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ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS: Communication in the 21st Century

By: *Patricia Iannacone*

Readng, writing, speaking, listening... No matter which career path a student chooses, these are the four essential skills all students need to succeed in both work and life. In our information-driven global village, knowledge comes at us in many different forms. Whether it's video, audio, images or print, our students are not only expected to analyze, synthesize and evaluate information, but to also effectively create and communicate that information in a way other people can easily understand.

How can we effectively foster these skills in our students? The processes used for comprehension of information and the skill to respond in writing and by speaking come from:

- Using prior knowledge to construct meaning
- Summarizing
- Sequencing
- Prediction
- Making inferences
- Drawing conclusions
- Self-questioning
- Metacognition

Some strategies that educators can use in their classroom include:

- Interdisciplinary thematic units that incorporate all the above processes in a variety of activities designed to motivate all learners.

- Situate learning to read and write in real-life scenarios, i.e., authoring and presenting multimedia presentations; designing and building websites; writing scripts; reading schedules; designing brochures, invitations, flyers and newsletters; creating and reading maps; and following recipes.

- Provide frequent opportunities to participate in discussions and dialogs around reading and writing, such as literature circles and book talks.

- Infuse technologies that promote multiple opportunities to read, write, speak and listen while producing podcasts, multimedia presentations, videoconferences, videos, blogs, wikis, and newscasts.

“One of the best predictors of whether a child will function competently in school and go on to contribute actively to society is the level to which the child progresses in reading and writing.”

—From Learning to Read and Write:
Developmentally Appropriate
Practices for Young Children

In this issue of the Nassau BOCES' CIT Response, you will find a myriad of resources to help your students become effective communicators — which will help them succeed in the 21st century workforce.

Cyber Sources

Screen Actors Guild Foundation-online streaming video program of actors/actresses reading children's books aloud! Each book has accompanying activities and ideas for classroom discussion. K-5

www.storylineonline.net/

PBS Teachers provide a searchable database of PBS ELA lesson plans, activities, and multimedia resources for teachers and students. K-12

www.pbs.org/teachers/readlanguage/

Use Google maps to follow literary work, such as "Night," by Eli Weisel, or "Make Way for Ducklings." (Google Earth) www.googlelitrips.org

This site has several interactive flash files such as a Learning Puzzle that is designed as a jigsaw puzzle. The student can create pieces and connect each piece, with text, to others. www.classtools.net

Thinkfinity has many resources to choose from. You can search items from Reading and Language Arts. There are hundreds to choose from.

www.thinkfinity.org

Web English Teacher—K-12 English/Language Arts teaching resources: lesson plans, WebQuests, videos, biography, e-texts, criticism, jokes, puzzles, and classroom activities. www.webenglishteacher.com

Upcoming Events

Naviance Training for Guidance Counselors

When: October 2nd and 8th

SchoolWires Lunch & Learn

When: October 6th

Network Security Lunch & Learn

When: October 7th

Progress Book Lunch & Learn

When: October 21st

Discovery Education Streaming Training

When: October 23rd

ParentLink Lunch & Learn

When: October 27th

Naviance edudocs Training for Guidance Counselors

When: October 28th

Naviance User group meeting

When: October 28th

For more information, visit
www.nassauboces.org/cit/it/mcs

ELA and the School Library

The basic philosophy of the New York State ELA Standards is using and understanding language. It is not merely enough to have the knowledge; the student needs to use that knowledge and ability. Students are expected to use language to think critically, make informed and reasoned judgments, produce, invent, critique, and analyze. All of these skills can be practiced through the school library program with the school librarian as the exemplary role model.

Determining the need for information is the start of producing and inventing information. Students can think critically using appropriate search methods and terminology to find the answers to their questions.

Making informed decisions, such as recognizing bias, is one example of knowledgeable and reasonable judgments. Critiquing and analyzing is demonstrated by teaching students to confirm the reliability and validity of searches. Each of these skills can be practiced separately or be included in a long term research project. This is 21st Century learning.

The school library is a place for students to learn and reinforce the 21st Skills they are expected to master for the ELA Standards. Classroom teachers and the school librarian will work together to provide avenues for students to learn the skills necessary to be successful on standardized tests, as well as life-long learning skills.

