

SECONDARY ELA NEWSLETTER

January 2023

Happy New Year, Secondary ELA Colleagues!

I hope you had a wonderful holiday break and are feeling refreshed and ready for the start of the spring semester. This year has presented its own set of challenges, but together we can help our students to continue to thrive and achieve their goals.

As we move forward, let's collaborate and share best practices for engaging our students in virtual or hybrid learning environments. I look forward to working with you and providing you with the necessary resources and support you need to make this a successful 2023 for your students and yourselves. Let's reach out and communicate regularly, do not hesitate to contact me for support and ideas.

Naomi

I'M CURRENTLY ENJOYING:

- The Blue Castle by L. M. Montgomery
- Glass Onion on Netflix
- Sold a Story podcast (more about this later in the newsletter)

UCTE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Are you joining other Utah ELA educators for UCTE's Annual Conference on February 3rd at the Jordan Commons?

REGISTER NOW!

SUBMIT A PROPOSAL TO NCTE

Proposals are due by 9am ET on January 18 for the NCTE Annual Convention in November 2023.

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY JANUARY 16

- [10 Ideas for Reading & Writing about MLK in ELA](#)
- [Lesson plan: "I Have a Dream" as a Work of Literature from PBS](#)
- [Short video biographies from Biography.com](#)
- [Lesson ideas at ReadWriteThink from NCTE](#)
- [The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research & Education Institute](#)
- [Guide from The Library of Congress](#)
- [Reading, Writing, & Raising Voices: The Centrality of Literacy to Civic Education from NCTE](#)



CONTACT INFORMATION

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Educator Spotlight

Elyse Arrington
East High School
Salt Lake City School District



WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ABOUT TEACHING ELA TO KIDS?

In my Hip Hop Lit. class this term, we have paired more traditional and canonical texts with different rap songs to evaluate their literary magnitude. Just as Hamlet pondered answers to his existential questions, so did Tupac Shakur. Emily Dickinson and Langston Hughes were masters of the trade, skillfully using literary devices and metaphors to articulate their feelings on hope and life. By pairing these texts, I want my students to recognize that knowledge, truth, skill, and art can be found all around them.

- ✓ In her 12th year teaching: 6 years in the Bronx, NY and 6 years at East HS
- ✓ Enjoys spending time with her husband, Dave, her five-year-old daughter, Eleanor Rex, and their two dogs, Bernie and Gina.
- ✓ Loves hip-hop music and culture, so you can usually catch her at a concert, dance battle, or on the dance floor at any wedding reception she's invited to.
- ✓ Current Favorite Book: Book of Rhymes: The Poetics of Hip Hop by Adam Bradley

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST REWARDING PART OF TEACHING?

Of course, the students are the most rewarding part of this job, but I am also inspired and sustained by the adults I get to work with, learn from, and grow alongside. I have found my best friends and most trusted mentors in each school I have taught. In addition to the incredible people, I value the opportunity to engage in my own lifelong learning.

WHO INSPIRED YOU TO BECOME A TEACHER?

I was inspired by my 12th-grade Creative Writing teacher. It wasn't so much that she inspired me to become a teacher; rather, she fundamentally altered the way I thought about the world. I didn't know a teacher could have that power and it left me searching for a profession where impact mattered more than a product.



LET'S TALK!

CREATING CONDITIONS FOR CIVIL DIALOGUE IN OUR SCHOOLS

Join colleagues across all academic disciplines in an engaging and outcomes-based professional learning experience. Learn and practice strategies to foster productive civil dialogue in our classrooms and school communities. This learning model will allow you to share and teach these strategies to your colleagues.

SELECT ONE HALF-DAY SESSION

Tuesday, January 31
Granite School District
Option 1: 8:00 - 11:30am
Option 2: 12:30 - 4pm

Wednesday, February 1
USBE Basement West
Option 3: 8:00 - 11:30am
Option 4: 12:30 - 4pm

[**REGISTER**](#)



Participate in four additional hour-long virtual consults throughout Winter and Spring 2023 for continued support and collaboration. More info to follow.

LET'S TALK!

CREATING CONDITIONS FOR CIVIL DIALOGUE IN OUR SCHOOLS

OUR FACILITATOR



MARY ELLEN DANEELS

Mary Ellen Daneels is a National Board Certified teacher who taught at West Chicago Community High School for 27 years. She serves as the Director of the Illinois Civics Hub and Illinois Democracy School Network, leading efforts to support civic learning across disciplines.

