

Tech Toys

Free Online Tutoring

In the last decade, hiring tutors has become the rage for parents eager to boost their children's skills. But the hefty fees can be a killer. Luckily, there's help to be found on the Internet — and it won't cost a thing.

There are 22 free educational Web sites geared for ages 8 through college for ease of use and content. We posed sample questions to see if their resources were helpful and varied, and assessed quizzes, review sheets, reference materials, multimedia offerings (like video and audio explanations), and more. We also consulted certified middle- and high-school teachers to ensure the lessons are grade-appropriate. Here's our report card on the top tutoring sites.

HippoCampus: www.hippocampus.org

CliffsNotes: www.cliffsnotes.com/WileyCDA

SparkNotes: www.sparknotes.com

FactMonster: www.factmonster.com

Infoplease: www.infoplease.com

Kid-Friendly Medical Dictionary

"What's a germ?" "Why does my stomach hurt?" "Why do cuts heal?" Kids who are sick or injured often have a lot of questions. And parents frequently wonder what the answer really is, and how to talk about medical information in ways their kids will understand.

Kids think about their bodies in very visual, literal ways. Therefore, experts recommend parents answer medical questions using age-appropriate, simple, easy-to-visualize terms. Be brief, and only tell your child what he/she needs to know, as too much information may be overwhelming. At the same time, respect your child's intelligence and try not to dumb ideas down.

www.pbs.org/parents/talkingwithkids/health/med_index_1.html

Long Island Technology Summit 2009

Join us for a day of bringing new ideas to life, connecting information and trends, and the pursuit of innovation!

Keynote speakers are David Warlick and Will Richardson. David Warlick is the creator of Landmarks for Schools, <http://landmark-project.com> which receives more than a half-million visits a day with some of the most popular teacher tools available on the Internet. Will Richardson is the author of the highly ranked and read blog entitled Weblogg-ed, at <http://weblogg-ed.com>.

Break out sessions include:

- Extending Your Personal Learning Network
- Managing a Google School
- Avoiding Information Overload

When: October 28

Where: Long Island Hilton, Melville, NY

Information: www.nassauboces.cit/techsummit

facebook

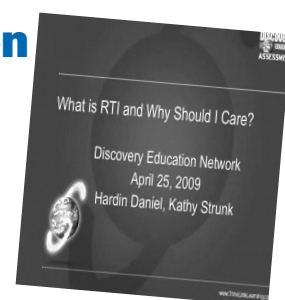


Be sure to follow us on Twitter at [litechsummit09](https://twitter.com/litechsummit09) and become a fan of LI Tech Summit 09 on Facebook.



Discovery Education RTI Presentation:

What is RTI and Why Should I Care?



<http://mediashare.discoveryeducation.com/assets/21EFCADA-1CC4-4143-6A64-D81BCB7620C8/DENVC-6-RTI.m4v>

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

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Watch for our November
issue featuring ELA!

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BOCES

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Response to Intervention

By Laverne Mitchell

For years, schools have attempted to provide help to struggling learners using a variety of approaches — including programs such as teacher assistance teams, special education, Title I (early reading and math assistance) and Academic Intervention Services (AIS). In 2004, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was signed into law, making provisions for school districts to provide additional support for struggling students within general education.

This support should be provided as soon as students show the earliest signs of difficulty. The current focus is on an improved research-based process known as Response-to-Intervention (RTI).

What is Response-to-Intervention (RTI)?

The RTI process is a multi-tiered approach to providing services and interventions to students who struggle with learning at increasing levels of intensity. The progress students make at each stage of the intervention is closely monitored. Results of monitoring are used to make decisions about the need for further research-based instruction and/or intervention in general education, in special education, or in both.

The RTI process has the potential to limit the amount of academic failure that any student experiences and to increase the accuracy of special education evaluations. Its use can also reduce the number of children who are mistakenly identified as having learning disabilities when their learning problems are actually due to cultural differences or lack of adequate instruction. Information and data gathered by an RTI process can lead

to earlier identification of children who have true disabilities and are in need of special education services.

Essential Components of RTI

According to the National Research Center on Learning Disabilities (NRCLD), www.nrclid.org, the essential components of Response-to-Intervention include:

- Monitoring the student's progress in the general curriculum using appropriate screenings or assessments
- Choosing and implementing scientifically proven interventions to address a student's learning problems
- Following formal guidelines to decide which students are not making sufficient progress or responding to the intervention
- Monitoring how the student responds to the intervention by using assessments at least once a week or once every two weeks
- Making sure the interventions are provided accurately and consistently
- Determining the level of support that a student needs in order to be successful
- Giving parents notice of a referral and a request to conduct a formal evaluation if a disability is suspected, as required by IDEA.

The School District's Role

All districts in New York State are required to have an RTI program in place by July 1, 2012. This will be part of the process which determines if a student in grades K-4 is a student with a learning disability in the area of reading. The New York State Education Department (NYSED) has established a policy framework for RTI. This is outlined in memo form and can be accessed at <http://vesid32.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/RTI>.

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Who's Who at Nassau BOCES

My name is **Regina Moraitis** and I am the new Distance Education Coordinator at Nassau BOCES. Before coming to work at BOCES, I worked as an Instructional Technology Teacher/Staff Developer.

I was responsible for working with students, teachers and administrators in order to incorporate instructional technology into the curriculum.

Throughout the years, I have had the experience of working with many different types of educational technology, including Videoconferencing, SMARTBoards, Senteos, online learning programs, and several student data management systems. I am very excited about my new position in the Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Technology, and I look forward to being part of the team at Nassau BOCES.

