



THE RI-TELLER

*The Newsletter for Rhode Island Teachers of
English Language Learners & ELL Professionals*

www.ritell.org

Issue 18: Spring 2020

Continuing the Conversation

Welcome to the Spring 2020 edition of the RITELLER!

This edition is jam-packed with information because Rhode Island has been a hub of recent action focused on our multilingual learners. RITELL's spring and fall conferences, WIDA's national conference, and the appointment of Rhode Island's first Latinx Commissioner of Education have all highlighted the urgent nature of the work we are doing every day with our students. In this edition, we look back at some of these 2019 events and we look forward to ways of continuing the important conversations that they sparked. Throughout the issue you will see this icon: with a link to add your response/ideas. We will share your thoughts on the RITELL website and in the next issue of the RITELLER. It's another chance to join our voices together in advocacy for our students. ¡Adelante!



3 News & Notes

RITELL Wrap Up 2019

4 Spring 2019 Conference

Tricia Kelly

7 Better Books for Multilingual Learners

Iveth Zoraya Streisand

10 Fall 2019 Conference

Tricia Kelly

12 Way Back at WIDA...

Tricia Kelly

13 Celebrating Our Identities in Rhode Island

Cathy Fox and Sarah Reis

14 Teacher Feature: Yomely Marte

16 Passion and Gratitude: Youmi Kim

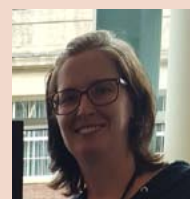
17 Online Learning Resources



CATHY FOX has been teaching multilingual learners for 35 years. She was nationally board certified in early childhood and certified in early childhood, elementary and ESL. She taught in Central Falls for 27 years and now works part-time in Johnston, coordinating services for Multilingual Learners. She has served as adjunct professor at RIC and PC. Cathy enjoys traveling, reading, music and good times with family.

YOUMI KIM has been teaching K-12 students since 2009, with diverse experiences teaching in vastly different educational systems: Korea, China and the United States. She's currently the Program Director of Literacy Volunteers of Kent County, an adult literacy organization with a 40 year history. She enjoys working with volunteer tutors and literacy students, providing personalized assistance for the unique needs of each student-tutor pair. When she's not working or studying, you'll find her doing crafts with her young children.

YOMELY MARTE has been teaching multilingual learners for 17 years, with diverse experiences teaching in different settings and countries. She is currently the English Language Development Specialist at Nowell Leadership Academy. She enjoys working with English learners, especially underserved high school students. She likes to create a sense of community in her classrooms where students from all over the world feel safe and welcome. She likes to partner with other community organizations to bring resources to her class. She feels that language is not a barrier when you can communicate in the universal language of LOVE.



SARAH REIS has been teaching multilingual learners for 20 years, and holds early childhood, elementary, and ESL certifications. She currently teaches Kindergarten at Asa Messer School in Providence.

She is excited to be part of the planning of the 2020 Gallery Walk for MLLs and sits on the state MLL Advisory Council. Sarah enjoys traveling and supporting refugees by volunteering with the local organization Women's Refugee Care.

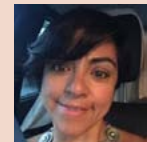
MITCHELL SANDERS is a talented student of photography who specializes in portraiture and astrophotography. At 20, Mitchell has an unusual amount of experience in the field and has worked with well known artist mentors for years. Currently based in southern Rhode Island, he attends Salve Regina University in Newport and is continuing his freelance photography business and artistic endeavors.

EDITORS



TRICIA KELLY is the English Language Program Coordinator at Nowell Leadership Academy, a charter school serving pregnant, parenting, and underserved high school students. She is also serving

as the EL Ambassador to Prepare RI, where she is conducting research on supports that newcomer students need to successfully matriculate in college. She has over 20 years of experience working in language education and especially loves learning with joy alongside her students.



IVETH ZORAYA STREISAND is a native of Quito, Ecuador. Iveth lives in Pawtucket, RI with her husband, 2 teenagers, and 2 Shitsus. Her career in education started 10 years ago. She has taught

Spanish in preschool, elementary school, middle school, and most recently in high school. She also taught English to adult learners at Progreso Latino. In her free time, she enjoys cooking, dancing, cycling, and doing pilates.



LAURA FARIA-TANCINCO is a member of the RITELL Coordinating Council and has taught Adult Ed ESL in universities & institutions all over RI. She has been in the ESL field for 10+ years. She began

her ESL journey in 2006, after a degree and professional attempt in Graphic Design left her wanting more. After a few years living in Quito, Ecuador, she returned to RI and she began adjuncting at colleges and universities around RI. She completed her M. Ed in TESL from RIC in 2015 and is currently the Coordinator of the ESL Intensive Program and Project ExCEL at RIC. She always says, the best people in the world arrive in her classroom. She enjoys all the challenges & rewards that come with the profession.



BETH TONEY is a member of RITELL's Coordinating Council. She has held various positions in education over the last 29 years including classroom teacher, school administrator, and currently, ESL/Reading Specialist for Central Falls.

She holds master's degrees in Urban Education and K-12 School Administration and is certified as a K-12 ESL Specialist and K-12 Reading Specialist. Originally from Massachusetts, she has lived and worked in Rhode Island for 8 years. In addition to spending time with her grandchildren and other family members, she likes to travel and is an amateur photographer.

NEWS & NOTES

RIDE News

RI Blueprint for Multilingual Learners Success

RIDE has announced a new initiative focusing on multilingual learners and is asking for community input. The goal is to create a blueprint that will "drive shared responsibilities in teaching language to all students, build world class talent and improve outcomes for multilingual learners." Parents, teachers, and students are being asked to complete surveys by **May 4, 2020** to contribute their voices to the process.

