

June 2008 E-Newsletter

Dear Colleague,

Click on [Worthwhile Websites](#) below to find summer reading ideas for you and your students and summer camps for kids. Please share this e-newsletter with your peers and invite them to subscribe by e-mailing us at teacher_center@wsboces.org with their names and e-mail addresses.

Jane, Carol and Elyse

Bulletin! Is dealing with discipline your least favorite part of teaching? Want to be more effective in the classroom? NYSUT's **Classroom Management** Course is for you.

July 1, 2, 10, 11, 12, 2008,

Amityville High School Library

Instructor: Paul Schmelter

3 graduate credits from LIU (\$645) or 3 in-service credits (\$375)

Please check with your district for course approval.

Register online at www.nysut.org/elt

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A Light Touch

Best Lawyer Story of the Year, Charlotte, North Carolina.

A lawyer purchased a box of very rare and expensive cigars, and then insured them against, among other things, fire. Within a month, having smoked his entire stockpile of these great cigars and without yet having made even his first premium payment on the policy the lawyer filed a claim against the insurance company. In his claim, the lawyer stated the cigars were lost 'in a series of small fires.' The insurance company refused to pay, citing the obvious reason, that the man had consumed the cigars in the normal fashion. The lawyer sued and WON!

Delivering the ruling, the judge agreed with the insurance company that the claim was frivolous. The judge stated nevertheless, that the lawyer held a policy from the company, which it had warranted that the cigars were insurable and also guaranteed that it would insure them against fire, without

defining what is considered to be unacceptable 'fire' and was obligated to pay the claim. Rather than endure lengthy and costly appeal process, the insurance company accepted the ruling and paid \$15,000 to the lawyer for his loss of the cigars lost in the 'fires'.

NOW FOR THE BEST PART. After the lawyer cashed the check, the insurance company had him arrested on 24 counts of ARSON!!! With his own insurance claim and testimony from the previous case being used against him, the lawyer was convicted of intentionally burning his insured property and was sentenced to 24 months in jail and a \$24,000 fine.

Darwin Awards.

1. When his .38 caliber revolver failed to fire at his intended victim during a hold-up in Long Beach, California, would-be robber James Elliot did something that can only inspire wonder. He peered down the barrel and tried the trigger again. This time it worked.
2. The chef at a hotel in Switzerland lost a finger in a meat-cutting machine and submitted a claim to his insurance company. The company expecting negligence sent out one of its men to have a look for himself. He tried the machine and he also lost a finger. The chef's claim was approved.
3. A man who shoveled snow for an hour to clear a space for his car during a blizzard in Chicago returned with his vehicle to find a woman had taken the space...understandably, he shot her.
4. An American teenager was in the hospital recovering from serious head wounds received from an oncoming train. When asked how he received the injuries, the lad told police that he was simply trying to see how close he could get his head to a moving train before he was hit.
5. A man walked into a Louisiana Circle-K, put a \$20 bill on the counter, and asked for change. When the clerk opened the cash drawer, the man pulled a gun and asked for all the cash in the register, which the clerk promptly provided. The man took the cash from the clerk and fled, leaving the \$20 bill on the counter. The total amount of cash he got from the drawer: \$15. (If someone points a gun at you and gives you money, is a crime committed?)
- 6.. The Ann Arbor News crime column reported that a man walked into a Burger King in Ypsilanti Michigan , at 5 a.m. , flashed a gun, and demanded cash. The clerk turned him down because he said he couldn't open the cash register without a food order. When the man ordered onion rings, the clerk said they weren't available for breakfast. The man, frustrated, walked away.

FYI

Courses and Workshops

Back by popular demand, textbooks are now included in the tuition for all NYSUT Education and Learning Trust (ELT) summer graduate courses, nearby and online! 2008 Special Promotion - 3 credit courses for just \$645, including books! For more information, go to their website at <http://nysut.org/elt/teachers.html>

June 30 - July 3, 2008, Law and Civic Education Summer Institute at Northport High School. In partnership with the Law, Youth and Citizenship Program of the New York State Bar Association, Project P.A.T.C.H. is proud to offer our 2008 LYC / PATCH Law and Civic Education Summer Institute. The cost is only \$20 per teacher for the entire 30-hour program. There is a discount for teams of two, if one of the team members has never completed a PATCH Institute before (only \$20 per team, instead of per teacher). The program supports all teachers K-12. Applicants select one of the six strands below for their training: 1) Criminal Justice, 2) American History Through Constitutional Law,

3) Character Education and Peer Leadership for K-12, 4) International Law and Human Rights, 5) Forensic Science, 6) Civic Education and the "Whole Child" (New / Special offering with ASCD). All participants are eligible for either in-service credit or a graduate credit option through SUNY Stony Brook's School of Professional Development. Registration materials and further information can be found on their website. The link is: www.northport.k12.ny.us/~patch.

