

A Newsletter of The Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts

Pedro Noguera's Keynote Address

45th TCTELA Conference, January 22, 2010

Joan S. Curtis



Above: TCTELA Member Georgia Edward, Northside ISD; Carol Jago and Pedro Noguera

Below: Pedro Noguera at the Friday Keynote Address



Dr. Noguera, an inspirational speaker, opened his address to attendees with a challenge: If we do not do a better job of educating ALL our children, we will pay for it as a country. We cannot continue to draw a difference between the haves as educable and the have-nots as uneducable. We confuse low skilled with unintelligent with who's gifted and who's gift-less.

Pulling from his own experience in education Noguera qualified what was important in teaching: that students be challenged by "black belt teachers," experts in their fields. Students do not need to be entertained. Students need teachers who are pedagogical experts and who understand that learning is an intellectual activity. Black belt teachers are life-long learners themselves. Noguera reminded us that assigning high-needs students to high-needs teachers has never worked—bad teaching only results in bad behavior. Even the kids that we write off as failures have hope and possibility, but they need to be taught by "black belt teachers."

Noguera encouraged us to work *with* the energy of our kids, not to crush it. Although good teaching happens in spite of chaos and bad leadership, we need to end the isolation of expert teachers and draw them into a community. Dr. Noguera praised TCTELA for the community of educators that we are. 

Kelly Gallagher: Building Deeper Readers by Kelly Gallagher

Donalyn Miller

In the weeks leading up to the TCTELA Conference, my anticipation builds. I am an unabashed author-stalker and the opportunity to see famous teacher/authors like Carol Jago, Jeff Anderson, and Kelly Gallagher thrills me. I chatter endlessly about it, really. During these conversations, my family and colleagues smile benevolently and humor me; they have no idea who Kelly Gallagher is or why he is famous to me. I don't think it matters that my neighbors and family members don't know who Kelly Gallagher is—as long as their children's teachers know. Kelly Gallagher, author of four books on teaching writing and reading, accomplished speaker and staff development presenter, and high school educator for 24 years, and recently announced President-Elect of the IRA Secondary Reading Special Interest Group, is famous to me and many other teachers because his body of work has shaped and improved how we teach. His latest book, *Readicide: How Schools Are Killing Reading and What You Can Do About It*, validates my beliefs about how reading instruction in America needs to change and stretches my thinking about how best to accomplish my short-term and long-term literacy goals with my students. Let's hope his words make Kelly a little famous to legislators and policymakers, too.

No one could question Gallagher's notoriety if they attended his recent presentation at the TCTELA conference. Two hundred teachers packed into the ballroom to hear Kelly's observations

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Kelly Gallagher: Building Deeper Readers by Kelly Gallagher
continued

about reading instruction and gain practical advice. Gallagher began his session, “Building Deeper Readers,” by describing the alarming statistics that show a decline in adolescent and adult reading and the static growth in NAEP reading scores. Many students graduate from high school apathetic about reading or unable to comprehend complex text. He claims that this “Readicide” indicates that educators must rethink how reading is taught. Gallagher advises a 50/50 approach to ending Readicide—providing students with equal parts recreational and academic reading. Some suggestions from Gallagher’s presentation include:

In developing recreational readers, teachers must:

- never lose sight that our highest priority is to raise students who become lifelong readers.
- recognize that massive test preparation is not a justification for killing readers.
- not allow recreational reading to be drowned in a tsunami of academic reading. Maintain a balance.
- provide adequate time in school to read.
- assure that students have access to lots of books at school (a book flood).
- model the importance of reading by being a reader him/herself.
- encourage students to recognize, seek, and maintain reading flow.
- stop chopping up recreational books with worksheets and quizzes.
- give kids credit for recreational reading, but stop grading it.
- understand that recreational reading is test preparation—it builds background knowledge.

In developing academic readers, teachers must:

- teach less material and teach it deeply.
- keep students’ focus on the value that classic books have to offer.
- ditch multiple choice tests in favor of essays and other responses that require deeper thinking.
- spend more time teaching students how to think instead of memorizing facts.
- demand that students continue to read books that may be slightly too hard for them.
- understand the cognitive development that occurs when students wrestle with long books.
- recognize when over-teaching is occurring. Stop chopping books into so many pieces that the book is lost.
- do not over-support students while reading challenging books, scaffold towards independence.
- surround academic text with high interest, authentic real world reading.
- design lessons that help students transfer the thinking skills they use with books to real world thinking. 

Source: Kelly Gallagher, 2009: *Readicide: How Schools Are Killing Reading and What You Can Do About It*.

Gallagher’s common sense approach to teaching reading and his years of experience provide a wealth of knowledge to all of us who struggle to balance our goals to raise academic achievement and foster lifelong reading habits

Additional Reading:

Gallagher, Kelly. (2004). *Deeper reading*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

Gallagher, Kelly. (2009). *Readicide: how schools kill reading and what you can do about it*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

Gallagher, Kelly. (2003). *Reading reasons: motivational mini-lessons for middle and high school*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

Gallagher, Kelly. (2006). *Teaching adolescent writers*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

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Carol Revelle

For Texas English teachers and leaders, the winter months bring not only cold weather and heavy clothes; it also brings the TCTELA conference followed by a month of TAKS preparations. This year's annual conference in Austin was both informative and energetic. The conference presenters reminded us of the importance of reaching each of our students to challenge them with high expectations and to build bridges in a system that increasingly sees students not as individuals but as data.

