new confidence, "My son will be a reader!" She had never before felt that academic prowess was a gift she would give to her own children.

Idea Units allow the mind to open to itself

Idea Units are portions of sentences that contain complete ideas or images that are accessible to the mind AND relevant to the author's intent. Let me repeat that sentence isolating each Idea Unit.

Idea Units are portions of sentences [pause] that contain complete ideas or images [pause] that are accessible to the mind [pause] AND relevant to the author's intent.

The English language, fortunately for us who struggle with reading, has natural breaking points in the sentences. If you were to read any English sentence aloud, you would find natural breaks that occur as we read. When reading aloud, we use these breaks to take in or release a breath. So, our breath becomes a tool for awareness of the ideas being created in our minds.

Exaggerating these pause points allows our mind-image to develop a bit more before we move on to the next component of the image, the next Idea Unit. Disciplining our mind to focus on Idea Units provides access to the larger ideas that develop as the sentence progresses.

Instead of getting to the end of the passage and realizing that we understand little of the author's intent, we can absorb ideas in component parts. We may miss some components if the ideas are complex, but we are in a better position to find what we missed. Because we understand more, we are more likely to stay with the passage and enjoy the process.

What now?

We can teach students to be mindful of Idea Units. Tim Rasinski of Kent State University says comprehension comes at the phrase level and not the word or full sentence level of our reading. Developing awareness of Idea Units is a device for students to be alert to the ideas within a sentence one component at a time. By briefly pausing after each Idea Unit, the mind takes time to absorb each component idea. Students can become aware of where they began to lose the larger concept because they have acquired a collection of the concept's component parts. By practicing this pausing technique, comprehension improves. As their reading skills improve they will naturally abandon the exaggerated pausing strategy unless it is needed for complex concepts.

Their brains are their most powerful tools, so we should teach to read their mind-images. The practice of pausing after Idea Units allows them access to their mind-images as they develop. Learning this powerful tool takes practice. It involves changing habits that allow readers more access to written ideas.

Secondary Literature

By Kacy Smith Paterson

Kacy Smith Paterson teaches ninth and tenth grade language arts at Southridge High School in Beaverton, Oregon. She reads a lot, but still has towering TBR piles everywhere.

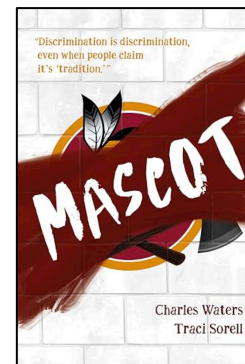
Winter has approached, bringing truly perfect weather for sitting on the couch and reading. Here are some YA books worth your time and some space in your classroom libraries.

Mascot by Charles Waters and Traci Sorell

5th/6th grade and up

Realistic Fiction/Novel in Verse

“Discrimination is discrimination, even when people claim it’s tradition.” Told from multiple points of view, students (and their teacher) grapple with the truths and tradition of their Native American mascot. While most students and family support the “Rye Braves,” new student Callie is shocked at the chants and stereotypical appropriations of feathers and such at games. Callie’s outspoken criticism leads to a class project investigating both sides of the controversy. Some opinions change, some friendships dissolve, and much is learned.

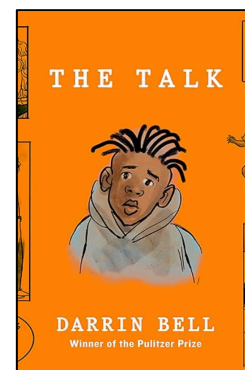


The Talk by Darrin Bell

6th grade and up

Graphic Novel/Memoir/Global Issues

This book belongs in so many classrooms. Darrin Bell, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Editorial Cartooning, tells the story of his life from the moment his mother won’t allow him to have a water gun to the moment he as a father must have the same talk with his son. *The Talk* is about racism, racist prescriptions and the dangers of the world for Black children. In between these talks, we watch Darrin grow from a socially aware child to a teenager to a political cartoonist, husband and father. Younger students will appreciate the graphics and story, and older students will recognize the historical context of the times and Bell’s editorial cartoons.