Surveys are available [here](#) in a variety of languages. Please complete the survey and share with your networks.

Postponed

Gallery Walk 2020

POSTPONED Fourth Annual Gallery Walk for Multilingual Learners, Thursday April 9, 2020 Moore Hall at Providence College

Due to school closures and social distancing guidelines, the 2020 Gallery Walk was cancelled. See the article by past event organizers, Sarah Reiss and Cathy Fox, for more information on this beautiful celebration. Rania Aghia, one of this year's coordinators says, "We are hopeful to continue to promote the stories of our MLLs through their identity text as soon as it is safe for everyone to gather again."

#MultilingualRI @rilanguage

Multilingual Advocacy Day

Organized by the Coalition for a Multilingual RI, Multilingual Education Advocacy Day on April 9, 2020 looked a little different this year! Hundreds of Educators across the state came together via social media to share their expertise and strengths in multilingual education and to ask legislators for more support. A benefit of this unique opportunity is that you can still take part! [Coalition for a Multilingual RI](#) Facebook

Postponed

RITELL Spring Conference: Postponed

POSTPONED: The RITELL Spring Conference, scheduled for Saturday May 2, has been postponed. If possible, we hope to offer the same theme and keynote speaker at a date to be determined.

Let's Talk: Engaging Multilingual Learners In Meaningful Discussions

Our keynote speaker will be [Nancy Motley](#), an educational consultant from Houston, Texas, and author of the book [Talk, Read, Talk, Write: A Practical Approach to Learning in the Secondary Classroom](#).

Let's Hear from YOU

Let's Talk!

Let's Talk! Have you or a colleague recently been promoted, won a grant, presented at a Conference, or received a recognition for your work? Don't be shy - share your good news! We love to highlight accomplishments in the RI-TELLER!

Incoming RITELL Coordinating Council

Say Goodbye... Say Hello!

At the RITELL Fall Conference, the following members were honored for their service on the RITELL Coordinating Council:

Flavia S.M. Baker
Sarah Northup
Holly Bubier

Doug Norris
Jessica Quaranto
Michael Paul

RITELL Coordinating Council welcomed the following members to a three-year volunteer term:

Megan Abreu
Sarah Hesson
Laura Faria-Tancinco
Tricia Kelly
Iveth Zoraya Streisand
Beth Toney

Rania Aghia
Anke Steinweh
Jay Busse
Jackie Nelson
Kim O'Connor

RITELL Wrap Up 2019

Tricia Kelly



Dr. Jane Fleming



Dr. Carla España

Spring 2019 RITELL Conference: Reflecting Bilingual Learners' Lives through Literature

On Saturday, May 11th, 2019 150 RITELL and community members joined us at Rhode Island College for our Spring Conference: Reflecting Bilingual Learners' Lives through Literature.

We were thrilled to welcome Dr. Jane Fleming back to her Rhode Island roots to be the keynote speaker at our Spring Conference. Dr. Fleming is Director of Literacy for Chicago Public Schools and Co-Founder of [Kids Like Us](#), an organization dedicated to high-quality multicultural and urban children's literature. Dr. Fleming shared ideas and strategies specifically for multilingual learners from her most recent book, [More Mirrors in the Classroom: Using Urban Literature to Increase Literacy](#). She shared these useful checklists for choosing and evaluating books we use with our students.

The following checklists reprinted with permission from Dr. Jane Fleming. Photos by Mitchell Sanders



Adult Breakout Session Panel Members



Adult Breakout Session Panel Members

Evaluating the Quality of Informational Texts for Accuracy and Cultural Relevance

Adapted from Moss, Barbara (2003). *Exploring the Literature of Fact. Childrens Nonfiction Trade Books in the Elementary Classroom*, New York: Guilford Press.

Criteria	Questions to Ask
Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the author and illustrator experts in the topic and do they know the topic because they have lived the experience? • Can they speak with cultural authority about the subject? • What research or credit do they not in preparation of the book? • Are authors or consulted experts members of the cultural groups being depicted? • Does the book avoid privileging one cultural group at the expense of another?
Accuracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the facts accurate and up-to-date? • Are language patterns, family relationships, cultural conventions, and values accurately depicted? • Are regional terms, captions, and labels used accurately and specifically?
Appropriateness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does author organize the material in a logical sequence and provide textual support such as tables of contents, chapters, headings, charts, glossaries, or other graphic aids? • Is the language level and vocabulary challenging but understandable for your students? • Does the text provide enough context or visual support for learning new academic vocabulary and content knowledge? • Does the text draw on any content that reflects your students' community and understandings? • Does the text provide concrete examples and make comparisons to content, experiences, or places that might be familiar to your students?
Artistry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the book employ a variety of literary devices so the information is interesting and will capture the attention of the reader? • Is there a hook at the beginning of each chapter to keep the reader looking for more information? • Is the hook culturally relevant and developmentally appropriate?
Attractiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the illustrations entice the reader to want to learn more about the subject? • Do a variety of visuals and graphic aids provide direct support for understanding of the text? • Are the illustrations accurate and non-biased, avoiding tokenism or stereotyping of cultural groups or urban contexts? • Are cultural details of the time and place (architecture, dress, hairstyles) accurately depicted in illustrations, photographs, and diagrams?

In Fleming, J., Catapano, S., Thompson, C. & Carrillo, S. (2016). *More Mirrors in the Classroom: Using Urban Children's Literature to Increase Literacy*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Characteristics of High Quality Children's Literature - Realistic Fiction

Fleming, J., Catapano, S., Thompson, C. & Carrillo, S. (2016). *More Mirrors in the Classroom: Using Urban Children's Literature to Increase Literacy*. Rowman & Littlefield.