First, to our local arrangements committee, chaired by Marilyn DuVon, we were impressed with your commitment and vision for this conference. Thank you for all of your hours of preparation before the conference and for all of your efforts helping the attendees during the conference. Behind the scenes, this group worked tirelessly and successfully to make this year's conference run smoothly.

We also thank all of our sponsors. Our sponsors paid for many of our guest speakers as well as the membership celebration, the affiliate breakfast, and the luncheon speakers. Because of our sponsors, we are able to stretch membership dollars to provide more speakers and services at our conferences.

To each of our concurrent session speakers, congratulations on an outstanding job. The evaluations attest to the care and effort that went into the planning and the presentations given at the conference. Again, our membership did an outstanding job creating meaningful sessions for their peers.

There are several new initiatives that I would like to report. First, the new strategic plan is complete and will soon be posted on the website. The board has already begun the implementation of this plan. For Example, we are working to increase the organization's communication between conferences through the use of Twitter @tctela, TCTELA NING, and our Facebook groups (TCTELA and Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts).

Join now for updates. Finally, we have a new proposal form and rubric for the concurrent sessions. These can be found on the website at tctela.org.

We would like to welcome four additions to the TCTELA Board. Laura Slay was elected by the membership to serve a one-year term as secretary. Also, Kay Shurtleff was elected to serve two years, first as the Vice President-Elect of Membership and Affiliates followed by a year as Vice President. Valerie Taylor was appointed to serve as our new SLATE representative, and *English is Texas* has a new editor, Carol Bedard. She will be working with Leigh Van Horn and Kim Pinkerton out of the University of Houston - Downtown. New submission deadlines and guidelines will be on the TCTELA website.

There are several affiliate conferences scheduled for this year, please follow us @tctela on Twitter, TCTELA NING and on Facebook for updates, and start planning now for the annual conference, January 21st – 23rd in beautiful Galveston, Texas where we will share our practices for *Teaching for Transformation*. 

Advocacy Day and Month 2010

Mark your calendars for Advocacy Day on Thursday, April 22, 2010. Join colleagues in Washington, DC, to meet congressional representatives and their staff. Become familiar with the 2010 NCTE Legislative Platform, which should be approved by the Executive Committee in March and ready for you to use as you contact your legislators.

If you are unable to travel to DC, make your voices heard on important issues by writing, e-mailing, and calling your legislators. Locate contact information on your legislators' state offices at <http://www.congress.org> or through your legislators' congressional websites. 



TCTELA UPDATES

Committee on Adolescent Literacy

Whereas NCTE's adolescent literacy policy brief states "motivation can determine whether adolescents engage with or disengage from literacy learning,"

Be it resolved that TCTELA encourage student choice by increasing awareness of high quality and diverse children's and young adult literature by publishing reviews and assessments of young adult and children's literature through TCTELA publications.

Committees on State of the Profession and Legislation Action

Whereas end-of-course testing will go into effect in 2012 and these exams will affect instruction, student course grades, and graduation, as well as the process for developing the new STAAR reading and writing assessments, be it resolved that TCTELA will investigate the development and review process and will seek input in to the review of ELA exams.

One Faculty Serving All Students

NCTE has signed on to One Faculty Serving All Students: An Issue Brief by the Coalition on the Academic Workforce [http://www.academicworkforce.org/CAW_Issue_Brief_Feb_2010.pdf] promoting "one faculty" at institutions of higher learning, not a two-tiered system of tenured faculty and nontenured faculty. 

Author Chris Crutcher, Keynote Speaker During TCTELA Luncheon

45th TCTELA Conference, January 23, 2010

Joan Scott Curtis

Rebecca St. Romain teaches English at Ryan High School in Denton ISD. A passionate fan of Chris Crutcher, Rebecca made the following introduction at the luncheon where Mr. Crutcher gave the keynote address.

I made a list of things I needed to tell you about:

I need to tell you about Sweetness Mays, my class "funny guy." —Go figure the kid calls himself "Sweetness!" Sweet read for the role of Sarah Byrnes in the novel Staying Fat... with a sequined hat, a few false curls tumbling about, and a twisted, scrunched-up face, "because she was burned and all."

We reached Dale Thornton and Sarah Byrnes' legendary fight scene, and he [Sweetness] recognized his life! At one time in his life, I think long before the "sweetness" came, he was Moby and he knew Dale Thornton. Sweetness started writing that day, and as a senior graduating with honors this year, he's still writing ... his first novel, M&M.

And I need to tell you about Will Clark, who cheated on his independent reading assignment because he didn't want to read a book! He used the novel his eighth-grade class had read together. But when we reached your novel, he insisted that Mrs. Lemry was in actuality, a "Latina hottie."

