

"Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other."

—Paulo Freire

ASILOMAR 72

the language arts conference

OCTOBER 2-4, 2026

Knowledge Across Communities

LANGUAGE ARTS, TEACHING, AND ORGANIZING IN A TIME OF TRANSFORMATION

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

For over 75 years, the Asilomar Conference has united educators to advance English Language Arts through collaboration and shared expertise.

This year's theme centers on how educators, writers, and organizers build and share knowledge within and across communities—classrooms, families, cultures, institutions, disciplines, and geographies—to address the transformative challenges facing education today.

As we navigate an era of profound educational transformation, we recognize that the most powerful knowledge emerges when communities connect, share wisdom, and collaborate across differences. From rural classrooms to urban centers, from traditional kindergarten to college composition practices that honor multiple knowledge systems and cultural ways of knowing, from student voices to family knowledge systems—transformation happens when we bridge divides and learn from one another and with each other.

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SESSIONS

Attendees are expected to stay with single session throughout the conference. Select a first, second, and third choice from the group sessions below. We ask for a second and third choice in case your first choice is full or cancelled.

1. Free Speech and its Boundaries: How Drama Can Help Your Students Understand this Paradox

GRADES 6-12, COLLEGE, GENERAL ENRICHMENT

Freedom of expression is vital, but not unlimited. Speech can inform or harm, uplift or wound. This interactive workshop uses creative theater strategies to help students critically explore the power, boundaries, and responsibilities of free speech in a diverse, democratic society.

2. Teaching Literature During the New Culture War: Defending Our Right to Choose What We Teach

GRADES 6-12

Can educators still teach “troubling” but worthwhile texts? Culture wars and cancellations have shrunk reading lists, and created ethical dilemmas. This session explores literature’s enduring power and responsible ways to teach challenged books. Participants will confront classroom controversies and share practical, student-centered approaches to teaching the texts we believe in.

3. Rooted in Community: ELA, Ethnic Studies, and Collective Care in Elementary

GRADES K-6

This session supports elementary teachers in integrating ELA and Ethnic Studies through identity-affirming, culturally sustaining practices. Educators learn to create safe, brave classrooms; co-construct inquiry and writing with students; engage families and communities; and apply the five S’s and Hallmarks of Ethnic Studies to foster learning.

4. Mirror, Mirror on the Wall: Motivation and Reflection in Writing

GRADES 6-8

Rereading your own writing can be transformative. This session explores ways to draw students in, boost motivation, reinforce effective practices, and keep teaching joyful, humorous, and alive. Participants will experience strategies that help writers reflect on work and view it in a new light, fostering engagement and growth.

5. Renovating Curriculum: Collaborative Wisdom to Revive Student Engagement

GRADES K-12, COLLEGE, GENERAL ENRICHMENT

By pooling our professional wisdom to address student disengagement, we will co-create responsive instructional practices that foster deep belonging and student agency. Through interactive demonstrations, we’ll brainstorm “two-legged” designs balancing academic progress and well-being. Join us to launch your own renovation project, creating inviting, nourishing learning experiences for all students.

6. Bridging Realities: Media Literacy Through Library–Classroom Collaboration

GRADES 9-12

Algorithm-driven feeds and AI create conflicting realities for students, demanding new pedagogical responses. By pooling our professional wisdom, we will explore library-classroom collaborations that empower critical literacy. Join us to investigate media literacy as a bridge between communities, sharing practical strategies that help students responsibly navigate their digital lives.

7. Embedding Native American Cultural History in Your Core Curriculum

GRADES K-12

Sharing classroom-tested knowledge, we explore an inquiry template for researching local Indigenous histories. Together, we’ll identify problems and propose remedies, creating a student-centered curriculum that honors community roots while building research skills. We investigate Native American history, culture, and present-day tribal practices across grade levels and diverse school disciplines.

8. Our Voices, Our Stories: Vietnamese American Refugee Knowledge Across Classrooms and Communities

GRADES 6-12

Sharing classroom-tested knowledge, we’ll challenge “perpetual foreigner” myths through Vietnamese American memoirs and primary sources. This session explores interdisciplinary toolkits offering “windows and mirrors” for students. Join us to co-create practical strategies that expand American identity, fostering belonging and empathy in our classrooms and the wider community now.

