

NEA Today

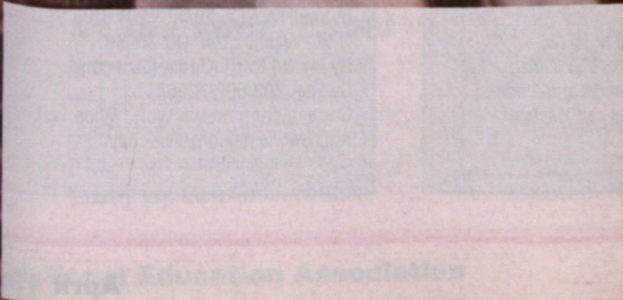
April 1997
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Washington, D.C.

Announcing the
New NEA Platinum
Plus Credit Card
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The Newspaper for
of the National Education Association

Inclusion: *Small Solutions Big to a Problem*

See page 4



April 1997

Volume 15, Number 8

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Our Responsibility for Quality

President's Viewpoint

Education is the modern world's temporal religion, or at least an article of faith. So if we seek excellence in public education, why not draw inspiration from cathedrals?

Think about the superlative craftsmanship still visible in Europe's great medieval edifices—the stone carvings, the iron grillwork, the stained glass windows.

This high quality was no accident. It resulted from craft guilds' insistence on high standards of skill, professionalism, and product quality.

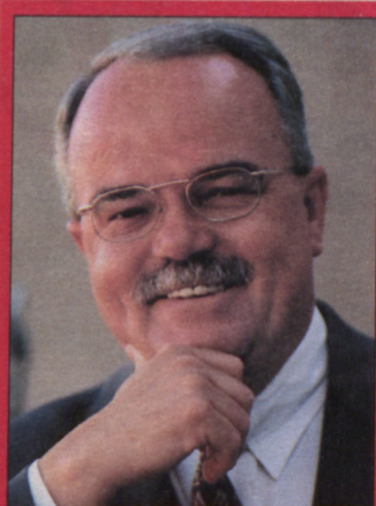
It is exactly this brand of "craft" consciousness that defines the new union we are striving to create at NEA.

Increasingly, school employees and principals are actively collaborating in the management of their schools. In some public charter schools, teachers have gone one step further—they are managing their schools collegially, without a principal.

In their quest for quality, these educators are rebelling against the industrial-style division of roles within schools—a status quo that relegates school employees to the narrow role of production workers, with no say in organizing their schools for excellence.

Likewise, they are challenging the shibboleths of their own unions. They argue—correctly, I believe—that we must match our traditional emphasis on decent salaries, benefits, and working conditions, with a more aggressive commitment to professionalism and quality.

Most boldly, a growing cadre of NEA leaders is insisting that quality must begin at home, within our own ranks. They argue that it is not suffi-



Bob Chase

Joe Di Dio

cient to collaborate with management on broader issues of school reform.

The litmus test of our commitment to quality, they say, is the willingness of local unions to take direct responsibility for the professionalism and competence of their members. For example, if a teacher is not measuring up in the classroom, we must do something about it.

Of course, in the eyes of traditional unionists, this is heresy—a threat to union solidarity and cohesion. But pathbreaking NEA locals are challenging this conventional wisdom, and proving it wrong.

In Columbus, Ohio, for example, NEA's affiliate designates senior teachers to serve as full-time consultants in the classroom. Under terms of the Columbus contract, these senior teachers—not unlike master craftsmen in a guild—serve as mentors to newly hired teachers. More critically, they intervene to assist veteran teachers who are experiencing difficulties

in the classroom.

This intensive assistance continues as long as the teacher is making progress. In most cases, the intervention is successful. But in roughly 10 percent of cases, the consultants—who, I emphasize, are members of our local affiliate—take the lead in counseling the problem teacher out of the profession.

This is difficult work, courageous work. It forces educators out of their comfort zone, and can entail political risk for teacher-leaders within their local Associations.

As one member wryly observed: "Before, we could stand on the sidelines and leave the tough calls to administrators. Eventually we might have to be the bad guys."

How else will we satisfy the public's impatience for higher quality schools—and fulfill our essential duty as an Association to protect the economic security of our members?

Centuries ago, medieval craft guilds were challenged to reinvent themselves for an industrialized, mass-production economy. Ironically, in today's post-industrial enterprises—above all in public education—unions are challenged to reconnect with their "craft" roots.

Superb public schools, like great cathedrals, require visionary builders. As we continue to reinvent our Association for a new era, our vision for the future must encompass the best of the craft guild past.

Quality—the professionalism of our members and the excellence of our product—must be our hallmark.

Bob Chase can be reached via E-mail at BobChase@nea.org.

NEA at a Glance

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Did You Know...

More than 7,000 NEA members from every state affiliate have enrolled in NEA's Women's Leadership Training Program workshops over the past 20 years to learn what they need to know to become effective advocates of public education and leaders within the Association. NEA Human and Civil Rights coordinates delivery of the training programs. For more information, contact your state affiliate.

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She's a Winner

Congratulations to Karen Mahurin, the 1997 NEA Support Person of the Year. A secretary at Sears Elementary in Kenai, Alaska, Mahurin does everything from loaning kids lunch money to recruiting parent volunteers. An Association leader par excellence, Mahurin has traveled by snowmobile and dogsled to recruit new members—and she still manages to find time to serve on the Alaska Labor Relations Board, the Kenai planning and zoning commission, and the local central labor council. For more on education support members, visit NEA's new Web page at www.nea.org/esp/.

Cover Story



Scott Suchman

4 Inclusion

Stop looking—there's no simple solution to the challenge of inclusion.

NEA Today visits with educators in several locations—each with a strategy or approach to inclusion that may help you in developing your own solutions. One successful exam-

ple: Silver Spring, Maryland teacher Eric Carter (above) emphasizes group collaboration to get his inclusive class of 30 elementary school science students pulling in the same direction.

Cover story by Mary Anne Hess

Cover photo by Ellen Banner

Neusmakers

7 At the National Level

NEA leaders look to Congress to provide a foundation for quality public schools. Now's your chance to get on the bandwagon.

8 In the Community

NEA members Shauna Waters (below, left) and Julie Denley-Page bring the joy of reading to homeless kids in Utah.



9 Out in Front

NEA members in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, build a new kind of unionism by reaching out to their community.

10 In the States

Is your governor willing to raise taxes for education? He is—if you live in Missouri.

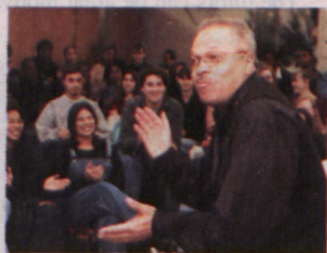
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It took two years, a lot of grit, and no small amount of shoe leather, but 20 support staffers in a small midwestern town finally get their first contract.

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Get your gray matter going with the latest on how the brain works—and a new phenom called "brain-based teaching."

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A revolutionary network created by the Kentucky Education Association connects teachers who want help with teachers who can help them.

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How far can school officials go to make schools safe? According to the courts, pretty far.

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Great Graphs Alive! A Louisiana teacher hooks her students by teaching them how to create graphs on the computer.

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Share a few April Fool's Day laughs with your colleagues. And lighten up—summer vacation isn't that far off.

36 People

With paint, a brush, and a bucket full of talent, Illinois custodian Cindy Mitchell (below) transforms hallways with marvelous murals.



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As she learns more about investing, Texas teacher Yvonne Gonzalez (below, with her family) expands her tolerance for risk. Care to join her?



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A look in the mirror confirms an Ohio teacher's worst fear—he's turned into a robot.

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General Colin Powell is busy asking corporate and civic leaders to do more for America's kids. Would you say no to this man?



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Is the segregation of ESL students discrimination? Bilingual educators from Illinois and California face off.

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Will a Utah teacher's compelling account of teaching homeless kids make you a more compassionate teacher?

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A trip to China changes a new teacher's perspective on teaching world cultures. Plus your letters on block scheduling, attention deficit, and more.

Inclusion

Educating students with disabilities in regular classrooms, far too often, generates frustration for staff and students alike. But not everywhere. Here are five schools where NEA members are forging small solutions to meet a big challenge. Their answers won't help everyone. They may help you.

In Washington State, the Power of Peer Tutoring

With only five special ed teachers, three aides, and 90 students carrying Individual Education Plans (IEPs), educators at Eastlake High School in Redmond, Washington needed to get creative.

They didn't want students with disabilities to be segregated into a few classes, unable to take advantage of the school's full curriculum.

The solution? Peer tutors—classmates who are on hand to provide extra in-class help to students with disabilities.

NEA member George Crowder (on cover), a special ed and humanities teacher who coordinates the program, credits these teenagers with helping to make inclusion a reality, from the piano lab to the gym to the humanities classroom.

Peer tutors are, of course, no substitute for a full complement of properly trained staff. But, at Eastlake, they fill an important role.

Counselors, advisors, and special ed staff screen student-applicants for the semester-long program (worth a half credit), with every

attempt made to assign tutors to assist in classes that match their interests.

Tutors don't have to be straight-A students, emphasizes Crowder. But they do have to enjoy working with others. And they've got to be trustworthy, since they log their own attendance when tutoring and are responsible for taking the initiative to help.

Ideally, Crowder would like to give peer tutors three to four hours of

training before the semester begins.

But right now they get about an hour at the start and then meet for discussion sessions a few times during the semester.

Crowder cautions the peer tutors to be sensitive to student disabilities.

"Some students want their peer tutors right next to them in class," he says. "Others don't feel comfortable with that."

The tutors can be great motivators,

Crowder adds. He's seen a boy with serious medical problems do sit-ups after lots of peer encouragement.

Tutors with musical talent are making piano lessons a reality for two girls with severe disabilities.

Another student went beyond her tutoring responsibilities, Crowder recalls, planning movie and shopping trips with the student she tutored, a recent immigrant experiencing lots of behavior problems. The relationship

had such a positive effect that the girl gained self-control and is now, in turn, a peer tutor for students with physical disabilities.

The program has proved so popular since its inception in fall 1995 that the number of peer tutors has grown from 12 to 78.

"Teenagers always get a bad rap," says Crowder. "But these students show lots of caring and concern."

He adds that the tutors "learn that when you take your eyes off yourself and know you've truly helped someone, you'll walk out of the room with a smile on your face and a good feeling about yourself."



Eastlake High School in Redmond, Washington relies on student peers to ease special needs kids into regular classrooms—from the weight room to the science lab.

Ellen Banner

SEARCHING FOR SOLUTIONS

Collaborating to the Beat in Maryland

If you ask my kids, they would never know they're in special ed," says Eric Carter of his 13 fourth and fifth graders at Highland View Elementary School in Silver Spring, Maryland.

"In fact, other kids look in the door and want to get in," he laughs.

Carter teaches an inclusive science class, so many youngsters of all abilities *do* get a chance to spend part of their day with him—and catch a little music along the way.

Carter, a lead singer and keyboardist in an award-winning reggae band, weaves his musical talents into his lesson plans.

But to get 30 kids with a wide range of talents working in harmony, Carter says, collaborative grouping is the key: "Each child has a role and knows that his or her role is important to the group's success."

The roles rotate. So, for example, special needs kids can use their manual dexterity to perform an experiment, while others can write up the experiment and do a presentation.

Carter works with an instructional assistant and a science specialist during the class, which takes place in the school's state-of-the-art lab.

To encourage a get-down-to-work atmosphere, he'll put on a CD as the kids enter the room. To spark interest in electricity, he'll incorporate some drumbeats into a lesson on negative and positive charges.

"If nothing else works, music will," he says.



"Each child has a role. . . . They push each other to do their best."

—Eric Carter, Silver Spring, Maryland



Team teaching involved "breaking down long-held attitudes about inclusion."
—Kathryn Bulle, Alamogordo, New Mexico

Integrating Team Teaching In New Mexico

It took a while for Kathryn Bulle to win over the "regular" education staff at Holloman Middle School near Alamogordo, New Mexico.

Her cause: convincing others that team teaching could make inclusion work.

Bulle, who's spent most of her 19-year teaching career in special education, went into the regular classroom six years ago to introduce the team teaching approach.

"The students liked it much better," says Bulle. "They preferred that over coming to my room and being pointed out as special ed."

But it was frustrating at first for Bulle, who did little besides sitting on the sidelines.

"Once in a while I would offer some information or offer to help grade," she recalls, "but my offer was never taken."

Staff turnover didn't help either. "It's very difficult to begin over each year," she adds.

Finally, with one seventh grade teacher, the program really took off.

"I worked with the same teacher for three years, and by the third year it was as if we thought alike," Bulle notes. "We created our own planning time when the students were in the library every two weeks. We graded papers together, especially projects. We were a team, and the students benefited."

Bulle's part of the 300-student school's regular ed staff now, teaching language arts to classes that include a wide mix of students.

Nothing's Insurmountable In Michigan

A 25-year teacher, Dan Casimir of Westwood High in Ishpeming, Michigan, remembers when educators labeled students with learning disabilities "as slow, hyper or bad."

"We shuffled them off to little rooms filled with flash cards or ribbons for prizes, left them there until they were 18, and then sent them out into the world with pretend skills."

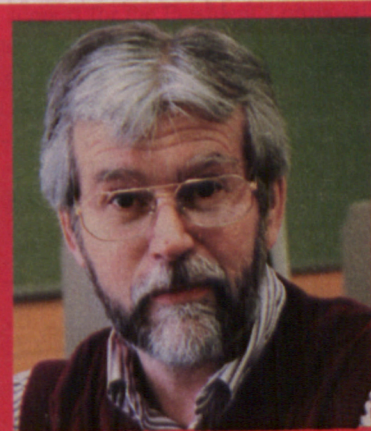
Today, at Westwood, these students are placed in regular classrooms with a co-teacher certified in special ed. They also attend a daily directed studies class for extra support.

"This seems to raise the level of expectation for students, and they rise to the occasion," says Casimir.

Students with severe disabilities are still usually taught at special ed centers, except when parents request otherwise. Casimir recalls one such student, Kim, a 22-year-old with Down's syndrome and severe medical problems who had never been in a regular classroom. A non-reader, she could barely speak.

That didn't stop Casimir, who scheduled Kim, along with her aide, into his advanced computer class and assigned his other students a real-life problem—create Hypercard stacks Kim could use for fun and learning.

"The students were enthusiastic and spent extra time making the stacks just right," Casimir says. Kim used the stacks to sight read about 50 words during the semester-long class. "She also made lasting friendships," he adds.



"Shuffling them off to little rooms with flash cards—those days are gone."
—Dan Casimir, Ishpeming, Michigan



"Universities should offer more training in teaching kids with special needs."
—Kathy Bold, Johnstown, Pennsylvania

Day-to-Day Diversity In Pennsylvania

A sign language club and a wheel-chair obstacle course all kids get to navigate—those are some of the vehicles that third grade teacher Kathy Bold and her colleagues have used to introduce a more inclusive environment at West Side Elementary in Johnstown, Pennsylvania.

The staff there works hard to teach youngsters "about how we're alike and how we're different," says Bold. The efforts are paying off.

One student with autistic behaviors repeatedly tapped her desk, enjoying the hollow sound. "The class came up with the idea of filling her desk with books," says Bold, "eliminating the sound—and the tapping."

Two other girls developed a friendship that blossomed after school—an unlikely outcome if the disabled child had been in a segregated setting.

Special needs and regular students get science instruction in the same classroom. "The result is an enriching experience for both groups," says Bold.

Inclusion's benefits are social, behavioral, and academic, explains Bold. "But, one of our biggest obstacles is convincing teachers that all the kids participating in an activity don't have to have the same objectives."

Funding cuts are eroding some aspects of inclusion at West Side, including planning time and continuing education. Yet Bold is confident her students will remain empathetic to persons with disabilities. "They'll carry that anywhere they go."

Keith Strakocic

Christine Garceau

Controversy Surrounds Crucial Inclusion Legislation

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is back on the agenda of Senate and House committees.

Last year, attempts to renew—"reauthorize"—the legislation died amid controversy. The authorization for most of IDEA actually expired in 1995, but Congress has continued to fund the law, considered the backbone of educational rights for students with disabilities.

But if reauthorization fails again, notes NEA lobbyist Diane Shust, funding for much of the law, including sections on professional development and early intervention, may be in jeopardy.

IDEA's Part B, which mandates Individual Education Programs (IEPs), is permanently authorized and not threatened, Shust adds.

But members of Congress are pressing the constituencies concerned about IDEA's future—organizations including NEA—to reach a consensus on the areas covered by a reauthorization bill.

Consensus has been hard to come by. Last year, controversy centered on IDEA discipline provisions, particularly those that address the removal of disruptive students.

Earlier this year, in Senate testimony, NEA President Bob Chase told Congress that every student needs to be held accountable.

"All students, including those with disabilities," said Chase, "should be held responsible for their own danger-



Joe Di Dio

NEA lobbyist Diane Shust is urging teachers and other school staff to share their insights about inclusion with their representatives in Congress.

ous or chronically disruptive behavior that puts themselves, other students, or education employees in peril."

Local schools, he added, must retain the right to remove disruptive students from the classroom. But these students must continue to receive education and other services to help them adapt socially and academically.

In situations where disruptive behavior is related to a disability, Chase continued, NEA supports a provision in last year's House bill.

This provision would permit a teacher to reconvene a student's IEP team to reassess the child's place-

ment and determine the need for additional supports.

Some parents oppose attempts to let schools remove disruptive students with disabilities, NEA's Shust notes. Other groups are pushing for stricter regulations on student behavior.

Shust urges NEA members to contact their representatives about the reauthorization bills, HR5 in the House and S216 in the Senate.

"Classroom teachers and aides have valuable insights to share with Congress," she explains.

The importance of professional development is one key issue that needs to be stressed to Congress.

"If these programs were adequately funded," says Shust, "many problems around IDEA would disappear."

IDEA, an expanded successor to the 1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act, authorizes special education and related services for more than 5 million young people each year.

Over the years, NEA President Chase noted in his recent testimony before Congress, IDEA has enabled many students with special needs to have "overwhelmingly positive" experiences in general classrooms.

"Nearly 70 percent are served in the general classrooms more than 40 percent of the time," he explained.

For a two-page summary of NEA's position on IDEA, contact Diane Shust, NEA Government Relations, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036 or call 202/822-7325.

Special NEA Resources on Inclusion

All the titles below are available, with discounts for NEA members, through the NEA Professional Library. Call 800/229-4200 for ordering information.

■ *The Inclusion Dilemma*—1995 award-winning Teacher TV videotape, 28 minutes.

■ *Providing Safe Health Care: The Role of Education Support Personnel*, 46 pages, 1996.

■ *Appropriate Inclusion and Paraprofessionals: Changing Roles and Expectations*, 20 pages, 1996.

■ *Creating Schools for All Our Students: What 12 Schools Have to*

Say, 66 pages, 1995.

■ *Toward Inclusive Classrooms*—ideas from NEA members in six different locations, 95 pages, 1994.

■ *Integrating Students with Special Needs: Policies and Practices That Work*, 66 pages, 1993.

■ *Children with Exceptional Needs in Regular Classrooms*, 184 pages, 1992.

■ *Inspiring Tranquility: Stress Management and Learning Styles in the Inclusive Classroom*, 112 pages, available this June.

The following are available at no charge—limit one copy per person—

from NEA's National Center for Innovation. Contact Romaine Hodge at 202/822-7357.

■ *NEA Policy Statement on Appropriate Inclusion*

■ *Answers to Frequently Asked Questions about the Requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*

■ *Providing Health Care Services to Students with Disabilities*

■ *NEA Policy Statement on Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Orders*

For materials on attention deficit disorder, contact Lisa Long at 202/822-7274.

Where To Go For More

Interested in getting a handle on recent court decisions on inclusion? Check *The Current Legal Status of Inclusion*, a 45-page report by Vicki Pitasky, an attorney and the editorial director of education and disability legal publications at LRP Publications.

Pitasky's report calls inclusion law "a mixed bag" and cautions school districts that flexibility is the key when placing students with disabilities.

The 1996 report, quite readable even for non-lawyers, is available for \$18 (plus \$3.50 s&h) from LRP Publications, 747 Dresher Rd., Horsham, PA 19044. Call 800/341-7874, ext. 275.

LRP also publishes a monthly newsletter, *Inclusive Education Programs*, that features advice and ideas on inclusion from a wide range of sources. An annual subscription costs \$130.

The World Wide Web, of course, is an endless source of information on inclusion.

Some particularly helpful Web sites include:

■ **The Federal Resource Center for Special Education** (www.dssc.org/frc/). A great source for information and links on a wide array of federal and state programs for students with disabilities.

■ **National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities** (www.nichcy.org). This site features numerous publications that can be downloaded for free. The center also offers a help line at 800/695-0285.

■ **The National Center to Improve the Tools of Educators** (www.dssc.org/frc/frc1.htm). This effort is part of a program to help teachers in 13 western states learn how to use the Internet more effectively with diverse learners.

The Web site offers a wealth of material on the use of technical media with a wide variety of students.

For more information, contact the center at 805 Lincoln, Eugene, OR 97405, 503/683-7543.

At the National Level

Speaking Up for Public Ed

When you talk, lawmakers listen. Tell Congress about NEA's agenda to strengthen schools.

Special education teacher Kelly Burk tells a too-familiar story about her district.

"My county is growing by leaps and bounds and we can't keep up with demands for space, services, and programs," she says. "Yet the Board of Supervisors is determined to keep the tax rate as low as possible."

But Burk, president of the Loudoun County (Virginia) Education Association, isn't shy about going over supervisor heads for more resources—say, to Congress or the national press.

After all, she explains, "most people are really interested in how teachers feel about the issues."

That's why Burk and three other local educators went to Washington's National Press Club on February 25 to help unveil NEA's Quality Public

Schools Agenda—a set of federal legislative initiatives designed to strengthen public schools.

"What we advocate in the agenda," NEA President Bob Chase

told reporters, "is for the federal government to provide a baseline—an education foundation—upon which states and localities can build schools that make educational opportunities available to every child."

Then Chase, Burk, and other NEA members from nearby Virginia and Maryland went on to outline the agenda's five prime objectives:

Safety and order in every school.

Ellen Stewart, a child advocate in Prince George's County, Maryland,

described how her safety and order program for elementary teachers is helping students become more responsible for their behavior.

Stewart stressed that disruptive and violent behavior seriously impedes

the learning process and asked Congress to support "proactive approaches" that help free students "from physical, psychological, and verbal abuse."



**Ellen Stewart,
Prince George's
Co., Maryland**

A qualified teacher in every classroom.

Barbara Allen, a middle school special ed teacher in Fairfax County, Virginia, noted that solid professional development has helped her work with general education teachers in core classes.

"But I know of other schools where this kind of collaboration has fallen through the cracks," she said.

"My school would benefit from more help, and more focused help in the area of professional development," added special ed teacher Burk. "Teachers who want to keep improving have to squeeze classes into their schedule of after-school activities or take time away from their families."

Every school building in good condition.

"It is clear to me that an improvement in the physical environment of a school leads to an increase in student achievement," declared Virginia teacher Allen, who noted that installation of air conditioning in her school has "improved students' focus and, certainly, their comfort level."

Every student's classroom connected to new technologies.

"Technology opens the door to learning for my special ed students," Burk pointed out. "Many of them struggle with writing, but their skills improve

when they use the computer to draft and revise their compositions. And they can use the Internet to gather information and solve problems."

Every child ready to learn.

1994-95 Maryland Teacher of the Year Linda Adamson—who teaches reading enrichment to third and fifth graders in Anne Arundel County, Maryland—noted that too many of America's children start the school year without needed vaccinations or sufficient nutrition.

Congress is starting to listen to what educators are saying. Bills have been introduced to expand federal support for teacher technology training and to screen youth facing criminal proceedings to connect them to

needed services. Another bill has been filed to expand the Family and Medical Leave Act to allow parents time off from work to attend school activities.



**Linda Adamson,
Anne Arundel
Co., Maryland**

Pro-education senators, for their part, are seeking documentation of crumbling schools—through videos, photos, and other evidence—to build support for the President's proposal to create \$5 billion in bond reduction incentives for school repair.

