



An Interview with Dr. DeAmicis' Class, conducted by Cynthia Lord

In Fall 2005, I held a dual interview with a wonderful fifth-grade class in California. First, the students interviewed me, and then I interviewed them.

Here are my questions for Dr. DeAmicis' class:

When you take a book off the library shelf, how do you decide whether you will read it or put it back? For example, do you flip through and look for something? Do you read the flap?

I look on the back and read it so I know if I would like to read it or not. *~Emily*

I look at the book and study its cover. For example if it has neat art or if the title is catchy then I try it. *~Kate*

I look at the title and at the picture and if it is funny, I give it a try. *~Angela*

I look at the title and most of the time I pick the funnier-looking books. *~Austin*

I decide by reading the back of the book and seeing if the title is interesting. *~Danielle*

I look at the cover and read the back. *~Rachel*

I usually look for an interesting title. Then I read the flap. *~Samantha*

I look at the pictures and the back to get to know the book. *~Kyle*

I read the back of the book and see if it is interesting. *~Edwin*

What makes a good book cover? What are some great book covers you've seen? What kind of covers don't you like?

Goosebumps has GREAT covers. So does Harry Potter. *~Samantha*

I like your cover because it has bright, clear, and solid colors. *~Ryan H*

Covers for me have to be neat. They have to tell a part of the story in a way of art. *~Kate*

What makes a great book cover is seeing what the characters look like, and then making it look like how you see it. I've seen so many great book covers that I cannot name them all! *~Danielle*

I think a rainbow would be good, if there was a book called Rainbows Of The Rain. The best book cover I like so far is yours. ~Emily

To me a good book cover has part of the climax of the story on it, but does not give the book away. Some books I've read with good covers are, Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix, most Goosebumps books, Series of Unfortunate Events, The Grim Grotto and Ersatz Elevator, and Guardians of Gahoole. I don't like covers that tell you too much about the book. ~Aaron

A good picture that can sort of tell you what the book's about. One of the best book covers I've seen is for Raising Dragons. I don't really not like any book covers. ~Alex

I think that a good cover is one with dragons and flames. I think that would look really good for a cover! One of the best book covers that I have seen is yours. I think it is really cool! I really don't like book covers with fairies and babies. ~Ryan R.

Illustrations that describe the book. Some of the covers I like are Land Of The Lawn Weenies and I don't like plain and boring covers. ~Austin

What's the first book you remember wanting to have read to you (or wanted to read to yourself) over and over? What did you like about it?

It was If You Give Moose a Muffin; it had a picture of a little girl and a moose eating muffins. ~Kate

Green Eggs and Ham. I don't know why but I really like the pictures and how they expressed the writing. ~Kyle

Captain Underpants. It makes me laugh every time. Even if I know the sentence word for word. Or if it's the 10,000 time I've read it. ~Samantha

When I was little, maybe around five years of age, my Mom took me to Barnes & Noble for the first time. Then she read me a book called The Tall, Tall, Grass. I loved it so much that she bought it for me. It was a beautiful picture book, and it was in collage. I loved the bright colors. And so every night my parents read it to me. When I was old enough to read, I forgot all about the book. I started to read other books. It's been years and years now since I've read it. Then, some time not too long ago, I was looking for a book to read. I slipped it out and opened it up, and inside was a note written for me! The note went something like this...

Dear Callie,

This is the first time I took you to Barnes and Noble and you loved it so much, I bought it for you. I hope you'll always treasure books.

Love Mom

Duncan and Dolores because I really like to act out the characters. ~*Danielle*

The Big Green Monster. ~*Rachel*

I wanted to read Down On The Funny Farm because I could read it very easily. ~*Austin*

The first book I wanted to read was Charlotte's Web because people said it was good.
~*Angela*

It would have to be Goodnight Moon. ~*Emily*

I always am in the spirit for my all-time favorite book, Pancakes For Breakfast. The thing about it that I love is that it has no words! I always make up the story in different ways. It is so fun. ~*Rachael*

I have always liked to read Green Eggs and Ham over and over again. ~*Daniel*

Who are some of your favorite authors? What do you like about their books?

Melissa Morgan, Megan McDonald, Kristen Larson. ~*Samantha*

Barbara Park and Lemony Snicket because their books are really good. ~*Danielle*

Laura Numeroff is one. Her books are hysterical. ~*Kate*

Judy Blume because she is funny. ~*Angela*

Lemony Snicket, and I love mystery and adventure books. ~*Austin*

My favorite author is J.K. Rowling because at the end of her Harry Potter series, she leaves you wondering. ~*Olivia*

I like Louis Sachar for his funny Wayside School, Judy Blume for her cool "Superfudge" books, and Dav Pilkey with the Captain Underpants books, "Tra La Laa." ~*Ryan H.*

Have you ever met an author or illustrator in person? Did he/she look like you expected? What was different or the same as you expected?

I have not met any authors. ~*Austin*

I have met a poem writer. He didn't look anything like I expected. ~*Kate*

What kind of books do you wish there were more of? What kind are you tired of seeing?

I wish there more types of insect books because I am really into insects, but they really don't make a lot so I kinda get bored. ~Kyle

I wish there were more books about life, like yours. I'm tired of books about survival. Every once in a while I get a good one about life, but not often. I hope we get to read more of your story. It left us hanging and begging for more. ~Callie

MORE LEMONY SNICKET!!!!!!!!!!!!!! ~Danielle

I wish all the stupid horror stories would stop, and I wish there were more series that I like that are my grade level. ~Kate

I wish there were more mysteries and less non-fiction. ~Paul

I wish there were more—at least 20 more—books for The Series of Unfortunate Events. ~Kyle

The Captain Underpants series. I'm not sure of any books I'm tired of seeing. ~Austin

I wish that there were more fiction chapter books with made-up species. After reading the Goosebumps series, I am tired of books with endings with a twist. ~Aaron

I wish there were more books about dragons. I'm tired of seeing lovey-dovey stories. Ick. ~Alex

I wish there were more books on dragons and more army books! I wish there were less history books. That I wish. ~Ryan R.

