



# Texas Association of Literacy Educators

TALE

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## President's Message

The STAAR was being conducted in grades 4 and 5 last week. Teachers were wearing their "STAAR Wars" t-shirts. Students had spent the day before in an energized STAAR pep rally. Teachers had quizzed students on the importance of a good breakfast and a positive attitude. This elementary school was ready.

Because of the testing, I was in a kindergarten classroom to observe a university student's writing lesson. A little girl, I'll call Josie, was weeping quietly in the back of the room. Her teacher is a caring, capable teacher of young children, so I knew she was ignoring Josie for a reason. I quietly asked Ms. M. if I could speak with the child. She said that would be fine. Apparently Josie had a hard morning behind her and Ms. M. had been allowing her some time to collect herself.

The task at hand was to paste a diagram of a bean seed in her science notebook and, based on the wonderful Georgia Heard and Jennifer McDonough text entitled *A Place for Wonder: Reading and Writing Nonfiction in the Primary Grades*, students had been given a lima bean "seed" and had been asked to consider their own wonderings about this seed. Josie had wondered what was inside of such a seed. She decided to draw what she suspected might be on the inside. I asked if she had a science notebook and she wept a bit more and said she lost it. Ms. M. gently reminded her that she would probably find it and asked that she put this lesson in her math notebook.

We opened to a blank page and began our search for a glue stick. Josie reached in her desk and pulled out a tattered, zippered pencil case. I am not sure what value the zipper held however, as the small bag had a long tear down one side. Nonetheless, Josie unzipped her pencil bag and pulled out a glue stick with very little "stick" left. She even managed to glue her diagram into her note-

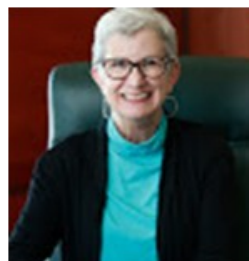
book. By now, tears were gone and she began to draw what she thought might be inside of her bean seed. When I asked her to tell me about her diagram, she said, "I am pretty sure there is a tiny bird in there. You know birds love seeds."

And I loved Josie. I loved her for trying one more time even though she felt lost and sad. I loved her for gathering some energy to participate in this lesson. I loved her for her curiosity about seeds and I loved her for having so little, yet bringing so much to the lesson.

For those of us in classrooms on a daily basis, we see our share of "Josies." We see the Josie who has the ability to read and write and think, but may not have the motivation that day because of emotional difficulties. We see the Josie who may have the ability and the motivation, but no access to a lesson because she lacks supplies, experiences or language skills required to participate in instruction.

As the STAAR season is upon us, newspapers will soon publish our scores and our campuses will be rank-ordered accordingly. But somehow I wish I could tell another story...the Josie story. I would tell everyone about how some students have the courage to thrive in contexts in which few of us could survive. When Josie arrives in third grade, her STAAR score may not represent all she knows. STAAR scores are important, but they are one part of our students' stories. Maybe it is our job to help the public see the complexities of teaching and learning and growing everyone's understanding of student success. Organizations like TALE offer an avenue for that voice.

Sharon O'Neal  
Associate Professor  
Texas State University - Round  
Rock Campus  
President, Texas Association  
for Literacy Education



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- Review of *Vunce Upon a Time*

## Featured Technology —Video Tools

by Elizabeth Stefanski  
University of Mary Hardin-Baylor




In the world of technology, how can teachers still engage children in the enchanting world of the written word? Truthfully, multimedia and books are not mutually exclusive worlds, for these two types of instructional tools can be used in conjunction to generate student engagement and interest in many different school assignments. Specifically, educators can capitalize on the modern generation's fascination with movies by integrating the use of videos into the curriculum. Rather than simply playing premade videos purchased from a company or found online, instructors can encourage students to produce videos for assignments. For example, in the most direct tie to literacy, students can be asked or allowed to make a video summary or advertisement of a beloved book. Or, after researching an important historical figure or event, an informational video can be made as a final product.