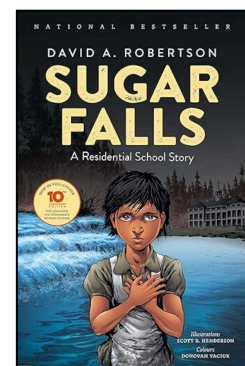


Sugar Falls: A Residential School Story written by David Robertson, illustrated by Scott B. Henderson and Donovan Yaciuk

7th grade and up

Graphic Novel/Memoir

This is the story of Cross Lake First Nation Elder Betsy Ross. At age eight, she was taken away from her family and put in a residential school. Sadly, and typical of residential schools, abuse, humiliation and dehumanization follow. Betsy struggles to survive and make her way home. While parts of this are difficult to read, there is much personal strength and resilience. This is a short and accessible read, and can be used to open discussion or learning of residential schools and other topics you may be covering with Tribal History/Shared History (SB 13).

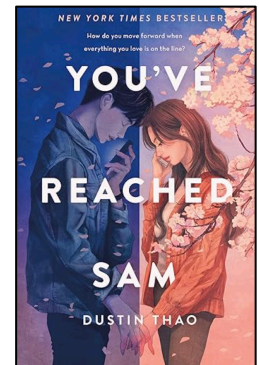


You've Reached Sam by Dustin Thao

7th grade and up

Romance/Paranormal

This is a bittersweet story of grief, love, and letting go. Julie and Sam have a beautiful life planned out- until Sam dies unexpectedly. Julie is overwhelmed with grief and withdraws from her family and friends. One day, missing Sam so much, she calls his phone to hear his voicemail message. Sam answers. They have a tenuous and temporary connection, which supports Julie but also keeps her withdrawn from real life. Julie needs to decide between her past with Sam and a future without him. A story that your romance fans-or readers who may want something a little different-will enjoy.

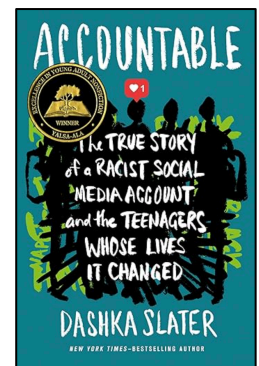


Accountable by Dashka Slater

7th grade and up

Nonfiction

Dashka Slater (*The 57 Bus*) returns with another true story about teens, their lives, their choices, and the personal and community impact of these choices. In *Accountable*, a student in a small California town starts an Instagram account with memes and posts about his classmates. He, and some of his close friends, find them funny and edgy. The students in the memes and others find them racist. As the account goes viral, students, teachers, and parents try to make things right- often not succeeding. This is a chilling and engaging read about social media and teenagers- very timely.

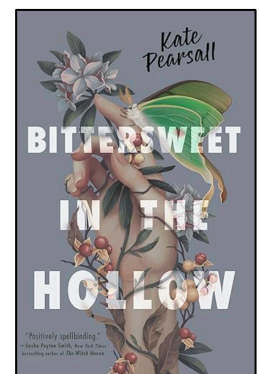


Bittersweet in the Hollow by Kate Pearsall

8th grade and up

Mystery/Paranormal

A small Appalachian town, a mystery, paranormal rumors, and family of magical women (who also own a diner)- what's not to love? Linden James, like her sisters, has a special ability. Linden, like her sisters, runs a small diner and make herbal remedies for neighbors- some of whom are grateful, others who call her a witch -or worse. Linden disappeared the previous summer, but has no memory of it. When her friend goes missing exactly one year afterward, she knows she needs to learn the truth. Family secrets and maybe a little bit of romance will be uncovered.



The Percy Jackson series has been popular again with the television reboot, so time to dust those books off! Other books that are not YA but my older students have enjoyed (and you may as well): *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus, *Pageboy* by Elliot Page, and *I'm Glad My Mom Died* by Jennette McCurdy.