June 30 and July 1, 2008, New York State Reading First and Adolescent Literacy Conference
Statewide Conference: Creating A Culture of Literacy. Featured Strands include: Early Reading, English Language Learners, Differentiated Instruction, Adolescent Literacy, Response to Intervention, Principal Leadership. Coaching Models at Elementary and Secondary Levels. Location: New York Marriott at the Brooklyn Bridge. All teachers welcome. For more information: visit www.ReadingFirstEvents.com.

July 7-14, 2008. Lincoln Center Institute's "Explore Imagination in Education" workshop will help educators discover how to elicit new ideas in students, stimulate creativity, and prepare conceptual thinkers for the world beyond the classroom. This workshop is offered at both introductory and advanced levels. For more information, please visit www.lcinstitute.org.

July 21-25, 2008, The Hudson River Teacherhostel: The Westchester Experience, Sleepy Hollow to Hastings-on Hudson, Contact Hours: 40, Cost: \$245 (includes five lunches and one dinner), **Enrollment Cutoff Date: June 21, 2008.** Experience the Hudson River from colonial times to the present. Learn about the Dutch, slavery, Washington Irving, Hudson River art, the Gilded Age, and the Rockefellers. The program combines art, archaeology, ecology, history, literature and provides a testament to the efforts of small river towns to maintain their heritage and identity into the 21st century. To register go to: http://www.ihare.org/programs_teacher2008.html

July 30, 2008, 8:30AM - 2:30PM, Using the TI-84 and Cabri Jr. to Teach the New Geometry Curriculum. Teachers will learn how to incorporate the Cabri Jr. application that is pre-installed on the TI-84 calculators into the new Geometry curriculum. They will leave with many lessons that cover some of the new geometry performance indicators. Grades 9-12 Math Teachers.

Location: Western Suffolk BOCES, Div of Instructional Support Services, 31 Lee Avenue, Wheatley Heights, NY, **Costs:** \$100pp (A506 members) \$150pp (non-members). For more information contact dmaxwell@wsboces.org, 631-595-6829.

Alternate date: **Aug. 26-28, 2008, Rockville Centre, NY,** Contact: Lou Cino at lcino@molloy.edu

Fall, 2008, NEW! Program from Molloy College: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages Pre K - 12

- Leads toward an Advanced Certificate from Molloy College
- 24 credit program
- \$1500 per three credit course
- usually completed in 1 ½ years, including a summer session
- courses offered in Lindenhurst, at OWL Teacher Center (and at least one course must be taken on campus in Rockville Centre)
- Must have undergraduate foreign language credits
- Courses accepted up to six credits if they are inclusion or teaching diverse cultures/populations.

Contact: Jennifer Bova, OWL Teacher Center, 631-226-2772.

August 4-8, 2008, Forts of the Empire State Teacherhostel, Fort Edward, Fort William Henry, Fort Ticonderoga, Contact Hours: 40, Cost: \$345, **Enrollment cutoff date: June 26**. Immerse yourself in the sights and sounds of the French and Indian War in upstate New York. Tour the forts, stand on the high ground, cruise the lakes, and walk the shores of the war that became part of American history, literature, and movies. Leave with a better understanding of the global war that preceded the American Revolution, and bring that excitement and experience back to the classroom. To register for the program go to: http://www.ihare.org/programs_teacher2008forts.html.

Events

June 13-15, 2008. CITIZEN ARTIST CONFERENCE -This three-day Citizen Artist Conference, offered by Epic Theatre Ensemble, will enable teaching artists to better integrate social and political reasoning into their arts-in-education practices, as well as provide information on the Citizen Artist program. The conference will be held in Midtown Manhattan for a low fee of \$30. This fee is waived for participants who reside outside of New York City. For more information, visit www.epictheatrectr.org or contact Darci Fulcher at DarciFulcher.epic@gmail.com.

June 27-29, 2008. ASCD Summer Conference on Differentiated Instruction, Understanding by Design and What Works In Schools. ASCD has gathered experts on these three research-based, classroom-proven approaches to learning and teaching for its summer conference. Attendees will have an opportunity to explore all three approaches or delve more deeply into the one approach they are most interested in. To learn more about the conference contact ASCD's Service Center at 1-800-933-2723 or 1-703-578-9600 and press 2, or go to: <http://www.ascd.org/portal/site/ascd/menuitem.094e328178c0162abfb3ffdb62108a0c/>

July 17-20, 2008. Literate Life: A Human Right. [Reserve your room](#) for the [Whole Language Umbrella's Literacies for All Summer Institute](#), which takes place in Tucson, Arizona. Sessions will focus on such areas as critical reflection and holistic classroom practices, culturally responsive curriculum, and multiple and multimodal literacies. [Featured speakers](#) include Carole Edelsky, Monica Brown, Kathy G. Short, and Bob Wortman.