Many teachers do allow such technological projects to be created in today's classroom, but do the options for integrating unique videos stop there? The answer is a resounding no, for the teachers themselves can quickly and easily create videos to share in the classroom. Perhaps a video can be created which outlines the instructional unit to be covered, whether it be a

basic timeline of World War II events or examples of books in the fantasy genre. The uses of video technology do not end there. Advertisements can be created to generate student interest in upcoming assignments, or an "all about me" video created by the teacher can be shown at the beginning of the year. Working together, students and teachers can create video advertisements for parents regarding events such as open house or a school play. Rather than a class newsletter, students, perhaps as a reward for positive behavior or as a part of the weekly classroom job assignments, could create an informational video about current classroom events to be sent home as a way to inform and involve parents. The options, then, for using classroom videos in a fun way to engage children in literacy activities are as boundless as the imagination.

The following diagram presents a few free options for creating videos. Other options include the Videolicious app for iPads and the Windows Live Movie Maker computer program. In addition, the link below provides access to a simple Animoto video I created as a mock advertisement for an upcoming assignment.

<http://tinyurl.com/k3fjzxh>

	<p>Animoto (App or Website)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animoto provides a template into which you add images and text.</li> <li>• Stock photos and music are also provided.</li> <li>• With the free version, the video length is limited to thirty seconds.</li> </ul>
	<p>iMovie (App)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• iMovie allows you to create your own movies with your videos and pictures.</li> <li>• It also provides templates for different types of movie trailers into which you can add images, videos, and text.</li> </ul>
	<p>Splice (App)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Splice allows you to add your own photos, videos, music, and voiceovers to create a simple video.</li> <li>• Videos are saved to the device and can be exported from there.</li> </ul>



*Elizabeth Stefanski is an education major at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor.*



## Facebook: A “Common Ground” to share thoughts!

by Patricia Durham, Ed.D.  
Sam Houston University



In January, TALE members took part in the first social media professional chat platform connected to the *Texas Journal of Literacy Education* (TJLE). Members were encouraged to read the article “Sharing Common Ground: Texas and the Common Core State Standards” (p. 77 of TJLE Winter 2013) and to post comments to “Question the Authors” on the TALE Facebook page. Members would have the opportunity to reach out to authors Sheri Vasinda, Stephanie Grote-Garcia, and Patricia Durham.

One TALE member, Christy Clayton Roeder, commented on the new knowledge gained regarding the process of revising the TEKS and additionally wondered how the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) would impact ELL learners in Texas

if adopted. Member Amy Cummins posted her wonders regarding how the next cycle of TEKS revisions due in 2014-2015 might be impacted by the response and implementation of the CCSS by other states. In response, authors Patricia Durham and Sheri Vasinda both commented that unless a repeal of HB 462 takes place, students in Texas and the TEKS will not be affected by any aspect of the CCSS. Additionally, Sheri pointed out that currently, the TEKS rate higher than the CCSS due to the long history Texas has with creating and revising standards.



Be on the lookout for the next Facebook professional chat connected to the *Texas Journal of Literacy Education*! We are also interested in the articles you connect with most, as it just might be the next selection used for the “Question the Author” platform!

Patricia Durham is an assistant professor at Sam Houston State University and is TALE’s president-elect.

### Call for Manuscripts

#### **TALE’s *Texas Journal of Literacy Education***

All TALE members are invited to submit manuscripts for possible publication in the *Texas Journal of Literacy Education*. Submit manuscripts before July 2 for consideration in the upcoming winter edition. The journal is a bi-annual, peer-reviewed publication. The co-editors are Leslie Haas, Debra Lee, Susan Szabo, and Sheri Vasinda.

For submission guidelines, visit: <http://tinyurl.com/n6kggnk>

## Bragging Rights - Texas Hosts Three Literacy Conferences in 2013



Sheri Vasinda is an assistant professor at Oklahoma University and serves on the TALE Board as Secretary.

by Sheri Vasinda

In addition to hosting our own state literacy conferences in 2013, Texas had the distinction of hosting the International Reading Association conference in San Antonio last April and two national literacy con-

ferences, Association for Literacy Educators and Researchers (ALER) and Literacy Research Association (LRA), both in Dallas in November and December respectively. While both of these as-

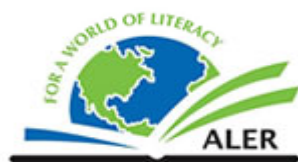
sociations have their roots in university reading research and instruction, their focus and goals have expanded.

