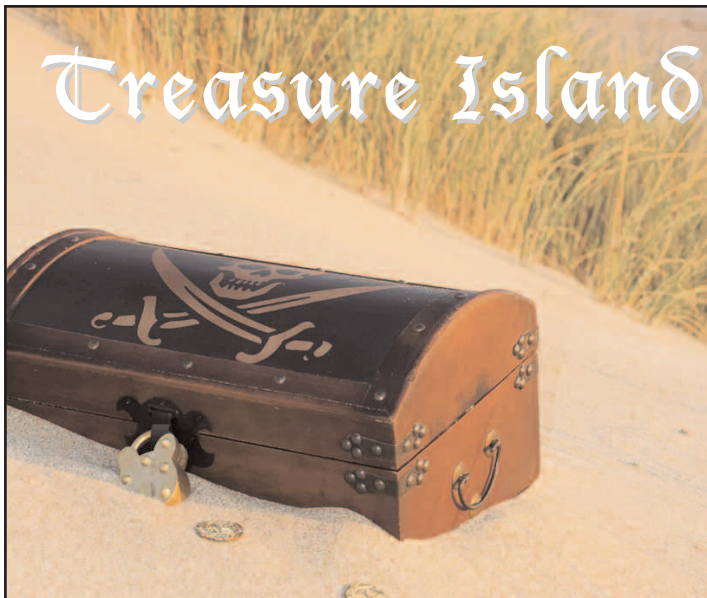




When TCAT returns to Galveston in December, it will become...



What better place to hunt for treasure than Galveston Island, once the lair of pirate Jean Lafitte?

Textbook coordinators will take their schools' hunt for treasure in the state's new textbook process to TCAT's 19th Annual Conference, Dec. 6-8, at the Moody Gardens Hotel and Convention Center in Galveston.

The complicated new system, the product of 2009 legislation, offers local schools incentives to select from an intricate Chinese-menu ("One from Column A; one from Column B") of – theoretically – lower cost alternatives to traditional textbooks.

But the state is still drawing the treasure map to the goodies that schools are told they may expect. Texas Education Agency staff will be at the TCAT conference to provide the most up-to-date information in

Please see Conference, Page 4

AG opinion could alter system again

The system of instructional materials in Texas is almost like the weather in Texas: Wait 15 minutes and it'll change.

Educators are waiting to see whether a pending attorney general's opinion will be the next change.

The system began changing dramatically with legislation passed in 2009. That created whole new categories of instructional materials that local schools could choose from.

That drew the broad strokes, but the Texas Education Agency and the State Board of Education had to provide the shading with their guidelines and rules. Those guidelines have been changing –

Please see AG Opinion, Page 9

Speakers' journey helped get Red back in the black

Attendees of TCAT's Summer Institute in League City may have noticed two new members of the textbook community: sisters Red and Black.

Tina Pennington and Mandy Williams (aka Red and Black) are the authors of *What I Learned About Life When My Husband Got Fired!*, a book that follows the months after Red's husband is fired from his job and Black steps in to help her sister learn all about personal finance and prioritizing her life.

It has elicited such a response from readers that the sisters were asked to teach a finance course at KIPP Houston High School, using their book as the program's textbook.

Interested in broadening to avenues in education, Red and

Please see Red and Black, Page 6



TCAT TALES

Official Newsletter of the Textbook Coordinators' Association of Texas

Volume 12 Summer 2010

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From the TCAT President

Summer crunch

Dear Colleagues:

It seems like yesterday we were enjoying the conference at Moody Gardens and now most of us are buried under our summer shipments. The ELA Reading Adoption is the largest adoption I have been associated with. The only words of wisdom I can muster are: have a plan, be organized, and get people involved.

TCAT's Summer Institute was bigger and better than ever. At 13 locations across the state, TCAT offered a full day of training to help new textbook coordinators as well as veteran coordinators. Thanks to sponsors of this event:

- McGraw-Hill School Education Group (sponsor of our lunches)
- Houghton Mifflin Harcourt/Holt McDougal
- Follett Educational Services, and
- Hayes Software

A special thanks to Ann McGuffey, our Training Committee chair, and to all the board members who have contributed to the training.

TCAT videotaped the Summer Institute in Duncanville and will make the tapes available for purchase as soon as we finish our post-production. Please keep an eye out for e-mails about the Summer Institute tape.

I look forward to seeing you at this year's 19th Annual Conference at Moody Gardens in Galveston Dec. 6-8, 2010. If you have any questions or concerns please contact me or any of your board members. Good luck, and I know you will do a great job this summer.

