

E-newsletter October 2006

Dear Colleague,

Scroll down to find lots of information about literacy. Please share this e-newsletter with your teaching friends. Invite them to subscribe by e-mailing us at teacher_center@wsboces.org with their names and e-mail addresses. We will promptly add them to our subscription list.

Jane, Carol and Elyse

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A LIGHT TOUCH

Great Literary Taunts

"I feel so miserable without you, it's almost like having you here." -- Stephen Bishop "

"A modest little person, with much to be modest about." --- Winston Churchill (about Clement Atlee)

"I've just learned about his illness. Let's hope it's nothing trivial." --- Irvin S. Cobb "

" I have never killed a man, but I have read many obituaries with great pleasure." --- Clarence Darrow "

"He has never been known to use a word that might send a reader to the dictionary." -- William Faulkner (about Ernest Hemingway)

"He is not only dull himself, he is the cause of dullness in others." --- Samuel Johnson "

"He had delusions of adequacy."--- Walter Kerr

"I've had a perfectly wonderful evening. But this wasn't it." --- Groucho Marx

"They never open their mouths without subtracting from the sum of human knowledge." --- Thomas Brackett Reed

"He loves nature in spite of what it did to him." --- Forrest Tucker "

"I didn't attend the funeral, but I sent a nice letter saying I approved of it." --- Mark Twain

"His mother should have thrown him away and kept the stork." --- Mae West

"Some cause happiness wherever they go; others whenever they go." --- Oscar Wilde

"He has no enemies, but is intensely disliked by his friends." --- Oscar Wilde

"He has Van Gogh's ear for music." --- Billy Wilder

"He is a self-made man and worships his creator."---John Bright

SHARING SUCCESS RESEARCH

- **You Asked -- We Answered**

We are including a child with Down Syndrome in our kindergarten this year and need any information on strategies to include him and meet his needs?

Elementary

I am looking for information concerning honors classes at the middle school level grades 6-8. We need to provide a report with the pros and cons of the issue.

MS

We need research on "differentiated instruction - HS Math" **HS**

Please **click here** to access research information on the following topics:

- **Comprehension [Elementary]**
- **Guidelines for teaching students to read and write [MS/HS]**
- **Professional Development [K-12]**
- **Parent/Family/Community involvement [K-12]**

Spotlight: **Report Gives Voice to Dropouts** [HS]

FYI

November 5th-7th , NYSERDA's (New York State Energy Research and Development Authority) bi-annual **Energy in Schools Conference** is coming up at the Rochester Convention Center in Rochester, NY. The conference includes tracks for teachers, facility managers, and administrators. Energy efficiency is based on good business practices, while incorporating innovative approaches. Finding ways to reduce traditional energy sources is our current mandate and energy is everybody's business. To register and get additional conference information, please visit: <http://www.nyserda.org/energySchools.asp>

November 7, POWERful Coaching for Powerful Results™. *Learn to Coach in 6 weeks!* Learn the skills, processes and techniques of powerful coaching in this 6 week teleclass. Guided by a professional, certified coach. Weekly practice with peer students on real issues. Click here for more information - <http://thechangeplace.com> Call or email **Karla Reiss** for more information or to reserve a space. changemaven@thechangeplace.com 303-530-9699. Classes are limited to 10 participants. Graduate credit is available.

NY State Regional CTERC (Career and Technical Education Resource Center) Regional Conferences. For more information contact CTE at 518.283.3107, FAX: 518.283.3053.

November 7, 2006, Brooklyn Technical High School, 29 Fort Greene Place, Brooklyn, New York 11217, (718) 804-6400, aacosta22@schools.nyc.gov

November 29, 2006, Hyatt-Regency Windwatch, 1717 Motor Parkway, Hauppauge, New York 11788, (631) 784-1234, <http://windwatch.hyatt.com>

November 7, 2006. The **Google Teacher Academy** is a pilot program designed to help K-12 educators get the most from innovative technologies. The Academy is a one-day experience at Google's Mountain View Headquarters where participants get hands-on experience with Google products and other technologies, receive instructional resources to share with colleagues, and share innovative instructional strategies with other local educators. Upon completion, Academy participants will become Google Certified Teachers. Google Teacher Academy, Northern California Pilot, Google Headquarters. Mountain View, CA. Apply by October 22. <http://www.edgateway.net/cs/google/print/docs/753>

November 14, 8:00-3:45, 14th ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON PREJUDICE REDUCTION, Charles B. Wang Center, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY. The Council for Prejudice Reduction is a nationally recognized public-private partnership devoted to advancing equity and reducing prejudice in collaboration with public schools. This annual conference is collaboratively created by our diverse team of volunteers from education, law enforcement, faith communities, service groups and community-based organizations. Representatives of more than 70 of our partner organizations meet throughout the school year to plan this annual conference. **To register** and to learn more about our extraordinary partners please visit <http://www.cprnys.org/>.