General characteristics of high quality picture books	
1. Cover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the cover of the book visually interesting? • Do the illustrations and title on the cover give useful information about the content that draw the reader to the story?
2. Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the story contain a memorable character who is about the same age as the students? • Is the behavior of the characters consistent with their ages and backgrounds? • Are the characters well developed and convincing?
3. Plot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will students enjoy the story (is it interesting, fun, or engaging on its own)? • Will students understand the problems and be able to follow the sequence of events? • Is the text segmented to add the drama of turning the page?
4. Theme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the theme worthwhile and developmentally appropriate for young children? • Is the author's message one that children can relate to?
5. Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the story contain natural, vivid language that reflects the mood of the story? • Do the words evoke clear, concrete images of characters and actions? • Is the language (vocabulary, syntax) appropriate in complexity to the age of the intended audience?
6. Illustrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the illustrations establish the mood, theme, and setting as the story unfolds? • Do the illustrations complement and enhance the story? • Are the illustrations interesting and engaging?

Characteristics of high quality urban children's literature	
1. Authenticity of characters and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are culture and language accurately portrayed from the point of view of someone inside the group? • Does the book capture experiences, values, and attitudes that resonate with members of the cultural group depicted? • Are gender, racial, and cultural stereotypes avoided among the characters? • Does the book present positive images of urban culture?
2. Familiar Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the book depict a familiar urban context? • Do the characters have experiences that are familiar to your students? • Will urban public school children be able to see themselves in the story and among the characters and settings?
3. Familiar Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the story use natural language and authentic dialogue that children will recognize? • If set in non-urban setting (suburban, rural), would vocabulary and dialogue change significantly?
4. Authentic Urban Scenery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the illustrations and descriptions accurately and realistically depict urban settings? • Will children recognize the setting as similar to their neighborhood/community?
5. Diversity of Characterization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the book show diversity within an/or across human cultures (age, race, ethnicity, SES, family structure, lifestyle)?
6. Diversity of Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is urban diversity represented by having a variety of city settings (apartment buildings, city sidewalks, city parks, local businesses, vacant lots)?

Better Books for Multilingual Learners

Iveth Zoraya Streisand

Photos: Mitchell Sanders

We all want our students to access books that they can connect with and that have messages of empathy, sensitivity, linguistic pride and cross-cultural awareness. We asked local experts to share their ideas for diverse and inclusive books for our multilingual learners. We shared these lists at our Spring 2019 Conference and we re-print them here for your reference. We hope that you can use these booklists to support your teaching and we hope that our learners can see themselves in these books. Let's go and read!

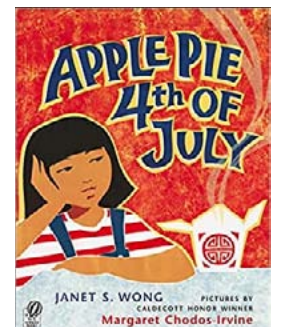
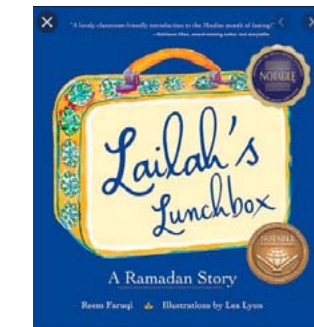
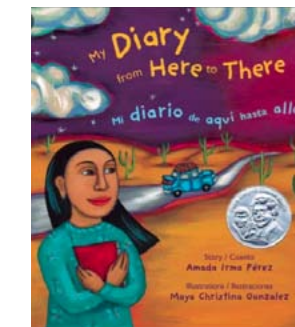


What is a favorite picture book that you use with your multilingual learners?

Booklist by Bonnie Lilienthal
Senior Children's Librarian
Providence Public Library
401-455-8025

Picture Books

American Wei - Marion Pomeranc
Apple Pie Fourth of July - Janet Wong
Angelina's Island - Jeanette Winter
Big Umbrella - Amy June Bates
Carmela Full of Wishes - Matt de la Pena
Color of Home - Mary Hoffman
Day You Begin - Jacqueline Woodson
Different Pond - Bao Phi
Dreamers - Yuyi Morales
Goodbye, 382 Shin Dang Dong - Frances Park
Grandfather's Journey - Allen Say
Here I Am - Patti Kim
I Hate English - Ellen Levine
In America - Marissa Moss
In the Small, Small Night - Jane Kurtz
Journey - Francesca Sanna
Keeping Quilt - Patricia Polacco
La frontera: el viaje con papa (My



Journey with Papa) - Deborah Mills
Lailah's Lunchbox - Reem Faruqi
Mama's Nightingale: A Story of Immigration and Separation - Edwidge Danticat
Mango, Abuela and Me - Meg Medina
Marwan's journey - Patricia de Arias
Matchbox Diary - Paul Fleischman
My Chinatown: A Year in Poems - Kam Mak
My Diary from Here to There - Amada Perez
My Name is Sangoel - Karen Williams
My Name is Yoon - Helen Recorvits
My Two Blankets - Irena Kobald
Name Jar - Yangsook Choi