Lawmakers will need to hear more from NEA members in the weeks ahead as more elements of the Quality Public Schools Agenda are incorporated into legislative proposals.

To learn more about the Quality Public Schools Agenda and how you can help move it through Congress, watch for NEA's quality agenda Web page—you'll be able to link with it through the NEA home page (www.nea.org)—and sign up for a weekly E-mail Action Alert.

To receive the Alert, just address an E-mail to majordomo@cet.nea.org with a one-line message: subscribe Quality Agenda.

Heroes & Zeroes



He's no meathead—he's a tot's best friend. Speaking for the Early Childhood



Engagement Campaign, Hollywood director Rob Reiner recently appealed to the nation's governors for more government support to educate kids under three.



An Amoral-Minority-of-One Award to Congressman Tom Coburn (R-

Oklahoma), who said NBC's airing of *Schindler's List* brought television "to an all-time low with full frontal nudity, violence, and profanity" and "should outrage parents and decent-minded individuals." Someone ask him to define "all-time low."



The Most Valuable Person Award goes to basketball All-Star Bob Lanier for 10



years of volunteer work in programs like the NBA's Stay in School program. Lanier now chairs the NBA's TeamUp program to get kids involved in community service. For details, visit www.nba.com and click on NBA Basics.



Topping her own proposal to make target shooting an interscholastic sport for high school students, Idaho State Superintendent of Public Instruction Anne Fox recently backed more money for abstinence-only programs, saying they can offer some students a "second virginity." Let's hope they're not already "a little bit" pregnant.



A Golden Stairmaster to NEA member Fred

Vanderveen, a Maryland high school science teacher and personal trainer who turned an abandoned shirt factory into a fitness club for Special Olympians and at-risk kids. The Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association recently honored Vanderveen with \$15,000 for his program.

In the Community

Packing the Right Stuff

At the start of this school year, 150 Laramie (Wyoming) students from underprivileged families received "School is Cool" backpacks stuffed with new school supplies. Members of the Student Wyoming Education Association joined volunteers from the Albany County Education Association on the assembly line.

It Takes a Village

The Charlotte County (Virginia) Education Association is recognizing outstanding local volunteers with Whole Village Awards. At a recent evening reception attended by everybody from parents to members of the board of supervisors, the local handed out "Village" awards from each of its schools.

Positive Feedback

Great Falls (Montana) Education Association members are dedicated, bright, hard working, and caring. That's what GFEA heard by sponsoring a "community-wide dialogue" with 50,000 local residents through focus groups, interviews, and postcards. The local also learned of a desire for more voc ed programs and renewed emphasis on the "basics" and technology.

Breakfast of Champions

Thanks to a grant from the Indiana State Teachers Association, school bus drivers in rural Perry County are getting to know their young passengers better. At a twice-monthly Breakfast With the Bus Drivers, each driver chooses two students to break bread with and discuss whatever is on the kids' minds.

An Early Start for Parents

Vermont-NEA affiliates are distributing *An Idea Book for New Parents* that covers talking to newborns to reading to pre-schoolers. An added bonus: age-appropriate book lists for parents who read aloud.

Future Benefits of a Good Read



Granite Education Association member Shauna Waters, left, and Julie Densley-Page, NEA Student Program leader at the University of Utah, team up to give homeless pre-schoolers more exposure to the world of books.

Student members hone their skills as they bring the joy of reading to homeless kids in Utah.

Every other Friday in Salt Lake City, homeless pre-schoolers are treated to storytime, courtesy of NEA student members from the University of Utah.

Gathered in the day care facility of the Bishop Weigand Resource Center for the homeless, these children are regaled with tales of dozing dogs and slumbering mice.

Their benefactors, meanwhile, get a unique chance to put their classroom techniques into practice as the children gain a love for books.

The fledgling UEA Student Program at the University of Utah kicked off this six-month reading project in January. The 19-member local decided to make its mark—and boost member-

ship—by "letting students know we exist on campus and help others in the community," says UEA-SP local President Julie Densley-Page.

The local received a \$1,500 CLASS—Community Learning Through America's Schools—grant from the NEA Student Program. These grants give education majors "a chance to implement what they learn in the classroom," points out Roel Gonzales-Padilla, chair of the NEA Student Program.

"Too often, students studying to become teachers become guarded and protected in the classroom," he notes. "They need to see what's actually happening in public schools."

CLASS grants require applicants to identify community and school needs and work on a project in conjunction with another Association affiliate.

Densley-Page, a university senior and student teacher at William Penn Elementary, found a grant partner in the neighboring Granite Education

Association.

The student local and the Granite local donated bookcases to the center. Individual Granite teachers also donated books en masse.

With the NEA grant, the student members then purchased everything from teaching materials to a couple of rugs for the center's new, but cold, linoleum floors.

Now NEA volunteers—student, active, and retired—come to the center to read to the youngsters, ages three to five, on a one-time basis.

The *Salt Lake Tribune* covered the project's first reading session in January. In a room full of guests, student local secretary-treasurer Aubri Cowan cracked open a book, read, and awaited critical response.

"The kids' mouths were open. They were all hers," recalls Densley-Page. "Then GEA President Lars Erickson, a junior high teacher, read to them in a very animated way. It was a neat experience—they were excited."

During that inaugural session, each youngster got the chance to pick out a brand-new book for keeps. Several "held the book to their chest, afraid it would walk away," Densley-Page reports.

"Our goal is to make sure these kids see a grown-up—someone other than a parent or resource center teacher—who loves a story and values reading," says Densley-Page.

"We're making sure kids see reading as something they can enjoy for life, starting now," she adds.

In 45 states, on some 300 campuses, 50,000 NEA student members brim with the same enthusiasm.

"Our student members are full of energy and want to get involved," concludes Gonzales-Padilla.

"My hope," he adds, "is that local Associations realize there's an NEA Student chapter nearby with all sorts of talent—and an eagerness to work with practicing teachers."

The Bottom Line

Puffing away: New FDA regulations that discourage cigarette promotions aimed at teens are now taking effect. Tobacco companies tried to block the regs by drowning the FDA in paper, some 47,000 pages worth. But the FDA used computers to complete the legally required review in months, not the years observers expected.

Language barriers: The number of students who don't speak English at home is up more than 26 percent since 1980, but many teachers have never received any LEP training. Nationally, 87 percent of teachers in classes that are over half LEP—but only 19 percent of teachers with three or fewer LEP students—have received special help.

Teen think: Over three-quarters of America's teens—78 percent—say they learn a "lot more" with teachers who make lessons "fun and interesting," but only 24 percent say "most" of their teachers are like that now. Nearly half of teens, says a new Public Agenda survey, feel most teachers "know a lot" about their subjects.

Bool: With more than 180 million books in print, the *Goosebumps* series has become, according to its publisher, "the most popular children's book series ever." The books are also under increasing fire. The American Library Association reports 14 cases where complaints about the books' scary stories have generated local controversy.

Out in Front

Forging Unity in the Community

In Sioux Falls, the local Association leads the way.

Siooux Falls, South Dakota—a diverse city featuring residents who speak more than 40 different languages and an 1,038-member local Association that's emerged as a community beacon and a recognized voice for quality public education.

That may not be the first image of Sioux Falls that springs to mind for people living outside the state. Count among them Eddie Davis, a North Carolina teacher who recently traveled there during this, his first year as an NEA Executive Committee member.

"I was impressed with the Sioux Falls Education Association's political action, its cooperative relationship with the administration, and the involvement of members from all areas and ethnic groups," says Davis.

"This didn't just happen," stresses former SFEA President Elaine Roberts, now president of the South Dakota Education Association. "It took a number of leaders, a number of members, and strategic planning to focus the local's energy and resources."

All this hard work has led to a local that:

■ Fosters unity in the community.

SFEA sponsors an annual Cultural Harmony conference in partnership with community groups. The goal: to build understanding of students from both "out" groups—like gangs—and Sioux Falls' many ethnic groups.

"We see what happens in other places without cultural harmony," says current local President Marlys Pearson, a middle school gifted ed teacher.

■ Constantly seeks partners.

including the United Way, the League of Women Voters, and the Chamber of Commerce. Pearson, who serves on the Chamber's K-12 Partnership Subcommittee, notes that this outreach helps



Lew Sherman

"We're all working for kids. We can accomplish more working together," says Marlys Pearson, president of the Sioux Falls Education Association.

uncover business partners and community volunteers for the schools.

These partnerships work in both directions. Recently, for instance, local nursing association members came into a middle school to learn about the Internet—from students!

Through such activities as "Teacher for a Day" and School Partnership Learning Breakfasts, Pearson adds, SFEA members and their community allies are "finding even more ways to work together and help students develop the skills to be productive citizens."

■ **Makes politics work for students.** As part of the Kids, Education,

and You Network, SFEA works with parents and business leaders to recruit pro-education school board candidates.

"We're looking for people who are pro-staff and pro-kids and who have credibility with the business community," Pearson adds.

During the past two years, the Network found such folks—and elected them.

The Network has also fostered a closer working relationship among SFEA, NEA ESP locals, and even AFL-CIO affiliates in the school district.

■ **Works with administrators.** SFEA often informally settles problems with the administrators before they become grievances and has engaged in collaborative bargaining with the district since 1992.

The local isn't afraid to recommend help for

staffers—be they teachers or site administrators—who need improvement. At the same time, "We definitely enforce the contract," Pearson emphasizes. "We send grievances on through to the state Supreme Court when necessary."

■ **Actively involves local members.** Whether it's staff development, contract enforcement, political action, partnerships, or public relations, the Association emphasizes member commitment.

The effort "helps educators help both students and themselves," concludes Pearson. "We help people take responsibility for their own destiny."



Farewell to Shanker

Education and the American labor movement have lost one of the century's most significant leaders. After a

three-year battle with cancer, American Federation of Teachers President Albert Shanker died February 22.

Shanker, 68, was first elected president of the 907,000-member AFT in 1974. Before that, as president of New York City's United Federation of Teachers, he led historic strikes in the '60s that established due process rights for teachers and other school employees.

"In the 1960s, Shanker helped take teachers into the brave new world of collective bargaining," says NEA President Bob Chase. "In the 1990s, he urged America's teachers to turn their attention toward improving the quality of teaching and insisting on high standards for students and teachers alike."

Shanker, says Chase, "was a true leader always one bold step ahead of us all."

AFT-NEA Joint Council

One of Albert Shanker's legacies, closer ties between NEA and the AFT, has become more tangible with the newly created AFT-NEA Joint Council.

With 15 members from each union, the council is a formal structure to help the two organizations deal with issues they have in common—like assuring health care for children and improving school infrastructure.

The council won't take up issues related to NEA-AFT merger talks. An NEA-AFT "no raid" agreement has been in place since January. Many state affiliates have negotiated parallel state-level agreements.

More grads: Among young adults between 25 and 29, Blacks and whites now hold high school diplomas at an identical 87 percent rate, according to the Census Bureau. The Black rate has jumped up from 81 percent in 1985. Among Hispanic young adults, 57 percent now have high school diplomas.

Bad kicks: Soccer is booming in America, often as an alternative to more injury-prone sports, but new data show that young people playing soccer face injuries, too. About a quarter of high school soccer players, boys and girls, are likely to sustain a time-loss injury in 1997, says the National Athletic Trainers Association.

No golden age: Did schools years ago do a better job teaching than schools today? Not according to a new U.S. Education Department study on functional literacy among adults over 60. The study found that 71 percent of older Americans demonstrate limited prose skills, compared with 41 percent in the 16-to-59 age group.

Hoop dreams: Many youngsters see sports as their ticket to a college education. But few will ever win athletic scholarships, notes a new study of 1988 eighth graders. Only 22 of every 1,000 1988 eighth graders competed intercollegiately in Division I, the college level where athletic scholarships are awarded.

In the States

To the Wire in Hawaii

Thanks to a massive, unified strike authorization vote by members—10,343 “yes” to 176 “no”—the Hawaii State Teachers Association reached an 11th-hour contract settlement in late February. The \$100 million package will put more than \$8,000 in the pocket of the average teacher over two years and provide an average salary increase of 17 percent over three years.

Voucher Law Slammed

In January, a Wisconsin circuit court judge ruled that the Milwaukee private school voucher program, expanded in 1995 to religious schools, violates the state constitution. This law would direct “millions of dollars to religious institutions that are pervasively sectarian, with a clear mission to indoctrinate Wisconsin students,” the judge wrote. Among the plaintiffs: NEA’s Milwaukee Teachers Education Association. The state will appeal.

Teachers Out Of Control?

Kansas NEA is battling a legislative proposal to gut due process rights for teachers. The prime instigator: the Kansas Association of School Boards. One authoritarian school board member testified to lawmakers that “because of the due process law we are unable to control our staff.” Kansas NEA President Barbara Cole is urging all Association members to call or write legislators on this issue.

Reclaiming a Bigger Slice

The Florida Teaching Profession-NEA is part of a broad coalition to “Reclaim Education’s Share” of the budget, back to the 40 percent share of 1980s—before the state lottery went into effect. The coalition—educators, parents, business people, and community leaders—is aiming to add its goal as a November 1998 ballot initiative.

Some States Have One...

An ‘education governor’ is someone who really supports public education—like Missouri’s Mel Carnahan.

What makes for a good education governor—and how can you tell if you’ve found one?

Missouri NEA member Jane Gibler emphasizes that early detection is the key. Interview politicians in-depth—when they’re still candidates—for their stands on public education.

“You can lobby people to death once they’re in office,” says Gibler, who chairs an Association government relations team. “But if they don’t share your values, you will not change them much.”

In 1992, Missouri NEA members decided that then Lt. Governor Mel Carnahan passed their muster and helped elect him governor.

Carnahan, the son of a rural school superintendent and an English teacher, has delivered for kids and schools ever since.

Carnahan’s 1993 Outstanding Schools Act offered incentives to school districts that reduced K-3 class sizes and created new career programs for non-college-bound students.

That same year, after a circuit court judge ruled Missouri’s school funding formula unconstitutional, the governor dared to propose a tax increase.

Risking political suicide, Carnahan pushed through a new school funding formula that raised taxes on both corporations and high-end personal incomes.

Last year, with Missouri NEA support, Carnahan shepherded through the Safe Schools Act—which makes a school site assault a felony, ensures that records of violent students follow

them from district to district, and more.

School safety was a “big, big issue for us,” stresses Gibler, a counselor at High Grove Elementary School in Grandview.

As a result, “I can’t say how much teachers support Governor Carnahan,” Gibler adds.

Actually NEA members made their support for Carnahan clear at the polls last fall—and helped him weather a withering attack campaign.

Because of the 1993 school funding formula that raised taxes on corporations and the rich, his opponents nicknamed him “Taxman Carnahan.”

They drummed that label into public

consciousness last fall with one negative election campaign smear ad after another.

But the attack ads didn’t work. Educators rallied to counterpunch—and spoke volumes at the polls. Carnahan won re-election in November with 57 percent of the vote.

“This administration will vigorously promote education,” Carnahan noted this past January, “not just with words, but through plans and hard work that translate into achievement.”

When a governor like Carnahan or Georgia’s Zell Miller makes a promise like that, it means that students and educators can truly look forward to their future.

... And Some Are Still Seeking



NEA member Dorothy Eachus, right, engages New Mexico Governor Gary Johnson, who touts education as his top priority—although he hasn’t always acted that way. Johnson has promised to try to ensure better funding for schools over five years. “If you are an ‘education governor,’ why not start this year?” Eachus asks.

The Bottom Line

Priorities: Subtract what the federal government now spends on defense, interest on the national debt, and entitlements like Social Security, and there’s not much left. In fact, as a share of Gross Domestic Product, Washington is spending about 33 percent less on education and other social initiatives than 20 years ago.

Site-based statistics: The best national study yet on site-based decision-making in America’s schools has found that the extent of local decision-making varies widely by state. Schools in West Virginia, for instance, are four times more likely to have a site-based decision-making body than schools in Nebraska.

More demand: America will need 16 percent more elementary teachers—and 29 percent more secondary—by 2005, says the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Someone must have leaked those figures to college frosh. Over 10 percent of freshmen today, says a UCLA survey, want to become teachers, the highest percentage in 20 years.

Uniform chic: School uniforms are so hot that yuppie catalog houses are now adding uniform lines. The Wisconsin-based Lands’ End is publishing a children’s catalog this spring that features apparel that meets typical school uniform guidelines. The company is offering all the uniform “basics”: chino pants, jumpers, and pleated skirts.

At the Local Level

Strength In Small Numbers

ESP members bring a big contract to a small town.

St. Elmo is a small town in the middle of Illinois, a place where people often run into neighbors at the coffee shop and stop to chat.

For the past couple of years, the talk's been about the St. Elmo Educational Support Staff Association and its drive to achieve a first contract.

In this town of 1,400, a group of fewer than 20 support employees has been determined to have a union.

Undaunted by their small numbers, these education employees banded together through two years of tough bargaining. The local finally got its contract in December.

Applauding the members' tenacity, Uniserv Director Marcus Albrecht says, "They were able to stand up and win redress."

At issue were many of the same points tackled by locals large and small—due process, job protection, fair treatment, a living wage.

Barb Kelley, a cook at St. Elmo Junior-Senior High School, chaired a bargaining team made up of people she labels as "very determined." They, in turn, were backed by members who "never wavered in support of the team during the two years."

"Whatever we asked the members to do, they did, and then some—everything from providing food for the Association negotiating team late at night to knocking on doors in the community," says Kelley.

Joined by family, friends, and



"Every time we saw each other in the grocery store, we'd say, 'Hang in there,'" says Barb Kelley (second from right), here with the rest of the St. Elmo ESP bargaining team that worked for two years to get its first contract.

Marcus Albrecht

teacher members of the St. Elmo Education Association, SEESPA members went door to door on weekends to talk about their issues—a fair contract and job security—and urge neighbors to contact school board members.

In such a small community, this approach packs added power. Residents obliged with SEESPA's request, and then some. In November 1995, voters backed Association members by sweeping incumbent board members—including the board's chief negotiator—out of office.

That produced a better atmosphere at the bargaining table, but tough talks still lay ahead.

St. Elmo support staffers—custodians, cooks, clerks, and bus drivers—held together over this long haul by staying in touch.

"This is a small community," Kelley notes. "Every time we saw each other in the grocery store, the bank, or the coffee shop, we'd say, 'Hang in there. We'll do it. Don't give up.'"

That same message came through during a September 1996 support rally

sponsored by the Illinois Education Association-NEA. There, local Association leaders from towns such as Effingham, Vandalia, and Brownstown urged St. Elmo ESPs to keep fighting.

Solidarity eventually delivered both a contract and—amazingly—back pay for employees who have retired or moved.

"They worked for it, they deserved it," states Kelley.

SEESPA's new contract spells out a grievance process, strong leave language, due process rights, and a seniority-based layoff procedure. The agreement also features a longevity-based salary schedule built upon improved base salaries.

That's a good beginning for Kelley, a 16-year veteran. "This contract gives me a sense of job security that I didn't have before and establishes equal treatment," she stresses.

"Local members have to work together and stay together," says the SEESPA President Jim Brasel, a head maintenance worker. "We worked together really great, just like a family. We hung in there and eventually won!"

Justice in Wilkinsburg

In Pennsylvania, a judge has ruled that the Wilkinsburg school board violated state law by furloughing Turner Elementary School teachers to make room for those employed by Alternative Public Schools, Inc. The judge's order: back pay amounting to more than \$500,000. The school board has now voted to reinstate the furloughed teachers, but not place them in Turner Elementary, which was put under private management in 1995.

Alternatives Course

The Alabama Education Association is working closely with 400 Birmingham school cafeteria workers to present alternatives to a corporate takeover of their program proposed by a management consultant. "We're also working with community leaders and legislators to seek reasonable alternatives to privatizing school nutrition," says UniServ Director Michael Todd.

TAs Prove Their Worth

Lansing (Michigan) Educational Assistants worked 16 months under a contract extension but never stopped pushing for a new pact. "We regularly attended board meetings to explain who we are, what we do, and how important we are to the community and the children," says LEA President David Hockaday. In January, LEA members ratified a new pact with better health, dental, and retirement benefits.

United WEA Stand!

Following a seven-day strike—and wrath from a 300-member citizens group—school boards in Sandy, Oregon signed a three-year contract with the new Wy'East Education Association (WEA). Along with language improvements, the pact includes a 2.5 percent raise in the first year and cost-of-living increases in the second and third.

Bad deal: New studies from Vassar and Johns Hopkins University are blasting the educational value of Channel One, the 12-minute TV program seen in 12,000 schools daily. Only 20 percent of Channel One airtime, says Vassar's William Hoynes, covers "recent political, economic, social, and cultural stories."

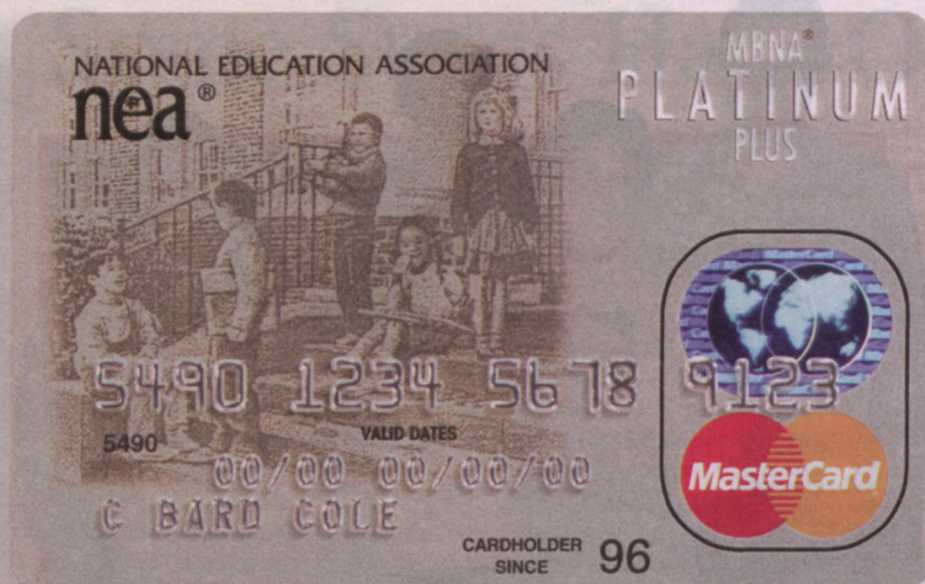
Union yes: In 1984, less than a third of Americans not in unions—30 percent—wanted a union organized at their workplace. A new poll shows that 44 percent of nonunion employees would like their workplace organized. According to the Labor Department, 14.5 percent of nonsupervisory employees are now union members.

Front-office pay: School superintendents averaged \$85,551 in 1996, a 4.1 percent hike over their salaries the previous year. Overall, administrative salaries increased 3.7 percent in 1996, a slight boost over the 3.4 percent 1995 rate. School security and safety directors saw the biggest salary jump last year and now average \$48,684.

Prison population: According to the U.S. Justice Department, Americans are now about as likely to be sitting in a cell as grad school. The number of Americans in jail or prison is now 1,630,940. About 1.7 million students are currently enrolled as graduate students. The U.S. incarceration rate is the world's highest.

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Conversation with your colleagues—it's often the best professional development activity around. Bellevue, Washington educators Normandie Callahan (left) and Phyllis Richardson meet with their colleagues every other Wednesday afternoon to talk about critical issues in their classrooms. In Kentucky, NEA's state affiliate is pioneering a new way of helping teachers learn from each other. Get the details on page 21.

Ellen Barner

Innovators

Striking a Chord

Innovator:

Matt Carrington

Job:

Carrington is a Massachusetts musician who lectures on jazz history.

Bright Idea:

Carrington created "Jazz as a Motivational Tool," a series of clinics and workshops he takes to schools around the country.

Using the elements of jazz, Carrington teaches kids about goal-setting, planning, and self-esteem.

"As kids play music, we discuss improvisation of notes and chords," he says. "This leads to talk about the importance of change in life."

Similarly, Carrington makes analogies between musical rhythms and life rhythms. "Rhythm is all about tempo and pacing," he says. "We discuss how each student has a different learning pace and learning style."

