



PECONIC TEACHER CENTER

CENTERLINE SPRING-SUMMER 2008

Issue #4 Spring-Summer 2008

Message from the Director:

There are many interesting and informative events happening this summer at PTC. By now, you should have received the PTC catalogue and it is our hope you have already registered for one or two of the courses we have organized. As we put the Summer program together, we tried to keep in mind the needs of all staff, Pre-K through 12, so you will see special programs that assist struggling readers at the elementary, intermediate and high school levels. We have courses for high school and intermediate school social studies teachers and high school math teachers, and we have a course that incorporates the research of Bena Kallick and Art Costa on Habits of the Mind for teachers of all grade levels. For schools beginning to address the RTI mandate, we have training in Wilson and Lindamood-Bell.

We continue to have collaborations with many partners including the Parrish Art Museum and our sister teacher center to the west of us-Teacher Center of the Western Hamptons. This fall, we will begin one course in the Masters in Literacy program with St. John's University. We are also in discussions with Stony Brook for another Administration cohort. For teacher assistants, we will begin a series of coursework to satisfy all three level of teacher assistant's certification. We are excited about all that we are offering. The Policy Board is very active and continues to push the boundaries of its thinking in providing high quality professional development to Consortium districts. In fact, we just completed a retreat at which we reviewed how best to support districts' Professional Development Plans (PDP).

Wishing you a restful and enjoyable summer, mixed with a just-right dose of professional development at Peconic Teacher Center.

Larrilee Jemiola

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TUNE IN to What the New Generation of Teachers Can Do

(A reprint from Tools for Schools, Volume 11, no.4)

Joan Richardson

Three veteran teachers on the 7th-grade math team don't want the responsibility of leading their weekly team meetings. But Meredith—a recent college graduate who just began teaching—volunteers for the assignment.

The older teachers are mystified—and a bit put off by her eagerness. Meredith quickly steps into her new role and announces the agenda for the next meeting. "I'll create a web page for us to use, and I'll post the agenda there, too," she says, as she taps the task into her phone, which is also her PDA. Moments after assuming this leadership role, however, Meredith's phone pings to indicate that she's gotten a text message. She quickly shifts her attention from the meeting to her phone, laughs a little and texts back a response.

Now the older teachers glance at each other and nod knowingly. Here we go again, another new teacher to train.

PTC Hours



**Spring
Monday-Thursday
8:30—4:30**

**Friday
8:30—4:00**

**Summer
Monday-Thursday
8:00-3:00
Closed Friday**

This clash of the generations is being repeated in schools across the country



“ANIMOTO”

Animoto is a fun way to add some Hollywood to your old, dull, same as everyone else’s slideshow. You know those field trips, end of year faculty meetings, parent open houses or just perhaps that special way of saying thanks to a class as they leave your school.

Animoto isn’t the kiss of death to Powerpoint unfortunately, but it will add some zip and keep people’s eyes open when it’s “your turn” to show ‘em something.

In beta, Animoto is a web application that generates a professionally produced video with music using your photos. At its core is a technology that analyzes and combines your images and music with the post-production savvy of a Hollywood film editor.

The service is free for as many 30 seconds videos as you want, or \$3 each for extended length videos. They also have a \$30 annual pass that provides unlimited access. While you do have the option of uploading your own music, Animoto has a slick library of its own divided into 3 groups, Indie Rock, Electronica or Hop Hop. (Even classical.)

You have the option of emailing your video, embedding it on your blog or website and posting it as a widget on your social network of choice.

Nice touch is you retain all rights to your content. Animoto assumes no copyright to your material. And coming soon is the ability to download videos to your computer, and send videos to your cellphone.

We like Animoto’s no hassle ease of use and its professional results. We definitely would like to see the ability to add your own captions or titles, maybe even illustrations to further customize your creation—and with that perhaps less reliance on the overdone, stick a fork in it, the ever present, Powerpoint presentation.

The founders of Animoto are veterans of the entertainment industry and are headquartered in NYC. Go to: <http://www.animoto.com>.

“TUNE IN to What the New Generation of Teachers Can Do”

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every day as more and more Millennials—those born in 1978 and later—move into the teaching ranks. Teachers beginning their careers in 2008 and for many years ahead will be strikingly different from the generations of Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, and even Gen Xers that preceded them.

These generational personality differences have implications for the way beginning teachers teach, how they want to learn about improving their teaching, and how they will impact the culture of the schools in which they work. They will reject some practices that were successful for earlier generations — but they will also embrace some that earlier generations scoffed at. And the number of Millennials in the teaching ranks will also increase rapidly as more and more Baby Boomers move into retirement. At the same time, however, Millennials threaten to be less committed than earlier generations to making a career out of teaching. This means that concerns about the loss of new teachers may become even more pronounced as Millennials become the primary source of new teachers. As Millennials moved into school systems, leaders will want to know if schools are ready to meet their needs. Not all Millennials are the same, but generations in a society tend to share broad experiences and have their own generational personality. Explore several statements that are likely to apply to members of this generation and consider the implications for your induction and professional learning practices. Also, encourage your older staff members to learn about these generational tendencies to help reduce resentment at behaviors that may seem to be disrespectful, arrogant, or distracting.