She has been recognized as the Law-related Educator of the Year from the Constitutional Rights Foundation of Chicago, Teacher of the Year by the 19th District of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and American Civic Education Teacher from the Center for Civic Education and the Illinois Education Association Teacher of the Year.

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STATUE OF MARTHA HUGHES CANNON HEADS TO D.C. SOON

- [Request](#) a Martha Hughes Cannon digital toolkit and celebrate the upcoming installation of her statue in the U.S. Capitol with your students!
- Download [Better Days' Utah Women's History curriculum](#) on Canvas with ELA strands & connections



TUMBLEWEEDS KIDS FILM COMPETITION WITH UTAH FILM CENTER

Utah K-8 learners may submit entries for the [2023 Tumbleweeds Kids Film Competition](#) from now **through Feb 14**. Prizes include free access to exclusive workshops, recognition at a red carpet event and have their shorts screened during the 2023 Tumbleweeds Film Festival.

SHE STARTED IT FOR ALL OF US 2022-23 STUDENT ART CONTEST

Utah women make history, but they're often missing in our textbooks, classrooms, and public art. We need your help to change that! Students grades 4-12 are invited to submit original art portraying a Utah woman who has made a difference in their community. Share this contest with your students and consider making it a class assignment!

Better Days' annual student art contest is open for submissions through **January 25, 2023**.

Visit [their website](#) to access a flyer with more details and to submit artwork.



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SECONDARY LITERACY DIRECTOR MEETINGS

- January 24, 1-3pm | virtual
- March 21, 1-3pm | virtual

message [brenda.mcmurtrey@schools.
utah.gov](mailto:brenda.mcmurtrey@schools.utah.gov) for an invite

PUBLIC COMMENT SOUGHT ON NEW SUPPLEMENTAL STANDARDS

Utah State Board of Education (USBE) is seeking public comment on drafts of the state's English language arts new supplemental standards for Humanities and Professional and Technical Communication. **Comments will be accepted through January 13, 2023.**

[Direct link to draft Humanities supplemental standards](#)

[Direct link to comment on Humanities supplemental standards](#)

[Direct link to draft Professional and Technical Communication supplemental standards](#)

[Direct link to comment on Professional and Technical Communication supplemental standards](#)

EVIDENCE-BASED SECONDARY LITERACY PRACTICES or "THE SCIENCE OF READING FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS"

These 3 reports from the What Works Clearinghouse outline and detail recommendations based on empirical evidence, so yes, we do have a "Science of Reading" in the secondary space:

- [Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom & Intervention Practices](#)
- [Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4-9](#)
- [Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively](#)



Read [Hot in 2023: Improving Spelling & Writing Instruction](#) from Nomanis and [A Fifth of American Adults Struggle to Read. Why Are We Failing to Teach Them?](#) from ProPublica

**Please note: LEAs have the duty to select instructional materials that best correlate to the core standards for Utah public schools and graduation requirements. (UCA 53G-4-402(1(a))). Posting of these resources by USBE staff curriculum content specialists does not imply the resources have received official endorsement of the State Board. Educators are responsible to ensure use of these materials complies with LEA policies and directives.

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THE ADVENT OF CHATBOTS



**My counterpart in Oklahoma, Jason Stephenson, shared the following message with Oklahoman Secondary ELA teachers, and I thought he summed up the issues with [ChatPGPT](#) well. And, oh by the way, I used [ChatGPT](#) to write my introduction to this newsletter. Could you tell it was written by a robot instead of me? The prompt I gave it was: "Write a welcome message in a newsletter to secondary English teachers for January 2023." If you're using ChatGPT in your classrooms, I'd love to hear about it.

from Jason Stephenson, Dir. of Secondary Language Arts, Oklahoma State Dept. of Education

At the end of November, the company OpenAI released its chatbot to the public. Called [ChatGPT](#), this chatbot uses artificial intelligence to create written responses to almost any prompt you give it. When I first learned about this new technological tool, I was intrigued. The website was so busy that I couldn't even log in. Over the winter break, though, I was able to experiment with it to see what all the fuss was about.

I asked ChatGPT to compare and contrast two characters from a novel I once taught my sophomores. The chatbot responded with some excellent points about the characters' differences, but it was unable to explain hardly any similarities. When I asked ChatGPT to compare and contrast two fairy tales, it was much more successful. When I asked it to apply the hero's journey to one of my favorite films, the chatbot deftly explained all twelve stages, from Ordinary World to Return with Elixir. When I asked it to write a short story about a high school freshman attending band camp, ChatGPT created a protagonist named Sarah who had trouble playing her flute. I asked the bot to change the conflict from flute playing to marching, and it quickly revised the story for me.