Impact:

Carrington has taken his message to hundreds of kids in school districts across the country.

"I created these workshops to reach out to as many kids as possible and inspire them to know they can be anything they want to be," he says.

"When I come into the school as an outsider and take an interest in students as individuals, it gives them a sense of worth."

NEA member George Perrone, who hosted Carrington in

his music class at Framingham High School recently, agrees.

"The jazz workshop is incredibly effective with my kids," Perrone says. "I've had students tell me they think more about their future after listening to Carrington. The messages about goal-setting and positive behaviors really hit home."

For More:

Contact Carrington Enterprises at P.O. Box 24, Medford, MA 02156, 617/488-5742.



Photos by Jim Kleinkauf

Class in Cyberspace

Innovator:

Marie Lano Thomas

Job:

Fourth grade teacher, Baker Elementary School, Milford, Michigan

Bright Idea:

On Wednesday evenings, Thomas moonlights in cyberspace. She teaches "Making Sense of Attention Deficit Disorders"—online.

Her classroom is an America Online chat room. Her students are parents, teachers, and sufferers of attention deficit disorder who gather to learn more about the illness.

"My daughter was diagnosed with this illness years ago, and I didn't know what it was," Thomas explains. "I desperately searched for information for five years."

Thomas now shares what she learned with students throughout

the United States, Canada—and even as far away as Japan.

"I teach my students what attention deficit is," Thomas says. "I teach about the brain, various treatments, and interventions. And I teach parents how to separate the child from the disability."

Teaching online is a challenge, she says, but not an insurmountable one. Thomas took a free class in how to teach online before she started.

Impact:

More than 350 people have taken Thomas's online class so far. She's taught parents how to monitor their child's illness. And the class has given sufferers of attention deficit disorder a supportive place to learn more about their disability.

For More:

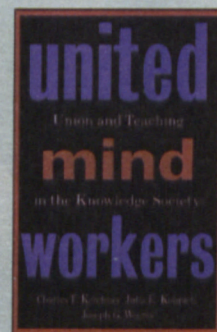
Contact Thomas at 810/363-6173. Or visit AOL, keyword: classes. Thomas's



Robert Chase

course is listed under the humanities and history class listing. The fee is \$40 for the 8-week class.

Unions and Quality



United Mind Workers: Unions and Teaching in the Knowledge Society

Charles Taylor Kerchner, Julie E. Koppich, Joseph G. Weeres. Jossey-Bass Publishers, 224 pp., \$29.95. The authors suggest three ways teachers unions can create quality in education—"rethinking the work of teachers and preparation for teaching, creating standards for student performance, and assuring quality in classrooms through peer assistance and review."

"Teacher unionists care deeply about children and about learning, and many are also gifted teachers. But under industrial approaches to organization, quality assurance was management's work, except under the logic of 'what's good for teachers is good for kids.' In the knowledge era, organizing around quality becomes both educationally necessary and organizationally potent for unions. As the instructional core of education changes and schools become more autonomous, teachers become the most logical guarantors of quality standards and the processes that cause them to come about. In such a setting, unions cannot avoid responsibility for defining and defending quality standards for schools, students, and teachers."

Organizing around quality challenges the industrial-era assumptions of both labor and management. Unions assumed that decent pay, safe working conditions, and freedom from administrative tyranny would free teachers' natural instincts to produce high-quality schools. Management assumed that it could engineer quality through curriculum scope and sequence, school scheduling, and assignment of teachers to jobs. Both assumptions were wrong."

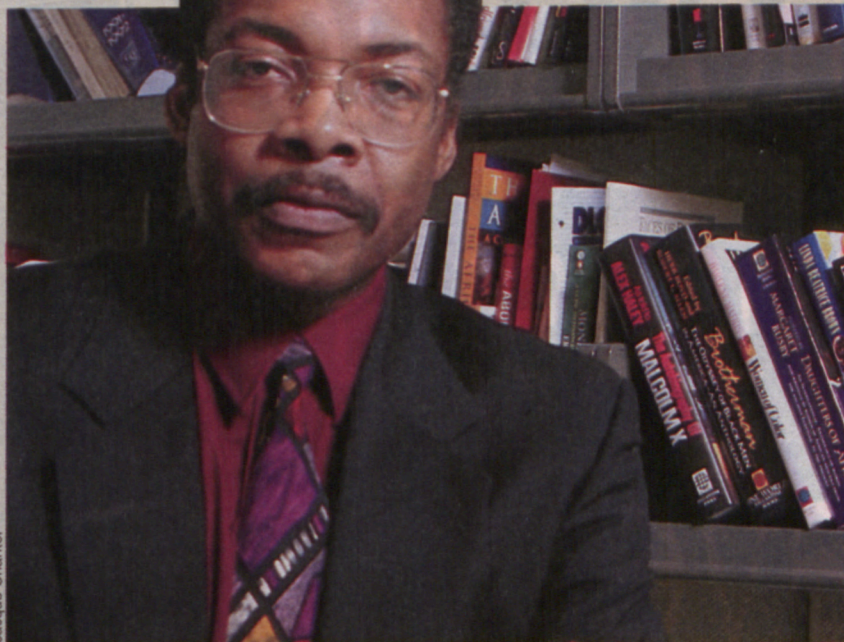
Expect the Most

Ellis Cose, author of the recently published and highly acclaimed *Color Blind* (HarperCollins, \$24), says the nation's minority students are being cheated by public schools that expect too little of them.

"Unfortunately," he writes, "far too many educators conclude, in effect, that it's easier to teach students to feel good about themselves—and even about their academic failings—than it is to help them raise their level of performance. Self-esteem becomes a goal unto itself."

Q What can public schools do to move us toward a race-neutral society?

A In my book, I attempt to distill the principles that make successful programs work—in school or out. Here they are: 1) Find a group of young people motivated to learn—or find a way to motivate them. 2) Convince them you believe in them. 3) Teach them good study skills. 4) Challenge them with difficult, but practical material. 5) Give them good support. 6) Demand that they perform.



Jacque Chantel

Q Should we continue to defend desegregation and affirmative action?

A We should continue to defend them and support them—and move on to something else. The better solution is to boost the achievement of young Blacks so they don't need affir-

mative action to get into college. We need to end the segregation that continues to consign far too many of our young people to communities in which they are written off at birth.

Q Why do you say hate is a "red herring"?

A Most people don't hate. Messages that implore us to stop the hate certainly are better than those that incite hate, but they do little to bring us together. Discrimination and stereotyping aren't the result of hatred, but if we continue to use hate as a shield, we avoid the reality that it's mostly nice, nonhating people who perpetuate racial inequality. Ending hate is the beginning—not the end—of our mission.

Q Is Ebonics a relevant issue?

A No. It's a sidetrack to the real issue of student achievement. Kids—especially those who speak "Black English"—don't need to be reminded that they speak a foreign language. But they do need to believe—and be convinced—that they can master any language.

Q If you could put a placard on every teacher's desk, what would it say?

A It would say, "Expect the Most." This is especially true for minority students.

A Lesson in Fear

Innovator:
Zipporah Miller

Job:
Ninth grade biology and chemistry teacher at Forestville High School in Forestville, Maryland

Bright Idea:
In observance of World AIDS Day, Miller showed students—in a simple, yet sobering way—how fast the HIV virus can spread.

"I gave each student a paper cup filled with water," Miller explains. "I told them one of the cups was infected with the HIV virus."

Using eye droppers, each student was then instructed to "mix fluids" with three classmates.

Then came the test: Miller put drops of Drano



Joe Di Dio

in each cup. The ones that had been "infected" with the "AIDS virus" turned pink.

Miller says students were incredulous that so many cups of water had been "infected" from just one source.

Impact:

Miller says the experiment dramatizes the spread of AIDS better than any textbook chapter on infectious disease.

"The kids really talked about their fears. Some students revealed they had friends or family members with AIDS and could now feel more compassion for those people."

For More:

Contact Zipporah Miller at 301/817-0400.

Get Ready For Block Scheduling

- 1 Establish routines to save energy and maximize learning time.
- 2 Post a daily class agenda on a newsprint sheet or chalkboard.
- 3 Organize class time around the kind of block schedule you have. If all of your classes are the same length, you may want to start out the day with a set of whole group "warm ups."
- 4 Organize your room to accommodate new teaching strategies.
- 5 Focus on what students can do, rather than what they know. With longer classes, students have the time to use what they know.

Source: *Moving to the Block*. NEA Professional Library, 800/229-4200.

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Kathryn Spayde Schroeder, NEA VIP

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VBNT0497

Inside Scoop

The Latest on How the Brain Works

Definition, please.

Nature or nurture? It's an old argument—with new research on how the brain works that may tip the scales.

New brain-based research challenges the notion that genes determine intelligence. Those who subscribe to brain-based learning theory say that a child's experiences in the first 12 years of life play a much bigger role in determining whether a child is bright, inquisitive, or confident.

Babies' brains, say the researchers, are made up of trillions of unconnected neurons waiting to be connected to other neurons, much like a computer is programmed.

More connections—formed when children are stimulated and supported in their learning—mean a better functioning brain for life.

There are four main principles of brain-based learning:

- Millions of patterns in the brain form from huge amounts of input.
- Millions of programs in the brain result from learning-by doing.
- Feedback fine-tunes the brain's patterns and programs.
- Students who feel safe and secure can learn more than those who don't.

What are the practical messages for educators?

- 1) According to brain-based research, the early years of a child's life—when neural connections are made—are more critical than ever thought before.
- 2) Hands-on learning is crucial to making neural connections that will be crucial throughout life.
- 3) A safe learning environment is essential for children to reach their potential.

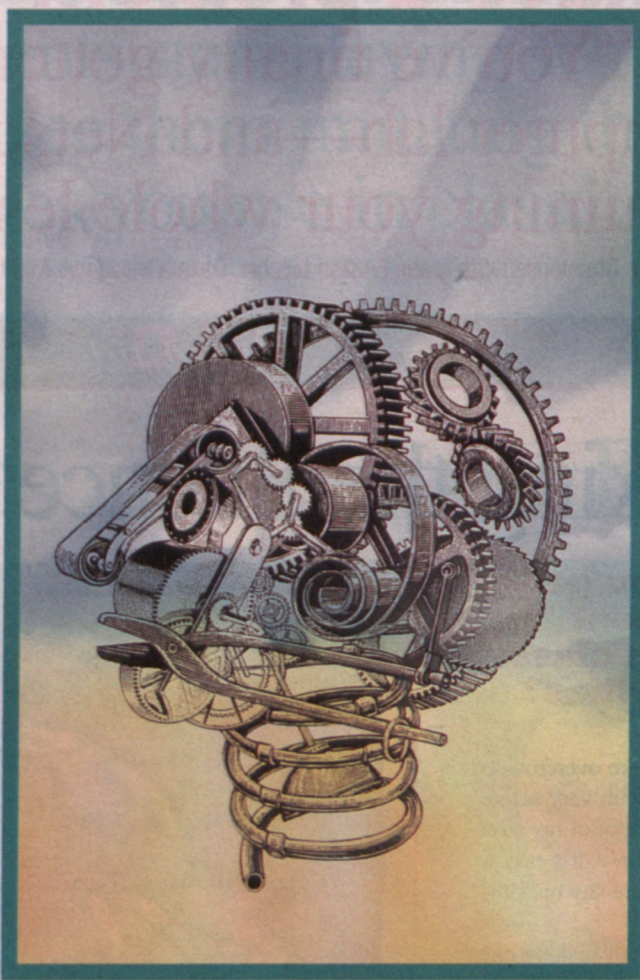
Why is this revolutionary?

"Because it's changing the way many teachers structure learning for their students," says researcher Robert Sylvester, author of *A Celebration of Neurons: An Educator's Guide to the Human Brain*.

"Memorization only taps into one part of the brain," Sylvester says. "With brain-based instruction, teachers immerse children in a variety of hands-on and problem-solving experiences, which engage their brains more fully than simply reading textbooks out loud."

How hot?

In the past 10 years, brain research



has gained credibility, funding, and attention. The topic has been on the covers of *Time* and *Newsweek*, the front pages of countless newspapers, and the subject of radio and TV public service announcements.

Recent new developments in brain research have caused a flurry of activities focused on infant and early childhood development. This month, President and Mrs. Clinton will convene a White House conference of educators and researchers on how the brain works.

Brain research will also be the cornerstone of a major multimedia campaign sponsored by the Families and Work Institute to support families with young children. The campaign includes a television show (see page 27), a CD-ROM, and a Web site.

Brain research is so critical the American Academy of Pediatrics is disseminating information about it to all of its members.

The National Conference of State Legislatures is forming a group of state legislators who will introduce legislation based on research findings that show what children need to thrive and learn.

Finally, more and more educators

are studying brain research—and using it to change the way they teach.

How does brain-based teaching work?

"Many of us were taught to present things logically, in neat, step-by-step sequence," says Barbara Pedersen, a Lebanon, Indiana elementary teacher who now coaches colleagues on brain-based instruction.

"Brain-compatible teaching doesn't work that way because the brain doesn't

work that way," she says.

To be "brain-compatible," Pedersen says, teachers should:

- Provide meaningful first-hand experiences. "Students won't understand the vast Pacific Ocean if they don't first understand the pond in their back yard," Pedersen says.
- Create an enriched environment, which can include music, field trips, visiting artisans, books, reproductions of famous paintings, and more.
- Give students time to process what they're learning. Let them question and probe.
- Offer choices in activities.
- Build trust and a safe environment for kids. "Students shouldn't be pressured to learn," Pedersen says. "They should be stimulated to learn."

Why bother?

"All you have to do is look inside my classroom for the answer," says Sharon Smith, fifth grade teacher at Dry Creek Elementary School in Rio Lindo, California.

"My students are engaged. They're not looking at the clock or looking at me for answers. They're trying to figure it out themselves, they're asking questions of each other, and they're

actively putting all the pieces together. That's the wonder of brain-based learning."

What's the downside?

"It takes time and work to restructure your way of working and your way of thinking," says Smith. "You may be challenged to change the way your school day or school curriculum is structured. That's isn't always easy."

Who's throwing stones?

To brain researchers, the early learning window is so small that even programs like Head Start may be too late for many children. Many believe those who aren't properly stimulated by kindergarten will never fully catch up.

Those who disagree—who believe it's never too late to rewire "broken circuits"—fear that brain research will provide a rationale for writing off disadvantaged kids.

Where's the NEA on this?

NEA has no official position on brain-based learning, but many NEA members are busy restructuring their schools and curriculum to maximize children's learning potential.

Need more information?

There are a number of books and publications on brain research and brain-based learning. Here are just a few:

- *Brain Development in Young Children: Research and Implications*. Rima Shore. Families and Work Institute, 212/465-2044.
- *Teacher TV*. "Teaching to the Brain." This episode of Teacher TV—coproduced by NEA and The Learning Channel—looks at two schools where a brain-based teaching approach helps students learn. To order, call 800/229-4200.
- *Making Connections* by Renatta and Geoffrey Caine, \$15.95 from Addison-Wesley Publishers, 800/447-2226.
- The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development offers the following two publications. For more information on them, contact ASCD, 1250 N. Pitt St., Alexandria, VA 22314-1453, 703/549-9110.
- A Celebration of Neurons: An Educator's Guide to the Human Brain* by Robert Sylvester. \$15.95 for ASCD members, \$18.95 for non-members.
- ASCD Select: Brain-based Learning*. \$36 for ASCD members, \$44.95 for non-members.

Students &

Good Stuff

Smart Choices

Teachers and parents can check out www.smartkid.com/—a new “Webzine” that offers reviews of the latest offerings in children’s books, educational software, online sites, toys, games, and videos. Includes a monthly “bright idea award.”

Make Reading Fundamental

The Council for Educational Development and Research has produced a list of reading skills students should be expected to achieve. By kindergarten, for example, the list says, a child should be able to identify and name letters of the alphabet and know how books work by reading from left to right. Free copies of the checklist are available from CEDAR at 2000 L St., N.W., Suite 601, Washington, DC 20036, 202/223-1593.

Authors in Cyberspace

In *The Nearness of You: Students and Teachers Writing On-Line*, 24 teachers demonstrate how they have effectively integrated computer technology into creative-writing exercises. Essays describe meaningful ways for students to revise, peer edit, and publish their work on the Internet. \$16.95 plus \$3.50 s&h. Contact the Teachers and Writers Collaborative, 5 Union Square West, New York, NY 10003-3306, 212/691-6590.

For Fascinating Facts . . .

The Teacher’s Book of Lists for Learning features hundreds of lists that add interesting facts to every curriculum area. History timelines, time and money facts, U.S. Census statistics, commonly misspelled words, and geography facts are included. \$10.95 plus \$2.25 s&h. Contact Scholastic Professional Books, 2931 East McCarty St., Jefferson City, MO 65102.

Hands-On Learning

Beyond Textbooks: Hands-On Learning, a Teacher-to-Teacher book from the NEA Professional Library, features stories from six educators who created innovative hands-on learning projects to boost student motivation and achievement. \$12.95 plus \$2.50 s&h. To get the special NEA-member price of \$9.95 plus \$2.50 s&h, use stock number 2906-2-10-FG. Call 800/229-4200.

You know you have a problem when...

“You’ve finally gotten into the computer lab—and Netscape is down, ruining your whole lesson plan.”

Beth Christensen, 8th grade English teacher, Dakota Meadows Middle School, Mankato, Minnesota

Dilemma

Breaking the Silence

How do you get a shy student involved in classroom activities?

Our classrooms are overcrowded and are filled with very active children who want a lot of my attention. In this atmosphere, it’s easy to overlook kids who are shy or withdrawn.

So I make a point of making one-on-one contact with shy children every day. I’ve found that by taking just a little time to say something or give a smile, children begin to feel more comfortable. When that happens, I use the window of opportunity to get them involved in the learning process.

Debbie Watts

High school special ed teacher
Gwinnett County, Georgia

Try to talk with shy students and find out what interests them or what talents or skills they possess.

As soon as the opportunity arrives—whether I make it happen or it happens naturally—I invite students to participate and share their experiences. Soon enough, they’re more than willing to talk and become full participants in most class activities.

Cooperative learning groups are also effective. With smaller groups, students tend to participate and talk more.

M.J. Richards

Sixth grade math teacher
Dublin, Ohio

Individual students often require different strategies. I use books by authors such as Marc Brown or Robert Munsch to focus on how individuals are unique. I also ask shy students to be my classroom helper—that usually



gets them moving around the room and interacting with other students.

Linda Edwards

Second grade teacher
Lewiston, Montana

I recommend taking the time to establish an individual relationship with that youngster. Simple conversation is most effective and is best done privately, when other children aren’t around.

It may take repeated gentle conversations until the shy child is confident enough to provide more than monosyllabic responses.

If you’re unable to establish conversational dialogue with a youngster, ask

your speech/language therapist to take the time to check things out.

Val Mitchell

Speech/language therapist
Philmont, New York

Try to get shy students involved by making them an integral part of the lesson. I find out about the things that interest them and incorporate them into lesson plans.

I’ve also found that videotaping the day and showing it back to students is a great way to get feedback from everyone.

Sarabeth Rothfeld

Special education teacher
San Gabriel, California

Strategies

You know you've been successful when...

"Your students start playing school, and you see them imitating the strategies you use in class."

Laura Lavin, K-2 music teacher, Kinston Memorial School, Kinston, North Carolina

Delight

When Rules and Respect Reign

An urban middle school teacher points the way to safer schools.

Three years ago when Edward Allen, music teacher and basketball coach at Grace A. Dunn Middle School in Trenton, New Jersey, took a few days off to attend a conference, he returned to find his classroom in shambles.

"The piano was unrecognizable," he says. "The walls were stripped. The place was a mess."

Not content to just shake his head, Allen took action. He got involved in an NEA Center for the Revitalization of Urban Education peace education project and taught conflict resolution skills in his music class.

Now rules reign.

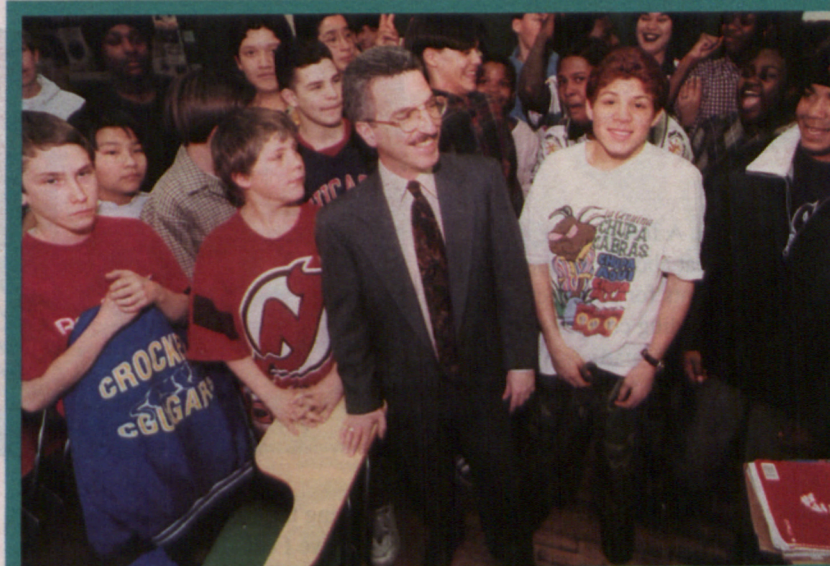
"We have rules," Allen says, "and the kids understand why we have rules. They also know that the rules apply to me as well as to them."

Along with heavy doses of respect, fairness, and consistency, Allen instituted the Rules for Fighting Fair, which he picked up from a CRUE workshop.

"Basically, these rules mean that a disagreement between two people has to be clearly communicated—and understood—by both parties," Allen explains.

"In other words, before people fly off the handle, they have to stop and look at the situation from the other person's point of view. It's amazing how such a 'cooling-off' period can work even with eighth graders."

When he's not working with his students, Allen coordinates the NEA urban school project in Trenton. The project's goal: to reduce student discipline problems at four area middle



Music teacher Ed Allen coordinates an NEA urban school revitalization project in Trenton, New Jersey.

schools. To help accomplish that task, those involved in the NEA project are key players in the Trenton Safe Communities, Safe Schools Coalition.

Back in the classroom, Allen uses some of the skills he's picked up as a basketball coach to establish order. He posts a list of classroom "fouls," which include such things as name calling, threatening, hitting, and not taking responsibility.

Consequences for fouls vary by offense, Allen says, "but they're the same for teacher and student alike." Sometimes Allen purposely commits a foul just to make sure the kids are paying attention.

To explain why rules are important, Allen uses what he calls the "no-rules game." He explains it like this:

"The students and I form a circle. Then I throw the ball to one of my students. He or she catches it, throws it back to someone else, and so on. Then I tell various students—one at a

time—to sit down.

"They have no idea why they're being told to sit, but they do—until no one is left standing. The kids are puzzled about why they're no longer in the game. I tell them there's no answer to that question—because the game has no rules.

"That leads us to our discussion about why rules are important to civilized societies," Allen continues, "and to classrooms."

This year, when Allen came back after a three-day absence, his classroom was pristine.

"First thing I told my students—I'm very proud of your attitude and behavior while I was gone. And I look forward—every day—to your coming into my class."

For more information, contact Joyce Jenkins, president of the Trenton Education Association, at 609/396-0016 or call Ed Allen at Dunn Middle School, 609/989-2582.

Idea Exchange

Room 101, USA

I use a city theme in my fifth grade classroom to help students understand rules and expectations.

Each desk is a student's home, the chair is the front door. The area around each desk is a student's yard. The walkways in the classroom are streets.

Students are responsible for learning the meaning of privacy, keeping their yard clean, and for behaving properly in the streets. In the end, they learn how to follow rules—and how to be good citizens.

Loretta Welk Jung

Jamestown, North Dakota

Cruisin' with Math

Students in my sixth grade math class improve math skills by planning a cruise vacation within a specific budget. Using percentages, addition, subtraction, division, and problem solving, they develop budgets and a balance sheet, write "checks," and maintain a checkbook. Research and geography skills also come in handy.

