

TEXAS VOICES

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

President's corner

By Charles Moore, TCTELA President



Summertime celebration

For many of us, the end of the school year cues a deep breath, filling our lungs with warm summer air, filling our eyes with spaces outside the four walls of our classrooms and offices, filling our hearts with family and friends. We look forward to this sacred time even if the outside temperatures make outdoor exploring seem somewhat daunting. For some, the end of this school year signals a time for change in role, location, or even career. Change is oftentimes scary. Think of all the books whose themes center around “change.” Change is often good for us. Even if we are returning to our position and place, the new year will mean a change in the people with whom we work, both kids and adults.

Summertime can be an opportunity to relax and recharge—a time of excitement full of travel and self care. Many of us see new parts of our world through the lens of a camera or the pages of a book. Maybe we can even create our own worlds through reflective writing or journaling as we sharpen the tools of our craft and celebrate our work.

While I’m on the topic of celebration, I encourage our members to take some time this summer to celebrate our amazing professionals by nominating teachers and leaders for an award from TCTELA. For that amazing teacher with whom you work, nominate them for our Teacher of the Year award (links below). It is our duty to honor those whose work we consider exceptional. Four levels of this award allow us to celebrate teachers from each grade band and at the university or college level. The Mercedes Bonner Leadership award is a chance to celebrate an educator from a diverse background who has made an impact in our field. The Edmund J. Farrell award provides us with the opportunity to honor someone who has worked to support the mission of TCTELA by making an impact on literacy instruction.

Our newest award, which will be awarded at our conference for the first time, is the Literacy Leader Award. This award is intended to honor campus or district leaders who support the work of English teachers in Texas. This person might be an administrator, an instructional coach, or even a district-level literacy leader who supports teachers as they serve students in the classroom.

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My hope is that our membership and our colleagues enjoy an incredible summer and that we take a collective deep breath, heal, and celebrate the people in our profession whose work buoys our resolve and propels us forward.

Links

Teacher of the Year Awards: <https://ventureall.wufoo.com/forms/s1k8wdaa0silaei>

Mercedes Bonner: <https://ventureall.wufoo.com/forms/p9sgdwz0c0tqa3>

Ed Farrell: <https://ventureall.wufoo.com/forms/wnijfc50p0pphv>

Literacy Leader Award: <https://ventureall.wufoo.com/forms/s1xl7jkplauqfgi>

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Refresh

By LaWanda Williams, Executive Secretary

Beautiful summer mornings bring such peace. The birds chirping, roosters crowing, beautiful blue skies, steaming coffee as the sun rises to demonstrate her power. As school was winding down, it was not the students or even the pressures of being an educator that made me long for summer. I just wanted to breathe. Enjoy the sun as it rises and sets. Listen to children as they giggle, run, and splash about.

The birds, the sun, and the summer fun have a way of making things look peaceful and relaxing. Sometimes we need a reminder to stop and enjoy the simple, free things in life. Each day is a new opportunity. Some kids take vacations, some have summer activities, while others live the experiences of their classmates through literature. How can individuals who are not in the classroom take this away from kids?



It is more important than ever to forge ahead for literacy. Kids deserve our best and to have mirrors of themselves in the literature they read.

The world exposes kids to so much negativity without providing the necessary guidance to understand. Books provide the understanding, sympathy and empathy kids need.

As I allow the sound of nature to refresh mind, body, and spirit, I will forge ahead in my daily quest to remain an advocate for children and literacy. My reading list for the summer will include YA literature to remain in contact with my students and professional reading to ensure I am able to teach students how to forge ahead.

How to set a reading goal

By Roni Burren, Past-President

I would venture to say that many literacy teachers aren't in love with the idea of children competing for prizes for reading. Attaching extrinsic prizes for completing books often creates an inauthentic "love" for reading. It's more like there's a love for the prizes.

However, that doesn't mean that having a proverbial carrot to chase isn't a good idea. Reading goals are great ways to motivate students and motivate us as literacy teachers.

I have set a reading goal for 2023. That goal is to read 100 books. Within that goal I've allotted a certain percentage for rereads, children's books, new genres, and non-fiction.

Here are some great guides for how to set reading goals for either yourself or for students in the upcoming school year.

Set a number goal. Look back on your reading last year or on the reading of your students from last school year. Then, calculate how many books were read. Take that number and add to it. Even if it's just one extra book from the previous year.

Set a genre goal. All of us, kids included, have genres that we naturally gravitate towards. Setting a reading goal of incorporating at least one to two genres you don't necessarily gravitate towards is a great way to goal-set.

Set a time goal. Although my reading goal this year is a number goal, a time-for-reading goal is my favorite. Decide how many minutes you or your students want to read. This can be daily or weekly. I like this goal because it can remove the stress of trying to chase a number.

In a world where short videos rule what we consume, a reading goal is a great way to push back against shrinking attention spans. Set a goal today! And happy reading.



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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.

To rest or not to rest?

By Markesha Tisby, Vice President-Elect Membership and Affiliates

When the final faculty meeting of the school year ends, teachers, with smiles from ear to ear, bound joyfully to the parking lot. They stop for hugs or quick chats along the way, and they all appear

to be energetic and refreshed. If you look closer, you will typically notice two groups: the teachers walking out with their keys and favorite tumbler and the teachers with totes or bags full of projects for the summer.

While those jovial beings appear to be full of energy and ready to attack anything and everything during the summer break, the truth is exhaustion has set in so deeply that they are functioning solely on adrenaline. For many, contemplating whether to spend time doing absolutely nothing or working tirelessly to prepare for the upcoming school year is quite the conundrum. The idea of uninterrupted time to do whatever, whenever might sound like the perfect plan to some, but then as the fall semester draws near, a panic sets in. The idea of checking every item off of a summer to-do list might also sound like the perfect plan, but as summer draws to a close, a bitterness sets in due to the missed opportunities to rest and engage in self-care.

I am here to offer up an alternative to both, perhaps a compromise. Instead of approaching these two ideas with an either-or attitude, how about we consider the grace of “and,” the combination of rest *and* productivity. You can enjoy fun-filled pool days *and* tackle a few items from your classroom DIY list. You can attend the awesome literacy conference *and* devour texts from your personal reading list. The key is balance and understanding that it will not look the same for everyone. As you consider the

alternative and prepare to embrace the grace of “and,” consider what rest and productivity looks like for you and how much of each will yield the perfectly refreshing summer.



Here are a few steps that may help with finding your perfect balance for a refreshing summer:

1. Generate two lists—one for all that you would like to do for fun and one that lists all you could do to prepare for the fall semester.
2. On the prep list, circle your top 3—the items that will have the greatest impact on your classroom. Then, determine how much time each of the top three items would take. Calculate the total time.
3. Pull out a calendar.

Look at the number of weeks or days you have left. Map out the fun and preparation items on the calendar.

4. Make sure that your prep list does not monopolize your time. Search for your perfect balance. Is it 50-50? Is it an 80-20 split? (Remember everyone is different.)
5. If your balance is off, add or remove something. The goal is to feel rested yet prepared.

While this is not an exact science, this will help you to see how much time you need to feel balanced upon your start to the 2023-2024 school year. The good thing about this plan is that it is solely up to you. Would you like to listen to your favorite literacy podcast on a road trip? So be it. Would you like to totally forget what day of the week it is for an entire week? Have at it. At the end of the day or rather the end of the summer, the key is for you to feel your best self. When you feel your best self, you do your best teaching.

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You Are Only Just Beginning: A refresh for the journey ahead

By Aisha Christa Atkinson, Digital Coordinator and Rising Leader 2022-2024 Cohort Member

Back in 2020, the algorithm of Instagram brought to my attention the watercolor and poetic musings of Morgan Harper Nichols, a mixed media artist deeply inspired by stories, conversations, and various moments of everyday life. During a time of my life where the world felt like such an isolating place due to the public safety restrictions of quarantine and my personal life seemed to be in such a state of disarray, I was able to find a communion of solace and light through Nichols' posts. Three years of growth and countless thought-provoking reshares later, I see myself on the other side of the uncertainty that was weighing me down so heavily. I live a much more joyful, grateful life these days and I attribute much of the foundation of that new outlook to Nichols' work.