Sincerely,

Abel E. Villarreal, TCAT President



TEA announces change in surplus shipping

Lone Star Overnight has been designated carrier for these surplus instructional materials weighing 150 pounds or less, replacing UPS. The change was effective June 28.

The same process to create labels through EMAT should be used by districts; the only change is the carrier. Pickups to send surplus textbooks must be scheduled by calling Lone Star Overnight at 1-800-800-8984 and referencing "TEA Surplus Textbooks".

For surplus materials weighing more than 150 pounds, schools should contact their local Central Freight Lines to pick up the materials. For pickups, call toll free at 1-800-782-5036. Shipments can be tracked on Central Freight's website, www.centralfreight.com, using the BOL number. First, click on "Online Resources" and then "Track by BOL#."



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Conference/ from Page 1

a system that seems to change daily.

Bottom line: What textbook coordinators learn in Galveston may help a local schools' bottom line, and that's a treasure worth hunting for.

In a new event this year, TCAT will offer a special, Sunday-afternoon, pre-Conference workshop to provide advanced training on the EMAT system. This workshop is available at an extra charge.

TCAT will continue to provide a series of hands-on EMAT sessions during the conference, at no additional charge.

New coordinators – and veterans who want to brush up on their skills – can take advantage of the important Coordinator Boot Camp on Monday, Dec. 6.

Each Boot Camp registrant is assigned to a “company” of coordinators. The company stays together throughout the day for sessions on ordering; shipping and receiving; and policy and accountability.

On Tuesday, Dec. 7, TCAT will welcome Dr. Amanda

Batson, former director of Curriculum for the Austin public schools and now president of ADB Partners, LLC, a company that focuses on education-on-demand for all ages.

Dr. Batson will address the conference luncheon. SkillPath seminars will also return on Tuesday with its popular presentations on “Embracing Change,” “Managing Multiple Projects” and “How to Negotiate with Vendors and Suppliers.” These workshops are offered for hundreds of dollars each, but they’re free to TCAT Conference registrants.

And those are just some of the treasures that TCAT Annual Conference participants can expect.

Register today with the form on Page 5 or visit www.tcat.org.

Schedule highlights TCAT 19th Annual Conference

TCAT's Conference Committee is refining the schedule for the conference, including a comprehensive offering of breakout sessions. For your planning convenience, here is a tentative list of some of the highlights:

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5

- 1-4pm Advanced Workshop with Hands-on EMAT (Additional fee)
- 3-6pm Registration open

MONDAY, DECEMBER 6

- 7:30am President's Breakfast
- 8am “Getting Real with Money”
Red (Tina Pennington) and Black (Mandy Williams)
- 9:15am Region Meetings
- Noon Lunch - Honorable Rob Eissler
Chair, House Public Education Committee (invited)
- 6pm Welcome Reception

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7

- Noon Lunch - Dr. Amanda Batson
ADB Partners
- 7-9pm Networking Event, sponsored by Hayes Software

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8

- 8am Hearty Breakfast
- 9am TEA Q&A
- Noon Conference Adjourns

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Copy form (as needed) – one form per participant. Please register by November 12, 2010

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E-mail address (required for processing): _____

	Postmarked by 11/12/10	After 11/12/10	
<input type="checkbox"/> FULL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION	\$245	\$275	_____
<i>(includes all scheduled activities, luncheons and 2011 membership dues; does not include Sunday EMAT workshop)</i>			
OR			
SINGLE-DAY REGISTRATION (CHECK ONE OR MORE)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Monday 12/6 <i>(includes activities, luncheon and 2011 dues)</i>	\$175	\$190	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday 12/7 <i>(includes activities, luncheon and 2011 dues)</i>	\$175	\$190	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> NEW FOR 2010! PRE-CONFERENCE EMAT WORKSHOP 12/5	\$ 45	\$ 75	_____
<i>(Special hands-on instruction 1-4pm Sunday 12/5; limit 80; NOT included in Conference Registration)</i>			
<input type="checkbox"/> 2011 Annual Membership Dues Only <i>(if NOT registering for conference)</i>	\$40	\$40	_____
***TOTAL (ADD RIGHT COLUMN)			_____

I have been a textbook coordinator: Please enroll me for "Textbook Coordinator Bootcamp" MONDAY Dec. 6:
Boot Camp T-Shirt size (circle one) S M L XL XXL

LESS THAN ONE YEAR

1-5 YEARS

MORE THAN 5 YEARS

* * *

Please enroll me in "Hands-On EMAT TRAINING" (Check Day/Session)

Monday Morning 12/6 Monday Afternoon 12/6

Tuesday Morning 12/7 Tuesday Afternoon 12/7

I have special dietary needs: What concerns would you like to see addressed at the Conference?