Brenda Meehan
Brewer, Maine

Book Club for Kids

I've created a Kindergarten Reading Club to increase reading skills for at-risk students. I use appropriate books, design lessons that include phonics, artwork, and drama, and provide opportunities to stretch thinking skills.

At the end of the week, I give students their own copy of the book to take home. Students in the Reading Club consistently score higher in reading achievement on statewide assessments, than non-club members.

Janice Peterson
Detroit, Michigan

Swap Meet

My high school special education students improved their math, communication, and organization skills by organizing a swap meet.

To get merchandise for their yard sale, students collected donated items from school staff and community residents. Buyers paid cash or offered a trade.

Thousands of leftover items were given to community groups and sent to missions world wide.

Dolores Lynch
Ephrata, Pennsylvania

Professional

Good Stuff

'Professional Portfolios'

From education students putting their best feet forward to teachers deciding how to document their career, portfolios have become a hot commodity. In *Professional Portfolios*, you'll find 12 articles on how to use—and create—them. \$12 plus \$3 s&h from IRI Skylight, 2626 S. Clearbrook Dr., Arlington Heights, IL 60005, 800/348-4474.

Safe Health Care

In an ideal world, every school would have licensed, certified health care personnel on campus. But because this isn't an ideal world and many school support employees end up dispensing care, the NEA Professional Library offers *Providing Safe Health Care: The Role of Educational Support Personnel*. Member price \$4.95, non-member price \$10.95. Stock #1-876-1-10-1. Shipping and handling added to all order. Call 800/229-4200.

New Math Teachers

Feeling a little overwhelmed? You're not alone, says veteran math teacher and NEA member Terri Santi. That's why Santi has created a homepage to help new math teachers with resources, lesson plans, web sites, and more. Visit www.clarityconnect.com/webpages/terri/terri.html.

Antarctic Experiences

Right now, a handful of American school teachers are spending their spring and summer in Antarctica, conducting scientific research at an outdoor laboratory, courtesy of the National Science Foundation. You and your students can join the expedition via the Web. Check out <http://zephyr.rice.edu/glacier/>.

Internet Help

The American Association of School Librarians has launched ICONnect to help students, school staff, and librarians learn to use the Internet. To make it easier, the group offers a series of publications with step-by-step instructions for integrating online resources into the curriculum. \$12 each (\$10.80 for ALA members) plus \$4 s&h. Contact ALA, 155 N. Wacker Dr., Chicago, ILL 60606-1719. Or visit <http://ericir.syr>.

You know you have a problem when...

"You realize you are the expert on the subject—and you don't have a clue what to do."

Linda Jordan, fifth grade teacher, Sherwood Elementary School, Silver Spring, Maryland

Dilemma

No Use for the Status Quo?

What do you do when you take heat for being a maverick?

I write about it. A few years ago, I took some heat about my practice of rewarding students for unexpected progress, outstanding completed assignments, and for participation by an exceptionally shy teen.

In my 31 years of teaching ninth grade English, I've gladly spent about \$500 a year on rewards, treats, and trinkets for my students to enhance their learning. I find that small, tangible rewards add potency to my verbal praise and complimentary notes.

I was shocked when a parent complained that I "bribed" my students. He contended that there was a plethora of research and literature that condemned this practice and asked that my administration assign me to read such literature.

Out of frustration, I wrote about the practice and the controversy in an article for *The Maryland English Journal*. Not only did I feel better about expressing my views and bringing the issue into the public arena, but the criticism ceased.

Kathy Megyeri

High school English teacher
Sandy Spring, Maryland

I often take heat for trying something new.

So what makes me keep trying? The one student who comes back and says, "Do you remember the time when we went to camp? That was the best time for me." Or, "Fifth grade really taught me so much. I know we were your guinea pigs for the project about



Accepting the Challenge, but it made me believe I could do almost anything."

It helps that I often run into parents in town who thank me for taking the time to do something that someone else may not have done—for going that extra mile.

There are times when getting in trouble sometimes just doesn't seem worth it, but when I hear "I'll never forget" and "thank you," somehow it seems to make it worthwhile.

Staci Kasse

Fifth grade teacher
San Diego, California

What's critical is communication. Sometimes people criticize efforts because they don't understand them. When you show them the real context, it's like a light going on.

That's why dialogue is so important when you're introducing innovative changes. When parents or colleagues are able to see that your goal is still high-quality education, then they begin to move in your direction.

Jeanne Lokar

Fifth grade teacher
Macedon, New York

Sometimes your efforts to change the system for the good of the students fail, as our efforts five years ago to introduce an extra period to our middle school day did after heavy opposition from parents.

It was rough, and many of us felt battered by the experience. But we learned valuable lessons, and that's what you do. You learn from your experience and move on, crafting even better strategies for the next time you introduce change.

Mike Marriam

Middle school reading teacher
Seneca, New York

Got a Question?

If you have a professional development question you'd like your colleagues across the country to answer, now's the time to ask it. Send your question to us by regular mail, Fax 202/822-7206, or send E-mail to this address: dilemma2@neatodaynea.org. Include your name, educational position, and home and school phone numbers.

Growth

You know you've been successful when...

"Colleagues you have instructed and assisted in the past have become mentors themselves."

Irene Sanders, sixth grade teacher, Orchard Elementary School, Vacaville, California

Delight

The Power of Peers

A revolutionary program in Kentucky connects teachers who want help with teachers who can help them.

James Elmore, a fifth grade teacher with 25 years in the classroom, wanted to learn more about hands-on science. So, in a move that signals a dramatic change in the teaching profession, he called his NEA state affiliate.

He connected with Teachers to the Power of Two—T2, for short—a five-year-old effort by the Kentucky Education Association to help teachers learn from one another.

"The idea behind T2 is to give KEA members easy access to professional development and the means to use it," explains Jamie Morton, KEA staffer and coordinator of the T2 program.

T2 staffers gave Elmore a listing of teachers who have experience in hands-on science. To help him get together with these experts, KEA paid for travel, food expenses, and for a substitute teacher.

Elmore got answers to his questions—and much more. "I drove out to Floyd County to meet with science teacher Ray Ferguson and observe his class," recalls Elmore.

"I learned a great deal about how to create hands-on materials for my classroom as well as use them. I also learned I wasn't alone."

"This program drives home the point that teachers learn best from other teachers," says KEA's Morton.

In the five years since T2 was created, more than 2,000 teachers

across the state have used the network of 400 resource teachers. The only requirement: Association membership.

Funding comes from the Business Partnership for Kentucky Schools. Over the past five years, KEA has spent \$150,000 helping teachers meet with other teachers.

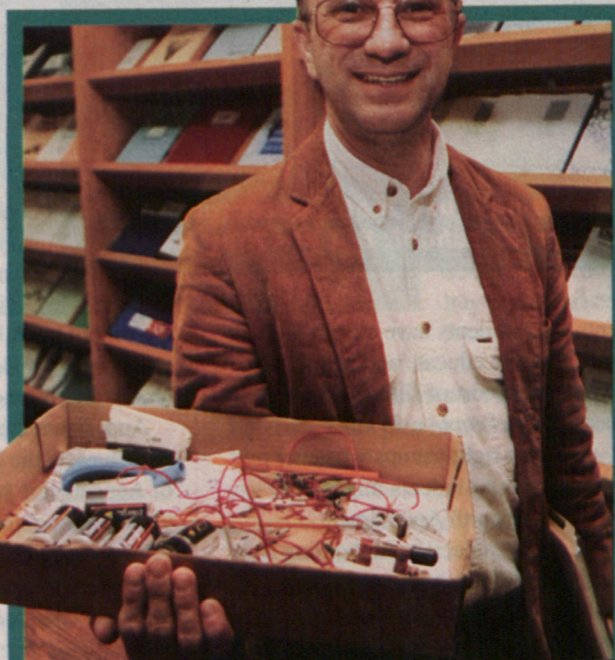
T2 experts have recently been called on to help teachers in schools deemed "crisis schools" because of dropping test scores. "We gave them the names of many of our T2 teachers," Morton says, "and now the teachers and schools are getting the help they need."

"Not only that, teachers in these crisis schools have a friendly ear as they work to improve their programs," says Greg Wiseman, a T2 math resource teacher who's helping out.

"It's hard enough to work in today's classrooms," Wiseman says, "but to add the pressure of public scrutiny? We're lending moral as well as instructional support."

Teachers to the Power of Two may be so popular because it's free of administrative constraints, says KEA's Morton.

"No one's watching, so teachers are free to talk about whatever's on their



NEA member James Elmore, a fifth grade teacher, carries the hands-on science materials that he learned to use with help from a colleague across the state.

Jayme Burden

minds," he says. "They all end up learning and sharing."

It won't be long before T2 opens more classroom doors—this time electronically—as T2 moves onto KEA's Web site. There will be a message board, homepage, and interactive assistance from T2 staffers.

"Once we go online, help may be just a few computer keys away," says Morton. "It's all part of making the state a smaller place and the classroom a larger community for teachers in need."

For more information on KEA's T2 program, contact Jamie Morton at JMorton@nea.org or call KEA, 502/875-2889, or call up the Web site at www.kea.org.

Idea Exchange

Banding Together

To cut down on isolation and increase comradery, I created a three-school cooperative for area high school Spanish teachers.

Now, on a regular basis, we share stories, lesson plans, and ideas to improve our teaching. Who wins? We all do—students and teachers, alike.

Adele Munsterman
Fridley, Minnesota

Create an Externship

In my school district, we make use of "teacher externships"—summer opportunities for teachers in grades 4-12 to "job shadow" business people in the county.

As we lurk in the "shadows," we get a first-hand look at some of the local businesses. The view helps us learn a lot about today's workforce, create effective school-to-work programs, and develop new skills.

Steve Lazaroff
Jackson, Michigan

Stand Up, Be Counted

Members of my local NEA affiliate—the Schaumburg Education Support Personnel Organization—are working hand-in-hand with area teachers to restructure the school day and week to benefit everyone—students, teachers, and support staff.

By co-coordinating the project, which recently won an NEA Urban Grant, our local affiliate makes sure support employees get the chance to voice their concerns about restructuring.

We won't be left out.

Cathy Pinkney
Schaumburg, Illinois

Helping is Job #1

In my school district, we now have an Instructional Support Team (IST) made up of 18 classroom veterans whose job is to help other teachers.

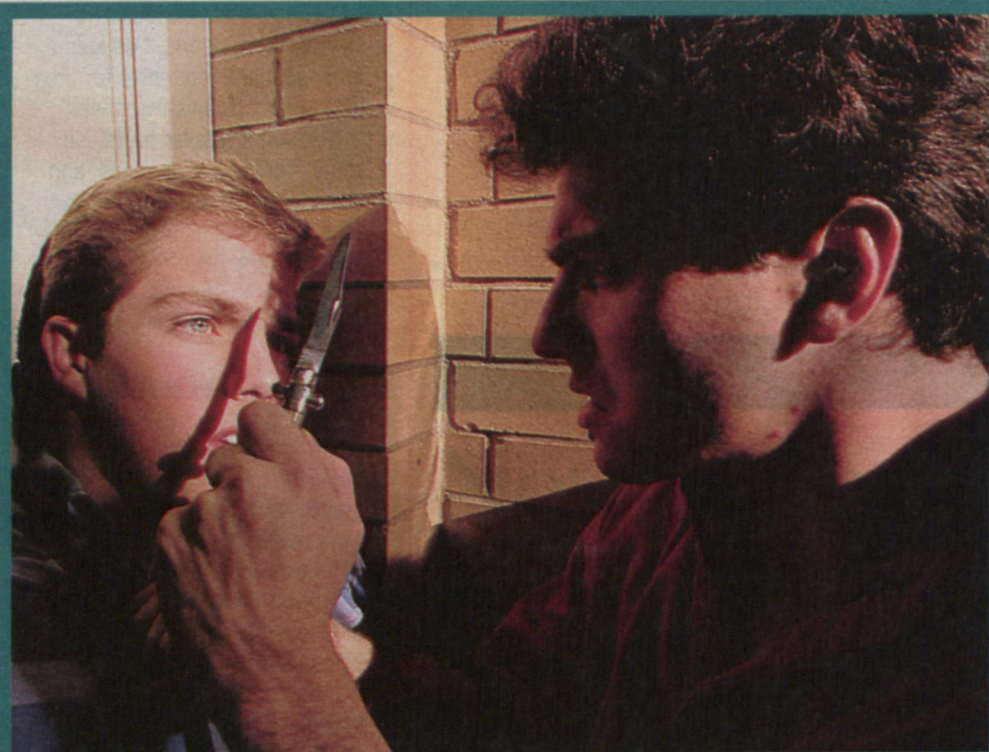
Each IST member is a specialist in one area, such as secondary math or general elementary. Teachers can request an IST member for staff in-service or a one-on-one meeting to get help.

It's teachers helping teachers, answering questions and sharing expertise.

Cindy Swecker
Prince William, Virginia

Rights Watch

Getting Tough on Gun Violence



Fifteen percent of all school districts now use metal detectors to stop students from bringing weapons to school. But are they legal?

Can school officials require students to go through metal detectors before entering school?

The headlines are startling. A fifth-grade teacher sitting in a Los Angeles school cafeteria is hit in the head by a stray bullet. A 14-year-old honor student from Washington State shoots and kills a teacher and two students during math class. A 15-year-old pregnant girl in St. Louis is gunned down on a school bus.

How do you reduce gun violence in schools? Increasingly, the answer—at least among inner city schools—is to install metal detectors.

According to a 1994 survey by the National School Boards Association, metal detectors are now in use in about 15 percent of all school districts.

But are they legal?

"Yes" say courts in five states—New York, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Florida, and Arkansas.

In a number of recent decisions, courts have unanimously rejected students' claims that being scanned by metal detectors violates their Fourth Amendment right not to be subjected to unreasonable searches.

"Boards of Education, teachers, par-

ents, and students have a right to a safe place to educate and learn," the Appellate Court of Illinois announced last year in *People v. Pruitt*.

And that right trumps whatever privacy interests students might have under the Fourth Amendment.

In *Pruitt*, a decision upholding the use of metal detectors in Chicago's public schools, the court emphasized that metal detectors are now "standard equipment" in airports and public buildings, and their use in such places has been uniformly upheld by the courts.

These same security concerns justify upholding their use in schools. "Judges cannot ignore what everybody else knows: violence and the threat of violence are present in the public schools," the court said.

And school boards "have a duty to take whatever lawful steps are necessary to assure that the school premises are safe and weapon free."

In a related Arkansas case, *Thompson v. Carthage School District*, students were required to remove their jackets, shoes, and socks, and to empty their pockets before being scanned by a hand-held metal detector.

The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals last year held that this "minimally intrusive search for dangerous weapons was constitutionally reasonable."

In other cases where school safety was at stake, the courts have taken a

similarly tough line.

A New Mexico federal court in 1995 rejected a student's claim that his school's ban on "saggy pants" violated his free speech rights, his right to "express his link with his Black identity, the Black culture and the styles of Black urban youth."

School officials explained that the dress code was adopted to combat a perceived problem of gangs within the schools and that "sagging pants" are viewed by some as a sign of "gang affiliation."

In Illinois, a federal court upheld a school rule banning gang symbols, clothing, jewelry, and other gang-related paraphernalia.

The court said that the school lawfully could use that rule to suspend a male student for wearing an earring to school.

And, in another significant free speech case, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals last year upheld the authority of a school to suspend a high school student for telling a guidance counselor, "If you don't give me this schedule change, I'm going to shoot you!"

The court rejected the student's claim that her utterance was just an expression of frustration and was not intended as a serious threat.

The fact that school safety is now a frequent topic for court consideration prompted this somewhat philosophical aside by the *Pruitt* court in Illinois:

"We long for the time when children did not have to pass through metal detectors on their way to class, when hall monitors were other children, not armed guards, when students dressed for school without worrying about gang colors. Those were the days when sharp words, crumpled balls of paper, and, at worst, the bully's fists were the weapons of choice."

"We mourn the loss of innocence this case represents."

Don't we all.

—Michael D. Simpson
NEA Office of the General Counsel

Resources

Safe families plus safe communities equal safe schools.

That's the reasoning behind NEA's recently published *Safe Schools Manual*, a resource that may help you make your school safer.

The manual's suggestions for preventing violence by working in schools and neighborhoods and with families are based on a careful study of successful programs and relevant research. And the recommended strategies can be easily tailored to suit your circumstances.

The NEA manual contains a summary of research about violence in schools, communities, and families. It also includes sections on how to make schools, communities, and families safe, a bibliography, plus relevant checklists, reporting forms, and guidelines you can use.

For a single, free copy of the NEA's *Safe Schools Manual*—and for single copies of NEA's three action sheets on safe schools, perceptions of school violence, and television violence—contact NEA Human and Civil Rights, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036-3290.

For additional information on violence prevention, contact the following organizations:

- Center to Prevent Handgun Violence, 1225 I Street, N.W., Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20005, 202/289-7319.

- National School Safety Center, 4165 Thousand Oaks Blvd., Suite 290, Westlake Village, CA 91362, 805/373-9977. On the Web, visit www.nssc1.org.

- Safe and Drug Free Schools, U.S. Dept. of Education, The Portals, Suite 604, 600 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, DC 20202, 202/260-3954.

- Community Relations Service, U.S. Dept. of Justice, Bicentennial Building, 600 E Street, N.W., Suite 200, Washington, DC 20530, 202/305-2935. Visit www.usdoj.gov.

- National Institute for Dispute Resolution, 1726 M St., N.W., Suite 500, Washington, DC 20036, 202/466-4764.

- National Crime Prevention Council, 1700 K St., N.W., Second floor, Washington, DC 20036, 202/466-6272.

—Mary Faber

NEA Human and Civil Rights

Health

Beware of Too Much Sun



Dr. June Robinson is a dermatologist and leader of a national skin cancer prevention campaign co-sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and the

American Academy of Dermatology. She spoke recently with Paul Sathrum, a staff member with NEA's Health Information Network.

Is skin cancer common?

With one million cases reported each year, I'd say it's a very common problem. The incidence rate of melanoma, the more serious form of skin cancer, has increased about 4 percent per year since 1973. Last year, 38,300 persons were diagnosed with melanoma, and approximately 7,300 died.

The more common form of skin cancer, non-melanoma skin cancer, can lead to disfigurement when the cancer is removed.

What are the risk factors for developing skin cancer?

Excess sun exposure, especially blistering sun burns in childhood, is a risk factor for developing melanoma.

Ninety percent of non-melanoma skin cancer can be attributed to the accumulated unprotected exposure to ultraviolet light. Since most Americans receive the majority of their lifetime ultraviolet light exposure in the first 18 years of life, adequate sun protection in those early years is essential in reducing an individual's risk of developing skin cancer.

In addition, people who have fair skin, tan poorly, and burn easily have an increased risk. Individuals who never burn, who have a lot of pigment in their skin, such as deeply pigmented African Americans, have a very low risk of skin cancer.

What can children do to reduce their risk?

- Seek shade between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the sun has the most burning potential.
- Wear a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) greater than 15. It's estimated that the consistent use of sunscreens in the first 18 years of life would reduce the incidence of skin cancer by 78 percent.
- Use lip balm.
- Wear sunglasses with an ultraviolet light protection factor.
- Wear a hat with a brim that provides shade over the nose and tops of ears.



- Do not deliberately try to sunbathe in either outdoor or indoor light. There is no safe light in tanning salons.

What can school staffs do to reduce sun exposure during outdoor play?

First, provide shade for children engaged in small games and activities to protect them from sun, heat, and dehydration. And provide a structural shade area—literally four tent poles and a piece of canvas—for team members when they're not out on the playing field.

Second, provide role models. Recess monitors should be seen wearing hats and putting on sunscreen.

Third, change the rules about prescription medication so kids can bring sunscreen to school and use it.

Fourth, encourage kids to wear hats on playgrounds. In Chicago, certain kinds of hats aren't allowed on playgrounds because of gang colors, but it's too dangerous to be out in full sun in 95-degree weather without a hat.

What kind of sunscreen is best?

One with an SPF greater than 15. With SPF 15, you shouldn't burn if you put it on before you go outdoors. Brand is not important except as it affects how the sunscreen smells or feels. Those

who are in and out of the water, should choose a water-resistant sunscreen and reapply it every hour. Even water-resistant sunscreens wear off.

Some kids involved in sports complain that sunscreens run and get in their eyes causing pain. They should look for sunscreens designed for sporting activities. These have a "no more tears" component and don't run as much.

People with allergies to sunscreens should buy ones marked PABA-free.

How can you motivate kids to use sun protection?

Be creative. Have contests to see who can make the most fun hat out of construction paper. Bring in parents or grandparents who've had skin cancer and have them talk about their experiences with sun exposure.

Finally, appeal to kids' vanity. Tell them that those "Baywatch" babes are going to have crow's feet around the eyes, blotchy liver spots on the backs of the hands, and broken blood vessels by the time they're 30.

Resources

- May is National Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month. For free materials, contact the American Academy of Dermatology, Attn: Communications Department, P.O. Box 4014, Schaumburg, IL 60168. Or visit www.aad.org.

- For answers about cancer, call the Cancer Information Service, 800/4-CANCER, a service of the National Cancer Institute. Spanish-speaking staff available. Open from 9 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. ET.

From the Network

To promote the health and well-being of education employees and their students, the NEA Health Information Network recommends the following resources:

Cancer Awareness

April is Cancer Control Month. April 14-18 is Minority Cancer Awareness Week. For information on cancer and how it affects minorities, contact the Cancer Information Service at 800/4-CANCER or call your local American Cancer Society.

Reduce Drug Use

Girl Power! is a program designed to prevent or reduce drug use among girls aged 9-14 and help them grow into confident women. For information, call 800/729-6686 or visit www.health.org.

Safe Kids Week

May 10-18 is National Safe Kids Week. The *SAFE KIDS Gear Up Guide* shows how to child-proof settings where children live and play. \$2 includes s&h. Contact the National SAFE KIDS Campaign, 1301 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Suite 1000, Washington, D.C. 20004.

Violence Prevention

Facing Violence: Discussion Starting Skits for Teenagers helps kids learn positive ways to handle violent situations. \$19.95 plus \$3 s&h. Contact Resource Publications, Inc., 160 E. Virginia St., #290, San Jose, CA 95112, 408/286-8505.

Sex Education

For help assessing your sex education program or designing a new one, get the second edition of *Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education*. \$5.75 includes s&h. Contact SIECUS, 130 West 42nd St., Suite 350, New York, NY 10036.

Note to Nurses

Recommendations for the School Health Nurse in Addressing HIV/AIDS with Adolescents provides guidelines for establishing an HIV program, including specific actions nurses can take to ensure adequate HIV services to students. Single copies \$2. Contact the American Nurses Association, Attn: Paula Popp, 600 Maryland Ave, S.W., Suite 100 West, Washington, DC 20024.

Bits & Bytes

New & Noteworthy

Neat Project

Projectneat wants to provide schools with a large screen television and equipment that allows Internet access through that television. Schools need to supply only a phone line and an Internet service provider. Priority is given to disadvantaged and rural schools. Contact Tom Rahimi, Projectneat, 3260 Jay St., Santa Clara, CA 95054, call 408/235-7760, or visit the Web site at (www.projectneat.org).

Chance to 'Do It'

High school students with disabilities and an interest in science, engineering, or mathematics can join the University of Washington's DO-IT pals. Participants can borrow computers, software, and adaptive technology for use at home. They can also be assigned a mentor in their area of interest and attend summer study programs at the university. For more information, call 206/685-3648, E-mail (doit@u.washington.edu), or visit (weber.u.washington.edu/~doit/).

Math's a Blast

The popular Math Blaster software has been joined by Mega Math Blaster for students in grades 1-6. The story line is stronger, and there are more math problems and problem-solving activities. The program is available for both PC and Power Mac for \$65, lab packs are \$155, and site licenses cost \$700. Call 800/545-7677.

Leave the Bug Spray

"Explore Yellowstone" is an interactive multimedia field trip for grades 4-12. Students take field surveys to earn achievement badges and answer visitor questions. The school version of the CD-ROM, for Mac and Windows, is available for \$54.80, lab packs for \$130.80, and site licenses for \$855. Calling MECC at 800/955-5570.

