

TEXAS VOICES



A NEWSLETTER OF THE TEXAS COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

President's Corner

President's message

Thriving in the New Year by Margaret Hale, TCTELA President

It's hard to believe that the summer of 2017 is drawing to a close. As you wind down your summer and gear up for the 2017-2018 school year, make sure to focus on how you can continue to grow as a teacher so that you can be the best possible teacher for those with whom you work!

Meenoo Rami offers some great strategies for helping you be the best you can be in her book *Thrive: 5 Ways to Reinvigorate Your Teaching*. I encourage you to check out her book, but until then, try some of these tips!

First, find and rely on mentors. These mentors might be colleagues with whom you work at school, or they might be mentors outside of the teaching profession. Sometimes those outside the daily work we do help us see our work through an entirely different lens, and that can often be refreshing. In addition, try to **BE** a mentor to someone new to the profession or new to your building. When we give to others through mentorship, it reinvigorates our own teaching lives. Step out and find someone who needs some mentoring and be that person. Mentor them through conversation, by introducing them to TCTELA or another professional organization, or by sharing professional reading with them.

Another of Rami's suggestions is to join and build networks. You are already a part of a network because of your membership in TCTELA. You can work to continue building that network by making sure to submit a proposal for the 2018 conference in Galveston and then attending! Presenting at a conference is a wonderful way to build your network of colleagues. That way you have a network both in your school and colleagues outside your school as well. Looking for the link to submit a proposal? Click [HERE](#) to submit your presentation proposal!

Rami also suggests that to thrive, we need to keep our work intellectually challenging. For many of us, we entered the field of English teaching because we love reading and/or writing. So as you move into this new school year, make sure to continue finding time to read and write what you love. I've been spending some of my summer catching up on my reading, but I know there will be so much more to read even as classes begin at the end of August!

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When we thrive as teachers, we are working to ensure that we are the best teachers we can be for our students, and everyone wins. You can continue thriving by joining us in Galveston, January 26-28, for our annual conference. While there you will have the opportunity to learn not only from each other, but also from our guest speakers including Alfred Tatum, Jocelyn Chadwick, Anne Goudvis, Chris Lehman, Jan Burkins, Kim Yaris, Gravity Goldberg, and more! Follow TCTELA on Facebook and Twitter for updates and remember, get those presentation proposals submitted by September 15, 2017. I look forward to seeing you, both online and in person!

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Reference:

Rami, Meenoo (2014). *Thrive: 5 Ways to Reinvigorate Your Teaching*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Congratulations

TCTELA HONORED WITH THE 2017 NCTE AFFILIATE OF EXCELLENCE AWARD, THE 2017 KENT WILLIAMSON AFFILIATE MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT AWARD, AND THE 2017 AFFILIATE NEWSLETTER OF EXCELLENCE AWARD.



Executive secretary's report

By Katrina Gonzales, Executive Secretary

Jump on the bandwagon quickly and get your school signed up to attend the TCTELA Conference in beautiful Galveston, Texas. Our greatest revenue for our organization is conference attendance, so to ensure a healthy future for TCTELA, please plan to attend.

Our mission statement and goals and objectives drive our budget, so you will see a bit of a shift this year from allocating monies toward the development of the new ELAR TEKS to the implementation of those TEKS. Work is beginning on professional development to assist Texas educators in translating the new ELAR TEKS into classroom practice. PD2Teach is coming soon!

Also, our committees have continued to grow and develop; therefore, the budget will reflect more money allocated for the work of the committees.

We look forward to all of you finding your place in our organization in 2018 in Galveston!

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TCTELA wins three awards from NCTE

By Kristen Nance, Editor, *Texas Voices*



National Council of
Teachers of English®

The Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts has been named as one of seven recipients of the **2017 NCTE Affiliate Excellence Award**, given by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). The affiliate, whose president is Margaret Hale of Pasadena, Texas, has won the award nine times.

The Affiliate Excellence Award was established in 1996 to honor NCTE affiliates that meet high standards of performance for programming and promote improvement in English language arts teaching. Qualifications for the award represent standards of excellence to which all NCTE affiliates should aspire. Award winners fulfilled at least eight different criteria for excellent affiliate programming during the school year of application. The required criteria include:

- increasing membership in the affiliate or NCTE;
- publishing an affiliate communications instrument at least twice a year;
- conducting at least one professional development program for members;
- completing the annual affiliate report to NCTE by the deadline;
- achieving accomplishments such as implementing and maintaining a cultural diversity plan;
- developing a program to encourage new teachers into the profession;
- participating in an NCTE Affiliate Leadership Meeting;
- participating in at least three affiliate-sponsored activities at the NCTE Annual Convention.

In addition, TCTELA has been named one of seven recipients of the **2017 Kent D. Williamson Affiliate Membership Recruitment Award**. Membership in TCTELA increased by more than 33.7% from 2016 to 2017. Established in 1987, this award recognizes NCTE affiliates that have increased their memberships over the past year. Awards are calculated as a percentage of increase based on membership lists submitted by the affiliates in both the year of and the year prior to the award.

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Texas Voices, published four times per year, is a member of the National Council of Teachers of English Affiliate Information Exchange Agreement.

Finally, *Texas Voices*, published by the Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts, has been named as a recipient of the **2017 NCTE Affiliate Newsletter of Excellence Award**. Established in 1992, this award recognizes outstanding newsletters of affiliates of NCTE that have published a minimum of three newsletters from May 2016 through the program deadline on May 1, 2017.

Newsletter submissions are judged on: content (particularly the inclusion of current, pertinent information with a good balance

between theory, practice, and professional growth information), quality of writing, a clear and accurately defined purpose for the publication, a format which aids the reader in locating information and is easy to read, and the use of graphics to aid the overall effectiveness of the newsletter.

The award winners will be announced at the 2017 NCTE Annual Convention in St. Louis, during the Affiliate Roundtable Breakfast on Sunday, November 19.

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ELA/R TEKS update

By Tracy Kriese, NCTE Affiliate Liaison

On June 23, the Texas State Board of Education voted to adopt revised ELAR/SLAR TEKS for English I-IV. New TEKS for elementary and middle school language arts were adopted earlier in the year.

The adoption of high school language arts TEKS concludes a process that began two and a half years ago and involved the participation of hundreds of educators and many state literacy organizations, including TCTELA. Key contributions from TCTELA included commissioning the Education Research Center at Texas A&M University to survey educators about their opinions and use of the current standards, participating with other professional literacy groups to draft a framework for standards revision, conducting an online forum to gather educator input on the drafts submitted to the SBOE, and sharing written reports and public testimony with stakeholders. For more information about TCTELA's work in the ELAR/SLAR TEKS revision process, see the links provided at <http://www.tctela.org/about-community>.

