

ORANGE COUNTY READER



The Newsletter of the Orange County Reading Association - P.O. Box 7143, Orange, CA 92863-7143
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Affiliated with California Reading Association and International Reading Association

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President's Message

Dear OCRA Members,

If you had the opportunity to be with us on October 23rd at our 47th Annual Fall Conference, I imagine that in addition to making you laugh a lot, Freddy Hiebert also pushed your thinking about vocabulary instruction. She is such a phenomenal presenter and it was a true privilege to be able to introduce her at the conference. I have learned so much from her over the years!

We have another popular speaker lined up for our Spring Conference on Thursday, March 24th at the Meridian Club in Fullerton. Kelly Gallagher is the author of the much talked about book, *Readicide: How Schools Are Killing Reading and What You Can Do About It*. He is also the author of *Reading Reasons: Motivational Mini-Lessons for the Middle and High School*; *Deeper Reading: Comprehending Challenging Texts, 4-12*; *Teaching Adolescent Writers*; *Writing Coach*; and *Write Like This*.

Although his books are geared towards upper elementary and beyond, I assure you that you will learn a lot from him even if you teach in the primary grades. Kelly will autograph books after his keynote speech. You will find a registration form for the conference in this newsletter. You can also register by going to www.ocreading.org. You may also want to look at his website, www.kellygallagher.org. In the "Resources" tab, you will find his very popular, "Article of the Week" resources.

In case you do not know, I want to point out that OCRA members also receive free membership to the California Reading Association! Not only do you receive publications from both professional organizations when you are a member, but you also receive reduced rates on all conferences. Why not encourage your friends to join, too?

It has been so exciting to have some new people join our Executive Council this year. If you are also interested, please send me an email at president@ocreading.org. You will be joining a fabulous group of people. It is refreshing to see such a large group of people volunteer their time for one of my favorite things--literacy! At our last conference, I must admit that tears of pride welled up in my eyes when I stood in the middle of the exhibit area and looked around. I was in awe at everything they we're doing to ensure that the conference went off without a hitch. It is truly a pleasure to be a part of the team!

Sincerely,
Julie Niles Petersen, President
Founder of the TWRCTank*
TWRCTank Blog: <http://www.twrcTank.com>
*"TWRCT" rhymes with "work" & stands for think, wonder, reflect, and connect.

Important Web Links:

Reading/Language ArtsFramework
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/cf/index.asp>

California Young Reader Medal Program
www.californiayoungreadermedal.org/index.htm

A Focus on Fluency
www.prel.org/products/re_fluency-1.htm

A Focus on Vocabulary
www.prel.org/products/re_ES0419.htm

International Reading Association www.reading.org

California Reading Association_
www.californiareads.org

OCRA's Website: www.ocreading.org
OCRA on Twitter: www.twitter.com/OCReading
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Outstanding Contribution to Reading Award



President Julie Niles Petersen (left) presented the Outstanding Contribution to Reading Award to Dr. Erica Bowers (right)

The Outstanding Contribution to Reading Award is given annually to an individual who has made a significant difference to reading in Orange County.

This year the award went to Dr. Erica Bowers. Dr. Bower's life is focused on making reading literacy a priority in her life and in the life of those she teaches. She has been a teacher for twenty-two years. She spent many of those years teaching elementary school and as a reading specialist. After earning her Doctor of Education degree from the University of Southern California, she became a professor at California State University at Fullerton. Currently, she is an Assistant Professor in the Reading Department of California State University, Fullerton, and is the Director of their CSUF Reading Clinic where she guides graduate students in their work with struggling readers grades K-12.

Dr. Bowers not only teaches, but is keenly interested in academic literacy and has published articles in two journals, the "Bilingual Research Journal" and "Reading Psychology". Scheduled to be published in the spring of 2011 is her book on academic learning in the content areas.

Although her schedule is full and responsibilities many, Dr. Bowers has made room for community service. In the last three years she has been an active member of our own ORCA 's Executive Board acting as President Elect, President, and currently immediate Past President.

Interesting Research

At the 2010 Society for Neuroscience meeting in San Diego, a group of scientists held a session on how poverty changes the brain. Helen Neville of the Univ. of Oregon described studies on the brains of 3-to-5-year-old children where they found that children growing up in poverty, for various reasons, have much poorer brain development and cognitive development than children growing up in not-poor environments. This has been shown by many people around the world for many decades. Now we have animal models showing some key characteristics of an impoverished environment such as parental neglect. Rats that neglect their offspring create difference in brains and learning that are parallel to those in humans.