Millennials think they’re pretty special.

As a generation, Millennials were loved and nurtured by parents who tended to be very hands-on. “These are the children who received trophies for finishing in eighth place,” said Suzette Lovely, deputy superintendent of Capistrano Unified School District in California and co-author of *Generations at School* (Corwin, 2007).

Jennifer Abrams, an educational consultant who specializes in generational issues, notes that this generation expects to be praised more consistently. “They were very loved at home and we differentiated for them at school. We told them how special they were — and they believed it,” she said.

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“TUNE IN to What the New Generation of Teachers Can Do”

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This can be problematic for professionals in schools because “we’re not set up to provide consistent, constant praise. Many support systems for newer professionals working in schools are not set up to provide the responsiveness and positiveness that they expect,” Abrams said.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR SCHOOLS: Search for ways to acknowledge Millennials when they join your staff and to acknowledge their individual talents. Host a breakfast or a lunch at the beginning of the school year to introduce new teachers to everyone who works in your building. Publish brief bios and photos of them in your school newsletter and on your web site. Make informal visits to their classrooms and chat casually with them to learn more about the non-work side of their lives. Ensure that you greet them by name and make eye contact with them each time you encounter them in the hallway. Certificates that may not impress older teachers may be very appealing to Millennials.

Millennials are comfortable with their parents’ values and not as rebellious as earlier generations.

Millennials are anxious to be mentored by older, experienced teachers. “In the past, if you had a mentor, that was considered a deficit model. Millennials really see mentoring as a form of coaching and they see that as a very positive thing. That is very different,” Lovely said.

“When you pair a Millennial with a veteran teacher, they are very accepting of that. They were raised with a lot of intense structure and supervision so they value having someone older and wiser looking out for them,” she said.

Abrams said Millennials want one-on-one coaching. But their demand for “a lot of immediate praise and feedback” may present challenges to systems that can only provide mentoring conversations once or twice a month. Given their comfort with technology, Abrams said online solutions may be the route for providing the support and feedback as frequently and quickly as Millennials may want.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR SCHOOLS: Link every new teacher with a mentor who can provide support for them that’s related to their local context. If your state or major certificate-granting university doesn’t already offer an e-mentoring program, explore options for creating one to serve new teachers in your state. Investigate e-mentoring options made possible by nonprofit organizations, such as the National Science Teachers Association and the New Teacher Center, that may be able to complement your local mentoring efforts. Blend their comfort with technology with your coaching/mentoring model. Teach your mentors how to add technology, such as texting, into their mentoring portfolios.

Millennials have a high tolerance for change, innovation, and learning.

Millennials don’t expect to sign up for a 30-year relationship with an employer as their parents did. Because they expect to make numerous moves during their career, however, they place a high value on continuing to learn and on moving ahead quickly. “Millennials are poised to become our first true generation of lifetime learners,” said Lynne Lancaster and David Stillman in *When Generations Collide* (HarperBusiness, 2002, p. 281).

Lovely said Millennials are very anxious to retool themselves. “They don’t mind changing,” Lovely said.

Packaged with this is a higher level of assertiveness and confidence in their own abilities. Often, this means that they want to move ahead as quickly as possible. “Many of them think three or four years teaching is plenty of time for teaching and then might consider becoming a principal or moving into another job in the field,” Abrams said.

Millennials’ expectation that they will not stay in one place or one field also means that tenure has much less value for them than for earlier generations, Abrams said. “They may be off and moving before they ever hit the tenure mark,” she said.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR SCHOOLS: Take advantage of Millennials’ interest in constant learning and their expectation that they will make several career moves. Make leadership opportunities available to beginning teachers as early as possible. Ensure that they understand that a variety of career options beyond the principalship are open to them if they focus first on becoming excellent teachers. Help them connect their professional development with their career aspirations as well as the needs of their students. Give them opportunities to identify what and how they want to learn.

Millennials love being on teams.

They were nurtured in environments that emphasized cooperative learning and team sports. And, at home, “Millennials have always been part of the day-to-day negotiation of their home lives. ... They’ll be able to contribute and collaborate right from the get-go,” said Lancaster and Stillman (p. 31).

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“TUNE IN to What the New Generation of Teachers Can Do”

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This means that grade-level and subject-area teams are very attractive to beginning teachers, Abrams said. “If the dynamics are right, if they are brought in as equal partners, they will flourish,” she said.