Specify: _____

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Fax to 512-251-8152 by November 12, 2010 for billings.

Payment must be received by Dec. 1, 2010.

I would be interested in participating in TCAT at the planning level (i.e. committee member, officer, director, etc.)

Red and Black/ from Page 1

Black attended the “Textbooks 101” program in League City to learn more about the world of textbooks.

They will also be keynoting Monday morning at the TCAT Conference on Dec. 6 in Galveston.

Following the format of their book, Red (👩) and Black (👨) took the time to answer some questions for us about their book, their interest in the textbook community and what they’ll be speaking on at the conference.

What is *What I Learned About Life When My Husband Got Fired!* about?

👩 I led a very sheltered life, going from my parent’s house to my husband’s house. When he came home one night unexpectedly fired, I turned to my sister in an absolute panic. All I wanted was answers and sympathy. Instead I got lots of questions. She yanked my ostrich head out of the sand and taught me how to make conscious, smart decisions. Much of what I needed to learn was about personal finance, so a good portion of the book covers financial topics. The other topics, like organizing the mountain of paper on your desk and dealing with the fact there are never enough hours, just happened, because the book is about real life. And by the way, I’m still waiting for the sympathy!

👨 I left home when I was 16, off to conquer the world and never looked back. I found it difficult to believe she managed to avoid dealing with life until she was in her 40s. The book is basically a compilation of our emails, IM’s and conversations and never speaks to the reader, but instead allows them to feel as if they are eavesdropping on our conversations or had hacked into our computers.

Why did you want to attend a TCAT Summer Institute Program? What did you come away with?

👩 Through our book, Black made me realize the importance of gathering information to be able to make smart, conscious decisions. We knew the rules were different for public schools than KIPP and other charter schools, but little did we know the extent of the differences! Talk about confusing! We wanted to better understand how the textbook process really works, so we contacted TCAT. I must do my warm-and-fuzzy at



Photograph courtesy of KIPP Houston Art School.

Red (Tina Pennington) and Black (Mandy Williams) will share their success in financial planning and personal prioritizing with TCAT Monday morning, Dec. 6.

this point and say how everyone has been so incredibly helpful and patient with all my questions. And that John Bridges and Jill Cook were especially wonderful at conducting the Summer Institute in League City and making us “outsiders” feel very welcome.

👨 When I researched the publishing industry I decided it was one of the worst business models I had ever seen. Now that I am becoming familiar with the textbook business, I cannot help but wonder about the selection process, built-in obsolescence and pricing models, but I will not get on that soapbox. However, hearing all the rules, regulations and logistical nightmares associated with textbook ordering and inventory management, all I can say is “I feel your pain.”

What will be the focus of your speech at the TCAT conference?

👨 The business side of me says we should focus on how our book can be used to meet the requirements

Continued on the following page

From the preceding page

within the social studies curriculum related to financial literacy, and my strong belief that teaching someone to balance their checkbook is math. Financial literacy should be about thinking whether or not you should make that expenditure. But I think if we focus on the stories and lessons from the book, the process by which my sister (and the students) learned from her “crisis” (her word, not mine) it will achieve the same objective.

🗨️ I agree. I’m really looking forward to being your keynote speakers because it’s very rewarding when we can help people learn (and laugh) about topics as basic as personal finance, mountains of paper and not having enough hours in the day! And then, based on our time allotment, we can open the floor to Q&A, which is always very enlightening. And usually a lot of fun!

Any future goals or plans related to the book? What’s next for you?

🗨️ When we first launched the book, I would have said that our plans were to try to reach as many readers as possible since our readers were telling us how much they

were not only enjoying the book, but how much they were learning (or re-learning!) from it. But now that we have developed and “taught” a financial literacy program, I would have to say that our future plans would be to try to reach as many “students” as possible since the results of the program have exceeded even our wildest expectations! Having said all that, I’m just following Black’s lead and holding onto her coattails for dear life.

🗨️ What’s next? The educational applications are our top priority. We believe the success of our program is it was NOT taught by financial “experts” and so anyone can be quickly and easily “trained” to teach the class because it does not require any special knowledge. Our program is easy to implement, it is not a burden to teachers or administrators (or textbook coordinators) and is very inexpensive. And fun.