For kids brought up in lower socioeconomic environments their executive function and self-control is lower, language skills are lower, IQ is lower, attention (the ability to focus on one thing and ignore distracting information) is poorer and working memory is poorer. They also found the same differences in adults so the effects are long-lasting.

After trying several processes it was observed that the most effective interventions were to train attention in kids (low SES kids in Head Start) so they developed games and puzzles for kids to do that they enjoyed. They also worked with the parents stressing the importance of talking to their children, using consistent discipline, giving choices, and the importance of attention and self-regulation.

With over 100 kids in the program the parents' behavior changes with their children, their stress levels go down, the children's problem behaviors diminish and their social skills improve, as rated by their teachers. In preliterate tests language and IQ showed marked improvements and brain function looked like high SES kids. The first group has been followed for two years and they are hanging on to the gains without further work. They're still gathering data especially for one more year.

Most of the children were English speaking and white so the next step is to adapt the study for Latino families. The group runs an educational web site (changing.brains.org) and produced a DV about how the brain changes. The group believes that people need to know the importance of the brain, need to know it's changed by experience, and need to know that genes are not destiny. (Condensed from an article published in the Jan. 29, 2011 edition of SCIENCE NEWS)





Book Reviews by Joan Macon



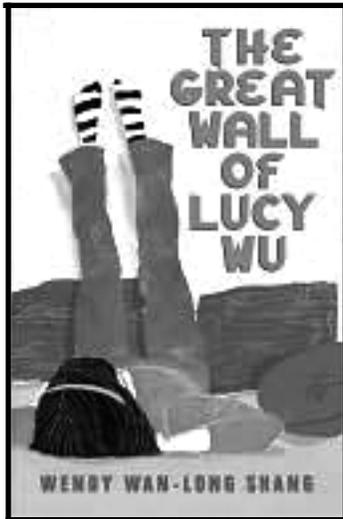
(Joan is a past president of OCRA and was our area director on the CRA Board. She served two terms (six years) on the State Young Reader Medal Committee. She is also a past president of The California Reading Association.)

The Great Wall of Lucy Wu

Written by Wendy Wan-Long Shang

© 2011 ISBN # 978-0-545-16215-9

Lucy Wu is going to be in the sixth grade, and it will be a perfect year. Her older sister Regina, who has always shared a bedroom with her, is going off to college, and Lucy will have her own room at last. She knows just how she will decorate it. She is maybe going to make captain of the basketball team. Sixth graders rule the school. But wait! Things are not what they seem. It turns out that her beloved grandmother had a sister, and that great-aunt is coming from China to visit, and where will she sleep? On top of that, her parents want Lucy to go to Chinese school on Saturdays when she should be working out with her team. Well, Lucy is going to do what she can about her room, so she arranges her desk, bureau, and dressing table down the middle of her bedroom, with the backs of all of them facing the other bed, and makes her own great wall. This story not only gives a very sensitive picture of Lucy's problems and their solutions, but a look at the Chinese culture and customs. And you'll wish you could taste the dumplings!



Chicken Big

Written and illustrated by Keith Graves

© .2010 ISBN #978-0-8118-7237-9

You've heard about Chicken Little, who got hit on the head by an acorn and thought the sky was falling? That's not this chicken. This chicken is humongous. When he hatches out of his egg, the other chickens are not sure what he is-and elephant, a squirrel, an umbrella, a sweater, or a cow? For example, when an acorn falls on the littlest chicken who thinks the sky is falling, the humongous chick tells them it's only an acorn; and they are actually quite tasty. So maybe he is a squirrel? The colorful, uninhibited illustrations for this book make it very appealing to children, and they should all be amused at what the littlest chick comes up with to describe Chicken Big.

WIN BOOKS FOR YOUR SCHOOL!

OCRA sponsors a drawing for free sets of next year's nominated titles for the California Young Reader Medal. So make a copy of your CYRM and send your original ballot to the CYRM committee (address on the ballot) and send the copy to Joan Macon, OCRA drawing, 1581 W Pacific Place, Anaheim, CA 92802. Send copies of your ballots by April 1st. Winners will be drawn for each of the five categories. Be sure to participate this year. You can find CYRM information at www.californiareads.org.