Lovely said Millennials also have a strong desire to develop friendships with colleagues at work. “Schools that provide for the social aspects of work as well as develop a team approach to learning, will find Millennials reluctant to leave them,” she said.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR SCHOOLS: Emphasize the importance of teams as you recruit Millennials. Use photographs of teachers working together in your printed and web presence. Involve teachers from the teams they will join in the interviewing and hiring process. Professional learning communities can be ideal structures for them, said Abrams and Lovely. But schools need to ensure that all participants in learning communities are grounded by a set of protocols. Millennials may feel as if protocols are slowing down the team process but protocols may be necessary to ensure that older teachers allow beginning teachers to participate fully in discussions.

Millennials are expert multitaskers who don't want to miss out on opportunities and also expect a lot of themselves.

This generation grew up as the overscheduled children of the Baby Boomers. They learned how to juggle AP classes with before-school choir practice and after-school sports. They listened to music and watched television while they did homework. “Being able to multitask is both a blessing and a curse. They take on a lot. They tend to think that they're somewhat invincible,” Lovely said.

Abrams said, at a much younger age than earlier generations, they feel that they have accomplished a lot — often because they have. “They want their experiences to be recognized. They don't want to be patronized,” Abrams said.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR SCHOOLS: Help them slow down. Although they have years of experience juggling a lot as students, they are not yet experienced at balancing the demands of a professional life. Help guide them to focus on the important issues, not just the urgent issues of their new lives. Mentors can be a great support for beginning teachers struggling in this arena.

Millennials are not afraid of accountability.

They were raised in a standards-based, high-stakes world. “This is a group that had to pass a high school exit exam to graduate from high school and a state test to get certified to be able to teach. Accountability is what they expect,” Lovely said.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR SCHOOLS: New teachers are likely to feel very comfortable developing common assessments and sharing the results of those assessments with other teachers. If older teachers are resistant to this practice, consider finding ways to tap into the interest of newer teachers to introduce this practice.

Millennials love technology!

This is the Facebook generation and technology is in their DNA. They are never unplugged.

“They are very savvy about picking up information off a web site. They do not want to get a lot of the bureaucratic information in a meeting. They want forms in their e-mails or on web sites,” Abrams said. Part of that is because they are more tech savvy but it's also because they prefer to handle such issues when they consider it most convenient for them to do so, Abrams said.

Millennials respond well to staff development that is experiential, especially if it allows them to come up with their own solutions, said Lancaster and Stillman (2002, p. 289).

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR SCHOOLS: Consider just-in-time staff development that occurs online. Think YouTube-style videos that are short, easily accessible, and allow beginning teachers to access the information they want and need on their own schedule. Create web sites where schools and systems post administrative information. Encourage the use of blogs for reflections following staff development. Take advantage of technology to differentiate professional learning for different learning styles. Combine teamwork with technology.

Millennials' experience with technology also means that principals and other supervisors have to be explicit about expectations related to technology. Is it, for example, appropriate for a teacher to communicate with students via Facebook? Is it appropriate to text message during a staff meeting? Acceptable use policies may have to be updated to include language about acceptable professional practices.

**Excerpted from: *Tools for Schools for a Dynamic Community of Learners and Leaders*
Volume 11, No. 4
May/June 2008**

“Questions and Answers regarding Mandated Professional Development Hours”

The professional development requirement applies to individuals who hold a professional teaching certificate or a level III teaching assistant certificate. Teachers must have 175 hours every 5 years. Teaching assistants must have 75 hours every 5 years.

This applies to other teachers and assistants only as required in their local, as collectively bargained.

NYSUT Information Bulletin number 200708 entitled, "The professional development requirement for certification," answers all these questions and more. Go to www.nysut.org click on PreK-12, then click on information bulletins and put the number 200708 in the search box for the entire bulletin. Here are some questions and answers that we thought we'd share with you.

Q Whose responsibility is it to track the 175 hours aside from the certificate holder?

A. Providing and reporting the 175 hr activities is a district responsibility. Districts must use TEACH. The TEACH system is the SED system for certification and for tracking of professional development hours. All districts must report to SED using TEACH; however, districts may choose a variety of software tools to keep track of hours in the district e.g. Mylearningplan. Teacher Centers may be asked to assist with documentation of teacher center programs for the holders of Professional and level III teaching assistant certificates. Peconic Teacher Center issues certificates for all of its programs.

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“Net Gain: Finding Education Information Online”

ASCD offers a wealth of online resources, covering up-to-the-minute information on leading education issues. For a guided tour, see "Quiet Please—The Library Is Online" in the May 2007 issue of *Education Update*, available at www.ascd.org/portal/redirect.jsp?productID=107064. After taking advantage of ASCD's online offerings, where else can you turn for free, valuable information on the Web?