Special Edition Article

By Ulrich H. (Rick) Hardt

*Professor of Reading at Portland State University, Ulrich H. Hardt, was IRA State Coordinator in 1979-85, while also serving as President of the Oregon Council of Teachers of English in 1981-86. In recognition of his work as IRA State Coordinator, ORA named its Service Excellence award the **Ulrich H. Hardt Award**.*



Regional Conference Pay Day

In a moment of weakness, when I was president of the Portland IRA Council in 1978, I agreed to serve as one of the coordinators of the Sixth Far West Regional IRA Conference in Portland, and, as it turned out, it was one of the most gratifying professional decisions I ever made. How so, you wonder.

While that conference was not particularly well organized, it whet my appetite to what regional conferences in the Northwest could be like and set me on the path to *chairing* two for IRA (plus seven for NCTE between 1980-2014). Both of the IRA regional conferences (1982 and 1985) set IRA conference attendance records of 2,500 and 3,300, and the Portland Chamber of Commerce and Visitors' Bureau gave us an award for bringing the largest conference to the city in 1985.

First Things First

To pull off a conference of this size took planning—lots of early planning. First order of business was to coordinate with IRA's master schedule and get their approval, after which dates and a venue could be identified. The fact that I was the IRA Coordinator in 1979-85 while concurrently serving as president of the Oregon Council of Teachers of English all those years made the ORA/OCTE partnership absolutely natural. Bringing in the Oregon Parent-Teacher Association and the National Elementary Principals' Association (Zone 9) was very beneficial for the Eighth Far West Regional in Portland (April 1-3, 1982), and I began in the spring of 1980 with recruiting nine coordinators for the various areas of responsibility.

Organizational Structure

Eventually, 74 people served on these seven committees:

- **Registration** – 11 people, co-chaired by Barbara Rommel and Judy Rumgay, mostly from the David Douglas School District
- **Special Services*** -- 10 people, chaired by Kay Struckman, from Parkrose School District, with help from Centennial, Estacada, and Hillsboro
- **Program Support** – 8 people, chaired by Judy Hyde with teachers from Portland and Beaverton School Districts, providing all needed AV and printing
- **Food and Meal Functions****-- 7 people, chaired by Bettianne Goetz and Reynolds School District folks
- **Exhibits** – coordinated by Marcia Schreiber, IRA Headquarters
- **Program** – 9 people, chaired by Ulrich Hardt, with 8 from cooperating organizations
- **Finance** – chaired by Colin Dunkeld (PSU), with all Coordinators as members
- **Publicity** – 30 people, co-chaired by Robert Hamm (West Linn School District) and Zola Dunbar (PSU & Beaverton School District)

*Among the responsibilities of the Special Services Committee was identifying 40 teachers, schools, and clinics in the Metro area that had noteworthy reading/language arts programs at K-12 levels for Thursday morning site visits. This committee also arranged for a one-half day "fire mountain" excursion, i.e., a tour to the at-that-time world-famous Mt. St. Helens.

**The Meal Function Committee also arranged for a popular pub crawl, hitting some of the hot spots in downtown Portland on Thursday night.

How to Ensure Success

I maintain that getting lots of publicity out early and repeatedly is the key to a successful convention, hence our committee of 30 people, with representatives from many school districts and the participating organizations. Consider: this was the era before digital publicity was available, so people only found out about conferences through announcements in newsletters and journals, but mostly through direct and repeated mailings of publicity flyers. For this 1982 conference, we put together a mailing list of 76,000 labels, in which the Publicity Committee attached three flyers to every one of them. These labeling parties occupied three Saturdays.

How Does Oregon Do It?

People have asked how regional conferences in Oregon consistently presented such variable and amazing programs. Here is our secret:

We started our planning early, like two years before the event. We identified our program strands and asked the co-sponsoring organizations to recruit their best speakers. However, a large number of the speakers—and certainly all of the keynote speakers—I had already scouted out and recruited while attending two years of national and regional IRA and NCTE conventions where I selected the best of the best. In this case, they came from 18 states plus from Canada and a wildly popular keynoter from Cambridge, England (Tony Adams), with whom I taught during my sabbatical at Cambridge in 1982.

