

CASN News Late January 2008

CASN News is sponsored by the Career Academy Support Network, Graduate School of Education at University of California Berkeley.

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<http://casn.berkeley.edu>

"At the heart of mastery is the belief that, with sufficient time to learn and with high quality instruction, all students can learn." David Berliner

"Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the interrelated structure of reality." Martin Luther King, Jr.

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SPELLINGS, NEA DEBATE MEANING OF COURT'S NCLB RULING

A ruling earlier this month by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit, in Cincinnati, that NCLB is essentially an unfunded federal mandate does not give states or schools the right to disregard the law, Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings said. The National Education Association general counsel has said the ruling means states and district cannot be forced under NCLB to use their own funds to comply with the law's mandates regarding testing and school progress.

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2008/01/30/21nclb.h27.html>

PHYSICAL-EDUCATION CLASSES CHANGING COURSE

A growing number of educators have ditched traditional physical-education curricula, which emphasize team sports, in favor of a new brand of exercise that targets life skills. Three teachers at one Washington high school--one for science, one for language arts, and one for physical fitness--teach students in the same classroom for several hours a day. The result is an interdisciplinary experience that allows students to connect subjects, contribute to the community, and enhance the long-term health and wellness of students. (source: Seattle Times)

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/southeastkingscountynews/2004/281_outdoor13s0.html

POSTSECONDARY LIFE FOR UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS POSES A CHALLENGE FOR SCHOOLS

For illegal immigrants, public school is a rare refuge. There's no requirement to prove legal immigration status to enroll in school. But the transition into the adult world can be abrupt. About 65,000 illegal immigrants graduate from U.S. high schools every year, unable to work legally and often unable to afford college without access to in-state tuition or government-backed financial aid. These students pose special challenges for schools. Some have scouted out ways to help

undocumented graduates pay for college. A few have sought to open more doors for promising students, delving into the maze of immigration law and attempting to help them legalize their status. (source: Washington Post)

CASH AWARD FOR AP CLASSES CHANGES SCHOOL CULTURE

A recent study found that when Texas began paying students and teachers in disadvantaged schools \$500 for each passing AP score, participation in AP classes and test scores rose. The awards also served to change the culture of the school, making AP classes seem less uncool, and placing them in higher demand. <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2008/01/16/19collegocol.h27.html>

WEST VIRGINIA PROPOSAL WOULD TIE DRIVING PRIVILEGES TO STUDENT GRADES

West Virginia Governor Joe Manchin has proposed to make maintaining a passing GPA a prerequisite for obtaining and keeping a drivers license. The state already suspends teenagers' licenses if they drop out of high school. (source: dailymail.com)

ARKANSAS IMPLEMENTS WORKFORCE READINESS CREDENTIAL

Arkansas Governor Mike Beebe recently announced the Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate which is designed to reduce employee turnover, build job-seeker confidence, boost economic development, and increase a graduate's chances for hire. The certificate will designate that an individual has core employability skills required across multiple industries and occupations.

CULINARY ARTS PROGRAM GIVES TEENS A CHANCE AT SUCCESS

The Culinary Arts program at Gloucester High School, in Gloucester, Virginia, aims to steer students toward culinary school and a well-paying career. The program is certified by certified by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation.

http://www.dailypress.com/news/local/middlepeninsula/dp-news_glocooking_0114jan14_0_5355021.story

COMPUTER SCIENCE PROGRAM STEERS STUDENTS TOWARD TECHNOLOGY CAREERS

Edgewater High School, in Orlando, Florida, offers a magnet computer science program that allows students to focus on engineering, architecture, or digital design. The program also includes a mentoring component that connect students with professionals in these fields at area businesses and corporations.

http://www.orlandosentinel.com/technology/ori-magnet0508jan05_0.738920.story

FAFSA ALERT: .GOV IS FREE; .COM WILL COST YOU (to share with our students)

Across the country, millions of high school seniors are struggling to fill out the FAFSA, a government document that students complete to gain access to almost every type of government-sponsored financial help. However, there is a Sacramento, CA company whose Internet site has FAFSA in its address. The site charges new clients \$79.99—repeat customers pay \$49.99—to file the document. The company clearly states on its site that it has no association with the U.S. Department of Education. Still, some parents and students who use the for-pay Web site, owned by Student Financial Aid Services, have complained about the confusion. (Source: eSchool News)

**TWO NEW STUDIES FROM UCLA'S CIVIL RIGHTS PROJECT
Are Teachers Prepared for Racially Changing Schools?**

by Erica Frankenberg and Genevieve Siegel-Hawley, reveals the challenges for teachers and school leaders as they face many different kinds of situations with regard to race, ethnicity and class.

