

THE WORD ON



Washington State Literacy Association Newsletter

March 2017

Amazing Day at the WWU Children's Literature Conference

Saturday, February 25, dawned overcast and chilly, but nothing could dampen the spirits of over 600 educators, librarians, and students who attended the 14th annual Children's Literature Conference in Bellingham. Featured authors and illustrators included Rita Garcia-Williams, Laurie Halse Anderson, Matt Phellan, and Christian Robinson. Garcia-Williams, Anderson, Phellan, and Robinson each shared about their journey to becoming an author and/or illustrator, which included various times of failure and disappointment as well as the successful times of who they are today. Each writer had a story of inspiration, determination, and humor, and all shared resources for others who desire to become writers.

Some notable quotes from the day included Halse Anderson's comment that, "Your job is to love the students in your classroom. Look them in the eye...they will never forget you. You are a soul on their journey." Garcia-Williams noted that, "Another word for hope is 'book'."

Save the date now for next year's conference—Saturday, February 24, 2018! Featured authors and illustrators will include Pam Muñoz Ryan, Benjamin Alire Saenz, Sohpie Blackall, and Kevin Henkes.

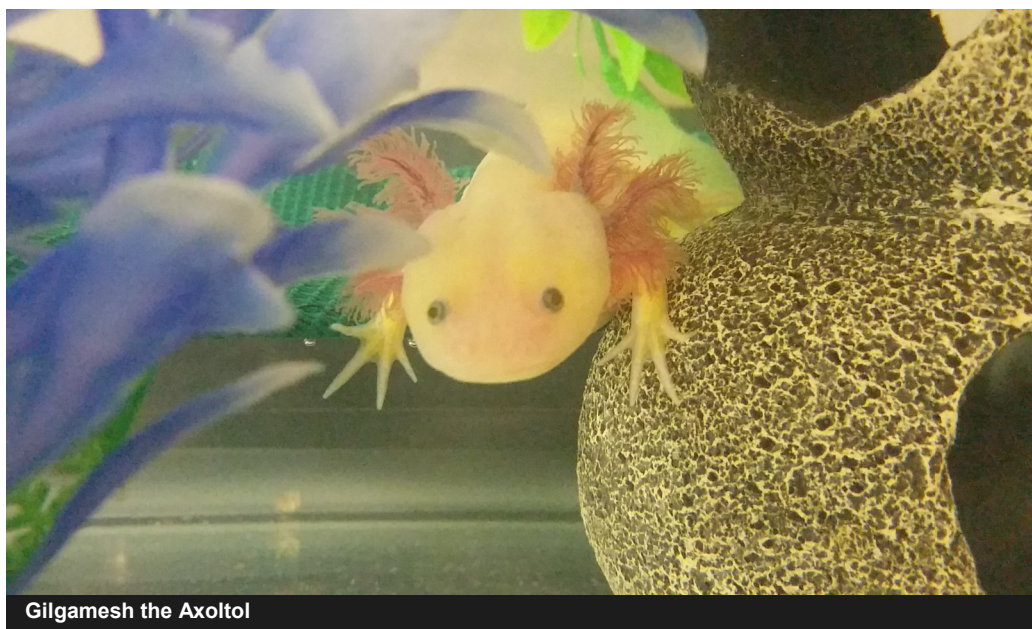
"Reading makes immigrants of us all. It takes us away from home, but, most importantly, it finds homes for us everywhere."

- Hazel Rochman

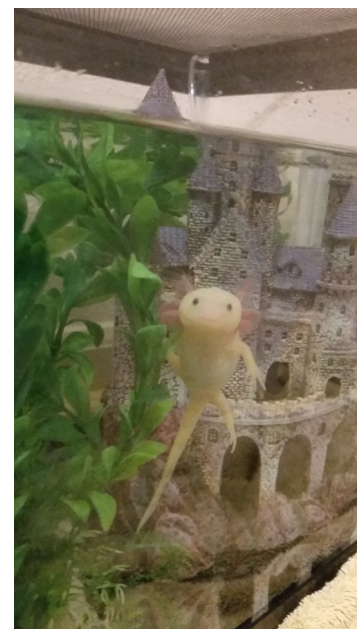
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Gilgamesh the Axolotl



An Easy Grant Class Pet

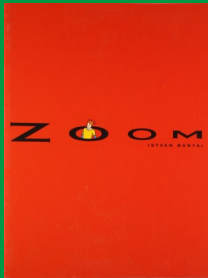
WaSLA gives many Florence Sperling Easy Grants to members throughout the school year. Paul Rentko was one recipient this fall and decided to use his \$50 Easy Grant to buy Gilly for his classroom. Below is how he justified the purchase to his administrator. Congratulations Paul!

