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**Chalkboard** is the newsletter of the Oregon Council of Teachers of English, an organization that has existed for 100 years to support teachers of English and the language arts in Oregon elementary and secondary schools, community colleges and universities.

**Chalkboard** is our way of keeping our many members and friends informed about OCTE activities, programs of the National Council of Teachers of English, conferences and learning opportunities for students, research tidbits, book recommendations, and more.

**Chalkboard** is a member of the NCTE Information Exchange.

For inquiries, please contact:

**OCTE**  
P.O. Box 9126  
Portland, OR 97207-9126

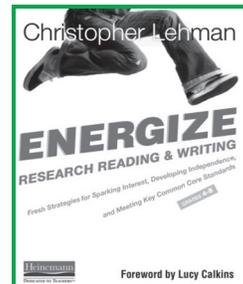
Editor:  
**Peter Thacker**  
thacker@up.edu

# Chalkboard

WWW.OCTE.ORG

PETER THACKER, EDITOR

## BOOK REVIEW



### Review of *Energize Research Reading & Writing: Fresh Strategies to Spark Interest, Develop Independence and Meet Key Common Core Standards*

by Christopher Lehman

Check out this irresistible, go-to text for teaching research and inquiry. If you know Chris Lehman's work, you probably already own this indispensable resource, dog-eared, riddled with post-its, and scribbled all over. You may have recited it to colleagues at lunch, copying pages as mailbox gifts. If not, get thee to Amazon. Don't miss this treasure of insights, strategies and anecdotes from one of the most informed, inspiring teaching voices of the day.

Are you clamoring to guide students effectively in independent research and inquiry? Lehman offers wisdom and wit with the nuts and bolts needed to launch a vibrant, vigorous literacy program, in any subject area. No cookie-cutter templates, only strategies to coach students to read for information, take useful notes, write for understanding, and effectively cite others' voices. Lehman differentiates for emergent and experienced student researchers alike. *Energize Research Reading & Writing* is the joyful, easy-to-navigate 146 pages summer read to inspire you.

Reviewed by Shelly Buchanan,  
Librarian & Instructional Coordinator, West Linn/Wilsonville School District

## GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Teachers are invited to apply for an OCTE grant to fund projects that assist them in the classroom. Grants of \$250–500 are available to develop curriculum, purchase materials, or for other uses that enhance instruction in language arts/literacy.

Deadline for submitting grant proposals:  
**November 1**

For details, see:  
<http://www.octe.org/grant-opportunities.html>



## Editor's Letter

I am very excited by this newsletter. We have winning poems from two elementary students (I love both!). Three teachers comment on how they are using what they learned in workshops at our NW NCTE Regional Conference. Shelly Buchanan introduces us to a professional book for helping us create inquiry-based classrooms, and Nicole Dalton clarifies how ODE plans to implement CCSS to good effect. I just returned from a conference in which Kim Patterson, ODE's Director for Educator

Effectiveness, said the department is here to be a support, not a compliance monitor. Read Nicole's words. CCSS are guidelines, and we in Oregon, through a dialogue in which classroom teachers have a big part, are creating a living, flexible, doable set of standards. Finally, don't skip our fall conference announcement. Send in proposals so we can learn from you, and come to Wilsonville to pick up stellar ideas from others.

With pleasure in our work together,  
Peter



# NW REGIONAL NCTE CONFERENCE REVIEWS

Though I have only been teaching for several years, I have spent the last three at a public charter school hugely supportive of its teachers seeking professional development opportunities. I have attended conferences, in-services, and workshops on every topic from math to behavioral aggression to classroom iPad use in Vermont, Seattle, even McMenemy's Kennedy School. The NW Regional NCTE Conference was by far the best. Never before have I attended a conference where every single session was

unique, fascinating, and easily replicable in my classroom. Never before have I attended a conference where the keynote speakers inspired me to take three pages of notes. Never before have I spent all weekend working and been more excited for the coming Monday.



In Renee and Dyan Watson's "Voices Rising: Using Poetry and Performance to Speak Out against Injustice," I learned how to use epigraph poems as a response to injustices in our societies and schools. I also got some great strategies to help students blend their individual poems into group poems. I used the lesson almost verbatim with my 7th graders, and they loved it. It was a welcome reprieve from the familiar solitary poetry, and opened eyes to some of the struggles that students "just like them" face every day.

Linda Christensen's "Outrageous Hope in Troubled Times" helped me to feel more optimistic about the heartbreaking realities

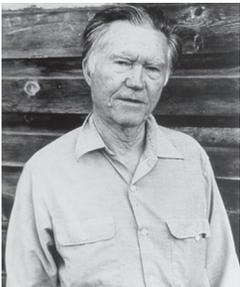
we sometimes face as teachers. At her suggestion, I taught Margaret Walker's "For My People," and then had students write their own poems for their "people." It was some of the best writing I've read all year.

The NCTE Conference helped me remember why I wanted to teach Language Arts in the first place, giving me some amazing tools, resources, and lessons with which to do it.

*Aly Ferris*  
*Seventh Grade Teacher, Sawvie Island Academy (Public Charter School)*



While attending the NW Regional NCTE Conference I was inspired by numerous sessions celebrating William Stafford's life and poetry. Kim Stafford shared heartfelt stories that brought William Stafford back to life, and Erin Ocon's presentation gave me a wonderfully effective way of showing students examples of the writing process by using the William Stafford Archives (available with drafts online at [www.williamstaffordarchives.org](http://www.williamstaffordarchives.org)). As soon as I returned to my classroom I shared multiple drafts of William Stafford's poem "The View from Here" with my students, and we analyzed how Stafford revised this poem to craft stronger verbs. I definitely saw how helpful it was for my students to see a famous author's writing and revision process.