Good Signs

"Telling Tales in ASL & English: Reading, Writing and Videotapes," a new videotape available from the Council for Exceptional Children, shows how videotaping and word processing help students graduate from American Sign Language (ASL) to attain great competency in written English. \$37.50. Call 800/232-7323.

Friendly User

New Take on Traditional Lessons

Who:

Veronica Harts, fourth grade teacher at Prien Lake Elementary School, Lake Charles, Louisiana

E-mail address:

vharts@hal.calc.k12.la.us

What:

When learning to make graphs means improving the playground and field trip reports involve multimedia presentations, students approach old lessons with new enthusiasm.

Inspiration:

"The project my students are working on now is called Great Graphs Alive. I'm teaching them to look at an everyday situation they face and think about how to convert it into a graph.

"One concern they have is improving their playground. So before any decisions were made on what equipment to purchase, they conducted a survey of other students.

"Then I showed them how to take their results and construct a graph. That illustrated to them how useful graphs are in interpreting information.

"Whenever I'm working with technology, the kids are already motivated because it's attractive.

"When I took my class on a field



An Apple QuickTake camera lets Veronica Harts's students snap pictures and then import the images into multimedia projects they create.



trip to Baton Rouge, I showed them how to take pictures with a QuickTake camera, a piece of equipment that stores the images electronically.

"When we returned home, I taught them how to input the images into the three computers in our classroom using Kid Pix Studio software.

"Next we created a storyboard on our trip. Based on that, my students pulled together different elements to tell the story.

"They incorporated the QuickTake images and their own drawings. They

added music and recorded their own voices.

"Then we invited parents in for a multimedia presentation on what the kids did on their field trip. It was such positive reinforcement for the kids!

"Technology has gotten parents more involved in other ways, too.

"Cellular phones, for example, let us contact parents when convenient, and parents can check with us to see if their children have kept up with their homework for the day.

"But these phones aren't just behavior monitoring tools. We let students call their parents when they get an A or B. Most schools have to wait until the end of the day or send a note, but I get to see my students smile as they excitedly tell their parents right away about their success."

Bytes for Beginners

Want to get your students' busy working parents more connected to what their kids are doing at school?

Communication is key, and one way to improve that is to incorporate some of the technology that's out there.

A basic wish list for improving communications with parents:

- A school-based phone for each teacher, to connect them to parents and other members of the community.

- Voice mail systems where parents and teachers can share information.

- Hotline systems that parents can access 24 hours a day to find out what's going on in the school, and in their children's classes in particular.

- Regular E-mail correspondence between parents and teachers.

- School World Wide Web sites that parents and communities can access through the Internet, which can update parents on school programs.

- Cellular phone distribution to educators so they can easily communicate with parents—and students when they're outside of the school building.

Click:

"My students are already familiar with different types of technology, from cell phones to VCRs. In my classroom, though, I show them how to use technology to become researchers."

More About:

A digital camera like the Apple QuickTake camera is invaluable for schools that have integrated multimedia in instruction. These easy-to-use devices let students snap a picture and quickly see the results on a computer. Kodak and Apple manufacture affordable (\$200-\$600), durable models well-suited to indoor/outdoor projects.

Click Here

A Universe Open to All

Textbook and educational software are undergoing a revolution. Traditional teaching tools are being replaced by materials that all students can use—whether they are an “average” learner, have a physical or cognitive disability, or are gifted.

These “universally designed educational materials are a giant step forward in learning progress,” says Nancy Safer, executive director of the Council for Exceptional Children. Here she explains why.

What exactly are ‘universally designed’ materials?

Universally designed materials provide different ways for students to access the same material and respond to it.

These products have components that make the software accessible straight out of the box for everyone. One example is a Scholastic product called “Wiggle-Works.”

With this K-2 literacy curriculum, developed by the Center for Applied Special Technology, a visually impaired student can have all the text

enlarged, or change the color contrast of the screen for a lower glare that may be easier to read. A language impaired child can have all text read aloud, or have text highlighted word by word or line by line.

For children with an impairment that prevents them from using the mouse in a regular way, the Wiggle-Works software is adaptable to the single switch system, where the buttons highlight one at a time, the name of the button is said, and the students push the switch when the one they want is reached.

With universally designed products, teachers can give any student learning materials that complement the teaching strategy that works best for that particular child.

What makes for a ‘good’ product?

A key feature of universal design is the flexibility it offers educators and students. Some noteworthy features:

- Content is available in digital format, allowing educators to convert it into a format that’s easily accessible to

a student. For example, a history text could be converted to large type for a student who’s visually impaired.

- Students have more than one choice of access or response formats—for example, information given auditorily would also be presented in text and in sign language.

- In some cases, universally designed curriculums can be presented in different languages or include specific cultural perspectives.

Is it really worth my while to learn how to manipulate all these different media?

There are increased expectations that all students—including those with disabilities—master general and specialized curriculums. To accomplish that, students must have educational materials that can be adapted to their needs.

If educators are to be held accountable for student mastery of curriculums, they must have learning tools that work for their students. Universally designed materials provide a new gateway to academic success.

Web Winners

World of Resources

Education World’s searchable database at www.education-world.com/ contains more than 20,000 links to resources for teachers, students, and parents. This vast site also offers message boards and lesson plans.

Sites on Special Ed

Special Education Resources on the Internet (SERI) (www.hood.edu/seri/serihome.htm) links to sites on attention deficit disorder (ADD), speech impairment, special needs and technology, the gifted and talented, and many other special ed resources.

‘Exceptional’ Articles

Readers of the journal *Teaching Exceptional Children* (TEC) can now discuss one article per issue with the authors. TEC Author Online is located at (www.edc.org/FSC/NCIP).

Technos Fans

The Agency for Instructional Technology’s new Web site (www.ait.net) offers discussion forums for educators who use AIT instructional resources, a tip board where you can read or post tips on programs, and articles to download from Technos press.

Newton Approves

At the Physics Classroom (www.glenbrook.k12.il.us/gbssci/phys/Class/BBoard.html), the principles of physics are explained and illustrated in an easy-to-read style. Each lesson includes a Q&A section called “Check Your Understanding.”

Famous People

Some 15,000 short biographies can be found at the A&E Biography site (www.biography.com). This lively site also provides reviews of recently published biographies and often includes the first full chapter from the book.

Solar System Scenes

“Views of the Solar System” at bang.lanl.gov/solarsys/ offers just that, allowing students to explore planets, comets, meteorites, and more. The site includes a useful glossary and a section on the history of space exploration. Some pages have been translated into Spanish, with promises of more to come.

Screen Shot

Location: <http://www.nea.org/cet>

Teaching, Learning & Technology

MESSAGE BOARD

EDLINKS

EVENTS

BITS & BYTES

TECHNOLOGY BRIEFS

Message Board

Whether you're looking for advice about using classroom technology or want to share technology-related ideas and information with your colleagues, this message board is the link to follow...

Educational Links Database

Recommended to NEA by teachers, parents and kids who visit our site.... Each submission is reviewed by a group of teacher volunteers and added to our EDLinks database.

Latest annual survey on "Advanced Technology in the Classroom"

NEA's technology page (www.nea.org/cet) links to a wide range of other education sites, provides data to back up your efforts to get technology into your classroom, and even sports a trivia quiz for technophiles. It also features a message board where you can read postings on education technology and add your own.

MONEY TALKS

According to *Money* magazine, the NEA-Sponsored GoldCertificate® CD rate regularly beats the best rates anywhere.

Every month, *Money* magazine ranks the CD interest rates offered by leading banks across the country. And every month, the NEA-Sponsored GoldCertificate CD rate, offered by MBNA America® Bank, N.A., has regularly beaten the very best rates in *Money*. Your money could earn more with us than at most banks. Including your own bank.

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Benefits



Heads Up!

TV Tips

School Stories

The Day the Earth Threw Up

Nickelodeon, Wednesday, April 2, 5:30-6 a.m., ET. Hosted by Linda Ellerbee, this show educates kids about the environmental problems facing the earth today and explores ways kids can make a difference.

Virus Encounters

TBS, Thursday, April 3 and Friday, April 4, 1-2 p.m., ET. This live, interactive event takes students inside the human body for a microscopic look at what causes illness and what cures it.



Fit TV in the Classroom

The Family Channel, Friday, April 11, 4-5

a.m., ET. Watch this show for aerobic conditioning, healthy living tips, and nutritional information. The program airs early and commercial free—educators have copyright clearance for their classrooms for up to two years. For support materials, write on school stationery to The Family Channel, CIC Dept., P.O. Box 2050, Virginia Beach, VA 23450-2050. Or visit www.famfun.com.

The Story of Mothers And Daughters

ABC, Monday, April 14, check local listings for time. To supplement this documentary look at the complex relationship between mothers and daughters, get a study guide produced by KIDSNET by calling 800/647-4ABC.

Charter Schools, Magnet Schools, and Other Choices

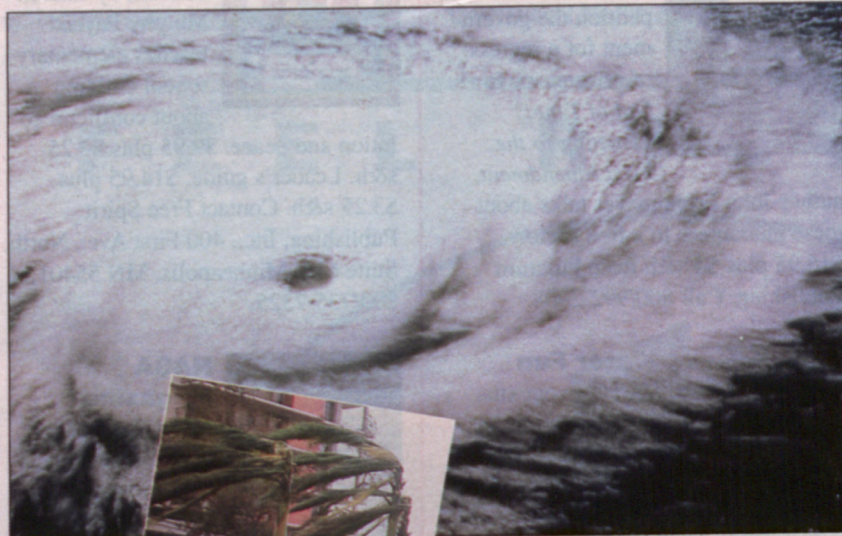
Distance Learning, Tuesday, April 15, 8-9 p.m., ET. This satellite town meeting, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, provides information about the choices parents have in public education. To register, call 800/USA-LEARN.

The Fight in the Fields

PBS, Wednesday, April 16, 9-11 p.m., ET. This program tells the story of the United Farmworkers Union and its charismatic leader, Cesar Chavez, who led grape and lettuce boycotts to win the first labor contract for California farmworkers.

7th Heaven

Mondays, WB Network, 8-9 p.m., ET. A wholesome family drama about a minister, his wife, and their five kids.



Five Great Weather Disasters

The Weather Channel, Saturday, April 19 and Sunday, April 20, 12-12:30 p.m., ET. This two-part show features the dramatic stories of the Dust Bowl in the '30s, Hurricane Hazel in 1954, Colorado's Big Thompson Flood of 1976, the Blizzard of 1978, and Pennsylvania's tornado outbreak of 1985.

Shari's Passover Surprise

PBS, Sunday, April 20, 7-8 p.m., ET. In this special, Shari Lewis, Lamb Chop and friends celebrate the Jewish holiday. To order the music songbook, contact Warner Brothers Music Publishing at 800/628-1528, ext. 214. For free materials, call Sharon Selico at KCET, 213/953-5242.



True Women

CBS, Sunday, May 4 and Tuesday, May 6, 9-11 p.m., ET. This four-hour mini-series, based

on the Janice Woods Windle novel, is about three generations of women who changed the face of the American West. The show spans five decades, from the Texas Revolution to the women's suffrage movement.

I Am Your Child

ABC, April, check local listings for date and time. This one-hour special hosted by Tom Hanks features music, comedy, and a documentary about a community that mobilized on behalf of its young children and families.

Part of a campaign to develop public awareness about the importance of the first three years of life, the special will include a toll-free number viewers can call for support materials.

These listings are provided by KIDSNET, a computerized clearinghouse for children's electronic media.

Want to see the real story of today's schools and classrooms? Tune in to *School Stories*, a joint program of the NEA and The Learning Channel, for a refreshing look inside. Here's the schedule.

Better Business, Stronger Schools

Sunday, April 6, 12:30 p.m., ET. What happens when a multinational corporation moves to town with a commitment to help schools? The answer: a hi-tech curriculum and a state-of-the-art training center.

Connecting with Kids

Sunday, April 13, 12:30 p.m., ET. Two teachers, two radically different teaching styles, one result—kids turned on to learning. Take a look inside the classrooms of Minnesota teacher Mary Beth Blegen and Texas teacher John Furst.

Putting Kids First

Sunday, April 20, 12:30 p.m., ET. At Teachers Memorial Elementary School in Kinston, North Carolina, the staff and principal will do anything for the kids and community—and it shows. Find out how they're working magic for their students.

The Struggle for Safety

Sunday, April 27, 12:30 p.m., ET. In schools around the country, it's a daily struggle to keep local gangs from spreading their influence in hallways and on playgrounds. Find out what school staffers are doing in Long Beach, California, to overcome the problem.

Plugging into Technology

Sunday, May 4, 12:30 p.m., ET. Five years ago, with the help of a federal grant, a school in one of America's poorest counties joined the technology revolution. Now look at White River High School in South Dakota, where students roam their rural community with cameras and computers, and the school has its own Web page.

BONUS: An added plus for NEA members, each episode of *School Stories* is available on video after airing with an additional 15 to 20 minutes of tips from the educators featured in each show. For details or to order, call 800/229-4200.

Heads Up

Free or Inexpensive



Classroom Communities

Written for elementary school teachers, *Creating Your Classroom Community* by Lois Bridges—with advice from 20

other teachers—offers tips, projects, and hints for creating a thriving learning environment within the classroom. \$12.50 plus \$3.50 s&h. Contact Stenhouse Publishers, P.O. Box 360, York, ME 03909, 800/988-9812.



Contests for Kids

From writing to photography to community service, there are awards out there just waiting for your students. Take a look at *All the Best Contests*

for Kids, a collection of sources for their prize-winning creativity. \$9.95 plus \$3.50 s&h. Contact Tricycle Press, 800/841-2665.

The First Amendment

Forty-five words guarantee every U.S. citizen five essential freedoms—free



author John Frohnmayer talks about these guarantees to a free society. \$16.95 plus \$4 s&h from Fulcrum Publishing. Call 800/992-2908.



Water Fun

Turn on your students' appetite for science with *Water Science, Water Fun: Great Things to Do with H2O* by Noel Fiarotta and Phyllis Fiarotta. ISBN #0806942487. \$17.95 plus \$2 s&h—20 percent discount for schools. Contact Sterling Publishing, 387 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10016, 212/532-7160.

20th Century Women

This collection of six posters features women who've made outstanding contributions in such fields as sports, literature, arts, education, and daring action. \$12.95 for the set, plus \$4 s&h. Contact the National Women's History Project, 7738 Bell Road, Windsor, CA 95492, 707/838-6000.



Getting Along

We Can Get Along: A Child's Book of Choices by Lauren Murphy Payne teaches elementary school children about conflict reso-

lution and peace. \$9.95 plus \$3.25 s&h. Leader's guide: \$14.95 plus \$3.25 s&h. Contact Free Spirit Publishing, Inc., 400 First Ave., North, Suite 616, Minneapolis, MN 55401, 800/735-7325.



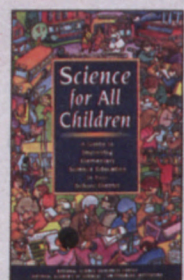
NASA Magazine

NASA Technology Today, a new magazine sponsored by NASA and written by the International Technology Educa-

tion Association, offers articles for classroom use and student projects. Subscription for one year (six issues): \$17.95. Contact Associated Business Publications Intl., 317 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10017, 800/944-6272.

Science for Children

Make your district's science education program the best it can be with help from the experts. *Science for All Children: A Guide to Improving Elementary Science Education in Your School District* offers guidelines by



the National Sciences Resource Center. \$19.95 plus \$4 s&h. Discounts for bulk orders available. Contact National Academy Press, 2101 Constitution Ave., N.W., Box 285, Washington, DC 20055, 800/624-6242.



Bullies Beware

Why is Everybody Always Picking on Me: A Guide to Handling Bullies helps explain why

bullies exist, then offers activities to help children resolve conflicts without violence. \$14.95 plus \$4.95 s&h. Contact Atrium Society Publications, P.O. Box 816, Middlebury, VT 05753, 800/848-6021.

Patriotism

The Department of Veteran Affairs offers *Celebrating America's Freedoms*, a free packet of essays and fact sheets covering a variety of topics including the origins of Flag Day and the history of the bald eagle. Write to Celebrating America's Freedoms, Department of Veteran Affairs, Office of Public Affairs (80D), 810 Vermont Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20420.

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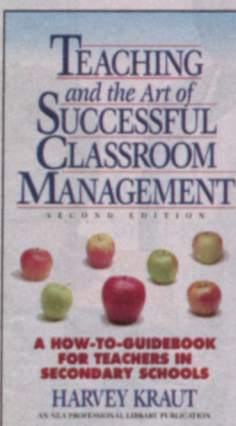


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128 pp., 1997, Stock #2004-9-00-D,

Non-members \$18.95, NEA Members \$14.95

Prices subject to change. Shipping and handling will be added.

HOW TO ORDER

To order any NEA Professional Library title, or to receive a FREE catalog, call toll free: 1-800-229-4200 Mon. – Fri. 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. ET or mail to: NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516

Heads Up

or visit www.va.gov/articles/celebam/index.htm.

Mental Illness

The American Psychiatric Association is offering *Mental Illness Awareness Guide for Educators* free to readers of *NEA Today*. For a copy, contact the American Psychiatric Association, DPA Dept. NEA-97, 1400 K St., N.W., Washington, DC 20005. Or visit www.psych.org.

Multiculturalism

Celebrations Around the World: A Multicultural Handbook offers explanations of more than 300 international holidays and celebrations. \$19.95 plus \$4 s&h. Contact Fulcrum Publishing, 350 Indiana St., Suite 350, Golden, CO 80401-5093, 800/992-2908.

National Wildlife Week

April 20-26 is National Wildlife Week. This year's theme: "Nature's Web: Communities and Conservation."

Get a free 1997 National Wildlife Week kit complete with posters and educators' guides by contacting your state NWF affiliate or writing to National Wildlife Week, National Wildlife Federation, 8925 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, VA 22184. And check out www.nwf.org.

Anatomy

Geared to students in grades 9-12, *Human Anatomy in Full Color* explores the complex mechanisms of the human body. Illustrated in vivid detail by John Green, this 44-page book explains the functions and purposes of bodily organs. \$4.95 plus \$4 s&h. Contact Dover Publications, Inc., 31 East 2nd St., Mineola, NY 11501, 516/294-7000.

Special Ed

The Survival Guide for the First Year Special Education Teacher by Mary Kemper Cohen, Maureen Gale, and Joyce M. Meyer offers advice on everything from working with parents to building partnerships. \$12 plus \$3 s&h. Contact CEC Publications, Dept K6012, P.O. Box 79026, Baltimore, MD 21279-0026, 800/232-7323.

Health Centers

The Evolution of Financing is the success story of one school-based health center's struggle to serve its community well and raise enough money to

survive. Lessons learned at Commerce City Community Health Services in Colorado may help you keep your center afloat. \$5 plus \$2 s&h. Contact the National Health & Education

Consortium, c/o Institute for Educational Leadership, 1001 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 310, Washington, DC 20036, 202/822-8405. Or visit www.nhec.org.

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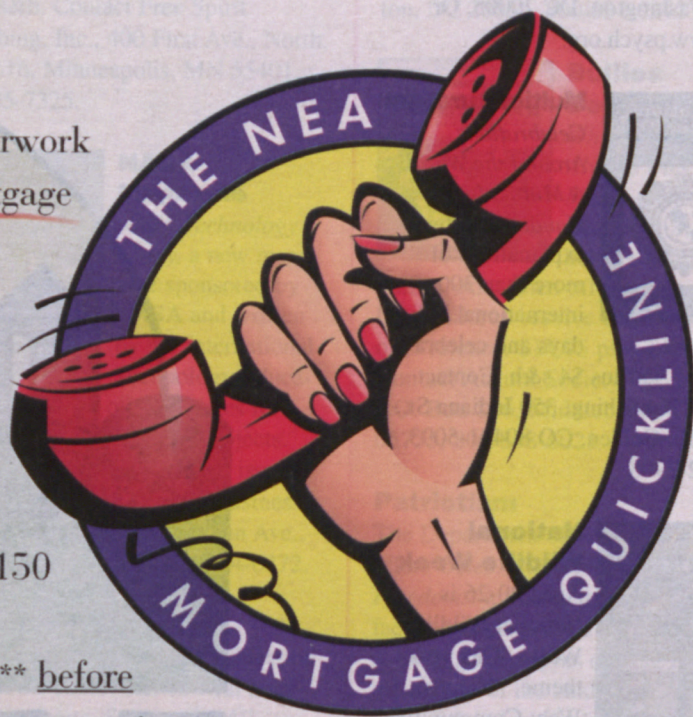
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If you already own your home, you can borrow up to 100% of its value with our home equity loans. You'll get competitive rates, the option for *no* out-of-pocket closing expenses, and a possible tax deduction†. It's the smart way to make major purchases or home improvements, or consolidate your monthly expenses.

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Heads Up

Events

Put Your Stamp On It

Education's got the stamp of approval from the U.S. Postal Service, which recently issued a new



"Helping Children Learn" stamp designed by award-winning children's book artist Christopher Van Allsburg. To buy the stamp for regular use, visit your local post office. For first day covers, call 800/STAMP-24.

Volunteer Week

Public School Volunteer Week is scheduled for April 13-21. Sponsored by Project Appleseed and the National Campaign for Public School Improvement, the week is a time to mobilize community support for education.

For a copy of the "parental involvement pledge," a host of suggested volunteer activities, and more complete information, visit <http://members.aol.com/pledgenow/appleseed/index.html>.

Savings Day

The American Bankers Association Education Foundation has designated April 17 as "National Teach Children to Save Day."

On that day, bankers across the country will make presentations to elementary school children on the importance of saving money. Teachers who haven't been contacted but would like to have a banker present to their class should call their local bank.

For more information, call the ABA at 800/338-0626. ABA's foundation also offers a resource kit for bankers to use during their presentations. The kit costs \$20 and can be ordered by calling the toll-free number above.

Grants

BET on Learning

Black Entertainment Television announces its 1997 Teacher Grant Competition. This annual program rewards teachers who successfully incorporate *BET on Learning* into their curriculum with \$1,500, a one-year subscription to *Emerge* magazine, and a TV and VCR. Deadline: April 30. For application and information, contact Holly Cypress, One BET Plaza, 1900 W Place N.E., Washington, DC 20018-1211, 202/6082076.

High School Chemistry

The American Chemical Society

Office of High School Chemistry is offering up to \$500 in teacher travel grants for high school chemistry teachers to attend NSTA, ACS, or other state, regional, or national sci-

ence education meetings.

Winners must present a paper on their classroom use of ACS products, including videotapes and textbooks.

Application deadline: July 1.

For more information, contact Christine Brennan, Office of High School Chemistry, ACS 1155 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036, fax 202/833-7732.

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MBNT0497

MUTUAL FUND QUOTATIONS

Fund Family	Fund Name	Yield	Rating	Assets	Price
AGF 210		8.85			10.14
G 10		10.14			10.14
Spartan & 1		10.14			10.14

The collage features several financial documents:

- A document titled "Mutual Funds" with the text "Developed exclusively for The National Endowment for Democracy, Inc. March 19, 1994".
- A document titled "NEA Valuebuilder Mutual Fund Program" with a dark blue header and a tan body. It includes a small image of a classical building and a pie chart.
- A document titled "PERSONAL INVESTMENT PROFILE" with a purple header and a tan body. It includes a pie chart and a section titled "Investment Goals".

The background of the collage is a large, faint "NEA" logo.