As has become an annual gift-to-self for Valentine's Day, I purchased a copy of Nichols' latest hardback to serve as an intentional slow read for the year. Entitled, *You Are Only Just Beginning: Lessons for the Journey Ahead*, the text begins with an essay that establishes the undertones of "hope and agency to make goodness" (Nichols, 2023, p. iv) for one's future that accentuates the vibrant brush strokes that artfully decorate every page thenceforth. Beyond this introduction, the remaining sections of the book are divided into chapters, with

each portion bearing host to an interconnected series of lessons facilitated by the teachers of nature and even a few seemingly ordinary objects. Some of these teachers include elephants, guitars, and even the vastness of outer space with immersive, whimsical art to amplify their messages. Each lesson begins with a section header and a brief essay explaining Nichols' stance on what

one can learn from the teacher of that particular section. What follows from there are a series of free verse poems, song lyrics, and phrases metaphorically, symbolically echoing these teaching points. At the conclusion of each section is a carefully curated list of affirmational statements designed to serve as evidence of a new inception for each lesson.

Among my favorite sections from the book is "Navigating Your Trials: Lessons from Lions." As aforementioned, this section begins with a brief essay from the author sharing how our perception of lions has become synonymous with our understanding of strength, and that, similar to lions, we must tap into our gifts of "awareness and discernment" to guide us through hardships and "grueling trials." We must, at the advice of Nichols, also be keenly aware of when it is time to "roar or run, but...remember that neither option is necessarily weak. We must simply seek what is wise." (p. 104) Throughout the course of the 2022-23 school year, I—like many other Texan educators contending with the unknowns of STAAR Redesign, the long-term complications of establishing a new normal, along with other worries of the world and the effects they have over education—have had to identify the wisest means of navigating each valley with a bold, yet precautionous sense of courage. Learning to establish a "pride" through the network of TCTELA and even within my colleagues and the teachers I support has not only afforded me a strength to rely on when I need help, but a reason to continue moving forward through the uncertainty.

As I look forward to the new journey that will be the 2023-2024 academic year, I find myself still rooted in happiness and gratefulness, but reinvigorated by the power of the collective that surrounds me. Should I ever find myself questioning the validity and even the loudness of doubts, I know to stop and hone in on these lines:

"Remember why you started on this journey./Breathe through the rest" (p. 115).

References

Nichols, M. H. (2023). *You are only just beginning: Lessons for the journey ahead*. Zondervan.

From the blogosphere...

Fill your tank with loads of instructional ideas at:

<https://movingwriters.org>
<http://twowritingteachers.org>
<https://www.weareteachers.com>
<https://pernillesripp.com>
<https://www.cultofpedagogy.com>
<https://blog.heinemann.com>
<https://readingbyexample.com>

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

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Feed your inner child's curiosity!

By Donna Herrera, Middle School Section Chair

STAAR 2.0 came and went. It left us feeling anxious, defeated, or perhaps reflective on how to adapt our already busy schedules and writer's workshops to this new kind of beast.

I found myself missing a few components during my writer's workshop with students. I struggled to help my students become more independent writers in a middle school classroom. I had a small handful of students that were able to write non-stop and independently. Unfortunately, I found that the majority struggled to keep the momentum or to let go of their training wheels—their teacher over their shoulder constantly giving them reassurance. It was *No More "I'm Done!": Fostering Independent Writers in the Primary Grades* (Jacobson, 2010) that transformed my subpar writer's workshop into a living, breathing organism of adaptability and independence.

Yes, we had fun writing, but it felt to fizzle out the more the minutes and days went by. My students felt it become routine, and not in the best way possible. Upon reading Jacobson's second chapter "Spaces that Support Independence," I knew I needed to put her book down and transform my classroom to foster independence. I had to let go of the notion of *I can't possibly put out all my Post-Its, colored paper, pretty pens (those always get stolen because who doesn't love glittery ink?), tape, glue, pencils, good stapler, or scissors just all in the open without having a check-out system! What if things go missing? What if everything goes missing?*



But I did just that. I champion the camaraderie and mutual respect in my classroom, so why not? It took a matter of a few minutes of real talk to level with them the importance of a community of writers and trusting one another to care for our writing center. We spoke of expectations we will uphold as writers such as the appropriate noise levels that would be tolerated during a writer's workshop. As a class, we created a slide that would always be on full display of writing reminders with a quote from Jacobson's book that just sang to our hearts, "To be a strong writer, you first have to be brave!" I invited my students to browse through her book as well to show that, as a teacher, I am also a student capable of learning and changing. My



classroom progressed from one day to the next into a room full of collaboration, conferencing, revising, and editing as I also wrote or conferenced with them. Just simply trying on the primary lens of Jacobson's book and adapting it to my middle schoolers proved transformative.

In a world changing with AI technology, my students relished the moments of being able to use the scissors to cut up parts of their pieces, resembling spider legs as mentioned in the mini lessons in the book, and turn them into something new. If a partner was not available to conference, they turned to their whisper phones for a self-conference and heard their "voice" come through the paper. In my opinion, whisper phones, which are recommended from preschool to sixth grade, should always be in a reading classroom from K-12! My middle schoolers cringed at first upon hearing their voice, but would then rush first to a whisper phone, make corrections, then go to a partner or me to conference. This allowed students to work independently at their pace in the various parts of the writing process. My students would lose track of time it became a natural and authentic part of their day.

As the year went on, we adapted quickly and added more office supplies to the inventory, but upon finishing the school year, we, as a class, reflected on how the writer's workshop could get better for the incoming 6th graders. My students shared that the writing portion of their STAAR exam wasn't as intimidating as they previously thought because they felt so comfortable writing. We, as educators, should take a step back and remember our students are children just as we will always be children at heart, so let's bring their childhood wonder to the forefront of our classrooms instead of letting it accumulate dust the moment they leave 5th grade.

Reference

Jacobson, J. (2010). *No more "I'm done!": Fostering independent writing in the primary grades*. Stenhouse Publishers.

Refreshing my repertoire: Listening my way through professional learning

By Alissa Crabtree, President-Elect



In our fast-paced culture, finding time to read the latest books on high-yielding best practices can be a challenge. However, fear not! As Marie Forleo has taught us, “Everything is figureoutable!” So, let me share my secret to consuming new learning—podcasts! While this may not be groundbreaking news, we often overlook the wealth of knowledge shared by teachers through this medium. Here, I will highlight three of my favorite podcasts that cater to different educator roles.

For the English Teacher: *Annotated ELA* with Melissa Burch

Melissa Burch may be new to the podcast game, but her ability to communicate reading and writing strategies with ease is truly awe-inspiring. She possesses the remarkable talent of making complex concepts understandable. Burch’s strategies are applicable to both elementary and secondary levels, and her podcast and blog posts offer a plethora of resources. A true reading and writing genius, Burch’s goal is to ignite students’ passion for writing. Listening to her shows, I can’t help but wish I had been a student in her classroom. This podcast is a valuable resource for teachers, instructional coaches, and content specialists alike.

For the Instructional Coach: *The Simply Instructional Coaching Podcast* with Nicole S. Turner

Nicole S. Turner is a true leader in the field of instructional coaching. With a published book and an annual coaching summit under her belt, she is dedicated to making coaching easier.

Turner’s active presence on social media allows us to consume her content across multiple platforms, and she consistently provides valuable resources in her blog posts, emails, and social media updates. This podcast is a must-listen for all instructional leaders, not just coaches. Administrators, make sure to add this show to your favorites.

For the Administrator: *Principal P the MC* with MarLan Parker

One of the standout features of Parker’s podcast is the infectious energy he brings to each episode. You’ll never find yourself bored while listening. Parker interviews educators in the field, addressing key issues and offering solutions to the obstacles we face. His topics span a wide range, from tackling bad habits to saving for college education. This podcast is not just for principals but is beneficial for all educators seeking inspiration and practical advice.



In conclusion, podcasts provide a valuable resource for busy educators looking to expand their knowledge and keep up with the latest practices. Whether you’re an English teacher, an instructional coach, or an administrator, there’s a podcast out there tailored to your needs. So, embrace the power of podcasts and unlock a world of learning that fits seamlessly into your fast-paced lifestyle. Happy listening and continuous growth on your educational journey!



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Advocacy never ends: Amplifying teacher and student voices beyond the 88th Legislative Session

By Dr. Lois Barker, NCTE Liaison

Every two years, the Texas Legislature meets in Austin to file bills that represent the needs and concerns of their constituents. And with every period, TCTELA hosts Education Advocacy Day in March to forge relationships with representatives and senators and amplify teacher and student voices so that bills passed are in the best interest of all students and teachers across our great state.