Research, Statistics, and More

The **U.S. Department of Education** is a popular destination for research, statistics, and teaching resources. For years, education researchers have turned to the department's **Education Resources Information Center (ERIC)** to search its vast database of citations covering academic and professional journals, reports, conference proceedings, dissertations, and more. In recent years, the site has added an increasing number of full-text documents in PDF format. If the full text is unavailable, ERIC can help visitors place the item on hold at the nearest library and often provides links to publishers' Web sites, where content may be available for purchase.

Federal Resources for Educational Excellence (FREE) contains lesson plans, primary source documents, and other teaching resources gathered across federal government agencies.

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is the place to go with statistical questions on U.S. education—questions such as "How many teachers, principals, and superintendents are there in Maine?" or "What are the trends in dropout rates?" Click on Fast Facts to begin finding answers to questions like these.

Newsworthy

Education Week is the most prominent U.S. news publication covering K–12 education, and its Web site offers a wide range of free resources. Visitors can view top stories and a staggering range of blogs, including a blog coauthored by **Diane Ravitch and Deborah Meier**. Register for free to access more content, including additional stories selected by the editors and the extremely useful Issues A–Z page, which provides quick news and information on leading education issues from accountability to year-round schooling.

Technology

To keep track of the ever-evolving world of education technology, **eSchool News** is a great one-stop resource. The site provides extensive coverage of emerging trends, a large news archive, and information on the hottest ed-tech topics. For a more conversational look at issues in education technology, visit Will Richardson's blog, **Weblogg-ed**. Richardson discusses blogs, wikis, and other Web 2.0 technologies with an eye toward practical classroom application. For those still trying to get their heads around RSS, Richardson provides a great guide for beginners.

Navigating the Blogosphere

On ASCD's blog, **Inservice**, members and visitors engage in rich discussions about a variety of education topics. The blog also includes "BlogWatch," a feature that explores the education blogosphere, highlighting sites that are relevant to educators.

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“Net Gain: Finding Education Information Online”

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Blognetnews is a fantastic blog aggregator, pulling together the content from multiple blogs on one easy-to-navigate page. You can narrow your focus by topic, state, grade level, and popularity. Content can be pushed to you via customized RSS feeds or e-mail.

Google Blog Search allows users to explore the blog universe with the same familiar interface Google provides for Web searches. Find out what people are saying on any topic by simply searching a keyword or string. **Technorati** offers a similar service with the additional ability to sort blogs by authority and subject.

Wide World

The sources covered in this article are some of the best, but only the tip of the iceberg. Beyond searching on Google and other search engines, educators can browse the **Librarian's Index to the Internet** for a hand-picked selection of top sites on virtually any education topic.

Online Resources

- **ASCD BlogWatch:** http://ascd.typepad.com/blog/edblog_watch/index.html
- **ASCD Inservice, ASCD's Community Blog:** www.ascd.org/blog
- **ASCD Online Library** (member access only): <https://my.ascd.org>
- **Blognetnews:** www.blognetnews.com
- **Education Resources Information Center (ERIC):** www.eric.ed.gov
- **Education Week:** www.edweek.org
- **eSchool News:** www.eschoolnews.com
- **Federal Resources for Educational Excellence (FREE):** www.free.ed.gov
- **Google Blog Search:** <http://blogsearch.google.com>
- **Librarian's Index to the Internet:** www.lii.org
- **Technorati:** www.technorati.com
- **U.S. Department of Education:** www.ed.gov
- **Weblogg-ed:** www.weblogg-ed.com



Excerpted from:

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development - Education Update
Volume 50, No. 5 May 2008

“Math and Science: NCTM’s Classroom Based Research Grants for K-12 Teachers”



Eligibility: K-12 classroom teachers currently teaching mathematics who are members of NCTM. **Deadline:** November 14, 2008. **Funds:** Up to \$8,000. **Contact:** Mathematics Education Trust at NCTM, 1906 Association Drive, Reston, VA 20191-1502.

The Mathematics Education Trust (MET), the charitable arm of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), is taking proposals for its Classroom Based research Grants program. The program will award a grant of up to \$8,000 to winning K-12 classroom teachers who perform research in partnership with college or university mathematics educators.

Eligible applicants are K-12 classroom teachers who are currently teaching mathematics and are members of NCTM either through an individual membership or their school’s NCTM K-8 membership. Interested teachers may submit a proposal for the 2009-2010 award.

Applicants must complete and submit the proposal cover form, which is downloadable from the website. Along with the cover page, applicants must submit:

- one page providing applicant background information, including formal and grant-related education and teaching experience;
- the project description, including the title, objectives and plan, a budget, and expected outcome; and
- letters of support, including a letter from the teacher’s school principal and a letter from the collaborating college or university educator, and other letters if desired.