Other keynoters were selected because they were the authority in a particular program area. Thus, Charlotte Huck (The Ohio State University) and Pat Koppman (future IRA President) were chosen for the Parents and Reading and Early Childhood Education strand; Hal Herber was the Reading in the Content Areas expert; and Jack Cassidy (IRA Vice President) addressed Classroom Reading Programs and the Role of Administrators in Reading.

Conferences in Oregon certainly always included popular authors who were in the headlines at the moment with their books. In 1982, we featured Paula Danziger whose *The Cat Ate My Gymsuit* and *There's a Bat in Bunk Five* were chart-topping the IRA-CBC Children's Choice list. The title of her speech was, "If I Weren't a Writer, I'd Be a Tapdancer."

Just for fun, we had Dutch mime artist Francisco Reynders as "mute" keynoter during Friday night's banquet. Reynders, a student of the world-renowned Marcel Marceau and the creator of the Oregon Mime Theater, had the audience riveted with his wordless messages.

The Program by Numbers

We had 256 speakers from 18 states, plus from Canada and the United Kingdom. They were educators from all grade levels, with 66% women and 34% men. Their presentations were intended for the following grade levels:

PK-3	- 11%
1-6	- 26%
6-8	- 24%
9-12	- 15%
General	- 24%

The eight conference strands included:

- Parents and Reading and Early Childhood Education
- The Role of Administrators in Reading
- Reading and the Exceptional Learner
- Content-area Reading
- Classroom Reading Programs

To add to the professional development opportunities, we identified 40 schools and reading clinics in the Portland metro area which had successful and somehow unique programs that agreed to have site visits on Thursday morning, before the official start of the conference.

Individual Hosts

Another trick to boosting attendance was the use of individual hosts for each of the conference presentations, in our case that was for 256 sessions. The secret is to select influential people for this—administrators and other leaders in school districts and organizations—who will publicize (and often even pay for) this opportunity for professional development among their staffs, simply because they can say that they are a part of the program.

Unforgettables

Among many unforgettables from this 1982 regional conference, here are a couple:

- Getting a phone call in my hotel room shortly after midnight on Thursday from Hal Herber, calling from New York to report that he was stuck at the airport in snow and ice and would not be able to deliver his keynote at 8:30 a.m. What to do? Herber's presentation on the importance of teaching reading across the content area had been highly touted and anticipated, and it had attracted a good portion of the attendees who all wanted to learn from the guru on this important topic. At 7:00 a.m., I quickly recruited Carrol Tama from PSU (one of Herber's students) and Ninette Florence from ODE, who, with me, each took a third of the people assembled for the keynote to three large separate rooms for smaller presentations on the topic.
- The second unforgettable is a happier one. It is the amazement on Tony Adams' face when he walked into a packed ballroom at the Hilton for his keynote address on Saturday morning at 8:15. "No teachers in England would voluntarily show up for anything like this on a weekend, and at this hour!" he marveled, and delivered an inspiring speech on recent developments in the teaching of reading in the UK.

Exhibits, Ads, and Profits

Oh, it might be of interest that we had 104 booths in the Exhibit Hall at the Marriott—a reality that we will never see again, with the many mergers of the textbook companies since that time. A few companies bought two booths, with Holt buying three, and Houghton Mifflin four booths.

We also had Alphabet Tiles, Made in Oregon, and the Diamond Nut Company of California booths, giving away free samples, and the Marriott sold snacks all day in the far corner of the Exhibit Hall, ensuring that the exhibits would have traffic all day long.

The conference program carried paid ads of textbook publishers and popular Portland restaurants, such as Jake's, McCormick & Schmick's, Hunan, Uncle Chen, and Horst Mager's specialty restaurants, Der Rheinlaender, Couch St. Fish House, and Tivoli Garden.

Is it a wonder, then, that after paying for all the expenses and the profit-sharing with the co-sponsoring organizations, including IRA, the ORA treasury was enriched by more than \$57,000?

