



Orleans-Niagara Teacher Center

Winter/Spring 2026 Catalog [Register Online](#)

Registration opens December 10 and closes January 8, 2026.

Stay warm this winter by keeping your brain active!

ALL CLASSES COUNT FOR CTLE CREDIT.



FREE ELL COURSES!

ELL-24 Literacy Foundations for English Learners: Part 1

In this course, teachers will read and reflect upon the first half of *Literacy Foundations for English Learners* by Elsa Cardenas-Hagan. This half of the book provides a background in the science of reading for multilingual learners of English (MLEs)--the components of language and literacy development, phonological awareness and phonics development relevant to those learners. Participants will learn new strategies that are essential to support MLEs' literacy development, while considering the implications on reading instruction for all academic language learners in every classroom. Helpful supplements will be added to support learning from the text.

1/26-3/6/26, (15 ELL CTLE hours, FREE), Katie Leven

ELL-25 Literacy Foundations for English Learners: Part 2

In this course, teachers will read and reflect upon the second half of *Literacy Foundations for English Learners* by Elsa Cardenas-Hagan. This half of the book provides a background in the science of reading for multilingual learners of English (MLEs)--fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, spelling and writing development. Participants will learn new strategies that are essential to support MLEs' literacy development, while considering the implications on reading instruction for all academic language learners in every classroom.

3/23-5/1/26, (15 ELL CTLE hours, FREE), Katie Leven

ENL Community of Practice – Spring 2026 (ENLCOP-26)

This popular community of practice will support ANY teacher and/or paraprofessional who instructs/supports multilingual learners of English. Teachers will choose a new ENL-related book for reflection and biweekly sharing. This year's program will be entirely asynchronous online, but timely responses to participant interaction is essential.

2/4-4/29/26, (15 ELL CTLE hours, FREE), Katie Leven

FREE HYBRID COURSES

(SYNCHRONOUS & ASYNCHRONOUS COURSEWORK)

H26-01 Science of Reading- A Playbook for Educators

Participants in this course will engage in an in-depth exploration of the Science of Reading, focusing on the six foundational pillars of literacy: phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, and oral language. Delivered in a hybrid format, the course combines independent study with collaborative discussions that examine both the theoretical frameworks and practical applications of the Science of Reading. Participants will utilize a digital playbook to document learning outcomes, classroom applications, and reflective insights, fostering meaningful integration of evidence-based literacy practices.

1/14-2/11/26, SYNCHRONOUS Zoom dates 1/21, 1/28, 2/4 & 2/11, 6-7pm (15 CTLE hours, FREE), Rene Brock

H26-02 Bridges to Belonging: Deep Dive into the CR-SE Framework

This course explores the emerging NY Inspires vision through the lens of the Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education (CR-SE) framework. Participants will deepen their understanding of CR-SE and develop

practical, student-centered instructional strategies for the classroom. A blend of online learning and live discussions fosters collaboration, reflection, and shared growth. 3/4-3/25/26, synchronous zoom dates 3/11, 3/18 & 3/25 4:15-5:15pm, (9 hours, FREE), Kennedy Schultz

ONLINE BOOK STUDIES – ALL COURSES ARE ASYNCHRONOUS

B26-01 *Tiny Humans, Big Emotions* (K-12)

Designed for all humans—tiny and big—this book by Campbell and Stauble, provides insight into how to handle children's outbursts while empowering them to recognize and manage difficult feelings like anger, sadness, and shame, along with anxiety. Research-based approach teaches children self-regulation and empathy, even as it strengthens the parent-child relationship, setting the groundwork for a lifetime of emotional resilience. 1/12-1/26/26, (15 hours, \$45), Jason Danielewicz

B26-02 *The Depth Advantage* (K-12)

In a world where students face constant distractions, this course guides educators to shift from surface-level teaching toward practices that foster true depth. Participants will discuss and explore Spencer's eight core competencies of deeper learning, applying them to classroom practice. Ultimately, teachers will leave with concrete strategies, redesigned lessons, and a renewed sense of purpose to help students think critically, stay focused, and learn deeply in today's fast-paced world. 1/12-2/2/26, (15 hours, \$45), Catherine Loncar

B26-03 *Meet Every Learner's Needs* (K-12)

Based on the book by Robert Barnett, this study equips educators with practical, research-based strategies for inclusive, student-centered instruction. Participants will learn how to make learning accessible, build strong relationships, and promote student ownership. With ready-to-use tools and templates, teachers can immediately enhance instruction and create equitable learning experiences that support the success of every learner. 1/19-2/8/26, (15 hours, \$45), Tina Oddy

B26-04 *Brave New Words: How AI will Revolutionize Education* (K-12)

