

March 2009 E-Newsletter

Congratulations to SETC 2009 Mini-Grant Winners!

Bay Shore UFSD

Animated Stories, Vincenzo LaRuina, Gardiner Manor Elementary School

Green Design, Andrea Karlan, Bay Shore High School

Deer Park UFSD

Professional Development: Increasing district's knowledge of RDI (Relationship Development Intervention) in order to provide more effective teaching of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Scott Agnew, Alicia Konecny, Abraham Lincoln School

Catapult Revival, Bruce Sander, John Albeltin, Scott Surdi, Robert Frost Middle School

Mini-Grant, John Heeg, Maria Giglio, Robert Frost Middle School

Northport- E. Northport UFSD

Character Education Through Law and Literacy, 5th Grade Mock Trial, Jennifer Schempp, Christine Shaw, Fifth Ave. Elementary School

"C.S.I. Challenge" - An Interdisciplinary Mystery in History, Bernadette Black, Mark Wagner, Northport High School

Meda Su Autografo, Por Favor? Can I have Your Autograph, Please?, Anahi Walton-Schafer, Northport High School

ELA The Law Enforcement Way - Fourth Grade Junior Detectives, David Scott, Louise Quinn, Pulaski Road Elementary School

Listen Up! To the Tales of the Westward Expansion - A Podcast Adventure for 5th Graders, Rosemarie Florio, Jessica Huebsch, Fifth Avenue Elementary School

Bringing Social Studies Alive: Interactive Lessons to Enhance Student Learning, Kristen Andriaccio, Jean Kiley, Fifth Avenue Elementary School

KNN (Kid's News Network) - News Literacy and Civic Engagement for Middle School Students, Paul Newmann, E. Northport Middle School

Environmental Action Team, Karen Polk, Matt Gorman, Andrew Luberto, E. Northport Middle School

Ear Buds, Kathleen McCormick, Sandy Schumacher, Dickinson Ave. School

West Babylon UFSD,

The Garden of Reading, Rose Lyn Cipparulo, Jillian Gismervik, Sonnya Graziosa, Mary Sullivan, West Babylon Junior High School

Picture This! Literacy Alive at the JHS, Christine Brower-Cohen, Carol Varsalona, West Babylon Junior High School

Going Green the Write Way!, Timothy Kahler, Kimberly Becvar, Holly Massmann, Frank Riviezzo, Sharon Wolkiewicz, Forest Ave. Elementary School

The Key to Improving Listening, Alison Gimberlein, Santapogue Elementary School

Wii Are Getting FIT!, Christopher Haug, Joseph Russo, JFK Elementary School

H.A.T.S.: Hands Across the School Cross Age Reading to Promote Character Education, Margaret DeGraff, Melanie DeLapi, Idamarie Tully, Susan Dieterle, Forest Ave. Elementary School

Dial "E" For Excellence, Alice Robinson, West Babylon Junior High School

Professional Conversations: Looking Closely at Student Work, Lisa Granieri, Stacey Ging, South Bay Elementary School

Dear Colleague,

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

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FYI

Announcements

March 24, 2009–Application Deadline. The recently established **Seven Valleys Writing Project** is one of 200+ National Writing Project college/region partnerships located in the United States. Here's an invitation for teachers to join us for four weeks at the yearly "Summer Institute" held in Cortland, NY. There, teachers research and practice writing-to-learn protocols based on contemporary composing theory. Led by Associate Professor Dr. David Franke of SUNY Cortland and Brian Fay of Cortland Alternative High School, the Summer Institute provides teachers with an intense professional development experience, six graduate credits at no cost to the teacher or district, and the tools to bring writing-to-learn techniques back to their home school and region. This program is open to any teacher with two years experience or more, including administrators. It is open to all content areas and levels. All application materials can be found online at <http://cortland.edu/svwp>. Contact David Franke, State University of New York, College at Cortland with questions. david.franke@cortland.edu

March 2009. New York Council for the Humanities Speakers in the Schools. Speakers in the Schools is a FREE program offering lectures by leading humanities scholars to high school communities across New York State. All lectures meet at least one NYS Learning Standards requirement. Speakers in the Schools lectures can be used in a variety of ways including classroom curriculum enhancement, after-school meetings, student assemblies, and professional development for teachers. Now, in addition to searching for available lectures by topic or subject area, you can browse for lectures that meet standards requirements in the following categories: *Language Arts, Social Studies, Music, Visual Arts*. All Speakers in the Schools lectures meet learning standard Language Arts 1.1.

