

## President's Message

Conference- from the Latin origin *conferre*, meaning to bring together for consulting or discussion . . .

This past February, TALE members came together to *confer* about the literacy stories they have experienced, explored, and discovered over the past year. What a wonderful opportunity this was! We listened to inspirational presenters that helped continue the momentum of transforming literacy in the lives of Texas students and teachers.



*Conference...* it is such a powerful part of literacy! We conference with each other about approaches and research, but in our field of classroom education, *conferencing* is the thread needed to transform a learning moment into one that is synergistic for our students when we have them participate in the act of reading, writing, thinking, speaking, and listening to others and themselves. Whether it is at a state conference or a corner in a classroom for a student ... having a venue to share these literacy experiences is vital for nurturing the *art* of holding a conversation. For when we meet together to share, we build the bond toward owning our literacy stories.

Thank you to our Keynote Speakers Donalyn Miller and Steven Layne for giving us wonderful things to *listen* and *think* about! Thank you to our presenters for *speaking* to us about your impactful literacy stories. And thank you to our Conference Planning Committee Director, Roberta Raymond and her team for carving out such a wonderful space for us to *conferre*!

To complete this synergetic experience, I encourage presenters to write your stories for the Yearbook so that we can read and explore more about how TALE is inspiring and transforming literacy in Texas!

Happy conferring!



Patricia Durham  
Assistant Professor  
Sam Houston State University  
2014-2015 TALE President

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### Special points of interest:

- Conference Highlights!
- Congratulations
- Hoot!Hoot!Kahoot!
- ELL Strategies
- Advocacy Information
- *The Day the Crayons Quit* and *The Fourteenth Goldfish*

"There is more treasure in books than in all the pirate's loot on Treasure Island." — Walt Disney



## TALE's 2015 Conference Rocked!



Thank you to Mary Lafleur for sharing photos for the newsletter.

The TALE 2015 Conference was held on February 21st at Sam Houston State University in the Woodlands. The theme of the conference was "Inspiring and Transforming Literacy" to reflect ways our organization can impact practice as it continues to advance literacy education. Approximately 225 members attended the conference, a sign that TALE's young organization continues to grow and expand in members and resources. The conference included presentations from Donalyn Miller and Steven Layne as well as many other expert presenters during morning and afternoon sessions. This issue of TALE's newsletter contains a few highlights from the weekend. We hope each conference will continue to grow in numbers. Please consider joining us at next year's Literacy Summit, co-hosted by TALE and IRA's Specialized Literacy Professionals, to be held February 12-13, 2016, at the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, Texas.



Pictured above are members Frances Gonzales-Garcia and Jamie Larson at Saturday's conference session "Re-energizing Poetry!" To the right, conference attendees pose for a selfie!



TALE's Friday night social was a success! Pictured above on the left are board members Laurie Sharp and VP Robbie Raymond at TALE's social. Pictured above on the right are TALE members from Central, Texas, including board member Karen Estes, librarian Lori McLaughlin, and newsletter editor Jodi Pilgrim. The social was well-attended and provided an opportunity for members to get acquainted.



## The Jack Cassidy Distinguished Service Award...The envelope please.

As many of you know, TALE has chosen to honor our own Dr. Jack Cassidy by establishing an award in his honor. The first award was offered at our Round Rock conference in 2013. As was fitting, we awarded it to our founder Dr. Cassidy. This year we began our search for the second recipient. To our delight many highly qualified people were nominated from the field. However, Dr. Stephanie Grote-Garcia stood out not only as a literacy scholar and a master teacher with a wealth of classroom experience in literacy, but as one member who has devoted significant time to creating and growing our beloved Texas Association of Literacy Education.

Dr. Grote-Garcia is known for her work, alongside Dr. Cassidy, on literacy trends and issues as exemplified in their column in *Reading Today*, "What's Hot, What's Not." She has also authored 11 books promoting literacy education, published a multitude of articles and chapters, and presented at local, national and international professional meetings. She currently is the Sister Theophane Power Endowed Chair in Education at The University of the Incarnate Word, where she teaches and conducts research in literacy education.

I am pleased to present to you our own Dr. Stephanie Grote-Garcia as the 2015 recipient of the Jack Cassidy Distinguished Service Award.