Dr. Lois Barker (NCTE Liaison and Dream Program coordinator), Zainab Jabak (HS Section Chair, Dream Program mentor), Karla Cardenas (UT student and Dream Program mentee), Valerie Taylor (PD2Teach Liaison)

This legislative period has been quite contentious as the bills filed sought to silence the voices and experiences of BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ authors and students, reduce public education funding under the guise of vouchers and parent choice, encourage a punitive approach to student discipline instead of actual restorative frameworks, and create barriers for bookstores and publishers to put books in the hands of students. Restrictive bills addressed public education, K-12, and higher education—bills addressing tenure and DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) practices on college campuses.

This war on education did not happen overnight. Rhetoric that turned DEI into something negative and books as opportunities for grooming and indoctrination came long before 2020. However, because the world was at a standstill, it seemed louder and more appealing. This rhetoric, birthed from ignorance, fear, and hatred, gave rise to many groups claiming to protect America's children and future. These groups led attacks on educators steeped in DEI practices, attacks on LGBTQIA+ communities (students, teachers, authors), and attacks on librarians, calling for libraries to be shut down. These groups created a playbook and had a strategy. They created social media and neighborhood groups, websites, and printed materials incorrectly explaining SEL and DEI frameworks and providing talking points and a list of books

to ban. They infiltrated board meetings, secured funding, ran for board positions, and called for board policy changes and the firing of school leaders. These groups partnered with and donated to representatives and senators who shared their ideologies. These representatives and senators now file and vote on bills these groups believe are needed; however, they do not represent the collective. And this is not a Texas problem. This is not just a Texas and Florida thing. It is a national problem.



Cheryl Vinson (TCTELA member), Representative James Talarico, Dr. Lois Barker (NCTE Liaison), and Zainab Jabak (HS Section Chair)

And this is why *our* advocacy is important.

On March 24, a small group of TCTELA members went to the capitol to meet with representatives and senators from both sides to share what our members need and want to see turned into policy. Although we intended to highlight the harm school vouchers cause to school systems, we could not leave without championing for better educator wages and more funding for the excellent choices already in many of our school systems. We met with representatives truly fighting to protect public education. We attended hearings on Senate Bill (SB) 8 and 9. We met with those interested in compromises from educators so that their ideology could still turn into policy. Imagine chatting with lawmakers who claim to understand what public education needs but do not realize that many districts have phenomenal Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs and professional pathways. Imagine them not understanding or caring that CTE and fine arts programs are cut when school budgets are cut. How about crucial positions such as librarians? How can we say there is a reading problem but not be open to funding libraries? How can we say students do not have a choice in public education but then not fund professional pathways or provide more special education and mental health services?

Although the Governor is proud of the state's \$33 billion dollar surplus, somehow now, at the end of the 88th Legislative Session, funding awarded to public education was far from sufficient. Many of the bills signed by Abbott, ultimately, do not address the needs of teachers and students across the state, but more part of a

Continued on next page

Advocacy never ends: Amplifying teacher and student voices beyond the 88th Legislative Session (continued)

larger political play. Here are some notable education bills recently signed into law:

- **HB 1** (Bonnen/Huffman) does not include new general public education funding (e.g., an increase in the basic allotment) or specific funding for salary increases.
- **HB 621** (Shaheen/Hughes) creates a temporary CTE teaching certificate for persons who have served in the armed forces or as a first responder. The person must otherwise meet eligibility requirements for a standard teaching certificate, except that if the certification requires an associate degree, they can substitute 48 months of active duty military service or service as a first responder; for a bachelor's degree, they can substitute 48 months of service plus at least 60 hours of higher education with at least a 2.5 GPA.
- **HB 900** (Patterson/Paxton) prohibits the possession, acquisition, and purchase of harmful library material that is sexually explicit, pervasively vulgar, or educationally unsuitable.
- **HB 1225** (Metcalfe/Zaffirini) allows up to 3% of students in a district to take required state assessments in paper format at a parent's request.
- **HB 1416** (Bell/Dutton/Buckley) provides school districts the flexibility to accelerate students who do not perform satisfactorily on STAAR.
- **HB 1605** (Buckley/Creighton) allows parents to access and review instructional materials and requires districts to provide teachers with a full sequence of instructional materials so they do not have to devote personal or planning time to develop instructional materials themselves.
- **HB 1926** (Hull/Paxton) removes the \$30 million cap on the total amount of funds that may be appropriated for the Supplemental Special Education Services (SSES) program each fiscal year.
- **HB 2012** (Oliverson/Hughes) allows classroom teachers to display a poster/copy of the national motto in their classroom.
- **HB 2209** (Lozano/Hinojosa) requires the commissioner of education to establish and administer the Rural Pathway Excellence Partnership (R-PEP) program to incentivize and support rural college and career pathway partnerships that would be multi-district, cross-sector, and that would expand opportunities for underserved students to succeed in school and life while promoting economic development in rural areas.
- **HB 3803** (Cunningham/Paxton) allows parents to determine if their child should repeat a grade level for 4th through 8th grades or a high school level course. Texas students in grades four through eight are eligible to retake any course in which they were enrolled in the previous year unless the student has already met all requirements for graduation.
- **HB 3908** (Wilson/Creighton) also known as Tucker's Law, requires public schools each year to provide research-based instruction on fentanyl abuse prevention and drug poisoning awareness to students grades 6 through 12. The bill also requires the Governor to designate a Fentanyl Poisoning Awareness Week.
- **HB 4363** (Kuempel/Hinojosa) creates a Future Texas Teachers Scholarship Program to recruit, prepare and retain career teachers, and to provide financial assistance.
- **SB 10** (Huffman/Bonnen) provides TRS retirees with a cost-of-living adjustment: 6% for those retiring on or before 8/31/01; 4% for those retiring between 9/1/01 and 8/31/13; 2% for those retiring between 9/1/13 and 8/31/20. This raise must be approved by voters per the constitutional amendment in HJR 2 on the November 2023 ballot. Retirees age 75 or older as of Aug. 31, 2023, will also receive a one-time supplemental stipend of \$7,500; those between 70 and 74 as of Aug. 31, 2023, will receive \$2,400.
- **SB 17** (Creighton) requires universities to close their diversity, equity and inclusion offices, which have become a mainstay on campuses across the country as schools and bans mandatory diversity training and restrict hiring departments from asking for diversity statements, essays in which job applicants talk about their commitment to building diverse campuses.
- **SB 68** (Zaffirini/Murr) permits a school district to excuse a student who is a junior or senior in high school from school for a "career investigation day" that involves visiting a professional at their workplace for the purpose of determining the student's interest in pursuing a career in the professional's field.
- **SB 763** (Middleton/Hefner) allows districts/charters to employ or accept as a volunteer a chaplain to provide support, services and programs for students as assigned by the school board/governing body. The chaplain is not required to be certified by SBEC. The chaplain must comply with the laws regarding criminal history checks before beginning work/volunteering, and a chaplain who has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication supervision for an offense requiring sex offender registration may not work or volunteer for the district/charter. Adds certain services performed by chaplains to the allowable uses for school safety funding, including restorative discipline and restorative justice practices, mental health support, behavioral health services, and programs relating to suicide prevention/intervention/postvention. All school boards and charter school governing bodies must take a record vote within six months of the bill's effective date on whether to adopt such a policy.
- **SB 798** (Middleton/Buckley) states that the qualifications for certification as a school counselor may not include a requirement that a candidate for certification have experience as a classroom teacher.
- **SB 838** (Creighton/Thierry) requires school districts and charters to provide panic alert devices in all classrooms.
- **SB 1893** (Birdwell/Anderson) bans TikTok on any governmental device or network and allows for other applications as specified by the governor to be banned in a similar manner in the future.
- **SB 2124** (Creighton/Howard) automatically enrolls students who are in the top 40% on their fifth grade math STAAR test in advanced math, with a provision allowing them to opt out.

TCTELA's Education Advocacy team does not aim to tell what you should champion or which lawmakers to support. Our team believes that schools should be safe, inclusive spaces in which all students are seen and heard and have access to quality instruction that tends to their diverse learning needs and backgrounds, their social and emotional development and well-being, and honors and celebrates all aspects of their identities and the experiences they bring to the classroom. Our team believes schools should be safe, inclusive spaces where all educators are seen, heard, and supported through coaching, mentorship, better pay, mental health services, autonomy to create engaging learning spaces for their students, and professional networking opportunities. We must call out the

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Advocacy never ends: Amplifying teacher and student voices beyond the 88th Legislative Session (continued)

policies that prevent such spaces from existing. We must amplify teacher and student voices that thrive in those spaces.