### Association for Literacy Educators and Researchers

Formerly the College Reading Association, ALER's goals include fostering and supporting the growth and development of teaching and learning processes related to literacy, as well as supporting teachers and literacy professionals at all levels. As

the new name implies, their annual conference draws both teachers and researchers interested in current research and practice. True to its roots, ALER's goals also include working toward continuous improvement of curricula that supports

teacher and reading specialist preparation at universities and colleges. The 2013 conference found Robert Calfee leading attendees in a "close reading" of Common Core State Standards and Tim Shanahan's thinking on the new era of reading assessments.



**ALER 2013 Conference Theme — Exploring the World of Literacy**

### Literacy Research Association



**LRA 2013 Conference Theme — Transformative Literacy: Theory, Research, and Reform**

In addition to serving as the host state of many literacy conferences this year, Texas can also boast the conception of LRA. In 1950, Texas Christian University professor Oscar Causey gathered colleagues from six southwestern states to come together to share practices and research regarding college reading, thus beginning the Southwest Reading Conference. Eight years later, the reputation of the conference grew as did the conference, resulting in a name change to reflect that na-

tional focus: National Reading Conference (NRC). Over time, the focus shifted to include K-12 reading and a wider scope of literacy, with an emphasis on research in literacy education. At the 60th conference in Fort Worth, the NRC officially became known as the Literacy Research Association (LRA).

The 2013 conference honored the life achievements of Norm Stahl, and the Oscar Causey Award for distinguished

research went to Yetta Goodman. A unique feature of this conference is a Town Hall meeting, an informal session led by a leader in the field, in which all are welcome to share thinking around literacy current events. Most folks hope to hear the thinking of the big names in literacy. This year's session was led by Doug Fisher. Other literacy legends often seen at this conference include the Goodmans, P. David Pearson, Nell Duke, Jim Hoffman, and Linda Gambrell.

*This year, both associations will host their conferences in Florida. For more information visit their websites: ALER [www.aleronline.org/](http://www.aleronline.org/) LRA [www.literacyresearchassociation.org/](http://www.literacyresearchassociation.org/)*





# Literacy terminology: Which buzz words do we use?

by Jodi Pilgrim and Elda Martinez

This past summer, 48 TALE members participated in a survey about 21st century literacy terminology. Many terms such as new literacy, multiple literacies, digital literacy, information literacy, and web literacy have become “buzz words” in education. Which of these terms are educators most comfortable using? Findings indicated TALE members were most familiar with the terms “multiple literacies” and “digital literacy.” In fact, 96% of the survey participants responded they could provide examples of digital literacy skills. On the other hand, only 47% of participants indicated they could differentiate between the terms. This is understandable—the terms overlap in meaning and use.

In a recent article in TALE’s new journal, the *Texas Journal of Literacy Education*, we reviewed 21st century literacy terms often found in text related to literacy education (Pilgrim and Martinez, 2013, p. 67). The following table from the article summarizes these terms, which reflect ways literacy has changed with new technologies of the 21st century. For more information, check out TALE’s new journal at:  
[http://www.texasreaders.org/uploads/8/6/6/5/8665759/tjle\\_2013.corrected.pdf](http://www.texasreaders.org/uploads/8/6/6/5/8665759/tjle_2013.corrected.pdf)

*Summary of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Literacy Terminology*

Term	Description
<b>Information Literacy</b>	The ability to recognize when information is needed and to have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information (ALA, 1989).
<b>Multiliteracies</b>	The multiple ways of communicating and making meaning, including such modes as visual, audio, spatial, behavioral, and gestural (New London Group, 1996).
<b>New Literacy</b>	The use of new technologies to gather and communicate information (Coiro et al., 2008).
<b>Digital Literacy</b>	The ability to find, evaluate, utilize, share, and create content using information technologies and the Internet (Cornell University, 2009).
<b>Web Literacy</b>	The knowledge and use of specific skills needed to locate, analyze, and communicate information found online.