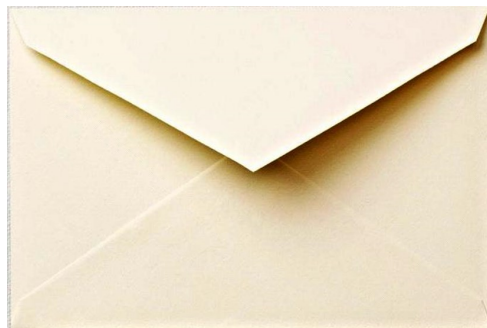
Dr. Grote-Garcia can be reached at The University of the Incarnate Word at [grotegar@uiwtx.edu](mailto:grotegar@uiwtx.edu).



**Dr. Stephanie Grote-Garcia**

Congratulations Stephanie!

*By Sharon O'Neal  
Texas State University*



*Are you interested in serving on TALE's Award Committee? If you are interested in this role, please contact Patricia Durham, chair of the 2015-2016 Committee. She may be reached at [texasreaders.org](http://texasreaders.org).*

To nominate an individual for the 2015-2016 TALE award, please submit the nomination form to Patricia Durham, [talemembership@gmail.com](mailto:talemembership@gmail.com). Guidelines can be found on the TALE website at [texasreaders.org](http://texasreaders.org).

**Deadline: October 31, 2015.** Award presented at the 2016 TALE Literacy Summit held at the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio (hosted by TALE and IRA's Specialized Literacy Professionals).



## Donalyn Miller at TALE

by Melinda Lucko

How to accelerate a reader? This was one of the first questions prompted by Donalyn Miller in her presentation at the 2015 TALE Conference. After giving the audience her impressive credentials - an English and Social Studies teacher for 4th, 5th, and 6th grade, co-founder and contributor of [www.nerdybookclub.com](http://www.nerdybookclub.com), and the author of *The Book Whisperer* and *Reading in the Wild* - Miller continued to describe her dilemma. Her students read numerous books throughout the school year in her class but did not continue their reading habit afterwards. For the students to continue the reading habit, Miller realized they needed to progress to the next level. The students needed to become independent readers. Miller spent the rest of the session sharing how she was able to assist her students in moving to the next level.

Miller, along with fellow teacher Susan Kelley, set out to find the answers to the question, *What are the habits of lifelong readers?* They sent out surveys to adult readers and received over 800 responses. From the survey, the educators were able to identify five habits shared by the responders. Miller shared three of the five habits with the TALE audience: time to read, self-selecting reading material, and sharing books and reading with others.

The first habit of lifelong readers is they dedicate time to reading. To promote this habit, teachers need to provide time for students to independently read for about 15 to 30 minutes a day. This allotted time gives students the opportunity to become more engaged in their reading. Lifelong readers also responded that they read at home and in the edges - any free moment during the day. Teachers should model and expect students to read during the waiting pockets throughout the school day - waiting in line (bathroom, cafeteria, etc.), waiting for school buses, and waiting for next class activity.

The second habit of lifelong readers is they successfully self-select books. In the classroom, students must have access to books. The recommended classroom library consists of an organized, current, diverse, and abundant book collection. New books should be added and out of date books should be taken out. The book selections should include at least two years above grade text levels and contain diverse genres and ethnic texts. The classroom library should contain up to 1,000 books which will allow seven books for each student at one time.



When students are selecting, reading and responding to books, teachers need to provide direction. Areas of assistance include the type of content (the topic), the process (how it is done), the product (the evidence), and the learning environment (what conditions reading occurs in such as proximity seating; independent or in groups). Matching readers to text successfully should be based on the reader's motivation, their background knowledge, and their reading level.

The last habit of lifelong readers imparted by Miller was sharing books among readers. Readers are social and love to discuss books with one another. Beginning readers and young readers are not the exception. Students love to talk with other readers in their reading community and need opportunities to share their books with the class. Teachers can offer opportunities in weekly classroom book talks by students and school staff.

Miller's account of her journey in discovering how to help her students become lifelong readers was rejuvenating and empowering to the audience. She created opportunities for educators to return to the classroom and pass on the excitement of reading to their students.

*Melinda Lucko is a 3rd grade ELA/Reading teacher at Academy Elementary School in Academy, Texas.*

## Dr. Steven Layne Ignites Audience with His “Confessions of a Reading Arsonist”

by Amy Cummins

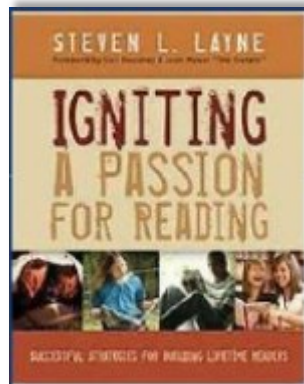
Reading arsonists like to set three types of fires: bonfires, flash fires, and wildfires. Dr. Steven L. Layne explained these metaphors during his presentation as one of the key-note speakers at the 2015 TALE Conference.