July 20-23, 2008. Design Your Literacy Curriculum with the Help of Key Experts at the NCTE Institute for 21st Century Literacies. Join [featured speakers](#) Kathleen Blake Yancey, Kylene Beers, Patsy Hall, Sandy Hayes, William Kist, Ernest Morrell, Fran Sharer, Sara Kajder, Helen Barrett, Elizabeth Beagle, and Michael Neal for the [NCTE Institute for 21st Century Literacies](#), in Indianapolis, Indiana. The hands-on institute will help teachers, literacy coaches, department chairs, and district leaders develop and design literacy curricula, instructional strategies, and assessment practices to prepare students for success in the 21st century. Check out the [schedule](#) for the event, and [register today to reserve your seat!](#)

August 11-13, 2008, 9:00AM-3:00PM: First Annual Literacy Coaching Conference: Summer Institute Focused on Enhancing Teaching and Learning Across Content Areas, Keynote speakers include: Dr. Jim Knight from University of Kansas—Center for Research on Learning, Dr. Cheryl Dozier from University of New York at Albany, Mary Catherine Moran from SUNY Oneonta—Eastern Stream Center, A group of experienced coaches and professional learning providers will provide workshop

sessions for demonstrations and modeling. From the State University of New York, Oneonta, Division of Education. For Graduate Credit or Professional Development (one seat hour). For more information, please contact **Jean Yaro** at 607-436-3176, Fax: 607-436-2554, E-mail: yaroje@oneonta.edu, Catskill Regional Teacher Center. Registration fee of \$180 includes continental breakfast and box lunch.

Announcements

June 30 Deadline: International Visual Arts Exchange. VSA arts is now accepting enrollment for ArtLink, an international visual arts exchange. In ArtLink, students create visual artwork based on a specific theme to exchange with their partnering classroom in another country. This year's theme is "Windows: Looking out, Looking in." A step-by-step teacher guide provides teachers with suggestions for incorporating the activities into other curricula. Classrooms prepare their ArtLink exchange packets consisting of the student artwork with descriptions. Classrooms then receive their partner's exchange packet along with the ArtLink portfolio, which consists of selected artwork from a variety of participants. Selected pieces of art are showcased in both live and virtual exhibitions. To enroll in ArtLink, contact Stephanie Litvak at stephanieL@vsarts.org

July 11 Deadline: Call for Entries from Young Artists with Disabilities. This call for entries from VSA arts and Volkswagen is open to young artists, ages 16-25, living in the United States who have a physical, cognitive, or mental disability. The theme of this year's VSA arts student exhibit is "Green Light." A green light signals "GO!" and permission to proceed. What revs you up as an artist and moves you to create? What signals the spark of creativity? For more information, visit www.vsartsnys.org.

This Summer, Get Chills: Spine-Tingling Experiences at Liberty Science Center. Liberty Science Center's summer of thrills and chills kicks off this month! And who says educational experiences can't make you shriek with excitement? We'll have you learning and squirming all at the same time with a new featured exhibition that delves into your deepest phobias and a new IMAX® film that gets your adrenaline flowing. Weekend events will have you digging for fossils, screaming for ice cream and facing your fears. Don't miss the excitement this summer—plan your visit today! **Have you considered a Liberty Science Center Membership?** With a membership, you'll enjoy unlimited FREE admission, so you can come as often as you want and stay as long as you like. But that's only the start. **Sign up today** to enjoy all that Liberty Science Center has to offer, including unlimited FREE admission for one year, free admission to over 270 **Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC)** around the world, Discounts on IMAX® Dome Theater and J. D. Williams Theater tickets, exclusive member nights, special invitations for children, FREE one-year subscription to *Popular Mechanics* magazine. **Join now online!**

Summer “Staycation” Ideas

With gas prices escalating, why not stay close to home for your summer vacation? Newscasters have aptly coined it a "staycation" and here are some ideas for you to try.

Are you a museum lover? Long Island is filled with interesting and unique museums, many with minimum or free admission, educator discounts and/or education programs for you to keep in mind for next year's field trips. With 129 museums on Long Island, there's one to match every interest.