November 16-21. Mark your calendar today for "*The Compleat Teacher: Bringing Together Knowledge, Experience, and Research,*" the [NCTE's Annual Convention in Nashville](#). Join thousands of K-12 teachers, college faculty, administrators, and other educational

professionals, as they gather to hear award-winning speakers, attend idea-packed sessions. If you're attending this November, be sure to include room in your schedule for [sessions on literacy coaching](#). To register online, visit <http://www.ncte.org/profdev/conv/annual/124264.htm>

November 19-21. CEL's Annual Conference in Nashville. Plan today to attend the Conference on English Leadership 38th Annual Conference! The Conference will be held after the NCTE Convention, November 19-21, 2006, in Nashville.

<http://www.ncte.org/groups/cel/featured/124307.htm>

Announcements

The OWL Teacher Center presents **Afternoons with Artists**. In an effort to promote the arts in our schools, we bring you a workshop series which we hope will assist you in integrating the joy of artistic creation into your curriculum, no matter what subject or grade you teach. The series features some of the most talented artists to be found in the Long Island area. Each artist will disclose facts and feelings about his/her craft. Classroom teachers K-12 will gain new insights into the creative process, which can be developed into teaching strategies for integrated instruction. NOTE: The grade levels for each workshop are suggested levels of suitability, but can be attended by all teachers of grades K-12 and special areas.

Attend any one or all of these seminars. Each seminar is equivalent to 3 contact hours. Fee for each seminar: \$7. All seminars run on **Mondays from 4-7 PM** on the dates below.

October 23 ~ Louise Rogers: *Jazzy Fairy Tales: The Jazz Music/Literacy Connection* (Grades K-3) Learn to combine stories, poetry and jazz in your classroom.

October 30 ~ Dafna Soltes-Stein: *Moving Words Workshop* (Grades K-5)

Build literacy, including the use of verbs, adverbs, similes, metaphors and poetry, through dance improvisation and composition.

November 6 ~ Tracy Warzer: *Artist's Books for the Classroom* (Grades 3-8)

November 13 ~ Mary Beth Spann: *Skill-based Scrapbooking* (Grades K-6)

November 20 ~ Barbara Garriel: *Books and Music...A Natural Harmony* (Grades K-4)

Discover a plethora of literature and interdisciplinary activities with musical themes and topics for the elementary classroom. Create a music-themed center activity pack.

November 27 ~ Ronn Kistler: *Teaching Curriculum through the Arts* (Grades K-6). Learn games and activities from this specialist in teaching curriculum through the arts. Design lessons which include dramatization and exploration of folktales, stories and poetry.

December 4 ~ Mary Beth Spann: *Making Books with Children...Publishing Children's Writing* (Grades K-3)

December 11 ~ Nancy Walsh: *Using the Language of Art for Visual Literacy* (Grades K-6)

Learn to use the steps of art analysis to promote discussion and understanding, practice language skills, formulate opinions, compare and contrast artwork, and use works of art as tools to connect other areas of the curriculum.

To register, call 631-226-2772 or e-mail owlcenter@optonline.net

Deadline November 1, 2006. Nominate Your School Board for the Annual School Board Recognition Award. The New York State Alliance for Arts Education is seeking nominations for the Annual School Board Recognition Awards. *The School Board Recognition Award recognizes a school board that has done an outstanding job of making the arts essential to the education of their district's students.* NYSAAE will select one school to represent New York State in the national competition. The winners selected by KCAAEN will receive a \$10,000 honorarium to support their programs, a plaque for display, and national recognition at the annual School Boards Association's Conference. For more information or to request an application, call Lainy Slyder at 518-473-0823 or e-mail exec@nysaae.org.

WORTHWHILE WEBSITES

<http://www.google.com/educators/index.html>. Google for Educators, a new Web site launched yesterday, offers guides and lesson plans detailing creative ways to use Blogger, Google Maps, Google Earth and nine other Google applications in the classroom. The site also offers links to a training academy that will allow teachers to become "Google certified."