Pilgrim and Martinez, 2013, p. 67

## References:

Pilgrim, J., & Martinez, E. (2013). Defining Literacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A Guide to Terminology and Skills. *Texas Journal of Literacy Education*, 1 (1), 60-69. Retrieved from [www.texasreaders.org/uploads/8/6/6/5/8665759/tjle\\_2013.corrected.pdf](http://www.texasreaders.org/uploads/8/6/6/5/8665759/tjle_2013.corrected.pdf)

Educators may encounter these terms as they prepare students for literacy tasks using technology tools. According to IRA’s annual survey of literacy leaders (Grote-Garcia & Cassidy, 2013), *digital literacies* remain among the *hot topics* in the field of reading education for 2013. In addition, at least 75 % of IRA’s survey respondents agreed digital literacies *should be hot*. The Department of Education used the term digital literacy in the National Education Technology Plan (U.S. Department of Education, 2010) to reference contemporary skills teachers need for classroom instruction. The literacy skills encompassed within these terms are also addressed in the *Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for Technology Applications* within six strands: creativity and innovation; communication and collaboration; research and information fluency; critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making; digital citizenship; and technology operations and concepts (TEA, 2011, p. 1). According to the *TEKS*, students use communication, collaboration, and creativity throughout the strands. Communication, collaboration, and creativity utilize 21st century skills and must be taught through technology integration across all subject areas. Literacy skills will continue to change as new technologies emerge. Teachers must understand literacy as it relates to new technologies used in the classroom.

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (2009). Texas college and career readiness standards. Austin: University of Texas. Retrieved from [www.theccb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=C9B4C756-ACDF-A9B7](http://www.theccb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=C9B4C756-ACDF-A9B7)

# Fostering a Gaming Mindset to Conquer STAAR

by Tammy Becker



*Tammy Becker is currently the principal of South Belton Middle School in Belton, Texas. She is a literacy specialist and promotes balanced literacy instruction.*

What motivates students to spend hours in front of a video game struggling to find the key to advance to the next level, while that same student lacks the confidence and perseverance to tackle the demands of STAAR?

Three years ago, Texas educators and students were preparing to take their first STAAR tests. Few sample questions had been produced, there was no outline for what state accountability would look like, and results would not be released until the following year. Since that time, educators and students have faced a steep learning curve. We've studied the complexity of questions, we've researched the learning standards and how the process standards are tested alongside readiness and supporting standards, and we've worked to match the rigor of our daily instruction and local assessments to state expectations of our students, so they are prepared and confident. Campus administration and teacher professional learning communities have sought to grasp the intricacies of the four indices of the new Texas educational accountability system. State accountability is no longer based solely on whether or not a student meets the standard on his or her state assessment. The new system offers campuses and districts at least partial credit for students who may not have met the passing standard, but who have made significant and measurable progress over the previous year.

Denis Waitley, motivational speaker and author of *The Winning Edge*, states that success is almost totally dependent upon drive and persistence. The extra energy required to make another effort or try another approach is the secret of winning. This drive and persistence is prevalent with gamers who spend hours working to "level-up" or to "jump a threshold."

The students who will spend hours working to level-up or to jump a threshold are the same students that will willingly put their head down or begin guessing when they encounter a rigorous academic task. Herein lies our opportunity. Certainly, many factors affect motivation. The extra effort or the energy to try another approach can be fostered through coaching conversations in which teachers help students set goals and track progress. This strategy motivates students through a gaming mindset.

There is much controversy about standardized testing. We can lobby and debate its place in our classrooms, but until a change in test occurs, use the design of the accountability system to teach your kids to commit to their progress. Set individual goals to level-up and to jump a threshold. Even through the pressure of testing, the students can learn the valuable lesson of goal setting and persistence.



**STAAR WARS —**  
**May the SCORES be with you!!**

## Engaging Dyslexic Students with Digital Accessible Books

by Valerie Chernek

*The Bookshare Mentor Teacher Program began in 2010 to support the nation's teachers and assistive technology specialists with training tools to engage educators, parents, and students in the effective use of Bookshare's online accessible library and reading technologies. Over 500 educators and specialists have joined the network as advocates for students with print disabilities. Bookshare Mentor Teachers also develop and share best practices with other teachers across the United States. The following article was provided by Valerie Chernek, Bookshare's Community Outreach Manager, to share one teacher's experience with Bookshare.*

Cathy Wilson, a Dyslexia teacher, likes to train students as early as first or second grade to use reading resources and technology. "Technology is a great equalizer for kids at any age," she says. Cathy is a Bookshare Mentor Teacher who trains colleagues and students to use the online library. Last year, she had 40 youngsters on her roster, and about 90% have individual memberships to the non-profit library service.