And Cody, who destroyed his football career and his best friend with the pickup truck he stole and wrecked; he found himself in your novels!

And Chris, who threatened to hide in my truck and sneak on up here to meet you!

In fact, all of my students were a bit worried about me coming to this conference and meeting you. For the last seven years as we

read through your controversial, thought-provoking novels, I've told them if I ever met you, ...well...

(But it's okay; my husband knows! He just told me to have fun, give you a big hug, and find out what kind of car you drive.)

But your novels, though they have made avid readers of senior high-school football players, though they have my students fighting over reading roles in class and sneaking looks ahead to see if they get to curse in class today, ...your novels are read in my class for selfish reasons; I read them for me, for the "spoken truths" I recognize, for the fact that they invigorate me and remind me about life and about truth.

And if my kids get something out of it, well, ...that's a bonus!

Thank you, Chris Crutcher. You didn't make me a teacher, but you've kept me one.

When Mr. Crutcher took the podium, he shared some personal anecdotes about his own less than stellar life as a student and how he happened upon teaching at an alternative school before becoming a family therapist. He explained that the he meets often become characters in his novels. He feels a moral obligation to write about the pains and recoveries of real life. His books are censored often. Why? Some people believe kids should not be exposed to such ugliness. But the sad truth is, kids are exposed to it. The day after Mr. Crutcher's speech, I heard about a 9-year-old boy who hanged himself at his school. Is there a better way to talk with students about life's ugliness than through a story where fictional characters experience real-life situations? Thank you, Mr. Crutcher, for giving us a way to begin such conversations with our students. 

Valerie Taylor, Recipient of Ed Farrell Award, Gives Acceptance Speech

Valerie Taylor



Valerie Taylor accepts the Edmund J. Farrell Lifetime Achievement Award from TCTELA Board member Carol Bedard.

Thank you. I am truly honored to receive this award, for I know that the man for whom it is named and all of the previous recipients have given to our profession this legacy of service that I have aspired to attain. I thank them all, and I thank TCTELA and the people who nominated me for this recognition.

In his book, *Mountains Beyond Mountains*, the story of Dr. Paul Farmer's work in Haiti, Tracy Kidder writes, "Lives of service depend on lives of support." I am fortunate to have been able to live a life of service in the profession of teaching and to have had lives of support surrounding me to allow me to do this. These lives, my family's, my colleagues' and my students', have supported mine for the past 30 years, as I have pursued my desire to help others, and in their support, each has also made some sacrifice.

When I first left home in Alief to pursue my bachelor's degree at the University of Texas, I did know that I wanted to live a life of service, but not that that life would be in teaching. I discovered this calling during my sophomore year, and my parents supported my decision (and paid for it). After I had taught for ten years, they again helped to support me and my family financially when I decided I needed to know more and returned to the University for my master's degree. They have also supported us by helping when both my husband and I have committed to help some individual or organization in our professions at the same time, by caring for our sons, taking them to soccer games or birthday parties or band rehearsals or school. Although my father has now passed away and my mother often thinks I am much too busy with professional activities, they are both still supporting me.

Most significantly my husband Kerry and my two sons Brian and Sean are ones who have supported me. They have helped me be able to do my job of teaching high school students (including

serving in various sponsor positions), helped me to serve in officer positions in CTCTE, TCTELA, and NCTE as well as in my chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma, and helped me to act as the Co-Director of the Heart of Texas Writing Project. Sometimes this support has come in the form of helping me with jobs around our home, sometimes with staying late in Mom's room at school while she finishes some work, sometimes by not having me present for some event, and always by being interested in my work. I wish they were here today to celebrate this with me, for they are much of the reason I have been able to serve. They, too, however, have obligations right this minute—conducting an all-region band, playing in a soccer game, attending school. We're a busy family.

Dolly Liburd Award Winner

Another group of people who have supported me are my colleagues. They have encouraged me when I have felt defeated, shared with me wonderful ideas, pushed me to do more than I thought possible, questioned me, challenged me to be better, advised me, comforted me...well the list



goes on and on. Some of these people I have worked with for long periods of time, others for only a short while, but each of them has brought to me new ways of seeing my professional life and thereby my personal life as well. There are the people I have taught with, the people who have been my principals, the people I have worked with through organizations across the state and nation, the people I have met only briefly, and the people I have met only through their writing. The support of these people has come in many forms – waiting on me to show up after I've taken care of my family responsibilities, helping me find time to do the work needed in positions of service by giving their time, working along side me when I asked for their help on some project. If I began to list their names, I would not be finished for hours, so instead I'd like the ones who are here today to stand. ... And to you I say thank you, for you continue to inspire me to work hard and to learn more and to serve.