MFNT0497

Heads Up

Technology Grants

EDS Technology will award 20 \$1,500 grants to elementary school teachers with ideas for using information technology products and services to enhance learning.

Projects must support curriculum objectives and further student achievement in the following categories: special needs students, global diversity, parental and community involvement, assessment and evaluation of student performance, student ethics, and behavior. Deadline: July 1.

Contact EDS Community Affairs, Attn: Carol Vail, 13600 EDS Dr., Mall Stop A6S-C13, Herndon, VA 22071. Or visit www.eds.com/techgrant.

Opus Aftermath

The Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation—established by the movie's composer Michael Kamen—is leading a cam-

campaign to collect used instruments, refurbish them, and distribute them to school music programs.

The Foundation will set up collection sites and conduct needs assessments to identify schools and individuals eligible for donations. For more information, set your Web browser for www.mhopus.org.

Outstanding Teaching

Best Practices in Education offers grants to help pre-K-12 teachers adapt outstanding teaching practices from other countries for their classrooms. Applications for "Discovery Grants" of up to \$2,500 are accepted year-round. For details, contact Best Practices in Education, 92 Exchange St., Portland, ME 04101, 207/780-1887.

Materials Science

Five ASM International Teacher Grants are available to science or mathematics teachers whose classroom projects enhance awareness of the role of materials scientists. The projects must also incorporate engineering materials such as metals, glass, ceramics, and polymers. Deadline: May 25, 1997.

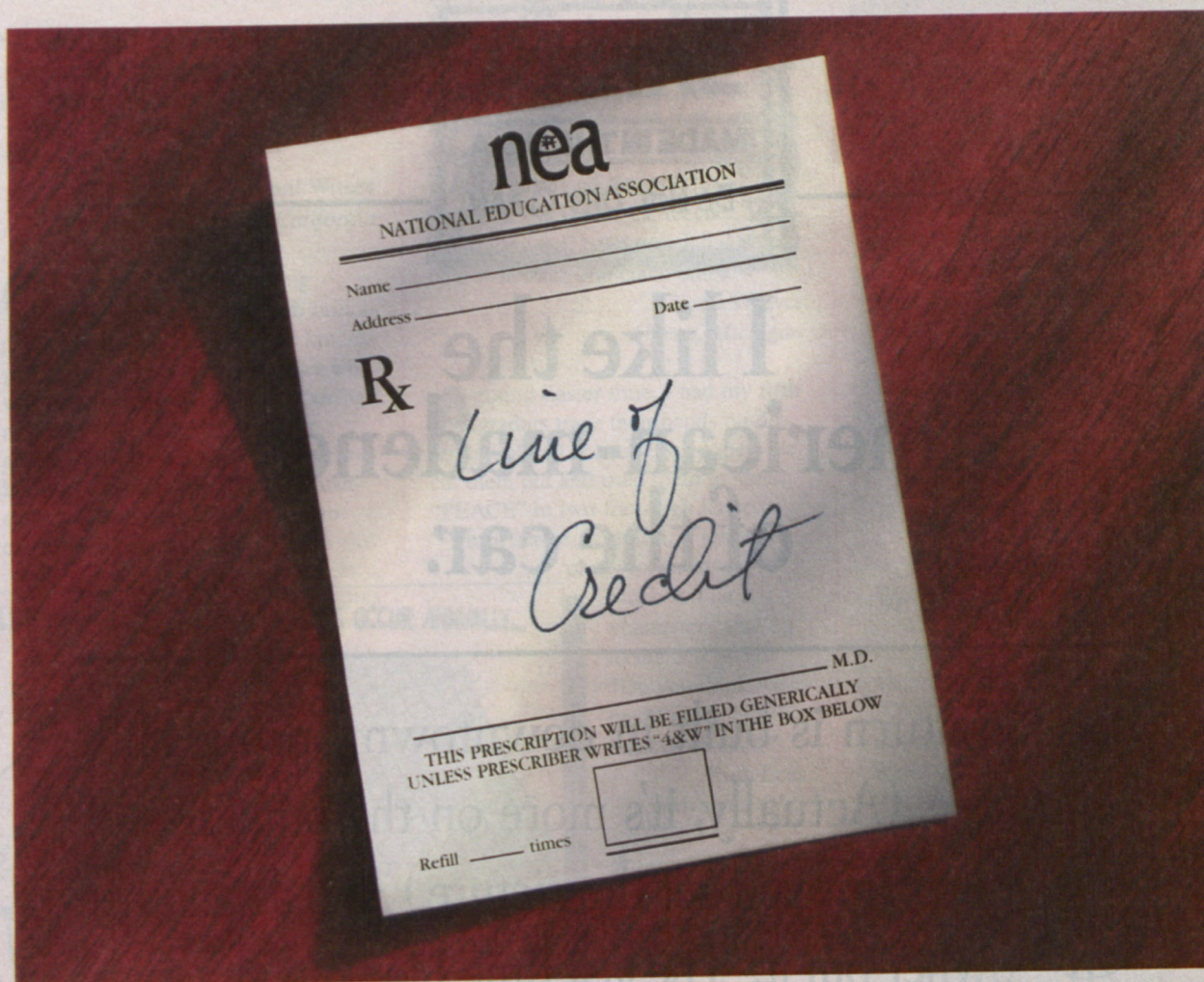
Submit a two-page proposal describing your hands-on project to T.K. Glasgow/ASMI, NASA Lewis Research Center, MS 105-1, 21000 Brookpark Rd., Cleveland, OH 44135.

photo contest open to students aged 12-18 who submit original photos depicting freedom to local newspapers. The winning photos will appear in newspapers all over the nation as

part of the ABA's "Celebrate Your Freedom" program. Deadline: May 1. For details, contact Dr. Betty L. Sullivan by E-mail to bettytsnie@aol.com. Send faxes to 415/641-0881.

Future Inventors

Can your students in grades 4-6 design and build a new or improved tool? If they can, enter them in the Craftsman/NSTA Young Inventors



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LCNT0497

Contests

Photo Contest

The American Bar Association is sponsoring "Images of Freedom," a

Heads Up

Awards program. Twelve regional winners will win \$5,000 bonds. One national winner will win a \$10,000 savings bond. Deadline: April 10. For an application, call 888/494-4994.

Space Colonies

The National Space Society's Education Chapter asks middle and high school students to design a human space colony suitable to house

explorers. Entry deadline: April 25. For more information, contact NSS Education Chapter, Attn: Carolyn Joseph, 1084 E. 82nd St., Brooklyn, NY 11236, 718/345-8131.

Web Winners

Fighting Drug Abuse

The National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information has a wide variety of resources, posters, and lesson plans for school staff, parents, and community activists on its Web site (photo, below). Call it up at www.health.org.



Cells Alive

This Web site shows microscopic organisms in action so students can understand how they work. Go to www.comet.chv.va.us/quill.

Shakespeare Online

Take an interactive tour of the life and complete works of William Shakespeare at <http://thetech.mit.edu/Shakespeare.html>.

High School Journalists

Want to connect with other high school newspaper staffs across the country? Visit <http://www.nvnet.k12.nj.us/newsweb>—a Web site designed for high school student journalists and their faculty advisers.

Wallowing Web Site

Plunge into the "yuckiest Web site on the Internet" and find out about worms, cockroaches, and other incredibly gross stuff. Set your Web browser for www.nj.com/yucky/ and find a learning resource center with more links for kids and educators.

Ancient Cultures

Here's your chance to explore ancient Near East cultures from your classroom computer. The site—<http://eawc.evansville.edu/nepage.htm>—offers maps, images, resources, and links to other sites.

Frog Dissection

Designed for high school biology classes, this site allows students to explore the anatomy of a frog without dissecting the real thing. You can turn the frog over, remove skin, and highlight various organs. Take a peek at <http://george.lbl.gov/ITG.hm.pg.docs/dissect/dissect.html>.



“

I like the American-madeness of the car.

—Gail Gross

”

Every Saturn is built in downtown Spring Hill, Tennessee. (Actually, it's more on the outskirts of town, but you get the picture.) And as another owner put it, "The last time I looked at a map, Tennessee was right in the greenest part of the U.S. of A." Which means that if American-madeness is



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what you want in a car, Saturns are just loaded with it. Hope to see you soon.



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In the Light Lane

'If I Were the Teacher ...'

A new kindergarten teacher in our building was commenting on the poor quality of paper black cats that her class had prepared as an art project. She went on to say that, though she was embarrassed, she had still put them on display on the walls of her classroom.

I decided to boost her spirits and take a look at them. As I entered the room and scanned all the "creations," I pointed to one over the door and said, "Well, that one isn't *too* bad."

"That," she replied indignantly, "is the sample one I made."

Linda Buchanan
Birmingham, Michigan

ble for writing notes in class was once again caught with a note. But my frown soon turned to a smile.

"Dear Mrs. Wilsey," read the note. "Happy April Fool's Day!"

April Wilsey
Mission Viejo, California

On a cold, blustery morning, while serving as an intern principal, I substituted briefly in the kindergarten room for a female teacher who was experiencing car trouble. During roll call, I noticed a student was absent. Yet I'd seen him earlier peering into the classroom. So I immediately asked the school secretary to contact his parents.

To give my fourth graders an opportunity to tell me what they'd like me to do differently, I asked them to write a journal entry on the topic "If I Were the Teacher."

Jason surprised me with his response: "If I were the teacher, I would quit and get a new job. I would be a fisherman and catch crabs."

Gloria Weaver
Alpena, Michigan

Around Easter time, I had my fifth graders trace their hands on different colored construction paper. We cut them out and used them to spell "PEACE" in two-foot-high letters.

From across the room, it looked pretty impressive—so

much so that a youngster came up to me and asked, "Do you think we could make LOVE back there also?"

Ruth Lees
Ravenna, Ohio

I am quite tall, and my behind sticks out a bit when I write near the bottom of the board.

During my first year of teaching fifth grade, I was writing on the board—and my students were watching carefully to make sure that I

made no mistakes. One student who was sitting behind me caught a mistake and asked, "Mrs. Mattson, why is there a big 'b' on your 'but'?"

Thinking he meant something else, I quickly looked at my behind for the big bee—and we all had quite a laugh.

Lisa Mattson
Lead, South Dakota

My mom and grandmother were conversing in Polish as our six-year-old daughter, Erin, listened. She followed their lips for a while and then, being the anxious-to-learn first grader that she was, turned and sighed, "I can never understand them when they talk in cursive."

Donna Johnson
Columbiaville, Michigan

NEWS ITEM: 19 MILLION KID-RELATED BASEBALL INJURIES OCCUR ANNUALLY...



By Jeff Stahl, The Cincinnati Post, Newspaper Enterprise Association

A few minutes later, the secretary laughingly related that the boy had walked home. He told his mother that when he saw "the janitor" in the room, he figured school was over and left.

James Weiss
Willmar, Minnesota

During reading time, I discussed the word "forefront" with my fifth graders. After a definition and a couple of sentences using the word, I asked Willie to give us his sentence using the word.

Willie obviously wasn't paying close attention. Yet after bringing his gaze down off the ceiling, he looked at me and replied, "My baby brother has four front teeth."

Randell Snipes
Memphis, Tennessee

Being named April, April Fool's Day has not been one of my favorite events. On April 1, 1993, as usual, many students were trying to trick me. I told them how, after teaching for 22 years, no one could trick me—I'd seen it all.

Then a student who'd been in trou-

Teri Michaud
West Hartford, Connecticut

Square One

When I taught third grade in Philadelphia, our fall field trip included a visit to Independence Hall. Before the excursion, I talked about the famous site and its history, trying to place people and events in perspective. I felt confident my students were prepared as we walked through the historic building.

After my class completed the guided tour, the ranger asked if anyone had any questions. He'd just finished pointing out which famous Americans sat at which desks when one student queried, "Where did John F. Kennedy sit?"

So much for prior knowledge.

Carol Fischer
Lake Barrington, Illinois

You can never take for granted what terms students are familiar with.

In our seventh grade geography class, my students came across a paragraph that discussed "Caucasians." I assumed everyone knew what a Caucasian was—until one student raised his hand and asked for a definition during our discussion.

One by one, students came forward with these definitions:

- That hot, spicy food in Louisiana. (Cajun)
- When you mix all kinds of stuff together, you get a Caucasian. (Concoction)
- When you get hit on the head, you'll end up getting a Caucasian. (Concussion)

William Aleksiewicz
Cochran, Pennsylvania

Got Laughs?

Have a funny school story, anecdote, or vignette you'd like to share? You can send contributions to "In the Light Lane," NEA Today, 1201 16th St. N.W., Washington, DC 20036. Fax: 202/822-7206 E-mail: NEAToday@aol.com

Or post your story in the "Recess" area of NEA's Web site (<http://www.nea.org>) or in the "Humor" topic on the NEA Teaching & Learning Message Board (keyword: NEA Teaching) on America Online.

People

Presto—Sleight Show



Jeff Amberg

Most teachers can boast of a magical moment in the classroom from time to time. But South Carolina teacher **Flo Johnson** does more than most to create her own magic—inside her class and out.

"I've always enjoyed magic," says Johnson, "and about 18 years ago, I got serious about wanting to learn how to do it myself."

She decided to take advantage of lessons offered at a shop in Columbia. Over the years, as Johnson honed her skills, she took on a partner for her magic act.

Together their performances now entertain audiences everywhere from nursing homes to state fairs.

And in her second grade class at Saluda River Elementary, Johnson goes solo and magic often takes center stage.

"I use magic to illustrate a lesson, mainly in math or science," Johnson explains. "I also use it to reward a job

well done or to teach good classroom behavior."

White doves appear during lessons on lifecycles. Pencils suddenly vanish from desks when students neglect to return them to their proper places.

"Magic," says Johnson, "spices up learning and adds adventure to the lesson."

Taking advantage of her students' awestruck response, Johnson always lets them know that "they can do anything I do with enough study and practice."

This approach has sparked some students' interest in reading—they'll go to the library and check out a book on magic.

"Many students have come back to me and said that this magic is one of the things they remember most," Johnson says. "I think it's very important for teachers to create memories."

Universal Studio

Ohio astronomy teacher **Daniel Francetic** loves to gaze at the Orion nebula because, he says simply, "It's the birthplace of the stars."

His unabashed enthusiasm for the universe has brought many students nationwide closer to the heavens.

First, Francetic helped establish a planetarium in the Euclid school district. Then he took on the assignment of teaching a K-12 audience there.

"At first, I was afraid to bring in the kindergartners, but they're so cute—their feet don't even touch the floor," says Francetic. "They hold hands in a circle, and when the star ball is eye level, they get so excited seeing stars all over each other!"

In Francetic's planetarium, students line up at the telescope to witness the beauty of space, from exploding stars to the enchanting rings of Saturn.

The telescope makes "things look spectacular," Francetic says. "The Moon is really awesome for students. You see their bodies jump back as they look for the first



time—even the high schoolers who try to be cool."

Next, Francetic took his astronomy act on the road.

Working with Euclid instruction and media coordinator Weston Orloff, Francetic created a mobile observatory housed in a 28-foot trailer. Throughout the year, students in five districts get to peer through telescopes

and run computer programs that simulate space travel.

Francetic then had the chance to take his passion to a national level. When a Harvard University study found that no suitable high school-level astronomy texts existed, Francetic was one of some 40 educators tapped to create one.

As he and his students prepared

their sleeping bags to catch the Hale-Bopp comet at the end of March, Francetic mused that he doesn't know what's next.

"I almost wish I was just starting to teach astronomy," says the 38-year veteran, "because our whole idea of what the universe is like is changing. There's an awful lot more out there. These are exciting times."



Mary Burkus

Hallmark Strokes

With a stroke of **Cindy Mitchell's** brush, solar systems come alive on hallway corridors and storybook characters leap onto the old brick walls of the William S. Freeman School in Troy, Illinois.

"The building I work in is where I attended first, second, and third grade," says Mitchell, a custodian. "I've always loved it and had a real respect for it."

Yet when she returned as an adult, "Everything was a grayish-green color," she recalls. "I said this has got to change."

Soon Mitchell was transforming hallways, cafeterias, gyms—even water fountain areas—with bright murals.

Now, when she embarks on a new project, she's met with renewed excitement from her students.

"I only do a little bit each day,

whenever I can take a few minutes," Mitchell says. "But the kids love to go by and see the progression."

Educational themes prevail in most of her paintings. "I often try to match the curriculum, grabbing stuff out of textbooks," notes Mitchell.

Her favorite mural? "I like my science hallway [pictured above] best," says Mitchell. "It deals with space and different surfaces, how water forms, and other neat stuff."

The impact from her work has seeped through the hallway walls and into the classrooms. "When I painted from the book *Sox*, the kids started asking to read the book," she says. And her work brought an art program to the school.

Mitchell's school has supplied the paints and the brushes. Soon there may be a bigger supply requisition.

"Now," says Mitchell, "we're running out of walls."

The New Role Call

Maryland technology educator **Fredric Everett** is used to confusion.

For one, he's passionate about a field that stumps many.

"Technology education has evolved from industrial arts," the Seneca Valley High School teacher explains.

"Instead of using power equipment and hand tools, it's more of a problem-solving class. I'm trying to integrate old concepts with new technology."

Everett brings to this burgeoning field a fresh face—and *that* causes confusion in its own right.

New security guards demand a hallway pass. One new student repeatedly refused to turn over his transfer papers. "He told me,

'You're not the teacher,'" Everett laughs. "The class was in hysterics."

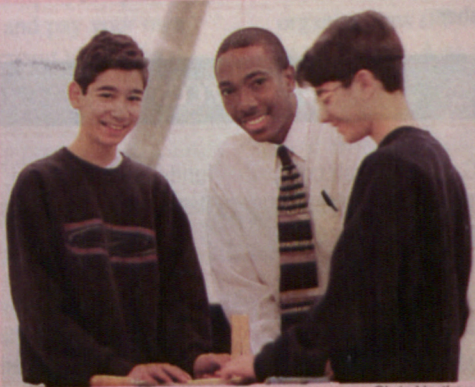
Yet Everett thinks his youth "helps the students open up. They know I was there just a few years ago."

Chris Hartlove

Everett is clear about par-

ticipating in the Montgomery County Education Association. "I like the fact that I've been here only a few months and my opinion is valued," he says.

So far, no one's stopped him to say students aren't allowed.



The Right Exposure

With more than 30 photography exhibits to date and assignments from Nike and Associated Photographers International, **Scott Weston** could teach his photography students a few lessons in building impressive résumés.

"I try to keep abreast and dabble around with a number of different photo styles," says Weston, who teaches at Washington state's Fort Vancouver High School.

"Lately, I've been working with classical and modern dancers, and it's been a real epiphany," he notes. "They use their bodies to create art, and it's a beautiful experience to photograph them."

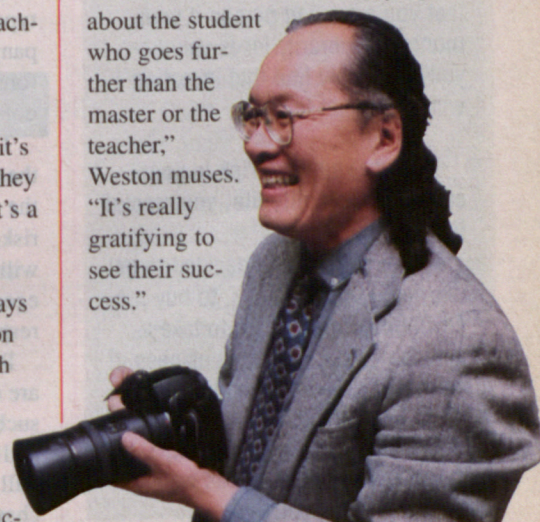
Thanks to a mother who was always whispering "teach" in his ear, Weston was endowed with a passion for both the classroom and the darkroom.

"I love watching what I call the 'ah-ha' point, when that light goes off in my students' heads," Weston says. "If they never take another pic-

ture after my class, I've taught them to see as never before."

Former students routinely visit or call with their latest news. On his last birthday, three dropped by to wish him well and two called to say they're moving to New York to work for big publications.

"There's an old Chinese saying about the student who goes further than the master or the teacher," Weston muses. "It's really gratifying to see their success."



WEA/ Shane Young

Money

Go Figure

Many investors mistakenly believe that risk tolerance is something that you're born with, like brown eyes and big feet. But tolerance for risk is not static. It can change, depending on life circumstances. And you can affect your tolerance level, chiefly by educating yourself.

Here are some factors to consider in determining how comfortable you'd be in the world of investing:

■ How much time do you have before you need your money?

If it's ten years or more, you can afford to take considerable risk, which usually means investing in the stock market. Time tends to smooth out the market's ups and downs.

■ How much money do you have?

If you have plenty of money to meet your financial needs, why risk it? If you fall short, you need to take some prudent risks to stretch your return.

■ How secure is your job?

If your income is stable and secure, you can afford to take some risks with your investments.

■ How much time are you willing to spend educating yourself?

Understanding the stock and bond markets and the way mutual fund managers use them helps investors feel comfortable taking risk.

■ How would you feel if the value of your investment decreased?

Investments in the stock and bond market inevitably change in value, moving up and down from day to day. If you can accept that dispassionately, you're off to a good start. If you look at it emotionally—feeling guilty, tremendously stressed, or that you are a bad person if your money temporarily loses value—you'll probably find that investing will be difficult for you.

■ How do you view risk in your career, your family life, your social life?

Think about how you decided to get married, to have a child, to buy a new home, to move, or to take a new job or start a small business. If you are inclined to stretch out and try to make things work, you have the makings of a prudent risk taker in the investment arena as well.

Decisions, Decisions

Mutual Benefits of Taking Risks

Educated risks and a diverse portfolio can help investors make the most of mutual funds.

Though NEA member Yvonne Gonzalez considers herself a "pretty conservative investor," she understands that educating herself about mutual funds is the key to taking more risk and—hopefully—earning better returns.

Like many investors, Gonzalez was introduced to mutual funds through her retirement plan at work—in her case, a 403(b) plan at Deanna Davenport Elementary School in Canutillo, Texas, just outside El Paso.

At 45, Gonzalez, has been investing for 15 years, putting away \$100 a month. She watches the market news daily and studies her retirement statements carefully.

Gonzalez has a choice of three funds, ranging from conservative to aggressive. She started, she says, "at the bottom," with the most conservative fund. This year she moved up to the middle-of-the-road fund, largely because she felt more comfortable with investing.

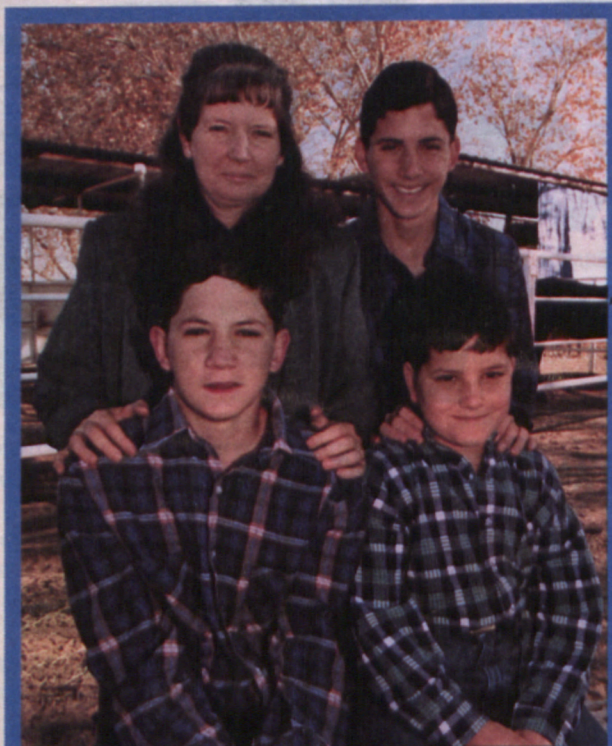
If you are an investor—and all of us should be—educating yourself to expand your risk tolerance like Gonzalez did is a first step.

The second is establishing a plan and building an investment portfolio that invests in more than one market.

One of the biggest mistakes investors make is to invest on impulse. A wiser strategy would be to diversify among "asset categories"—different types of investments, like large company stocks, small company stocks, foreign stocks, bonds, real estate, and gold.