The \$50 Easy Grant has been one of the most remarkable parts of this school year for my class, and for me. I've become an expert on the strange, adorable, and educational aquatic wonder: the axolotl. Axolotls are salamanders that are native to two lakes near Mexico City. They remain in their juvenile stage for life--an appropriate quirk for a classroom pet--which is why they never outgrow their gills and spend their entire lives underwater. They are goofy little critters with natural smiles and big pink, feathery gills that make them look the part of a water dragon. Axolotls feature prominently in Aztec art and mythology, making for a great World History connection when discussing Mesoamerican Civilizations, and they were a staple of the Aztec diet. They are nearly extinct in the wild now, unfortunately, but have become incredibly popular in medical research for their ability to regrow almost any body part and accept transplants from other creatures without complications. Their popularity in science labs makes them a cheap pet. Our cute gal, Gilly, only cost \$25 and the rest of my grant went towards setting up her aquarium.

My students and I have learned a great deal about the nitrogen cycle that balances chemicals in an aquarium, and have written several stories about Gilly's adventures while we are all at home. She is a low maintenance pet that is constantly entertaining and has proven to be a fine mascot for our class.

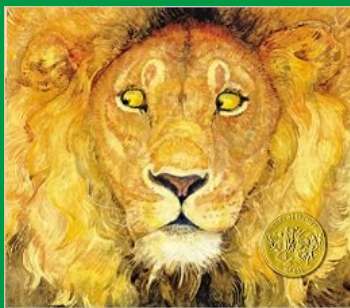
Have you filled out your [Easy Grant form](#) yet for this year?

Inspiring Visual Literacy Books



Zoom by Istvan Banyai

This is a magical wordless book that would be great to (dare we say) take apart and have students try and figure out the order of the pictures and how they determine the order. There is also a *Re-Zoom*.



The Lion and the Mouse
by Jerry Pinkney

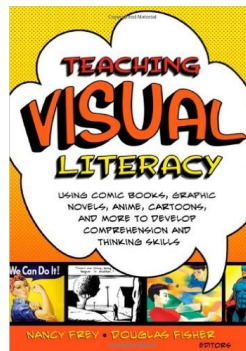
This is a fantastic wordless adaptation of one of Aesop's most famous fables. This picture book is beautifully done and a Caldecott winner. There is also another book by Jerry Pinkney titled *The Tortoise and the Hare*.

Visual Literacy

Last month, Snohomish County Reading Council presented an evening devoted to visual literacy in the classroom. Participants explored using graphic novels, memes, infographics, and film clips as texts for students to close read and analyze in a variety of ways.

One resource that was shared is on the Museum of Toledo's website where you can find all the ELA and Math visual literacy Common Core standards for all grade levels. It is easily accessible and can be found [here](#).

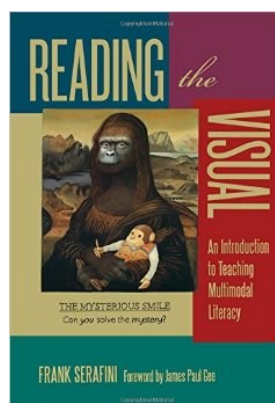
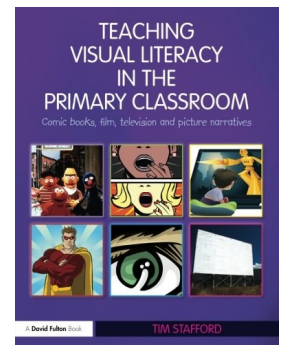
A few other books that will help you incorporate visual literacy in your classroom are pictured below.



Teaching Visual Literacy
by Nancy Frey and Douglas Fisher

Teaching Visual Literacy in the Primary Classroom: Comic Books, Film, Television, and Picture Narratives

By Tim Stafford



Reading the Visual: An Introduction to Teaching Multimodal Literacy

By Frank Serafini



For Your Classroom

Compiled by Suzanne Coleman

Using technology in the classroom can be a contentious topic. It is necessary, but how can we know if the technology is helping to move learning forward? How can it fit seamlessly into an already overcrowded day? These questions, and more, were discussed at WaSLA's Board Meeting in June of last year. In addition to the typical business meeting topics, that meeting has also been a time when we, as educators, have been able to connect over topics affecting us all. Sharing ideas, strategies, and resources help to support our work. A list of apps teachers have used, and found helpful, was created at the meeting. The following list highlights some of those apps...

