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21st Century Workforce

By Patricia Koehler

We all want our students to be successful in life. Our greatest hope is to see them in satisfying careers. In its compelling 2006 report, *Tough Choices or Tough Times*, (www.skillscommission.org/executive.htm) the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce states that in a competitive and decentralized global economy, even highly skilled workers are in danger of losing their jobs to overseas competitors who can work from afar for a much lower wage. This is a world, the commission argues, "in which comfort with ideas and abstractions is the passport to a good job, in which creativity and innovation are the key to a good life, in which high levels of education — a very different kind of education than most of us have had—is going to be the only security there is." Now in 2009 we know this to be very true.

The need for a better and differently prepared U.S. workforce is indisputable. Today's global economy has created a high demand for intellectually strong workers who are capable of solving complex problems and developing innovative services and products. Numerous reports have documented the significant changes in the world economy brought about, in part, by globalization and automation, and by the growing demand for Americans to master advanced skills, from mathematics to problem-solving and working more creatively.

How do we, as educators, enable our students to learn all the skills that will help them to be good employees and good citizens? How do we set goals to prepare them academically, as well as equip them with learning and thinking skills, global awareness, information and communication technology, literacy, and life skills?

Hank Bounds, superintendent of education of the state of Mississippi, believes that the redesigning of education for the 21st Century workforce will need to utilize several strategies that will require us to think beyond the traditional classroom. Some suggestions

he offers are service learning, cooperative learning, and project learning.

Recently, while attending a Northern Sector NADCO meeting, I had the opportunity to listen to Terry Clark, assistant superintendent of the Bethpage school district, a teacher, and a Bethpage High School student share how they are utilizing 21st Century skill strategies to redesign learning, making it beneficial for students. Through an optional program that they have established, students are enjoying taking responsibility

for their own learning and accomplishing invaluable learning experiences. It was clear to me that they captured the message of *Tough Choices or Tough Times*. The core problem is that our education and training systems were built for another era. We can only get where we must go by changing the system itself. *Congratulations Bethpage for taking the leap!*



Foundation Skills Wheel developed by Pennsylvania's Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE).
<http://www.pawerc.org/foundationskills/cwp/view.asp?Q=92970>

Upcoming Events

Discovery Education Streaming for Beginners



When: March 20th
Time: 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
Where: Administrative Center

Social Networking in Education Roundtable

When: March 30th
Time: 9:00–11:00 a.m.
Where: One Merrick Avenue Center

Discovery Education for Advanced Users

When: March 20th
Time: 12:30–3:00 p.m.
Where: Administrative Center

Using Portable Interactive Products

When: April 28th
Time: 9:00–11:00 a.m.
Where: One Merrick Avenue Center

Lunch and Learn

Tom Snyder Productions

When: March 25th

Pasco's Spark Science Learning System

When: March 31st

Where: All Lunch and Learn sessions will be held at One Merrick Avenue Center, Westbury, from 12:00–2:00 p.m.

For more information on the upcoming events, visit www.nassauboces.org/cit/mcs

Digital Media

School to Work: Essential Skills

This site shows students how school experiences relate to work and to life. The basic literacy and computational skills, thinking skills, and personal self-management skills are learned in school. www.discoveryeducation.com

Making a Successful Transition from School to Work

This segment discusses the essential skills and personal qualities learned in school to be used in the workforce. The skills identified in the segment include basic English, math, communication, and thinking skills.

Discovery Education: www.discoveryeducation.com

Great New Titles for Children and Young Adults

The American Library Association (ALA) presents annual awards to honor the year's publication of outstanding books and videos for children and young adults.

These awards are presented at an Awards Ceremony during the ALA Midwinter Conference. Included are the Caldecott medal, Newbery medal, Corretta Scott King award, and Geisel award, software, recordings, graphic novels, and other author awards. The press release is posted on the Web site immediately following the ceremony. At the same time, ACLS, the division for children's librarians, selects a list of over 70 titles of Notable Books for Children (up to 14 years of age). BBYA (Best Books for Young Adults) is selected by young adult librarians (12 to 14 years). This is a list of over 70 titles appropriate for older readers. The lists of outstanding videos, paperbacks and books can be found at the ALA site (www.ala.org).