Tech Toys

Franklin Speaking Spelling Bee Handheld

This handheld device from Franklin allows students to compete in a virtual spelling bee — with features including a full slide-out keyboard, three playing modes and multiple difficulty settings. Just like in a real bee, students can request a word's definition or origin, or ask to hear a word used in a sentence. The game's memory also includes the entire "Merriam-Webster's Intermediate Dictionary and Thesaurus and Rhyming Dictionary," and can be plugged into a television, allowing up to ten players to compete. Intended for ages 8 and up.



www.franklin.com

The TV Teacher

These DVDs use a combination of singing and repetitive instruction to teach elementary students the written alphabet. In 5-minute segments hosted by "Miss Marnie," each letter chapter uses 8–10 vocabulary words, making it easy to incorporate the videos into any existing alphabet program. Students will also learn about various topics such as body parts, musical instruments, colors, and opposites, while they learn letters. These DVDs are available in uppercase or lowercase editions, or in a set of both.

www.tvteachervideos.com

Mimio has introduced a product that brings life to the everyday whiteboard used in classrooms nationwide, making it an interactive whiteboard *in a flash*. New hardware allows teachers to connect a portable device to the side of a traditional whiteboard and use a pointer (complete with ultrasound sensors) to click and write on the board. The teacher's annotations then can be saved in a computer file, just as with an electronic whiteboard. The device is removable, therefore, schools that once had to lug cumbersome whiteboards from class to class can now simply hand over the Mimio interactive system when they are done. www.mimio.com

Model School Offerings

Nassau Reading Council — Lifelong Readers and Writers

When: October 2, 30; November 6; December 4 and January 29, 2009

WRS Introductory Workshop/Applied Methods

When: October 8, 15 and 22

Implementing Writer's Workshop

When: October 8, 15, 22, 29; November 12

A Six-Trait Approach to Teaching Writing in the Middle School

When: October 8

ELA Coordinators Collegial Circle

When: October 14; March 24 and June 2, 2009

Overview of the ELA and Math NYS Assessments

When: October 15

FUNDATIONS — Wilson Language Basics

When: October 17

Interactive Clouds for Guided Reading

When: October 20

A New Look at Nonfiction Writing in the Middle School

When: October 23

"Engage with the Page" Social Studies and Science Content Area Reading Strategies

When: October 28

Creating Lessons That Support Differentiated Instruction

When: October 28

For more information and registration:

<http://nassauboces.org/cit/catalog/pd/Catalogindex.htm>

2008 Technology Summit

2020 Vision Now: Global Connections

A thread of conversations and learning experiences will highlight the 2008 Technology Summit facilitated by Dr. Ray Jorgensen. Brought to you by Nassau BOCES and Western Suffolk BOCES, this year's Technology Summit will provide a series of unique and engaging learning experiences for educational leaders — including the World Café.

Keynote speakers include Philadelphia's School of the Future Technology Architect, Mary Culliane, and noted educator and technologist, Ian Jukes. You'll share in special presentations on making global connections and implementing global curriculum presented by the Herricks and Massapequa school districts, and observe a live, international student panel connecting students in the US with other countries. A special leaders panel will explore the future of schools and learning. This panel facilitated by Dr. Ray Jorgensen will include our keynote speakers along with superintendents Dr. William Johnson, Dr. John Beirworth, and businessmen Tom Murphy and Bob Longo.

Students in the 21st Century must be prepared to enter a workforce that utilizes technology to connect the world. Acquiring 21st Century technology skills and knowledge has never been more important in our society. Businesses are positioning themselves for future success and growth through the recruitment of a workforce that demonstrates creativity, innovation, flexibility, and collaboration. As a result of advances in technology, a diverse workforce can consist of employees from across the world. You will engage in a variety of sessions that will explore:

- How can our schools ensure that students are prepared to be successful in a new “flat” world?
- What are students saying about their own learning? What do they need?
- What are the business and educational leaders saying? What do they need?
- What would be different at your school if your principal was called the “Chief Learner?”
- What skills, knowledge, and tools do students need to be prepared for success in the 21st Century?



When: Wednesday, October 29, 2008

Time: 8:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

Where: SUNY Farmingdale College,
Farmingdale, New York

Cost: \$100.00

Includes: Continental breakfast, buffet lunch, two keynotes, panel discussions, district global project demonstrations, international video conference, vendor showcase, raffle and promotional items and more.

Visit the Summit web site to register:

www.nassauboces.org/cit/techsummit