We cannot wait to visit the capitol every two years and discuss policy. Our advocacy must be ongoing. We invite you always to attend your board meetings and local town halls. Notice legislation passed in other states and see if it is gaining traction and how it might influence your state or community. We are about to endure

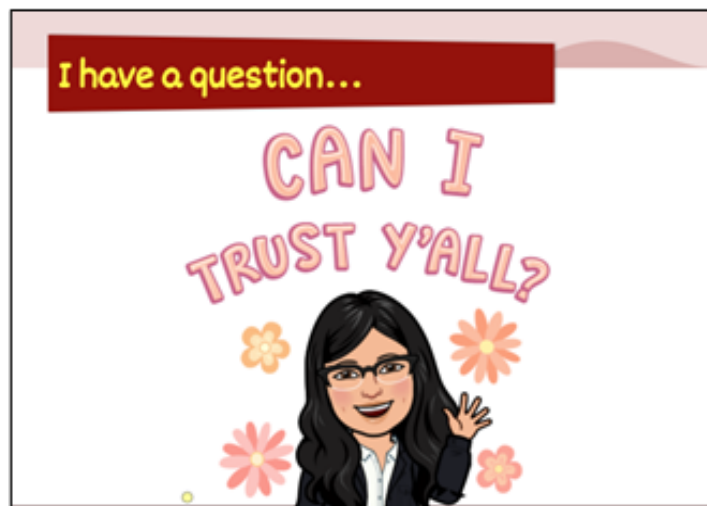
another chaotic presidential season. The rhetoric will again frame policies appearing in the next legislative session because it will be added to the playbooks of local candidates and school board potentials. We must be vigilant, well-informed, and ready to educate others, lift our voices, and protect our learning spaces. For more information on how to be a part of the Education Advocacy team, please email lois.marshallbarker@yahoo.com.

A fresh look at found poetry

By Eva Goins, Vice President Elect

Learning can take place anywhere. Creativity can be inspired anywhere. Then why do we, as teachers, continue to teach confined within the four walls of our classrooms? It is time to venture out into other spaces.

This April, in honor of Poetry Month, I made our entire Adams Middle School campus my classroom. I wanted my students to partake in creating a found poem, but a different kind of found poem. I wanted them to create a poem that materialized before them while taking in an environment that they saw on a daily basis, but didn't really interact with much at all.



As my students walked into my classroom, I had a slide on my screen that said "Can I trust y'all?" Immediately, my students' curiosity peaked. They sat at their desks with a sense of anticipation of what the day's lesson would offer them.

After our daily writing warm-up, I told them we were going to write Adams' found poetry. I continued to tell them that in order for this assignment to work, I'd have to have implicit trust in their abilities to follow my expectations for our assignment.

I introduced the assignment with the slides pictures here. I could tell as they listened to my expectations that they were engaged and excited about the opportunity to leave the classroom for this activity.

Adam's Found Poetry

- You will take your journal with you and a pen or pencil (leave phone/airpods in locked room.)
- You will create a found poem that you will write from the spot you choose to sit at.
- Close your eyes and listen and see and imagine and feel, and write
- Be creative -- write in any language you want
- Let the poem come to you.

Adam's Found Poetry

- When you leave my classroom, you are no longer able to talk.
- You must find a spot in the building -- away from all of your classmates
- Ideas: courtyard, gym hall, gym, fine arts hall, cafeteria, hallway (do not go into a classroom)
- Do not bring attention to yourself (be inconspicuous)

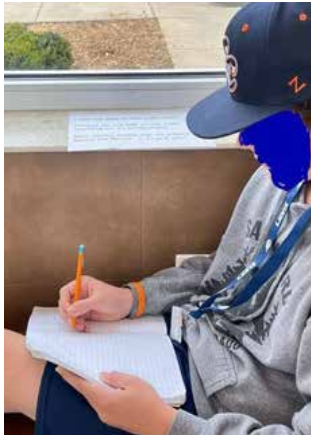
Adam's Found Poetry

- Keep track of time!
- You must return to class by _____
- I trust you! Please follow expectations
- When we return to class you will share your poem with a peer or whole group.
- Any questions?

A fresh look at found poetry (continued)

A majority of my students couldn't wait to get out into the hallways to begin creating their found poems, their school providing for them as their muse.

Again, I implored the importance of trust and expectations of their behavior and armed them with a sheet of paper that each



student would use as a hall pass should anyone stop them in the hallway. I also gave them the exact time to return to our classroom so we could debrief and have an author's share session.

As my students walked out with their journals and pencils in hand, they set out on their journey to find the perfect location to sit and listen to the poem that would find them. Some students scurried off to the Fine Arts hallway while others hurried to the courtyard or athletics hallways.

I am not able to talk right now.

Please do not talk to me, I am working on an assignment.

Mrs. Goins trusts me, so please leave me alone. :) Thank you!

I walked around and saw my students engaged in their worlds, allowing their senses to ignite their imagination as they wrote down their lines of poetry.

Some teachers later told me that they tried to ask questions of my students, but they calmly pointed to the sign and continued to write.

Here are a few of the poems that my students created:

I feel as if i've been everywhere.
Everywhere all at once.
Magical, isn't it?

It's cold,
And the ambience within brings relief.
Why?

I don't wanna be in
One place anymore.
I wanna go somewhere else again.

The concept
The idea of freedom itself.
Why would I let that go in the breeze?

And there are voices,
Voices from a place I've not go.
And I'd rather not go anyways.

So why haven't I moved?
Freedom in my hands and yet
I am stood still.

Yet church bells ring from a far,
But they seem so close.
Even if they aren't bells at all.

I feel lost yet so found in here,
But why?
I wish I knew.

But someday I will learn.

Someday.
Someday the silence will say it all.
Then i'll be at peace once again.

The rumble of cars
A creaking stage
Custodians cleaning
Jingle of ID badges
Faint echoes of teachers
The hum of the AC
Soft music from the band hall
Dancing pencils
The ruffles of notebook paper
Laughing kids
Flushing toilets
The trickle of sink water
Thuds from the Theatre Room travel through the floor
Light footsteps
Questioning gazes
A mop being wrong
Clanging metal
Flipping pages
Trash cans banging
Closing doors
A phone rings...
Teachers laugh.

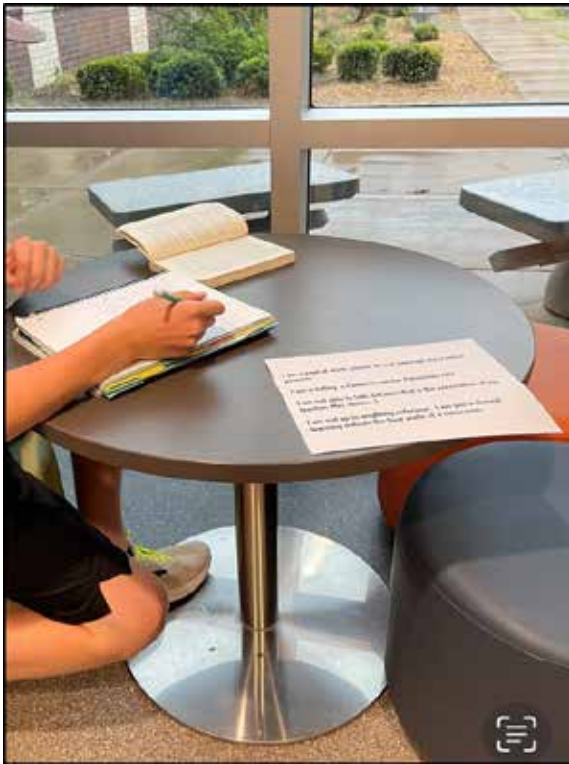
Peace is Needed

I hear the clatter of metal
Like a bell on a church
I hear the wind of a dryer
Like ideas you catch in the air
I see a table
A table that carries all of our health and academics
This building creates the future of us and our children
To help our world
To solve horrible problems
The roar of cars like a bear
Loud, violent, and fierce
To place dominance on the others
It's a contest
A competition- It always has been
To be better than the next
That's what we need to fix this
We need to be in peace and harmony with one another
We need to teach ourselves and the children of the future
Help us find peace.

A fresh look at found poetry (continued)

When we debriefed this activity my students enjoyed the freedom of being able to go out into the building and write freely. Many mentioned that it allowed their creativity to soar. They wanted to do it again. The opportunity came when I had a couple of my classes that were reading Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* venture out to write a Cento Poem.