In parent meetings at school, Cathy likes to discuss the benefits of digital accessible books. "From the moment a new student comes to class, I want to meet with their parents," she says. "We discuss dyslexia-related topics and reading tools, like the Bookshare Web Reader. Parents are busy just like educators, so we need to help them understand the value of resources and technologies available." Bookshare offers free memberships and reading technologies in support of students with qualified print disabilities such as blindness, low vision, physical disabilities, or reading disabilities, like dyslexia. The program is funded by awards from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.

Every week, Cathy spends 10 minutes reviewing how to go online, log-in with user names and passwords, search for a book, download it, and then open it on a device or software. Her students explore navigation features and practice reading digital books on laptops. They then demonstrate the login and download process on a Smartboard for others.

"As you empower kids with technology and let them practice and demo it, they get it!" says Cathy. "I want my students to have a good understanding of the tools, technologies and strategies to succeed in higher

grades." In school, Cathy works with ten groups of children (first through fifth graders) who have dyslexia. Students are grouped by reading levels that coordinate with the district's curriculum. Each group knows her Reading Center process well. They come to class and huddle in the "jungle corner" on comfy pillows. They read a printed book or pull out a personal device and read an audio book.

"Before they enter sixth grade, I want them to know what a digital reading experience is like," she says.

Many students who have moved on to middle and high school come back to visit Cathy. She invites them to attend new parent meetings as guest speakers. "They talk about what helped them succeed. Digital audio books are always on point! They like portable devices and favor the Read2go app on their iPads. Some of my AHA! moments are when I see the reactions of new parents. These teen talks usually clinch the deal for getting new parents to sign their children up for an individual membership. This ensures their children will learn and benefit from digital accessible books and reading technologies at a young age to use throughout their lifetime."

Learn more at

<http://communications.bookshare.org/mentor-teachers/>



*Cathy Wilson is a Dyslexia Specialist at Coppell ISD, TX and a Bookshare Mentor*

# Do the Seasons Affect Student Learning?

by Angelica Villafuerte, M.Ed. And L Karen Estes-Sykes, Ed.D.

Is there a season for learning? With spring break at an end and summer break around the corner, we need to ask ourselves: how can we ensure our students do not fall trap to seasonal effect and summer loss? Interestingly, recent research may be supporting what many educators have noticed for years.

We've long believed summer vacation contributed to academic loss in our students. In particular, this time away from school seems to widen the achievement gap between school-aged children from higher and lower SES groups. According to Roman and Fiore (2010), this growing achievement gap could be attributed to cumulative reading loss. Higher-income families generally have greater access to books; therefore, more academic gains are noted for these children compared to those in economically disadvantaged families during summers. Inevitably, this achievement puts higher SES children at an advantage once the school year begins. It's important to note the same research shows little difference in reading gains between children from high and low SES students during the academic year.

More than just summer time away from school could be a factor in the waxing and waning in achievement for students. Studies have shown the seasons during the academic year may have an effect on students' growth and learning. One study (Christ, Silberflitt, Yeo, & Cormier, 2010) found general and special education populations in second through fifth grades demonstrated more academic growth in the fall than in the spring. Another study (Ardoin & Christ, 2008) had similar results. Second graders showed greater literacy-related growth in the fall than in the spring.

With the possible effects of these phenomena, how can we reduce or eliminate seasonal effect and summer loss?

- As educators, we must be vigilant in maintaining high expectations for all students. When we believe a student cannot succeed, we unknowingly behave in ways that do not facilitate student learning or success. In the same way, if we reinforce our personal beliefs that a student can succeed, we tend to behave in ways that help him/her achieve (Marzano, 2007). This difference in how we treat high-and low-achieving students throughout the school year may affect the instruction and feedback students receive from educators at different times in the academic year (Christ, Silberglitt, Yeo & Cormier, 2010).
- Teachers are said to invest more at the beginning of the school year than the latter part of the year (Christ et al., 2010). Therefore, we must work on increasing teacher motivation and ensuring consistency throughout the academic year.
- Schools and supporting organizations should host workshops informing parents of the importance of reading. Also, these workshops can provide families with tools to assist their children with oral reading practice and comprehension strategies to keep their children academically engaged when not in school (Edwards, 2004).