Postscript

With the success of this Eighth Far West Regional and all the enthusiasm it had generated among the workers, IRA/ORA almost immediately put in a request for the 11th Far West Conference on March 7-9, 1985, which attracted 3,300 educators to hear 282 speakers, including from Israel, Turkey, and Palestine, and these knock-out-of-the-park keynoters:

- Marie M. Clay, New Zealand, Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire and renowned Whole Language and Reading Recovery expert
- Judith Thelen, IRA President
- Pat Koppman, IRA Past President
- John Nance, Journalist and author of *The Gentle Tasaday* fame
- John Manning, IRA Vice President
- Madeline Hunter, UCLA, of the Instructional-Theory-into-Practice teaching model, which was implemented in thousands of schools throughout the U.S. during the last quarter of the 20th century.

It is small wonder that membership in the International Reading Association in Oregon increased by 245% in 1985. Following our success, I issued a challenge to all other regional IRA conferences to best our record.

Here is how the Executive Director of IRA, Dr. Ron Mitchell, responded on April 26:

Dear Rick:

Thank you very much for your recent correspondence. I just want to tell you that I will pass along your challenge to the other regional conferences.... You are easily ahead of any other conference—state, regional or international – in terms of the number of members you signed up with the exception, of course, of the annual convention. However, while we may take in more memberships at the annual convention, we do have around 13,000 registrants; therefore, **I am sure our percentage of memberships to registrations is not nearly as high as yours.**

I want to thank you again for doing such a fine job with the 11th Far West Regional Conference and look forward to seeing you at the convention in New Orleans.

As far as I know, Oregon's challenge of 39 years ago has never been met by any other IRA/ILA councils anywhere in the world. Not unrelated, the Oregon State Literacy Association was the first to receive IRA's State Service Award in 1985, newly created to acknowledge state affiliates' achievements.

Today is a new era, and leaders can learn from the past while adapting to new realities. The camaraderie of a group of professionals working together on a shared goal is very satisfying and rewarding. Here's to the future!

2023-2024 OSLA Local Council Community Service Grants for \$100 are available!-

By Debra Sahleen, Community Service Grant Coordinator.

OSLA Community Service Grant Details - Our Mission

The mission of the Oregon State Literacy Association (OSLA) is to be a driving force for the development of literacy in our schools and communities and to foster a lifelong love of reading.

Community Service Grant Criteria

This grant is available to local councils - **not** individual members. If you are looking for an individual special project grant, please go to OSLA's home page at oregonread.org and click on the tab labeled Projects and Grants.

Overview and Guidelines

*Eligible projects must have an impact that extends beyond the school walls.

*Grant winners will be asked to submit an article for the ORacle Newsletter and share their project at the OSLA Leadership event in August 2024.

*Applications are accepted throughout the school year until April 15th.

*OSLA serves educators, communities, and learners of all ages by supporting researched-based literacy development that prioritizes equitable access, honors and celebrates diversity, and promotes social justice.

Previous Projects Awarded Grants

-Summer Reading Programs

-Books on the Bus

-Baskets of Books at local restaurants

-Little Library at Eastwood Park in Roseburg, Oregon awarded to the Umpqua Council

-Little Library in the Forest Grove area awarded to the Vineyard Valley Council

OSLA Community Service Grant Application Process

1. Go to the OSLA home page (oregonread.org), click on the Projects and Grants tab

2. Click on the first item called Community Service Grants

3. Go to the bottom of the page and click on the "Complete the Community Service Grant Application". Here is the link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc2NxAoZgzYt3pl4Ec-Ea6nKVza_lp0UXPcwIETL69KX9ql_A/viewform

4. Once the application (form) has been completed it will automatically be sent to the Community Service Grant Coordinator (Debra Sahleen) where it will be reviewed and processed. Each local council will be notified once a grant application has been approved.

5. If you have any questions, concerns, or just want to have a conversation about your local council's ideas for a \$100 Community Service Grant, please reach out. It is an honor to serve as your new Community Service Grant Coordinator. Many thanks to Beth LaForce who is retiring from this position. It is an honor to follow in her footsteps!

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