Award winners will be required to submit a final report on completion of the project. The grantee will receive three quarters of the grant amount on acceptance of the grant. The remainder of the grant amount will be awarded on completion of the final report and receipts for expenses. The deadline for proposals is November 14, 2008. More information online visit <http://www.nctm.org/resources/content.aspx?id=1330>. **Excerpted from:** *Quinlan Grants for K-12 Hotline, Volume 20, No. 10 May 25, 2008*

“RTI: Progress Monitoring”

An important aspect of the RTI initiative is progress monitoring students who are struggling. Here are some Q and As from the National Center on Student Progress Monitoring (www.studentprogress.org) that might help to clarify the relatively new term “progress monitoring.”

What is progress monitoring?

Progress monitoring is a scientifically based practice that is used to assess students' academic performance and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. Progress monitoring can be implemented with individual students or an entire class.

How does progress monitoring work?

To implement progress monitoring, the student's current levels of performance are determined and goals are identified for learning that will take place over time. The student's academic performance is measured on a regular basis (weekly or monthly). Progress toward meeting the student's goals is measured by comparing expected and actual rates of learning. Based on these measurements, teaching is adjusted as needed. Thus, the student's progression of achievement is monitored and instructional techniques are adjusted to meet the individual students learning needs.

What are the benefits of progress monitoring?

When progress monitoring is implemented correctly, the benefits are great for everyone involved. Some benefits include:

- accelerated learning because students are receiving more appropriate instruction;
- more informed instructional decisions;
- documentation of student progress for accountability purposes;
- more efficient communication with families and other professionals about students' progress;
- higher expectations for students by teachers; and
- fewer Special Education referrals.

Overall, the use of progress monitoring results in more efficient and appropriately targeted instructional techniques and goals, which together, move all students to faster attainment of important state standards of achievement.

Who should be practicing progress monitoring?

Anyone who is interested in improving results for children should be implementing progress monitoring. Whether you are a regular educator, special educator, related service provider, administrator, or family member, you should be interested in implementing research-based progress monitoring practices.

What challenges face progress monitoring?

- Educators and families need information about the effectiveness of progress monitoring that would encourage them to adopt the practice.
- Teachers and other practitioners need support in translating progress monitoring research into easily implemented, usable strategies.
- Technical assistance on progress monitoring must transfer knowledge in ways that accommodate differences in background, training, and beliefs, as well as differences in the nature and philosophy of the instructional programs and practices already in place.
- This information dissemination must take place in a variety of formats, in usable forms, and at different levels of specificity.

Are there other names for progress monitoring?

Progress monitoring is a relatively new term. Some other terms you may be more familiar with are Curriculum-Based Measurement and Curriculum-Based Assessment. Whatever method you decide to use, it is most important that you ensure it is a scientifically based practice that is supported by significant research.

Source: *National Center on Student Progress Monitoring; www.studentprogress.org*



“Book Study Helps Teachers Hone Skills”

PTC has sponsored and supported a “Teacher as Reader” program for several years. Apparently, this professional activity is catching on in many parts of the country and with good reason.

On media-center couches and at conference-room tables, downing Cokes and sipping coffee together, teachers around the country are cracking open books to get better at what they do—and, often, relishing the experience. The pairing of books and teachers might seem natural, but it has taken the convergence of at least two trends to move “book study” far up the list of the way teachers spend their professional-development time. For one, many observers, not least teachers themselves, are convinced that teachers are obligated to upgrade their classroom skills. For another, the most effective way to do that, according to a growing chorus of educators and experts, is through work on practice located within schools, conducted among colleagues, and, above all, well integrated with teachers’ day-to-day work.

Enter book study—easily localized and collegial, hugely adaptable. It is also relatively cheap at a time of rising costs and declining revenue.

“My district is finding teachers are already involved,” said Wendy A. Rothman, who introduced book study to her fellow kindergarten and 1st grade teachers at Wines Elementary School in Ann Arbor, Mich. “Now, districts are moving toward using these book groups for professional development.”

For example, the Ann Arbor school system, in cooperation with neighboring University of Michigan, is using study of the book series *Young Mathematicians at Work*, by Catherine Fosnot and Maarten Dolk, to prepare teachers from across the 17,000-student district for summer school classes targeted at students who have fallen behind.

At Wines Elementary, Ms. Rothman persuaded her colleagues to use part of their common planning time this semester to discuss *The Continuum of Literacy Learning*. “When I started reading it, I said, “This is a secret I can’t keep to myself,” the kindergarten teacher recalled. She and others said one beauty of book study is that, kept to small groups, it can foster new insights and change even among the most guarded teachers. “They have their own private learning experience with their group,” said Ms. Rothman, “[where] they don’t expect to be judged by colleagues and they hope to learn from them.”