The Last Have Become First: Rural and Small Town America Lead the Way on Desegregation, by Gary Orfield and Erica Frankenberg, The report shows that a pattern has clearly developed: rural areas and small-towns in the South, especially those without large areas of residential segregation, have the most integrated schools in the country. But ironically the large urban districts and their suburbs, mostly in the North, display the most segregated schools.

"What's important to note," says Orfield, "is that data produced by state education reforms and No Child Left Behind show more clearly than ever that segregated minority schools are inferior both in life opportunities and academic outcomes."

That pattern has been driven in part by an unlikely source - Supreme Court rulings have nullified policies for school desegregation in larger metropolitan areas, whereas desegregation plans for the rural and small-town South remain in effect.

The report finds that the current level of segregation for Latinos is the highest

recorded in the forty years....(and)...the segregation of African Americans is back to what it looked like in the late 1960s, before serious urban desegregation began.

"These studies show that we now face staggering levels of segregation, approaching racial apartheid, for millions of American students, Orfield continued, "and that the frontier of large-scale racial change is in our suburbs."

To download the reports, see: <http://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu>

REPORT: UNEVEN FUNDING LEAVES NEEDIEST STUDENTS WANTING

Many states provide the fewest funds to districts with the most poor and minority students, according to a new Education Trust report, *The Funding Gap*. On average, U.S. school districts in 2005 spent \$938 less per pupil at schools where incomes were low versus more affluent districts, while districts with a large proportion of minority students received \$877 less per pupil compared with predominately white districts. "Many of the school districts with the greatest needs often receive the least funding, begging the question of whether we're setting some students up for failure," wrote Education Trust research director Carmen Arroyo. <http://www2.edtrust.org/NR/rdonlyres/5AF8F288-949D-4677-82CF-5A867A8E9153/0/FundingGap2007.pdf>
<http://www2.edtrust.org/NR/rdonlyres/21242216-A535-4E51-9383-32A6BF85D470/0/FundingGap2007SP.pdf> (Spanish version)

REPORT: SMALL SCHOOLS SAFER, SANER (Minneapolis)

<http://www.ncef.org/pubs/saneschools.pdf>.

FORBES MAGAZINE FEATURES ED "SOLUTIONS"

The "Solutions" opinion page of Forbes magazine is featuring commentaries on reforming public education from 18 luminaries. Bill Gates, of Microsoft and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, starts his piece by remembering Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaimed education to be a fundamental human right. He then shifts his focus to the unique ability of technology to enable today's limited educational resources, making it an essential ingredient in any effort to transform education. John Chambers, chairman and CEO of Cisco Systems, continues in Gates' vein by stating the necessity of creating a new model for how educators use, teach and interact with technology, while fellow businessman Craig Barrett, the chairman of Intel, sees the major problem as the lack of a systematic, coordinated approach to education reform. In his mind,

achieving real, sustainable progress requires a more holistic strategy. Moving to the political arena, U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings begins with a very Forbes message, namely that America's competitors are improving the ways they nurture human capital, and that, even at the elite level, the U.S. is losing ground. However, she quickly moves to the main thrust behind the No Child Left Behind Act: closing the achievement gap. The U.S. is getting only half of its minority students out of high school on time, she writes, while 90 percent of the fastest growing jobs require post-secondary education. U.S. Representative George Miller (D-Calif.) lent his voice to the increasing fervor for improving early childhood education. As he sees it, every dollar spent on early childhood education makes the U.S. economy stronger and more competitive. With perhaps a unique view on the problems facing education, Col. Dean Esserman, chief of police in Providence, R.I., adds that it is no surprise to members of his profession that small, neighborhood-based schools perform so much better than bigger regional ones (must be music to Gates' ears). He offers some interesting solutions (putting schools on wheels to keep kids together) rooted in his view that schools are anchors of the community.