Is art your passion? Take a trip to the **Hillwood Art Museum** on the C.W. Post Campus of LIU in Brookville to see the African arts, contemporary photography and Pre-Columbian artifacts. Or visit the **Nassau County Museum of Arts** in Roslyn Heights to walk in the formal gardens and view the sculpture on this 200 acre estate. Drop in at the **Parrish Museum** in Southampton to see a fascinating origami exhibit or the **Heckscher Museum** in Huntington to view 2100 works of European and American landscape artists.

Are you a science buff? Tour the **DNA Learning Center** at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, or spend time viewing the thought-provoking exhibits at the **LI Museum of Science and Technology (LIMSAT)**. While you are there, visit the nearby **Cradle of Aviation Museum** with its IMAX theatre and dramatic exhibits depicting Long Island's leading part in America's aviation and space history. Both are in Garden City.

Other well-known museums include the **Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Museum, Vanderbilt Museum and Planetarium** in Centerport, **American Airpower Museum** at Republic Airport in Farmingdale, **Sagamore Hill** in Oyster Bay, **The Museums at Stony Brook** and **Old Bethpage Village**. Have you seen them all? Then try a worthy but less well-known museum, such as the **American Guitar Museum**, the **Long Island Chess Museum**, or the **Railroad Museum of Long Island**. They can be found at <http://www.longisland.com/museums/>.

Outdoor recreation destinations abound on Long Island. Swim, sun, or surf at one of our 28 state and county public beaches. How about **Wildwood State Park** in Wading River with two miles of pristine Long Island Sound beachfront? Take a weekend camping trip to one of our 20 state and county parks which offer fishing and boating, hiking and biking trails, nature walks and much more for you to enjoy. Have you been to **Nissequogue River State Park** in Kings Park? There, besides fishing and hiking, you can enjoy canoeing and kayaking, bird-watching or nature programs. For more information, click on *Parks* and/or *Beaches* at the website <http://www.exploreli.com/entertainment/localguide/>.

Theatre and concerts are summertime staples. Why travel to New York City when you can enjoy lively professional performances at 11 theatres and more than 20 music venues on Long Island? There are the well-known **Westbury Theatre** and **Jones Beach Theatre** summer performances, but have you gone to a concert at the **Patchogue Theatre for the Performing Arts** or seen a play at **Airport Playhouse** in Bohemia or **Theatre Three** in Port Jefferson? For a schedule of performances at all of Long Island's theater and music venues, go to <http://www.exploreli.com/entertainment/localguide/> and click on *Theatres* or *Music*.

Your entire family can enjoy themselves all day at a Long Island festival or fair. Start the summer off with the **Mattituck Strawberry Festival** on June 13-15. Hang out at the **Great South Bay Music Festival** on July 11-13. Drive to the **Metro NY Balloon and Music Festival** in Shirley on August 8-10. Or get your tickets for the **Big Apple Circus** coming to Eisenhower Park from May 30-June 15. Look for more by clicking on *Fairs and Festivals* on <http://www.exploreli.com/entertainment/localguide/>.

Take a "one-tank trip" to a weekend getaway like Wine Camp on the North Fork or an ocean fishing expedition at Montauk Point. Book a room in a nice hotel or a charming B&B near your destination. Just

click on *Where to Stay* at http://www.discoverlongisland.com/home.cfm/group_ID/1. Pick up a Zagat Long Island Restaurant Guide and treat yourself to a meal in a new restaurant or two while you're there. Wherever you go, enjoy your Long Island summer "staycation"!

Worthwhile Websites

For teachers

<http://www.rif.org/summer/> **This Summer, 'Read' for the Gold!** *Swifter, Higher, Stronger...* that's the motto of the 2008 Summer Olympics taking place in Beijing, China this August. This summer, make it your motto to help children develop into *swifter* readers with *higher* comprehension skills and *stronger* vocabularies. And what better way to do so than with a fun and friendly competition. Host a Summer Reading Olympics for your family, neighborhood, or local youth group.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=17958464>. NPR's **Morning Edition**, Seattle librarian **Nancy Pearl** returns with another set of what she calls "under-the-radar" books — titles you really, really should be reading but haven't (yet). The latest batch features the story of three royal cousins, tales of wild animal adventures and a pun-filled picture book for younger readers.

www.technologyinthearts.org. **Technology in the Arts Website**. These services help organizations build capacity by exploring the intersection of the arts and technology, including the annual Technology in the Arts conference, podcasts, blog, and consulting.

www.getty.edu/education/for_teachers/building_lessons/guide.html. **Grade-by-Grade Guide to the Building of Visual Arts Lessons**. The J. Paul Getty Museum offers a curriculum-building guide that provides suggestions for students at different skill levels based on child development theory. On those pages you'll find ideas for art production, incorporating language arts into lessons, and assessment.

www.nytimes.com/learning/index.html. The New York Times: Learning Network is a website containing teaching resources aimed at students in grades 3-12, their teachers, and parents.

www.artbeyondsight.org/ahttps/dali.shtml. Art Education for the Blind presents **Art History Through Touch and Sound Online**. This is a unique multi-sensory art encyclopedia for people with visual impairments and all students of art.