Not an Add-On

In fact, book study has been used for years by principals to build awareness of directions for change in a non threatening manner, said Stephanie Hirsch, the executive director of the National Staff Development Council headquartered in Dallas, the national group for educators who specialize in training others. Down the road, Ms. Hirsch said, the approach can help faculties make decisions about where they will put their energy and commitment. Books by Phillip C. Schlechty, such as *Creating Great Schools*, or Robert J. Marzano’s *The Art and Science of Teaching* have paved the way for further work under the guidance of those educators. Finally, book study alone can be used to “promote deeper understanding of concepts and actual transfer of ideas to practice,” Ms. Hirsch said.

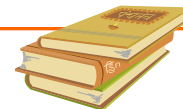
Natalie Elder, the principal of Hardy Elementary School in Chattanooga, Tenn., was so awed by the pertinence of consultant Ruby J. Payne’s message for her school that she started her first book study with Ms. Payne’s *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*. Hardy’s 50-member instructional staff discussed the book and a companion volume monthly over a year and a half.

Book study is now woven into the school’s professional development, which the 40,000 student district has seen as an important lever for improvement at Hardy and eight other inner-city elementary schools.

At Salem Middle School in Cary, N.C., teacher teams have each taken up a title from a book list compiled by administrators, allowing the teams to address weaknesses but stick with common school goals, according to teacher William Ferriter. As social studies and English teachers, members of Mr. Ferriter’s team were concerned that they were not collecting enough data on students’ mastery of more advanced skills in the required curriculum. So they settled on *Classroom Assessment for Student Learning* as their text. With parts of the book as a guide, this year the group broke each social studies standard into measurable parts and wrote assessments for each. “Sounds like an easy and logical task—but it was one we’d never considered and never had the time to tackle!” wrote Mr. Ferriter in an e-mail. “We’re proud of what we have now—and already have the next part planned—rewriting standards into kid friendly language that starts wit the phrase, “I can.”

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“Book Study Helps Teachers Hone Skills”



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Mr. Ferriter, a member of the Teacher Leaders network, which fosters enlarged roles for teachers, said that the key to the success of book study at his school is that it is not an add-on to more central endeavors. “Book study—combined with regular [team] meetings—is the professional development in our building.”

Teacher-Led Work

One appeal of book study is that it allows teachers to take the lead in informing their colleagues and seizing a moment in the life of a school. That happened at Valley Middle School in Grand Forks, N.D., after teacher-mentor Laurie Stenehjerm read *Mosaic of Thought* by Ellin Oliver Keene and Susan Zimmerman, a book addressing reading comprehension. After some of its ideas helped an English teacher, that teacher organized a study group around the book and several related ones, which lead to a similar district wide effort and later an online course with Ms. Stenehjerm as one of the teachers. “I am a big believer in the need for both bottom-up and top-down change,” the veteran teacher said. “Book studies are wonderful because they build this bottom-up direction.”

Some teachers prize book study, at least in part, because it knits together staff members. “We have really gotten to know each other as teachers and friends,” Heather Ferris, a literacy teacher in the elementary grades at Portville Central School in rural Portville, N.Y., write in an e-mail. As a result, she added, “you will see teachers more apt to share their ideas and questions about what they are teaching.”

While most of the books that show up as the subject of study seem to have to do with teaching practice or school reform, they can range more widely, with a variety of purposes.

At Chets Creek Elementary School in Jacksonville, Fla., for instance, the book-study program this year gives teachers a choice of seven books, fiction or memoir, all dealing with the lives of children as they cope with autism, poverty, divorce, abuse, and other realities of contemporary life. Dayle M. Timmons, a literacy coach at the school and a former state teacher of the year, wrote in an e-mail that the activity gives teachers a way to “live the life of a reader.” In that spirit, the groups will discuss not only the books’ themes, but also the author’s craft, Ms. Timmons wrote in her blog.

While Chets Creek’s effort is required professional development, two high schools across the country from each other have found value in offering voluntary book groups to teachers who want to explore issues pertinent to the lives of teenagers.

At Palo Alto High School in California, about a dozen teachers talked last year about Beverly Daniel Tatum’s *Why Are All the Black Kids Talking Together in the Cafeteria?* This year, a group is tackling *Mindset*, which argues against the reality of fixed intelligence and for the value of effort. The book “is informing our teaching in how we give feedback to students: praise for effort, leading to increased growth, rather than praising on what might seem to be innate qualities,” wrote Elizabeth Brimhall in an e-mail. She organized the groups as part of her school’s teacher-directed staff development.

Sherry L. Annee, the science department chairwoman a Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School in Indianapolis, has introduced her school to two books that address the pressures on high-achieving high school students like the ones at Brebeuf: Edward Humes’ *School of Dreams and Overachievers* by Alexandra Robbins. More than half the staff members have read and discussed the books, which also sparked student panels and a visit from Ms. Robbins.