*Mariko Walsh*  
*English Teacher, Scio High School*

*Poetography: Writing with Light* by Caroline N. Simpson

Poetography is a new art form blending photography and poetry. By pairing poetry with photographs created by students, Ms. Simpson encourages students to look beyond the surface photo to describe how that photo affects their thoughts and ideas. Rather than a mere description of the photograph, they need to deepen their views, creating metaphors for the image. Simpson presents an exciting, new perspective of poetry, easily incorporated into the classroom. Students are excited to view the world through the lens of a camera and to turn the ordinary into the extraordinary. If cameras are not viable, photographs from magazines can be used.

*Dorothy Courtois*  
*Second Grade Teacher, St. Anthony School, Tigard, OR*



# UPDATE ON CCSS IMPLEMENTATION

When a social media post gone viral about the Common Core hit *The Colbert Report*, I clutched a tiny glimmer of hope that truth, filtered through cynicism and satire, just might prevail.

“Even I cannot understand the Common Core Mathematics approach,” reads the parent handwriting on what is reported to be an elementary-grade math assignment, followed by the parent’s credentials, a B.S. in Electrical Engineering.

While the frustration may be real and valid, it is misplaced. The Common Core Standards are just that—standards. They are a framework of goals, not step-by-step instructions for how to attain those goals. Nowhere in the Common Core Standards are homework assignments, lesson plans, or any sort of “approach” provided.

In an ideal educational landscape, the opportunity would be evident: teachers are trusted to use their credentials, their creative minds, and understanding of student populations to develop meaningful, targeted instruction that leads students to proficiency in the standards. Simply put: teachers design the approach.

Reality is complicated by time (who ever has enough?!), local curriculum requirements, and the need for high quality professional learning.

The beige, cloth-lined cubicle walls of the Department of Education would confirm that these “complications” find their way into most conversations these days. The strategizing, refining, and modifying of approach in response to feedback is as much an ongoing process at the Department as it is in any forward-looking classroom.

Below are three of ODE’s current efforts to support educators:

1. The newly developed Network for Quality Teaching and Learning provides non-competitive grants for each district to support educator effectiveness and implementation of the standards in a manner best suited to the needs of the district. This might mean buying teacher time to work in PLCs, observe other teachers, or create common formative assessments. It may fund targeted professional learning for educators, the purchase of software that facilitates standards-based grading, or childcare for parent information nights to gain community support as districts push forward with positive change.
2. The Network also provides thrice yearly state-sponsored professional learning for district teams in the form of Professional Learning Team Conferences designed to support a feedback loop between the Department, stakeholder groups, and educators in the field, informing policy in an informal way.
3. Oregon’s instructional materials laws (ORS337 & OAR581 Division 11) are outdated and in need of revision. ODE has begun the process to change the laws to acknowledge the wealth of resources now available (including online materials and independent publications) and to support high quality teaching. Current curriculum adoptions do not adequately support implementation of the Common Core standards, despite the “Common Core-Aligned” stickers slapped on their covers—the revisions to the instructional materials laws will acknowledge these deficiencies and support educator innovation and networking in curriculum development and selection.

*Nicole Dalton, ODE Education Program Specialist, Liaison to OCTE*

## SAVE THE DATE!

### OCTE 2014 Fall Conference

Saturday, October 4, 2014  
Wilsonville High School

## CALL FOR PROGRAM PROPOSALS

*Do you have an idea for a presentation?  
An instructional model you’ve developed?  
Strategies that have worked well in your classroom?*

Presenting at an OCTE conference is an excellent way to share your expertise, to meet other English Language Arts teachers, and to help shape the future of our organization and our profession.

Go to [octe.org](http://octe.org) and submit proposals for the Fall 2014 Conference.

**Deadline for proposals: May 30, 2014**

## *Please Post*



## TWO OREGON POETRY ASSOCIATION WINNING STUDENT POEMS

### *When the Time is Right*

When the time is right in the fall,  
and the last leaf falls from the trees,  
the goose cries out and leads  
the birds away to  
a land that is awake,  
leaving this world of sleep.

Amy Amato, 3rd Grade, Heritage School, Salem;  
Writing Teacher, Elaine Olsen (1st place OPA, 2014)

### *Noticing Winter*

Dead leaves.  
Melting into black  
on the ground.  
My cold ears and  
steaming breath  
show winter.

Bare tree has  
no leaves left.  
But one  
hummingbird  
and ice drops  
remain.

Isibiah Durham, 3rd Grade, Create Solutions Tutoring, Ashland  
Writing Teacher, Sara-Lynne Simpson (3rd place OPA, 2014)

## OREGON POETRY ASSOCIATION STUDENT CONTEST INVITATION

Steve Jones and Tiel Aisha Ansari, Oregon Poetry Association (OPA) president, co-chair the annual OPA Student Poetry Contest and invite teachers to closely read, discuss and write poems in response with their classrooms while meeting Common Core goals of close reading, familiarizing with literary elements, use of telling details, and writing in a variety of short forms.

Age-appropriate classroom mentor poems can be found in Billy Collins online [www.loc.gov/poetry/180](http://www.loc.gov/poetry/180), [www.poetryoutloud.org/teachers-resources](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/teachers-resources), [www.poetry.org](http://www.poetry.org), [www.poetryfoundation.org](http://www.poetryfoundation.org), and two Oregon annual contests: [www.honoringourrivers.org](http://www.honoringourrivers.org), [www.oregonpoets.org](http://www.oregonpoets.org) (the OPA contest). OPA poets look forward to reading your students' best poems.