English language arts teachers might be concerned that students will use ChatGPT to write their essays for them, but there are a number of ways to leverage this technology to help your students become better readers, writers, and thinkers. [This blog post](#) has twenty ways to use ChatGPT as a tool for teaching and learning, and I am highlighting five of them here.

1. Use it as a more complex, nuanced source of information than Google.
2. Use it to provide students access to lots of good examples.
3. After the bot creates some writing, have students score it using a tool such as a checklist or rubric.
4. Take several responses and make a better product.
5. Generate prompts and questions to facilitate discussions.

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FURTHER READING ON CHAT GPT

- [ChatGPT: Teachers Weigh In on How to Manage the New AI Chatbot from Education Week](#)
- [What Is ChatGPT and How Is It Used in Education? from Education Week](#)
- [The Future of the High School Essay from The 74](#)
- [A college student created an app that can tell whether AI wrote an essay from NPR](#)
- This American Life recently aired [an episode](#) that included a story based on an essay called "[Ghosts](#)" by Vahini Vara, processing the loss of her sister, through the assistance of a chat bot. The essay is very interesting because it includes her own writing and prompts as well as the chat bot's responses.



The [Sold a Story](#) podcast by Emily Hanford has stirred up quite a bit of controversy in the literacy world, particularly in the K-3 space. I would highly recommend giving it a listen as it does have secondary ramifications and then delve into some of the responses and related articles -- as always, please do your own research, too:

- [OPINION: A call for rejecting the newest reading wars](#)
- [An Open Letter by Tim Rasinski](#)
- [Is Emily Hanford Right?](#) by Tim Shanahan
- [Science of Reading: Defining Guide](#) by the Reading League
- [Stanford study on brain waves shows how different teaching methods affect reading development](#), Stanford News
- [In Memphis, the Phonics Movement Comes to High School](#), NY Times

myShakespeare™
Love to learn it.

[myShakespeare](#) provides media-rich, full-text editions of Shakespeare's plays for free. Some key features:

- Interviews with the characters illuminate themes and ignite discussion
- Performances of key scenes bring Shakespeare's language to life
- Animated videos explore the plays and their contexts
- Complete audio recordings emphasize clarity and comprehension.

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The Book Love Foundation seeks teachers who demonstrate a passion for promoting a hunger for books. These teachers recognize the diversity of every class of readers, and they challenge each student to build an independent reading life of increasing depth and joy. Teachers who apply for a Book Love Foundation grant must demonstrate that they are already committed to the support of readers through current classroom practices such as maintaining access to a range of books, conferring regularly and purposefully to understand and support students' changing needs, and sharing their own contagious passion for reading inside and outside of their classroom.

Read about the [requirements](#) for a grant, and then apply for either a classroom library or book clubs.



Claribel A. Ortega wrote three first lines to stories that don't exist—yet. Choose your favorite line, and use it to write your own short story and enter the contest. Claribel will choose the winning story and two finalists.

[Learn how to ENTER the contest.](#)



[NPR's Student Podcast Challenge](#) is back – for a fifth year! Beginning in January and running through April, NPR will once again be hearing from thousands of student podcasters, all competing for their grand prizes and a chance to hear their stories on NPR.

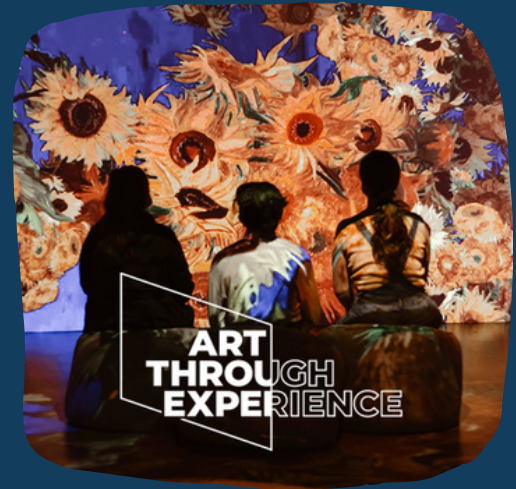
This year's Student Podcast Challenge will **open for entries on January 6, 2023 and close on April 28**. As in past years, the NPR judges will choose winners in two categories: grades five through eight and grades nine through 12. Entries must be submitted by an educator or a student leader who's 18 years old or older.