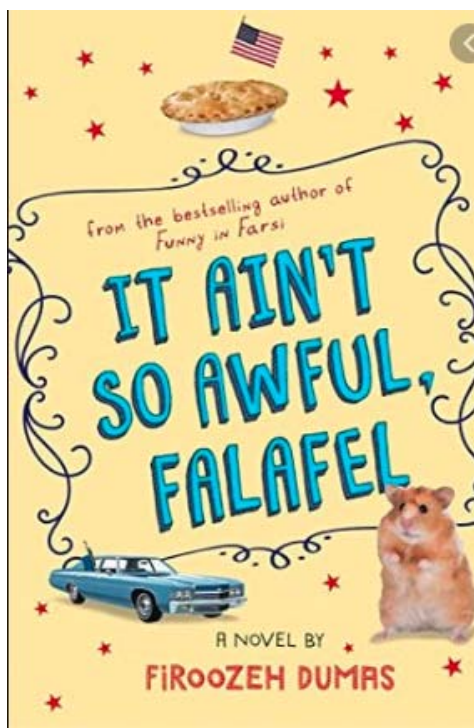
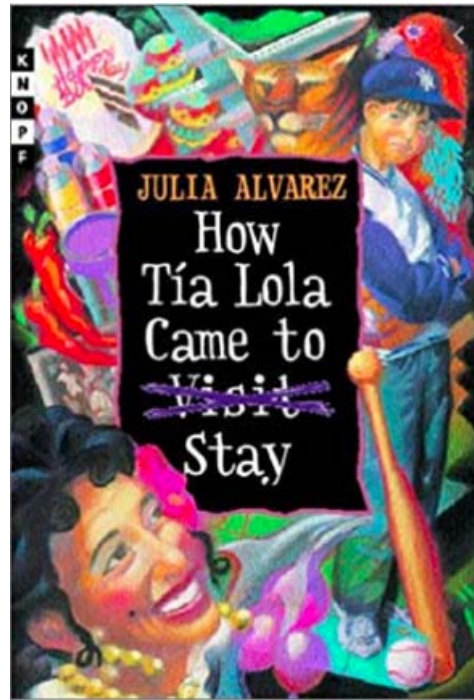
No English - Jacqueline Jules
Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale - Duncan Tonatiuh
Quiet Place - Sarah Stewart
Someone New - Anne Sibley O'Brien
Stepping Stones: a refugee family's journey - Margaret Ruurs
Teacup - Rebecca Young
This is Me: A Story of Who We Are and Where We Came From - Jamie Lee Curtis
Uncle Rain Cloud - Tony Johnston
Very Important Day - Maggie Herold
Watch the Stars Come Out - Riki Levinson
We Came to America - Faith Ringgold
Yo soy Muslim: A Father's Letter to his Daughter - Mark Gonzales

Better Books for Multilingual Learners (con't)

Booklist by Bonnie Lilienthal (con't)

Books for Older Children

All the Way to America: The Story of a Big Italian Family and a Little Shovel - Dan Yaccarino
 America, My New Home: poems - Monica Gunning
 Dancing Home - Alma Flor Ada
 Dear Whiskers - Ann Nagda Whitehead
 Dreams in the Golden Country: The Diary of Zipporah Feldman, a Jewish immigrant - Kathryn Lasky
 Drita, My Homegirl - Jenny Lombard
 First Generation: 36 Trailblazing Immigrants and Refugees Who Make America Great - Sandra Neil Wallace
 Front Desk - Kelly Yang
 Gold-threaded Dress - Carolyn Marsden
 Her Right Foot - Dave Eggers
 House of Tailors - Patricia Reilly Giff
 How Tia Lola Came to Stay - Julia Alvarez
 I Lived on Butterfly Hill - Marjorie Agosin
 Immigrant Kids - Russell Freedman
 Immigrants - Martin Sandler
 It Ain't So Awful Falafel - Firoozeh Dumas
 In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson - Bette Lord
 Inside Out and Back Again - Thanhha Lai
 King of Mulberry Street - Donna Jo Napoli
 Long Walk to Water - Linda Sue Park
 Lowji Discovers America - Candace Fleming
 Maggie's Door - Patricia Reilly Giff
 Molly's Pilgrim - Barbara Cohen
 My Name is Maria Isabel - Alma Flor Ada
 Only Road - Alexandra Diaz (sequel is Crossroads)
 Refugee - Alan Gratz
 Return to Sender - Julia Alvarez
 Save me a Seat - Sarah Weeks
 Stormy Seas: Stories of Young Boat Refugees - Mary Beth Leatherdale
 Their Great Gift: Courage, Sacrifice and Hope in the New Land - John Coy
 Turtle of Oman - Naomi Shihab Nye
 We are Americans: Voices of the Immigrant Experience - Dorothy Hoobler

Booklist by Literacy Volunteers of Kent County
Yumi Kim

What Can You Do with a Paleta? - Carmen Tafolla, 2009, Fiction

My Way - Lynn Reiser
2007, Children's Literature

Salsa - Jorge Argueta
2015, Poetry, Cookbook

My Name is Gabriela - Monica Brown
2005, Biography

Magda's Tortillas - Becky Chavarria-Chairez,
2000, Children's Literature

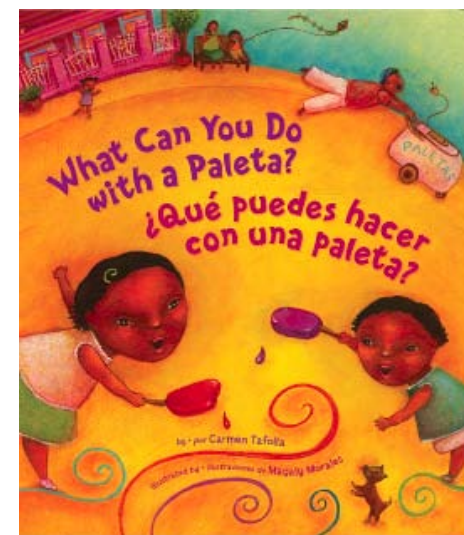
The Storyteller's Candle - Lucia Gonzalez,
2008, Children's literature, Historical Fiction

Abuelita, Full of Life - Amy Costales
2007, Fiction

Antonio's Card - Rigoberto González
2005, Fiction, Children's literature

Pepita Talks Twice - Ofelia Lachtman
1995, Fiction

Circus Day in Japan - Eleanor Coerr
2010, Fiction, Children's literature



Better Books for Multilingual Learners (con't)