Recreational Book Clubs

Amid all the serious professional work undertaken in book study, a few educators have found a place for recreational book clubs, the kind boosted in popularity by media mogul Oprah Winfrey. Teachers at Komanchin Middle School in Lacey, Wash., meet monthly on their own time to enjoy their good reads together. With the 800-student school organized into “houses,” many faculty members rarely see each other outside the book gathering, said Janet L. Brown, the school librarian and the book club’s organizer.

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“Book Study Helps Teachers Hone Skills”

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Over the six years of the club's existence, the group has read books ranging from the mega-best-selling *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown to the recent literary sensation *Suite Francaise* by Irene Nemirovsky. The choices have been deliberately diverse, but each year the teachers pick one book from the “young adult” category meant to appeal to their students.

And as teachers' biases might have it, one such book, concerning a girl saved by reading, won special plaudits. “Our all-time favorite,” said Ms. Brown, “is probably *The Book Thief*.”

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“Peconic Teacher Center: Teacher As Reader”

Contemporary Female Authors in Literature - Southampton High School, Maria Clinton & Lorraine Duryea

Teach Creech - Sag Harbor Elementary School, Debbie Price

The High Power of Lucky & Freak the Mighty - Southampton Intermediate School, Maureen Flanagan

Professional Books, Young Adult Novels, Classics and recently talked about books - East Hampton Middle School, Meredith Hasemann-Cortes

Newberry Books - Sag Harbor Elementary School, Debbie Price



What's Going On In Our Schools?

Hampton Bays Elementary School:



Earth Day

To get kids excited about Earth Day, Mrs. Mary Beth Motz de Gonzalez's kindergarten and Miss Lyndsey Simmons' third grade classes have teamed up to help Hampton Bays become a little greener. The two classes will host their second annual Recycling Project to raise funds for the Quogue Wildlife Refuge while promoting awareness of the importance of recycling, as well as celebrate Earth Day in a meaningful way. We hope to raise as much money as we can while helping the earth by recycling all of our school's soda bottles. Every Wednesday, students bring in as many soda bottles as they can fit in their backpacks. Then, a team of kindergartners and third graders collect and count the bottles. Teachers, students and parents then volunteer to take the bottles to *Classic Beverage* in Hampton Bays to be recycled. Last year, we raised approximately \$150.00 and recycled over 3,000 bottles. That's a lot of plastic that may have ended up in landfills. This year we plan to recycle even more bottles and raise more funds for the Wildlife Refuge. Some of our other Earth Day projects include making composting buckets out of reused gallon milk jugs and recycling our snack napkins to create pulp for our handmade paper.



Atrium Mural

In this project, funded by the Hampton Bays School District, with BOCES support, students in the Hampton Bays Elementary School grades 1-6 worked with Art Teacher Kathy Dayton and Mural Artist John DiNaro to collaborate and create a 90' mural for the atrium of our new Middle School. The mural depicts Dune Road, Ponquogue Bridge, the U.S. Coast Guard Station, and the Pine Barrens. Visuals include life on and below Shinnecock Bay, as well as the sky above. Students were presented with authentic marine replicas for inspiration. Mr. DiNaro and Mrs. Dayton enlarged and cut these illustrations from 1/2", 3/4" and veneer plywood. Students utilized various brush techniques including dry, stippling, and fan. Wood components are attached to the prepared wall surface. Benches and tables were also constructed, bringing the mural images to floor level. This project has New York State Fire Marshal certification. The mural is located inside the front entrance of the Hampton Bays Middle School.

Montauk School:



Eight Grade

The week of March 19th 2007 was an exciting one for the 8th grade. It was the Washington DC trip that had been anticipated since September. The first sight of the Capitol was truly

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What's Going On In Our Schools? (Cont.)

Montauk School (continued from p. 10):

extraordinary. Arriving in DC at 1:30 in the afternoon meant that there was time to do some sightseeing. Ford's Theatre and the Peterson House was the first stop and not only did we all see the Presidential box where President Lincoln was shot but we also saw the very interesting set on the stage for the play "Meet John Doe" which we would see Thursday night. Later that afternoon we went to the National Portrait Gallery and the nearby National Museum of American Art. Both of these museums have been closed for several years for an extensive renovation and the results are beautiful. While exploring the Hall of Presidents, the students found a picture of Teddy Roosevelt with the caption explaining it was taken in Montauk after the Spanish American War. That evening we were back at the National Portrait Gallery for a one man play entitled "Haunted Prince: The Ghost of Edwin Booth". This play was about the brother of John Wilkes Booth and his career as a famous Shakespearean actor.