http://www.forbes.com/home/opinions/2008/01/23/solutions-education-teaching-oped-cx_hpm_0123solutionsland.html

PAMPHLET: WHAT IS SERVICE-LEARNING? A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Parental involvement is one of the most important factors in student success. A companion piece to Learn and Serve America's popular service-learning public service announcement, Bring Learning to Life, this 6-page guide for parents provides information on the definition and benefits of service-learning as well as practical steps for ensuring service-learning is a part of their child's education.

http://www.servicelearning.org/lisa/bring_learning/index.php#parents

EMERGING PRACTICE: CLIMATE CHANGE TEACH-INS

Several hundred colleges and universities around the United States plan to discuss climate change as part of a January 31 teach-in reminiscent of the civil rights and antiwar movements. "What our kids have to do is truly heroic," said organizer Eban Goodstein. "If they're going to stabilize the climate for their children, they have to rewire the entire planet with clean-energy technology." Some high schools are holding similar climate change formats now or in celebration of Earth Day in April 2008. (Source: Christian Science Monitor, etc.)

JANUARY IS NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH

Many of our Academies and SLCs are working to provide opportunities for students to connect with adult professionals and to increase the number and quality of

mentoring experiences for Academy students. Some are involving mentors in helping to support the development of Academy student portfolios or major Academy student projects, including service-learning projects.

In celebration of National Mentoring Month, here are a few mentoring resources:

There is a very useful Academy Mentoring Guide available for download on the CASN website <http://casn.berkeley.edu>

The Corporation for National and Community Service <<http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/initiatives/nmm.asp>> 's website offers an array of resources including a mentoring toolkit, research, and links to other mentor resources.

The MENTOR (<http://www.mentoring.org>) where individuals can find mentoring opportunities plus excellent tools. Detailed information and resources can be found to help you manage, implement, and evaluate your mentoring program.

The official National Mentoring < <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/chc/wmy2008/index.html>> Month site has mentoring videos from national leaders and information on the January 24th Thank Your Mentor Day.

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ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE MENTORING PRACTICE

Program Design

Design the parameters for the program:

- Define the youth population that the program will serve;
- Identify the types of individuals who will be recruited as mentors (such as, senior citizens, corporate employees and college students);
- Determine the type of mentoring that the program will offer - one-to-one, group, team, peer or e-mentoring;
- Structure the mentoring program - as a stand-alone program or as part of an existing organization;
- Define the nature of the mentoring sessions (such as, career involvement, academic support and socialization);
- Determine what the program will accomplish and what outcomes will result for the participants, including mentors, mentees and sponsoring organizations.
- Determine when the mentoring will take place;

- Determine how often mentors and mentees will meet and how long the mentoring matches should endure;
- Decide where mentoring matches primarily will meet - workplace, school, faith-based organization, juvenile corrections facility, community setting or virtual community;
- Decide who are program stakeholders and how to promote the program;
- Decide how to evaluate program success; and
- Establish case management protocol to assure that the program has regular contact with both mentors and mentees concerning their relationship.

Plan how the program will be managed:

- Select the management team:
 - Establish policies and procedures; and
 - Implement ongoing staff training and professional development.
- Develop a financial plan:
 - Develop a program budget;
 - Determine the amount of funding needed to start and sustain the program;
 - Identify and secure a diversified funding stream needed to start and sustain the program;
 - Determine the amount of time each funding source can be expected to provide resources;
 - Establish internal controls and auditing requirements; and
 - Establish a system for managing program finances.
- Implement the program:
 - Recruit program participants, such as, mentors, mentees and other volunteers;
 - Screen potential mentors and mentees;
 - Orient and train mentors, mentees and parents/caregivers;
 - Match mentors and mentees;
 - Bring mentors and mentees together for mentoring sessions that fall within program parameters;
 - Provide ongoing support, supervision and monitoring of mentoring relationships;
 - Recognize the contribution of all program participants; and
 - Help mentors and mentees reach closure.
- Plan how to evaluate the program:
 - Decide on the evaluation design;
 - Determine what data will be collected, how it will be collected and the sources of data;
 - Determine the effectiveness of the program process;

- Determine the outcomes for mentors and mentees; and
- Reflect on and disseminate findings.