This diversification may increase the overall return of your portfolio. At the same time, you'll be reducing risk—the volatility of your portfolio will be lower because not all asset categories move in the same direction in response to market changes.

Remember, the investment markets are cyclical. Some asset categories, such as large company stocks in 1995 and 1996, will do better, while others will do worse. The next year they may change places.



Texas teacher Yvonne Gonzalez safeguards her family's financial future by constantly gauging how much risk to take when selecting mutual funds.

You don't want funds that move up and down together. If two funds have a positive correlation of 100 percent, they'll move in sync. You want one fund that zigs when another zags.

As your portfolio grows, you should include both "growth" and "value" investments, the two primary styles used by stock investors.

Value investors look for companies with hidden value that isn't reflected in the stock price. Value investors might look at companies in bankruptcy or companies that have had some bad publicity that's artificially deflated

their stock prices. In building your portfolio, a good place to start is a mutual fund that invests in large U.S. companies. An intermediate U.S. government bond fund and an international fund are good additions.

In deciding on the mix, you should look at the "correlation" between the different funds in your portfolio. Correlation measures the way two securities—or two funds—perform relative to one another.

their stock prices.

Growth investors believe that the most important thing driving the stock price is rapidly rising earnings. That's what they look for.

A successful mutual fund investor aims to build a diverse portfolio that pulls together different asset classes that do well in different market environments and funds with different investment styles.

—Mary Rowland

Resources

■ **NETworth by Galt** (www.galt.com) is the most comprehensive mutual fund Web site, providing quotes, portfolio monitoring, prospectuses, top-performing funds rated by objective, and other strategic information.

■ **The Dow Jones Web site** (www.dowjones.com) offers links to a variety of financial and investment-related magazines, such as *The Wall Street Journal* and *Smart Money*.

■ If you're interested in finding out what companies your mutual

funds hold stocks in, check out the Calvert Group's "Know What You Own" free service on the Web (www.calvertgroup.com).

■ **Morningstar Investor** is one of the best newsletters available on mutual fund investing. \$79. For more information, call 800/876-5005.

■ **A Commonsense Guide to Mutual Funds** by Mary Rowland offers advice organized into short do's and don'ts. \$19.95 from Bloomberg Press.

Ready for Retirement?

Bridging the Coverage Gap

For those looking to retire early, finding medical coverage can be a health hazard.

Name: Jessie Butler

Age: 57

Job: Guidance counselor at Harrisburg High School in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Home & Family: Widowed, resides in Harrisburg

Years Until Retirement: 2-5

Current Challenge:

"I've considered retiring early, but in my school district, there are no health care benefits for retirees. Medicare doesn't kick in until age 65. How do I fill the gap?"

Options:

Retirees between 55 and 64 are especially vulnerable to insurance woes. They're usually too young to qualify for Medicare, but old enough to run into increased medical problems.

There are options for coverage, though many can be expensive. Among them are the following:

■ **COBRA.** Under COBRA (the federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act), you can remain covered by your employer's plan for up to 18 months and pay your own premiums at 2 percent above the discounted group rate.

The COBRA coverage may seem expensive, but it's generally less costly

than buying an individual policy and usually has much higher benefit levels.

■ **Individual policies.** Look for plans that pay all hospitalization and surgery costs, and most costs for prescription drugs and outpatient care.

Your policy should limit your total out-of-pocket costs to \$5,000 annually and pay lifetime maximum benefits of at least \$1 million. Also, make sure the initial premium can't be raised for at least one year.

Some insurers allow you to convert your employer-paid group plan to an individual policy. But conversion costs can be high. Healthy retirees can usually find a more comprehensive policy for less.

■ **Group affiliations.** Thousands of fraternal, professional, and support organizations offer group medical coverage to their members. Examine groups you may have already joined, like your college alumni association.

■ **Managed care.** HMOs can cost as much as 80 percent less than comprehensive individual policies. The catch is that you must use the organization's network of doctors. Preferred provider organizations (PPOs) are also gaining in popularity. A recent American Medical Association study shows that more than 75 percent of physicians are now affiliated with a PPO or HMO.



Jessie Butler is considering her district's early retirement program, but she's concerned about covering insurance costs between now and when she turns 65.

John Whitehead

■ **Spouse's coverage.** If you're married, you may be able to get coverage through your spouse's medical plan.

Homework:

If you're nearing retirement, review your health care plan documents for language that constitutes a clear promise to continue providing benefits for life or for a certain period of time. Also look for language that gives your employer the right to change or eliminate your benefits. If you're contemplating early retirement, beware that special promises made in such deals can override other plan documents.

The Labor Department's Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration recently issued an advisory bulletin, "Can the Retiree Health Benefits Provided By Your Employer Be Cut?" It outlines steps you can take to assess your situation and try to protect yourself. For a free copy, call 202/219-9247 or point your Web browser to (www.dol.gov/dol/pwba/).

Financial Finds

Women Investors

You and Your Money: A Financial Handbook for Women Investors, free from Merrill Lynch, includes worksheets for calculating net worth, analyzing cash flow, budgeting, the best allocation for retirement assets, and more. Contact Merrill Lynch at 800/637-7455, ext. 1824.

The Early Years

Get a Financial Life: Personal Finance in Your Twenties and Thirties (Fireside/Simon & Schuster, \$11) by Beth Kobliner, a writer for *Money* magazine, tells you how to get your financial life in order—from paying off your student loans to saving for your own kids' college education. If you're pressed for time, the first chapter offers a summary of the most important steps you should take. At the end of each chapter, a "Financial Cramming" section highlights key concepts.

The Later Years

Most financial planning software is designed to help younger people invest for their future retirement. One program that specifically addresses retirees' needs is Vanguard Retirement Manager (available on CD-ROM or floppy disks for Windows 3.1 or higher). The \$29 package includes a 300-page guide featuring advice on a multitude of retirement issues, including when you should start collecting Social Security. Call 800/950-1971.

Building Value

Most people know they should do more to prepare financially for the future, but question what to do and where to put their money. Now, help is at hand for NEA members. The new NEA Valuebuilder Mutual Fund Program offers members help in understanding their investment goals with a strategic plan to meet those goals. Getting started requires only filling out a brief questionnaire, which is computer scored. Then members can choose leading, publicly available mutual funds with investment objectives ranging from conservative to aggressive. For more information about the Mutual Fund program or other investment programs available to NEA members, call NEA Member Benefits at 800/637-4636.

Educated Investor

Q. What's the difference between load and no-load mutual funds? I know that no-load funds charge no up-front sales fees. But don't they have to make up the difference somewhere, like by charging higher management fees?

A. Not necessarily. In most cases, the

up-front sales charge is a commission paid to a salesperson who sells the fund to you. No-load funds are offered to you directly, over the phone or in the mail. The company need not pay a salesperson, so there's no sales charge.

Q. Are long-term capital gains from a mutual fund subject to federal income

tax if the gain is immediately reinvested?

A. Yes. You must pay taxes each year on the capital gains and dividend distributions your mutual fund pays out, even if you turn around and reinvest that income. The fund company is required to mail a form 1099-DIV to report your income both to you and the IRS.

"I believe in individualism..."

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Nice thought, but if FDR wanted to save on life insurance, he'd believe in the **group**.

Sure, individuality is admirable.

So is saving money.

As a member of the National Education Association, you're part of a group of more than 2 million. So when you buy life insurance through the NEA, you get an economical group rate. And while saving some money, you'll help make sure your family's future and dreams are cared for.

Different plans for different needs.

We offer four different plans – including insurance coverage while you travel, insurance to help secure your child's college education and insurance to help protect your family's standard of living if you die.

Free NEA coverage for 6 months.

There's also a special fixed rate plan that gives you up to \$25,000 in coverage* and won't cost you a cent for the first 6 months – courtesy of the NEA Members Insurance Trust®. After that, your monthly group rate will stay exactly the same until age 70. It's called the NEA Level Premium Term Life Insurance Plan. For more information and an enrollment form, call one of our NEA Member Benefits representatives at **1-800-637-4636** Mon-Fri, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. or Sat 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (ET).

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(These insurance plans have certain limitations and exclusions. For costs and complete details of coverage, contact NEA Member Benefits Representatives toll free at 1-800-637-4636.)

Policy Form ORD 70075 Serial U
Contract Form 83500 COV 1004
TRNT0497

*Coverage depends on age of applicant and decreases over time.

My Turn

Help! The Teacher's a Robot!

A look in the mirror confirms what I suspected: I have become a robot.

By Daniel Dyer

My skin is metallic. My empty eyes glow a stoplight red. I speak with an emotionless voice-mail voice. The transformation is nearly complete. Soon I will be the perfect teacher.

Robots used to frighten me. Mechanical villains were a staple of the B-movies and primitive TV shows I watched in the 1950s, and I remember having nightmares about robots breaking into my bedroom, destroying my books and records. Ripping me apart.

But long before people feared robots, they were fascinated by them. In 3000 B.C., the Egyptians built articulated figures, and in 18th century Europe, automats of various types—quacking ducks and music-playing dolls—delighted the aristocracy. By the 19th century, automated toys and tools were commonplace.

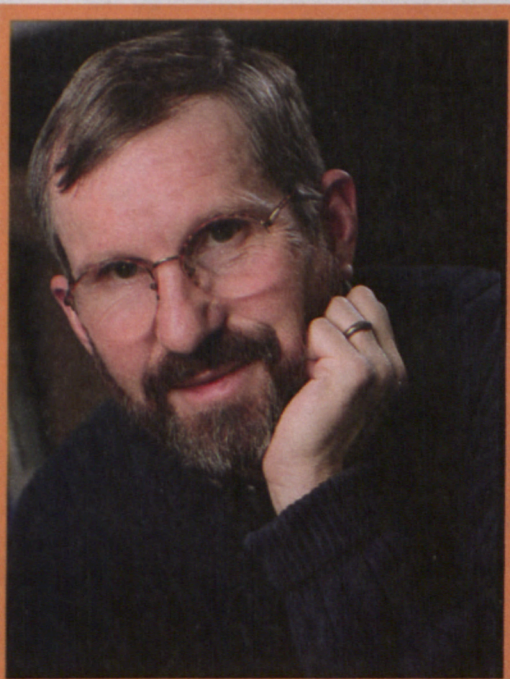
In 1921, a Czech playwright, Karel Capek, adopted the Czech word *robota* for his play, "Rossum's Universal Robots." The word *robota* meant "drudgery" or "forced labor." In Capek's play, the robots—designed to relieve workers from dreary, repetitive tasks—instead organize and overthrow their creators.

Since 1921, the robot—with notable exceptions like the Tin Woodman in *The Wizard of Oz* and the amiable droids in *Star Wars*—has almost always been portrayed in the media as the enemy, an enemy particularly frightening because it is heartless.

In a way, the history of education has been a series of increasingly sophisticated attempts to supplement, even supplant, teachers with machines.

The first such "machine" was the book, a device that enabled a person with very little schooling—someone like, oh, William Shakespeare—to teach himself enough history and politics to write a play or a poem.

When we entered the 20th century, new technologies made teaching by proxy possible. And attempts were made to create machines that could assist teachers in scoring tests or pre-



An Association activist, Daniel Dyer is a 30-year teaching veteran.

sending facts in logical succession.

While most in this century have been careful to state that machines shouldn't replace teachers, there have been those in statehouses and gubernatorial mansions who thought otherwise. In the 1960s, legislatures and foundations turned on the money spigot for classroom technology.

When I began teaching in 1966, I worked in a school that had just gotten a chunk of government money to establish a "reading laboratory."

This room looked like the flight deck of the Starship Enterprise. Contraptions—ShadowScopes, tachistoscopes, and something called a Vocal Master—were everywhere.

But the great lake of money for such enterprises dried up when researchers discovered that students in hi-tech reading programs neither read better nor wanted to read more than kids who simply had access to lots of books and were given the time and encouragement to read them.

As we near the 21st century, gliding on our silicon sleds along the Information Superhighway, we hear that every classroom will, via the Internet, soon be connected to every other classroom in the world.

But deep thinkers are not happy. They realize that a near-century of investment in instructional machines

has not brought comforting results. Too many students cannot read, write, calculate, or compete.

But these discomfited thinkers have hit upon a notion both profound and breathtakingly simple: If machines can't replace teachers, why not make teachers into machines? Into robots?

This remarkable transformation is being accomplished not by bionics, but by mandating a universal, lock-step curriculum with quantifiable objectives assigned to every subject at every grade level.

In Ohio, they're called "Pupil Performance Objectives" or PPOs, for short. Each year, the state administers "proficiency tests" at grades 4, 6, 8,

and 12—and then releases the scores to the media.

The results of this narrow focus and wide publicity are not surprising. Vanishing from the curriculum are topics not assessed by proficiency tests—why waste time with *Hamlet* if it's not on the test? Minimum competency demands maximum attention.

Lost along the way, of course, are spontaneity and creativity. Worse, as we trivialize the curriculum, we no longer need educators, learned people who know how to communicate. Web sites and CD-ROMs replace them.

It seems we will populate our classrooms with robo-teachers, who, in the words of the old song, "don't know much about his-to-ree" (or literature or art or music), but who do know how to monitor joyless children who sit and work, alone, at computer terminals—like so many cattle grazing on endless rows of PPOs.

I don't know why we've decided to train children instead of educate them. And I don't know why we want our teachers to behave with robotic efficiency and predictability. Even the Tin Woodman knew that without a heart he was worthless.

Daniel Dyer recently retired from teaching eighth grade English at Harmon Middle School in Aurora, Ohio.

You Said It

Our mail boxes—electronic and regular—are overflowing these days.



Bill Fischer, editor

But don't think I'm complaining. Hearing from you makes our magazine better—and our jobs easier. Instead of scouring the landscape to find a debater, for example, we're getting letters from members who not only want to take a position on a debate question, but who send in suggestions for future topics.

Some of you have set your sights on getting published in the *My Turn* column next door. Still others have taken a close look at the format for the *Innovators* or *Students and Strategies* pages and have carefully crafted items to fill each slot. And, in the last month, the number of letters to the editor has jumped by 50 percent.

But there's another section of the paper that's drawing your response in unexpectedly large numbers.

Last fall, when we decided to introduce a column called *Books by NEA Members* (page 45), we weren't sure we'd have enough material to fill it up. Since then, we've received an avalanche of mail—thin letters accompanied by fat packages of books—that could fill the column up for years to come.

It's been a real thrill to see how many of you are prolific authors—of children's books, reference books, classroom materials, memoirs, young adult novels, and so much more. Besides all the book listings you've already seen, we haven't had space yet to mention *Memoirs of a Depression Bum*, *American Women Historians*, and *Teacher With an Attitude*.

In fact, the column's been so successful, we plan to expand it next year to include more listings.

So if you've sent us a book note already, please be patient. And if you've written a book we don't have, please send it along and we'll do our best to list it.

Whether it's books or letters or suggestions for topics we should include in future issues, remember: We love to read as much as you love to write! Keep it coming.

Bill Fischer

Meet

He retired as chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He retired any plans to run for President—at least for now. But General Colin Powell hasn't retired from public service.

Later this month, Powell will chair the Presidents' Summit for America's Future, a meeting designed to boost volunteer efforts that aid children.

In the works for a year, the Summit will bring together President Clinton, former Presidents Bush, Carter, and Ford, plus delegations from 100 communities—all committed to providing kids with a healthy start, safe places to learn and grow, mentors, marketable skills, and the opportunity to give back through community service.

Out of uniform—yet still commanding—Powell spoke recently with NEA Today's Mũthoni Wambu in his Virginia office.

Of all the things that you could spend your time on, why pick children?

I picked youth because they're our future. And it's a challenging and demanding future with the whole world changing—the death of communism, the growth of the global economy and the information and technology revolutions. I saw so many of our young people not preparing themselves—or not being prepared by us—for this new world that I thought it would be a good place to devote some of my time and energy.

What's the Summit's aim?

We want to get more of a commitment on the part of public and private officials toward education, communities, and children.

What's your role?

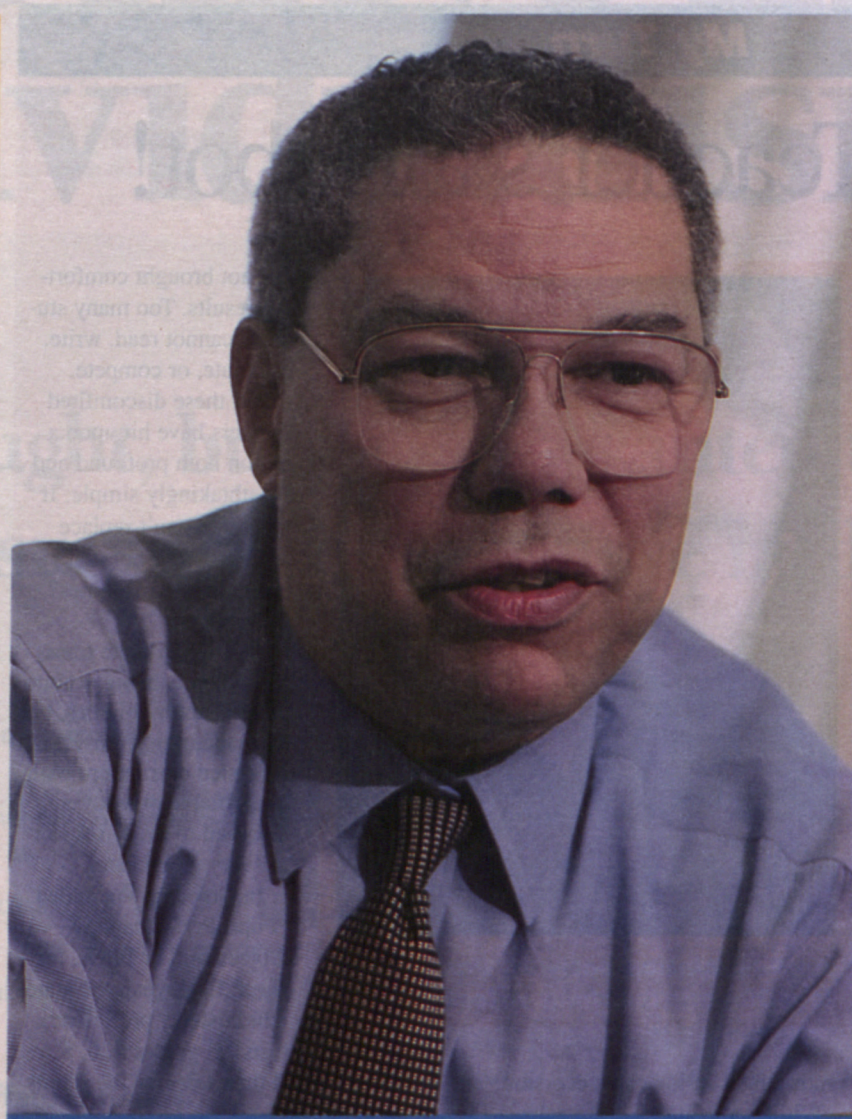
Let me give you an example. I was with a company last night talking to their corporate leadership. They're making a financial commitment to a school near one of their plants and giving employees time off to tutor students there.

And so I said, "Fine. You're partnering with 100 schools now. Can you do 150 by the year 2000? Do you have enough facilities and people? Are you willing to make that kind of financial commitment?" And every corporate leader that I've been talking to is saying, "Yeah, we can do it, we can try. We will make a plan."

I'm telling corporate leaders, "You tell me what you're doing and then we'll see if you can do more of it."

Do you support corporate funding in public schools?

I support any money I can get out of



Colin Powell

Scott Suchman

On the Front Line— For Children

anybody to help public schools. But corporate contributions should not be an excuse for public funds to go away, because I don't think we have any greater responsibility than to educate our young people.

How will you reach those who are most needy?

Most of the leaders I've been speaking to understand that we don't need you to go mentoring in a nice, tight, white suburban school district. We need you to leave your factory area and travel 30 minutes downtown to where they haven't seen anybody like you lately. That's what I want.

We're trying to skew our suggestions so that corporations will head toward disadvantaged neighborhoods. But I'm not a general anymore. I can't order people like I used to.

How can our NEA members get involved in the Summit?

What we're trying to do is help NEA. NEA is doing so much now. Teachers are already mentors. Teachers are providing a safe place for children every day. Teachers are educating. Teachers are associated with a healthy start for kids, and many schools are requiring their students to do community service. So NEA is firing on all eight cylinders right now.

Why is public education so important to you?

I went from kindergarten through college without paying a penny, and I'm very proud of that. I came out of the public school system with the ability to speak, read, write, communicate, convey information to people, and take in information.

I tell young people that your teachers are the last adults in life who will give you something for free. And so listen, learn, take it all in.

In Henry Louis Gates's recent book, Jesse Jackson wonders what you stand for. Do you support unions?

My mother was a member of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and, in my youth, I was a member of Local 812, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Why would I not stand for them?

Do you support vouchers for private school tuition?

I support using vouchers and seeing where it takes us. I'm not saying let's do the whole country. I'm saying now's the time to take risks to see if we can improve America's schools. Let parents make a choice about whether they want their children going to a public school or some competing educational opportunity.

Over the next five years, the President proposes to raise education spending by \$41 billion and military procurement by \$59 billion. Any reaction?

I think you fall into a trap when you think, "Aha, see, all we have to do is cut the military and we'll fix the education system funding problem." I don't think the two should be compared unless you also compare all of the other expenditures of the federal government.

What do you see as the single most important change needed in today's schools?

It would be presumptuous of me to say I know what the answer is for all tens of thousands of schools. I think each and every school has a different challenge. If there's one thing that sort of puts me off is everybody looking for the silver bullet that will "fix" education. There is no silver bullet—it's going to take lots of little lead bullets, and it's going to take time.

For More

For details on the April 27-29 Presidents' Summit for America's Future—or to find out how you can get involved—call 800/365-0153 or go to www.citizenservice.org. For background information on the Summit, check NEA's own Web page at www.nea.org/whatsnew.

Debate

Is the segregation of ESL students discrimination?

Yes

Jane Medina is an English as a Second Language (ESL) Skills Center teacher in Orange County, California, an Association member, and a parent educator. In her 19-year career, she has worked as a music specialist and bilingual teacher.



One day last month, my students were working to create a print-rich environment by labeling all the objects in the room and making them “talk” by taping up paper speech bubbles.

Jovany suggested that the wall say, “Paint me brown.” The kids erupted into laughter, imagining a classroom painted brown.

Suddenly, Jackie’s eyes lit up, and she said, “We are the brown class. All of us are brown!” The class reacted with confused silence—not the laughter Jackie had expected.

I share my students’ confusion. While I stand firmly on the side of racial tolerance and desegregation, I teach a group of students who are segregated—officially because of their language, but in practice because of their race.

I am an ESL Skills Center teacher. One hundred percent of my students are Hispanic in a school where only 20 percent of the students are identified as limited-English-proficient.

The school’s policy has taken a heavy toll on my students—socially, psychologically, and academically.

When I first began teaching at Taft last fall, I did a miscue analysis of each individual’s reading. I was appalled to find that the longer kids had been segregated in ESL Skills Center classes, the worse they read.

Fourth graders who have only received English instruction in Skills Center classes are just now beginning to read at a primer level.

In contrast, transfer students who had primary language instruction are reading at grade level in English. Even LEP kids with only one year in a regular education program have superior English skills compared to Skills Center students.

Besides my observations, abundant research shows that an integrat-

ed bilingual program is optimal. To that end, *all* teachers can learn effective ways to teach LEP students.

There are many teachers whose sensitivity to their students’ needs has led them to use ESL techniques intuitively. Though intuition can’t replace English language development training, such sensitivity is irreplaceable.

Even if we set aside what we know about effective learning, isn’t it ethically wrong to segregate a group of children for *any* reason?

Even if we have the best academic intentions, isn’t separating our children into little language groups socially harmful?

Even if we would never dream of discriminating, isn’t discrimination the ultimate result of segregation?

Fortunately, there are many other teachers on my staff who find segregation repugnant, and we’re working together with our principal to make changes next year.