How the program works:

Select a [lecture](#)

- Contact the Speaker directly to arrange a mutually agreed upon date and time for your event
- Submit the [online application](#) to receive Council funding (you will be notified of the Council's decision within 3 weeks)
- View [Planning Tips](#) and follow-up program requirements

If you have any questions, contact Tracy Varites, Program Associate, New York Council for the Humanities. Ph: 212-233-1131, F: 212-233-4607 TVarites@nyhumanities.org, www.nyhumanities.org

April 1 Deadline. Apply Now or Encourage a Colleague to Apply for the NCTE Early Career Educator of Color Leadership Award. Created as part of the NCTE LeaderShift Initiative to support and advance members of color, the [Early Career Educator of Color Leadership Award](#) will fund participation in a three-day summer retreat to help early career teachers of color plan and carry out projects to advance literacy education. Applicants should be in their first five years of a paid teaching position to be eligible.

May 1 Deadline. Rod Serling Video Contest. The Rod Serling Video Festival competition, sponsored by the Binghamton City School District, is open to students K-12 throughout New York State. All students need is access to a camcorder and "a desire to holler these magic words: Lights! Camera! Action!" Honors and awards will be given for various categories, including Best of Show, Best Directing, Best Use of Comedy, and more. Prizes will be awarded. To learn more, click on <http://rodserlingvideofest.com/index.html>.

[Courses and Workshops](#)

New York State Archives Training Schedule

- 4/1/2009, Your Role as Records Management Officer, Penn Yan, Region 7
- 4/2/2009, Managing E-Mail Effectively, Mamaroneck, Region 9
- 4/7/2009, Managing Maps and Plans, Saratoga Springs, Region 4
- 4/8/2009, Preservation of Electronic Records, Valhalla, Region 9
- 4/14/2009, Microfilming and Imaging: Using Both Effectively, Watertown, Region 5
- 4/15/2009, Managing E-Mail Effectively, Brooklyn, Region 1
- 4/21/2009, Disaster Planning & Response, Marcy, Region 5
- 4/22/2009, Conducting a Needs Assessment or a BPA, Hauppauge, Region 10
- 4/22/2009, Disaster Planning & Response, Geneseo, Region 7
- 4/23/2009, Developing Records Management Policies, Delhi, Region 6
- 4/23/2009, Developing Records Management Policies, Sanborn, Region 8
- 4/23/2009, Your Role as Records Management Officer, Massena, Region 4
- 4/29/2009, Your Role as Records Management Officer, Odessa, Region 6

Online registration: <http://www.archives.nysed.gov/a/workshops/index.shtml>

Cost: All workshops listed above are free.

Time: Most workshops run 9-1. Details are listed on our website.

Help: Email ARCHTRAIN@mail.nysed.gov if you need assistance with registration.

July 7-July 11, 2009. Greater Capital Region Teacherhostel.

Celebrate the Quadricentennial in the Greater Capital Region of the Empire State. Immerse yourself in an interdisciplinary program covering the art, history, literature, and ecology of the region. Tour the homes, walk the grounds, see the exhibits, meet the curators, take home the curriculum material and ideas to energize your classes and stimulate minds. The program covers from Dutch settlement to the Erie Canal to the Underground Railroad to the Rockefeller years including behind the scene tours of museum labs, and sunset walks in the ravines of a cemetery. Experience every time period in the state standards all in one small region.

Locations: Albany, Cohoes, Troy, Waterford

Contact Hours: 50

Cost: \$375 (includes 2 lunches and 4 dinners)

Registration Cutoff Date: June 7

To register go to: http://www.ihare.org/programs_teacher2009.html

No group reservation has been made for lodging. There are numerous places in Albany and along I-87 which can be used including Days Inn, Microtel, Red Roof Inn, and Super8.