Program Management

Ensure the program is well-managed:

- Form an advisory group:
 - Define the advisory group roles and responsibilities;
 - Recruit people with diverse backgrounds to serve on the group; and
 - Facilitate the advisory group meetings to improve programming and management.
- Develop a comprehensive system for managing program information:
 - Manage program finances;
 - Maintain personnel records;
 - Track program activity, such as, volunteer hours and matches.;
 - Document mentor/mentee matches;
 - Manage risk; and
 - Document program evaluation efforts.
- Design a resource development plan that allows for diversified fundraising:
 - Seek in-kind gifts;
 - Hold special events;
 - Solicit individual donors;
 - Seek corporate donations;
 - Apply for government funding; and
 - Seek foundation grants.
- Design a system to monitor the program:
 - Review policies, procedures and operations on a regular basis;
 - Collect program information from mentors, mentees and other participants; and
 - Continually assess customer service.
- Create a professional staff development plan:
 - Provide ongoing staff training; and
 - Build on staff members' skills and knowledge.
- Advocate for mentoring:
 - Advocate for pro
 - mentoring public policies and funding at the local, state and federal levels; and
 - Encourage private sector leaders to adopt pro
 - mentoring policies and provide funding.
- Establish a public relations/communications effort:
 - Identify target markets;

- Develop a marketing plan;
- Gather feedback from all constituents;
- Develop partnerships and collaborations with other organizations; and
- Recognize mentors, mentees, other program participants, funders and organizations that sponsor mentoring programs.

Program Operations:

Ensure strong, everyday operations:

- Recruit mentors, mentees and other volunteers:
 - Define eligibility for participants, including mentors, mentees and parents/caregivers;
 - Market the program; and
 - Conduct awareness and information sessions for potential mentors.
- Screen potential mentors and mentees:
 - Require written applications;
 - Conduct reference checks, such as, employment record, character reference, child abuse registry, driving record and criminal record checks;
 - Conduct face to face interviews; and
 - Hold orientations.
- Orient and train mentors, mentees and parents/caregivers:
 - Provide an overview of the program;
 - Clarify roles, responsibilities and expectations; and
 - Discuss how to handle a variety of situations.
- Match mentors and mentees:
 - Use established criteria;
 - Arrange an introduction between mentors and mentees; and
 - Ensure mentors, mentees and parents/caregivers understand and agree to the terms and conditions of program participation.
- Bring mentors and mentees together for mentoring sessions that fall within the program parameters:
 - Provide safe locations and circumstances; and
 - Provide resources and materials for activities.
- Provide ongoing support, supervision and monitoring of mentoring relationships:
 - Offer continuing training opportunities for program participants;
 - Communicate regularly with participants and offer support;
 - Help mentors and mentees define next steps for achieving mentee goals;
 - Bring mentors together to share ideas and support;

- Establish a process to manage grievances, resolve issues and offer positive feedback;
- Assist mentors and mentees whose relationship is not working out; and
- Assure that appropriate documentation is done on a regular basis.
- Recognize the contribution of all program participants:
 - Sponsor recognition events; and
 - Make the community aware of the contributions made by mentors, mentees, supporters and funders.
 - Actively solicit feedback from mentors and mentees regarding their experiences; and
 - Use information to refine program and retain mentors.
- Help mentors and mentees reach closure:
 - Conduct private, confidential interviews with mentors and mentees; and
 - Ensure mentors, mentees and parent/caregivers understand program policy regarding their meeting outside the program.

Program Evaluation

Ensure program quality and effectiveness:

- Develop a plan to measure program process:
 - Select indicators of program implementation viability and volunteer fidelity, such as, training hours, meeting frequency and relationship duration; and
 - Develop a system for collecting and managing specified data.
- Develop a plan to measure expected outcomes:
 - Specify expected outcomes;
 - Select appropriate instruments to measure outcomes, such as, questionnaires, surveys and interviews; and
 - Select and implement an evaluation design.
- Create a process to reflect on and disseminate evaluation findings:
 - Refine the program design and operations based on the findings; and
 - Develop and deliver reports to program constituents, funders and the media (at minimum yearly; optimally, each quarter).