Booklist by Nicole Galipeau
Teacher-Librarian
Guiteras Elementary School
Bristol Warren Regional School

The Journey
Francesca Sanna
Refugee from war

My Night in the Planetarium
Innosanto Nagara
Political Resistance, Based on author's childhood

I Hate English!
Ellen Levine
Family structure, language

A Day's Work
Eve Bunting
Language difference, misunderstanding – two very different perspectives

I Speak English for My Mom
Muriel Stanek
Family structure, language

Mango, Abuela, and Me
Meg Medina
Family structure, language barrier between grandchild and grandmother

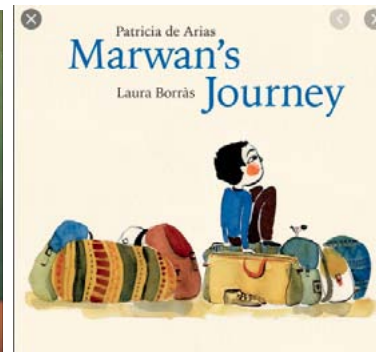
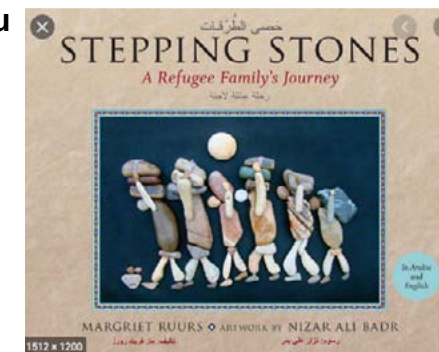
When We Were Alone
David A. Robertson
Family separation; specifically First Nations (Cree) child in Canadian Government boarding school

Drawn Together
Minh Le
Language difference between grandchild and grandfather

Name Jar
Yangsook Choi
Newcomer to US; language as part of culture (specifically name of main character)

Stepping Stones: A Refugee's Family's Journey
Margriet Ruurs
Family leaves home because of war and book focus on the journey; in English and Arabic

Dreamers
Yuyi Morales
Newcomers to United States



Summaries of Other Works

The Day War Came by Nicola Davies ; illustrated by Rebecca Cobb.

Summary: "A powerful and necessary picture book – the journey of a child forced to become a refugee when war destroys everything she has ever known. Imagine if, on an ordinary day, war came. Imagine it turned your town to rubble. Imagine going on a long and difficult journey – all alone. Imagine finding no welcome at the end of it. Then imagine a child who gives you something small but very, very precious ...

When the government refused to allow 3000 child refugees to enter this country in 2016, Nicola Davies was so angry she wrote a poem. It started a campaign for which artists contributed drawings of chairs, symbolizing a seat in a classroom, education, kindness, the hope of a future. The poem has become this book, movingly illustrated by Rebecca Cobb, which should prove a powerful aid for explaining the ongoing refugee crisis to younger readers."

Islandborn / Lola by Junot Díaz ; illustrated by Leo Espinosa (Islandborn is the English translation of the Spanish language Lola)

Summary: "Lola was just a baby when her family left the island, so when she has to draw it for a school assignment, she asks her family, friends, and neighbors about their memories of her homeland...and in the process, comes up with a new way of understanding her own heritage."

Marwan's Journey / Patricia de Arias ; illustrated by Laura Borràs. Summary: " One night they came ... The darkness grew colder, deeper, darker, and swallowed up everything ... Marwan is a young boy on a journey he never intended to take, bound for a place he

doesn't know. On his journey, he relies on courage and memories of his faraway homeland to buoy him. With him are hundreds and thousands of other human beings, crossing the deserts and the seas, fleeing war and hunger in search of safety. He must take one step after another - bringing whatever he can carry, holding on to dreams. This is the journey of one boy who longs for a home, and we follow his path, walking hand in hand with him as he looks forward with uncertainty and hopes for a peaceful future. This beautiful, heartfelt story gives a human face to the plight of refugees all over the world. Marwan's journey is everyone's journey"

Me and my Fear / Francesca Sanna.

Summary: "When a young girl has to move countries and start at a new school, her fear tells her to be alone and afraid. How can she hope to make friends if she doesn't understand anyone? Surely no one else feels the same way."

Saffron ice cream / by Rashin Kheiriyeh.

Summary: "Rashin is an Iranian immigrant girl living in New York, excited by her first trip to Coney Island, and fascinated by the differences in the beach customs between her native Iran and her new home – but she misses the saffron flavored ice cream that she used to eat."

Stepping stones : a refugee family's journey / Margriet Ruurs ; artwork by Nizar Ali Badr = Ha.sa al-turuqāt : ri.halah áá'ilah láji'ih / ta'líf, Mārgharīt Runurz ; rusūm, Nizār Alī Badr.

"In this picture book, a young girl and her family are forced to flee their village to escape the civil war that has engulfed Syria and make their way toward freedom in Europe."



Dr. Marybelle Marrero-Colon

Fall 2019 RITELL Conference: Identifying and Supporting ELLs with Special Needs

Approximately 250 RITELL and community members joined us at Rhode Island College on Saturday, November 16th for our Fall Conference: Identifying and Supporting ELLs with Special Needs.

Dr. Marybelle Marrero-Colon, from the Center for Applied Linguistics, presented the Keynote entitled *Creating Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for English Learners who Struggle Academically* as well as a secondary school breakout session. In her interactive keynote, Dr. Marrero-Colon challenged participants to evaluate their schools' current practices using Response to Intervention (RTI) and whether or not they included an emphasis on ELLs' complex processes of second language acquisition. She shared personal stories from her own family and from her passionate work to stop students from 'slipping through the cracks' of insufficient support services. Drawing on key research, Dr. Marrero-Colon encouraged school personnel to ask these questions



Dr. Leila Rosa

prior to referral and evaluation of students:

- Has the student received preliminary (e.g. Tier 1) and intensive (e.g. Tier 2, Tier 3) interventions using appropriate materials/ strategies designed for ELs, and have they been implemented with fidelity over time?
- Does the team have data regarding the rate of learning regarding learning patterns and language use in the home?
- Are the error patterns seen in L1 similar to the patterns seen in L2?
- Are the learning difficulties and/or language acquisition patterns manifested over time similar in different settings and in different contexts?