.Reps Needed on OCRA Council

OCRA needs representatives from school districts in Orange County: one rep from each small district and two reps from each large district. Reps are still needed from: Anaheim Union High SD, Brea-Olinda SD, Capistrano Unified SD, Centralia SD, Fountain Valley SD, Huntington Beach City SD, Huntington Beach Union High SD, La Habra City SD, Los Alamitos Unified SD, Lowell Joint SD, Magnolia SD, Newport-Mesa Unified SD, Ocean View SD, Orange Unified SD, Placentia-Yorba Linda SD, Saddleback Valley Unified SD, Savanna SD, Tustin Unified SD, Westminster SD. **If you are willing to serve, please contact president Julie Niles Petersen at julie@TWRCTank.com**



Dr. Erica Bowers (past pres.), Julie Niles Petersen (pres.),
Dr. Elfrieda Hiebert, Megan Sommers (vice pres.-elect)

Dr. Hiebert's Speech

Dr. Hiebert is currently an Adjunct Professor at the Univ. of California, Berkeley. Her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology is from the Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison. At the Fall Conference she spoke about Strategic Vocabulary Selection.

English Vocabulary is huge: 290,500 entries in a dictionary with variant spellings, obsolete forms, combinations and derivatives making over 616,500 words. School Vocabularies come from school tasks, content specific words, general academic words, literacy words, and core words. There are differences between the vocabularies of narrative and informational texts. The percentage of conceptually complex words is higher in informational than in narrative texts. It is the conceptual complexity of words that influences learning from context and rare words are repeated more frequently in informational than narrative texts.

The informational vocabulary that needs to be taught are words that are content specific as well as general academic words such as system, process, form. Attention should be paid to compound words and phrases. Many words have Romance-based morphology (e.g., combine/combination; solution/dissolve). Students need in-depth experiences with concepts as well as opportunities to talk about them, read about them, and write about them.

Some new words can be explained easily/quickly with synonyms or a phrase that students recognize and understand. Studies have shown that 2nd and 5th grade students knew over 75% of the grade level words and over 70% of the words from the next two higher grade levels.

Some words can be pictured. Illustrations and photos are especially helpful to English Language Learners when learning vocabulary. The words that remain (after the easy to define and those that can be pictures) become the focus words. Some words are more critical for comprehension of narratives especially those that give insights into the thinking/traits of characters or circumstances of plot/resolution such as words that describe cognitive/perceptual actions, communication, and feelings and values.

Students should be aware that many words belong to families of words that have the same root words and meanings. They also need to know that many words in English, especially those that are used frequently, have multiple meanings and when words are in compound words or phrases they may take on unique meanings. Also, some words share the same pronunciation with other words, even though they are spelled differently.

We need to realize that every word in English can't be taught. New inventions bring with it new words and meanings to existing words. (For example: Just think of the words associated with a computer.)

Subject expertise alone does not make a teacher successful

Possessing only subject-matter expertise does not make an educator successful, former teacher and University of California, Los Angeles, education lecturer Walt Gardner writes in a blog post. Effective teachers need to be experts in engaging students in lessons, or the subject knowledge they possess will be of little use; this realization is driving more teacher-training programs to increase their focus on hands-on classroom skills, Gardner writes. Education Week/Walt Gardner's Reality Check blog

Technology in the Classroom - Is classroom technology worth the cost?

Palm Beach County, Fla., schools have spent about \$500,000 on classroom tools, such as student clicker systems and interactive white boards, during a time when the district cannot afford teacher raises, and some question whether the high-tech gadgets are worth it. Many teachers, however, say technology enhances learning. One principal said technology doesn't negate the need for an effective teacher. "You're still seeing a human being explain and interpret," he noted. "The teacher is still front and center."

How classroom technology is being used to boost student literacy

Rather than purchasing expensive software, some teachers say they are using technology they already have to improve students' literacy. One teacher says she uses audio recorders and PowerPoint to create vocabulary-building DVDs with audio for students to take home. In another classroom, students who watched themselves read via webcam were able to improve their fluency. Another teacher says all of her fifth-graders read at grade level or above by the end of the school year, in large part because of the use of technology. Digital Directions (EdWeek.org)



INFORMATION FOR PARENTS



Building Your Child's Vocabulary



All parents want their child to do well in school. One way to help your child is to help them build their vocabulary. Vocabulary refers to the words that children must know to communicate effectively. In school terms, it can be described as oral vocabulary (listening and speaking) or written vocabulary (reading and writing). Young children start by acquiring a listening and speaking vocabulary which helps them understand the world around them. Beginning readers use the knowledge about words to help them make sense of what they're reading. The more words a reader knows, the more they are able to understand what they're reading or listening to.

Talking to and reading with your children are two terrific ways to help them hear and read new words. Conversations and questions about interesting words ("The book says, 'The boy **tumbled** down the hill,' and look at the picture! How do you think he went down the hill?") are easy, non-threatening ways to get new words into everyday talk. Remember to read aloud stories (fiction), poetry, and non-fiction so that your children are exposed to many new words in context.