Summer Schedule

June 29-July 3 The American Revolution: The Benedict Arnold Story, United States Military Academy

July 7-11 The Greater Capital Region Experience, Albany, Cohoes, Troy, Waterford covering every time period in the standards

July 13-17 The Rivertown Experience (Westchester), Dobbs Ferry, Hastings-on-Hudson, Irvington, Sleepy Hollow, Tarrytown

July 18-19 The Rockefeller Legacy in the Hudson Valley, New York, America, and the World, Kykuit (participants are required to stay at Kykuit)

July 20-24 A Corner of Connecticut: The Pequot to Mystic Pizza, New London Historical Society, Stonington Historical Society, Groton Bank Historical Association, Mystic Seaport, Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center

July 27-31 The Mid-Hudson Experience, includes Teaching Hudson Valley Conference, Beacon, Fishkill, and Poughkeepsie

August 3-7 Forts of the Empire State, Fort Ticonderoga, Fort William Henry, Fort Edward, Crown Point, lake cruises

To register go to: http://www.ihare.org/programs_teacher2009.html

Events

March 25. Nassau STANYS presents: 2009 Winter Workshops & Science Teachers' Dinner

Wednesday, 3/25, 3:45 PM - 7:00 pm Jonas E. Salk Middle School, 3359 Old Jerusalem Rd.

Levittown, NY. STANYS invites all interested science educators to gather for its 2009 WINTER WORKSHOPS. Choose from nine exciting workshops and, afterwards, join your fellow science teachers for dinner and good fellowship. Subject Area Representatives will be available to answer your questions. For directions to Jonas E Salk Middle School

<http://maps.google.com/maps?q=3359+Old+Jerusalem+Road,+Levittown,+NY+11756&iwloc=A&hl=en>

Walk-In Registration 3:45 - 4:00

Workshop I 4:00 - 4:45

Workshop II 4:55 - 5:40

Dinner 5:45 - 6:45

Check Nassau STANYS website www.geocities.com/nassaustanys. For additional information and registration, contact us by email at mjhanophy@aol.com.

Wednesday, April 29, 2009 from 9:30am-4pm : WHY GOOD WORK WORKS: A Day of Presentations and Discussions – Registration Deadline April 3, 2009. The Arts in Special Education Consortium is hosting a day of presentations and discussions about barriers to and opportunities for providing quality arts education to special needs students. This event is for anyone with a vested interest in the work of the arts in special education and is appropriate for: School and Arts Administrators, Arts Liaisons, Classroom Teachers, Arts Specialists, Teaching Artists, Parents, Paraprofessionals, Related Service Providers, and others. The event will be held at the **Metropolitan Museum of Art** (5th Ave. at 81st St., Manhattan.) To register for this event, email ArtSpdEdConsortium@yahoo.com or call 718-387-5055.

Sharing Success Research

Please [click here](#) to access research information on:

- Differentiated Instruction [Elem, MS, HS]

Please [click here](#) to access research information on:

- Test Taking Preparation [Elem, MS, HS]
- Regents Preparation

Worthwhile Websites

<http://www.apa.org/monitor/sep02/edresearch.html>. Educational research: What's hot now? Psychologists' research has important implications for the future of the nation's educational system. This thoughtful article looks at research in stereotypes and learning, mapping spatial learning, education and technology and integrating learning research in individual differences and innovative curricula.

Seven thematic lesson-plan websites for March from Education World

Eggs-cellent Lessons! Looking for a teaching theme with which to welcome spring or plan some Easter fun? We have "eggs-actly" what you're looking for. Toss eggs into the curriculum mix. Eggs can be used to teach skills in math, geography, and science. And don't forget to create "eggs-quisite" art. Included: A dozen egg-stra special lessons. http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson/lesson337.shtml

Celebrate Music in Our Schools Month Begin March on a sweet note. Included: Five lessons that will have you singing a happy tune. Plus be part of the World's Largest Concert.

http://www.educationworld.com/a_special/march.shtml#music

March Is Nutrition Month. Your students will gobble up these lessons about eating well, the food guide pyramid, and the history of food. http://www.educationworld.com/a_special/march.shtml#nutrition

Take Time Out for "March Madness". If you can't beat 'em, join 'em! Make the most of your

students' interest in the NCAA basketball tournaments with these cross-curricular lessons and activities. Included: Additional online resources about basketball.

http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson/lesson228.shtml

[Celebrate Women's History Month. Think Spring: Plant Seeds of Learning](http://www.educationworld.com/holidays/archives/spring.shtml)

<http://www.educationworld.com/holidays/archives/spring.shtml>

[Tech Lesson of the Week](http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/dailyp/dailyp/dailyp063.shtml). Students graph the fat content of their favorite snack foods.


http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/dailyp/dailyp/dailyp063.shtml

Bulletin Boards That Teach.