I would not be here today if it were not for my students as well, both my high school students and my colleagues who have been my students in summer writing workshops. For these people,

Continued



From left to Right: Valerie Taylor, Eanes ISD, Edmund J. Farrell - Lifetime Service Award; Kayley Nielson, Stephen F. Austin State University, Future Educator Award; Dolly Liburd, La Porte ISD, Middle School Teacher of the Year; Shanna Stovall, Denton ISD, High School Teacher of the Year; Sarah Woody, Galena Park ISD, Elementary School teacher of the Year



Above: Shanna Stovall, Denton ISD accepts High School Teacher of the Year award from TCTELA President, Joan Curtis

Valerie Taylor, Recipient of Ed Farrell Award, Gives Acceptance Speech continued

I seek this life of service. I see in their faces the frustration and the joy that accompany learning, and what I see brings me back each day, wondering what else I can learn from them. They, too, have supported my life of service, allowing me to learn from them in order to share what I've learned with others, waiting patiently for papers yet ungraded, having a substitute while I attend a conference. I know that some of the ones I have taught in high school have now become teachers themselves, and I am thrilled that they too want to share this life. If any of my former students (high school or writing project) are in the audience, I would like you to stand now, too, because I want to thank you for supporting me.

I'll end now with a short anecdote. Several years ago, I listened as Ann Ruggles Gere delivered her President's message at the NCTE annual conference when she challenged the audience to give generously to the causes we live for in addition to the ones we might die of. I took her advice and started to give memberships to the organizations that had provided me places to connect

with other teachers and learn much about my practice as a teacher, Central Texas Council of Teachers of English, Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts, and National Council of Teachers of English. On Sunday at the general session, I will continue to do so, and three of you will "win" as a door prize a check to pay for a year's TCTELA membership dues. You may choose to keep this membership to extend your own membership for a year, or you may choose to pass it along to a colleague you would like to invite into our organization for the coming year. I do challenge you to try to bring a colleague with you next year to share in this experience of professional and personal growth, to extend this life of service by supporting someone else's ability to serve—that is what I hope to do.

Thank you. 

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Jeff Anderson: Self-Evident Truths About Grammar Instruction

Alana Morris

History students learn about *self-evident truths* in connection with the constitution and the United States' quest for independence. Members of TCTELA have come to know a few self-evident truths of their own. For one, if Jeff Anderson's name is on the program, the room will be full, even when it is early Sunday morning, and even when the topic is grammar.

The traditional pattern of grammar instruction in many classrooms dictates that students think they cannot "do" grammar, and teachers may come to believe they cannot effectively teach it. Jeff illustrated this point during his session by playing a clip of Kelly Clarkson's hit single "Because of You," where she sings, "Because of you I never stray too far from the sidewalk./ Because of you I learned to play on the safe side so I don't get hurt./ Because of you I find it hard to trust not only me, but everyone around me./ Because of you I am afraid."

While the lyrics brought hearty laughs, the truth hidden behind the words and behind the laughter remind us of why we, as master teachers, keep attending conferences and being part of professional communities and professional conversations. Jeff Anderson led the conversation during the final workshop of the conference and shared ways to engage students in meaningful activities with texts that shatter once negative perceptions about teaching and learning punctuation and grammar; he brought new self-evident truths to crafting writing and learning the rules of standard, academic language.

One truth is that students learn by positive models. Rather than using techniques such as *Daily Oral Language*, where students are bombarded by incorrect examples, Jeff demonstrated

how to use authentic text models (mentor texts) to show students how various authors use grammar and punctuation rules to impact meaning and to then provide time for students to analyze and thoughtfully emulate those structures.

A second truth is that academic conversation between students helps synthesize and solidify challenging and abstract grammatical concepts. The exploration of the mentor texts begins with students *noticing* what each author did with the sentence structure and punctuation. The conversations remind students that grammar and punctuation are chosen with intent rather than happening by accident. It is not about getting rules right; it is about having choices in how we use language to create meaning.

A third truth is that we do not have to use TAKS (now STAAR) drills to practice standardized test objectives. Jeff shared an engaging strategy where students read an excerpt from a text (in this case, from the latest Newbery winner, *When You Reach Me* by Rebecca Stead), and then compare it to the same excerpt that has been revised by adding details, combining sentences, etc. Students analyze both versions, deciding which is better written. Again, it is not about right answers; it is about meaningful conversations about texts.

One final truth that was evident—participants of Jeff's session left excited about getting back to their classroom and using his ideas and finding additional ways to blend reading and analysis of text in order to help students find value in exploring and learning grammar. Rather than "Because of You," the new lyrics for our classrooms will certainly be "Unstoppable" by Rascal Flatts. 

Nominate a Texas Educator*

TCTELA AWARDS

Dr. Edmund J. Farrell Lifetime Service Award

The Farrell Award was inspired by Dr. Farrell's profound impact on the profession of English/language arts education, commitment to excellence in the teaching of English, and continued dedication to service and support of the mission and purpose of the Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts. Those who nominate an educator should be TCTELA members. TCTELA reserves the right not to present this award each year.

Outstanding Educator in English Language Arts

TCTELA recognizes one English language arts professional in each of the following levels: Elementary School, Middle School, High School, and College / University. Recipients will receive an award and one year of free membership in TCTELA. Those who nominate an educator should be TCTELA members.

Future English Language Arts Scholarship

The Future English Language Arts Educator Scholarship is given to a college student who is preparing for a career in English education.