(Cummins, 1984; Ortiz, 1997; Ruiz, 1995; Butterfield, 2014)

Passionate adult ESOL teacher, **Dr. Robin Lovrien Schwarz**, joined us from Maine to lead an Adult Practitioner breakout session, entitled *Adult ELLs Who Struggle to Learn: Why They Struggle and What We Can Do About It*. In her session, she shared personal anecdotes and research on her work with adult learners from various backgrounds and the ways she teases apart the

complex overlap between language acquisition and learning differences. She highlighted the following seven areas for teachers to consider and analyze with their learners:

- Physical and mental health issues
- Unique adult language learning needs
- Influences of dominant language
- Phonological processing skills
- Level of literacy; extent of experience with formal education
- Cultural influences, ideas, attitudes
- Exposure to inappropriate pedagogy

Dr. Schwarz and participants discussed the power that effective games can have in ESOL settings. [Click here](#) for her follow-up blog post on how to effectively implement games with adult learners.

Dr. Leila Rosa, Assistant Professor of Educational Studies/ TESOL & Bilingual Education, presented her breakout session entitled *Crossing the RTI Bridge for Students that are Emergent Bilinguals*. Focusing on the elementary level, Dr. Rosa discussed the under and over-identification of MLL/EL students and urged teachers to probe deeper into multi-tiered systems of support to better serve those students that need Special Education Services. She led teachers to consider



Dr. Robin Lovrien Schwarz

multiple factors in determining whether a disability exists, including:

- Identifying a pattern of difficulty as compared to other students who share similar backgrounds, across settings
- Identifying behaviors that are not primarily the result of cultural, linguistic, or socioeconomic differences, and
- Identifying behaviors that persist despite instructional support strategies.

In order to address this pattern of difficulty, she suggested improvements in the areas of academics, behavioral, and social-emotional learning. Finally, Dr. Rosa highlighted supporting our students by implementing a multi-tiered system that includes classroom instruction, targeted small group discussion, and intensive individual attention.

How do you collaborate with the Special Education team at your school to serve EL students?



Remember to check out the [RITELL Website](#) for extensive teacher resources from all RITELL Conferences.

Written by Tricia Kelly, Photos by Beth Toney



Way Back at WIDA...

Tricia Kelly

WIDA™ Annual Conference
 OCTOBER 15-18, 2019
 Rhode Island Convention Center | Providence, RI

Special Offer for Rhode Island Educators

Apply to attend the WIDA Annual Conference for free!

WIDA is offering scholarships to Rhode Island educators that will cover the cost of conference registration. Applicants may apply for one of the following:

- Free Full-Conference Registration to attend

Contest Rules and Conditions

- Contest will open on April 8, 2019
- Contest will close on May 31, 2019
- The top ten winning entries will receive a free registration to the 2019 WIDA Annual Conference in Providence, Rhode Island held from October 16-18, 2019.
- Twenty five additional winning entries will receive a one-day registration pass to attend the 2019 WIDA Annual Conference in Providence, Rhode Island on October 17, 2019.
- The registration prize will be given to the owner of the email address used to the contest submission form.



Hundreds of teacher experts and researchers from around the country landed at The Providence Convention Center in October for the WIDA Annual Conference, entitled Teaching for Equity in a Multilingual World. In one keynote address, poet José Olivarez inspired the large group by sharing a few striking, gritty poems from his collection called Citizen Illegal. He provided free copies of this book to all conference attendees and participated in a lively Q&A with participants following the reading. The son of Mexican immigrants, Olivarez's poems touch on issues of race, language, assimilation, cultural pride and relevance. In addition to writing, he co-hosts the Poetry Gods podcast and is the marketing manager for Young Chicago authors. We thought his poem, The Voice in My Head Speaks English Now, might resonate with some of your students in these New England winter months.



Did you attend WIDA? What was one highlight or key take-away for you?

The Voice in My Head Speaks English Now

José Olivarez

snow finds me underneath layers. maybe
 the cold wants to hang out. take me skiing.
 wants me to see winter isn't a bad a country
 & it's not, but i'm still shivering. i make snow
 angels & come out snot-nosed. throat blistering.

it never stops being cold. my new voice fit
 with coughing. my friends say summer is coming.
 they're lying. on gray days, i wear the sun, but
 it falls off my shoulder. if you catch my mom
 in good light, it's impossible to tell where the sun
 ends.

i tell myself that's where i'm from, but i'm not
 sure. when i was a baby i used to get fevers.
 maybe that's why my parents had me planted in
 snow.
 now i'm a long way from the fire my parents
 feared
 & so close to this new blue flame.

Reprinted with permission from the author and Haymarket Books. See [José Olivarez](#) for more information on the poet.

Celebrating Our Identities in Rhode Island Gallery Walk: April 2019

Sarah Reis & Cathy Fox

Photos by Mitchell Sanders

The Gallery Walk is an annual event where teachers of multilingual learners of all ages in Rhode Island schools and adult learning programs are invited to share student-produced artifacts that reflect identity in a positive light. Artifacts can be written, spoken, visual, musical or any representative combination thereof. Bilingual presentations are encouraged for this event. In order to honor student voices and reflect current proficiency levels, pieces need not be edited. This event strives to celebrate the richness these students bring to the classroom and recognize the value in these literacy practices. In the past four years, we have moved from a school-based exhibition to a broad, welcoming community celebration. Previous celebrations have included presentations from up to 500 multilingual learners from 20 districts and organizations throughout Rhode Island. Thirty-four different languages have been represented and presenters have ranged in age from 5 to 63.