<http://nadc.ucla.edu/>. The **National Arts and Disability Center (NADC) web site** offers free resource directories and annotated bibliographies on a wide array of subjects for artists with disabilities, arts organizations, museums, arts administrators, disability organizations and agencies, universities, educators, and students.

www.nysut.org/cps/rde/xchg/nysut/hs.xsl/educatorsvoice_10023.htm. **NYSUT Highlights the Connection between Literacy and the Visual Arts**. In this increasingly multimedia and multidisciplinary world, classroom teachers working with visual arts specialists can create the kind of learning environment that will help students develop the literacy skills needed in the 21st century. Read the full article in NYSUT's *Educator's Voice*, written by Patricia Barbanell. Available online at http://www.nysut.org/cps/rde/xchg/nysut/hs.xsl/educatorsvoice_10023.htm. Also in *Educator's Voice*, a veteran art teacher explains how children's early interest in drawing, if it is

nurtured, can be instrumental in helping youngsters develop - and improve - their reading, writing and speaking skills.

<http://www.wiredsafety.org>. Cyberbullying is an epidemic. More than 85% of middle school children report having been cyberbullied one way or another last year. Yet, only 5% of those would ever entrust their parents with this information. They fear their parents' reaction would be to either make it worse learn how you can help to frame solutions to this growing and horrible problem at this website.

For students

http://longisland.about.com/od/summercamps/Summer_Camps.htm. **Summer Camps**. Find a summer camp to meet your child's needs. Here's a list of Long Island day camps. Included are general interest camps, and camps that specialize in science, performing arts, visual arts, sports, and computers. You can also find camps for children with special needs.

<http://www.thereadingtub.com/?gclid=CJDOm6XL3ZMCFsASQQodN3peZw>. The Reading Tub, Inc. is 501(c)(3) dedicated to promoting reading and literacy. Jump in to find great books you and your children will love to share, and learn about ways to encourage your child's love of reading.

http://www.cdli.ca/CITE/summer_reading.htm This website features lists of award-winning books, online reading sites for kids, interactive reading sites for kids, planning a summer reading program, recommended reading by public libraries and much more.

http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/curr244.shtml **Summer Reading Lists Abound on the Web!**

Education World surveys some of the best children's summer reading lists on the Web. Here, you'll find an overview of great lists that you or your school's staff might use to create your own summer reading program. Included: Tips for parents plus ideas for publishing students' book reviews.

NCTE Inbox

News

Maine Writes a New Ed-Tech Success Story. Providing students and teachers with laptops and software and supporting teachers with ongoing professional development have contributed to the improved writing scores of students in Maine. [eSchool News, June 2, 2008](#)

Dropouts Give Reasons. A [poll](#) of 500 young adults in Michigan found that fewer students would drop out of high school if they took classes they found relevant and if they had more direction in developing their goals. [Detroit Free Press, May 30, 2008](#)

YouTube Lawsuit Tests Copyright Law. A lawsuit challenging YouTube's ability to keep copyrighted material off its video-sharing website could have implications for educators as they are just beginning to realize the possibilities for 21st century technologies in the classroom. [eSchool News, May 30, 2008](#).

Turn Teen Texting toward Better Writing. The Pew Internet & American Life Project and the College Board report [Writing Technology and Teens](#) notes that 85% of teens communicate through digital writing and 86% percent of teens consider formal writing skills essential to future success. In addition, it notes that over half of teenagers from all races and income levels have social networking profiles in places like Facebook and MySpace. [The Christian Science Monitor, May 14, 2008.](#)

Blog...

Twitter: 140-Character Professional Development and Writing Tool. Twitter is a microblogging tool that offers great possibilities for community building and writing instruction. NCTE INBOX blogger Traci Gardner introduces readers to the tool in [this week's NCTE INBOX Blog.](#)

Views

A Changing World for Literacy Teachers. "[Maine Writes a New Ed-Tech Success Story](#)" emphasizes that students who have access to digital technologies improved their revision and writing skills and, thus, their state writing scores. NCTE's [21st-Century Literacies: A Policy Research Brief](#) agrees that digital technology enhances writing and interaction in several ways.