Sharing a new word with your child doesn't have to take a long time: just a few minutes to talk about the word and then focus back on the book or conversation. Choose which words to talk about carefully - choosing every new word might make reading seem like a chore. The best words to explore with your child are ones that are common among adult speakers but are less common to see in the books your child might read.

When introducing new words to your young learner, keep the following four helpful hints in mind:

1. First, provide a simple, kid-friendly definition for the new word:
Enormous means that something is really, really big.
2. Second, provide a simple, kid-friendly example that makes sense within their daily life:
*Remember that really big watermelon we got at the grocery store? That was an **enormous** watermelon!*
3. Third, encourage your child to develop their own example:
*What **enormous** thing can you think of? Can you think of something really big that you saw today? That's right! The bulldozer near the park was **enormous**! Those tires were huge.*
4. Last, keep your new words active within your house. Over the next few days and weeks, take advantage of opportunities to use each new vocabulary word in conversation.
Take the time to share new words and build your child's vocabulary. You'll be **enormously** glad you did!

For more resources, visit the vocabulary section on Reading Rockets:
www.ReadingRockets.org/atoz/vocabulary



Teaching Secrets: Tips for New Teachers By Renee Moore

This article was on TeacherMagazine.org and can help all new teachers from Pre-School to College Levels.

Brand new teachers have much to learn as they boldly walk into a classroom for the first time. Fortunately, others have gone before and we should learn from them. Looking back over my 20 years in the classroom, there have been four truly enduring lessons that have helped me to be a successful teacher, and I urge everyone entering our profession to consider them as they navigate their maiden voyage.

1. Join or create a supportive professional network. Professional learning communities and other types of teacher networks are more numerous and accepted than they were even a decade ago. I have been part of several such learning communities, and each of them has provided me tremendous information and encouragement. Not everything that calls itself a “learning community” is a truly supportive or collaborative environment for bringing out the very best in teachers, so some searching may be necessary. Nevertheless, it is worth the time to seek out a group within which a new (or veteran) teacher can ask important questions about daily classroom practice and get thoughtful, helpful feedback. Hopefully, such a network will exist in your school building or district, but that may not be the case. Fortunately, there are other options, including social media networks.

2. Develop a deep working cultural knowledge of your students and their communities.

I have done extensive classroom research on culturally engaged instruction. That research has led me to this belief: *Empowering language arts instruction is a dynamic practice. It is shaped by informed and collaborative analysis of the particular cultural experiences, strengths, and learning goals of a specific group of students within a particular community. I refer to this type of teaching practice as Culturally Engaged Instruction (CEI).* One method I used is the Personal English Plan (PEP). The PEP is an individualized learning plan that I developed with each student in my English classes. Starting with a series of diagnostics that I designed, the students and I develop their learning goals for the year. The student him- or herself is responsible for monitoring progress on the PEP. However, I also ask each student to select one significant adult to act as a mentor for the school year. (This could be the parent, but not necessarily). A few helpful tips should you want to try a similar method:

- This type of planning can be overwhelming at first, especially if you are teaching on a six or seven-period day. The first school year, I only developed plans with one class, until I worked out the logistics.

- Having students working in reading/writing workshops facilitates having the individual planning conferences.
- Be open-minded in developing the goals. Don't limit the student (or yourself) to adopting just the goals from the list of state objectives, but help them set realistic timelines.

3. Explore technology and other teaching tools, even the initially unlikely ones.

Find out as early as possible what the tech possibilities and limitations are at your school. Determine how those options might help you and your students. Don't be discouraged if you have to push your administrators or even your students at first to work with some forms of technology. It is a myth that all young people are into technology and know how to use it better than their teachers—just as it is a myth that most teachers are anti-new technology and don't want to use it. Beware of teaching myths in general; many a novice teacher has been shipwrecked by relying on inaccurate information about students and new co-workers.

This is another area in which networking can be immensely helpful. There are hundreds of teachers who are using technology in myriad forms under all types of conditions, and documenting their work. Some of my bookmarks include: Ted Nellen's **CyberEnglish**; Bill Ferriter's **Digitally Speaking**; and Jennifer Barnett's **Web Wardrobe**. These teacher-created resources address a range of grade levels and can help you apply tech knowledge to your own work.