Literacy Websites

<http://www.literacycoachingonline.org> Struggling readers? Learn how an effective literacy coach can help at the Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse website. Effective literacy coaching involves collaborative dialogue for teachers at all levels of knowledge and experience, is characterized by data-oriented student and teacher learning, is a form of ongoing, job-embedded professional learning that increases teacher capacity to meet students' needs and involves classroom observations that are cyclical and that build knowledge over time.

<http://www.literacy.uconn.edu/56sites.htm> Literacy Websites for Students in Grades 5-6

<http://www.succeedtoread.com/resources.html> Teach a child to read. Literacy Websites

for Parents and Teachers Education and Family Info.

<http://www.ocde.k12.ca.us/infolit/index.html> Information **Literacy** Teacher's Guide ...

This **website** has been designed to help guide fellow educators toward developing literacy lesson plans.

Halloween Ideas

<http://www.theteacherscorner.net/seasonal/halloween/index.htm> Here's a collection of teacher-submitted ideas for observing Halloween in the classroom.

<http://www.education-world.com/holidays/archives/halloween.shtml>. Halloween is the perfect time for students to scare up a humorous poem or epitaph. Here's a host of ideas from Education World.

NCTE INBOX

News

Big Business Going to Bat for NCLB (*Education Week, October 18, 2006*) Large companies and major business groups, not usually interested in lobbying for education issues, are laying the groundwork to lobby Congress on the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act. <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2006/10/18/08biz.h26.html>

The Handwriting Is on the Wall (*The Washington Post, October 11, 2006*) The computer has made shorthand obsolete. Now there's evidence that the keyboard is also threatening cursive writing. For the 2006 SAT handwritten essay, just 15 percent of students wrote the essay in cursive writing. The rest wrote the essay in block letters. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/10/AR2006101001475.html>

Struggling Readers (*District Administration, October 2006*) With reading scores dropping between grades four and eight, many middle schools are scrambling to find programs to improve adolescent literacy.

<http://www.districtadministration.com/viewarticle.aspx?articleid=927>

Scathing Report Casts Cloud over "Reading First" (*Education Week*, October 4, 2006)

The political and educational fallout over the Reading First audit continues.

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2006/10/04/06read.h26.html>

New English Testing Rule Sets Up Immigrants to Fail, Teachers Say (*The Journal*

News, October 1, 2006) ELL teachers in New York say the federal rules that require immigrant students to take the same reading and writing exam as fluent children will hurt ELL students' ability to learn English.

<http://www.thejournalnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?>

[AID=/20061001/NEWS02/610010319/1018](http://www.thejournalnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20061001/NEWS02/610010319/1018)

Sorry, Cupcake, You're Not Welcome in Class (*Los Angeles Times*, September 26,

2006) (free registration required) Many school districts are encouraging parents to bring healthy snacks to school when celebrating their child's birthday with classmates, in light of concerns about childhood obesity. Some parents are not happy with these new policies.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/education/la-me-cupcake27sep27,1,3733448.story>

Ideas

Using Literacy Coaching to Improve Your School

NCTE and the International Reading Association have created a Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse to build a professional learning community of literacy coaches and to provide the education community with information on literacy coaching.

If literacy coaching is new to you, check out the *Voices from the Middle* article "[What Is a Literacy Coach?](#)" (G) for an overview of this strategy for ongoing professional development through which classroom teachers deepen their literacy understandings, instructional methods, and assessment strategies.

The [opening chapter](#) (G) of [The Literacy Coach's Desk Reference: Processes and Perspectives for Effective Coaching](#) can tell you more about how literacy coaches support teachers in becoming more thoughtful and knowledgeable about their teaching.

The newly launched [Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse website](#) (G) offers resources to increase the knowledge base, research, and practice of literacy coaching, including the articles [Qualifications for Literacy Coaches: Achieving The Gold Standard](#) (G) and [What Are the Characteristics of Effective Literacy Coaching?](#) (G).

For additional ideas, visit NCTE's [Literacy Coaching Teacher Resource Collection](#).