21st Century Literacies—Not Just Tools. While Blackboard is going to Facebook to get students to pay attention ([Inside Higher Education, May 14, 2008](#)) and teachers are using the texting skills of 86% of the teenaged population to teach writing ([The Christian Science Monitor, May 14, 2008](#)), it's plain that 21st Century literacy is not just about technology. As the [NCTE definition](#) notes, 21st century literacy is also about relationships and sharing information.

20 Years Post-Hazelwood, Student Freedom of Speech and Press Important As Ever. In its resolution "[On Students' Freedom of Speech and Press](#)," NCTE emphasizes the importance of student journalists having the right to exercise freedom of speech and the press, as stipulated in the First Amendment of the Constitution. The [NCTE Assembly for Advisers of Student Publications/Journalism Education Association](#) (AASP/JEA) and the [Journalism Education Association](#) provide resources on student publications. The [Student Press Law Center](#) provides help when student publications are challenged.

Ideas

Internet-Savvy Language in the Classroom. The [recent LA Times article on TwitLit](#) demonstrates how Web 2.0 technologies can change even our conceptions of a genre. Students' understanding and use of such technologies provide a great opportunity for us as teachers -- the challenge of supporting the use of Internet-savvy language in the classroom.

The ReadWriteThink lessons [What's the Difference? Beginning Writers Compare Email with Letter Writing](#) and [Write Right Back: Recognizing Readers' Needs and Expectations for Email Replies](#) (E) outline opportunities for investigating the genre of email in the classroom. For more information, read the article that inspired the lessons: "[Email as Genre: A Beginning Writer Learns the Conventions](#)" (E) from *Language Arts*.

Explore the language of electronic messages and how it affects other writing with the ReadWriteThink lesson [Audience, Purpose, and Language Use in Electronic Messages](#) (M). To set up online chats and email with students, check out the *Voices from the Middle* article "[Improving Writing: Online Bulletin Boards](#)" (M).

The *English Journal* article "[Virtually Being There: Creating Authentic Experiences through Interactive Exchanges](#)" (S-TE) describes an email writing exchange between preservice teachers and high school students, designed to help students develop conversations about writing as a tool for learning across the curriculum. For resources to structure your own writing exchange, check out the ReadWriteThink lesson [Exploring Literature through Letter Writing Groups](#) (S-C).

Invite students to explore the lingo of the online world by reading books included in the *English Journal* book review "[Internet Literature for Media-Savvy Students](#)" (M-S). Even teachers with limited technology access in the classroom can explore the ways that people read and write with technology. The *College English* article "[Distant Voices: Teaching Writing in a Culture of Technology](#)" (C) considers the ways that technology can influence our teaching in light of "the increasing replacement of face-to-face contact by 'virtual' interaction via multimedia technology, e-mail communication systems, and the recently expanded capabilities of the World Wide Web" in our campus classrooms and in distance education.

Exploring Journalism with Students. On June 1, 1980, [CNN debuted as the first television news network](#). Take advantage of the anniversary to explore journalism activities in the classroom.

Elementary students can explore and write op-ed pieces, using the resources in the *Language Arts* article "[Exploring Inquiry as a Teaching Stance in the Writing Workshop](#)" (E). The article includes a "snapshot" of a fifth-grade writing workshop and its study of op-ed writing to show inquiry in action. Remember that these pieces are not limited to print publications. Local television stations and radio stations offer "talk back" options.

If you work with middle level students, try writing letters to the editor using ideas from the *Voices from the Middle* article "[Going Public: Letters to the World](#)" (M), which includes criteria for effective letters and an exploration of how student writing benefits from writing for a public audience. Try a similar project with secondary students with the ReadWriteThink lesson [Persuading an Audience: Writing Effective Letters to the Editor](#) (S). Don't limit the letters to print publications. Check cable and network news websites for ways to submit students' letters to the news programs.

Whether you're advising an extracurricular newspaper or working on a class newspaper project, the *English Journal* article "[So You've Been Asked to Advise a Student Publication](#)" (S) outlines the structures students can use for learning to find, research, develop, respond to, and reflect on story ideas. The *Teaching English in the Two-Year College* article "[Using Journalism Writing to Improve College Composition](#)" (C) explores news gathering and news writing techniques common to feature writing and outlines a profile writing project. Students might then film YouTube videos of their news stories or post blog entries on the latest information.