President's Research and Travel Grant

The recipient of the President's Research and/or Travel Grant will receive \$1,000 from TCTELA to continue research on a project that provides a positive impact to English language arts teachers in the state of Texas. Applicants must be a member in good standing of TCTELA at the time of application.

*Nomination forms available at tctela.org. 

Larry Scanlon and Renee Shea More Nonfiction

Valerie Taylor

Many of us struggle to introduce more nonfiction texts into our curriculum, given the many other genres that have traditionally filled our classrooms. These texts are, however, critical components of our students' literacy development. In their session entitled "Bringing Nonfiction Texts into the Curriculum: The Rhetoric of Sustainability," Larry Scanlon and Renee Shea offered ideas for using a wide array of texts to help students think critically about the world around them.

Using texts such as a speech by Lou Gehrig (www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/lougehrigfarewelltobaseball.htm); advertisements from The Nature Conservancy and HSBC (Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation); documentary films such as *An Inconvenient Truth* (and others you can learn about in John Goldman's NCTE publication *The Reel World*); and nonfiction books such as *Nickel and Dimed* by Barbara Ehrenreich, Shea and Scallon

recommend that students examine the written and visual texts to determine the ways rhetoric is influenced by the occasion as well as by who the speaker/writer is, what the subject is and who the audience is (the rhetorical triangle).

To help students learn to accomplish this analysis, Shea and Scallon recommend using Robert DiYanni's "Steps to Analyzing Visual Texts" (from "Reading Images" on AP Central at apcentral.collegeboard.com): (1) Make observations; (2) Connect the observations; (3) Draw inferences from the related observations; and (4) Formulate a tentative interpretive conclusion. They also recommend having students find examples of specific rhetorical strategies and examining the effects of those examples. Overall, the session offered a multitude of texts to look at and consider for use as well as time to practice some of the strategies recommended. 

Submission Guidelines for *English in Texas* Manuscripts

Manuscripts should be sent by e-mail as an attachment to bedardc@uhd.edu. Manuscripts should be double-spaced throughout (including quotations, endnotes, and works cited), with standard margins. Word 2003 or later is preferred. Authors using Macintosh software should save their work as Word for Windows. Please save copies of anything you send us. We cannot return any materials to authors.

- In general, manuscripts for research articles should be no more than 10 to 15 double-spaced, typed pages in length (approximately 2,500 to 3,750 words). Manuscripts for classroom innovation articles can be 8 to 12 pages in length (2,000 to 3,000 words).
- Tables and figures should be in separate file(s), but with their content included in the word count.
- Provide a statement guaranteeing that the manuscript has not been published or submitted elsewhere.
- Ensure that the manuscript conforms to the NCTE *Guidelines for Gender-Fair use of Language* at <http://www.dev.ncte.org/positions/statementsgenderfairuseoflang>
- Number all pages.
- Use in-text documentation, following the current style of the sixth edition of the *APA Handbook*. Where applicable, a list of works cited and any other bibliographic information should also follow APA style.

- List your name, address, school affiliation, telephone number, and e-mail address on the title page only, not on the manuscript. Receipt of manuscripts will be acknowledged by e-mail.
- Student consent forms for research based articles will be requested upon acceptance of the article for publication.

English in Texas is refereed, and virtually all manuscripts are read by two or more outside reviewers. We will reach a decision on each article submitted for a themed issue within two months after the submission deadline, and articles of general interest within five months after the submission deadline. In order to be considered, submissions must be received on or before the call deadline. The deadline for the next issue is April 15, 2010.

Submission Guidelines for Student Work for the Spring/Summer Issue

With a theme directed to *Building Bridges with Every Student*, we'd like to invite your students to consider bridging their understandings of themselves and their peers. Students may write about themselves using alternative genres such as spoken word poetry, instant messages, graphic designs, or short plays. They should use writing to tell others about themselves and their experiences, and to bridge school and pop culture through authentic genres. 

Essential Practices for Teachers of English Language Learners

Elsa Anderson

This workshop was presented by Dr. David Freeman and Dr. Yvonne Freeman, professors from The University of Texas at Brownsville and authors of multiple books including: *Academic Language for English Language Learners and Struggling Readers* (2008), *Dual Language Essentials* (2006) and *Closing the Achievement Gap* (2002).

The Freemans explained the following six practices aimed at addressing the academic needs of English Language Learners (ELLs):