Please note that each committee is made up of librarians and other people, and they all must be knowledgeable and interested in quality literature for children and young adults. It is the responsibility of each committee member to read and review hundreds of titles published that year. The committee meets face-to-face twice a year, with continued conversations via the Internet. Lists of discussion books for many of the committees are posted at the ALA Web site along with the specific criterion for each award.

Consider these new titles to engage students and enhance resources for your curriculum. Check with your school librarian to borrow them and for more information about any of the titles. For a list of winners and press releases: www.nassauboces.org/nsis/ALA2009.htm

Research

Are They Really Ready for Work?

Many young people entering the workforce lack critical skills essential for success. Young people need a combination of basic academic and applied skills.

http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/documents/FINAL_REPORT_PDF09-29-06.pdf

Technology and Workforce Skills

Students must have access to the technical, digital and career pathway skills necessary for success in the global economy.

www.edtechactionnetwork.org/schools_workforce.html

Formative Assessments Made Easy

There are multiple ways to assess whether learning is taking place in the classroom: teacher observation, student projects and reports, and formal assessments, to name a few. The Nassau BOCES Instructional Data Warehouse (IDW) is now providing to districts the opportunity to administer various forms of formative assessments using the Nassau BOCES IDW service. We can scan your data, or districts can scan their own data if they belong to the Nassau BOCES Scanning Service. Data are then loaded into the IDW. Districts receive standard IDW Item Analysis reports that show a summary of all the assessments recorded during a student's enrollment in the district (ChAP), and sometimes Gap reports are available.

Second-Grade End-of-Year Assessment

Last fall, a group of teachers from 12 districts worked with Patricia Iannacone and Dr. Elaine Zsellar, both from Data Analysis and Curriculum Support (DACs), on the Grade 2 End-of-Year assessment project. They deconstructed questions from past New York State third-grade assessments, and then worked collaboratively to construct their own questions, including evaluating item difficulty. The resulting multiple choice assessment, which mimicked the NYS assessments, will be administered at the end of this school year to second-graders at the participating school districts. The resulting district data will be benchmarked against the aggregate data from all participating districts to provide an analysis tool from which the districts may determine areas of strength and weakness in the second-grade curriculum and instruction.

Pre-Tests

This year, several districts participated in our ELA and math pre-tests. Districts administered a past NYS Assessment to the current grade level to assess student knowledge at that point in time. At our February IDW User Group Meeting, Lisa Ruiz, assistant superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and

Pupil Services, Merrick UFSD, along with Eric Arlin, principal of the Birch Elementary School, shared with the group how they used the ELA pre-test to differentiate instruction for students, as well as to examine results by grade-level and teacher. By reviewing the data as a group, the teachers started a dialogue and were able to draw from each others' strengths to bolster weaknesses where present.

Spring ELA Pre-Test

New this spring, the IDW will provide districts the opportunity to administer a past ELA NYS assessment to their students. For example, 4th-grade students will take a 5th-grade assessment. Student responses can be scanned and scored by Nassau BOCES and loaded into the IDW. The results will assist districts in determining which interventions and/or enrichment students will need when they enter school in September.

K-1 Literacy Profile

New to the IDW formative assessment offerings for '09-10 is a K-1 Literacy Profile. This profile will be created by the Data Analysis and Curriculum Support group. They will work with a group of district representatives to finalize the assessment which will be administered to students in the fall and spring to test growth. The profile will be comprised of a compilation of early literacy skill sets. The districts will be able to view their resulting data benchmarked against the aggregate of participating districts (if five or more districts participate).

The Nassau BOCES Instructional Data Warehouse services 54 of our component districts and over 200,000 students. Our goal is to provide the tools necessary to enable effective instruction. We continue to update our services and encourage feedback from our component districts. For more information contact **Helene Karo at (516) 608-6699** or email hkaro@mail.nasboces.org.

Tech Toys

Chill Pill Mobile Speakers

This is a set of ultraportable speakers that's ideal for educators on the go. When not in use, the two speakers are held together by built-in magnetic locks and stored as a sleek capsule that measures only 2 by 4 inches. With a 3.5-millimeter plug, the speakers plug in to any computer or laptop to produce impressive sound. The Chill Pill is powered by a rechargeable lithium-ion battery that lasts for about six hours.

www.smalldog.com/product/71679



DXI Input System by Ergodex

The DX1 Input System is an assistive device that helps students who have trouble using a standard keyboard and mouse control for their computers. This device is a series of 25 keys that come with an 8 by 10 inch pad. The user can place the keys separately or in groups anywhere on the pad, and can assign them to perform any function, creating a customized keyboard based on individual needs. Once they're placed, the keys can be moved to accommodate a variety of users. The device connects to PCs using a USB cable, and supports Windows 2000 and XP operating systems.