Explore how AI is transforming education in this 3-week asynchronous PD based on the book by Salman Khan. Educators will examine real-world AI applications, reflect on ethical and equity considerations, and develop practical strategies for enhancing learning. Participants will engage with readings, discussions, and reflection tasks, leaving with actionable ideas to thoughtfully integrate AI in their classrooms and support student success. 2/2-2/27/26, (15 hours, \$45), Tom Penale

B26-05 *The Learning Game* (K-12)

This course offers educators strategies inspired by Ana Lorena Fabrega's book, "The Learning Game," to cultivate critical thinking, resilience, and a love for learning in students. Participants will explore practical approaches for creating a classroom environment that encourages independent thought and celebrates challenges. By implementing these strategies, educators will empower their students to become lifelong learners and confident problem solvers. 2/23-3/16/26, (15 hours, \$45), Mackenna Daly

B26-06 Educator's AI Handbook: Save Time and Evolve Teaching Practices (K-12)

Discover how to use AI to enhance teaching and learning in this practical guide for K–12 educators by Gretchen Austgen. Learn how AI can streamline tasks like grading and differentiation, freeing time for personalized support. Explore 53 ready-to-use AI-integrated lesson plans, cross-curricular ideas, and strategies for student collaboration, all designed to make teaching more efficient, innovative, and engaging. 2/23-3/20/26, (15 hours, \$45), Dena Peterson

B26-07 Am I Cut Out for This? An Educational Leader's Guide to Navigating Self-Doubt (K-12)

Teacher burnout is soaring. In "Am I Cut Out For This?", Elizabeth Dampf uses self-doubting archetypes—like the jittery innovator, empty empathizer, punching bag, and struggling salesperson—to tackle this crisis. Each scenario reveals the issues teachers face, highlights common pitfalls, and offers strategies to build confidence and succeed. 3/2-3/16/26, (15 hours, \$45), Jessica Bruno

B26-08 Better Days: 180 Creative Practices and Daily Connections (K-12)

Looking for ways to help students develop social-emotional skills and prepare themselves to navigate the world in a healthy way? The book by Lisa Lucas presents 180 inspirational readings and creative activities to help teachers and students stay present and optimistic while integrating healthy habits into their lives. The teacher practices and student connections are grouped into 10 themes including Attention, Intention, Mind Management, and Self-Care 3/2-3/18/26, (15 hours, \$45), Maura Bruno

B26-09 The InterACTIVE Class in a World of AI (K-12)

This book study explores how educators can harness AI to spark creativity and engage students in meaningful learning experiences. The engaging book, by Joe and Kristin Merrill, provides practical strategies, real-life examples, and over 40 ready-to-use lesson plans to empower students as creators. Participants will discover ways to cultivate a classroom environment where imagination thrives while navigating the challenges and opportunities AI presents. 3/2-3/26/26, (15 hours, FREE), Cheryl Herman

B26-10 Teach from Your Best Self (K-12)

Teachers, this book is a guide for taking care of education's most valuable resource: you. Author Jay Schroder, founder of the popular Teach from Your Best Self Institute, demonstrates why the version of ourselves that we bring to teaching matters and describes how we can rejuvenate ourselves while maximizing student learning. 1. Explains why the self that a teacher brings to the classroom is important. 2. Explore skills that will help us sustain a best-self state in all manner of situations. 3. Delves into those moments when we're provoked beyond our limits and our "hurtspots" come sharply into view. It offers ways to avert a reactive state or recover from it. Lastly, 4. Provides simple approaches for building a more durable, best self for the long term. 3/9-3/27/26, (15 hours, \$45), Audrey Stafford

B26-11 Teach Like Finland: 33 Simple Strategies for Joyful Classrooms (K-12)

Discover the secrets behind Finland's world-renowned education system in this engaging study based on the book by Timothy D. Walker. Explore practical strategies inspired by Finnish classrooms—emphasizing joy, balance, trust, and well-being—that you can bring to your own teaching. Learn how small shifts in mindset and practice can lead to happier teachers and more motivated, successful students. 3/9-3/27/26, (15 hours, \$45), Kyle Hurtgam

B26-12 Results Now 2.0: The Untapped Opportunities for Swift, Dramatic Gains in Achievement (K-12)

Participants will dive into the book by Mike Schmoker and uncover why so many proven, high-impact teaching practices still aren't happening in classrooms. They will investigate the hidden "buffer" of policies and trends that hold schools back and discover how powerful, evidence-based instruction can spark rapid, inspiring improvement. Through real success stories and actionable strategies, participants will be energized to rethink curriculum, elevate literacy, and champion transformative practices that lead to stronger learning for all students. 4/12-5/3/26, (15 hours, \$45), Kelly Zimmerman