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*Karen Estes-Sykes is an Associate Professor in the Education Department at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor.*



- Coordinate with the public library to create a summer or after-school reading program. Roman and Fiore's (2010) research revealed third grade children who participated in a public library summer reading program scored higher on reading achievement tests when they began fourth grade. There was also no evidence of summer loss during the study.
- Ultimately, as educators, we must motivate students to read more. Provide students with opportunities to read books which match their independent reading levels and reading preferences. Regardless of the time of year, this will generate a greater desire to read.

There are many factors that greatly affect student achievement within the academic year and during the summer months. While instructional conditions and student motivation may be contributing to this phenomenon, the use of data-based decision making can help reduce the probable effects. It is also important for teachers to realize how their view of their students' level of potential success can affect student motivation and achievement (Marzano, 2007). During the summer, schools are encouraged to work with parents by providing them with the critical knowledge and skills necessary to keep their children motivated and eager to learn even when they are not in school (Roman & Fiore, 2010). By working together with parents and the community, we can strive to reduce seasonal effect and summer loss, ensuring growth in learning throughout the year.

Ardoyn, S.P. & Christ, T.J. (2008). Evaluating curriculum-based measurement slope estimates using data from triannual universal screenings. *School Psychology Review*, 37(1), 109-125.

Christ, T.J., Silbergliitt, B., Yeo, S., & Cormier, D. (2010). Curriculum-based measurement of oral reading: An evaluation of growth rates and seasonal effects among students served in general and special education. *School Psychology Review*, 39(3), 447-462.

Edwards, P.A. (2004). *Children's literacy development: Making it happen through school, family, and community involvement*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Marzano, R.J. (2007). *The art and science of teaching: A comprehensive framework for effective instruction*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development.

Roman, S. & Flora, C.D. (2010). Do public library summer reading programs close the achievement gap! *Children and Libraries*, 27-31.



**Is there a topic you want discussed in the Newsletter?**

Let us know at

**[TALEmembership@gmail.com](mailto:TALEmembership@gmail.com)**

# Call for Proposals

## *Inspiring and Transforming Literacy*

The 2015 Conference of the Texas Association for Literacy Education (TALE)  
Literacy Summit

Sam Houston State University  
The Woodlands, Texas

Deadline for Submission: May 31, 2014



You are invited to present at the TALE Literacy Summit to be held in The Woodlands TX, February 21, 2015!

### **Please include the following in your proposal:**

Return 2 completed proposals in word document format electronically to the proposal committee at [TALEmembership@gmail.com](mailto:TALEmembership@gmail.com). One file should be blinded with all references to presenters' names removed. Please use "conference proposal" in the subject line. Proposals are blind reviewed.

If your proposal is accepted for the 2015 Literacy Summit, all presenters will be expected to register and pay for Literacy Summit.

1. Title of presentation
2. Name, Institutional affiliation, Position/Title, email address, address, phone number(s) of all presenters
3. **Presentation proposal**, to include
  - Type of session
    - Panel Session/Workshop Session (60 min.)- Small or large group environment to present content or conduct workshop activities
    - Roundtable (15 min.)- Several presenters with similar themes will be grouped at one table to present, followed by a discussant and participant comments.
    - Poster Session- A stand along presentation in a gallery-style/walk through environment
  - Audience:
    - Proposals should reach out to one or more of the following:
      1. **Classroom literacy practices (Elementary/Middle/High school)**
      2. **Informational Text/Digital Literacies**
      3. **Librarians**
      4. **Administrators**
      5. **Teacher Education**
      6. **Community Connections**
  - Program entry
 

*Write a one-sentence description of your presentation for the conference program.*  
*Include your targeted audience type*
  - Description of presentation (maximum 500 words)
 

*Describe your presentation and the kind of pedagogy you might use to engage the audience with references cited. All literacy related proposals which are classroom/research-based and noncommercial are welcome.*



### Your festival registration includes:

Three days of fun!  
Six different dramatic readings  
William Joyce art exhibits  
Interaction with live animals  
Six sculpture unveilings  
Collectible pin buttons  
Discount on optional concert  
Movie festival showing: "Epic,"  
"Rise of the Guardians" and more

Train rides  
Easter egg hunts  
Balloon sculptor  
Magic shows  
Bubble show  
Book signings  
Face painting  
Costume contest  
Art activities

### William Joyce: A Guardian of Childhood

Meet author, illustrator, and Academy Award winning filmmaker William Joyce at this year's C.A.L.F.! See his artwork on display at the National Center for Children's Illustrated



Literature and experience three days of fun in downtown Abilene.