[Spring Into Reading](http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/bullboard/bullboard030.shtml) Use this fun, colorful bulletin board to track students' reading between the start of spring and Children's Book Week in May.

http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/bullboard/bullboard030.shtml

Five websites for elementary and middle school students

[The Renaissance Connection](http://www.renaissanceconnection.org/)  <http://www.renaissanceconnection.org/>. Sponsored by the Allentown Art Museum, this interactive Web site provides engaging activities while learning about the Renaissance's artists and history.

[The White House](http://www.whitehouse.gov/kids/)  <http://www.whitehouse.gov/kids/>. Find out about the histories of the White House itself and pets in the White House. Write an e-mail message to the President, and more!

[This Day in History](http://www.historychannel.com/tdih/index.html)  <http://www.historychannel.com/tdih/index.html>. Select a date in history and learn what happened in that day's headlines. Participants can narrow their focus to specific dates in Automotive, Civil War, Cold War, Crime, Entertainment, Literary, Old West, Vietnam War, Wall Street, and WWII history.

[Thomas the Tank Engine Page](http://www.hitentertainment.com/thomasandfriends/official_thomas_the_tank_engine_website.htm)  http://www.hitentertainment.com/thomasandfriends/official_thomas_the_tank_engine_website.htm. Calling all Thomas the Tank Engine fans! Stories, games, and fun.

[Colin Thompson](http://www.colinthompson.com)  <http://www.colinthompson.com>. Australian author/illustrator of wonderful stories like Tower to the Sun.

NCTE Inbox

News

. . . **On the Stimulus Package and the Proposed Education Budget**

"Schools Already Making Plans with Stimulus Money": [*All Things Considered*, National Public Radio, March 9, 2009](#)

"New Fed Funding for Ed Tech Nears \$1 Billion": [*eSchool News*, March 12, 2009](#)

"Guidelines Sketch Out Use of Aid": [*Education Week*, March 10, 2009](#)

. . . **On the Proposed Education Budget**

"Secretary Testifies on ED Budget": [*Ed News*, March 13, 2009](#)

"President Envisions Anti-Poverty Efforts Like Harlem's 'Zone'": [Education Week, March 10, 2009](#)

Educators Using Technology to Improve Writing. As NCTE's new report [Writing between the Lines -- and Everywhere Else](#) points out, students are doing different sorts of writing in and out of school, and the trick for teachers is how to transform the out-of-school writing expertise of their students into the sort of writing usually required in school. NCTE member Sandy Hayes is quoted. [The Roanoke Times, March 14, 2009](#)

NCTE Recognizes the Evolution of Writing. Echoing NCTE's new report [Writing in the 21st Century](#), this article notes that the more students write, the better writers they become, and the Web 2.0 environment certainly provides many new writing opportunities. [ZDNet News, March 11, 2009](#).

. . . Teacher Quality

"States Get D-Plus on Teacher Reviews" (see [report: Houston Chronicle, January 29, 2009](#)

"Gates Foundation to Show Excellent Teaching": [eSchool News, January 27, 2009](#)

Jill Biden, Doctor of Education, Is Back in Class. The Second Lady, a long time community college English teacher, has returned to the classroom at Northern Virginia Community College. [Los Angeles Times, February 2, 2009](#)

Ideas

21st Century Literacy Skills: Reading and Writing Everywhere. The following NCTE resources can help you and your students meet the challenges of learning in the 21st century. The ReadWriteThink.org lesson [Family Message Journals Teach Many Purposes for Writing](#) (E) establishes a home/school literacy learning connection as students write multiple messages with varied purposes, such as helping themselves remember something, making sense of new information and ideas, and sharing personal thoughts and reactions.