B26-13 Meet Their Needs, and They'll Succeed: Transforming Students' Lives Through Positive Relationships (K-12)

In this inspirational and action-oriented book, "Principal EL" shares insights from his own experience as a student whose life was changed by empathetic educators and as a teacher and school leader who has become a life-changer. Proceeding from his "Four Cs" approach, which maps a positive way to show up for the young people in our classrooms, he offers research-backed strategies to help educators provide students with equitable access to supportive relationships and to instruction that is engaging, respectful, and effective. 4/20-5/8/26, (15 hours, \$45), Karen Pax

B26-14 The Missing Link to Help Them Think (K-12)

Discover practical, research-based strategies to strengthen students' executive function skills—attention, memory, impulse control, flexibility, self-monitoring, and organization. Based on the book by Marilee Sprenger, this workshop helps teachers bridge social-emotional learning and academics with easy-to-implement tools that empower all students to focus, plan, and succeed in any classroom. 4/27-5/18/26, (15 hours, \$45), Lori Hurtgam

B26-15 The AI Playbook: Time Saving Tools for Teachers K-12)

Busy educators need tools that support their planning and provide them with more time with students. While Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a promising solution, it can only help if we're willing to learn how to use it in ways that improve upon what we already do well. The book by Hargrave, Fisher and Frey, will empower teachers to explore AI's potential and discover practical ways to implement it to enhance their planning and instruction. 4/27-5/21/26, (15 hours, FREE), Cheryl Herman

ONLINE COURSES (NO BOOKS REQUIRED)

O26-01 Student Success With Easy Online Writing (K-12)

Are you looking to create engagement for your students in a new and exciting way? Do you want them to be able to showcase their writing online, viewable by others, including parents and peers? Let's dive into the extensive world of online writing where we will look at many of the platforms available. We will also look at how to expand your use of the Google Suite to make it new and exciting. 1/12-1/26/26, (12 hours, \$36), Stryker Ostafew

O26-02 Online Resources to Inspire Science Thinkers (K-8)

Let's nurture our students' science curiosity, inquiry skills, and knowledge as we integrate science into daily instruction. From science videos and video clips to experiments to lessons, this course will be an exploration of 45 online resources to inspire thinkers in your classroom. Each of the three course parts will be introduced by a TED Talk followed by an exploration of 15 online resources and websites. Throughout the course, participants will select their Top 15 resources/websites to enhance their integration of science inquiry and inspiration in the classroom. 2/4-2/24/26, (15 hours, \$45), Jennifer Kibler

O26-03 Using Artificial Intelligence to Personalize Learning

A focus on personalized learning has become a priority in education. We are now in a position to prioritize the unique needs of each student more than ever before. With the help of AI Tools we will explore how AI Tools can personalize learning for all of our students.

3/4-4/1/26, (15 hours, \$45), Kathy Halter

O26-04 Shift Happens: Actionable Insights for Teaching and Life

In the high demand job of teaching, it's easy to feel depleted and disconnected. This course uses selected videos from the Newel of Knowledge youtube channel to explore how educators can deepen their mental clarity, strengthen social connection, and reclaim energy for their work and life. Through watching videos, reflective journaling, and professional application, participants will engage with powerful ideas such as narrative-breaking, habit transformation, courage with conversation, and self-leadership, and then translate them into actionable practices for classroom presence, colleague relationships, and personal renewal. 4/22-5/6/26, (15 hours, \$45), Melissa Elliott

Tranquil Tuesdays 2026 Educator Wellness Program



Join us in one or more of the following **FREE** wellness sessions from 4-5:30pm at the **BOCES Conference Center**.

You may combine 6 sessions with additional reflection work for a 15-hour CTLE block.
See flyer below for complete details.

W26-01: Reduce Stress and Boost Mood & Unplug and Reconnect – Jared Byer, January 13

W26-02: Change Your Mind & Movement Medicine – Jared Byer, February 10

W26-03: Mindful Gratitude Journaling for Stress Relief for Teachers - Nicole Lamantia, March 10

W26-04: Nutrition for Educators and Exercise: More than Just Weight Loss – Matt Heyd, March 24

W26-05: Maximizing Teaching and Learning in Schools with Mindfulness & Movement – Mari Irwin, April 21

W26-06: Using Movement to Enhance Learning in the Classroom and Breathing for your Brain and Body – Matt Heyd, May 5

W26-07: Somatic Movement Practices in and out of the classroom Nicole Lamantia, May 19

W26-08: Desk Yoga & Self-Care for Positive Impacts on Work & Life– Mari Irwin, June 9

**Registration opens December 10, 2025
and closes January 8, 2026**

Student Literacy Contest 2026 *When Characters Come To Life!*



Attention Teachers! Looking for a fun and meaningful way to spark a love of reading and writing in your students? Our Annual Literacy Contest is back—and this year's theme celebrates the magic of *connection through characters*! Students are invited to write about a book character who felt real to them—someone who made them laugh, think, or see the world differently. This contest encourages reflection, empathy, and creativity as students explore how stories shape who we are.