Unfortunately, my district isn’t the only one that segregates LEP students out of convenience and political expediency. I call on NEA to promote policies and methodologies that provide academic success and social acceptance while meeting the special needs of second-language learners.

“Separate but equal” has never been true. Modern-day segregation makes as little sense academically and socially as it did 40 years ago. We must expose it for what it is.

No

Guadalupe Cortes is a first grade bilingual teacher with Berkeley School District #87 in Northlake, Illinois, and an activist in both her NEA local and state affiliates. She also teaches English as a Second Language to adults at the College of DuPage.



Providing all students—young and old—with equal opportunity in education is a moral and political imperative and a hallmark in American society.

Bilingual education, which provides students who are not proficient in English with instruction in their native language, is essential in providing that equal opportunity.

If students can’t understand what their teacher is saying, how can they be expected to learn? How can they be provided the equal educational opportunity that is their due?

People must realize that the most important goal of any second language program is to develop proficient bilingual students.

And people must realize that “segregation” is not a part of bilingual programs. Separation of students is done for the betterment of their education.

Most bilingual programs provide beginning level instruction in core subjects in the student’s first language. Sheltered English is taught for basic social and academic goals, but students are mainstreamed for art, music, and physical education.

At the intermediate level, most bilingual programs provide first language instruction in all core subjects except math, which is taught in English. Sheltered English continues for social and academic goals, and students are mainstreamed for art,

music, and physical education.

At the advanced level, first language classes are offered for enrichment purposes, while all content subjects are provided in sheltered classes. Again, students are mainstreamed for math, art, music, and physical education.

While all bilingual and English as a Second Language classes incorporate some level of separation from monolingual students, there is no segregation. Separation but equality is always the goal.

A number of researchers have identified specific characteristics that help make programs for non-English proficient students successful.

For bilingual students in particular, success is more likely if the program features “active” teaching, communication of high-level expectations to the students, and coordination of English-language development with academic studies.

When immigrants come to our schools, it is our duty, for the betterment of all, to teach them English and to educate them.

If we don’t succeed, we’ll see high failure rates lead to high dropout rates and eventually to high unemployment and crime.

Without a doubt, the cost of educating these children in quality bilingual programs is much cheaper than paying for joblessness and jail.

Given our global economy, it won’t be long before bilingual education will be provided for *all* students, regardless of their ethnic or language background.

I’m already hearing more about “two-way immersion” programs that provide education in both English and another language for all students at multi-ethnic schools. These programs are welcome—they are the wave of the future.

What’s Your Opinion?

Is the segregation of ESL students discrimination? To vote “Yes,” send an E-mail message to vote-yes@neatoday.nea.org. To vote “No,” E-mail vote-no@neatoday.nea.org. Please note your message subject as NEA Today April Debate.

Where you stand on last month’s Debate

Do zero-tolerance drug policies go too far?

75% Yes

25% No

Marketplace

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National Minority Cancer Awareness Week. As part of its campaign for Breast and Cervical Health, the NEA Health Information Network is offering National Minority Cancer Awareness Week (NMCAW) Promotional Packets for use in local awareness campaigns. NMCAW, observed April 14-20, is organized by the National Cancer Institute (NCI). For a free promotional packet from NEA HIN, call the HIN Resource Line at 800/718-8387. For a variety of materials targeting special populations, contact NCI's Cancer Information Service at 800/4-CANCER.

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Have you written a book, developed an instructional aid, or created a software program? Do you organize trips to interesting places or conduct seminars?

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See the information box in the lower right hand corner of this page for details.

Making the Grade: A Guide to School Drug Prevention Programs.

The NEA Health Information Network is pleased to support this compilation of comprehensive health programs and drug prevention programs. This guide will assist you in selecting the most appropriate curricula for your school. For copies of *Making the Grade*, contact Drug Strategies, 2445 M St., Suite 480, Washington, DC 20037; 202/663-6090. Cost: 1-4 copies @ \$12.95 ea., 5 & over @ \$9.95 ea.

Technology

The Education Technology Promotion Guide from the Software Publishers Association offers guidelines for publicizing the success of your educational technology program. A CD-ROM includes letter and press release template in both MAC and PC formats. To learn how your local association can obtain a copy, visit the NEA's Tech page at <http://nea.org/cet> for more information.

Newsmakers

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Books

It's a Great Read, But . . .

Will it change the way you treat your students?

Nobody Don't Love Nobody: Lessons on Love from the School With No Name

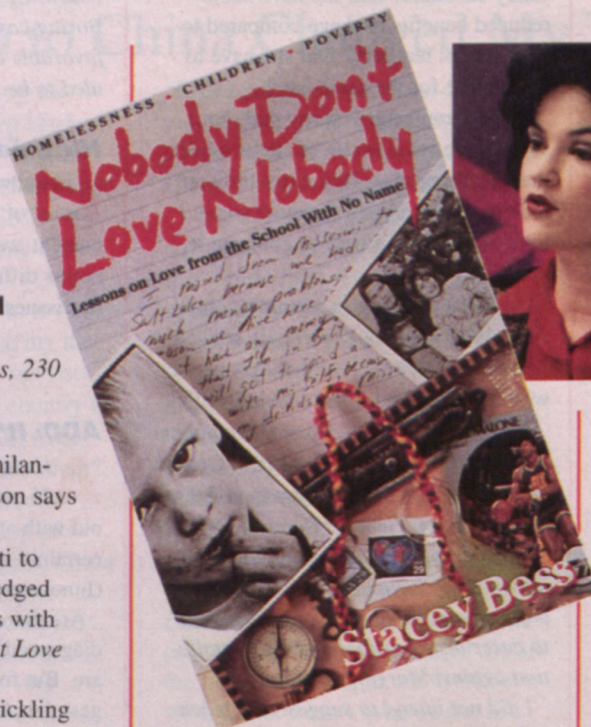
Stacey Bess. Gold Leaf Press, 230 pp., \$16.95, 888/467-4446.

Ohio businessman and philanthropist Edward Davidson says it will.

On a flight from Cincinnati to Vancouver, Davidson got wedged between two football players with only a copy of *Nobody Don't Love Nobody* to distract him.

"By page 10, tears were trickling down my cheeks," Davidson recalls. "By page 30, I was sobbing. I had to get out to go to the bathroom for tissues, and getting one of those behemoths to move was an act of God."

The book, written by NEA member Stacey Bess in 1994, chronicles her experiences as a teacher at The School With No Name, a make-shift school for homeless kids in Salt Lake City.



Bess tells of abused kids, kids forced to sell drugs for their parents, kids who move every few weeks, heartbroken parents who know that their best isn't good enough.

She talks about having a child of her own at 16, dealing with cancer in her 20s, and the wear-and-tear involved in confronting tragedy everyday.

But, mostly, she talks about how the



Steve Wilson

simple act of giving freely to her students enriches her own life and that of her family.

"Most of the stories in Stacey's book have bad endings, but you still walk away with a positive message," says Davidson. "Her book

is about being kind and loving, and that's what real teaching is about."

Davidson believes the book will push jaded educators to be kinder and gentler with their students. So he's working to raise money to give thousands of copies away.

"My plan," he says, "is to try to see that everyone who teaches kids gets their hands on this book, reads it, and not only takes it to heart, but takes it to heart."

NEA Today will update you on Davidson's distribution efforts. But in the meantime, test his hypothesis. Read this compelling and courageous teacher's tale and see if it moves you to tears—and to change.

It did me.

—Stefanie Weiss

Books by NEA Members



Benni & Victoria

Patricia H. Aust. Child & Family Press, 117 pp., \$8.95, 800/407-6273. In this story for kids aged 8-12,

a 10-year-old Latino boy meets a ghost. The two become "friends through time."

Learn with Rap Geography

Patricia B. Murphy. *People Are People, Inc.*, 58 pp. plus audio tape. \$19.95, 517/337-7789. A creative, musical approach to teaching geography to students at three levels—grades 2-3, 4-5, and 6-9.

Rose and Tulip



Cynthia Fels. National Reading Styles Institute, 28 pp., book and 3 tapes \$15, video \$19, 888/ALLREAD.

This simple story of two very different flowers explains the concept of learning styles to young children and can be used to teach about multiculturalism.

NEA Professional Library Top 10 List

1 Countdown to the First Day of School. Schell & Burden. (\$4.95 for non-members/\$4.50 for NEA members) A "must-have" checklist for every beginning elementary teacher. (#2150-9-10-FB)



2 The First Year Teacher: Teaching with Confidence (K-8). Bosch & Kersey. (\$18.95/\$14.95) The ultimate first-year teacher's handbook. (#1862-1-10-FB)

3 Multiple Intelligences. NEA Teacher-to-Teacher Books. (\$12.95/\$9.95) Find out how your colleagues are adapting their teaching strategies to take advantage of the seven intelligences. (#2910-0-10-FB)

4 The Healthy School Handbook: Conquering the Sick Building Syndrome and Other Environmental Hazards In and Around Your School. Norma L. Miller, ed. (\$24.95/\$21.95) Find out how sick building syndrome affects teaching and learning—and what you can do about it. (#1863-X-10-FB)

5 Student Portfolios. NEA Teacher-to-Teacher Books. (\$12.95/\$9.95) Insights from your colleagues on how to use portfolios to assess and enhance student learning. (#2901-1-10-FB)

6 Toward Inclusive Classrooms. NEA Teacher-to-Teacher Books. (\$12.95/\$9.95) Six stories that show how students with special needs can learn with their peers. (#2903-8-10-FB)

7 Teaching and the Art of Successful Classroom Management, 2nd Edition. Harvey Kraut. (\$18.95/\$14.95) The book first-year

high-school teachers have been waiting for. (#2004-9-10-FB)

8 Bullyproof: A Teacher's Guide on Teasing and Bullying for Use with Fourth and Fifth Grade Students. Nan Stein and Lisa Sjostrom. (\$19.95/\$15.95) "Bullyproof" your classroom with these teacher-tested lessons. (#1873-7-10-FB)

9 Integrated Thematic Teaching. NEA Teacher-to-Teacher Books. (\$12.95/\$9.95) Six stories from teachers who are successfully interweaving disciplines into a tapestry that makes the curriculum come alive. (#2909-7-10-FB)



10 Pitfalls and Potholes: A Checklist for Avoiding Common Mistakes of Beginning Teachers. Barbara A. Murray and Kenneth T. Murray. (\$4.95/\$4.50) The second title in the Checklist Series offers practical advice to new teachers. (#2151-7-10-FB)

This month's rankings are based on last month's sales for all books published by the NEA Professional Library, a service

for NEA members financed solely by the sale of books and professional development materials to the education community.

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Letters



By the Block

I expect my organization's magazine to be balanced and unbiased. The articles on block scheduling (Cover story, March) were neither.

Where were the stories of teachers teaching six classes instead of five—for the same pay? Where were the stories about schools that have tried the block—and failed? Where were the unbiased, scientifically validated studies to show if the block is truly better?

Neil Gordes
Newington, Connecticut
NeilG7@aol.com

Drugs in School

Are there places in the United States where teachers and administrators have nothing more serious to do than bust kids who bring aspirin and Midol to school? (Debate, March). Perhaps these school officials should take a field trip to a school where actual problems exist.

Pat Terrell
Montclair, California
PatMont@cris.com

The idea of students bringing prescription drugs to school makes me nervous. In an age where anyone can sue everyone—or so it seems—prescription drugs should come with signed and dated permission slips. And someone should check the expiration date on the bottle. All it takes is someone not noticing, and the school and teachers will be responsible in the end.

Valerie Malingowski-Sieczkowski
Shannon, North Carolina
ValMal@nconline.com

Beyond Ebonics

For the teachers of Oakland, the most disheartening part of the recent Ebonics controversy (Letters, March) was the resurfacing of race-baiting and teacher bashing by certain school board members.

Teachers in Oakland are not the enemy

of the city's underachieving young people. Indeed, for many kids, a teacher is their best adult friend.

It's time to move beyond Ebonics and stop the teacher bashing. Too many good teachers have left the city since the strike a year ago. How many more Black, white, yellow, and brown educators will leave Oakland unless the school district begins to practice the efficacy that it likes to preach?

Ben Visnick
Oakland, California

Demoted?

In the article, "Two Victories for Academic Freedom," (Rights Watch, February), you state that a teacher "had been a successful high school drama teacher...when she was abruptly demoted to a middle school in 1992." I was puzzled by the author's use of the word "demoted" in this context.

Calling an involuntary reassignment or transfer a "demotion" does a great disservice to those middle school and junior high teachers who have dedicated their expertise, energy, and enthusiasm to working with students at this level.

Mary Bigelow
Middletown, Pennsylvania

I'm appalled that you would even dare to write that a teacher was "demoted" to middle school. Since when are movements between grade levels demotions?

Is the work of a middle school teacher less valuable than the work of a high school teacher? Using that logic, am I to assume that my colleagues who work in elementary schools rank even lower?

No wonder our society fails to recognize us as professionals. We do a fine job of doing that ourselves.

Geraldine Waitt
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Was the teacher "demoted" to a middle school paid on a different salary schedule? Did she have some reduced benefits package compared to high school teachers? Did she have to work more for the same pay?

It's just conjecture on my part, but I suspect the issue is one of status more than anything else. This nasty little attitude has been around for quite some time—perhaps it's time to confront it now.

I've been teaching in a middle school since 1980 and would certainly resist a "demotion" to a high school. My peers would surely think I had lost my skills.

Dave Cunningham
Gold Hill, Oregon
cngnhmwa@cdsnet.net

NEA Assistant General Counsel Michael Simpson replies: *Sincere apologies to all who may have been offended by my unfortunate use of the word "demoted" to describe the school district's retaliation against Margaret Boring.*

I did not intend to suggest that teaching in a middle school level is somehow less worthy than in a high school, but space limitations prohibited a more detailed explanation.

What I intended to convey was that Boring's "transfer" had a severe and adverse impact on her professional opportunities.

The nationally recognized high school drama program Boring spent more than a decade building was taken away from her. She was deprived of the opportunity to teach an advanced acting class, to coach advanced drama students, and to compete in the state-wide high school drama competition.

For Boring, at least, the "transfer" was punitive and damaged her professionally. Hence, my use of the term "demotion."

(Update: After publication of the February edition of NEA Today, the Fourth Circuit voted to rehear the Boring case and vacated the earlier, favorable decision. The case was scheduled to be reargued in March.)

Nice Job

I'm quite impressed with the February issue of NEA Today. The format and content are both excellent. It somehow seems different—and better—than previous issues. I love it!

Mary Jane Tillman
Fredericksburg, Virginia

ADD: It's No Myth

As a high school teacher for the last 25 years and a parent of a 13-year-old with attention deficit disorder, I can certainly tell you that ADD is no myth (Innovators, February).

Are there children who have been misdiagnosed with ADD? Of course there are. But for Thomas Armstrong to suggest that ADD is a fabrication of the pharmaceutical companies is simply ludicrous.

Anyone who truly understands how these children suffer would not begin to suggest that this label somehow gives them a "special edge."

Some people may think that because Armstrong is an "expert," he must be right. I say if you really want to ask an expert, ask a parent with an ADD child or the teacher who works with one, not a psychiatrist with an axe to grind.

Marlene Huschke
Lawrenceville, New Jersey
huschke@sprynet.com

Armstrong claims that profit motivates specialists from several professions to perpetuate the "myth" of attention deficit disorder. Can we assume that he is donating the royalties from his book and speaking engagements to charity?

Dolores Ratcliff
Cedar Falls, Iowa
ratcliff@forbin.com

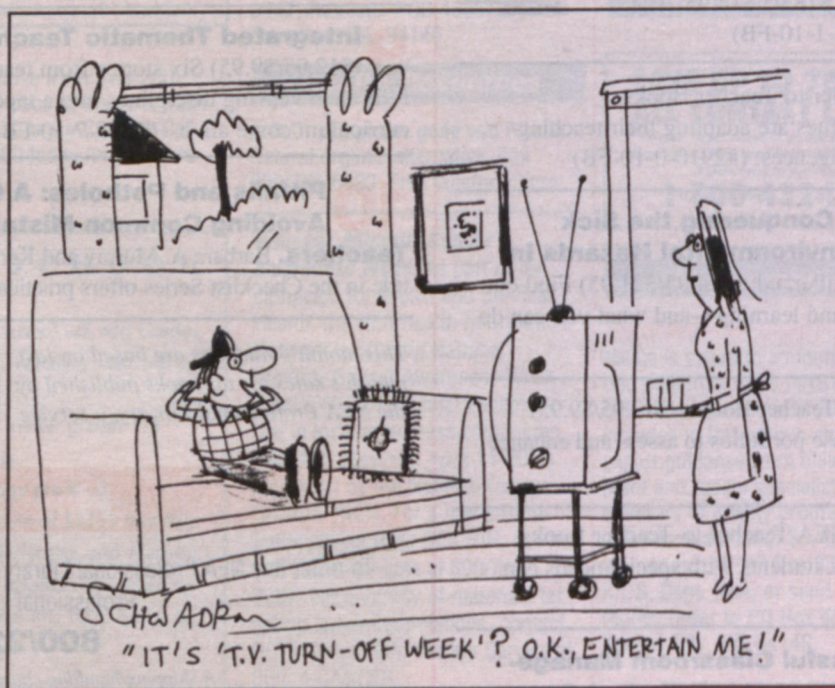
Not 'Unnatural'

While your description of Minnesota teacher Wayne Berry's intercultural project (People, February) is exciting, I hope you'll choose your words more carefully.

Although the term "natural parents" may parallel some states' legal terminology, it has unpleasant implications for those of us who have adopted.

Please consider using "birth parents" or "biological parents" or some other term that doesn't make us "unnatural."

Lori and Sid Katz
Cherry Hill, New Jersey
SidK@aol.com



Harley Schwadron

A Letter From: Graterford, Pennsylvania

How a Trip to China Changed My Teaching Life Forever

When I was hired by the Perkiomen Valley High School last year to teach 11th graders about Asia, Africa, and Latin America, I was thrilled.

"A chance to expose young minds to all of the pressing issues of the planet," I grandly thought to myself.

I set right to work writing my thematic curriculum. First on my list: human rights. The perfect country to begin with: China. After all, what country do we hear the most about?

Next topic: environmental concerns—pollution, destruction of habitat, poaching. Once again, China seemed to be the best example.

And so it went. For every topic I came up with—overpopulation, disease, treatment of women—the country at the top of my list: China.

So, while I discussed other countries extensively, I taught my students all about China. And why not? China's in the news every day:

"China stands to lose most-favored nation status over human rights abuses" or "U.S. bears being poached for China's traditional medicine trade."

I felt more than justified in my approach—until I got the phone call that would forever change my approach to the subject.

Last spring, I got a call from the head of a local distance learning project asking if I would like to go to China with him to set up a video exchange program between Perkiomen Valley and Guangzhou First Railway High School.

I was floored. "First-year teachers who don't own passports don't go to China," I thought. I ran home to discuss the trip with my husband. Of all the places we thought we would ever visit, China wasn't even on the list.

I knew how it would be—grim teachers teaching military-style to equally grim students. No fun, no discussion, no smiles.

When I first arrived, I got exactly what I had expected. Customs officials, dressed in drab uniforms, refused to exhibit even the hint of a smile.

But when we stepped outside, a delegation of officials, administrators, and students was there to greet us—and they were beaming.

I sat next to a Chinese teacher who spoke perfect English. As we discussed teaching, I knew instantly that she was my colleague and would be my friend.

Throughout our trip, the kindness and generosity of our hosts overwhelmed me. Never in my life have I been treated with such warmth and graciousness from people I'd just met.

Now whenever I think of China, my greatest memories are all smiles—the smiles of teachers and students, the laughter as we tried to understand each other.

Now I think of a country made up of

a billion individuals—individuals who have the same dreams and loves I do, individuals who are never mentioned in the media coverage that had shaped my ideas about China.

I still teach about human rights abuses, environmental degradation, and the like. And I still use China as an example. But now I'm careful to remind my students that nations are made up of individuals.

When you teach social studies, it's easy to teach only of the troubles, conflicts, and sufferings of our world—and these are certainly lessons that need to be taught.

But now I constantly remind my students and myself that although the world is full of problems, it's also full of people.

Kimberly Minor is a second-year teacher of world cultures in Graterford, Pennsylvania, and vice president of her local NEA affiliate.

Never Never Land?

NEA President Bob Chase wants teachers to believe that it's time to reinvent collective bargaining as a collaborative, non-adversarial process (President's View-point, February).

Really? Labor legislation presumes an adversarial relationship between those who do the work and those who pay us. In the adversarial process lies our only protection.

Too many politicians are bent on breaking teacher unions. To be full partners in today's hostile environment, teachers need the kind of support that Chase seems unwilling or unable to provide. Let's stop the nonsense.

*William Savage
Holt, Michigan*

All for Empowerment

"Time to Face the Hard Truth" by Doug Tuthill (My Turn, February) should have been your cover story. The NEA should help its members become true managers of learning and help them regain classroom control.

Teachers need the right to discipline inappropriate conduct on the spot. Teachers need the right to have fiscal control inside their own building. Teachers need to be empowered to reduce distractions. Achievement will follow.

*Peter Lucas
Lincoln, Maine
pjljr@agate.net*

I appreciate Doug Tuthill's call for a world in which teachers and school administrators have the tools to manage "the profound problems plaguing our schools."

But these problems result from a culture unwilling to deal with the perverse educational priorities that result from our national obsession with state and local control and the unequal opportunity that results from racism and poverty.

Let us focus our attacks on the political culture and the political actors who create these dysfunctional school systems in the first place.

*Jim Mamer
Modjeska Canyon, California
jmamer@earthlink.net*

'Dem Bones

The threat of osteoporosis is a serious one, and I agree with most of Dr. Siris's statements (Health, February). But she's wrong when she says "the best source of calcium is dairy products."

Not all health care professionals tout dairy products as necessary for good health. The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine says: "Cow's milk appears to be a risky source of dietary calcium."

"The dairy calcium is not isolated, but is instead contained in a high-fat, high-protein and possible contaminated food that is not well tolerated by many people. Alternatively, plant sources of calcium are low in fat and protein, full of

fiber, and carry none of the hazards of dairy products. . ."

The North American Vegetarian Society states: "Dairy products, touted as good sources of calcium, are actually calcium inhibitors because of their high protein content. The highest rates of osteoporosis are found in countries where calcium intake is greatest and most of that calcium comes from protein-rich dairy foods."

*Debra LaBruzzo
Springfield, Massachusetts*

'Not the Right Tool'

I agree with Melva Burmeister (Letters, February) that the computer is not always the best answer for our needs, but I don't agree with the test she used to prove her point.

Using the Internet to search for a single fact is like using a screwdriver to pound in a nail—it'll get the job done, but it's not the right tool for the job.

In Burmeister's test, the savvy senior should have used Grolier's Encyclopedia or Encarta to search for a discrete fact. The Internet is a better choice for general topical searches or to communicate with experts.

*Paul Johnson
Underwood, Iowa
technology.uhs@juno.com*

Ben & Jerry

In your interview with Ben & Jerry of ice cream fame (Meet, February), Jerry

says it's hard for him to take risks because "we're all taught in school not to make mistakes." Ben says he was taught only to memorize and regurgitate.

I'd say their behavior has nothing to do with school and everything to do with their nature and nurture out of school.

Instead of knocking school, Ben and Jerry should give their school credit. If they hadn't met in gym class and shared such magnificent underachievement back then, it's unlikely they would be experiencing such magnificent shared success today.

*George Mason
Salisbury, Maryland*

Let's Talk

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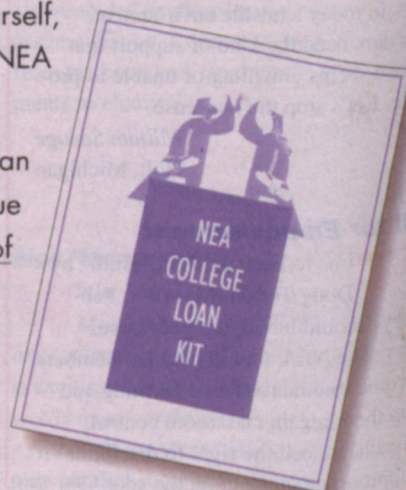
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