The work now continues with professional development: what do educators need in order to be prepared to implement the new TEKS? Beginning in 2018, the Texas Education Agency plans to offer training that includes sample lessons and video models. Through its PD2Teach initiative, TCTELA commits to being an additional resource for educators, creating an online platform that connects teachers with research-based best practice ideas for implementation of the standards. Discussions about the new TEKS and professional development needs will continue at the annual TCTELA conference in Galveston January 25-28.

Implementation of the ELAR/SLAR K-12 TEKS will be 2019-2020 for elementary and middle school and 2020-2021 for high school. To view amendments considered by the SBOE throughout this process, visit <http://tea.texas.gov/curriculum/teks-review/>. That page will be updated soon with the final rule text of the adopted K-12 TEKS.

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NCTE 2017 annual convention

by Tracy Kriese, NCTE Affiliate Liaison

The 2017 NCTE Annual Convention will be held November 16-19 at the America's Center Convention Complex in downtown St. Louis, Missouri. This year's conference theme is Teaching Our Students Today, Tomorrow, Forever: Recapturing Our Voices, Our Agency, Our Mission. Program Chair and NCTE President-Elect Jocelyn A. Chadwick elaborates: "2017 is our year to celebrate ourselves, sing ourselves, sharing and melding our assumptions and aspirations.... We are English teachers, and we must recapture our voices, tell our stories, and be about the mission."

Keynote speakers include award-winning poet Jimmy Santiago Baca, who will share his personal story and passion for lifelong literacy; author Gareth Hinds, critically acclaimed for his use of the graphic novel genre as a way to approach literary classics; NASA astronaut and memoirist Leland Melvin, who will speak to chasing passion despite adversity; and bestselling, award-winning author Jacqueline Woodson, who will discuss how students of diverse identities and backgrounds relate to her works.

TCTELA will also have a role in this year's convention, participating in a Presidential Panel titled A State Affiliate's Quest to Bolster Teacher Voices: Connecting with State-level Politicians and Curriculum Directors. From the session description: "Leadership from the Texas Council of Teachers of English

Language Arts (TCTELA), in collaboration with state-level education officials, discuss how to navigate the murky waters of mandated ELAR standards revision and how to ensure that teachers' voices are represented in the process. Discover how to buoy relationships with politicians, state curriculum directors, and other professional organizations to ensure that teachers are informed and have an influence on decisions that directly impact students." TCTELA is honored to have this opportunity to highlight the important work that has been done over the past two and a half years of ELAR/SLAR TEKS revision in Texas.

NCTE convention registration includes all General Sessions, concurrent sessions, Special Interest Group meetings, the Now Screening film festival, NCTE Central and the Exhibit Hall. The deadline for advance registration is November 6, 2017. More information about deadlines and rates can be found at ncte.org/annual/registration/. Click the "See Workshops" tab for details about specific workshop options.

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NCTE VISION

NCTE and its members will apply the power of language and literacy to actively pursue justice and equity for all students and the educators who serve them. As the nation's oldest organization of pre-K through graduate school literacy educators, NCTE has a rich history of deriving expertise and advocacy from its members' professional research, practice, and knowledge. Today, we must more precisely align this expertise to advance **ACCESS, POWER, AGENCY, AFFILIATION, and IMPACT** for all learners.

<p>ACCESS: NCTE and its members will strengthen or create inclusive hubs for state-of-the-art practices, research, and resources, providing access for more diverse voices to create, collaborate, and lead, within and beyond the organization.</p>	<p>POWER: NCTE and its members will actively engage families, community members, administrators, colleagues, and other stakeholders and contribute to and critique policy at the local, state, and national levels.</p>
<p>AGENCY: NCTE and its members will be leaders in nationally recognized instruction, research, and assessment practices that support diverse learners in their journeys to becoming critical thinkers, consumers, and creators who advocate for and actively contribute to a better world.</p>	<p>AFFILIATION: NCTE's member-created communities will strengthen cross-community connections, information sharing, and organizing to collaborate more powerfully.</p>
<p>IMPACT: Ultimately, NCTE and its members' efforts will deepen every student's consciousness of worth and widen possibilities for all students' access, power, agency, affiliation, and impact, across a lifetime.</p>	

NCTE members will see the benefits of our collective work through the successes of our instruction, research, public advocacy, and, most critically, our students.



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TCTELA - Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts

 **Follow TCTELA on Twitter: @tctela** 

The annual NCTE Affiliate Meeting

By Kelly E. Tummy, Vice President, Membership and Affiliates

The NCTE Affiliate Meeting had a new vibe this year, an electricity in the air matched by the passion of NCTE leadership as well as all attending. It was the first time all affiliates were invited to attend instead of the split attendance of every other year, and this new format and the richness of the days in Atlanta gave affiliates a new vision. NCTE's vision is inclusive not only of the work affiliates do in language and literacy, but also of engaging many stakeholders to advance "access, power, agency, affiliation and impact for all learners" (NCTE, 2017).

Beginning with inspiration from two members of the NCTE leadership team—Vice President, Frankie Sibberson, a 3rd grade teacher from Dublin, OH, and Emily Kirkpatrick, executive Director for NCTE, affiliates and individual members were challenged to add their stories to the NCTE Village to create stronger agency among affiliates, to share stories, to build a community of connected educators. (Join here: <http://village.ncte.org/>) But not only were affiliates challenged in this way, after spending time with the new vision statement and hearing from different affiliates and author Sharon Draper, we were asked some challenging questions—"Are you a member of NCTE, of your affiliate, or do you just follow websites and Facebook pages? What does it mean to you to belong? We want an organization of members who feel a sense of community and who belong and share experiences with each other—what is your place?" And the

challenge over the weekend was to find places not only in NCTE but in our affiliates and to make affiliates stronger.

Affiliates were given the floor most of Saturday to lead the highlights and discussion over *Expanding Reach and Voice Via Social Media*, *Modern Approaches to Scholarly Journals*, and *Practices in Membership*. TCTELA was pleased to be asked to highlight the incredible work of *English in Texas*, our scholarly journal, and many affiliates took notes and asked follow-up questions regarding our systems and our hand-over process. As there are quite a few new affiliates starting across the US, it was great to see the Texas affiliate held up for such a strong example of a scholarly journal.

The completely restructured and retooled NCTE Annual Affiliate Meeting gave affiliates not only a time to shine but also to renew their focus, collaborate for a new year, and to see themselves going forward with NCTE. The new NCTE is an exciting organization to belong to, really belong; and TCTELA is excited to find a place among such vitality for literacy across the continent.

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Reference:

NCTE. (2017). NCTE Vision Statement. Retrieved 24 July 2017 from <http://www.ncte.org/mission/vision>

Calling all service-minded educators!

By Eve Zehavi, Editor English in Texas

English in Texas is looking for reviewers. We are dedicated to making our journal a premier publication in the teaching of English Language Arts and as such we would like to increase our treasury of reviewers. We are looking for diverse voices across the spectrum of Language Arts content, from educators with a wide variety of interests and areas of expertise.