Seesaw - can be used to create digital portfolios. The website notes that students can "show what they know" using photos, videos, drawings, etc. The portfolio allows a central place to demonstrate growth and can be a tool used at parent-teacher conferences by highlighting student work. Being able to record items themselves, showcases authentic student work.

Plickers - allows teachers a novel way of collecting information from students to check for understanding. The founders of Plickers state that "deep learning can happen when we measure... progress and use data as a starting point, not just an ending metric."

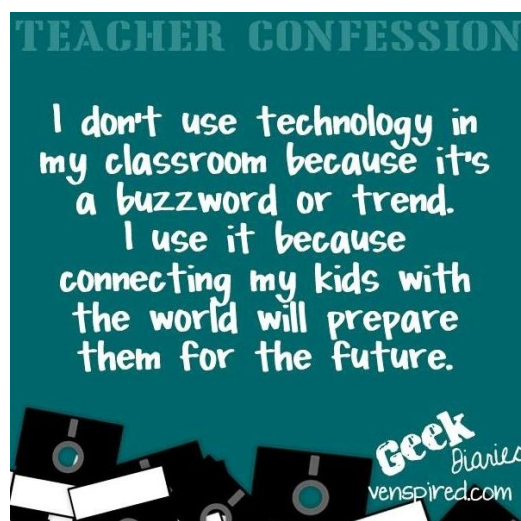
Remind - is a tool for communicating with a group of people (i.e.: the families of a class). Text messages can be sent directly to families, and allows for the ability of seeing who has received and read the text. In addition to texting, Remind has the capability of sending files to families and conversing, as well.

Quizlet - provides a way for students to practice and "quiz" their knowledge about any topic of study. Quizlet says that their, "tools are designed for the digital age, not just replacing paper predecessors (flashcards, matching games, etc.), but using the best of new mobile and audio technologies to create new kinds of learning tools and games. And beyond tools for practice and recall, we've also added tools that focus on longer term learning and mastery for every level learner." Although Quizlet can be used with any topic, foreign language teachers, especially, have

Chatterpix - is a fun way for students to make their illustrations talk. By drawing a line for a mouth and then recording something for the character to say, illustrations can come to life. Among many possible options in a classroom setting, students can use Chatterpix to create "real" dialogue for characters in a story.

Sockpuppets - is another way to have students record their own ideas; however, this app provides the puppets, background, and scenery. By imagining a story to create, students can put into practice many literacy and language standards. Work with storytelling, character development, plot, setting, and more can be applied using Sockpuppets.

The listed provided above is a small number of apps that are available to use in a classroom. However, even though the apps listed above have been used with success by some educators does not mean it will be right for you, your class, or your families. Researching the apps available can be daunting, though. One website, [Class With Apps](#), provides a review of many different educational apps. Their website states that their, "mission is to support educators in the development and delivery of technology rich Common Core driven lessons for students in all grades. It is our thinking that tablet devices and the applications that run on them should not be yet another fad, but rather a standard tool accessible and useful to all teachers. To accomplish this we hope to share these effective tools and new ideas that will fuel your creativity and lesson planning." With both articles about technology in the classroom and reviews of apps, they might just have the perfect app for you!



Upcoming Events around Washington:

April 15– Bonnie Campbell Hill Award applications due. This is a \$2,500 grant awarded to literacy leaders in our state. For more details and the application [click here](#).

June 1– SCRC presents Summer Spines and Wines– UW bookstore in Mill Creek will be sharing their summer picks for children, teens, and adults. Details to come!

June 22– Inland Northwest Presents Merging Best Practices in English Language Arts and Science Curricula at Gonzaga University

In an era of increased academic rigor, educators must learn to maximize their teaching and learning time in the classroom. Dr. Pearson will discuss and teach us best researched methods on how to integrate our ELA Common Core standards with science. This workshop is geared toward all K-12 and collegiate educators. By implementing cross curricular methods, we support each other as teachers and maximize student learning for the duration of their academic journey. For more information or to register [click here](#).

June 23 & 24 –Chuckanut Writers Conference: Inspiration into Action [details here](#).

Child Lit Conference Quote Corner

“Life is a series of revisions. You try a little bit harder, you learn a little bit more, you try.” -Laurie Halse Anderson

“We need to look backward to keep things moving forward.”
-Rita Williams-Garcia

“No matter how bleak things are there is always goodness in the world.” -Matt Phelan

“Kids say, ‘I hate to write.’ They really mean, ‘I hate the way writing makes me feel.’” -Laurie Halse Anderson

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