

# Curriculum Courier

The Curriculum Newsletter of the Catholic Schools Office in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston



## Upcoming Events

- **April 1-12, 2019: IOWA/CogAT Testing window.**
- **April 14-20, 2019: Holy Week**
- **April 21, 2019: Easter Sunday**
- **April 22, 2019: Easter Break**
- **April 30, 2019: UST Essay Contest Mass & Awards Ceremony @ Co-Cathedral. 9:30 am.**



## Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners

by Benita Gonzales

English Language Learners (ELLs) represent a significant population in our Catholic schools. As such, it is important to use strategies that can scaffold student learning in all content areas. This includes:

- ✓ Physical involvement with language
- ✓ The use of multiple mediums to present information
- ✓ A low-stress environment for language performance
- ✓ Success can be independent of language performance
- ✓ A large amount of interactions with other students

ELLs face the double challenge of learning academic content as well as the language in which it is presented. As teachers respond to the needs of these students, here are a few strategies and resources that can help:

[Click Here for More about ELLs](#)

Renee' Nunez, Asst. Superintendent for Curriculum, Assessment, and Data, [rnunez@archgh.org](mailto:rnunez@archgh.org)  
Laura Rolo, Director of Instruction, [lrolo@archgh.org](mailto:lrolo@archgh.org)

Dear Catholic School Teachers,

The season of Lent gives us the opportunity to put our faith into action. Imagine how powerful it would be if all 1.2 billion Catholics faithfully observed the Lenten practices of prayer, almsgiving and fasting for 40 days and nights. How quickly could we transform the world?! Although we do not have influence over the entire globe, we can influence our classrooms, schools, and the communities in which we live.

One of the strengths of our Catholic schools is our commitment to Catholic identity, not only in word, but also in deed. Lent is a call to action! Over the past several years, we have worked together as an archdiocese to build and strengthen our collective commitment to service through the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. As we use this time to reflect and renew our commitment to our ministry, I hope you will ask, "What if?" What if I fasted and abstained from behaviors that hurt my relationships with others? What if my personal Lenten prayer routine became my new prayer routine? What if my classroom continued to expand our Corporal Works of Mercy project? What if our entire school community continued to build relationships with the poor and oppressed? What if we continued to fast and donated the money we saved to Catholic Charities? What if we empowered and challenged our students, teachers, parents with maintaining the kindness and compassion they show during Lent throughout the year? We would transform our classrooms, and our schools, and our communities, and dare I say, we would transform the world!

Lenten Blessings,

Lytia Reese, Associate Superintendent of Catholic Schools

**The Write Stuff** This year, you have been given the Narrative Writing Rubrics, the Information Writing Rubrics, and the Opinion/Argumentative Writing Rubrics to assist in your writing instruction. These were adapted from Lucy Calkins' book, *Writing Pathways: Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions (Grades K-8)*. These rubrics are accessible to you on the Catholic Schools website: [www.choosecatholicschools.org/rubrics](http://www.choosecatholicschools.org/rubrics). We hope you have found them useful and they will continue to guide your writing instruction in the future. Check out the new **"Student Friendly" Rubrics!** Your students will really love how they illustrate grade-level competencies. Let us know your thoughts and/or suggestions of future topics you'd like to see. As E/LA committee members, we want to know in order to assist you and others in future issues of the Curriculum Courier.

Email us at: [csogeneral@archgh.org](mailto:csogeneral@archgh.org). ☺

"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." -Dr. Seuss



## What are teachers saying about their February In-Service experiences?

Thank you for having Fr. Sean speak today. He was engaging, funny, serious, knowledgeable, and passionate. His presentation could not have been more timely. **4-8 Grade Teachers**

I now have rubric information that I can refer to in my teaching. I can start at the beginning and gradually increase my expectations. This way the students have a written assessment of how they are doing at each stage of the assignment. **Ancillary Teachers**

I learned of a great resource for the TEKS called lead4ward. We watched an excellent video on how to teach guided reading. I learned about useful resources to enhance my stations and small groups. I will be more explicit in my guided reading lessons. **Pk-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teachers**

## READING RESOURCES YOU CAN USE

Do you know the Six T's of Effective Literacy Instruction? Richard Allington found that exemplary teachers use **six key features** to guide reading instruction. Click on this link to an article by Allington to see the six common features classroom teachers effectively utilize in their literacy instruction.