Dr. Layne examined how teachers can create a positive reading climate at their schools. A bonfire is planned for and prepared; a flash fire occurs suddenly when two combustible materials come together; and a powerful way to start a wildfire is simply “A good book read well.”

Dr. Layne drew on ideas developed in his two scholarly books: *Igniting a Passion for Reading: Successful Strategies for Building Lifetime Readers* (Stenhouse, 2009) and *In Defense of Read-Aloud: Sustaining Best Practice* (Stenhouse, 2015). He has published 26 books for various audiences, including picture books, poetry books, young adult novels, as well as scholarly books for readership by K-16 educators. In Elgin, Illinois, at Judson University, Dr. Layne works as Professor of Literacy Education.

His most awarded book is the YA novel *This Side of Paradise*. It won the Hal Clement Award for Best New Science Fiction Novel for Young Adults. Dr. Layne revealed that the third book in the Paradise series is currently underway. Lively delivery of his picture book *Love the Baby* powerfully demonstrated his abilities in reading aloud, a practice he urged teachers at all grade levels to use.

Exciting anecdotes helped Dr. Layne reinforce messages. The audience roared with laughter at stories about Pierre, who pulled the fire alarm at the nursing home during a field trip, and about Dr. Layne’s daughter, who called 9-1-1 on a neighbor’s cell phone because “It’s the only number I know, and I never get to call anyone!”



Dr. Stephen Layne presenting to TALE members at the 2015 conference at Sam Houston State University.

Dr. Layne challenged the audience to think about what they would like the reading climate to be like at their schools and then to take steps to bring about that change. “Kids will read. They need adults who care to put them in touch with good books.” He urged teachers to read many books targeted for the grade level they instruct and to share these books with students.

Sustaining professional development is urgent for teachers who want to change the reading culture of their schools. TALE members in attendance certainly agreed about the value of what they heard in Dr. Steven Layne’s presentation and during the conference as a whole.

Amy Cummins works as an associate professor of English at the University of Texas Pan American in the Rio Grande Valley. She is also a current TALE board member.

## A Message from TALE's State Coordinator

What a winter we have experienced in North Texas! The day I returned home from the TALE Conference, an ice storm moved into the DFW metroplex. I admit that I was grateful that I made it home before the inclement weather. I was also glad that I had attended the TALE Conference and was able to learn from many speakers, especially Donalyn Miller and Steven Layne. I hope that you also had the good fortune to attend this conference because it was a great professional development opportunity.

At the conference, I was able to share information about setting up local chapters of the International Literacy Association in Texas. Our Council Advisor from ILA, Angela Rivell, provided me with the application forms that are the beginning of this process. If you are interested in becoming part of a local chapter affiliated with both TALE and ILA, please email me and I will be happy to send you information about the process. A chapter in North Texas is in the process of being formed. If you live in this area, please

contact me and I will be happy to send you information about our plans.

As you make plans for the summer, you won't want to miss the ILA Annual Conference in St. Louis, Missouri. The conference is set for Saturday, July 18 through Monday, July 20 with pre-conference institutes on Friday, July 17. Visit the ILA website for more information about registration and hotel reservations. As always, the conference will be a fantastic learning experience as well as a chance to visit with friends. I hope to see you there.

Lorene Reid  
TALE State Coordinator







## Featured Technology Tool—Hoot! Hoot! Kahoot!

by Mandy Vasek

What is a secret ingredient to a rich learning environment at any level? The answer is ... #gamification! The process of gamification utilizes game-thinking mentality mixed with game mechanics to engage and motivate users to achieve their goals. Gamification is a new social trend, especially in education (Amir & Ralph, 2014). Developers of websites and web-based applications continue to find ways to gamify their products (Amir & Ralph, 2014). Game-based pedagogy uses motivational tactics to increase student participation and performance (Brooker, 2015; Amir & Ralph, 2014; Bohyun, 2012; Byrne, 2014). The dynamics of gaming systems allow participants to accomplish simple to complex tasks as they move toward a goal (Bohyun, 2012).