Can a novice be a reviewer? Absolutely! New reviewers and novice teachers make great contributions because they often bring fresh and interesting perspectives to the process. No formal training is required, although there are myriad sites that offer guidelines and suggestions for reviewers. Just google "how to write a journal review" and you will get 64,700,000 links!

Why be a Reviewer? There are lots of reasons to be a reviewer. Reviewing is an easy way to build your resume as well as to get your name out into the educational community. On our board alone there are academicians, administrators, teachers, and librarians with whom you might be working.

Reviewing lets you get a sneak peek at the most current research and thinking in the field, giving you insights into new trends and important contributions. Moreover, as the sheer amount of information and number of journals increases, reviewing offers an excellent way to keep up with the literature (Pain, 2013).

Reviewing has the power to make you a better, more competitive writer. Having an opportunity to see firsthand the

strengths and limitations of research studies, the organizational structure, and the presentation of other authors can help you improve your own writing and give you and understanding of what editors are looking for (Annesley, 2012).

What's involved? If selected you agree to review no more than three manuscripts in a 12 month period. Reviewers are asked to read, comment, and return annotated manuscripts within 15 days. However, if you feel unable to complete a review within 15 days you can decline to review for that cycle. If you are interested, please let the editorial board know by contacting us at eintex@central.uh.edu. Use the word REVIEW in the subject line and you will be contacted promptly about joining our team. We look forward to hearing from you.

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References:

Annesley, T.M., (2012). Seven reasons not to be a peer reviewer—and why these reasons are wrong. *Clinical Chemistry, Guide to Manuscript Review*. DOI: 10.1373/clinchem.2012.182618.

Pain, E., (2013). Interactive peer review: What's in it for reviewers? *Science, Careers*. DOI: 10.1126/science.caredit.a1300077.

The artful do-over

By Diane M. Miller, Ph.D., TCTELA President-Elect

One of things I treasure most about teaching is the powerful *do-over* that we get each year (or even each semester). We push our students to be lifelong learners, of course, but it is incumbent upon us to emulate that eternal sense of wonderment and discovery. I always tell my students—pre-service teachers—that a reflective novice is a better teacher than a stagnant veteran. Each year should be viewed as an opportunity to research the latest best practices, fine-tune your classroom environment, enrich the diversity of your classroom library, and more authentically support your students' learning. Experience is valuable only when the power of the do-over is embraced!

In *The Numberlys*, William Joyce and Christina Ellis (2014) graphically narrate the ultimate do-over in a picture book that would be a perfect read-aloud to kick off your year. In the beginning, we encounter an orderly, numbers-only, gray world without “books or colors or jellybeans or pizza.” Next, we are introduced to five friends who are “wondering if they could do something...MORE.” Dissatisfied with the status quo, the friends embark upon a project to create something “DIFFERENT.” At first, their results are “awful,” but with hard work, they produce something “artful.” When the friends share their newly created alphabet, they fill their gray world with multi-colored “amazements.” At the end of their very industrious day, they are able to rest, proud of their “something new, something different, something more.”

Each new year of teaching provides teachers an opportunity to accomplish this type of transformative work. *What will you learn with your 2017 do-over?* While we may not create alphabetic metamorphoses, we do teach children to read, write, think, and contribute to their worlds in meaningful ways. Here's the thing: we are doing that work, year after year, in shifting worlds. That

is where the do-over concept comes in. Last year was not wrong, necessarily, but how will you push yourself to make this year the best it can be with an ever-changing set of variables?

The upcoming year brings new boundaries to cross, new topics to explore, new distractions to mitigate, new learners to inspire. In her influential book *The Right to Learn*, Linda Darling-Hammond (1997) argues that diversity in our classrooms—in curriculum, texts, experiences, and people—empowers students' thinking and participation in society. She advocates a multicultural approach, noting that such work can “help

students to develop an analytic frame for life in a democracy, seeing problems and ideas from many vantage points” (p. 126). In the current atmosphere of inflammatory tweets, fake news, and shifting loyalties, our students must be equipped for “analytic” lifelong learning. As I consider Darling-Hammond's words, I can hear song lyrics: “What the world needs now...” (David & Bacharach, 1965).

To make your 2017 do-over more “artful” than “awful,” consider ways in which you will recognize and embrace the various lenses, diverse voices, and multiple pathways inherent in our Texas classrooms.

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References:

Darling-Hammond, L. (1997). *The right to learn: A blueprint for creating schools that work*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Joyce, W., & Ellis, C. (2014). *The numberlys*. New York: Moonbot/Atheneum.

David, H., & Bacharach, B. (1965). What the world needs now is love [Recorded by J. DeShannon]. On *This is Jackie DeShannon* [Album]. New York: Imperial Records.

From the blogosphere...

Fill your tank with loads of instructional ideas at:
<http://twowritingteachers.org>

...to the website

Visit us online at: <http://www.tctela.org>

Texas Writing Pilot summary

By Shona Rose, Learning Leader, Region 16

House Bill 1164 (2015) asked TEA to explore alternative, and authentic, methods for writing assessment. Specifically, the bill specified the following assessment outcomes: (1) a student's mastery of the essential knowledge and skills in writing through timed writing samples, (2) improvement of a student's writing skills from the beginning of the school year to the end of school, (3) a student's ability to follow the writing process from rough draft to final product, and (4) a student's ability to produce more than one type of writing.

Last year, Regions 6, 10, and 16 participated in the first year of a two-year pilot program. Each region is also supported by a local Higher Education Entity in designing and conducting implementation of the program. In early September, participating regions, school and university personnel established goals for the writing pilot. According to these goals, the Writing Pilot:

- Will give teachers a framework they can follow.

- Is authentic assessment that is part of the natural instruction cycle.

- Will have a thoughtful and paced roll-out so that the program can be sustainable.

- Will encourage writing to occur across all grade levels, all content areas, and all classes, highlighting that writing skills are transferrable to a variety of students.

- Will emphasize that writing be made a relevant and integrated part of students' lives.

During the first year of the pilot the following documents were collected from approximately 2000 students across the state:

- An initial timed writing sample based on a specific writing prompt chosen by the student from a selection of writing prompts;

- A portfolio of two writing process compositions to demonstrate each student's skill in using the writing process to compose texts from two additional genres (e.g., personal narrative, persuasive, and expository); and

- A final timed writing product, written near the end of the school year, designed to produce a growth measure.

Teachers scored student documents using rubrics specifically designed for the pilot. This summer, blind scoring by non-teachers-of-record occurred at each service center. Results from both scoring sessions are still being tabulated by TEA and ETS.

In 2017-2018, the pilot will expand to double in sample size, but the program elements will remain the same. Year two will also feature an online platform provided by ETS to facilitate collection and submission of student samples to TEA. At the conclusion of the pilot, a report to the Texas Legislature will be compiled from the collective feedback from all participants.