In the News

Eye on Curriculum

Teaching children helps high-schoolers master science concepts. More than 300 Virginia high school freshman and sophomores not only showed off last week what they learned in their school's biotechnology program, but taught basic scientific concepts to area elementary students. "We make believe we are doing it only for the little kids, but we are doing it for us, too," said Larry Nemerow, the school's biotechnology coordinator. "There is no higher form of learning than teaching." [The Washington Post](#) (6/1)

Decade after busing ended, Seattle schools resegregate. Twenty Seattle schools have an enrollment of minority students of 90% or more versus a district average of 58%, leading some educators and other observers to say the district has effectively resegregated. "We like to think of ourselves as these enlightened, liberal folks," says school board member Harium Martin-Morris. "But the fact is our schools aren't the way that people really think they are." [The Seattle Times](#) (6/1)

Minority dropout rates said to have reached crisis levels in six Northwest states: Minority students, especially Native Americans, are far more likely to drop out of high school than their peers in six northwestern U.S. states: Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming. Rather than expecting disadvantaged students to be well-prepared for school, schools must better prepare educators to help such students succeed, said an expert panel at a University of California-Los Angeles Civil Rights Project education conference. [Anchorage Daily News \(Alaska\)/Associated Press](#) (free registration) (6/1)

"G-u-e-r-d-o-n": Indiana boy spells it and wins it at National Bee. Eighth-grader Sameer Mishra, 13, on Friday won the Scripps National Spelling Bee with the word "guerdon," which means a reward that one has earned or gained. Sameer, who twice finished in the top 20 spellers, was tutored by his older sister, who competed in the tournament three times. The bee has become increasingly popular in the last decade, and preteens sought out judges, previous winners and even fellow spellers for autographs. [The Washington Post](#) (5/31) , [ABC News/Associated Press](#) (5/31) , [CNN/Associated Press](#) (5/31)

Is math gender gap linked to equal rights for women? The discrepancies between 15-year-old girls' and boys' scores on the Program for International Student Assessment in math are narrower in those countries where men and women have equitable rights and opportunities, according to a new study. Of the 40 countries studied, the U.S. was found to be in the mid-range both in terms of its gender-based math gap and in relation to the equality it affords women. [USA TODAY/Associated Press](#) (5/29)

Top students drawn to career, technical courses. College-bound honors students are increasingly adding courses in bioscience, finance and computer programming to their schedules even as such courses face possible federal funding cuts. "It's where the core academics come alive," said Stephen DeWitt, senior director of public policy for the Association of Career and Technical Education. [The News & Observer \(Raleigh, N.C.\)](#) (5/28)

Involved parents play a major role in student achievement. Students whose parents are actively involved in their education or schools do much better academically, according to University of New Hampshire research on more than 10,000 U.S. eighth-graders. Parent involvement has as much effect on student achievement as would schools spending an additional \$1,000 per child, according to researcher Karen Smith Conway. [Concord Monitor \(N.H.\)/Associated Press](#) (5/27)

Professional Leadership

Amid budget cuts, conference travel under scrutiny. A Florida elementary principal and 15 teachers are being forced to defend a planned summer trip to Las Vegas for a five-day conference in differentiated instruction as their district lays off educators and eliminates high-school courses. Training grant funding in the amount of \$17,000 is paying for the July trip, which principal Miriam

Williams said will help teachers as they introduce a dual-language program and mainstream ELL students and those with special needs. [The Palm Beach Post](#) (5/31)

Is science being left behind? A growing number of schools are placing less emphasis on science education, which is sometimes neglected because the subject's test scores are not used to gauge schools' progress under No Child Left Behind. Linda Froschauer, outgoing president of the National Science Teachers Association, said teachers approach her at conferences to say things like, "My principal told me to stop teaching science for the year and just concentrate on numeracy and literacy because that's what's being tested." [The Washington Post](#) (5/26)

U.S. education colleges may not prepare all students for the classroom. Some education colleges are failing to adequately prepare students for real-world teaching, according to this Cleveland Plain Dealer analysis, which contends that there is no universal standard in terms of the number of hours students teachers must log, and also asserts that some schools accept some less-qualified students as a means to boost enrollment. [The Plain Dealer \(Cleveland\)](#) (5/25) , [The Plain Dealer \(Cleveland\)](#) (5/25)

Advising students on sensitive issues may land teachers in hot water. As more schools encourage teachers to form closer bonds with students as a means of helping to enhance academic performance, few systems are training educators how to counsel those who approach them for advice on sensitive issues and how to avoid becoming too enmeshed in their students' problems. [Austin American-Statesman \(Texas\)](#) (free registration) (5/25)