Once again I armed my students with their hallpass, journal, pencil, and novel. They went out into the school, found their perfect location and wrote a Cento Poem for *Fahrenheit 451*. Below are examples of their work.



I am a poet at work, please do not interrupt my creative process.

I am creating a Cento Poem for Fahrenheit 451.

I am not able to talk, because that is the expectation of my teacher, Mrs. Goins. :)

I am not up to anything nefarious. I am just a student learning outside the four walls of a classroom.

The autumn leaves blew over the moonlight pavement in such a way.
Half an hour passed,
 If only.....
Only half an hour,
 But the world had melted down and sprung up in a new and colorless form.
Keep going.
Nowhere,
 There was nowhere to go.
Walk, that's it, walk, walk.
The circus must go on,
 Even with war beginning within the hour.
It's over.

A fresh look at found poetry (continued)

Pleasure

It was a pleasure to burn
 Burn - To catch aflame and disintegrate
 Pleasure - To please someone
 Fire
 A dangerous substance
 Destroys everything in its path
 Never slows down
 Cannot be stopped
 Happiness
 A beautiful emotion
 Flowers and Sunshine
 Overtakes all
 Except one
 Sadness
 Anger, Hurt, Loss,
 Sadness
 The Strongest of them all
 Order
 Keeps everyone
 S a n e
 It was a pleasure to burn

He lay where he had fallen
 And sobbed, his legs folded
 His head whirled sickeningly
 He wondered "How'd you get so empty?"

He solved his problems with burning
 As if it could cut it off
 Its terrible emptiness filled the room
 And hissed out a senseless scream

He didn't try to save himself
 Yet he shut up and stayed alive
 I'm sorry, I'm sorry he thought
 He tried to piece it all together

He stood and set out
 Finishing with all the crying and pain
 A frame skeleton strung with asphalt tendons
 There was nowhere to go.

The school building found poetry was a success. I look forward to doing this activity with my new students next year as well. I will continue to think and teach outside of the

four walls of my classroom in order to engage and inspire my students to use their creativity.

FOCUS ON SOCIAL MEDIA!



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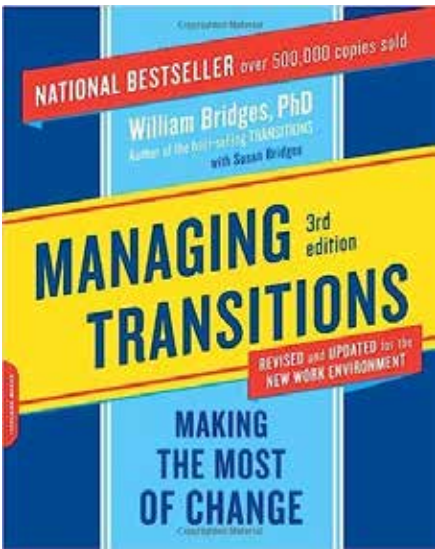
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How to navigate the neutral zone

By Doug Frank, Recording Secretary

It is not revolutionary to state that change is hard. In most circumstances change comes with challenges. A change in careers, a change in location, a change in curriculum, or any change that challenges the norm can bring feelings of trepidation or frustration. In William and Susan Bridges’ (2017) book *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change*, they guide the reader



through how to deal with significant change. While many of the examples provided in the book stem from the business world, our world of education is always experiencing some sort of change with varying degrees of significance. The time we spend floating between the old ways and new ways is what Bridges refers to as the “neutral zone.” Too often we only consider the end—the outcome—and not the time in between. The

book makes a significant case as to why we must not ever overlook the neutral zone when going through change.

The book describes the neutral zone as the “limbo between the old sense of identity and the new. It is the time when the old way of doing things is gone, but the new way doesn’t feel comfortable yet” (Bridges, 2017, p. 9) The time in the neutral zone is indeterminate; Bridges states that “this time between the old identity and the new can stretch out for months, even years” (p. 45). There may be reasons out of our control as to why the transition from the old to new is delayed, and this time of uncertainty can lead to frustration. Think about times in your own life when you were in a time of transition. How did you feel before you reached the end? Was there a sense of confusion or anxiousness to reach the end? Since we cannot always force our way to the end, we should recognize our time in the neutral zone and have processes in place to avoid polarization in a team that can lead to chaos and “never [emerging] from the neutral zone” (p. 48).

Ending Losing Letting Go	The Neutral Zone	The New Beginning
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Visual representation of the three phases of transition

The specific chapter over the neutral zone offers these guides when navigating through this time:

1. Normalize the neural zone: Recognizing that the neutral zone does exist and that “it is natural to feel somewhat nervous and confused at such a time” (p. 49). Vocalizing the uncertainty can make the time in the neutral zone more bearable.
2. Redefine the neutral zone: Changing the language surrounding the metaphor can also ease frustration in an organization. Bridges provides examples of how to describe the neutral zone as a “voyage” (p. 50-51).
3. Create temporary systems for the neutral zone: Maintaining business as usual is ineffective and even toxic when transitioning to a new beginning. How are roles changed during this time? What are short-range goals to work towards while in the neutral zone?



4. Strengthen intragroup connections: Relationships are always key at any level (families, classrooms, schools, districts). Strengthening the relationships in an organization can be helpful, but still be mindful of the people’s feelings toward a change. Team building activities can be seen as inappropriate or insincere, so, instead, maintaining open communication can be more effective.

Bridges offers even more guidance about the neutral zone in the chapter. This is only a glimpse at the importance of functioning and existing in the neutral zone. Whether it’s changes to state standards, state testing, district curriculum, or school leadership, we need time to recognize that we are in a neutral zone and allow ourselves to recognize how we feel during any sort of transition.

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Forging new family ties: Revisiting family literacy to reframe the narrative

By Heather Ramer Fletes, Elementary Section Chair

The Texas summer heat also brings memories of childhood summers. Growing up as the middle of five kids, I remember how my mom searched for ways to keep us busy that were cheap or free. There was an occasional soda-can-discount trip to Six Flags or staying at a motel to use the pool when my brother had a baseball tournament out of town. When I was three or four years old, my mother drove us to the library on a hot June day to sign my older siblings up for the summer reading program, part of the plan to keep us routinely busy during the dog days of summer. The air conditioning was a balm, and I grabbed some books to entertain myself while my mom and siblings chatted with the other families about books.

The librarian wandered over to check out my selections and asked me to read some of the book to her. She asked if we had that book about kittens at home. I said we didn't, but I had always wanted a kitten. The librarian asked Mom, "Why don't you sign your younger daughter up too?" My mom explained that I hadn't started school yet and couldn't read. The librarian laughed, "But she does read. She just read me a book."



I had learned to read without anyone consciously teaching me, and without my parents even noticing. They weren't obsessing about letters or levels or putting me in expensive tutoring programs, but I had learned to read even before kindergarten. My mother dropped out of high school to work and my dad turned down college opportunities. My parents both grew up in poverty and enjoyed reading for different reasons. While they did not teach me to read, some of their practices created conditions that made early reading possible.

My parents had their own reading lives, shared books with us, and taught us to entertain ourselves with books. The local public elementary was a hub for our lives, and I spent a lot of time there even before I started kindergarten. I watched my mom flip her way through enough decorating magazines and books to read her way into a successful career as a decorator. She even took some community college classes to gain specific skills. Decorating books were expensive, so I sat in the armchairs of many-a-bookstore reading while my mom flipped longingly through books she could

not afford. My dad worked in construction and left before the sun was up each day. He somehow managed to have energy to help with bath time and read me a book or two in the evenings (after he finished the sports page). Part of the way my dad found this time is that we were not allowed to watch television except on the weekends. If my mom did need me to be entertained for an hour while she accomplished things around the house, Mr. Rogers and Sesame Street were my babysitters and teachers.



My parents found enough room in their budget for us to purchase a book at the book fair each year. I still have some of those books today, though they were well-loved and passed down through younger siblings. Mom would allow my siblings and I to purchase books at garage sales or thrift shops when she dragged us along hunting for treasures for the house.

When we waited, we did not have devices or videos, we had books. In the winter, we sometimes brought crayons and a coloring book along, but she knew better than to let kids keep crayons in the car during Texas summers. So, at doctor's offices, waiting with Mom to pick up my older siblings, on road trips to Galveston, at Grandma's house, while mom was on the phone with her best friend, at my brother's little league games, or while my mom shopped at the Dillard's Outlet, I looked at books. If we complained of boredom, our parents would gift us extra chores. I quickly learned the benefits of finding entertainment in books.