Tuesday was packed with activities including the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the National Museum of the American Indian, the United States Holocaust Museum, and a visit to the National Archives to view the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution including the Bill of Rights. Back at the hotel the students were able to relax a bit by swimming in the indoor pool or going to the exercise room. A night tour of the Jefferson and Lincoln Memorials plus stops at the World War II, Korean, and FDR Memorials rounded out the day.

Wednesday was eagerly anticipated because it was the day we would visit Arlington National Cemetery and lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Peter Johann and Maggie Fleming were chosen to lay the wreath and they did an excellent job. Our next stop was Capitol Hill and a meeting with Congressman Tim Bishop. Congressman Bishop spoke to the students about our government and his job as our representative and then answered questions from the class. Mr. Bishop was impressed with the questions the students asked and their concern for such a diversity of topics. His assistants, along with some borrowed ones from other offices, then took us on a tour of the Capitol and a visit to the House of Representative Gallery. On the floor of the House there was much activity and debate over the upcoming vote on the budget. Some of the students got to see Vice President Al Gore as he visited the floor of the House.

The afternoon was spent at the very impressive National Gallery of Art which included both the East and West wings. Wednesday evening was a visit to a mall where the students help the local economy of the Washington area.

Thursday morning was spent at the White House where the students took lots of pictures, and then a stop at the National Museum of Natural History. Late in the morning it was off to the Bureau of Printing and Engraving for a tour of where and how money is made.

Montauk School (continued):

Most of us were disappointed seeing all that money so close yet so far! The National Cathedral is a must stop to show the students all the elements of a Gothic Cathedral that they have studied in Art History. We were all impressed by the size, beauty and grandeur of the Cathedral. The rest of the day was spent at the National Zoo which included the famous pandas. Thursday evening we got to see the interesting set at Ford's Theatre put into action by going the play "Meet John Doe". It was a musical and was enjoyed by all.

We couldn't believe that Friday had come so quickly and the trip was almost over. We managed to get in a few more important stops before we left. These were the Hirshhorn Museum and the National Air and Space Museum. After lunch it was time to board the bus for the last time and say good by to our nation's capitol. I have a feeling life time memories were made over the past 5 days we had spent in Washington, DC.

Our Lady of the Hamptons

Fourth Grade



The fourth grade goes fishing! A rainy Saturday afternoon provided the perfect backdrop for the opening of the spring season at the Southampton Historical Museum. The OLH fourth grade and their teachers Mrs. Jennifer Wagner and Mr. Peter Lynch were responsible for curating the exhibit called "Surf and Soil". It focused on fishing and farming on the East End over the years.

Jennifer Wagner and her fourth graders spent a day of research and hand-on learning at Soleau's Wharf in Hampton Bays in preparation for their curatorship project at the Southampton Historical Museum. The students worked with Peter Lurch, project co-chair and the Soleau family, learning about commercial fishing as a industry, cutting, washing and identifying the harvest, and asking questions about the trade.

After a day long visit to Soleau's Wharf where they observed actual fishermen, the students were split into five groups. They worked on a fish cookbook, dioramas, marine art and research on the industry.

One group researched biographies of fishermen and presented oral interpretations of their lives at the Museum opening. Michael Chilicki was one of the historians. Elixabeth Ottati demonstrated the function of the harpoon.

The museum-goers were very impressed by the way the work was displayed.

The total exhibit was the work of the students of Southampton Elementary and Tuckahoe schools with OLH and funded in part by a Mixi-Grant awarded to the classes from PTC.

“Questions and Answers regarding Mandated Professional Development Hours”

(continued from p. 5)

NYSUT strongly encourage holders of professional certificates to maintain a portfolio of attendance, programs, certificates, etc. to document their participation.

Q. How are hours tracked? I know some people use Mylearning plan. Are there others?

A. Management of this tracking and reporting is done by the district using a variety of methods. For those employed in a public school or BOCES, the district or BOCES reports all professional development hours to SED using the TEACH system. **Holders of the relevant certificates not regularly employed must report hours online using the SED TEACH system.**

Q. Does the regulation apply to Non-public schools?

A. For those employed in nonpublic schools or not regularly employed, the requirement applies to holders of the professional certificate. The professional development must be in the content area of the certificate or in the pedagogy related to the certificate. Those not employed in a public school or BOCES must report their hours personally using the SED TEACH system. If you are unemployed as a teacher, you must use the TEACH system.

Q. Do you need 175 hours for every certificate you have? For example, if you have a certification in ELL and in elementary?

A. No you need only complete total of 175 hours for each 5 year professional development cycle.

Please see the NYSUT IB #200708 for a complete discussion of this part of certification maintenance. Below are some useful links.

Here is the link for NYSED TEACH system <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/teach/>

Here is the link for TEACH Q and A <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/teach/resources.htm>

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