Mr. Joyce is hailed by Newsweek as one of the Top 100 people to watch in the new millenia. Two recent movies, "Rise of the Guardians" and "Epic," are based on his books. His short film, "The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore," based on his book by the same name, won an Academy Award.



#### Early Registration Prices:

\$7 child pass  
\$10 adult pass

#### After May 1:

\$10 child pass  
\$15 adult pass

# FREE CHILD'S PASS

Redeem by registering for the C.A.L.F. festival online at [www.abilenecalf.com](http://www.abilenecalf.com)  
or in person at the T&P Depot, 1101 N. 1st St. in Abilene. ENTER THIS CODE: LibraryW

One per family. Redeemable with purchase of adult pass.

Offer expires June 1, 2014.

The C.A.L.F. is a program of the Abilene Cultural Affairs Council

**Save the date:** June 11-13, 2015 C.A.L.F. ! Meet "No, David!" and "A Bad Case of Stripes" author/illustrator David Shannon



## TALE Member Book Review: *The Incorrigible Children of Ashton Place: The Interrupted tale* by Maryrose Wood

*The Interrupted Tale* marks the fourth installment of the incorrigible tales. All books take place in England during the Victorian era. Miss Penelope Lumley is a plucky young governess who is given the task of teaching three children who were mysteriously abandoned in the woods near the estate Ashton Place. In this installment, Penelope takes her three young pupils to her alma mater, The Swanburne Academy for Poor Bright Females. Penelope is the honored speaker at Swanburne's annual Celebrate Alumnae Knowledge Exposition (CAKE). There has recently been a change in board members and the seemingly evil, newly instated head board member, Judge Quinzy has taken over. His influence has caused the previously lively institution to turn into a rigid, unhappy establishment (including an academy name change to the School for Miserable Girls). Judge Quinzy also has a keen interest in a book that might reveal some of the series persisting mysteries including: *Who left the children in the forest? Who are Penelope's parents? Are the Ashton's cursed?* Penelope is determined to reveal the contents of the book, which is written in sailor's invisible ink, in order to thwart Judge Quinzy's schemes. The book leaves most mysteries unanswered and fans anxious for the next installment.

The entire series seems like a Common Core and TEKS match made in heaven. Maryrose Wood intertwines grammar (acronyms, synonyms, and homonyms), poetry (iambic pentameter), sociology (the bystander effect), history (Archimedes, Peloponnesian War, the fall of Ancient Rome), literature (H.G. Wells, Victor Hugo, Longfellow), languages (French, Latin) and math (geometry, multiplication) into a whimsical adventure that you can't put down. The audio version is delightfully read by Katherine Kellgren (who is the winner of several awards in audio including the Audie award, Publishers Weekly's Listen Up Award, and Audiofile's Best Voice award). The entire series is highly recommended for anyone wanting to delve into chimerical mystery that is fantastically written.



*The Incorrigible Children of Ashton Place: The Interrupted Tale*, Maryrose Wood, 2013

Age range: 8-12 years

Goodreads rating: 4.03/5 stars,

Amazon rating: 4.6/5 stars,

Similar books: Series of Unfortunate Events series by Lemony Snicket, Mysterious Benedict series by Trenton Lee Stuart, The Wolves series by Joan Aiken



Paige Alfonzo is a reference librarian at the University of Mary Hard-Baylor. She also serves as the Education and English Liaison. Paige is a new member of TALE.