“Hoot! Hoot! Hoot!” What is all that noise about? The answer is... Kahoot!. Kahoot! is a popular web-based platform that works in the HTML5 (core technology mark-up language of the Internet), instead of IOS or Android operating systems (Brooker, 2015; Wang, 2015; Amir & Ralph, 2014). An HTML5 address provides access to larger, more diverse populations. Greater access leads to more users and higher ratings (Brooker, 2015). Similar to Socrative and Infuse Learning (Byrne, 2014), Kahoot!’s educational angle is to provide real-time gaming experiences to its users through quizzes (termed “kahoots”) and surveys (Amir & Ralph, 2014). The student response system consists of questions, which can include pictures and videos. The teacher can manage the pace of each question by adding time limits (Byrne, 2014). Correct answers and timeliness earn points for students on the scoreboard, which continually displays the top five scores by user names (Byrne, 2014). Participants do not need an account to participate (Thomas, 2014). The class will need the PIN number from the main screen to enter the game. Each student will create a unique screen name to access quizzes and a personal device (iPad, tablet, or cell phone) to answer each question as it appears on screen (Byrne, 2014; Thomas, 2014). Kahoot! is gamification at its best!

What is more meaningful to students than responding to teacher-generated questions? The answer is... student-generated inquiries (Thomas, 2014)! Writing questions is one of the highest levels of learning. Students benefit

greatly from generating kahoots as a means of review. To increase the rigor, the teacher can have students construct meaningful wrong answers to accompany the right answers. Kahoot! takes learning to new levels with students becoming the leaders of their own learning through critical inquiry (Thomas, 2014).

Do you think inquiry-based learning might flip the Socratic Method on its head using Kahoot!? The answer is... yes! Socrates believed that intelligent conversations stemming from questions would lead to a deeper truth (Schwartz, 2012). Student-led inquiry positively affects engagement by providing high levels of learning and interest (Schwartz, 2012; Amir & Ralph, 2014; Thomas, 2014). With an inquiry-based approach to learning, students engross themselves in a dilemma, phenomena, concern, topic, wonder, etc. The quest leads students to produce questions instead of answers. Constructing questions involves high levels of critical thinking, which forces students to analyze and investigate issues from various angles (Schwartz, 2012). Students can publish the questions in Kahoot! (Amir & Ralph, 2014; Brooker, 2015). To challenge students even further, have groups produce not only the correct answer choice but also methodically select the incorrect choices. This is not as simple as it sounds. In order to stump the player on Kahoot!, the creator must select wrong answer choices that are meaningful. Getting into the mind of a “future player” takes the ability to think strategically, purposefully, and critically. What a powerful approach to check for student understanding (Brooker, 2015)! As a bonus, I added the “genius stumper.” This skill level is measured by how well the question writer stumps the players by the incorrect answer choices. Kahoot! makes this easy since it shows the number of student responses for each individual answer.

A teacher could use Kahoot! during a lesson cycle. For example, at the beginning of class, the teacher can assess students’ current levels of knowledge of an upcoming objective. In the middle of a lesson, the instructor might check the progress of students with Kahoot! The teacher can use the data to find

## Featured Technology Tool, cont.

by Mandy Vasek

students who need extra support. At the end of a lesson, students create an exit ticket using Kahoots!, which measures current levels of understanding (Byrne, 2014). This is similar to the Post –It-Note Exit Ticket...except digitized. The teacher can export student data into Excel. Over time, the spreadsheet will show the progress of each student. Finished quizzes go into a data bank to share with other users. Educators have access to public quizzes from all over the world, which is an added feature that teachers will like (Brooker, 2015).

A final thought about Kahoot!... Bright colors, suspenseful music, noises, gongs, and surround sound add to any gamification experience. The platform also allows its users to like, favorite, share, and browse on its site like other global social sites. Even with all these functions, does Kahoot! have staying power in the world of education? In a recent study, Wang (2015) conducted a five-month, quasi-experimental research project that investigated the “wear off” effects of Kahoot! For five months, a lecture class instructor used Kahoot! as a routine part of the daily activities. The researcher compared the excitement and motivation levels of the students at the beginning and end of the study. Wang (2015) reported only a slight drop in motivation and engagement. Wang’s results conclude that the competitive nature of the game keeps the engagement high, even after repeated use (2015).

Kahoot! continues to rock the world of gamification according to the thousands of public quizzes stored in the systems data bank, followers on social media, and game users (<https://getkahoot.com>). So, the secret ingredient for now is Kahoot!. However, over time, the secret may change. Educators must always be ready and willing to transform our own practices to meet the needs of our learners to keep them engaged. For now, give a hoot and try Kahoot!