A SAMPLING OF WEB RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Exploring the Power of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Words Through Diamante Poetry

Reading, writing, and thinking come together in this beautifully detailed lesson plan that focuses on the power and passion of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. After reading and interpreting the text, students are asked to

create original poetry using words and themes taken from King's speech. All materials, including rubrics, handouts and worksheets, a captioned audio clip, related Web resources, and links to NCTE/IRA standards are included.

http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=258

Of Mice and Men (from BBC)

This is a good site to introduce the *Of Mice and Men* or to review and quiz student knowledge as they read. It offers very general, but valuable information on context, including a brief Steinbeck biography, background on the depression, information on migrant workers (complete with Woody Guthrie song accompaniment), and a picture of housing.

Print these brief sources or use the menus for plot, character, or theme to locate some explanations and interactive quizzes. Note to American students: "Revise" in the U.K. is the same as "Review" in the U.S.

Check out the section called "Sample Question." This section helps students think about answering thoughtful questions about this novel. It provides "preparation," a sample question, and a model answer -- complete with commentary on that answer.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/english_literature/prosemicemen/

Exercise Central (grammar/writing)

This is a great site for all sorts of grammar and writing exercise and practice. Geared for college prep and honors/AP students, this site is perfect for individual work on problem writing areas for students. The exercises in many of the links deal with sophisticated topics such as using commas in cause and effect and avoiding faulty constructions. There are diagnostics, tutorials, and hundreds of exercises for students to practice so you might even assign certain ones. There are also some great downloads such as "Straight Talk about Plagiarism" and more from the Bedford St. Martin's Handbook.

You do have to register, but it is free. Student registration requires an email address. If your students do not have access to email at school, consider using a teacher GMail account with subaccounts for each student. You can even set up the site for students to do exercises and instructors to look at student results-- very handy if you are working with a cyber class or want to assign the work to be done outside of class. <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/exercisecentral/>

Gel Electrophoresis

This online lesson is from the Genetic Sciences Learning Center at the University of Utah. This site brings the technique of gel electrophoresis within student reach on the computer. Begin the simulation with an overview of the process. Then, use the simulation to make the gel, spin DNA, load DNA into the chambers of the gel, follow the electrophoresis process, and estimate the length of the base pairs. Scripts along the bottom explain what is happening at each screen and the actions to perform. Teachers can use other activities offered in the Print-and-Go Index with interesting titles such as "Have your DNA and eat it too," "Generation of Traits," and "Traits Bingo," among others. Activities included address Genetics and Heredity topics for grades 5-7 and 9-12 and include plans and suggestions. The simulation requires Flash. <http://learn.genetics.utah.edu/units/biotech/gel/>

NOTE: This web site has two other DNA lessons:

[DNA Extraction](#)

DNA is extracted from human cells for a variety of reasons. With a pure sample of DNA you can test a newborn for a genetic disease, analyze forensic evidence, or study a gene involved in cancer. Enter this virtual laboratory to perform a cheek swab and extract DNA from human cells.

[DNA Microarray](#) DNA microarray analysis is one of the fastest-growing new technologies in the field of genetic research. Scientists are using DNA microarrays to investigate everything from cancer to pest control. Now you can do your own DNA microarray experiment! Here you will use a DNA microarray to investigate the differences between a healthy cell and a cancer cell.