Additional information about the pilot and associated documents are available for review at: [http://tea.texas.gov/Student_Testing_and_Accountability/Testing/State_of_Texas_Assessments_of_Academic_Readiness_\(STAAR\)/The_Texas_Writing_Pilot_Program/](http://tea.texas.gov/Student_Testing_and_Accountability/Testing/State_of_Texas_Assessments_of_Academic_Readiness_(STAAR)/The_Texas_Writing_Pilot_Program/)

(2015) Enrolled HB 1164 may be viewed at <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/84R/billtext/html/HB01164F.htm>
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Multigenre research projects: allowing students's voices and choices in research

By Katrina Gonzales, Executive Secretary

Research, the word that elicits more groans, or at least as many, as the word "homework" on a football Friday in Texas. Even when they lack experience with research, most students hold negative pre-conceived notions about the practice. Maybe they have heard horror stories from older siblings or their parents. Maybe they've watched a few too many Disney sitcoms portraying an ancient English teacher bedecked with a gray bun and a strand of pearls insisting that notecards must be labeled in a certain manner. Whatever the case, after implementing multigenre research projects in my 8th grade through 12th grade ELAR classes, research no longer strikes fear in the hearts of teenagers in my classrooms.

Multigenre research can be traced back to master educator, Tom Romano. From Tom Romano's *Blending Genre, Altering Style: Writing Multigenre Papers* (2000):

A multigenre paper arises from research, experience, and imagination. It is not an uninterrupted, expository monolog nor a seamless narrative nor a collection of poems. A multigenre paper is composed of many genres and subgenres, each piece self-contained, making a point of its own, yet connected by theme or

topic and sometimes by language, images and content. In addition to many genres, a multigenre paper may also contain many voices, not just the author's. The trick is to make such a paper hang together. (x-xi)

When I begin the multigenre research process, I draw on my beliefs regarding students' choice and students' voice. By allowing students to explore an area in which they have interest, the actual process of research is joyful and filled with curiosity. I might narrow the scope to a particular theme, such as when I required my English III students to research within the realm of the American Dream or when I required my seniors this past year to explore the theme of "Roots and Wings." Nevertheless, the students still retain their choice and their voice within these parameters.

After selecting their topic, for the first couple of weeks, multigenre research looks similar to traditional research in the classroom with students exploring the school's available resources, such as electronic databases and print media. Plagiarism lessons are woven into the first few days and touched on throughout the duration of the project.

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Around the third week, I introduce the students to a list of six genre categories with project ideas within each category. The stipulation is that everyone must choose one of the two possibilities from Section Six, which contains the more traditional research pieces: a persuasive essay or a report. (see “Visual of Group Choices”) These project ideas are what I have found along the way from other expert teachers and additional possibilities my students and I have added each year.

Because of the vast array of possibilities the students may choose from (I also allow them to create their own with my permission), the teacher spends 90% of the time working one-on-one with students as they develop their multigenres. About 10% of the teacher’s time will be spent conducting mini-lessons over MLA citations, plagiarism, as mentioned previously, and other brief lessons pertinent to the multigenre research project.

Some components of a multigenre research project which make it unique and different from a traditional research paper are:

Dear Reader Letter: written in 1st person and after the entire project is complete, this letter serves as a roadmap of the student’s learning throughout the research process. Quite honestly, the Dear Reader Letter is my favorite component overall.

Artifacts: chosen from the six categories with each showing a unique facet of the student’s research. In a multigenre research project about immigration, one artifact might be a letter from a recent immigrant to America to her family in Honduras. The facts the student gains in the research are enhanced by his imagination and writing skills. Another artifact might be an analysis of an interview the student conducts with a local immigrant. Again, another facet of the research is examined as if holding up a prism to a light.

Rationale Page: offers the reader/viewer an understanding of why the student chose each artifact. How did the artifact enhance the understanding of the research?

Repetend: creates a cohesive thread throughout the multigenre research. Oftentimes, a multigenre research project can seem “all over the place.” Repetend is to the multigenre research project as theme is to a novel. Students have chosen to use a word that is repeated throughout the project. Some have used a cartoon figure which changes slightly as the project progresses. Others have used a symbol which represents their research.

Other components of the multigenre project are similar to a traditional research paper: cover page, table of contents, and works cited.

During the 2016-17 school year, my school district had access to Sway, which is part of the Microsoft 365 Suite. To challenge my seniors, I required that they use Sway as a platform in which to house their multigenre research projects. While we had numerous issues (learning the new platform, losing information, etc.), when they finished their projects, the students were proud. Previously, I had the students complete the multigenre research projects on paper which proved to be quite cumbersome. Sway took their work and housed it on the internet in a beautiful, sleek location.

Click the links below for some of my students’ projects. If you have questions and need further information, I would love to share.

Christine’s Multigenre Research Project on Parasomnias: Christine was a sophomore in my Honors English II class. This was her first extensive research project.

<https://sway.com/xAjGfhVEMf13XNIX?ref=Link&loc=play>

Mathias’s Multigenre Research Project on being a first generation college student: Mathias was a senior this year and worked through the excitement and anxiety of being a first generation college student through his multigenre research project.

<https://sway.com/AUt30yz71wZ5fEsl?ref=Link&loc=play>
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Early childhood spotlight: Stories for the beginning of the school year

By Amelia Hewitt, Chair, Early Childhood Committee

The Name Jar

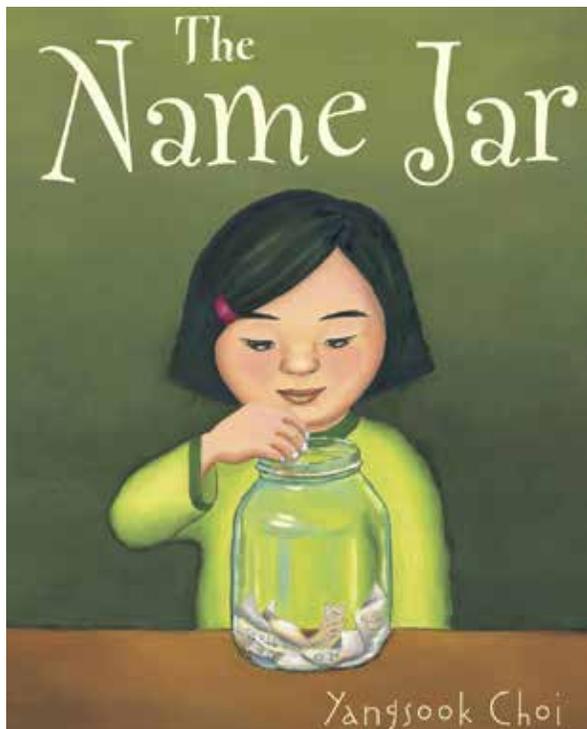
Written and Illustrated By: Yangsook Choi

Ages 4–6

Fiction

Unhei (pronounced “Yoon-Hey”) has just moved from Korea. She is introduced to the class, but when asked what her name is, she states that she hasn’t chosen a name. Unhei is afraid that her Korean name will not be easy for her classmates. So, she practices new names in the mirror (Amanda, Laura). Nothing seems to fit. The students in Unhei’s class decide to fill a jar with American names so Unhei can find a name. She tries the names but still nothing seems to fit. Joey, one of the students in her class, learns Unhei’s real name and its special meaning. When she arrived at school the next day the name jar was missing. It was time for Unhei to introduce herself. So, she introduces herself as Unhei, “Yoon-Hey” which means “grace”. She helps her classmates learn how to pronounce her own name, and learns how her classmates also have meanings behind their names as well.