Learn more about the connection between audience and purpose in the development of young writers in this [sample chapter](#) (E) from [Family Message Journals: Teaching Writing through Family Involvement](#). Find places where elementary writing experiences can be updated to include hypertextual elements, multiple perspectives, and meaning beyond words in the *Language Arts* article "[Reading and Writing 'Hypertextually': Children's Literature, Technology, and Early Writing Instruction](#)" (E).

The *Voices from the Middle* article "[Out of the Narrow Tunnel and into the Universe of Discourse](#)" (M) describes a classroom in which students find writing more meaningful as they consider audience as a motivating factor. By doing so, "school stops being an academic exercise and transforms into a place where we practice real world writing . . . and real world thinking." Help students read, respond to, and compose sophisticated texts that combine two or more genres using the ReadWriteThink.org lesson plan [Reading and Analyzing Multigenre Texts](#) (M). The lesson also includes ideas for a Web-based application of the activities.

The chapter "[What Is New about the New Literacies of Online Reading Comprehension?](#)" (S) from [Secondary School Literacy: What Research Reveals for Classroom Practice](#) defines the range of new literacies and explores the differences between the strategies students need for online and offline

reading comprehension. There are also classroom suggestions for cultivating students' online reading skills. See this research put into practice in the ReadWriteThink.org lesson [Hoax or No Hoax? Strategies for Online Comprehension and Evaluation](#) (S), in which students learn comprehension strategies involving a sequence of planning, predicting, monitoring, and evaluating. They then read a variety of hoax websites, evaluate the content, and demonstrate their learning through the creation of outlines for hoax websites.

Visit [Learning Beyond the Classroom](#) (G) for an array of activities you can recommend to families and caregivers to make connections between literacy learning in and out of the school setting. The *English Education* article "[Critical English Education](#)" (TE) makes the case for a curriculum that is explicit about the role of language and literacy in conveying meaning and in promoting or disrupting existing power relations. Critical English seeks to develop in students the skills to deconstruct dominant texts carefully, while teaching them skills that allow them to create their own critical texts that can be used in the struggle for social justice.

Reading and Exploring Nonfiction Texts. Just announced, the [2009 Orbis Pictus Nonfiction Book Awards](#) (E-M) highlight the best nonfiction books published in the past year. The titles range from science to social studies and beyond. Award winners from previous years are available on the [Orbis Pictus Nonfiction Book Awards website](#), and the [ReadWriteThink calendar entry](#) provides additional materials on the award and on teaching nonfiction. Try the techniques outlined in the *School Talk* article "[The Nonfiction Read-Aloud: An Essential Ingredient in Student Learning](#)" (E) for ways to explore nonfiction with younger readers. In the *Voices from the Middle* article "[Expository Text in Literature Circles](#)" (M), Harvey Daniels explains how to extend literature circles to include a variety of nonfiction genres. The general suggestions in the article can be adapted for any level.

The *English Journal* article "[Nonfiction Books in the Classroom: Undervalued, Underused, and Oversimplified](#)" (M-S) examines the value of nonfiction, explores a sampling of recent titles, and suggests how creative teachers can incorporate books like these into their classrooms. The article includes details on over a dozen books that work well in the classroom. "[Naming Nonfiction \(a Polyptych\)](#)" (C) from *College English* explores the complexity of naming nonfiction as a genre. Teachers can use the ideas in the article as a starting point for discussion and reading of nonfiction in the classroom. You'll find practical classroom ideas for teaching nonfiction in [these selected lessons](#) from [ReadWriteThink.org](#)

In the News

Eye on Curriculum

Seniors give students perspective on Great Depression. Senior citizens who lived through the Great Depression are helping some Florida students learn about the era thanks to a community partnership between high-school history teacher Eric Johnson and an area nursing home. "It's one thing to have the kids read about it in a book, but for them to hear these stories gives a whole new perspective," he said. "Let me just tell you -- these kids were silent for a whole hour." [St. Petersburg Times \(Fla.\)](#) (3/17)

Are immigrant students too isolated? English-language learners are one of the only groups still largely segregated from their peers at school. While grateful to their schools for teaching them English, some

immigrant students say they wish they were not so isolated in intensive English programs meant to help them acquire language skills quickly in order to prepare for state tests. [The New York Times](#) (3/14)