[Planet Science](#) (Grades 0 - 12)

This interactive science website features eight specific areas. The "News" section includes weekly news updates and features. "Wired" has challenging interactive games for grades 4-12. "Sci-Teach" provides countless resources for teachers of all grades. "Out There" takes you to the "back garden of science delights," including inventors, sound, vampires, and the flu. "Parents" has useful ideas, "Under 11s" is geared for younger students. The activities teach traditional science topics using new multimedia. The "Next Steps" link challenges students to think about their future careers, There are printable pages and interactive activities for elementary, middle, and high school students. The "Library" link features countless online science resources. (note: most activities require FLASH.) <http://www.planet-science.com/home.html>

[Power of Points](#) (grades 9-12, math resource)

When does a soccer player running down the sideline have the best chance of making a goal? This lesson uses the Power of Points Theorem to answer this question. The Power of Points theorem is often taught as three separate theorems: the Chord-Chord Power Theorem, the Secant-Secant Power Theorem, and the Tangent-Secant Power Theorem. Using a dynamic geometry applet, students discover that these three theorems are all applications of the Power of Points Theorem. They also use their discoveries to solve several related problems. Activity sheets, applets, overheads, discussion questions, lesson extensions, suggestions for assessment, and issues for teacher reflection are included.

<http://illuminations.nctm.org/LessonDetail.aspx?id=L700>

Reader Response in Hypertext: Making Personal Connections to Literature

In this lesson, students choose four quotations to inspire their personal responses to a novel that they have read. Students write a narrative of place, complete a character sketch, create an extended metaphor poem and write a persuasive essay. Each piece of writing is linked to the quotations. Students may also incorporate photos into their presentation then publish the collected texts on their website. This lesson may be used with novels that contain a strong sense of place, that focus on closeness of characters, and that are metaphorical in character, such as *A River Runs Through It*, *Montana 1948*, and *The Bean Trees*.

http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=782

GREAT AMERICAN DREAMING: DOCUMENTING STORIES OF IMMIGRATION IN YOUR COMMUNITY: A RESOURCE FROM WHAT KIDS CAN DO (WKCD)

Immigration issues dominate the news just now, and they present a perfect opportunity for a curriculum or service project. Your students can bring back wonderful interviews if they venture into their communities to talk to the immigrants they know about their experiences.

WKCD learned this, when they coached and then published such work by New York City students in [Forty-Cent Tip: Stories of New York City Immigrant Workers](#). Now WKCD is offering us a look at their coaching guidelines—and a chance to be published—in the hope that others will try the project, too!

Work like this sparks students' learning in many ways:

- **They practice their communication and literacy skills.** You'll coach students to come up with good questions, teach them how to transcribe their interviews carefully, and then shape them into compelling first-person essays. If they can take photographs as well, the arts add another dimension.

- **Their understanding grows about the historical, political, and cultural issues** behind immigration issues. Linking real people's stories with the debate on policy makes it come alive, as they think the issues through for themselves.
- **Their active, hands-on work forges connections with the community.** Respect grows on both sides as youth and adults witness each other's strengths.
- **They see their work published for a larger audience.** Send their best work to WKCD, and we will make it public on our website, whatkidscando.org. For an example of how this might look, see a feature story WKCD recently published of immigrant interviews and photos from students in Casco, Maine.

WKCD offers the following resources to help with your project: Download the manual for teachers and students. Request a complimentary copy of the WKCD book *Forty-Cent Tip: Stories of New York City Immigrant Workers* --- or a classroom set, which we make available at our publisher's cost (\$3.75 per copy in quantities of 10 or more), as long as supplies ask. Please be sure to include your full mailing address in your email. For info and related downloads, visit: http://www.whatkidscando.org/featurestories/2008/01_great_american/index.html

OPRAH'S O AMBASSADORS

Oprah Winfrey is looking for elementary, middle and high school educators to join a new program called **O Ambassadors**. By becoming one of Oprah's O Ambassadors, your students will learn about other children and families living in developing countries and discover that kids can make a difference in their own lives and someone else's! The application deadline has been extended! _ <http://www.oambassadors.org/global>

UPCOMING WEB EVENT

Fifteen Fixes for Broken Grades - a free Webinar with Ken O'Connor on Effective Grading

The grades students receive should reflect what they have actually learned. What should teachers eliminate in the grading process for that to happen? What should they do to make grades support learning?

Ken O'Connor, author of *A Repair Kit for Grading: 15 Fixes for Broken Grades*, will explore the answers to these questions, and describe grading practices that result in accurate and meaningful communications about student learning.