The Name Jar is a delightful story that encourages children to appreciate the differences between and meanings behind everyone’s name. The story acts as a springboard for children to learn about diversity, moreover, to not only appreciate the person, but also the name that goes with the person.



First Day Jitters

Written by: Julie Danneberg

Illustrated by: Judy Love

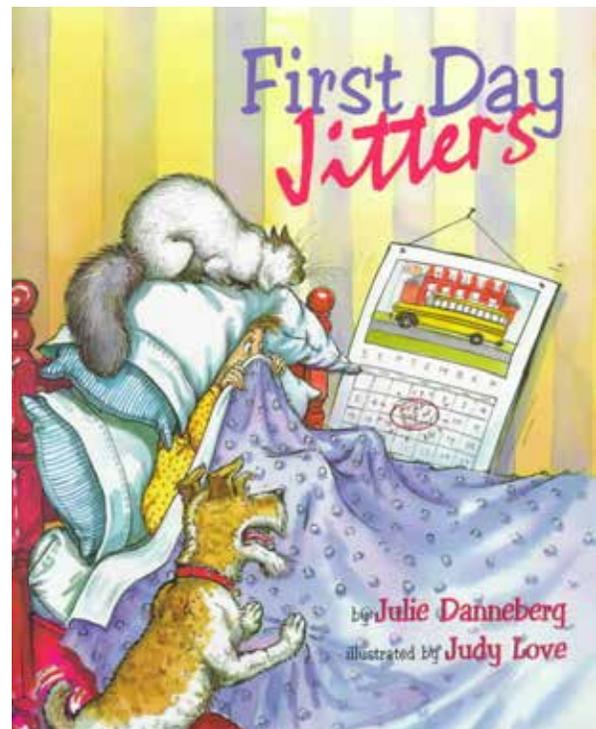
Ages 4–6

Fiction

It’s the first day of school. Sarah Hartwell does not want to wake up. She’s attending a new school. Mr. Hartwell finally gets Sarah to wake up and drives her to the new school. She meets the principal, Mrs. Burton. Mrs. Burton leads Sarah to her class. She brings Sarah to the front of the room and introduces her to the new class – “Class, I’d like for you to meet your new teacher, Mrs. Sarah Jane Hartwell”.

First Day Jitters is an amusing story that can be used to help children understand that they are not the only people who get nervous on the first day of school; teachers get “jitters” too. The story offers a great way to initiate a dialogue with children about their feelings on the first day of school.

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Disrupting Thinking

By Amanda Palmer, Secretary

Disrupting Thinking (Scholastic 2017) by Kyleene Beers and Bob Probst is a brave text addressing fake news, student apathy, social justice, the whole class novel, and change in education in general. This is just a sampling of the major issues addressed in less than 165 pages. Beers and Probst invite the reader to be brave along side them, join the discussion, and face these issues and others head on--to become part of the solution.

The premise of *Disrupting Thinking* is simple, grounded in Louise Rosenblatt's work. We can no longer afford to concentrate only on practices that teach students to merely extract information from texts, i.e. chapter outlines and plot diagrams. Simply knowing what a text says is not sufficient. We must grow curious readers willing to ask hard questions of the texts they read and ultimately of themselves and the world that surrounds them. Addressing this issue is a bit less simple, but Beers and Probst offer a path.

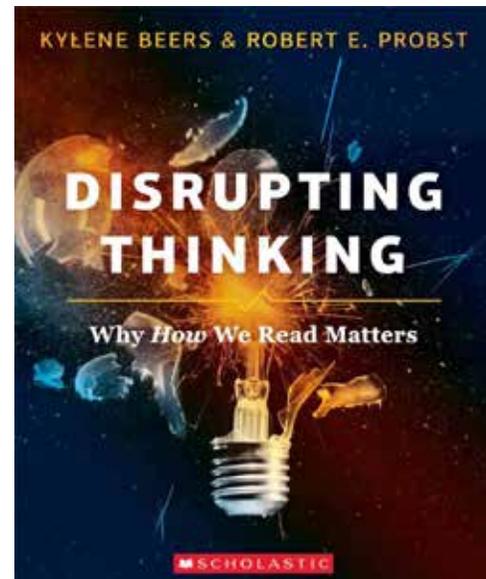
The book is well organized and vibrant, using full-color printing throughout. It is divided into three sections: the first part illustrates the type of readers we desire in a democracy, followed by a teaching framework to engage these readers, and ending with the changes we must embrace if responsive, responsible, compassionate readers are to emerge from our classrooms.

The words flow from the pages like a conversation among friends, but it isn't light-hearted. There is an urgency in Beers and Probst's words encouraging the reader to take action. True to its conversational writing style, the reader is offered a "Turn & Talk" section at the end of each chapter with discussion-rich questions to ponder and discuss with a colleague. Each of these sections is accompanied by a link to a video of Beers and Probst briefly discussing that chapter.

While Part I describes the responsive, responsible, and compassionate readers that fuel a democracy, Part II of *Disrupting Thinking* offers the Book, Head, and Heart (BHH) framework described as a "simple (but not simplistic) way to nurture that responsive, responsible, and compassionate reader we need" (55). It's a reminder that students must do more than gather information from a text. The framework encourages a balanced response to texts where extracting information is valued but no more important than the reader's personal transaction with the text. Examples of classroom use are provided throughout the book and span from first grade to post-secondary.

The authors interweave the Sign Posts, the Three Big Questions, and other strategies found in *Notice and Note* (Heinemann 2012) and *Reading Nonfiction* (Heinemann 2015) through Part II. *Disrupting Thinking* capitalizes on the learning from these texts and, like a much-awaited final book in a trilogy, brings all of the materials together in a manner that both satisfies the reader and encourages deeper thought. Reading *Notice and Note* and *Reading Nonfiction* prior to *Disrupting Thinking* is not a requirement for understanding the material, but having read them will assist with comprehension.

The final part of the book encourages teachers to embrace disruptive thinking in our profession in order to move from best practices grounded in what has worked previously to "next practices" that offer innovative solutions to current issues that will guide us into the future. Teachers are urged to question and think



creatively, to reach all learners, and ultimately to "take the risks that 'something new' requires" (106). The authors give high-stakes testing and the fear of low scores its due blame for educators' risk adversity while advocating a shift in thinking that focuses on the long term gains of a "lifelong, curious, compassionate learner" rather than the short term target of passing a test (109).