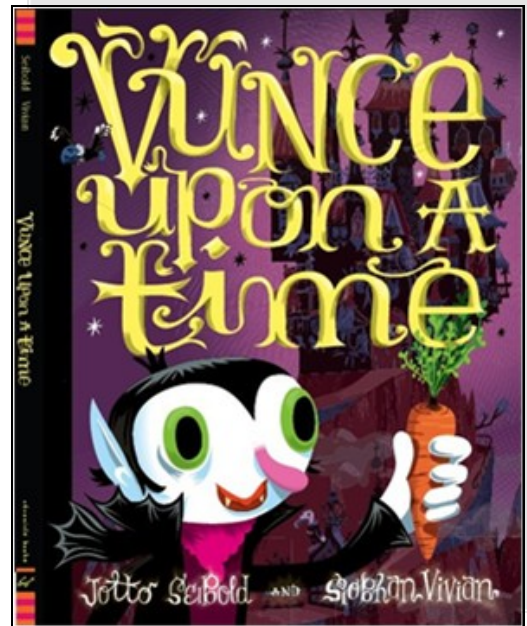


## TALE Member Book Review: *Vunce Upon a Time* by J.otto Seibold and Siobhan Vivian

Often times as adults, we fall behind the times in the realm of children's literature. We get so caught up with work, college classes, and other real-life occurrences that we don't take the time to escape into the fantasy world that children's literature offers to us. Recently, I came across the book *Vunce Upon A Time* by J. Otto Seibold and Siobahn Vivian. My eye was immediately drawn to the story because of the unique and intricate illustrations covering the outside of the book. The colors of the illustrations are very deep and rich, which definitely plays into the Halloween theme of the story. This is a tale of a young vegetarian vampire named Dagmar who has discovered a love for candy. When he finds out that on Halloween he can get all sorts of free candy, he brainstorms many different costume ideas and plans for the evening. Along his journey, he meets several obstacles. The scariest obstacle of course, was meeting a real-life human child!

Our first impressions of books often stick with us forever, but I would have to say that after reading the story, I only loved it more. In the public school environment, it is hard to find Halloween themed stories that are appropriate for students from all walks of life. This book still talks about all the costumes, candy, and trick-or-treating that many children in our country partake of on Halloween, but it does not have any scary moments or religiously offensive material. It shows the typical "scary" Halloween characters as being caring individuals that are much more like humans than they are like beasts. Not only can this book be used as a fun circle time story during the Halloween season, but it could also be used to teach children that you can be friends with all types of people, no matter what the common perception about those particular people. Dagmar had spent his whole life being afraid of humans; yet, the very first one he encountered was helpful and sweet to him. Students of all ages can come away from this book having gained the appreciation for the differences that people have from one another.

Even in our jam-packed schedules, I think it is imperative to make time to keep up with the literature that our students will be reading. Not only does that allow us to be able to discuss the books with our learners, it provides a nice break from reality. We can dive head first into stories like *Vunce Upon A Time* that radiate vibrant colors and illustrations, as well as a humorous writing style.



*Vunce Upon a Time*, 2008

Age range: 5 and up

Goodreads rating: 3.96/5 stars,

Amazon rating: 4.7/5 stars,

Sensitive areas: Sensitive areas: Halloween subjects



Lauren Morgan is an education major at the University of Mary Hard-Baylor. Lauren is a new members of TALE.

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 Reading Association (IRA). Contact us at [TALEmembership@gmail.com](mailto:TALEmembership@gmail.com)



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

[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 winter edition of *Texas Journal of Literacy Education*
- Officers nominations needed for upcoming election
- Reviewer applications now being accepted for *Texas Journal of Literacy Education*
- Memberships fees (\$5.00) now accepted online via credit card
- Upcoming conference: International Reading Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, May 10-12
- Upcoming event: Children's Art and Literacy Festival, June 12-14 in Abilene, Texas

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

[TALEmembership@gmail.com](mailto:TALEmembership@gmail.com)

## Editor's Note

As this newsletter goes to press, teachers across the state of Texas prepare to administer the STAAR to their students. The pressures of accountability and testing often seem overwhelming, but teachers' efforts are appreciated. Teachers, and students are the STAARs! Thank you for all you do!



This newsletter includes tips to conquer the STAAR as well as articles

about the importance of motivating readers through digital literature and summer reading programs. This issue also contains highlights from the Literacy Research Association conference and the Association for Literacy Educators and Researchers conference. Plans for next year's TALE conference are already underway, and a call for proposals is included in this newsletter. Other news regarding TALE activities includes Facebook discussions, a call for manuscripts, and the re-

sults of a TALE literacy survey.

This issue features technology tools for using video applications in the classroom. Be sure to try the link to the Animoto video clip. Finally, check out literature reviews for great books to read over the summer.

TALE hopes to see you at the IRA national convention in May!

~Jodi Pilgrim



Jodi Pilgrim, Ph.D.  
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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)