Community members are invited to view these beautiful student artifacts displayed on tri-boards, in book format, in verse, through paintings, and in other art forms. Last year, schools from several districts brought buses with students and their families to participate in the Gallery Walk. All audience members were treated to live readings from students in the Author's Corner as well as a dedicated Video Room to watch personal narratives about language acquisition and immigration. Main Stage 2019 was graced with a variety of expressions, including music from Inner City Rhythm Drummers, dancers from Shea High School and PC's Motherland Dance Group, and spoken-word poetry performed by Sussy Santana. The Women's Club from South County attended our celebration and came with homemade baked goods.

We invite and encourage you to participate in the 2020 Gallery Walk, which will be held at The Center at Moore Hall at Providence College on Thursday, April 9th from 5:00-7:00 PM. The Cranston Public Library, North Kingstown Public Library, and Villa Nova Middle School in Woonsocket will serve as drop-off stations for artifacts. For more information, reach out to identitytextsgallerywalk@gmail.com

Come celebrate with our multilingual learners and honor their stories of courage, loss, struggle, gratitude, and love.

This article was written before the COVID pandemic began to take shape. We are printing the article as it was originally intended to be printed. Sadly, the 2020 Gallery Walk has been canceled due to the COVID pandemic.



5 Questions with... Award Winner: Yomely Marte

2019 Nancy Carnevale Award Winner



Recipient of the RITELL's Nancy A. Carnevale Teacher of the Year Award for Excellence in ELL Teaching, Yomely Marte is an educator with Dorcas International Institute. In honor of the award's namesake, Yomely was honored for 'teaching from the heart.' Her project will be the creation of a multi-generational quilt that explores cultural identities of her high school students in English Language Development at Nowell Leadership Academy.

that time on, I think I was teaching without realizing it. I came to New York when I was 18, and I thought I would go to college to be a doctor. But English was a barrier, so I took intensive English classes and studied in a community college. While there, I got a job as a teacher's aide and moved up to head teacher in a day care and after-school program. That's when I really fell in love with teaching. I fell in love with seeing the light in other people learning, when they saw what they were capable of doing. Since then, I've seen that light with every age group - from babies, to middle school, to high school, and adults.

back to the Dominican Republic for a while and I was hired as a teacher in Computer Science in a private school. That's when I learned an important lesson: I don't need to love the subject, I just need to know how to teach you to fall in love with that particular subject. In that school, I created a project where students used clay to create a computer abacus. It was incredible - the kids took it to a whole new level.

I also loved the project we did last year at Nowell when the students read The House on Mango Street. We went from an idea of students building houses, to the houses becoming a whole neighborhood, to the students presenting and recording their voices. One little spark grew into a beautiful project and the students were so proud.

1. How did you decide to work in education?

When I was in high school in San Francisco de Macoris, a small town in the Dominican Republic, teachers would always use me as their assistants. I don't know why, but they always asked me to explain what they were teaching when students couldn't understand it. In fact, in the ninth grade I developed a classroom in my house with my sister. When we had final exams, we would have cars line up around the street with students coming just to practice. From

2. What are some favorite activities you have done with your students?

When I was in New York, I got my Associates Degree in Business Administration with Computer Science Option. I graduated with a 4.0. But, do you know what? I hate business and computer science - unless I have to teach it! I moved

3. What is the hardest part of your job?

I want to help students change their lives, but I know there is only so much that I can do. It is hard for me

to leave things at the end of the day. Sometimes my husband can't believe it. He'll say, "Do you really have to answer that phone call?" And I do, because they're my students, and I have to do everything that I can.

4. What surprises you about your work with multilingual learners?

I think the thing that surprises me the most is how much they can handle. They have to deal with so many obstacles and so many challenges, but they show up and do everything they can for themselves and their families. I am constantly reminded how smart English Learners are, how eager they are to learn, even when all odds are against them.

5. What advice do you have for teachers who are new to working with multilingual learners?

My biggest piece of advice is to be careful to not judge students quickly: lack of language is not a lack of intellect. That was so frustrating for me when I first came here and people thought I couldn't do something because I couldn't speak the language. I always wanted to show them my report cards and say, "See! Look at these!" I would also advise teachers to be patient and to embrace all the skills that English Learners bring with them, including their native languages. Learn about their culture to understand them better. And, most of all, remember that love can be expressed without words. Love is universal and we can all communicate with that language.



Who is doing great work with Multilingual Learners? Nominate them to be interviewed for our new TEACHER

FEATURE page in the next edition of the RI-TELLER.

Nancy Carnevale Award

Do you know a passionate teacher who "teaches from the heart", as Nancy Carnevale did?

Nominate them for the annual award!

Nancy Carnevale, M.Ed., a National Board Certified Teacher of English as New Language (ENL) invested her 38-year career in supporting urban ELLs and their families. She exemplified the "can-do" philosophy. She serves as a model of best practices in urban education for ELLs. A lifelong advocate for children, she took every opportunity to acquire the latest ELL teaching practices so that

she could promote success for her students in every way possible. She is honored for her passion, her love for and unwavering dedication to her students, her collaborative nature and for her clarity of vision that teaching is most successful when you "teach from the heart."

The Nancy A. Carnevale Grant will be awarded each year to classroom teachers who exemplify Nancy's life and career. The \$500 award may only be used to fund a project which meets certain criteria.

For more information about nominations contact: Cathy Fox cathyfox10@gmail.com or visit the "Awards" page of the RITELL website

Adult Practitioner Award

Do you know an extraordinary adult education teacher who goes above and beyond for the profession and their students?