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## English Language Learners, Part 2

by Susan L. Reily

It is common practice for a teacher to establish a protocol for welcoming and introducing a new student to the procedures of the classroom community. A teacher may have many strategies in place, but what strategies should a teacher implement when the new student has limited English proficiency (LEP)? Consider a scenario where a child, whose family recently moved to the States from Honduras, joins a pre-school classroom. The child speaks virtually no English and does not attempt to communicate to the others within the classroom community. However, the child or English Language Learner (ELL) is observant, listening and watching the actions of others within the classroom community. Although it is uncommon for a young ELL to avoid attempting to communicate when first joining an English-speaking classroom, it is common for ELL students to have a non-verbal period (Moravcik, Nolte, & Feeney, 2013). Moravcik et al. (2013) refer to the non-verbal period as a time where the child is studying a new language they hear in the English-speaking classroom. Some teachers may consider this non-verbal period as a personality trait of the child related to being shy, rather than a language related behavior. However, learning the English language can be a challenge for children from homes where another language is spoken (Santos & Ostrosky, n.d.). Therefore, teachers should prepare for the ELL student by first understanding the language development of an ELL and gathering information from the family (Santos & Ostrosky, n.d.). The teacher will use the information provided by the family and their knowledge of language development to use scaffolding techniques to support the child in developing English proficiency.

“All English learners come to school with varied experi-



*Susan Reily is an assistant professor at Stephen F. Austin University in Nacogdoches, Texas.*

ences, but not all of their background knowledge matches what they need to know to be successful in U.S. schools” (Vogt &

Echevarria, 2008, p. 23). By reaching out to the families of ELL students, the teacher obtains a better understanding of a child’s background experiences to apply when making connections for the child. Copple & Bredekamp (2009) indicated the importance of bringing a child’s community into the classroom community in order to help the child connect their personal experiences with learning experiences in the classroom. The teacher can bring a child’s community into the classroom by connecting their home language to the introduction of English content vocabulary, providing audio materials in their home language, and inviting families and others who speak their home language into the classroom (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

Along with connecting a child’s home language to English words, the teacher can assist the ELL student further by using visuals such as pictures or real objects in an effort to make content comprehensible and encourage the child to engage verbally. “We cannot expect ELs to master new content learning by just listening; They need demonstrations, photos, illustrations, and models to make sense of the words you are speaking” (Vogt & Echevarria, 2008, p.50). Utilizing visuals with English words is just one way for teachers to provide scaffolding techniques. Scaffolding strategies appropriate for a pre-school classroom utilize different forms of verbal scaffolding such as think-alouds, repetition, and frequent review of vocabulary related to the content areas (Vogt & Echevarria, 2008).

One thing we know for certain about English learners is that they will not become proficient speakers of the language unless they have frequent opportunities to use it. While this seems obvious, it’s surprising how few chances there are each day for ELLs to speak English. English learners are likely to speak their native language before and after school, during breaks, recess, and lunch, if they have peers who speak their same native language. Teachers, who monopolize the vast majority of classroom talk, as is common practice, compound the problem and ELLs have even fewer opportunities to speak English (Vogt & Echevarria, 2008, p. 101).

## ELLs, Continued

It is important for teachers to spend more time in conversations with ELLs and provide opportunities for them to engage in conversations with the other children. "All children, and especially those who have ground to make up in vocabulary and other aspects of language, benefit significantly from sustained conversation with adults and other children, particularly peers whose language skills are more advanced than their own" (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009, p. 144). Teachers of students who are in the non-verbal period should model and help children with communication and understanding of word meaning (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

With the increase of inclusive classrooms, teachers must prepare for the diverse needs of students, including students who are limited English proficient. Teachers may utilize different strategies to assist the ELL student. A focus on strategies that recognize and utilize the child's home culture in the classroom, and providing opportunities for the child to interact with the language, are important protocols for any child, especially ELLs. Scaffolding of support is imperative when engaging an ELL in conversations, especially a child who is in the non-verbal period. Teachers should

remember that students with limited English proficiency need additional support and interaction during the process of learning their second language.

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## ELL Strategies: Tried and True Methods from Classroom Practice

by Amberly Walker

For the last 14 years, I have taught ELL of all proficiency levels. Here are a few of my favorite strategies that get the most classroom mileage.

### Routines

I often hear teachers comment, "How could he/she have missed it? I said it a million times!" Sometimes teachers assume that what we know and expect is easily inferred; however, this is often a misconception, especially for ELL. Keeping information, announcements, procedures, and assignments in specific places in the classroom and checking for understanding are crucial. Simply establishing routines and reviewing language and content objectives and directions will ease anxiety and the ELL can work on developing language instead of worrying about what might happen next. Clear expectations go a long way.