In "The Other Kids", perhaps the most impassioned and stirring section of the book, the authors take on the social justice aspect of "test prep" curriculum. They argue that the "belief that some kids should receive less help to achieve more is a bias that must be examined" particularly as those underachieving "other kids" are typically poor students of color (111). Perhaps the most powerful statement of the book declares, "Differentiation that results in diminished educational experience for *those* kids is not only wrong, it is shameful" (112).

The final sections of Part III are devoted to addressing relevance, silent reading, student talk, and even the whole class novel conundrum (they assert it is fine occasionally, but do not expect students to read the same book the same way).

Disrupting Thinking is a well-researched, reasoned argument in favor of changing our practices, even those long ingrained, in order to do what is best for kids—to prepare the young people who will soon run our country and carry democracy forward. It's a call to action that crescendos with these words:

We need to recognize that reading ought to change us. Reading ought to lead to thinking that is disrupting, that shakes us up, that makes us wonder, that challenges us. Such thinking sets us on a path to change, if not the world, then at least ourselves (161).

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Reference:

Beers, K, and Probst, R. (2017) *Disrupting thinking*. New York: Scholastic.

Still Life with Tornado by A.S. King: A revealing look at the impact of abuse

By Kim Pinkerton, Past President

For readers who love atypical, thought-provoking novels, anything by A.S. King would be a great choice. *I Crawl Through It* (2015) and, more recently, *Still Life with Tornado* (2016) are two of my favorites. While there are no invisible helicopters or girls who have swallowed themselves whole, *Still Life with Tornado* cleverly provides a glimpse into the life of a seemingly schizophrenic teen who is unable to face the various levels of abuse that she has endured.

Sarah, a.k.a. Umbrella, will not go back to high school because of Miss Smith and the liars in her art class. She spends her days in Center City in Philadelphia, stalking homeless Alleged Earl and taking classes in her school. Most perplexing is that she has regular meetings with herself at the ages of 10, 23, and 40. These versions of Sarah help her to make sense of the bullying that she suffers at school and the abuse, both mental and physical, that she sees at home. It is a painful, yet interesting, journey that the reader must walk with all of the Sarahs.

True to A.S. King’s style, there is a blurring of the lines between what is really happening to the character and what is taking place inside her head. Reminiscent of old films like *The Three Faces of Eve* (1957) or *Sybil* (1976), the reader is left to ponder which of Sarah’s actions are real and which are imagined cloaks

of protection for her fragile psyche. When Sarah’s mother and brother appear to interact with all of the Sarahs, the reader again must discern the factual from the artificial. These elements of ambiguity are skillfully woven throughout the novel and provide springboards for dialogue and inference. This is why A.S. King’s work is so fascinating; the reader must navigate the murky waters of obscurity.

On top of that, readers will find that this book looks at the many levels of abuse. While there is clearly physical abuse at the crux of the story, there are more subtle elements of psychological abuse that some may not see as dangerous. Readers will have to face the truth about the damaging effects of hateful language or vile high school pranks. Introspection may even reveal moments where readers themselves have engaged in these more covert acts of abuse. This is what makes A.S. King’s work so powerful; readers must confront who they really are and who they want to be.

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Reference:

King, A.S. (2016). *Still Life with Tornado*. New York: Dutton Books.

A fluency scenario from the Reading to Learn Academies

By Shona Rose, Learning Leader at Region 16

In 2017, the Texas Education Agency made Reading Academies available to elementary teachers in 4th and 5th grades. As a Region Service Center employee, I prepared the materials for the participants that would attend the summer sessions. The material seemed to be so clear and valuable. Unfortunately, a limited number of teachers qualified to attend the academies, so I have taken the information and compiled a scenario and work text to make the information available to other teachers. The scenario is reproduced here.



5th Grade Fluency Scenario:

Use slides 10-17 of the Reading to Learn Academies, Grade 5, Fluency PowerPoint (The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk, 2017a) to support your thinking as you work through this scenario. Handouts 1-7 (The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk, 2017b) offer additional support as well.

Background Information and Data:

Anna is an incoming fifth grade student. (Anna’s my grand-daughter. She’s not in the fifth grade nor is she struggling with reading, but isn’t she cute? I get to use her pictures for free!)

Her fourth-grade teacher reported that she ended the year on Guided Reading level at an O.

	Q			40
Grade 4	M			20-24
	N			28-30
	O-P	180-1280	740-875	34-38
	Q-R			40
	S-T			40-50
Grade 5	Q-R			40
	S-V	330-1280	875-1010	40-50
	W			60
	T-V			50

When Anna took the beginning of the year benchmark, she

continued on next page

struggled to finish reading all the passages and made a 60 on the multiple choice questions.

Her teacher pulled her aside to listen to her read aloud from one of the stories in their fifth-grade reading anthology. Out of 122 words, Anna read 112 of them correctly. From this data, Anna’s teacher was able to determine her accuracy and the reading level match for this text.

Accuracy: The formula for accuracy is: the number of words read correctly/total number of words read= percent accuracy. For Anna, this is $112/122= 91\%$.

Reading Level: Based on that percentage, the teacher can use the reading level chart to make some decisions about the child’s match to this text and can make some decisions for instruction. (NOTE: This “reading level” is not the same as Guided Reading, DRA, or Fountas and Pinnell reading levels.)

Reading Level	Description	Accuracy Level*	Setting
Independent level	This text is relatively easy for the student to read accurately without support. No more than approximately one in 20 words is difficult for the student.	95 percent to 100 percent	The student reads independently with little or no instructional support.
Instructional level	This text is challenging but manageable for the student to read accurately with support. No more than approximately one in 10 words is difficult for the student.	90 percent to 94 percent	The teacher provides small-group instruction to allow for modeling, scaffolding, and feedback to support all components of fluency (accuracy, rate, prosody).
Frustration level	This text is difficult for the student to read accurately. More than one in 10 words are difficult for the student.	Less than 90 percent	The teacher models reading the text and facilitates discussion about the text.

*Reading accuracy levels vary from text to text.

Adapted from Gunning, 2006.

Figure 1: from The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk, 2017b

STOP and THINK about READING LEVEL AND ACCURACY

1. What is Anna’s reading level for this text?
2. What support will this child need before, during, and after reading?
3. What small group placement would be most appropriate?
4. Is this text appropriate to use for this child?

Note: If the goal is to build this student’s fluency, the text must be at the child’s INDEPENDENT level.

Reading Rate: Anna’s teacher noticed quickly that most of the students in the class finish reading before Anna. It seems to take a long time for Anna to finish reading at the guided reading table too. Anna’s teacher googled fluency passages and found a passage for fifth grade. In one minute, Anna read 90 words and made 9 errors. The teacher subtracts the number of errors made from the number of words read in one to get Anna’s correct words per minute: 81.