For more information on Red and Black and *What I Learned About Life When My Husband Got Fired!*, visit redandblackbooks.com. And be sure to catch the sisters’ keynote address on the morning of Dec. 6 in Galveston.



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TCAT nominations open

TCAT will elect a president-elect, secretary, members of the Executive Committee and an alternate during its Annual Meeting at noon Tuesday Dec. 7 at the 19th Annual Conference.

Candidates must have the support of their districts to attend, at district or personal expense, at least three quarterly meetings each year at various locations in the state and the Annual Conference during their term of office.

“We hope to attract experienced coordinators with the drive to continue building on TCAT’s success as the premier source for knowledge on Texas instructional materials,” said Pres. Abel Villarreal.

Candidates for officer –

president-elect and secretary – must have served on the Board for one year.

Candidates must be the coordinator or designee for a district or open-enrollment charter school. Two employees of the same district or charter school may not serve on the Executive Committee at the same time.

Nominations Committee Chair is Karla Christman, immediate past president. For consideration as a candidate in the Nominations Committee report, a member should contact the TCAT office at 512-251-8101 or by e-mail: textbook@texas.net.

Nomination for the positions closes at the conclusion of regional meetings Monday morning, Dec. 6.

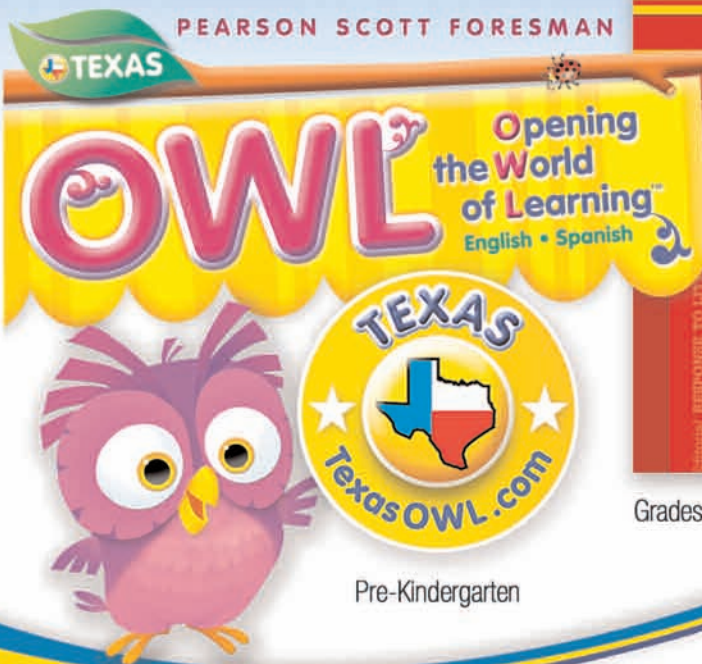
Spreadsheet helps match PEIMS, MLC

A spreadsheet that links PEIMS course numbers to the Multiple List Codes of instructional materials for that course is available on the TCAT website.

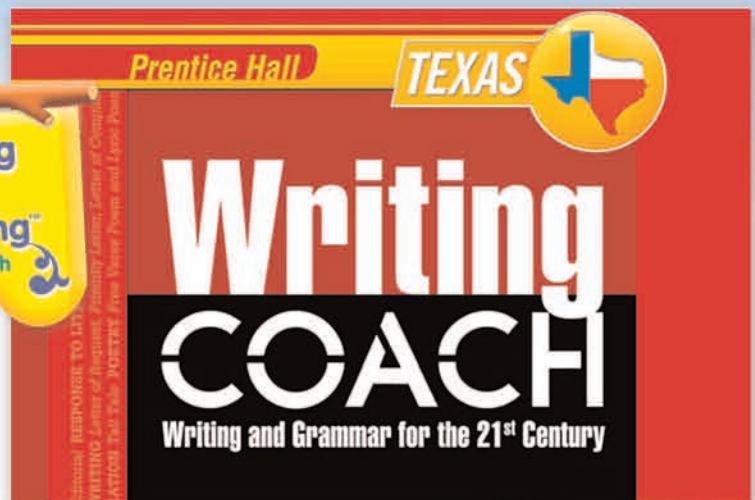
The spreadsheet was compiled by a TCAT committee, chaired by Anne Tweedt and including Betty Adamson and James Voss.

The spreadsheet is available on the TCAT website, www.tcat.org.