Fifteen Fixes for Broken Grades: 11 a.m. - Noon ET - Monday, January 28, 2008; Friday, February 15, 2008; or Monday, March 10, 2006. Register now for the free webinar at <http://www.ets.org/webinar/fifteenfixes.html>

SOME FUNDING AND AWARD OPPORTUNITIES (and a bit more)

VSA Arts Playwright Discovery Program

The VSA arts Playwright Discovery Program invites middle and high school students to take a closer look at the world around them, examine how disability affects their lives and the lives of others, and express their views through the art of playwriting. Playwrights may write from their own experience or about an experience in the life of another person or fictional character. Young playwrights with and without disabilities are encouraged to submit a script. Entries may be the work of an individual student or collaboration by a group or class of students.

Students in grades 6-12 who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the U.S. are eligible applicants.

The winning play will be professionally produced at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The winning playwright receives \$2,000 and a trip to Washington, D.C., to see his/her play performed.

All submissions must be postmarked by April 11, 2008 for consideration.

<http://www.vsarts.org/x244.xml>

Professional Development for Arts Educators (PDAE) Program

This program supports the implementation of high-quality professional development model programs in music, dance, drama, media arts, or visual arts, including folk arts, for arts educators and other instructional staff of kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) students in high-poverty schools. Grants are intended to strengthen the capacity of teachers and schools to deliver standards-based arts education programs and to raise student academic achievement in the arts and ensure that all students meet challenging State academic content standards.

This program has one absolute priority. This priority requires that all professional development programs covered under this grant for K-12 arts educators and other instructional staff that use innovative instructional methods and current knowledge from education research and focus on--

(1) The development, enhancement, or expansion of standards-based arts education programs; or

(2) The integration of standards-based arts instruction with other core academic area content.

To be eligible for PDAE Program funds, applicants must propose to carry out professional development programs for arts educators and other instructional staff of K-12 low-income children and youth by implementing projects in schools in which 50 percent or more of the children enrolled are from low-income families (based on the poverty criteria in Title I, section 1113(a)(5) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (ESEA)). In addition, a partnership must be formed with one or more of the following:

- (1) A state or local nonprofit or governmental arts organization;
- (2) A state educational agency or regional educational service agency;
- (3) An institution of higher education; and/or
- (4) A public or private agency, institution, or organization, including a museum, an arts education association, a library, a theater, or a community- or faith-based organization.

Awards will range from \$100,000 to \$350,000 for the first year of the project. Funding for the second and third years is subject to the availability of funds and the approval of continuation awards. Approximately 30 awards will be made. Applications must be transmitted by February 29, 2008. <http://a257.g.akamai.net/7/257/2422/01jan20081800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/E8-217.htm>

Arts in Education Model Development and Dissemination Grant Program

The Arts in Education Model Development and Dissemination Grant (AEMDD) program supports the enhancement, expansion, documentation, evaluation, and dissemination of innovative, cohesive models that are based on research and have demonstrated that they effectively--(1) integrate standards-based arts education into the core elementary and middle school curriculum; (2) strengthen standards-based arts instruction in these grades; and (3) improve students' academic performance, including their skills in creating, performing, and responding to the arts. Projects funded through the AEMDD program are intended to increase the amount of nationally available information on effective models for arts education that integrate the arts with standards-based education programs.

All applications must propose projects that enhance, expand, document, evaluate, and disseminate innovative, cohesive models that are based on research and have demonstrated their effectiveness in (1) integrating standards-based arts

education into the core elementary or middle school curriculum, (2) strengthening standards-based arts instruction in the elementary or middle school grades, and (3) improving the academic performance of students in elementary or middle school grades, including their skills in creating, performing, and responding to the arts.

Applicants that propose an evaluation plan that is based on rigorous scientifically based research methods to assess the effectiveness of a particular intervention will be eligible to earn up to 20 competitive preference points.

To be eligible for AEMDD funds, applicants must propose to address the needs of low-income children by carrying out projects that serve at least one elementary or middle school in which 35 percent or more of the children enrolled are from low-income families (based on data used in meeting the poverty criteria in Title I, Section 1113(a)(5) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (ESEA)).