Hasbrouck and Tindall (2006) did some research about reading fluency norms. The 50th percentile is considered normal. 10 words more or less than the suggested number is also considered normal.

5	90th	166	182	194
	75th	139	156	168
	50th	110	127	139
	25th	85	99	109
	10th	61	74	83

Figure 2 The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk, 2017b, 5: Fluency, Handout 2

Fluency Goals: It’s obvious that Anna needs to grow. At the beginning of the year, fifth grade students should be reading at 115 words

STOP and THINK about READING RATE

1. Based on the data in the second column, what conclusions can the teacher make about Anna’s performance on this passage?
2. What impact does her reading rate have on her class performance

per minute. By the end of the year, students should be reading 139 words per minute. Fifth grade students are supposed to grow 24 words per minute throughout the year. Most fifth-grade students can grow between .5 and .8 words per minute each week.

The following findings from a research study (Fuchs, Fuchs, Hamlett, Walz, & Germann, 1993) can help teachers establish appropriate goals for weekly fluency improvement.

Grade	Recommended Weekly WCPM Gain
1	2 to 3
2	1.5 to 2
3	1 to 1.5
4	0.85 to 1.1
5	0.5 to 0.8

Fuchs, L. S., Fuchs, D., Hamlett, C. L., Walz, L., & Germann, G. (1993). Formative evaluation of academic progress: How much growth can we expect? *School Psychology Review*, 22, 27–48.

Figure 3 The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk, 2017b, 5: Fluency, Handout 3, p. 1

Anna needs to grow 49 words per minute this year to reach grade level expectations. If the school year has 33 weeks, that means Anna can probably grow 16.5 words with normal instruction. Anna needs to grow 3 times as many words to reach the end of year goal - $16.5 \times 3 = 49.5$! At the end of the year, she could be expected to be at 107 words, which keeps her at the 25% for performance. Clearly, Anna will need additional support and intensive intervention. But when we divide 49.5 words by the number of weeks available, it seems more manageable. Anna would only need to grow 1.5 words per week.

Tip: This website has calculators and other resources to help evaluate and monitor fluency: <http://fluentreader.org/index.html>

STOP and THINK: About SETTING FLUENCY GOALS

1. How would you select weekly or biweekly goals for Anna?
2. How would this data determine the intensity and type of instruction for Anna?
3. How would you set a midyear fluency benchmark for Anna?

Monitoring Fluency: This chart shows how a teacher and student might keep track over reading fluency over time. Notice that the student times herself with a cold read, after practice, and then a final time when she reads to her teacher or to a peer.

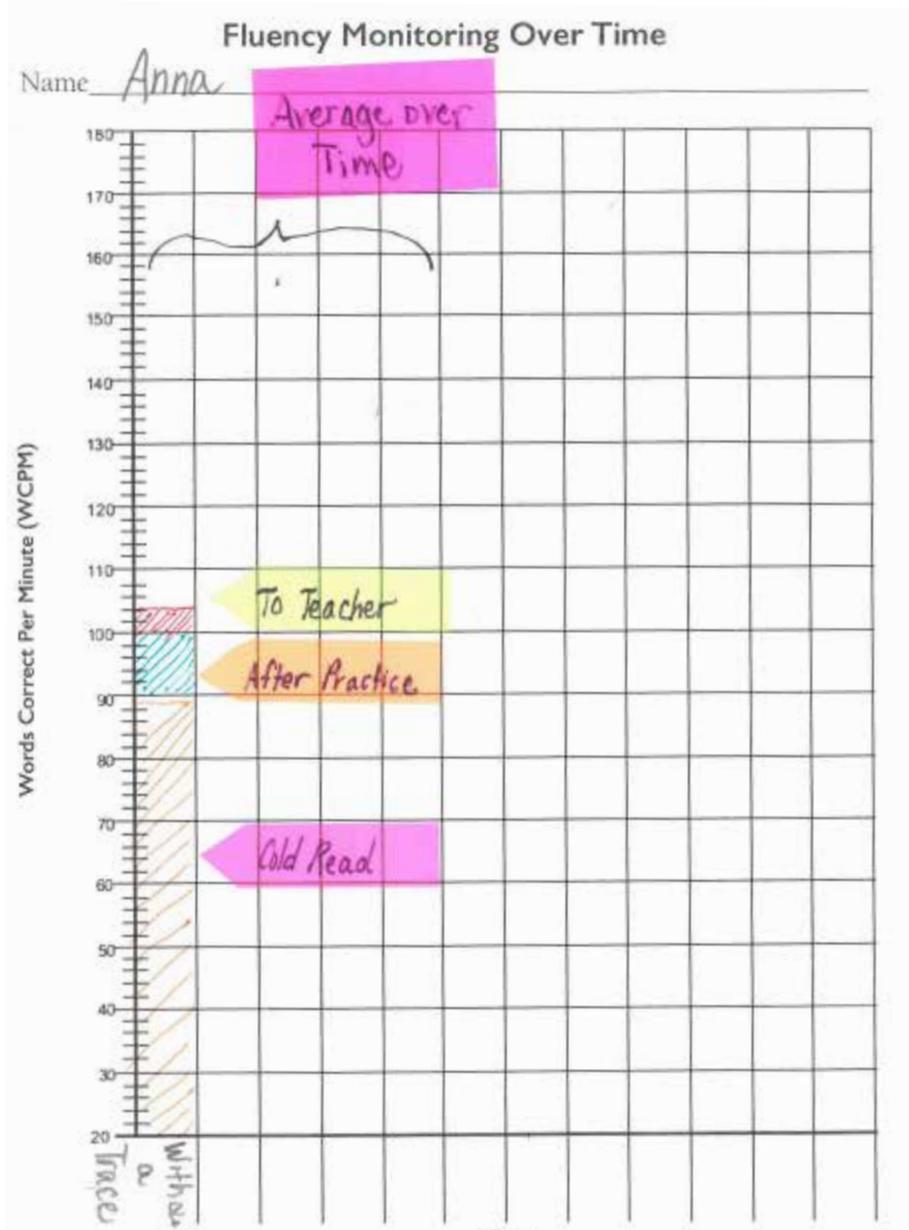


Figure 4 Adapted from The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk, 2017, 5: Fluency, Handout 4, p. 1

Evaluating Fluency Errors: When listening to Anna read, her teacher marked the errors on her fluency passage, noting an insertion, hesitation, mispronunciations, and substitutions.