### Scripts

Scripts can be used in many ways with all proficiency levels and across all content areas. First, scripts can be teacher generated and brief. Scripts can be CLOZE style where a few vocabulary words are omitted and students provide the words. Scripts can be student written and traded among groups for cooperative style learning. Scripts can be teacher-to-student or student-to-student. See an example from a geometry lesson:

A: How did you know what formula to use?

B: I knew to use SAS because \_\_\_\_\_.

A: Yes, this is true. Is there another formula that you thought about?

B: Yes, I considered \_\_\_\_\_, but I ruled it out because \_\_\_\_\_.

A: Great job, SAS it is!

The CLOZE style script is great at the ending of a lesson, whereas a complete script can be more appropriate for a beginning of a lesson or introduction of a new concept. Sometimes, in English class, I use scripts to teach tone and inflection. I display a short script and provide a tone or mood word. I ask the student to read with sarcasm, hopelessness, anger, or surprise, etc. and have the class guess the tone. It easily shows how inflection can change meaning, and tone can be inferred depending on body language and timing. Content that is sometimes difficult to teach has just been "taught" by a learner using a script.

### Downsizing

The blank page seems to trap ELL like nothing else. When I ask for responses and get blank stares or unfilled papers, many times I head for post-it notes. I can ask for a 3 sentence summary, a one word response, for drawings, or any variety of quick responses to get the ideas flowing. If I use a post-it note as the canvas, it is less stressful for the learner! Soon I have students writing on the front and the back, and asking for another! It is a way to get more with less.

### Pictures

Recently in a lesson over comparatives, I snapped several pictures as students were coming into class. I emailed them to myself and had them up on the projector screen before the late bell rang. The lesson about comparatives suddenly got personal, humorous, and more engaging than a lecture or worksheet. Of course, I knew in advance what pictures I needed. Suddenly, who is tall, taller and tallest or whose hair is short, shorter and shortest became tangible and something to reference throughout the study. Students then take their own pictures and make their own comparisons.

### Feedback

Constructive feedback is crucial to student success. Many times, ELL aren't sure if they are getting better at speaking English or not! They may be entering a new culture they know nothing about, and the overwhelming feelings of excitement, despair, possibility and pressure can be too much to navigate. For this reason, feedback should be ongoing and constructive. I like to use a Noticing Graph or Self-Progress Monitor Graph. This is a one page sheet with a bar graph divided into blocks where the student charts his/her own progress related to a specific skill in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Brief conferencing with the student helps her/him to know that I am noticing her/his risk taking and appreciative of progress. Developing this relationship of encouragement while noticing the struggle and the success can be the most important strategy of all.

Amberly Walker is an ELL Interventionist at Granbury High School





## A Message from TALE's Advocacy Committee

*TALE realizes the importance of keeping members connected with topics and legislative issues concerning literacy. TALE seeks to use our knowledge and experiences to inform and influence others about policy and legislation for fluid, meaningful, and comprehensive literacy education practices.*

### Legislative Update

The 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative session began on January 13, 2015 and is scheduled to end on June 1, 2015.

This session features new people and leadership on committees, including:

- a new governor (Governor Gregg Abbott),
- a new lieutenant governor (Lt. Governor Dan Patrick),
- 29 new representatives, and
- 9 new senators.

According to the House Research Organization and the Texas Senate Research Center, potential public education topics addressed during this session that have a potential impact on literacy education may be:

- The expansion and improvement of pre-K programs in Texas
- Alternatives to high-stakes testing
- Directing the State Board of Education to streamline the TEKS to reduce their number and align them more closely with the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards
- Ways to increase public awareness about the option to substitute academic assessment or to encourage students to do so
- Ways to provide more flexibility to school districts to incorporate new technology and course delivery
- Legislation regarding teacher certification and teacher retention

### What You Can Do

Your voice matters! As respected literacy professionals and members of TALE, we encourage you to join TALE's advocacy efforts by:

1. Find out who your representatives are: <http://www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us/Home.aspx>
2. Write, email, call, or visit your elected officials to express your point of view on any of the legislative issues above and explain why their support is needed. Be brief, courteous, and provide only facts.

TALE is documenting all advocacy efforts, so please submit copies of any correspondence to TALE's Director of Advocacy, Laurie Sharp at: [laurie\\_a\\_sharp@yahoo.com](mailto:laurie_a_sharp@yahoo.com).

We wish you the very best in your advocacy efforts as TALE strives to promote literacy that will enhance the lives of all Texas citizens personally, socially, and economically.