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/six-ts-effective-elementary-literacy-instruction>

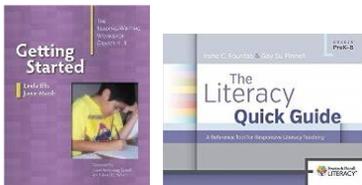
Are you using Literature Circles and Book Clubs? Or maybe you've heard of Book Clubs or even want to experiment with it but don't know where to start. This resource by Laura Candler provides a great overview of different Literature Circle and Book Club models for both fiction and nonfiction pieces and a vast array of other valuable information. Check it out and see for yourself!

<https://www.lauracandler.com/files/literacy/strategies-litcirclemodels/>

Maybe you still have questions about the concept of balanced literacy. Read this article for an in-depth overview of the components of balanced literacy and useful links to help you understand the importance, purpose, benefits, strategies, and how to implement it in your classroom. <https://www.k12reader.com/balanced-literacy-instruction/>

## Valuable ELA RESOURCES for Balanced Literacy:

- Getting Started: The Reading-Writing Workshop grades 4-8 (Ellis & Marsh)
- The Literacy Quick Guide: A Reference Tool for Responsive Literacy Teaching PK-8 (Fountas & Pinnell)



On February 11, 2019, Heinemann offered a one-day workshop presented by master English teachers Kelly Gallagher and Penny Kittle called **Everyday Practices that Engage and Empower Readers and Writers** for grades 6-12.

Some ELA teachers who attended had these responses from the day:

- Both English teachers filled the workshop with great insight. My take-away from the day was we need to get kids reading, and one key way to do that is give them time to read in class and surround them with books and talk about books. - CD, 7<sup>th</sup> grade
- When students read, they become better readers, thinkers, and writers. - JT, 8<sup>th</sup> grade
- It was stressed to allow students to write every day, to give students ample writing time. Don't expect 'good' writing with every attempt, but there needs to be 'many attempts at writing.' - CH, Literacy coach

Shine the Light of Christ from YOUR classroom! Submit pictures, articles and/or lessons for our next issue to: [csogeneral@arcgh.org](mailto:csogeneral@arcgh.org)

## Archdiocesan Spelling Bee

The Catholic school community was ABUZZ as history was made on February 13, 2019. For the first time, the Catholic Schools Office held both the Elementary and the Middle School Archdiocesan Spelling Bees on the same day at the same location, St. Rose of Lima Catholic School.

Each year the top spellers in Elementary grades 3, 4, & 5 and Middle Schoolers in grades 6-8 compete to represent the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston in the Scripps Houston Public Media Regional Spelling Bee, and the competition is top-notch. This year's brush with history was not limited to the combined Bees, but also was made by the repeated wins of both Spelling Champions.



Eighth grader, **Arielle Caranto**, (representing St. Laurence Catholic School), the Middle School Spelling Champion, and fifth grader, **Clare Hayes**, (representing St. Theresa Catholic School in Sugar Land), the Elementary School Spelling Champion, are no strangers to the top honors as this is their second year claiming the title of Archdiocesan Spelling Bee Champion.

When asked what advice she would offer students preparing for the Bee, Arielle recommended becoming familiar with the etymology of words on the spelling lists, saying, "It really helped me to prepare."



Arielle & Joseph, Spelling Bee champ & Runner-up with Assistant Superintendent Renee Nunez & Bee Celebrity Spellmaster, Tim Matt.

Congratulations go out to all the participants of the Archdiocesan Spelling Bees and it stands that there will be a lot of celebration at both Catholic school campuses in Sugar Land this year.