Eligible applicants are:

- (1) One or more local educational agencies (LEAs), including charter schools that are considered LEAs under State law and regulations, that may work in partnership with one or more of the following:
 - (a) A State or local non-profit or governmental arts organization,
 - (b) A State educational agency (SEA) or regional educational service agency,
 - (c) An institution of higher education, or
 - (d) A public or private agency, institution, or organization, such as a community- or faith-based organization; or
- (2) One or more State or local non-profit or governmental arts organizations that must work in partnership with one or more LEAs and may partner with one or more of the following:
 - (a) An SEA or regional educational service agency,
 - (b) An institution of higher education, or
 - (c) A public or private agency, institution, or organization, such as a community- or faith-based organization.

The U.S. Department of Education expects to make 14 awards that will range from \$225,000 to \$275,000 for the first year of the program.

The deadline to submit a Notice of Intent to Apply is February 13, 2008.

Applications must be transmitted by March 14, 2008. <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20081800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/E8-449.htm>

Fiskars Project Orange Thumb Grants

Fiskars Project Orange ThumbSM grants give Fiskars Garden Tools and materials such as plants, seeds, mulch, etc. to eligible gardening groups. Maximum Award: \$1,500 in implements and materials. Eligibility: gardens and/or gardening projects geared toward community involvement, neighborhood beautification, horticultural education and/or sustainable agriculture. Deadline: February 15, 2008. http://www.fiskars.com/content/garden_en_us/Garden/Community/project+orange+thumb

YSA American Young Ambassadors Program

The American Young Ambassadors Program, Ltd. global leadership program recognizes the significant accomplishments academically, athletically or through public service efforts of U.S. high school students. The youth selected for this program will represent the United States as Young Ambassadors-at-large at the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, China. Maximum Award: Four days in Beijing during the 2008 Summer Olympics. While at the Olympics, the Young Ambassadors will be volunteering at various venues; hosting a youth summit; and hosting several leadership receptions including an International Sports Leadership Reception with world-accomplished athletes and a World Leaders Reception with heads of state and leaders of corporations. Eligibility: youth ages 15-18. Deadline: March 3, 2008. <http://www.servenet.org>

TEACHER TO RANGER TO TEACHER (TRT) PROGRAM

National parks enrich the lives of many in this nation. They provide access to the powerful ideas, values, and meanings associated with the remarkable cultural, natural, and recreational heritage of the United States. The National Park Service (NPS) strives to provide opportunities for all Americans to connect to their national heritage through the national parks. However, these opportunities are lacking for some - often due to a variety of social and economic factors.

The Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) Program offers a solution, by linking National Park units with teachers from low income school districts. Under this program, selected teachers spend the summer working as park rangers, often living in the park. They perform various duties depending on their interests and the needs of the park, including developing and presenting interpretive programs for the general public, staffing the visitor center desk, developing curriculum-based materials for the park, or taking on special projects.

Then, during the school year, these teacher-rangers bring the parks into the classroom by developing and presenting curriculum-based lesson plans that draw on their summer's experience.

<http://www.nps.gov/wupa/forteachers/trt.htm>

NCSS Outstanding Social Studies Teacher of the Year Award

Outstanding Social Studies Teacher of the Year Awards recognize exceptional classroom social studies teachers for grades K-6, 5-8, and 7-12 who teach social studies regularly and systematically in elementary, and at least half time in middle or junior high, and high school settings. Maximum Award: \$2,500. Eligibility: Anyone may nominate. Self-nominations will be accepted. NCSS Membership is required. Social studies teachers for grades K-6, 5-8, and 7-12 who teach social studies regularly and systematically in elementary school settings, and at least half time in middle/junior high and high school settings. Deadline: April 1, 2008. <http://www.socialstudies.org/awards/teaching/>

EESC's Engineering Education Poster Contest

"Green Engineering" is the theme for the Engineering Education Service Center's (EESC) 2008 Poster Contest.

Posters should be fun and motivational and inspire students to pursue a degree in engineering, technology, or science. The grand prize is \$200. A second-place winner will receive \$100, and a third-place winner will receive \$50. Honorable mentions to be awarded at judges' discretion. All winners will also receive a certificate.

Submission deadline is February 15, 2008.

For more information, eligibility requirements or to submit an entry, please visit <http://engineeringedu.com/contest.htm>