- Know your students – Know whether or not the ELLs in the classroom were born in the U.S (about half of all ELLs are not immigrants but in fact are born in the U.S.). If students are immigrants, know how long they have been in the country and the extent of their prior schooling.
- Teach language and content – Ensure that students have real purposes and opportunities to learn and to use academic English while at the same time learning content. Infuse language use into each content area to support growth in academic vocabulary.
- Organize around themes – Connect the curriculum to students’ lives through cross-curricular themes and big questions. Draw on students’ language strengths by connecting the curriculum to their backgrounds through thematic units.
- Draw on students’ primary language and culture – Facilitate learning of English through the use of the first language. Preview/View/Review is a strategy where the lesson is previewed in the first language, taught in English, and again reviewed in the first language in order to increase comprehension. The preview and review sections can take place even if the teacher is not fluent in the first language, through the use of cognates (words with similar spellings and meanings in both languages), the use of culturally relevant books in the first language and through students’ work in same-language groups.
- Emphasize meaningful reading and writing – Implement teaching approaches that include a daily read aloud, shared reading, guided reading and independent reading. This sequence follows a gradual release of responsibility model moving from teacher dependency to students’ independence as readers. Build and/or activate students’ background knowledge.
- Develop academic language – Provide opportunities for students to bridge from conversational to academic English. Involve students in tasks that are cognitively demanding and context-embedded. Scaffold students as they engage in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Scaffolding can take place by introducing key vocabulary, guiding oral presentations, and providing writing opportunities. Teach academic language at the text level (through exposure to a variety of genre), at the sentence level (by deconstructing and reconstructing sentences) and at the word level (by developing oral language, by engaging students in wide reading, and by fostering word consciousness). 

Keynote Address by Regie Routman - Raising Expectations, Results, and Enjoyment for ALL Learners: What Does it Take?

Carol Revelle

With forty years of experience teaching, coaching, leading, and collaborating in classrooms, schools, and districts, Regie Routman shared the research and practices that lead to academic success for all learners. Concerned with excessive teaching and scripted programs, Routman reminds us that we should “assess kids – not too much – but mostly teach.” She urged us to remember the individual learner’s needs, and she questioned the notion of “fidelity to data” and “fidelity to the program,” asking, “Where is the fidelity to the kids?”

The largest civil rights issue today is that “students are entering middle school two to three years behind.” Routman calls this “the poverty of low expectations.” Since we teachers teach from our belief systems, it is imperative that we gain a sense of urgency to address this issue.

Routman’s Lessons Learned

- Celebrate everything the learner does well.
 - Raise expectations for all learners.
 - Teach and assess more effectively and efficiently.
 - Collaborate.
- Routman shared the stories and the work of real students and teachers with whom she has worked to increase expectations, performance, and motivation. She emphasized the importance of authentic work in the classroom for increasing interest. According to Routman, “if we don’t find it in the real world, it doesn’t belong in our schools.” 

Lake Travis Fiddlers Shine at Stubbs

Sue Mitchell



A stage full of talented teens led by Lake Travis orchestra director Anna Macias wowed the audience at Stubbs BBQ on January 23rd. The Lake Travis Fiddlers fiddled and sang and rocked to a full house for two hours. The event, “A Night Out Austin Style,” was held in conjunction with the annual state convention of TCTELA in Austin.

The outreach project for the convention was: “Yes, we can fight hunger. Yes, we can fight poverty. Yes, we can fight declining literacy rates!” TCTELA members donated \$3,120.00 to buy food for the Capital Area Food Bank. Half of the ticket proceeds for “A Night Out Austin Style” were donated to the food bank.

This year’s TCTELA convention was organized by Lake Travis Middle School language arts teacher, Marilyn DuVon, and her committee, including Leslie Meaders, Sue Mitchell, and Monica Clark, all members of the LTMS Language Arts Department. Six hundred language arts teachers from all over the state spent three days attending seminars and enjoying downtown Austin. 

Writing With Brush Strokes

Martha Medlock

I have had the pleasure of attending a Harry Noden workshop twice in my teaching career. The first time was when my view on teaching grammar had morphed from traditional grammar instruction to teaching grammar in the context of writing. I sat in awe of this man, this teacher of 30 plus years, who makes grammar come alive. The second time I attended a Harry Noden workshop was at the TCTELA conference in January 2010. I had the pleasure of introducing Noden to the attendees. Once again, I sat in awe as he talked about a second category of brush strokes: musical rhythms.

Well known as the author of *Image Grammar: Using Grammatical Structures to Teach Writing* (Heinemann, 1999) now in its 15th printing, Harry Noden introduced attendees to his new *Image Grammar Activity Book* (Perfection Learning, 2009), which includes a

Teacher Guide and Student Activity Book for both middle school and high school. Now before you scoff at the thought of “another consumable,” let me set the record straight. This new activity book makes grammar fun and easy. It provides oversimplified definitions, demonstrations, and activities for imitating and applying. This book takes students through useful grammatical strategies that invigorate writing and enriches grammar instruction.

Noden talked about the original brush strokes we all know: participles, absolutes, shifted adjectives, appositives, and action verbs. But the workshop introduced attendees (or at least this attendee) to the brush strokes of musical rhythms in parallel structure. There are three ways to create musical word rhythms: literal repetition, pure grammatical rhythms, and combined literal and grammatical repetition. Like

the first category of brush strokes, Noden explained them with oversimplified definitions, demonstrated how they worked, asked us to imitate them, and then we applied what we learned.

Participants walked out of the workshop armed with an arsenal of grammatical strategies and models that could be implemented the Monday after the conference. Thank you, Harry Noden, for making grammar useful and showing us how teaching it can be fun for all. 