4. Resolve to have and fiercely protect designated family and rest time for yourself.

Most new teachers, regardless of their route into the profession, enter enthusiastic, committed, and determined to make a difference for their students. They tend to overreach, take on too many extra duties, and seriously underestimate the amount of physical and emotional energy real teaching requires. Teachers often grossly underestimate the amount of time outside school they will need to spend on preparation, evaluation, and feedback to students. New teachers too often push through the school year at a breakneck pace, neglecting their health and their families. Those of us who are parents have to remember that our own children will only grow up once: with or without us. To be truly effective over the long haul, accomplished teachers learn to balance their lives.

*Detroit native Renee Moore teaches in the rural Mississippi Delta. A former state teacher of the year and Milken Award winner, she serves on the boards of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. She blogs at **TeachMoore**.*



Orange County Reading Association's 47th Annual Spring Conference

*Educators *Administrators *Student Teachers

**Thursday, March 24, 2011
Meridian Club**

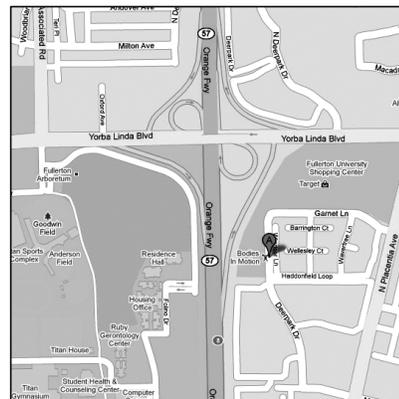
1535 Deerpark Drive
Fullerton, CA 92831

An Afternoon High Tea
Featuring

Kelly Gallagher

Educator/Author

Kelly Gallagher is a full-time English teacher at Magnolia High School in Anaheim, California, where he has taught twenty-five years. He is the former co-director of the South Basin Writing Project at California State University, Long Beach, and the author of *Reading Reasons: Motivational Mini-Lessons for the Middle and High School*; *Deeper Reading: Comprehending Challenging Texts, 4-12*; *Teaching Adolescent Writers and Readicide: How Schools Are Killing Reading and What You Can Do About It*. He is also a principal author of *Writing Coach* (Prentice Hall, 2010). Kelly's newest book, *Write Like This* will be released in the fall. Kelly is also featured in a number of video series including *Building Adolescent Readers*, *Twenty Questions Homework*, *Article-of-the-Week*, and *Improving Adolescent Writers*. You may visit Kelly at www.kellygallagher.org.



From 57 N:
Exit Yorba Linda Blvd.
Right on Yorba Linda
Right on Placentia Ave.
Right on Garnet Ln.
Meridian Club on right

From 57 S:
Exit Yorba Linda Blvd.
Left on Yorba Linda
Right on Placentia Ave.
Right on Garnet Ln.
Meridian Club on right

Registration and Refreshments	3:15 to 4:00 p.m.
Program	4:00 to 5:15 p.m.
Autographs	5:15 to 6:00 pm.

Possible funding sources: ARRA Funds, Title I, Title II, Title III, LEP

Free parking on 2nd floor of Meridian Parking Structure.

Pre-Registration Application – Pre-Registration Ends on March 18, 2011. No refunds.
Bring a printed receipt to the registration tables if you register through PayPal after March 17th
 Please send this form and a check or P.O. made out to OCRA to: Sue Roppa, 802 Anacapa, Irvine, CA 92602.
 You can also pre-register at www.ocreading.org using PayPal. Questions? Email Sue at registration@ocreading.org
No verification will be sent with pre-registration. All materials picked up on site. **On-site registration:** School P.O., cash, check, or PayPal.

Name _____ Phone _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Email Address _____
 School District _____

If a student, University or College attending
 Conference Registration **ONLY**: \$20 for Current Members (Teachers); \$15 for Current Members (Students*)
 Conference Registration **ONLY**: \$55 for Non-Members (Teachers); \$45 for Non-Members (Students*)
 OCRA/CRA 1 yr. Membership: (\$40) **and** Registration (\$20) = \$60 (Teachers)
 OCRA/CRA 1 yr. Membership: (\$35) **and** Registration (\$15) = \$50 (Students*)
 *includes Parents & Teaching Assistants

Go to www.ocreading.org for more copies of this application, or other OCRA publications.
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Please join us at the OCRA Conference at The Meridina Club on March 24th and bring a new or gently used book appropriate for K - 3 students to help support the "Reading by 9" program. For each book you bring, you will receive an extra raffle ticket which will increase your chances of winning wonderful door prizes donated by publishers and conference exhibitors.

To ensure that you continue to get OCRA newsletters, check for your membership expiration date located below on the line above and to the right of your printed name and address!

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