For more info call 516-606-6643 or email me at rmoraiti@mail.nasboces.org.



Reading Matters

Many different Response to Intervention (RTI) plans exist to meet the needs of students. Encouraging free voluntary reading is one choice to respond to the needs for RTI. It only requires access to a library and involves no really expensive or complicated equipment.

According to the American Association of School Librarians Standards for the 21st Century Learner, "reading is a foundational skill for learning, personal growth, and enjoyment" and "an indicator of success in school and life." Successful reading implies decoding and comprehension leading to interpretation and development of new understanding. Linguistics expert, Stephen Krashen's ongoing research confirms that reading more often results in better reading comprehension, better writing style, better grammar, better spelling, and better vocabulary. Reading is a lifelong learning skill.

Good quality reading entails anything that engages the reader/student. Reading is a 21st Century Skill in a variety of formats, which include a traditional book, listening to an audio book, even reading text on the Internet. Reading selections should be made by the student, with recommendations from other readers, librarians, parents, as well as outside sources to recommend selections. For more information contact Eva Efron at eeffron@mail.nasboces.org.

Middle-Level Summit

As an attendee at the Middle-Level Summit, in August 2009, I was asked to summarize the event. My first response was made up of one word responses:

- **collaborative**
- **challenging**
- **motivating**
- **networking**
- **enlightening**

Collaborative: As representatives from different organizations, we all worked together. Not just educational and not just middle-level educators. The common focus and goal was "the best educational options for kids."

Challenging: The tasks have just begun, due to our conversations over those two meetings.

Motivating: The positive feeling was contagious! There is work to be done but everyone was motivated to work collaboratively.

Networking: Because so many different groups were represented, this was a wonderful networking opportunity. Special guests included Chancellor Tisch, from the New York State Board of Regents; Dr. Shelia Evans-Tranum, New York State Education Department Associate Commissioner; James Viola, Chair of the Governor's Dropout Prevention Statewide Organizations Workgroup, to name a few.

Enlightening: It was enlightening to discover how much information there is to assimilate, how many of us are moving toward the same goal, how many are duplicating (reinventing the wheel), and lastly, why should we? You can learn more at: <http://www.nysmsa.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=18>. For more information contact Eva Efron at eeffron@mail.nasboces.org.

See all the latest Fall Professional Development offerings Nassau BOCES' CIT has to offer:
<http://nassauboces.org/cit/catalog/current/index.htm>

Early Literacy

K-1 Early Literacy Profile Project Now Available Through the Instructional Data Warehouse (IDW) Service

New to the IDW formative assessment offerings for 2009–2010 is a K–1 Early Literacy Profile project.

Using the New York State Early Literacy Profile (ELP) assessment tool, districts will be able to administer the Group Rhyme Awareness, Lower Case Alphabet Recognition, Letter-Sound Knowledge, Spelling and Word Identification portions of the assessment to grades K and 1. The assessment is given in both the fall and spring, and various reports will be available to teachers and administrators in the IDW. Districts will be able to view their resulting data benchmarked against the aggregate of participating districts (if five or more districts participate).

We continue to update our services and encourage feedback from our component districts. **For more information, contact Helene Karo at (516) 608-6699 or hkar@mail.nasboces.org, or Rose Baum at (516) 608-6673 or rbaum@mail.nasboces.org.**

Professional Development Services is also offering two-hour training, “Administering the Early Literacy Profile for the Nassau BOCES Instructional Data Warehouse.” Educators who are responsible for monitoring K–1 students’ early literacy progress will learn how to assess students in the following five areas:

- Group Rhyme Awareness
- Alphabet Knowledge (Lower Case Alphabet Recognition)
- Letter-Sound Knowledge
- Spelling
- High Frequency Word Identification

Participants will also learn how to complete the scanform for entry into the Nassau BOCES Instructional Data Warehouse.

For more information about professional development, contact Trish Iannacone at (516) 608-6662 or piannaco@mail.nasboces.org or click on the link to register in My Learning Plan: www.nassauboces.org/cit/catalog/pd/FALL09/IDW.htm.

Upcoming Events

Carnegie Learning

When: October 2

Study Island

When: October 6

Day of Discovery

When: October 7

Apple Seminar

When: October 21

User Management Resource Administrator

When: October 21

Discovery Education Streaming Training

When: October 23

Weaving the Pieces: RTI Collegial Circle

When: September 29, October 27, November 19, January 12, February 9, March 11, April 13, and May 11, 2010

Guidance Trainings:

Naviance Counselors Training

When: September 29, 30 and October 9

Guidance Direct User Group

When: October 6

Naviance User Group

When: October 7

Bridges User Group

When: October 29

eDocs Training

When: October 30

All are being held at the Robert E. Lupinski Center for Curriculum, Instruction and Technology.

For more information and to register, visit our Web site at: www.nassauboces.org/cit/it/mcs.

Response to Intervention

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The School’s Role

Continuous progress monitoring is a fundamental and necessary component of RTI. The information gathered through progress monitoring is used throughout the RTI process to make important instructional decisions about students. RTI is meant to be applied on a school-wide basis, and the careful analysis of performance data for all students is critical to success. It provides evidence that the school’s curriculum and instructional process is providing acceptable progress for most students.

The Teacher’s Role

The goal of RTI is to reduce the number of children entering special education due to unaddressed reading problems, by requiring early screening and intense collaborative intervention.