Nominate them for the annual award!

Each year, RITELL's Adult Education Special Interest Group (AE SIG) recognizes the extraordinary contributions of an individual to the profession, learners, and/or colleagues.

Nominees must demonstrate high levels of commitment and makes significant contributions to the SIG's language learning environment, demonstrate high levels of professionalism, collegiality and cooperation and go above and beyond to help students and professionals in the SIG area.

The award includes a certificate of Recognition from RITELL, \$250 cash award and a free RITELL membership for the following year.

For more information about nominations contact: Chris Bourret cbourret@verizon.net or visit the "Awards" page of the RITELL website

Passion and Gratitude Award Winner: Youmi Kim

2019 Adult Practitioner Award Winner



Photo credit: The Warwick Beacon

Youmi Kim, Program Director of the Literacy Volunteers of Kent County (LVKC) program, was awarded the RITELL Adult Practitioner Award at the 2019 Fall Conference. In her work, she oversees the training of literacy tutors and the education of ESL students throughout Kent County. After being notified of winning the recognition, Youmi shared this beautiful note of appreciation and agreed to have it reprinted below.

What an honor! I was so surprised and humbled after learning what organization RITELL is and what the award means. Words cannot describe how much it means to me. This kind of moment is when I wish I had better English skills to express my deepest gratitude.

As the first immigrant to hold the position as program director, the last couple of years at LVKC has offered me an opportunity to dive into the community and mingle with diverse

populations. Working with more than 130 students and volunteers, each with unique talents and language needs, I'm inspired every day by their determination. I enjoy the challenge of pairing students with the right tutor to help them achieve their specific goals. The true reward comes when our students feel empowered, equipped with new skills to help them improve their lives. Seeing this change in LVKC students always reminds me of my own grandmother's journey towards literacy.

Born the early 1930s, during the Japanese colonization of South Korea throughout the 30s and 40s, my grandmother was deeply affected by the Japanese Ethnic Extermination Policies, one of which was eliminating the Korean language, using coercive measures to carry this out. During this time period, Korean people were killed protecting Korean books and dictionaries. She dropped out of school in the

2nd grade and was illiterate until her late 50s. She learned how to read and write in the 1990s and took great pride in copying down bible verses every day. As a young child I distinctly remember thinking my grandmother's handwriting was a bit childish. I couldn't have known then how much writing those words must've meant to her, but, today, I realize, it meant everything. Deeply rooted inside of me resides a deep sense of gratefulness and responsibility to my mother language. My interest and passion for literacy and education had been naturally cultivated by the people and cultural events throughout my upbringing. I became an elementary school teacher in my early 20s, and in my late 20s I began teaching for a Korean international school in China.

After the Korean War in 1953, my mother was raised in a society where most people didn't value education for girls. A busy life with four children never afforded her any time to invest in her own education. That

changed when she turned 50. With a lifelong passion for education, she was determined to pursue her dream and entered university during the time I was studying for my bachelor's degree. Her dedication to complete her bachelor's and master's degree in her 50s taught me a great lesson, one I'll cherish forever: never to be afraid to step outside of my comfort zone and learn new things. This, indeed, was the motivation for me to dive into American society even though I was very nervous to meet Americans other than my husband's family 2.5 years ago. Well, I hope you didn't realize that I still feel nervous around new people I meet.

Life in America wasn't always easy for me; sometimes it took twice the effort to get things done, some days English just didn't come easy and my tongue would freeze, and sometimes I felt self-conscious and homesick. My focus, however, to grow and thrive in my new environment strengthened my patience to endure the difficult times and sparked my creativity to overcome the challenges. LVKC has been the biggest support for me. The members of the Board of Directors saw the transferable skills I had, and believed in my passion despite the lack of experience in the American workplace. Daily communication with tutors always teaches me something new, and interaction with adult learners brings me humbleness and respect. Learning more and more how adult literacy impacts our educational and economic well-being, I recently began my journey at URI to pursue my master's degree in Adult Education.

I began by wanting to share a little bit of background story where the sincere gratefulness I feel comes from, and just realized it's rather long. Hope I didn't bore you! I understand I have a short resume compared to other award recipients, and also there are so many dedicated and amazing adult educators in Rhode Island. I humbly accept the award as I consider this honor a pat on the back to continue learning and sharing. I'll do my best to 'practice' better and harder as the 2019 Adult Practitioner of the Year. I hope this opportunity, being recog-

nized by such a wonderful organization as an immigrant, will be an inspiration to other adult educators especially from different cultures and backgrounds.

Thank you again for all your kindness and support.

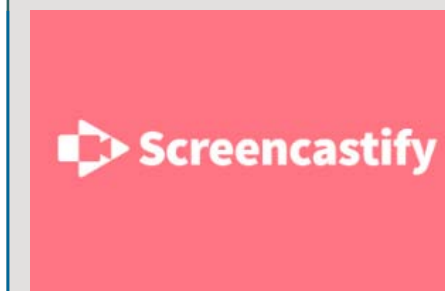
Warmest regards,
Youmi Kim

To read an article from *The Warwick Beacon* featuring Youmi Kim, [click here](#).

Remote Learning Resources

As RI learning moves online, RITELL is committed to supporting teachers in this time of transition.

Below are two programs recommended for online instruction.



Screencastify is a free screen recorder for Chrome. No download required. Record, edit and share videos in seconds. Videos autosave to your Google Drive account. [Learn more about Screencastify.](#)



Kami allows users to edit PDFs and make them "fillable". It is a PDF & document annotation app for schools. [More information about Kami.](#)

Be sure to visit the "Teacher Resources" section of the [RITELL website](#) for many more high quality, online teaching recommendations!