Maryland leaders encourage ELL students to retain native language. Maryland's English-language learners should be helped to develop skills in their native tongues, according to a legislative group's report. Such bilingual students could be important to the state's economic future, the report says, filling important educational and business roles. [Education Week \(premium article access compliments of Edweek.org\)](#) (3/11)

Report: 12 U.S. states improve graduation rates. Although the U.S. high-school graduation rate held steady at 75% between 2002 and 2006, Tennessee, New York and 10 other U.S. states made improvements, according to a report. Tennessee climbed 11 percentage points to 72% thanks in part to greater funding for at-risk and ELL students, state education department officials said. [The Boston Globe/The Associated Press](#) (3/12)

Recession gives students new perspective on Depression. While lessons about the Great Depression of the 1930s rarely have grabbed U.S. students' interest, history teachers are noticing more students paying closer attention this year as they draw parallels with the nation's current economic crisis. "I noticed that my students this year seemed to have a much better handle on the New Deal programs than they did in the past, and I think it's because of the comparison," said Cheryl Spear, who teaches U.S. history in a Massachusetts high school. "The test results came back better; the questions were more in-depth; there wasn't as much lecture; there was more give-and-take. They are aware of what's happening with them." [Education Week \(premium article access compliments of Edweek.org\)](#) (3/11)

Professional Leadership

Michigan teacher retirement incentives meant to stimulate economy. By enticing older teachers to retire with higher monthly pension checks, Michigan lawmakers and teachers union leaders hope to hire more recent college graduates as teachers and stimulate the state's economy. But opponents, including the state's governor and some superintendents, oppose the plan, saying the solution will hurt districts in the long run as experienced educators leave. [Chicago Tribune/The Associated Press](#) (free registration) (3/13)

More than 40,000 Calif. school staff warned of layoffs. California schools have warned some 26,500 teachers and 15,000 other employees that they could be laid off as districts attempt to cut more than \$8 billion from their budgets, according to California education department estimates. Federal stimulus funds likely will help schools rescind some of the layoffs by June, state officials said. [MSNBC/The Associated Press](#) (3/14)

Rhee apologizes to D.C. educators for pushing "too many" reforms. Washington, D.C., school leaders may have pushed too many reforms too quickly, Schools Chancellor Michelle A. Rhee said. "In our exuberance to fix everything all at once, we've thrown so many different programs at you," she wrote in a letter to D.C. educators. "But now I see that we may have pushed on too many different fronts all at the same time." [The Washington Post](#) (3/14)

Report: Controversial Wyo. teacher training among nation's best. A Wyoming school district has abandoned a Wednesday ritual of sending students home early so teachers can participate in professional development. Some parents felt their children were being cheated out of instructional time, but a recent report shows that the most successful students have teachers who spend a lot of time training. [Google/The Associated Press](#) (3/11)

Stimulus package includes teacher-equity provision. The federal economic-stimulus package includes a provision mandating that governors address disadvantaged students' unequal access to top teachers and improve overall teacher effectiveness in order to be eligible for \$53.6 billion in state education funding. "The intent here is not to expect some sort of dramatic change overnight," said Marshall "Mike" S. Smith, a senior adviser to the U.S. secretary of education. "It is, however, to expect states to see that this is a fundamental inequity and to begin to address it in a thoughtful way." [Education Week \(premium article access compliments of Edweek.org\)](#) (3/11)

German teachers gave their lives to help students escape. When a 17-year-old boy went on a shooting spree at his former high school in Germany, three teachers defiantly stood in the gunman's path, giving their lives to prevent the deaths of more students, witnesses say. Nine students were killed, all but one of them girls, and seven other girls were injured. [Telegraph \(London\)](#) (3/12)

Technology

Interactive white boards let students practice cursive. Some Massachusetts students are using an interactive white board, called a Smartboard, to learn cursive handwriting. As some schools question whether students should be taught cursive, technology-driven lessons makes the more old-fashioned writing appealing to students. [Cape Cod Times \(Mass.\)](#) (3/15)

High-school newspapers turn to new media. With the future of print journalism looking bleak, high-school journalists increasingly are publishing podcasts and making use of social networks as they fold online components into their curriculum. School newspapers need to follow their audience, says Patrick Stoddardt, the Web site editor of his high school's journalism lab. [St. Louis Post-Dispatch/The Associated Press](#) (3/15)