I wish there were more dragon books and less nonfiction books. ~Daniel

If you could be any children's book character for a day, who would you be? Why?

I would probably be Sleeping Beauty because I wonder what it is like to have tiny fairies guarding me and making my clothes and stuff. ~Rachael

I would be Mr. Brown so I could make cool sounds. ~Austin

I would be Billy from Raising Dragons, because he's half dragon and he can breath fire. ~Alex

I would be Mandy Hope from Animal Ark because her parents are vets! ~Kate

I would be India Opal Buloni from Because Of Winn Dixie. I would be her because she has a great personality and she makes her own friends. ~*Kayleigh*

I would be Junie B. Jones because she is really funny. ~*Danielle*

Where do your own best ideas for writing come from?

I always get my ideas from my imagination or from something that happened in my life. ~*Kayleigh*

I usually get them by my friend's summaries, you know, at school then I say to myself, "Could I make a fantasy story with that?" My stories are usually very detailed. ~*Rachael*

I get my ideas from other books. ~*Austin*

Pets; stuff from my everyday life. ~*Kate*

How do you share your writing with other people? How do you feel when you share your writing? Are you ever nervous? Excited?

I read out loud. When I do that, I feel nervous and excited. ~*Austin*

Yes, I get nervous and excited. I get a little nervous because I 'm afraid I've messed up on something or made a spelling error. ~*Kyle*

I read everything to one of my best friends, and then I ask them how they liked it. ~*Kate*

When I share my writing, I don't really like it because I like to keep it personal to myself, and I think maybe I didn't do that part right, maybe I misspelled that...you know what I mean? ~*Joseph*

What's the best advice someone gave you about writing so far?

To follow through. ~*Austin*

What's the worst part about writing for you? Why?

Spelling, because I need to improve. ~*Austin*

Revising because it is sooooooooooooo boring!!!! ~ *Danielle*

The worst part of writing for me is that I write too thickly, I write with too much detail. Then the paper gets so jumbled with ideas that I can't even read my own paper. To tell you the truth, I'm not very organized. :) ~*Callie*

I write slower than my brain. I'll know what I want to put on the page and my brain will be reading aloud far past chapter six and I will be stuck in chapter two. ~*Kate*

How do you choose a title for something you've written?

How I choose a title is I just think of one. ~*Ryan R.*

I choose the title by the meaning of my story. ~*Austin*

Mainly what the story is about. ~*Danielle*

When I write, I go from the title. When I think of a good title name, I kind of automatically start the story from there. ~*Kate*

I choose a title by first looking through my story and finding main ideas. Then I combine the main ideas or choose one main idea. Then I make the main idea the title. ~*Chris*

When you get to choose your own topic, what's the process you go through for choosing? Do you make a list on paper? Do you ask for suggestions? Etc.

My best ideas come from experiences that I add into my story. ~*Chris*

I just start writing about something. If I don't like it, I start writing about something else. ~*Galen*

Sometimes I have great ideas in my head. I don't make a list but I do ask for suggestions. ~*Austin*

I think about pets and stuff from my life. ~*Kate*

My process is both, because first I would make a list and choose my topic. Then when I run out of ideas, I would ask someone a topic I should do. ~*Natalie*

When you give feedback and suggestions to another writer, what are some things you comment on? Does your classroom have some rules about giving feedback?

I comment on illustrations and vocabulary. Second of all, we don't hurt other people's feelings. ~*Austin*

**What kind of feedback is the most helpful to you when you share your writing?
What doesn't help?**

The feedback that helps me is the kind that tells you where you need corrections and such. Positive feedback is great, it makes me feel good about myself, but I don't find it helpful. ~*Olivia*

I love positive feedback but negative doesn't work. ~*Austin*

What would you think would be the best or most fun parts of being a published author?

I think it would be fun to be a published author because you would have people run up to you and ask for your autograph and you would get interviewed on T.V. (if your book was a major success). ~*Olivia*

Earning money and seeing people enjoy my books. ~*Austin*

The fun things would be people enjoying your work and having fun with your own writing. ~*Natalie*

What are some things about living in California that are great? What are some parts you wish you could change?

The great thing in California is that you barely EVER get too cold. The thing I wish I could change is the pollution. The sea is a place to dump things and the ground is a place to throw things. ~*Callie*

One great thing about living in California is the weather: it is usually sunny with a breeze or we have beach weather, which I love. ~*Aaron*

Some good things are no horrid snow blocking the road, but the bad weather here is constant heat. ~*Austin*

I think we should have a bigger mall with more shopping areas and stores. And I think that we should have 5 Starbucks Coffee shops downstairs. I would definitely have a food court. I also think that we should have these tiny, sort of like traffic lights, and put them at the end of every aisle in a grocery store so that people know if someone is going to turn your direction. So that way we won't have cart crashes ever again. ~*Rachael*

There are lots of places my family can drive to with no "trouble", but I wish it snowed in southern California. ~*Galen*

What surprised you about being in fifth grade or about your new classroom?

That I have new kid and student teacher in our class. ~*Austin*

What surprised me was when I walked into the smallest classroom in the world and also watching my teacher erase work on the board because the board is so small. Another thing that surprised me was that I am actually in fifth grade and noticed that the work isn't really hard. ~*Natalie*

Just for fun! A few class polls. What do you like best?

Skittles or M&Ms? 10:11

Summer or winter? 6:20

Funny books or scary books? 19:6

Fiction or nonfiction? 20:5