Warmest regards,

Laurie Sharp, Amy Cummins, Melinda Butler, Lisa Avrit, & Ferne Farkas

## TALE Member Book Review: *The Day the Crayons Quit* by Drew Daywalt

*Sure, you have probably used crayons before to draw or color, but have you ever received a written letter FROM a crayon?*

In the children's book, *The Day the Crayons Quit*, the reader is able to see what all the crayons in our crayon boxes are thinking! Duncan is in class one day, when he reaches for his crayons and instead finds a mysterious stack of envelopes addressed to him. Upon opening the letters, Duncan sees that his crayons have a mind of their own, and they all have written Duncan letters expressing their true feelings.

Hey Duncan,

It's me, RED Crayon. We need to talk. You make me work harder than any of your other crayons. All year long, I wear myself out coloring fire engines, apples, strawberries, and EVERYTHING ELSE that's RED... I need a rest!

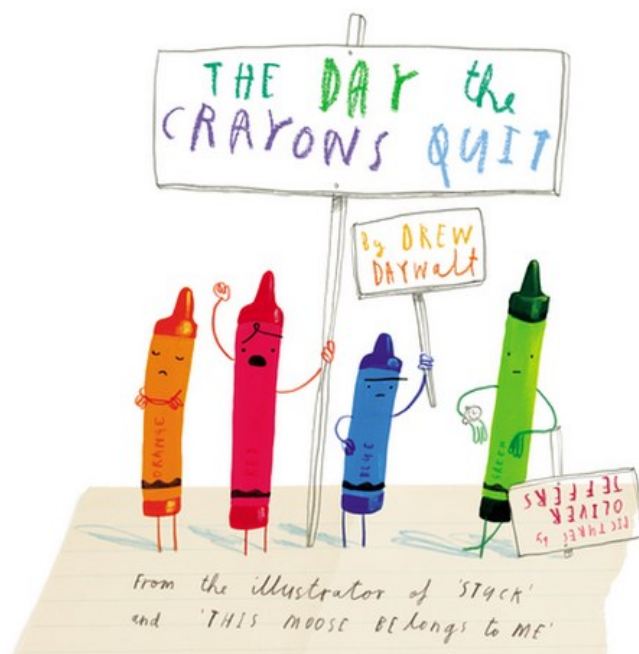
Your overworked friend,

RED Crayon"

Duncan sifts through letters from just about every crayon, reading their thoughts, complaints and funny observations. Poor Duncan just wants to color, but he must first think of a solution to solve the crayons' problems so they can be happy again!

Although Duncan is technically the main character in *The Day the Crayons Quit*, the true stars of the book are the crayons themselves. The reader never sees Duncan, but we do see his drawings. The illustrator varies from using brightly colored, child-like drawings to photographs, making the pictures interesting to look at. The text also changes on each page to match the crayon that's writing the letter. The book is a relatively short picture book with little plot, but it could be used for a wide age range of students. Young children would enjoy listening to the story as a read-aloud, and it would be helpful for teaching color recognition, as each page is filled with objects of one color. Older elementary students would enjoy reading the book as well, and lessons used could focus on perspective, opinion, persuasive writing and vocabulary. The book also provides excellent examples for letter writing! In today's world, it sometimes seems as if children aren't given many opportunities to express their creativity. I loved how *The Day the Crayons Quit* not only encouraged children to be creative, but to think outside the box. It would be a wonderful addition to any classroom library!

Ashley Toscano is an undergraduate education major at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor.