Indiana's governor aims to transform high schools with technology. Indiana's 350 public high schools could get a high-tech makeover if Gov. Mitch Daniels wins support to replace many classroom lectures with group learning. "No one knows what the ideal or perfect model for helping our kids achieve more is, but here we have something that works," said Daniels of the model that has been introduced to six Indiana high schools. "It's a huge step beyond what we have been doing. It's affordable, and it can be moved into schools very quickly." [The Indianapolis Star](#) (3/10)

Twitter used to develop second-graders' writing skills. Students in two Maine elementary schools have been exchanging messages through the social-networking Web site Twitter. Teachers say the exercise, which began about one month ago, was initiated to help students develop their writing skills by exchanging messages that must be 140 characters or less. [The Providence Journal \(R.I.\)/The Associated Press](#) (free registration)

Learning and Teaching

Teacher training is key to U.S. education reforms. Plans by President Barack Obama and U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan to improve education will not be successful unless there is increased emphasis on teacher training, writes Marc Bernstein, a Long Island superintendent. Bernstein suggests that Obama gather representatives from teachers unions and other organizations to study successful teacher-training programs. [Newsday \(Long Island, N.Y.\)](#) (3/19)

Supply classrooms for free. With many districts cutting back, some teachers feel compelled to buy their own classroom supplies, but education and personal-finance writer Tamar Snyder has tips for equipping classrooms at no cost. Community and parent ads on exams can help generate revenue, she writes, while recycling sites such as Freecycle and donor sites such as Adopt-A-Classroom can offer used or new items for free. Office-supply stores, parent-teacher organizations and other community organizations also may be willing to help out, she writes. [Edutopia.org](#) (3/11)

Teacher: Student test results have limited usefulness. That state tests have limitations should come as no surprise to teachers, writes nationally certified English teacher David B. Cohen. While testing data looks objective, many factors other than classroom teaching shape results, he writes. [Teacher Magazine](#) (free registration) (3/11)

Tips to better engage students in learning. Creating a classroom environment that is energizing for students and for the teacher isn't difficult, writes former teacher Tristan de Frondeville, a consultant on project-based learning and school redesign. Students must feel safe, and teachers must closely monitor their levels of engagement, he writes. Encourage reflective writing, thoughtful discussions and multiple drafts on projects, he writes. [Edutopia.org](#) (3/11)

Policy Watch

House bill would triple AmeriCorps' size. The U.S. House was to vote today on a bill that would increase the number of AmeriCorps members from 75,000 to 250,000. In addition to increasing the college benefits for full-time AmeriCorps members, the expanded program also would offer middle- and high-school students who work during the summer a \$500 award for college. [The Boston Globe/The Associated Press](#) (3/17)

Final 2009 budget boosts Title I and special-education funding. The \$410 billion Reading First program was eliminated in the federal 2009 fiscal budget signed by President Barack Obama last week. The overdue legislation increased the federal education budget by 7% and dedicated 4.3% more money to Title I and 5.5% more to special-education state grants. [Education Week \(premium article access compliments of Edweek.org\)](#) (3/18)

Duncan: Stimulus package may help U.S. reform education. U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan is poised to reform the country's education system, and the federal economic-stimulus package should give him the means to do so, Gerald F. Seib writes. "I see this as an extraordinary opportunity," Duncan said. "We have a couple of things going in our direction that create what I call the perfect storm for reform." [The Wall Street Journal \(free content\)](#) (3/17)

Parent involvement, not private schools, makes the difference. A private-school voucher program in Washington, D.C., will expire at the end of the next school year unless lawmakers reauthorize it.