Read [this NPR webpage](#) to learn more guidelines, explore helpful resources, and listen to past winning podcasts.



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JOIN THE POETRY OUT LOUD 2023 COMPETITION

This national competition encourages Utah's 9th-12th graders to engage with great poetry through memorization and performance. More than \$100K in prizes is awarded to students and schools; a \$20K award goes to the national champion. Student workshops with Utah Poet Laureate Lisa Bickmore are available.

Regions will advance one winner to the state final competition, to be held on March 8, 2023. State winners can compete at the national competition in Washington, D.C., in April 2023.

Register by January 27, 2023. More info [here](#).

FREE TICKETS FOR EDUCATORS!

Educators throughout the state can visit the immersive art experience now playing at the IDEA Space within The Leonardo Museum located in downtown Salt Lake City at Library Square. Simply follow [this link](#) and use code TeachArt22 to check out Van Gogh 360, Monet to Kandinsky, Italian Renaissance, Great Impressionists, or Monet To Kandinsky En Español. The code is good for **two complimentary admissions** through the month of October. Art Through Experience programming is open Wednesday through Sunday.

Link to ticketing [here](#).

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THE NEWS LITERACY PROJECT RESOURCES

The [News Literacy Project](#), a nonpartisan national education nonprofit, provides programs and resources to help people of all ages become smart, active information consumers and equal and engaged participants in a democracy. The misinformation crisis requires a bold response, and NLP is meeting the moment by transforming its mission into a national movement to advance news literacy. Founded in 2008, NLP is the leading provider of news literacy education through its signature free e-learning platform [Checkology](#)® virtual classroom and other resources. NLP works with thousands of educators in all 50 states and more than 100 other countries.

[Checkology](#), NLP's industry leading, browser-based platform, includes nearly 20 lessons plus dozens of additional exercises and challenges that help students learn how to navigate today's challenging information landscape. NLP's [Checkology](#) lessons are aligned to Common Core literacy standards, social studies standards, NGSS, ISTE student standards and the C3 Framework. They gain the skills to identify credible information, seek out reliable sources, recognize misinformation and help stop its spread. The middle and high school cross-curricular lessons also provide an understanding of the role of the free press and the first Amendment in our democracy. [Checkology](#) features a directory of vetted journalists in the Newsroom to Classroom program who can speak with students, virtually or in-person. And its Check Center allows students to detect and debunk misinformation as they encounter it.

ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS IN WRITING & PROMISING YOUNG WRITERS AWARDS

Prompts are now available for the 2023 [Achievement Awards in Writing](#) and [Promising Young Writers](#) contests! NCTE encourages educators and administrators to share information on these school-based writing awards across the middle and secondary levels.

Here are key dates for the 2023 contests:

- November 2022: contest opens for submissions.
- **February 15, 2023: submission window closes.**
- May 2023: winners are announced.

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ABOUT

StoryMaker is a free learning platform powered by PBS NewsHour Student Reporting Labs. It's your one-stop shop for projects, tutorials, and lesson plans connected to media making, digital journalism, and public broadcasting. Features include:

- a personalized dashboard to save your favorite resources,
- an educator directory to connect to like-minded educators and mentors, and
- a robust library chock full of activities, videos, and worksheets.

Our standards-based curriculum develops communication skills, critical thinking, and teamwork, and provides a strong foundation of storytelling skills to help students discover their place in the world.

BEGIN YOUR STORYTELLING JOURNEY

Youth media empowers students to use their voice, engage with people outside of school walls, discover new ideas and tell important stories. StoryMaker provides not only the resources, but pathways to do through a variety of tracks:

- Teach Media Literacy Skills
- Increase Civic Engagement
- Explore Science Journalism + STEM
- Experiment with Storytelling Formats
- Activate + Amplify Student Voice
- Motivate with Culturally Responsive Projects
- Start a Broadcast Curriculum

For more info visit: <https://story-maker.org/getting-started>

2022-23 PROMPTS, LESSONS, PROJECTS & CHALLENGES

SRL releases new projects, prompts, lessons and rapid responses as current events unfold. Check StoryMaker regularly as additional prompts will be published, including connections to Ken Burns' U.S. + The Holocaust and Making Black America. For more info visit: <https://story-maker.org/library>