Just a reminder! TCTELA is going online with *Texas Voices*! Make sure you don’t miss any news by keeping your e-mail address up to date with TCTELA. You can check by e-mailing info@tctela.org or calling 800.694.8680

Creating a Classroom Where Readers Flourish – Donalyn Miller

Carol Revelle

At one of the kickoff workshops on Friday morning, January 22, *The Book Whisperer*, Donalyn Miller shared how she “Creates a Classroom Where Readers Flourish.” We all do lip-service to the importance of creating life-long readers in our classrooms, but Miller shared how she successfully planned for and created the perfect environment for the readers in her classroom.

Here are her seven core ideas:

1. Carve out more reading time for students.
2. Embrace your inner reader.

3. Acknowledge the “Rights of the Reader” (Pennac).
4. Reposition Instruction around Independent Reading
5. Encourage students to make reading plans.
6. Validate students’ reading choices.
7. Promote students’ authentic responses.

Miller emphasized the importance of being reading models for our students and the importance of teaching students not books because learners are disempowered when they lose the

ability to choose their own reading. She ended with a recommended book list that her own students created. Active, independent reading doesn’t just happen by throwing beanbags on the floor and loading your shelves with books, especially with reluctant readers.

Last year, Donalyn’s students read an average of 57 books each, and it happened because of her intense focus and her careful plans. She literally creates a reading social network in her classroom where reading is its own reward. 

Yvette Jackson: Transforming Urban Classrooms Through Strengths: Making Students Smart Again

Mary M. Stockton, Lewisville ISD

Yvette Jackson turns standards on their heads. Instead of evaluating for weakness, she advocates assessing for strengths. Her philosophy, grounded in gifted education, insists that educators see giftedness in all of us, with an understanding of realities shaped by time, circumstance, and situation. Whatever challenges an urban setting presents, it is filled with students who have gifts to contribute. With this philosophical basis, wise educators build upon the students’ strengths and interests, connecting these attributes to highly challenging complex educational tasks. As a result, students-- especially the often marginalized urban student--can build bridges to academic achievement. More importantly, all students can benefit from this shift in emphasis from remediation to scaffolded development. Research supports Jackson’s claim that such an approach results in achievement that meets standards.

Because teachers and students cannot complete all tasks simultaneously, teachers must group and pare down extensive lists of standards in order to concentrate on those that produce the most learning. These fall into familiar categories, such as compare/contrast, apply, analyze, synthesize, and so forth. Cognitive skills, reflective thinking, cultural frameworks are all aspects of this achievement imperative. The following is a clear formulation: Learning = understanding + motivation * confidence and competence.

Thus students learn, most importantly, because that is what the brain does constantly. In the case of schooling, learning focuses on academics. Academic language is not found in the ordinary circumstances of life and is especially removed from students’ social situations. Yet, the brain seeks “engagement, challenge, and feedback.” All of these are well-known elements of effective learning—in and out of school. The chasm between the teachers’ culture and that of students requires a bridge. A prime example concerns familiarity with and use of digital texts. The bridge resides in the attitudes and decisions forming the foundation of Jackson’s philosophy of potential.

Moving to practical application requires respecting an almost unknown psychological fact. The brain can attend to only one item at a time, although most people can switch among items at lighting speed. As a result of this fact, educators need to keep in mind that they can have either learner’s attention to receive information or the learner can focus on synthesizing meaning. In other words, giving attention means the absence--in that time--of creating individual meaning. Meaning creation excludes giving the teacher attention. The rapidity that most can switch between the two obscures this little known fact. Nevertheless, teachers must keep the limitation in mind as they build lessons. As a result, when teachers deliver information, they need to stop

Continued

Yvette Jackson: Transforming Urban Classrooms through Strengths: Making Students Smart Again continued

every eight to ten minutes in order for students to process what has been taught.

In ending the gap between potential and actual achievement, Jackson provides a foundation in educational philosophy. That philosophy emphasizes the positive gifts that everyone has to offer society. The philosophy finds practical application in an analyses of differences between students and teachers' cultural frameworks. Jackson also offers a sensible application regarding lesson design that considers the limitations of attention. Thus result is Jackson's elegant equation: learning is understanding plus motivation multiplied by confidence and competence. 

NCTE has issued the following position statement to help teachers as they refine their curriculums to meet the demands of the new century.

NCTE Position Statement

A statement on an education issue approved by the NCTE Board of Directors or the NCTE Executive Committee

The NCTE Definition of 21st Century Literacies

Adopted by the NCTE Executive Committee, February 15, 2008

Literacy has always been a collection of cultural and communicative practices shared among members of particular groups. As society and technology change, so does literacy. Because technology has increased the intensity and complexity of literate environments, the twenty-first century demands that a literate person possess a wide range of abilities and competencies, many literacies. These literacies—from reading online newspapers to participating in virtual classrooms—are multiple, dynamic, and malleable. As in the past, they are inextricably linked with particular histories, life possibilities, and social trajectories of individuals and groups. Twenty-first century readers and writers need to Develop proficiency with the tools of technology

- Build relationships with others to pose and solve problems collaboratively and cross-culturally
- Design and share information for global communities to meet a variety of purposes
- Manage, analyze, and synthesize multiple streams of simultaneous information
- Create, critique, analyze, and evaluate multi-media texts
- Attend to the ethical responsibilities required by these complex environments 

The 2010 Affiliate Breakfast

Katrina Gonzales

Held in the Capital View Terrace room as the early morning sun streamed through the floor-to-ceiling windows, educators from across the state, representing their little piece of Texas, enjoyed an enriching breakfast and even richer conversations. Approximately 40 affiliate representatives attended the Affiliate Breakfast, sponsored by Pearson.