Technology

Green technology may save school cash. Educators can reduce energy consumption by holding online meetings and video conference calls to save on gas and printing costs, programming computers to automatically enter energy-saving "sleep" modes after 20 minutes of idle time, and offering more virtual coursework and professional development. "Going green is a long-term investment. ... Who knows how high energy costs will be 20 years from now?" said Jim Schul, the Harris County, Texas, education department's chief information officer. [eSchool News](#) (5/30)

Are video games a key to wellness? Schools are among the growing number of groups and institutions turning to so-called healthy video games to promote fitness, teach wellness and reinforce healthful behaviors. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is offering up to \$200,000 to 12 research teams to investigate over the span on 12 to 24 months how both the young and elderly are affected by video game play. [MSNBC/Associated Press](#) (5/29) , [The Sun \(Baltimore\)](#) (free registration) (5/29)

Learning and Teaching

Offer choices to engage students. Instead of dictating assignments, National Board-certified teacher Mary Tedrow always gives her students choices. The method gives students more ownership over their education and allows them to choose topics that may make the learning more relevant to their own lives. [Teacher Magazine](#) (5/28)

Policy Watch

Parent finances pinch school fund-raising. As the U.S. economy grows tighter, schools are feeling the pinch beyond their own food and fuel costs: Some parents are no longer able to donate money or volunteer to drive students on field trips, while other students whose parents' homes are foreclosed upon are forced to switch schools. [The Sacramento Bee \(Calif.\)](#) (free registration) (6/1)

Idaho schools ask feds to restart clock on NCLB sanctions. The Idaho state education board this week asked the U.S. Education Department to lift NCLB sanctions imposed against hundreds of schools stemming from student performance measurements taken between 2002 and 2006, and start with a clean slate, saying the state's standards and exams were poorly aligned until the 2007 test. "It is unreasonable to label schools and districts based on student achievement data that was measured with an invalid and unreliable tool," Mike Rush, the Idaho board's executive director, wrote in a letter to the U.S. Education Department. [The Idaho Statesman \(Boise\)](#) (5/29)

Education issues central to Obama policy speech. Democrat presidential contender Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., vowed in a [Wednesday speech](#) to fix the "broken promises" of NCLB and outlined a host of policies including tax credits to help fund a public college education. A spokesman for Republican Sen. John McCain's, R-Ariz., campaign asserted that Obama lacks experience in heading up educational reform, but former Colorado Democratic Gov. Roy Romer said Obama "has the ability to look at a problem in a new way." [Education Week \(premium article access compliments of Edweek.org\)/Associated Press](#) (5/28) , [The Washington Post](#) (5/28)

NCLB

"Backloaded" goals make adequate progress challenging. The 23 U.S. states that set low achievement goals in the years immediately following the enactment of No Child Left Behind now must ask schools to improve by 10 or more percentage points annually in a bid to comport with the law's aim of universal proficiency by the close of the 2013-14 school year. That sets up schools for failure, said Kevin Carey, the Education Sector's research and policy manager. [Education Week \(premium article access compliments of Edweek.org\)](#) (6/2)

In the Field

Rising food prices hamper school nutrition efforts. To save money, schools nationwide are cutting back on fresh and whole-grain foods in exchange for cheaper, processed versions, undermining efforts to improve student nutrition. Notwithstanding such moves, a minimum of 100 districts across the country have approved raising the price of meals in the next school year, according to this article. [The Miami Herald](#) (6/2)

College success requires practical preparation. To succeed in college, new high-school graduates should spend the summer learning to budget their money, cook and do their own laundry, says Robin Forman, Rice University dean of undergraduate students. "They're supposed to perform at a higher level at the very time they're unable to have the same support systems in place to help them, unless they plan ahead," said Gail Hudson Gillan, director of the wellness center at the University of Houston. [Houston Chronicle](#) (6/1)

More colleges opt not to require SAT. More selective colleges are making the SAT optional as they seek to increase socioeconomic diversity. Recent research has indicated performance on the test in and of itself does not accurately predict college success, with performance on the exam influenced by the level of affluence of the student's family; an SAT official said scores on the exam reflect the quality of education afforded each student, not a bias in the test itself. [CNN](#) (5/30)

Experts cautiously optimistic as childhood obesity rates hold steady. Government health surveys offer a glimmer of hope that child obesity rates may have leveled off, as percentages from 2003-2004 and 2005-2006 have held steady at 32% of U.S. children being overweight or obese. Experts say that since the obesity rate rose for 25 years, the results are not conclusive, adding that if the rate has peaked, it might be because schools and parents are emphasizing healthy eating habits and exercise. [Google/Associated Press](#) (5/27)

"The best things in life aren't things."

--[Art Buchwald](#), American humorist