IN THE NEWS

Eye on Curriculum

Despite past scoring woes, SAT still carries clout. The scoring problems that plagued last October's SAT appear to have had no adverse effect on the number of students registered to take the high-stakes college admissions exam, although the glitches have prompted some college admissions offices to put more emphasis on the essay and other parts of an applicant's portfolio. Out of the roughly 2,600 accredited colleges in the U.S. about 730 institutions have now made the SAT optional. [Newsday \(Long Island, N.Y.\)](#) (10/15)

New York state math results vary by district wealth. Statewide, 65.8% of New York students in grades three through eight met proficiency targets last school year, but the percentage of those performing at grade level ranged from 86% in wealthy districts to roughly 30% in less-affluent areas. Mirroring a similar trend in English results for the same period, math scores across the state fell as students got older. [The New York Times](#) (free registration) (10/12)

A look at America's "testing culture". In the first of a series of articles on tests and their impact, Washington Post staff writer Valerie Strauss finds many Americans wholeheartedly embrace standardized tests, even though such assessments, critics say, often measure very narrow skills. Supporters, however, argue that tests are the best tools available to objectively measure the performance of teachers and schools. [The Washington Post](#) (free registration) (10/10)

Pediatric group recommends more playtime. In a [report](#) released yesterday, the American Academy Of Pediatrics said children need undirected playtime, which provides a creative outlet and allows them to learn important social skills. Many schools under pressure to raise test scores or provide structured physical activity time, however, have been scaling back recess or eliminating it altogether. [The Wall Street Journal](#) (free content) (10/10)

Teachers debate value of homework. A small but growing number of teachers are no longer assigning homework, particularly at the elementary-school level, because they believe such assignments make a difference in student achievement. The most widely accepted research suggests that homework boosts student scores in the short-term and, when assigned in moderate amounts, improves student learning in the long-term, especially for high school students. [San Francisco Chronicle](#) (10/8)

Vocational ed gets an overhaul. Pressures to boost academics, aging facilities and competition for funding led to a decline in the number of high school technology education courses in California from about 40,000 in the late 1980s to 24,000 last school year. Vocational-ed classes are starting to enjoy a renaissance in the state and other parts of the country, however, as schools seek new ways to prepare high school students for the workplace. [The Philadelphia Inquirer/Associated Press](#) (free registration) (10/2)

Professional Leadership

Commentary: Celebrating colleagues on World Teachers' Day. It's only fitting that, as communities everywhere celebrate World Teachers' Day, British educators ponder how they can help dedicated colleagues who struggle to teach under the most difficult conditions in Sudan and other underdeveloped countries, Jane Davies writes. Davies says her stint in Sudanese refuge camps left her deeply struck by her students' enthusiasm and desire to learn, and the dedication of local teachers, who work without educational resources and for a pittance. [The Guardian \(London\)](#) (10/5)

Teachers sideline their desks. Many teachers who regard their desk as a hindrance that distances them from students have either turned the piece into a corner storage item or removed it from the classroom altogether. No-desk proponents argue that engaged teachers are usually either at the board, moving around the classroom or holding conferences with students. [The Washington Post](#) (free registration) (10/3)

Endless test prep stifles inquiry. Evaluating a teacher solely through test scores is like measuring a company on the basis of one day's stock price, says veteran Los Angeles elementary school teacher Jeff Lantos. The best teachers, he argues, look for connections between strands of information and seek to broaden the context. [Pioneer Press Newspapers \(Illinois\)/The Los Angeles Times](#) (9/24)

Technology Solutions

Libya becomes fifth country to order \$100 laptops. Libyan government officials and Massachusetts Institute of Technology researcher Nicholas Negroponte have struck a \$250 million deal to bring \$100 laptops to Libya's 1.2 million schoolchildren by June 2008. The arrangement could make Libya the first nation in the world to have every school-age child connected to the Internet through educational computers, Negroponte said. [The New York Times](#) (free registration) (10/11)

Blackboard to enhance search function with Google Scholar. Education software and services provider Blackboard has announced it is teaming up with Google to offer enhanced access to scholarly works directly from courses within its system. [Washington Business Journal](#) (10/10).

Google launches literacy site. At the Frankfurt Book Fair on Wednesday, Google unveiled a [Web site](#) that helps literacy organizations contact each other, provides links to reading resources and features video segments from around the world on successful reading approaches. The project aims to help people share information about and solutions to illiteracy, says one top Google executive. [The Boston Globe](#) (10/4)

ESchool News launches online video news program. On Tuesday eSchool News and eSchool News Online launched [eSN TechWatch](#), a free, 20-minute daily newsmagazine that will cover developments in educational technology in streaming video format. [eSchool News](#) (free registration) (10/3)

Tech advocate: New Internet is about your imagination. Former high school English teacher turned ed-tech consultant Will Richardson now travels the country presenting workshops to teachers and administrators on the power of the Internet to transform classroom instruction. Blogs -- such as the wildly popular [one](#) his New Jersey pupils created to discuss "The Secret Life of Bees" -- and wikis engage students and tap into the power of collaborative writing, he says. [Teacher Magazine](#) (Free Registration) (10/1)