Prosody: As text difficulty increases, due in part to syntax becoming more relevant, prosody becomes an element of fluency that requires direct instruction and monitoring. First, select a text at the student’s independent level. Aim for 200 words that include a

STOP and THINK about EVALUATING FLUENCY

1. Based on Anna’s miscues, what mistake most impedes her progress?
2. What knowledge about sounds and words does Anna need to learn? (content)
3. What cues is she attending to or disregarding? (Meaning, Structural, Visual)
4. What decoding skills/strategies does Anna need to use at the point of her difficulties? (process)

variety of dialogue, emotion, punctuation, and sentence structures. Listen to the student read aloud, paying particular attention to

STOP and THINK about PROSODY

1. Based on the student's prosody, does the student use punctuation and meaning to interpret the sentences?
2. What elements of prosody need direct modeling or explicit teaching? (content)
3. What strategies can the student use to improve prosody, or phrasing? (process)
4. In examining the student's prosody, reading rate, accuracy, and reading level, what conclusions can be made about the level, type, and intensity of reading instruction or intervention?

stress, phrasing, intonation, expression, and pausing. Use a rubric to evaluate and interpret the student's reading.

Additional Resources:

Chunked Texts: http://www.fcrr.org/documents/sca/G4-5/45FPartTwo_Chunked_Text.pdf

Connected Texts: http://www.fcrr.org/documents/sca/G4-5/45FPartTwo_Connected_Text.pdf

Phrases: http://www.fcrr.org/documents/sca/G4-5/45FPartTwo_Phrases.pdf

Word Parts: http://www.fcrr.org/documents/sca/G4-5/45FPartOne_Word_Parts.pdf

Words: http://www.fcrr.org/documents/sca/G4-5/45FPartOne_Words.pdf

Partner Reading with Retell: <http://buildingrti.utexas.org/lessons/fluency-partner-reading-retell>

Paired Reading: http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/paired_reading

Reading Fluency as a Neglected Skill: <http://buildingrti.utexas.org/links-websites/reading-fluency-viewed-neglected-skill>

Target 2%: Lessons to Support Fluency Grades K-5: <https://www.texasgateway.org/resource/target-2-lessons-support-fluency-grades-k-through-5>

Timed Repeated Readings: http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/timed_repeated_readings

Image Sources:

Amarillo ISD. (2017). *2017-2018 Calendar*. [PDF document]. Retrieved from [http://www.amaisd.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_18929979/File/Calendars/AISD%20Calendar%20REV%202017-2018%20\(3\).pdf](http://www.amaisd.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_18929979/File/Calendars/AISD%20Calendar%20REV%202017-2018%20(3).pdf)

Scholastic. (n.d.). *Guided reading leveling chart*. [Infographic]. Retrieved from <http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/book-selection-tips/parents-guide-to-guided-reading>

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The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk. (2017a). *Grade 5 Reading to learn academy*. Austin, TX Retrieved from http://jukebox.esc13.net/vgcdeveloper/Grade5Academy/PresentationFiles/RTLA_G5_Presentations_Day1.zip

The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk. (2017b). *Reading to Learn Academies, Grade 5. Participant Guide* [PDF document] Retrieved from <https://www.texasgateway.org/resource/reading-learn-academy-grade-5-trainer-resource>

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CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Review the submission guidelines at <http://www.tctela.org/english-in-texas>

English in Texas, Vol. 48.1 (SPRING/SUMMER 2018)

Theme: Fueling Our Fires to Thrive as Teachers

Manuscript Deadline: April 1, 2018

Column Deadline: May 1, 2018

Call for Submissions: The 2018 conference theme is “Fueling Our Fires to Thrive as Teachers: An Energy Exploration.” Teaching is hard work, and every one of us knows that. We spend time trying to find just the right lesson for a standard we want to teach that will engage our students. We spend time trying to figure out which of those books in our classroom library will be the perfect fit for the one student who hasn’t engaged in reading yet. We spend time reading our students’ writing and giving them constructive feedback. And sometimes, there just doesn’t seem to be enough time to get it all done! Not only are we fighting to find the time to get it all done, we are also fighting to make sure that our voices are heard—in our schools, our districts, at the state level, and at the national level as well.

Don Graves, in his book *The Energy to Teach*, talks about the emotional roller coaster that teachers experience every day. He writes, “At times you will be second-guessed by parents, administrators, and pundits who have never taught. Laws will be passed that try to govern the teaching transactions you make with children” (p. 2). This emotional roller coaster he talks about drains our energy and makes it harder to be effective in our roles.

How do we combat the draining effect that all of this has upon our professional and personal lives? Graves would tell us that first we have to account for our time and energy and decide which activities gives us energy, which activities take energy away, and which activities are neutral. He would next instruct us to look at those things that take energy away and come up with a plan to make them into energy gains. Can we do this? Certainly we can! However, there are some strategies that might make this a little easier.

Networking and making connections across our schools, districts, and states is one way to make it easier. Broad connections help, but finding that one colleague, according to Graves, is also a benefit and a way to find more energy in your teaching. Meenoo Rami, in her book *Thrive*, provides many other ideas for helping to stay energized in your teaching, from finding connections, to listening to yourself, and even to keeping your work challenging! In her book *Conversations*, Regie Routman reminds us that in order to be professionals, we have to challenge ourselves not only in our professional lives, but in our personal lives. She writes that, “Without interests and time spent in activities and endeavors we love, our focus becomes pretty narrow.” We have to be more than one-dimensional for our students. If we aren’t interesting people, they aren’t going to be interested in our classrooms!

So we invite you to explore the ways in which you find the energy to be fully present in your teaching. What are your interests that enrich your teaching? What activities give you energy? How do you take activities that might be energy drains and turn them into energy gains? How do you find connections with colleagues, in your school and beyond the school walls? How do these connections impact your teaching?

We encourage you to think about these questions, and we invite interested individuals to submit manuscripts, conceptual, pedagogical, research-based, and theoretical, as related to this topic of “Fueling Our Fires to Thrive as Teachers.” Please refer to the *English in Texas* website for manuscript submission guidelines. Do not hesitate to contact the editorial team at EnglishinTexas@uh.edu should you have any questions.

Furthermore, we invite interested individuals to submit ideas for our Spring/Summer columns, “Putting It All Together” and “The Tech-Savvy Teacher” as related to the theme of “Fueling Our Fires to Thrive as Teachers.” The below descriptions detail each column as well as provide information for contacting the editorial team regarding your column idea. Please query the editorial team **BEFORE** submitting your full column.

The columns to be published in the Spring/Summer Issue:

Putting It All Together: This column focuses on opportunities teachers provide to integrate reading, writing, listening, and speaking. What are some successes you’ve had in integrating reading, writing, listening, and speaking? What resources have you consulted? How do your students respond to integrated lessons as opposed to isolated lessons? To submit a column for publication consideration, please contact the editorial team at EnglishinTexas@uh.edu.

The Tech-Savvy Teacher: This column focuses on ways to incorporate technology into your daily teaching. What are some technology tools you’ve found useful? How do these tools inform your instruction? How do students respond to these tools? What is required to use these tools? To submit a column for publication consideration, please contact the editorial team at EnglishinTexas@uh.edu.