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again, dramatically – since TEA unveiled its vision of the system at TCAT’s Annual Conference last December.

There’s a chance for new shading from the Office of the Attorney General. In May, SBOE Chairman Gail Lowe requested an attorney general’s opinion on eight issues raised by the new system.

How the AG’s office comes down on those issue could change the system again.

Chairman Lowe’s questions included:

- 1) whether the SBOE definition of “classroom set,” which would require most elementary schools to purchase complete sets of adopted textbooks, is correct.
 - 2) whether university open-source textbooks are eligible for selection as classroom sets.
 - 3) whether schools meet the requirement of providing instructional materials covering the entire state curriculum if they buy a classroom set that does not cover the curriculum, but also provides other materials that “make up any deficit.”
 - 4) does the requirement that, upon parental request, a district must provide a textbook for a child to
- take home entitle a student to take home a textbook that is part of a classroom set?
 - 5) may the SBOE reject a university open-source textbook on the conforming or nonconforming lists, even if the university disagrees with the Board?
 - 6) may the SBOE impose a fine or other penalties against a university that provides an open-source textbook?
 - 7) if a school district selects a university open-source textbook in lieu of another textbook purchased a state expense, is the district entitled to a credit under the expanded system of credits?
 - 8) do instructional materials or technological equipment purchased with textbook credits become state property or the property of the local school district?

In a letter to the attorney general’s opinion division, TCAT weighed in on the last question, urging that items purchased with credits become local property or else the goal of the credit legislation will be frustrated.

The attorney general is required to provide his opinion on the matter by Nov. 14. TCAT will be keeping an eye out for the opinion; watch your e-mail for an update.

TCAT weighs in on credit purchases

In a letter to the attorney general’s Opinion Committee, TCAT urges that any instructional materials purchased with credits under the state’s newly expanded system be the property of the local school district.

In soliciting an opinion from the attorney general on several issues related to the new instructional material system, SBOE Chairman Gail Lowe said, “We have assumed that these additional textbooks and instructional materials [purchased by credits] become state property....”

The June 28 letter from TCAT Executive Director Cliff Avery noted that in training provided by the Texas Education Agency, textbook coordinators were told that the items would become local property.

Avery noted that the legislative intent of textbook credits is to introduce cost-sensitivity into selection of instructional materials. “To designate items purchased with textbook

—————
Making items purchased with
credits state property
would thwart the Legislature.
—————

credits as state property would be diametrically opposed to that intent,” he wrote.

“Items purchased with credits would, as state property, be subject to the onerous and inefficient sur-

plus distribution system inflicted on local schools since TEA closed its central instructional materials warehouse in 2003,” Avery said.

The TCAT letter noted a 2007 State Auditor’s report that revealed widespread problems with the TEA surplus distribution system. That report included the judgment: “The virtual depository system is a disincentive to textbook coordinators.”

Avery argued, “Because of the disincentive inherent in the surplus system, we believe that, if items purchased with credits are indeed state property, school districts would be reluctant to purchase such items. and, therefore, the Legislature’s purpose in providing credits would be frustrated.”

Memorial fund honors Russell Owen

Donations are being accepted to the Russell Owen Memorial Fund.

Owen, the longtime Dallas ISD textbook coordinator and past president of TCAT, died March 22 after suffering injuries in an automobile accident.



At TCAT's 2001 Conference, Russell Owen, second from right, posed with other TCAT past presidents. From left, they are P.D. Thomas, Mark Rogers, Anne Tweedt, Randy Strickland, Joe Morales and Mike Fowler.

On Jan. 13, the car Owen was riding in was rear-ended, breaking three bones in his neck. After a prolonged period in the Intensive Care Unit at Baylor Medical Center in Dallas, including fending off pneumonia, Owen was believed to be on the mend.

But on March 22, workers at the convalescent center found him unresponsive. He was rushed back to Baylor, but doctors could not revive him.

Owen, 63, had served almost 40 years with the Dallas Independent School District. He was one of the founders of the Textbook Coordinators' Association of Texas and served as its president from 1993 to 1994.

He served as a mentor to a generation of textbook coordinators. He was a fixture on the program of TCAT conferences, offering the insights he gained from regular attendance at State Board of Education meetings and as an observer of the Texas Legislature.

The Russell Owen Memorial Fund will provide opportunities for training for Texas textbook coordinators.

Send donations to: The Russell Owen Memorial Fund, c/o TCAT, P.O. Box 676, Pflugerville, TX 78691.



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