My parents were able to send me for a few hours each week to our church's Mother's Day Out. The idea was to give stay-at-home moms a break for a few hours to run errands and to provide some fun educational experiences that included literacy connections. We enjoyed stories and then took part in hands-on activities connected to them. We memorized Bible verses and learned the letter of the week. There was an expectation that parents would practice with us at home. This knowledge of the alphabet and the connection between words printed and spoken helped unlock the mystery of the symbols accompanying the pictures in all those picture books I perused. I did not yet have formal instruction on reading simple words, but I was able to transfer what I learned about letters because there were constant opportunities for me to

Continued on next page

Forging new family ties: Revisiting family literacy to reframe the narrative (continued)



see those letters in books and hear the words connected to print as I followed along while others read to me.

I hear from a lot of parents asking how to help their children read. Some of them are looking for a quick fix or school intervention. Quite a few do not realize there is a problem until their children are already far behind and feeling insecure about reading. What if we, as educators, began to shift our lens to helping parents set up their homes and habits for literacy in the coming year? What if we spent as much energy building a narrative of early literacy practices in our schools and libraries as we have spent preparing for standardized tests which measure problems we agree already exist? What if we invited parents in to talk about literacy, to check books out for younger siblings, to have parent book clubs? Maybe we can go on the offensive with literacy rather than defending our schools in the midst of battles over books and pedagogy.

Sometimes I have heard administrators or teachers too quickly dismiss the power of family partnerships, especially in schools where poverty is high. Think about a family like mine. Five children born to parents raised in poverty, the mother a high school dropout and the father a manual laborer. Yet, all their children learned to read at high levels. My oldest sister is a technology sales executive who still reads for pleasure. My big brother is a pastor, who reads and writes to learn and communicate daily. I am a literacy teacher and consultant. My younger brother is an engineer and voracious reader, and my baby

brother is delivering packages while he figures out what he wants to do in life (He's a reader, so I think he'll be ok). Elementary schools in the 80s and 90s taught my mom how to set us up to become readers and that knowledge helped us learn to read and receive a strong public education.

As the Texas summer heats up, I keenly feel the stifling heat of criticism around our public schools, our reading practices, and our teachers, driving educators to look for a new future. That sometimes looks like a search for a new grade level or a new school district. For some teachers, the heat has become unbearable, and they are looking for entirely new professions. I love teachers. When I was a classroom teacher, I awoke in the wee hours of the night thinking of my students and how to solve the challenges facing them. Now, teachers and their problems consume that space. I would like to propose that family relationships with schools around literacy could be part of forging a new future in Texas, where teachers want to stay because they feel supported and appreciated, families feel equipped and empowered, and students leave school with the necessary literacy skills to contribute meaningfully to the great state of Texas.

I know that the problems are complex, and I do not want to oversimplify the struggle. I believe that there are some literacy practices that are not up for debate. Let us get back to some of the best things about the 80s. We can leave the perms and shoulder pads behind, but I think the future of literacy includes families.

Grammar gets the job

By Shona Rose, TCTELA Teacher Development Chair and Walter Riggs, Banking Executive

Last month, my friend, Walter, sent me a message on Facebook Messenger. I've heard him groan and complain about grammar on social media, but have disregarded or argued with most of what he says. Social media is ok for informal registers. Yet, I think he has a point here that needs attention.

Shona—

I have a great story for you that happened this week: I'm on a museum board, and we're trying to recruit an office administrator. Our board chairman insisted that accompanying the resume, applicants needed to write a letter outlining why they believe serving as our administrative assistant would be of interest to them.

He passed on a candidate because of her inability to compose a sentence, including the longest run on sentence he had ever seen.

How can this be subtly articulated to give the masses a heads up that English class and grammar matters in the real world?

—Walter

We met at a local coffee shop to discuss the matter further. Here's an adapted script of our conversation.

Walter: As we sit here and listen to people talk and write, I begin to wonder if we need to just accept this way of communication. But are we just dumbing down our communication? Has it always been like this? Has social media revealed the lack of knowledge and expression?

Shona: I'm not sure we can answer that for everyone. I know that we are teaching grammar and writing (and assessing) in every grade.

Walter: But when you are in school, you work so hard to write and learn and read and compose sentences. How can you not continue to do that because you aren't in school? It baffles me. Plus, you have to have pride. People are going to judge you by how you write: what does that say about your self-esteem? I don't want to be judged based on an inability to compose a sentence. Maybe that's superficial...

But when my executive director said he couldn't have her in his company... We've only had one person interview, but it's not going to go anywhere because she wrote the longest run on sentence I have ever seen in my life. As an admin assistant, she would not have been communicating in writing, but he wasn't going to hire someone who couldn't write a sentence.

Shona: What was underneath that?

Walter: I think he thought she was sloppy—she wouldn't project the image he was hoping for.

Shona: That makes sense to me. But it seems that there is more here that bothers you.

Walter: In this day, as we are communicating more and more in written format, how much more do we need to be clear and accurate? Why do we value writing in so many acronyms that we see it as a badge of honor? I just get mad when I see a run on sentence as if they are trying to insult me. Are they trying to piss me off?

Shona: True. Writing is about communicating meaning. Clarity. The punctuation and grammar are tools to help the reader know what you sound like as you speak.

Try this one: THE OLD MAN THE BOAT



Walter: It's not a sentence.

Shona: Well, sometimes, the grammar and punctuation can't help you hear the speaker's voice. If I read this sentence in a way that helps the listener hear that the person I am speaking about are the *old*, and what they do is *man the boat*, the meaning changes from two noun phrases to something that means old people steer the sailing vessel.

Walter: Exactly, I remember. I remember diagramming sentences...do people understand it? Or do college students today have the capacity to write well to graduate? Or do they just decline over time and not write correctly on social media?

Shona: I believe that most people have been taught to write well. Their purposes are different, so the way they write is, too. And the audience. All of that changes what the communication looks like.

Walter: But being able to write efficiently in the fewest words possible to get the thoughts across is so important. My favorite rule is—I hate dangling prepositions.

Shona: Why do you hate them?

Walter: My mother would correct me, and it was embarrassing. It sounds like poor intelligence...I have to think...I need to restructure so that I can write the best way. I enjoyed the intellectual exercise of trying to make it flow better. And then subject verb agreement—that drives me crazy—that suggests that the folks are not very intelligent. 90 percent of why I am the way I am is because of my mom—we weren't allowed to talk like that. Maybe that's why I'm so anal about it. I look at my mom's background—they all spoke eloquently. There was an element of formality when we spoke at family gatherings. It just wasn't allowed. It would have been shameful.

I'm a 65 year old man—it wasn't allowed in my house. It's not about being stuffy and pretentious—it's about being respectful and

Grammar gets the job (continued)

showing your upbringing. If I am going to ask you to spend time reading what I wrote, I need to spend time writing it in such a way that you don't have to allocate additional resources to understand what I am trying to say. If I'm proud that you are taking the time to read it, then I need to respect and honor you enough to make it easy for you to understand what I am trying to articulate. It's about mutual respect—not about what is being written.

Shona: It's about humanity and connecting respectfully.

Walter: Gentlemanly discourse. Approach people and ideas with respect...Is it a lost social norm?

Shona: We convey more in writing than before. We'd think that our writing would be more astute because of that.

Walter: I'd like for this to be a call to action: Don't expose your ass or idiocy with the written word. Take on an ethic of respect in the use of language. There is more of a need for formality and written ethics because of the exponential audience and impact. And, errors mean that you are not being kind for your reader.



Seinfeld character, Cosmo Kramer, as seen in The Scofflaw episode, Jan. 26, 1995 (Source: seinfeld.fandom.com/wiki/The_Scofflaw)

Shona: (Irony again. There is a BE KIND neon sign behind him as he speaks.)

Walter: Do you know the term, Scofflaw? It means someone who disregards the law on purpose. Seinfeld had an episode on it. I don't mean to be a social scofflaw here, but why is it a terrible thing to strive for an easy, efficient way to explain yourself? I wonder if the poor grammar is a brazen disregard for clarity and laziness or disrespect.

Shona: Like a character issue not a grammar issue?

Walter: Perhaps. As an employer, I ask: Is that laziness, ignorance, or a dismissive character trait? I don't want you working for me if that's the way you are. If you write that way, are you going to work that way? I don't want to hire you. If you are applying for a job,

reduce the risk for something that is so controllable. Don't let your grammar make them wonder.