Title: *The Day the Crayons Quit*

Author: Drew Daywalt

Illustrator: Oliver Jeffers

Award: Texas Bluebonnet Award, 2015

Age Range: 4-10

Goodreads: 4.4/5 stars

Amazon: 4.7/5 stars

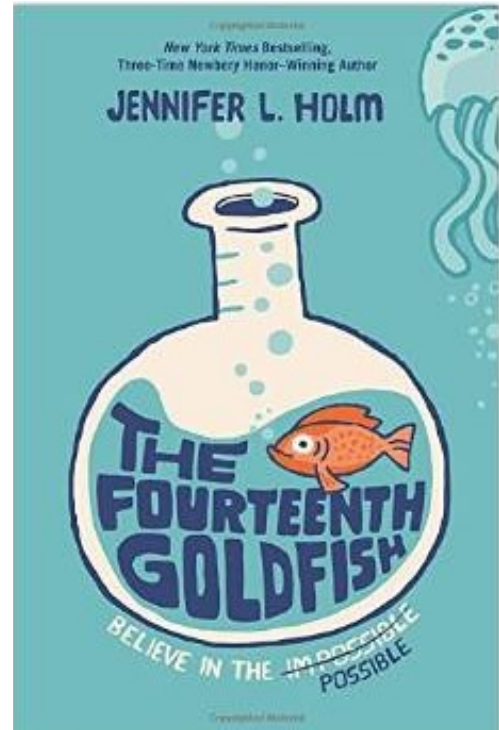


## TALE Member Book Review: *The Fourteenth Goldfish* by Jennifer L. Holm

The generations intertwine in this tale of a scientist grandfather who discovers how to reverse the aging process. His relationship with both his daughter and granddaughter morph as he takes on the role of a teenager again and moves into their home. The story is told by Ellie, a preteen who finds herself in the awkward situation of attending middle school alongside her grandfather. The theme of self-discovery latches on to each member of the family; they gain insight into themselves as well as those around them. Ellie not only grows closer to her grandfather, but she develops a passion for science and hopes to follow in his footsteps.

The story's flowing narrative and believable dialog give a realistic feel to this science fiction plot. Humorous situations are sprinkled throughout the book as the grandfather's typical elderly behavior is exhibited through a youthful exterior. There are also a variety of science elements in the story. It mentions the work of specific scientists like Robert Oppenheimer and Jonas Salk, and it brings up the question of responsibility in relation to new scientific breakthroughs.

Undoubtedly this would be a wonderful novel to share with students. It would serve well as a read aloud, a book club focus, or as a recommendation for independent reading. *The Fourteenth Goldfish* is one of Jennifer L. Holm's newest novels. She has earned many awards for her creations over the past few years including three Newberry Honors. She also works with her artist brother, Matthew Holm, to produce two beloved graphic novel series: Babymouse and Squish. Multiple honors have been given to the Babymouse series, and one of its titles is the first graphic novel to be named an ALA Notable Children's Book.



*The Fourteenth Goldfish*, Jennifer L. Holm, 2014

Age range: 8-12 years

Goodreads rating: 3.86/5 stars,

Amazon rating: 4.6/5 stars,

Lori McLaughlin is a librarian at Sparta Elementary School and Lakewood Elementary School in Belton, Texas.



TALE is open to anyone interested in the development of literacy in children, youth and adults. This organization is a recognized affiliate of the International Literacy Association (ILA), formerly known as the International Reading Association. Contact us at  
TALEmembership@gmail.com



Remember TALE is on Facebook and Twitter! Please follow us to see what is happening with TALE members:  
<https://www.facebook.com/texasreaders.org>

@TXLiteracyEd

[www.TexasReaders.org](http://www.TexasReaders.org)

## Upcoming Plans and Events

See our website for additional information regarding the following TALE plans and events:

- Manuscripts now being accepted for the *Texas Association of Literacy Education Yearbook*
- Manuscripts now being accepted for the summer edition of *Texas Journal of Literacy Education*
- Reviewer applications now being accepted for *Texas Journal of Literacy Education*
- Membership fees (\$5.00) now accepted online via credit card
- Upcoming conference: International Literacy Association, July 18-20 in St. Louis, Missouri

If you have an event you would like to share with fellow TALE members, please contact:

TALEmembership@gmail.com

## Editor's Note

A quote from Donalyn Miller comes to mind as I reflect on TALE's 2015 conference: "When we meet and I discover that we have read and loved the same books, we are instant friends." At TALE's conference, as we met and discovered that we have loved the same profession and have experienced the same desire to inspire and transform literacy for our students, we were instant friends. TALE members from all over the state (and some from outside of Texas) came together in Feb-

ruary to share knowledge and to learn from one another. Friday night's social was a success as TALE members met and spent time chatting throughout the evening...instant friends. Saturday we shared and learned about effective literacy strategies and tools...instant friends. I cannot wait for next year's Literacy Summit at the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, where we can once again visit with our friends about the same passion—literacy education!

This newsletter includes highlights from February's conference, including details about Donalyn Miller's and Steven Layne's keynote addresses. This issue also includes articles about English Language Learners and two featured book reviews by TALE members.

Finally, this issue contains a column featuring a technology tool as well as a message from TALE's coordinator and advocacy committee.



Jodi Pilgrim, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor  
University of Mary Hardin-Baylor

If you would like to write for TALE's newsletter, please submit your ideas/articles to me at  
[jpilgrim@umhb.edu](mailto:jpilgrim@umhb.edu).