Martha Medlock, formerly Vice President of Membership and Affiliates who is, now, President-Elect of TCTELA, welcomed the attendees. Next, Katrina Gonzales, current Vice President of Membership and Affiliates, highlighted the various ways in which our organization is attempting to connect and communicate (e.g., via Twitter, TCTELA Ning, Facebook, etc.)

Several affiliate events are already scheduled for the year. The newly formed Concho Valley Teachers of English, which serves the area around San Angelo, will hold their first-ever conference on July 26th at the Education Service Center Region XV. Other areas of Texas interested in forming affiliates are the Longview area and the Brownsville area. TCTELA members who are thinking about forming an affiliate in your area are encouraged to contact Katrina Gonzales at katrina.gonzales@scisd.net or Kay Shurtleff at kayshurtleff@yahoo.com.

Regional and local affiliates encourage us as educators to step out of our classrooms to participate in professional conversations. Consider building bridges in your area by joining your regional or local affiliate or forming a new one this year. 

TEACHING FOR TRANSFORMATION

GALVESTON
JANUARY 21-23, 2011

46TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXPOSITION
TEXAS COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

PRESENTATION PROPOSAL FORM

PRESENTER(S) INFORMATION

Check all that apply. Please complete this information for each presenter listed.
Print clearly, providing information for all presenters if this is a joint presentation.
Attach another sheet if necessary. Your program confirmation will be sent via email.
Please make sure your email address is correct. Should it change, please notify TCTELA.

- First-time presenter
- Previous presenter at TCTELA Conference (most recent years ____, ____, ____)
- Previous presenter at a national conference [list organization(s)]



Primary Contact _____ Title/Position _____ Organization/Affiliation _____

Mailing Address _____ City, State Zip _____

Work Telephone _____ Home Telephone _____ Email Address _____

ADDITIONAL SPEAKERS

Name _____ Title/Position _____ Organization/Affiliation _____

Name _____ Title/Position _____ Organization/Affiliation _____

Name _____ Title/Position _____ Organization/Affiliation _____

PRESENTER NOTES

Please initial each statement to indicate your agreement.

- It is the obligation of each presenter to register for the conference and incur hotel and travel expenses.
- Overhead projector and screen will be provided. All other AV equipment is the responsibility of the presenter.
- Presenter(s) must be a current member of TCTELA. Membership in NCTE does not qualify.
- Proposals must be postmarked on or before October 1, 2010.
- Incomplete proposals will not be considered.
- Presenters and their representatives are prohibited from advertising and/or selling products or services before, during, or after concurrent session presentations. Presenters who wish to do so must purchase an exhibitor booth.
- Presenters are welcome to email handouts to TCTELA for web posting by December 10, 2010.



SESSION TITLE *As you wish it to appear in the program.* _____

SESSION OBJECTIVE _____

SESSION ORGANIZATION *Brief overview of what a participant can expect.* _____

SESSION ABSTRACT *Please limit to 50 words or less. This abstract will be listed in the program book.*

TOPIC(S) OF EMPHASIS *Check all that apply.*

- Multicultural Issues ELL/Bilingual Education Technology
- College Readiness Emergent Literacy Pre-AP®/AP®/Honors
- New to the Profession Gifted and Talented* Literature/Poetry
- Reading Comprehension Writing Other _____

**For Gifted and Talented and Pre-AP®/AP®/Honors, please send copies of the documentation of your G/T hours and yearly updates along with a resume showing your degrees, certifications, work history, etc. This information is sent to the Texas Association of the Gifted and Talented for G/T credit approval.*

INTENDED AUDIENCE

- Elementary (K-5) Middle School (6-8) High School
- College General (proposals of interest at all instructional levels)
- Other _____

AUDIO VISUAL EQUIPMENT

- I will bring my own laptop and projector system.
- I would like to order a TV/VCR. I agree to pay for the equipment rental before the conference (\$300).
- I will need an overhead projector and screen.

METHOD OF PRESENTATION *(Select one)*

- Research Roundtables (2/25-minute program) Workshop (2-hour program)
- Concurrent Session (1-hour program) Conference Mosaics (2/25-minute program)

THEORY/PRACTICE/RESEARCH RESOURCES AND/OR TRADE BOOKS FEATURED IN YOUR SESSION

Note: Presenters will be notified of the status of the proposal by October 31, 2010. Program participants must pay the conference registration fee (and membership fee if nonmember) in order to present at the 2011 TCTELA Annual Conference. Incomplete proposals will not be considered.



Complete form and return by October 1, 2010 to: TCTELA, P.O. Box 201796, Austin, TX 78720-1796