Shona: So, know the room, read the room, write for the room?

Walter: If you want the job, yes.

A quick look into terminology to refresh & update our bilingual education/ESL lexicon as Texas educators

By Stephen White, Sarah Albrecht, Catalina Lugo, Erik Torres and Ángela López Pedrana, Editors, *Texas Voices*

As bilingual teacher educators, we are often confronted with a great deal of misunderstanding about what bilingual classroom teachers do and why. In trying to find a path to prepare these future bilingual teachers, we discover that language is the most common source of these misunderstandings. Hence, communicating what a bilingual educator does and why, often rests on knowing the meaning behind the terminology that we hear when speaking about the bilingual education curriculum and instruction. As such, we compiled a very basic and perhaps simplistic list of vocabulary associated with bilingual education that is undertaken in many parts of Texas.

I will never forget the comment made by a Pre-K teacher during the very first year of my teaching in a public school whose student body was overwhelmingly Spanish speakers. Even then, in 1989,



literacy was a major topic and a huge concern for us. I happened to walk in through the back doors of the teacher lounge to warm up my lunch and some teachers were in the front part, which was our workroom, discussing test scores. The comment was by a "generalist" who had recently moved to Houston. They were talking about how the scores were low "again" and how despite all efforts, their children were not able to demonstrate proficiency in reading. Then she said, "Well, I noticed they do not have a language," and I stopped mid

step. Thankfully another teacher responded, "*They* do have a language, it is just not the language required for the test." I stepped in (with my Tupperware® in hand) and said "It takes time to transition from Spanish to English, and often by third grade, they have not yet developed their CALP." Everyone nodded and went back to work. I warmed my meal (which did not taste all that good

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A quick look into terminology to refresh & update our bilingual education/ESL lexicon as Texas educators (continued)

anymore) and wanted to kick myself for using an acronym they probably did not know.

When I became a college professor in the bilingual education strand, I pulled that memory and have used it as a mantra when I speak about bilingual/ESL education. Even those of us who speak other languages are not familiar with terminology that is used in the school system as it relates to teaching English Learners. The list is a short lexicon that is critical and can be helpful to Texas educators who often find themselves teaching students who speak other languages. And while not all children are placed in bilingual programs where they use their heritage language as they learn, many are placed in ESL settings where the language used to teach and learn is only English.

The following list is the result of the work done by bilingual teacher educators whose passion for preparing teachers to work in bilingual education contexts compel them to try to have a common lexicon that will help foment a better understanding of the bilingual education/ESL programs in our area. We all knew it would merely scratch a tiny part of what is used by teachers who work in bilingual contexts, but as I always say: nothing ventured, nothing gained.

Academic language: A somewhat formal variety of language used for academic purposes in school settings to discuss abstract topics. It uses precise vocabulary terms.

Academic literacy: Emphasizes the development of reading and writing abilities in academic varieties of the language. Also refers to the development of content and cultural knowledge necessary to school success and the ability to function in the school environment.

Additive bilingualism: A situation in which a second language is eventually added to a student's native language without replacing it.

Affective factors: Also known as emotional factors. These learner characteristics include students' feelings about language learning toward their particular target language and culture.

Affective filter: According to Stephen Krashen, this filter determines learners' receptivity to second language input. It is made up of emotional factors connected to language learning, such as motivation to learn the language, anxiety, and feelings toward target language speakers and the target culture. The affective filter determines whether target language input becomes in-take.

Basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS): One of two types of second language proficiency described by James Cummins. This term refers to a type of everyday language commonly used for social interaction. Also referred to as social language or playground language.

Bilingual education: An educational program where students receive instruction in both their first and second languages to keep them from falling behind in their content learning and to encourage the development of their first language while they are learning English.

Bilingual Education Act: Added in 1968 as Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Act. Before passage of the No Child Left Behind Act, it provided federal support for bilingual and other programs for ELLs and their families through competitive grants.

Bilingual Immersion Programs: For language minority students who are English dominant and native English speakers who desire to become bilingual. Students are initially instructed

90%-100% in the non-English target language for the first 2 years of the program. Instruction eases out gradually to 50% instruction in English and 50% in the non-English language as students move up the grade level.

Biliteracy: The ability to read proficiently in two languages.

Code-switching: Switching back and forth between two languages in one sentence or within one conversation when proficiency exists in two languages (e.g., "That is bueno").

Cognates: Words that are related in form and in meaning to ones in another language.

Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA): Anna Chamot's widely used method for teaching language through content.

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills (CALPS): Proficiency in academic language development needed for content areas with specialized, lexical terminology; usually takes 5-7 years to develop.

Communicative competence: The ability to use a language to communicate effectively and appropriately with other speakers of the language. Includes grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence.

Comprehensible Input: Oral or written language that is slightly above a second language learner's current level of proficiency in the second language and thus provides linguistic input leads to second language acquisition.

Comprehensible Output: Oral or written language produced by a second language speaker that is comprehensible to the individual or individuals with whom he or she is communicating. Second language learners' need to produce comprehensible output pushes them to pay attention to gaps in their proficiency and thus may prompt them to notice more in the input and motivate them to learn the language they need to express their intended meanings.

Discourse Competence: The ability to competently interact with native speakers using various communication strategies, social registers, conversation, narration, inquiry for information, directing others, and so forth.

Dominant Language: Term is used to describe the language in which a bilingual person is most proficient.

Dual Language Immersion (DLI): A state-approved bilingual program model in accordance with TEC, §29.066.

Emergent Bilingual: Refers to language learners who maintain their first language as they develop second language competence. This term emphasizes the importance of maintaining learners' first languages. Interchangeable with the term of English learner, which is used to describe a student who is in the process of acquiring English and has another language as the student's primary or home language.

English as a Foreign Language (EFL): Refers to learning or teaching English in an overseas context where English is not spoken.

English as a Second Language (ESL): Refers to learning or teaching English within an area where English is spoken.

English Learner: Students who are not proficient in English as determined by the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment.

English Language Learner (ELL): A label for students who are non-native speakers of English and are in the process of attaining proficiency in English.

A quick look into terminology to refresh & update our bilingual education/ESL lexicon as Texas educators (continued)

English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS): Assessment in listening, speaking, reading, and writing as required by 19 Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 74, Subchapter A, §74.4, outline English language proficiency level descriptors and student expectations for English language learners (ELLs). School districts are required to implement ELPS as an integral part of each subject in the required curriculum. (Currently under review by TEA)

Heritage: A person's cultural background including language.

Heritage language: Refers to the language spoken by the learner as their first language before entering school.

Heritage learner: Refers to learners studying a target language that is also their heritage language.

Immersion (as a program type): A program in which at least 50 percent of instruction is in the partner language and the focus of instruction is on both language and subject content, in both the partner language and English.



Immersion (as a method): A method in which teachers speak in the partner language exclusively during instructional time. The term may be used in immersion programs or in traditional world language classes at any grade level.

Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC): Committee created to make assessment decisions on an individual student basis to determine participation of emergent bilingual (EB) in a bilingual education program. This is in accordance with administrative procedures established by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and in the Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 101, Subchapter AA, Commissioner's Rules.

Languages other than English (LOTE): Refers to the languages spoken in the United States by non-English speakers whose increasing population numbers make the distinction between foreign and second languages less clear.

Limited English proficient (LEP): Students who are second language speakers of English who do not have sufficient English ability to function in English speaking classrooms. The term LEP is currently generally considered to be outdated and somewhat pejorative.

Metalinguistic: A branch of linguistics that deals with the relation between an awareness of one's own language use and other cultural factors in a society.

Newcomer: Students who are new immigrants to the U.S. who are English learners

Newcomer centers: Programs for newly arrived language learners. These programs offer both English and content

instruction and other services in a single place. They are often directed at learners with gaps in their schooling and/or low levels of literacy in their native language.

One-way immersion: Dual language immersion/one-way is a bilingual/biliteracy program model in which students identified as emergent bilingual students are served in both another language and English and are prepared to meet reclassification criteria in order to be successful in English-only instruction not earlier than six or later than seven years after the student enrolls in school. Instruction provided in a language other than English in this program model is delivered by a teacher appropriately certified in bilingual education under TEC, §29.061. Instruction provided in English in this program model may be delivered either by a teacher appropriately certified in bilingual education or by a different teacher certified in ESL in accordance with TEC, §29.061. The goal of one-way dual language immersion is for program participants to attain full proficiency in another language as well as English. This model provides ongoing instruction in literacy and academic content in the students' primary language as well as English, with at least half of the instruction delivered in the students' primary language for the duration of the program.