Complete details and entry form [available here](#).

All entries must be received by March 12, 2026

Awards assembly for all students and families will be held in the spring (Date and location TBD).

Don't forget about our **SPECIAL SERVICES** and **TECHNOLOGY LOANS!**

The Teacher Center offers LOW cost poster making, lamination and button/magnet making. We also have various tech devices available for loan. Visit our website for complete details!

<https://onteachercenter.wixsite.com/ontc/special-services>

ONTC Policy Board Members

Albion, April Patti, apatti@albionk12.org and Jen Lamont, jlamont@albionk12.org

Barker, Sara Thibault, sthibault@barkerksd.net

Lewiston-Porter, Karen Pax, kpax@lew-port.com

Lockport, Michelle Burtis, mburtis@lockportschools.net

Lyndonville, Katie Strusienski, kstrusienski@lcsdk12.org

Medina, Morgan Jackson, mjackson@medinacsd.org

Newfane, David Krull, dkrull@newfanecentralschools.org

Niagara Wheatfield, Rene Brock, rbrock@nwcsd.org

North Tonawanda, Heather Slipko, hslipko@ntschoools.org

O/N BOCES, Kristine Thompson, kthompson@onboces.org

Roy-Hart, Jen Lesniowski, jlesniowski@royhart.org

Starpoint, Gracie MacNamara, gmacnamara@starpointcsd.org

Wilson, Megan Salvatore, msalvatore@wilsoncsd.org

DeSales, Heidi Marciniak, marciniakh@desalescatholicsschool.org

Holy Ghost Lutheran, Christina Platten,

christinaplatten77@gmail.com

Niagara Charter, Sherrie Tracy, sherrietracy@niagaracharter.org

SUNY Niagara, Julianne Rademacker,

jmasocco@niagaracc.suny.edu

TRANQUIL TUESDAYS

JOIN US FOR A FREE WELLNESS SERIES FOCUSED ON IMPROVING YOUR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

4-5:30PM @ THE O/N BOCES CONFERENCE CENTER

REGISTER HERE & WEAR COMFORTABLE CLOTHING

REDUCE STRESS AND BOOST MOOD / UNPLUG & RECONNECT - 1/13/26

This workshop explores simple, practical strategies to reduce stress, boost mood, and improve social well-being by adopting healthy lifestyle habits and unplugging from technology to reconnect with others. Jared Byer

CHANGE YOUR MIND / MOVEMENT MEDICINE - 2/10/26

This combined workshop introduces practical, science-based strategies to enhance brain health, improve mood, and boost physical well-being through the mind-body connection, neuroplasticity, and simple movement-focused lifestyle habits. Jared Byer

MINDFUL GRATITUDE JOURNALING FOR STRESS RELIEF - 3/10/26

This experiential workshop introduces teachers to journaling as a simple, effective mindfulness practice that supports stress relief, nervous system regulation, and daily resilience. Nicole Lamantia

NUTRITION AND EXERCISE: MORE THAN JUST WEIGHT LOSS 3/24/26

This workshop helps educators improve health and energy by teaching practical nutrition strategies & the wide-ranging benefits of strength & cardiovascular exercise. Matt Heyd

MAXIMIZING TEACHING & LEARNING W/MINDFULNESS & MOVEMENT 4/21/26

This interactive workshop teaches simple, inclusive mindful-movement and breathing techniques that reduce stress, improve focus, and offer practical self-care tools for the school day. Mari Fox

USE MOVEMENT TO ENHANCE LEARNING/BREATHING FOR YOUR BRAIN & BODY 5/5/26

Learn how to boost learning, energy, and focus in the classroom through simple movement & targeted breathing exercises to support brain & body performance. Matt Heyd

SOMATIC MOVEMENT PRACTICES IN AND OUT OF THE CLASSROOM 5/19/26

Discover simple somatic movements to reduce tension, boost focus, and energize or calm both you and your students. Nicole Lamantia

DESK YOGA & SELF-CARE FOR POSITIVE IMPACTS ON WORK & LIFE 6/9/26

Enjoy gentle, accessible Chair Yoga with breathwork and mindful activities that relieve stress, boost focus, and support healthy self-care throughout the workday. Mari Fox

YOU CAN EARN 15 CTLE HOURS BY COMPLETING 6 SESSIONS, SELF-REFLECTIONS, AND A CULMINATING ACTIVITY.

ORLEANS-NIAGARA TEACHER CENTER