9. Heuristics of “Cross-Cultural Fluency”

GRADES 6-12, COLLEGE

Rooted in James Moffett’s legacy, Cross Cultural Fluency fosters cultural diplomacy through “twinning teams.” Students link in written English with peers abroad, sharing responses to shared lessons: poems, athletic experiences, or local dishes. Join us to explore this tested pedagogy, bridging different worlds to build remarkable global common ground.

10. Everything You Always Wanted to Know About AI

GRADES K-12, COLLEGE, GENERAL ENRICHMENT

Join this interactive multimedia session to build inclusive high school English classrooms using Universal Design principles. Learn to integrate ELD standards, create a classroom brand with core values, songs, and logos, and explore the potential and challenges of AI in education.

11. Teachers as Researchers: Utilizing Data to Make Meaningful Change

GRADES 6-12

Looking for a systematic way to improve instruction? This session explores teacher inquiry groups grounded in a teacher-led, two-group quantitative study. Learn to design research, and collect data to impact students and communities. Join us to identify problems, propose remedies, and reclaim your professional voice as a transformative teacher-researcher.

12. “Windows Turned Sideways Make Bridges”: Teaching through Creating Constellations

GRADES 9-12, COLLEGE, GENERAL ENRICHMENT

This session explores a conceptual framework to help teachers create spaces of authentic connection through ELA units and support teaching across racial differences. Participants will develop strategies for building critical literacies that interrogate difference, examine nuanced shared histories, and support students in imagining cross-cultural solidarities and collective action.

KEYNOTE



Antero Garcia is a professor in the Graduate School of Education at Stanford University and the current President of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). His research explores the possibilities of speculative imagination and healing in educational research. Prior to completing his Ph.D., Garcia was an English teacher at a public high school in South Central Los Angeles. He has authored or edited more than two

dozen books about the possibilities of literacies, play, and civics in transforming schooling in America. Antero currently co-edits *La Cuenta*, an online publication centering the voices and perspectives of individuals labeled undocumented in the U.S. Antero received his Ph.D. in the Urban Schooling division of the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles.

13. Being Peace: Cultivating Healing, Love, and Hope through Multigenre Writing

GRADES 9-12, GENERAL ENRICHMENT

Thich Nhat Hanh reminds us that creating peace begins with the self. This session explores powerful, multigenre writing practices supporting students in cultivating peace and resisting violence. By centering healing, empathy, love, and hope, we'll share practical classroom applications to identify problems and propose remedies, fostering collective professional wisdom.

14. Music as a Portal to Literacy

GRADES 9-12

Teenagers today love listening to, interpreting and memorizing lyrics to songs. In doing so, they are building literary and literacy skills without realizing it. This session explores ways to employ students' natural interest in multi-cultural, multi-genred music as a bridge toward improving thinking, reading, and writing skills.

15. Teaching Along the Silk Roads

GRADES 6-12

The Silk Roads isn't just for history class! Discover how this ancient network of exchange fueled centuries of vibrant literature. In this hands-on session, explore literary resources and lesson plans designed by teachers who walked the route. Collaborate on primary sources to captivate students and leave with ready-to-teach lessons.

16. Writing on the Road

GRADES K-12, COLLEGE, GENERAL ENRICHMENT

Empower your students to take ownership of their learning journey! This interactive session explores practical strategies to foster student autonomy, self-direction, and metacognition in the classroom. Learn how to create environments where students set meaningful goals, make informed decisions, and develop the confidence to drive their own educational experience.

17. The Moral Necessity of James Baldwin: Unpacking the Pervasive Anti-Blackness in English Language Arts

GENERAL ENRICHMENT

Through an examination of frameworks of power, coupled with curated passages from Baldwin's "A Talk to Teachers," participants partake in the often-neglected discourse regarding education and anti-Blackness. Straight up, we'll unpack power for a deep, vital exploration of the incessant nature of anti-Blackness within our classrooms and in ourselves.

18. Writing Instruction in the Era of AI

GRADES K-12, COLLEGE

The emergence of AI has challenged how we conceive, produce, and teach the written word. This session invites educators to navigate the ethics of AI, reimagine pedagogical best practices, and explore emerging tools, all while preserving the essential human elements of voice, agency, and critical inquiry.