Partner language: An alternative term for "target" language or a language other than English that is used for instruction. This is the preferred term in dual language education, in which both English and the world language are "targets" for developing proficiency.

Primary Language Support (PLS): Using student's native language during ESL or sheltered English content area instruction to make the English instruction more comprehensible.

Registers: The level of formality of a language.

Scaffolding: A term used to describe the act of a more proficient target language speaker supporting a conversation so that less proficient speakers with limited resources can participate.

Second Language Acquisition: Refers to language learning or teaching within an area where the target language is spoken.

Sequential biliteracy: Students who learn initial "formal literacy" in their first language after age three for the first 2-3 years, then add second language formal literacy.

Simultaneous biliteracy: Students who learn initial "formal literacy" in both their first language and second language after age three.

Sheltered English: Refers to an approach where English learners are grouped together so that they do not have to compete with English speakers while they are supported in their development of academic skills and competence in academic English.

Sheltered Instruction (SI): Instruction focusing on teaching content but tailored to the needs of second language learners. Typically, all of the students are second language learners from the same L1 background.

Sociocultural: Combining social and cultural factors.

Sociolinguistic competence: Language production that is socially and culturally appropriate as well as grammatically accurate. Learners must follow cultural conventions for verbal and nonverbal behavior within interpersonal communication in areas such as suitability of topics, politeness, and turn taking. Learners must also understand the cultural content of language and vary their productions according to the social context and their conversational pattern.

Subtractive Bilingualism: A situation in which a second language eventually replaces a student's native language.

Continued on next page

A quick look into terminology to refresh & update our bilingual education/ESL lexicon as Texas educators (continued)

Target language: The second or foreign language of instruction.
Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS): TEA designed the Texas to assess the progress that emergent bilingual (EB) students make in learning the English language.

Translanguaging: In its original conceptualization, refers to the practice in which bilinguals receive information in one language and then use or apply it in the other language. In its expanded sense, it refers to the natural and normal ways bilinguals use their languages in their everyday lives to make sense in their bilingual worlds.

Transitional Bilingual Program: When a district identifies 20 students with the same primary language in the same grade level district-wide, Texas Education Code 29.053 requires the district to provide one of the four state-approved bilingual program models in the elementary grades. The goal of traditional transitional bilingual programs is academic proficiency in English. The philosophy of these programs is that students who first establish foundational language and literacy skills in their primary language can then leverage these skills as a resource to develop English literacy within a program that addresses their affective, linguistic, and cognitive needs. For this reason, all students participating in a traditional transitional bilingual education program learn to read in their primary language first. In Texas, 90% of identified emergent bilinguals list Spanish as their home language, so Spanish is usually the primary language of transitional programs. The stronger the language and literacy skills in the primary language, the smoother the transition to English, although explicit instruction is required to ensure a complete transition.



Two-way immersion: A dual language immersion/two-way is a bilingual/biliteracy program model in which students identified as English learners are integrated with students proficient in English and are served in both English and another language and are prepared to meet reclassification criteria in order to be successful in English-only instruction not earlier than six or later than seven years after the student enrolls in school. Instruction provided in a language other than English in this program model is delivered by

a teacher appropriately certified in bilingual education under TEC, §29.061, for the assigned grade level and content area. Instruction provided in English in this program model may be delivered either by a teacher appropriately certified in bilingual education or by a different teacher certified in ESL in accordance with TEC, §29.061, for the assigned grade level and content area. The goal of two-way dual language immersion is for program participants to attain full proficiency in another language as well as English. This model provides ongoing instruction in literacy and academic content in English and another language with at least half of the instruction delivered in the non-English program language for the duration of the program.

As I foreshadowed, while the list clearly does not cover all we need to know about language and learning and working with speakers of other languages, we do hope it will give a glimpse into the dual language learning contexts. It might help when a student is heard speaking English in the hallway or playground or even in their classroom realize that while they might have enough proficiency to speak at very informal manner in English, they may still be far away from reaching the level of proficiency that permits him to communicate in academic or professional contexts.

The most evident caveat that must be pointed out is that, just like with any language that has dictionaries, depending on the source for the definition, depending on the person's knowledge of the bilingual education curriculum & instruction, the terms have slight differences. Furthermore, this list is not intended to be exhaustive, rather, it will help foment awareness about languages and learning as well as an understanding that there are more terms we need to try to know because, as teachers, we often work with students who speak other languages as they learn English. In the spirit of trying to find common ground or develop a common lexicon, we attempted to inform our readership about terms that are important in the bilingual education realm. As such, it seems very appropriate to invite you, the reader, to think about what word you would add.

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Call for submissions

Review the submission guidelines at https://www.tctela.org/english_in_texas.

English in Texas, Vol. 53.2 (Fall/Winter 2023)

Theme: Pandemic Panacea: Enacting & Extending Lessons Learned about ELAR Instruction

Manuscript Deadline: September 1, 2023

"As literacy education professionals, we must reject the notion of 'behindness,' expecting instead that children come to us rich with experiences, new knowledge, and multiple ways of speaking, writing, and drawing that we can learn about and teach into going forward." —Katherine Bomer

The Fall/Winter 2023 issue of *English in Texas* is focused on lessons learned (and those that we are still learning) about what ELAR instruction looks like when the world is beset by a global pandemic. The last three years brought many challenges to the doorsteps of ELAR classrooms. In the spring of 2022, The New York Times reported on significant reading losses for early childhood and high-poverty students (2022, March 9). It did not take long for those outside of our classrooms to characterize negatively the impact of online, hybrid, and other nontraditional learning environments in regard to literacy.

Rather than being driven by deficits, let us be guided by Bomer's image of teaching "into" what comes next. For the Fall/Winter 2023 issue of *English in Texas*, we invite you to consider how you met and are still meeting the challenges that have been swirling about our classrooms since March 2020. Some pedagogical questions to consider for manuscript submissions are any of the following, any fusion of the following, or any extension beyond the following:

- What happened in your classroom and in your pedagogy when you opened the door beyond the physical walls?
- Did you learn something new about online literacy education?
- Upon our return, what did you learn about face-to-face interactions with students as they read, write, and talk?
- How did the pandemic expand or shrink literacy learning?
- What new perspectives and experiences did your students bring into your classroom?

More broadly, you may also consider the following:

- How did you "teach into" the new?
- How did you collaborate with colleagues and professional organizations in new and unexplored ways?
- **pan·a·ce·a** /pan'sēə/ noun : A solution or remedy for difficulties.

FOCUS ON THE THEME: We invite interested individuals to submit manuscripts, conceptual, creative, reflective, student-authored, pedagogical, research-based, and/or theoretical, as related to this topic of **Pandemic Panacea: Enacting & Extending Lessons Learned about ELAR Instruction**.

INQUIRIES AND INNOVATIONS: Additionally, we welcome educational research relevant to the work of ELAR educators.

STANDING COLUMNS:

We also encourage brief contributions in the form of standing columns. These center on topics that interest you but do not necessarily align to an issue's theme or full-length manuscript requirements.

A Seat and a Voice at the Table

This column focuses on supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion to empower groups that are too often marginalized in the ELAR classroom.

What does your seat at the table look like day-to-day? How are you striving to bring diverse texts, methods, and instructional design to the forefront of 21st-century instruction?

"Diversity is having a seat at the table, inclusion is having a voice, and belonging is having that voice be heard." —Liz Fosslien

Keeping Your Wits About You

This column focuses on teacher self-care in today's often challenging educational environment.

How do you keep your wits while the world spins—often wildly!—on its axis each day? What are your personal and professional approaches to bringing hope and balance to the world of teaching?

"If you can keep your wits about you while all others are losing theirs, and blaming you... The world will be yours and everything in it..." —Rudyard Kipling

Teaching Outtakes

This column focuses on sharing the "aha" lessons from the "uh-oh" moments in your classroom.

As educators, we often talk about "what works," but how has the "not working" turned you into a more knowledgeable practitioner and a more streetwise professional? How did the "not working" inform you in your teaching and help you to grow?

"Mistakes are a fact of life. It is the response to error that counts." —Nikki Giovanni

To submit any of these standing columns for publication consideration, please contact the editorial team at EnglishinTexas@uhd.edu with a 100-150-word summary of your idea BEFORE submitting.

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