Policy Watch

Florida mayor brokers business-schools partnerships. Mayor Rick Baker over the past five years has encouraged the St. Petersburg, Fla., business community to fund 700 college scholarships and trained more than 1,000 mentors to tutor children. Although some fear Baker is "selling out" students to corporate advertisers, supporters say the mayor's approach is creating better schools that will ultimately attract more firms. [CNN](#) (10/12)

Opinion: Centralizing education not the way to fix schools. Creating a national test, as some educational reformers have suggested, could lead to more federal control of American education at a time when innovation at the local and state level is critically needed, argues Home School Legal Defense Association President Michael Smith. The best way to fix schools is through more parental choice rather than by more government regulation, he maintains. [The Washington Times](#)

NCLB

Bush: NCLB shrinking achievement gap. At a Washington, D.C., charter school Thursday, President George W. Bush deemed NCLB a success but urged lawmakers to amend the law in several areas, including expanding testing beyond 10th grade and giving bonuses to teachers who raise their students' scores or work in hard-to-fill schools. In response, the Democratic National Committee termed the law a failure, because its underfunding has forced states to sue the federal government to pay for programs. [The Washington Post](#) (free registration) (10/5)

Opinion: Build a growth model into NCLB: NCLB's fixation on passing rates has forced many schools to devote most of their resources to those students just below the passing cutoff, at the expense of both gifted children and struggling pupils requiring intensive help, argues Columbia University doctoral candidate Jennifer Booher-Jennings. Policymakers need to change the law so it rewards teachers who help their students improve, regardless of whether they clear the passing bar, she says. [The Washington Post](#) (free registration) (10/5)

Bush brothers take different paths to school reform. With NCLB coming up for reauthorization next year, Florida Gov. Jeb Bush has entered the debate over the law by praising facets but also touting his state's A-Plus plan, which awards schools for the progress they've made in raising the achievement of individual students. In an [article](#) in the current issue of the journal Education Next, two Ivy League professors find the federal system to be "badly flawed" and not as accurate as Florida's. [The New York Times](#) (free registration) (9/28)

Editorial: It's far too soon to call NCLB a success. Deeming NCLB a success, as U.S. Education Secretary Margaret Spellings did in a San Francisco Chronicle [op-ed piece](#) yesterday, is premature, given that the San Francisco Unified School District, whose score gains she touted, has failed to meet "adequate yearly progress" goals for three straight years, the newspaper editorial argues. The most glaring failure of the law, they say, is that it has not yet shrunk the "yawning" achievement gap between black and Latino students, on one hand, and white and Asian peers on the other. [San Francisco Chronicle](#) (9/27)

In the Field

School food getting a healthy makeover on several fronts. As communities mark the 60th anniversary of National School Lunch week, FoodNavigator details some of the many steps the government and industry have taken this year to make school vending machine products and cafeteria fare more nutritious. [FoodNavigator](#) (10/12)

High school dropouts earn far less money. Dropping out of high school has its costs around the globe, but nowhere steeper than in the United States. The News -Observer <http://dwb.newsobserver.com/24hour/politics/story/3370787p-12403326c.html>

Top N.Y. school mulls scrapping AP courses. Scarsdale High School, renowned for the caliber of its students, may replace its Advanced Placement offerings with "accelerated" classes to give teachers more curriculum flexibility and ease the pressure on students. Some parents worry that such a switch could hurt their children's college-admission prospects. [The New York Times](#) (free registration) (10/4)

Strife forces schooling for Afghan girls to go underground. Taliban attacks and threats have prompted almost half of the 748 schools in four Afghan southern provinces to close their doors, leaving some girls no choice but to attend semi-secret classes run out of private homes. In the more peaceful north, however, foreign aid is being welcomed to build girls schools. [Arab Times \(Kuwait\)/Washington Post](#) (9/26)

School in England to run 24/7. Seeking new ways to engage bored pupils, Bridgemary Community Sports College in Hampshire will, starting next fall, hold classes from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., supplemented by online classes available throughout the night. Head Teacher Cheryl Heron says the two-year pilot reflects the philosophy of changing schools to meet the needs of children, rather than forcing students to conform to schools' rigid routines. [BBC](#) (9/25)

It is better to look ahead and prepare than to look back and regret."

Jackie Joyner-Kersey,
U.S. Olympic athlete, track and field