www.ergodex.com/mainpage.htm

For information on any of CIT's programs, including back issues of CIT Response, up-to-date education news, NCLB, special reports, new services, and more, visit the Curriculum, Instruction and Technology Web site at: www.nassauboces.org/cit

April Spotlight: Westbury Middle School Math Teacher

By Tammy Link, tlink@westburyschools.org

When I first began teaching mathematics to English Language Learners, one could say I felt like a duck out of water. I started teaching as I would have any other math class, but it was not too long before I realized that I needed to change my approach. I could waddle my way through the situation and hope that my schedule for next year would be different, or I could learn from the students and adapt to my surroundings.

It did not occur to me right away, but I realized that I was not the duck out of water, my students were. Although I was not taught how to handle ELLs, my students were thrust into a situation where they did not even know the language that I was using to communicate with them. I stopped feeling sorry for myself and my schedule, and focused my attention on my craft, teaching. Since my students did not speak English — and I did not speak Spanish or Haitian-Creole — I needed to learn how to communicate with them in ways other than through verbal or written language. I quickly realized that my students were mainly visual learners... and a picture is worth a thousand words. So I decided to think a bit outside the box, and introduced project-based learning through an online resource provided by the textbook company we used in our school. My classroom was transformed from a painful rote training station to a truly vibrant experiential learning environment, where each of my students became zookeepers stocking and caring for a zoo of their own design and maintenance.

The project-based learning opportunity brought my ducklings right back into the pond. They took the opportunity to engage themselves in a real-life experience, and loved it! The project was wonderful. The students understood the concepts that I was teaching, and so much more, but the project took a long time to complete. We did not always have access to the tools we needed to complete it, and my supervisors were looking at

what I was going to do with my students when the novelty wore off and we would need to get into some more “traditional” methods of math.

I could not tell my fragile ducklings that they needed to learn to waddle out of the water, after they had finally felt like they were swimming. So, I began to look for a less traditional method of instruction that would allow my ducklings to waddle. At that time, I was attending a workshop through Nassau BOCES that introduced me to the Smart Board and the Notebook software. That is when I began creating lessons on the Smart Board and introduced the new technology to my students. My students began to become more attentive and wanted to be a part of the lessons. They enjoyed getting out of their seats to solve problems on the board. I also began using my students to help teach new entrants. They would pay close attention to me as I introduced a new topic in English, and students would model the lesson in their native language to the other students. My lessons were now very visual and I had the capability to pull up pictures when comprehension of vocabulary was a problem. The results were huge. Their self-confidence increased and they truly enjoyed learning math. Almost all of my English Language Learners who took the NYS Math Assessment the previous year had increased their scores by at least one whole level.

Although it is no secret that today’s students are visual learners who have an aptitude for educational technology, I never thought that bringing the Smart Board into the classroom would inspire and excite them to learn. My ELL students, who had previously been pushed aside by others because of the language barriers, were no longer acting as though they were pushed out of their comfortable pond to waddle through the world of math. Instead, they left their comfortable little pond of familiarity and began to fly in the world of success and achievement.

Free Resources

The **Newseum** displays these daily newspaper front pages in their original, unedited form. Some front pages may contain material that is objectionable to some visitors. Viewer discretion is advised. If you place the mouse on a city, wait a few moments, and then double click, the newspaper headlines will pop up.

www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages/flash/

CNN Student News

Geared for secondary school students, this offshoot of CNN not only posts the latest news but also supplements articles with maps, transcripts, videos, classroom activities, quizzes, one-sheet backgrounders on newsy topics, and links to related articles. www.cnn.com/studentnews/

Free Rice

FreeRice engages kids with online quizzes in chemistry, art, grammar, vocabulary, geography, math, and foreign languages. For every correct answer your students give, FreeRice will donate 20 grains of rice to those in need. It takes 20,000 grains to feed one person for one day, but students’ widespread participation will help the fight to end world hunger. <http://freerice.com/>



Adobe Coldfusion 8 for Educators

High school students now have access to Adobe’s ColdFusion software to help them develop Web applications and expand their tech prowess. <http://freeriatools.adobe.com/coldfusion/>