19. Beyond the Simple View: The Role of Executive Functions in Literacy Development

GRADES 6-12

This session explores the Active View of Reading, moving beyond traditional models. We'll examine executive functioning as the engine driving comprehension. Participants explore research and hands-on strategies to support all readers. Utilize this framework as a pragmatic tool to empower growth, identifying problems and proposing remedies for striving readers.

20. Classroom Spaces & Activities That Nurture Student Voice, Advocacy, and Community Organizing

GRADES 9-12

Join us to share strategies and activities that empower organizing skills and student advocacy. Together, we'll surface, support, and amplify student voice across our curriculum. Participants will exchange practical examples and leave with classroom-ready approaches to foster community, agency, and meaningful engagement. Join our collaborative inquiry for immediate use.

21. The Art of Writing Communities

GRADES K-12, COLLEGE

"People learn from the truth, even though the truth is a mess." Expanding Peter Elbow's foundation for teacherless classrooms, this experiential session separates creative "cooking" from critical "editing." Use non-stop freewriting to explore writing from the inside-out, joining a peer-based community where writers contribute in equal and equitable ways.

22. Dystopia to Democracy: Book Clubs as Civic Inquiry

GRADES 6-12

Move from "reading the word" to "reading the world." This session reimagines ELA as a hub for "restless inquiry" through interdisciplinary book clubs. Using Kittle and Gallagher's *4 Essential Studies* (2022), workshop thematic clubs, student-led podcasting, and resource acquisition. Leave with a practical toolkit to empower students as change agents.

23. Composing Digital Democratic Futures: Sharing Strategies of Multimodal Composition, Connection, and Care

GRADES 6-12

In an overwhelmingly connected, digital – and yet still isolated - world, literacy educators committed to equity, justice, and empathy must engage in multimodal discourse with students and colleagues about sensitive civic topics. This session will offer helpful principles and strategies to do this from the Digital Democratic Dialogue (3D) Project.

24. CWP Directors Meeting

This session is for Regional Site Directors of the California Writing Project.

25. Do Your Own Thing—Team Planning Session

School teams or district teams can use conference time to plan their own projects, and find inspiration from the keynote and Around the Hearth sessions. Ten or more people required.

Additional session information and conference updates are available at:

curriculumstudy.org

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CONFERENCE SCHEDULE:

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2

3:30-9:00 pm Registration
4:30-5:30 pm Reception
6:00-7:00 pm Dinner
7:15-8:30 pm GENERAL SESSION A
8:45-9:45 pm GROUP SESSION #1

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3

7:30-8:45 am Breakfast
8:00-5:45 pm **Bookstore Open**
9:00-10:30 am GROUP SESSION #2
10:30-10:50 am Coffee Break
10:50-12:00 pm GROUP SESSION #3
12:00-1:00 pm Lunch
1:30-3:00 pm GROUP SESSION #4
4:00-5:30 pm Reception and Book Signing
6:00-7:00 pm Dinner
7:15-8:30 pm Around the Hearth A - State of the Profession
8:45-10:00pm Around the Hearth B: Poetry Open Mic

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4

7:30-9:00 am Breakfast
*Pick up boxed lunch orders after breakfast
8:00-9:30 am Bookstore Open
*Check-out @ 11am
9:15-10:15 am GROUP SESSION #5
10:15-10:25 am Coffee Break
10:30-11:00 am CLOSING AFFIRMATION
12:00-1:00 pm Lunch

A NOTE ON TRADITIONS: WHY NO NAMES?

You may notice that our session descriptions do not list the names of presenters. This is a deliberate tradition of the Asilomar model dating back to 1949. We believe that professional growth is a democratic act of mutual learning, where the focus remains on the “pooling of intelligence” rather than the hierarchy of a “speaker” and an “audience.”

The Resource People and Chairs behind these sessions are among the most outstanding leaders in our profession—award-winning authors, veteran classroom teachers, and dedicated researchers. However, they serve here as stewards of a collaborative matrix, not as isolated experts. We trust in these sessions because the ideas within them have been “tested under fire” in real classrooms. In this community, we are all learners, and we are all resources for one another.



REGISTER HERE

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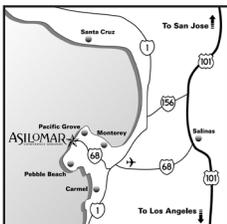
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1st Class



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