However, a 28-year teaching veteran says the students who would benefit most from vouchers often do not take advantage of the program because their socioeconomic status prevents their parents from giving education their full attention. [The Christian Science Monitor](#) (3/16)

Obama calls for major education reforms. In his first major education speech as president, Barack Obama unveiled a potentially controversial plan that includes merit-based teacher pay, a longer school year, tracking of individual students' progress and removal of restrictions on charter schools. "Despite resources that are unmatched anywhere in the world, we have let our grades slip, our schools crumble, our teacher quality fall short and other nations outpace us," he said. "The relative decline of American education is untenable for our economy, unsustainable for our democracy and unacceptable for our children. We cannot afford to let it continue. What is at stake is nothing less than the American dream." [Chicago Tribune](#) (free registration) (3/11) , [MSNBC/The Associated Press](#) (3/10) , [The Washington Post](#) (3/11) , [Reuters](#) (3/10) , [The New York Times](#)(3/10)

NCLB

NCLB's focus on failure prompts similar attitude in students. When high-school English teacher Sarah Fine returns graded papers, students too often look only at whether they passed or failed and ignore her comments on how and where they can improve, she writes, noting that NCLB has helped to fuel this pass/fail mentality. Focusing on weaknesses only hurts morale without encouraging improvement, she writes. [Education Week \(premium article access compliments of Edweek.org\)](#) (3/18)

Will stimulus package shape NCLB's future? Billions of education dollars included in the economic-stimulus package may help President Barack Obama's administration gain credibility in discussions about NCLB's pending reauthorization, education leaders say. "I really think this changes the conversation dramatically. I think it makes things a lot easier," said Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., the chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee. [Education Week \(premium article access compliments of Edweek.org\)](#) (3/11)

In the Field

Study: Fish might boost brain activity. A study of 15-year-old boys who consumed fish more than once a week found that they tended to score higher on intelligence tests three years later. The omega-3 fats found in fish are believed to help brain development and function. [Reuters](#) (3/16)

Deferring college could save money, allow for new opportunities. [The New York Times](#) (3/13)

Stability balls help students stay on top of their game. Some teachers are beginning to replace students' chairs with stability balls, saying they improve posture and attentiveness. "The whole theory with the brain is that when your body is engaged, your brain's engaged," said teacher Tiffany Miller. "I call it actively sitting. They're maybe moving their legs a little, wiggling some. But their upper body, they're focused on writing, on the teacher. It really works." [San Francisco Chronicle/The Associated Press](#) (3/15)

Some college scholarships may disappear as stock-market losses hit endowments. [The New York Times/The Associated Press](#) (3/12)

A Light Touch

Pun Fun

A Good Pun Is Its Own Re-Word.
Energizer Bunny arrested - charged with battery.
Shotgun wedding: A case of wife or death.
A hangover is the wrath of grapes.

Corduroy pillows are making headlines.
Does the name Pavlov ring a bell?
A successful diet is the triumph of mind over platter.
A gossip is someone with a great sense of rumor.

A man's home is his castle, in a manor of speaking.
When two egotists meet, it's an I for an I.
What's the definition of a will? (Come on, it's a dead giveaway!)
A backwards poet writes inverse.

A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion.
With her marriage, she got a new name and a dress.
You feel stuck with your debt if you can't budge it.
The short fortuneteller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large.

Once you've seen one shopping center, you've seen a mall.
Those who jump off a Paris bridge are in Seine.
Bakers trade bread recipes on a knead-to-know basis.
Acupuncture is a jab well done.

□

Zen for Those Who Take Life Too Seriously

Save The Whales. Collect The Whole Set
On The Other Hand, You Have Different Fingers.
42.7 Percent Of All Statistics Are Made Up On The Spot.
Light Travels Faster Than Sound, Which Is Why Some People Appear Bright Until You Hear Them Speak.
Honk If You Love Peace And Quiet.
Remember, Half The People You Know Are Below Average.
The Early Bird May Get The Worm, But The Second Mouse Gets The Cheese.
Support Bacteria. They're The Only Culture Some People Have.
Plan To Be Spontaneous Tomorrow.
Ok, So What's The Speed Of Dark?
How Do You Tell When You're Out Of Invisible Ink?
Hard Work Pays Off In The Future. Laziness Pays Off Now.
If Barbie Is So Popular, Why Do You Have To Buy Her Friends?

How Much Deeper Would The Ocean Be Without Sponges?
What Happens If You Get Scared Half To Death Twice?
I Couldn't Repair Your Brakes, So I Made Your Horn Louder.

"If you don't go after what you want, you'll never have it. If you don't ask, the answer is always no. If you don't step forward, you're always in the same place."

--[Nora Roberts](#),
American author