



Supporting Inclusive Education Worldwide

Inclusive Schools Network News

January 2009

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Inclusive Schools Network

"Supporting Inclusive Education Worldwide"

The Inclusive Schools Network (ISN) is a web-based resource for families, schools, and communities interested in the topic of inclusive education. This network has grown out of Inclusive Schools Week™, an internationally-recognized, annual event sponsored by Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC). During the 2008-2009 school year, ISN will be expanding in capacity to offer new products, conferences, online events, and social networking opportunities.



Great things happen in inclusive schools™

Inclusive Schools Network News is your source for updates and information about the Inclusive Schools Network, Inclusive Schools Week, and other resources and events related to building more welcoming and supportive schools and communities. Click below to subscribe:

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

ISN Resources & Events:

Inclusive Schools Week 2008



The Inclusive Schools Network hosted the **8th Annual Inclusive Schools Week** this past December on the theme, "Together We Learn Better: Inclusive Schools Benefit All Children". The Week was a great success thanks to the participation and support of schools, communities and families around the world! Read more about Inclusive Schools Week 2008 on the ISN website at:

<http://www.inclusiveschools.org/ISW2008>

Inclusive Schools Week 2009

December 7 - 11, 2009
Save the Dates!

Video-Cast Available Now!

Inclusive Schools Network Math Webinar

On December 3, 2008, the Inclusive Schools Network hosted its first webinar on the topic "**Reflecting Upon the NCTM Focal Points and the Role of the Special Educator in Today's Mathematics Classroom**" with Drs. Hank Kepner and Lisa Dieker. This 90-minute online presentation and discussion was recorded, and a video-cast of the event can now be purchased for viewing through the ISN website. It is an excellent professional development resource for educators and organizations looking to improve practice and help students with disabilities in addressing math standards in inclusive settings. For more information, and to purchase the video-cast, go to:

http://www.inclusiveschools.org/Webinar_2008_December

New ISN Video Clips Posted!

Including Samuel Film Discussion

As part of the 8th Annual Inclusive Schools Week, ISN hosted a screening and discussion of the documentary *Including Samuel* with filmmaker Dan Habib. This film examines issues related to inclusive education and honestly portrays the experiences of Habib's son Samuel, who has cerebral palsy, and four other individuals with disabilities. **Check out ISN's newly-posted video clips** of Dan Habib and others talking about the film and discussing important issues related to inclusive education. You can also view a short trailer for *Including Samuel*, read more about the film, and buy copies of the DVD and Viewers Guide on the ISN website, at:

http://www.inclusiveschools.org/ISN_Video_Including_Samuel_Discussion

Featured Events:

CITEd Webinar Series:
"Moving Forward with Technology"

The Center for Implementing Technology in Education (CITEd) hosts a webinar series on "[Moving Forward with Technology](#)". This month, David Rose, Mary Thorngren and Jenna Wasson of the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) will lead a session on the topic "Technology Implementation: Getting to Where You Want to Be" on January 13th from 2:30 to 3:30 pm CST. Next month, Joy Zabala and Diana Foster Carl of the AIM Consortium will lead sessions on the topic "Accessible Instructional Materials 101" on February 4th from 1:30 to 2:30 pm CST and on February 10th from 9:00 to 10:00 am CST. Visit the CITEd website to read more and register for these upcoming events, or to view slides and recordings from previous sessions, at: <http://www.cited.org/webinars.html>.

Webinar: "School Practices to Improve Mathematics Teaching
and Learning for Students With Disabilities"
January 28, 2009, 12:00 - 1:30 pm EST

The Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast and Islands (REL-NEI) is hosting a webinar on January 28, 2009, from 12:00 to 1:30 pm EST on the topic: "[School Practices to Improve Mathematics Teaching and Learning for Students With Disabilities](#)". This event is intended for state-education agencies, superintendents, principals, district-level specialists, and association heads, and features REL-NEI researchers discussing both math-specific interventions, such as additional math support time, and schoolwide practices, such as teacher collaboration, to enhance math education for students with disabilities. Visit the REL-NEI website for more information and to register for this webinar: <http://www.relnei.org/events/upcoming.schoolpractices.php>.

2009 Conference on Inclusive Education: "Energizing Learning"
February 12-14, 2009

The PEAK Parent Center is hosting their [2009 Conference on Inclusive Education](#) this February 12-14 in Denver, CO. This conference is focused on the theme "Energizing Learning" and on "practical strategies that boost the academic success and inclusion of students with disabilities in their classrooms, schools, homes, and communities". Visit the PEAK Parent Center website to read more about this event and to register: <http://peakparent.org/conferences.asp>.

Tip of the Month:

Differentiate Instruction with Online Tools for Writing

Many children with disabilities struggle with writing assignments in school. Whether the difficulty lies with the physical act of writing (holding a pencil, using a keyboard, forming letters), writing mechanics (grammar and spelling) or getting thoughts onto paper, writing can become a painful task for students with disabilities. As writing becomes a dreaded activity, students' writing abilities further suffer through lack of practice, leading to a cycle of writing avoidance. And little wonder! Few among us would continue writing if it took us twice as long (or longer!) than our peers to write something. Or if it took us so long to laboriously form letters that by the time we finished a word we had forgotten what we had intended to write. We might only write when absolutely necessary or if we were particularly motivated. In any classroom, students are likely to have a wide range of writing abilities, so it is important for teachers to ensure that all students gain practice writing for a variety of purposes and that struggling writers have plenty of opportunities to improve their basic skills.

Integrating web tools into your teaching can be a great way of beginning to address some of these issues. There are several reasons to use these tools in your classroom. Technology itself is inherently motivating for students, and many of them are using Web 2.0 tools already (social networking, YouTube, blogging, etc.) for daily activities. For many students with disabilities, using a computer also allows them to write and create more freely. For a student with dysgraphia, for example, using a keyboard may be far easier than trying to write with pen and paper. Web 2.0 tools provide students with a variety of ways to interact with print and images and to become the creators of knowledge. Using these tools to allow them to type or record their voices rather than handwrite can help kids with disabilities better demonstrate their knowledge while participating in the same lessons as their peers. While tech tools won't replace good teaching, they can help make writing activities more accessible for all your students.

Here are some suggestions for incorporating tech tools into your lessons:

- Use [VoiceThread](#) to create a slideshow about a book the class is reading. Ask students to respond to prompts throughout the slideshow about characters, plot, narrative devices, etc. Allow students to respond using text or audio. For younger students (pre-writers) or struggling writers, visual storytelling can be an excellent way of telling a story without the demands of writing.
- Use [Twitter](#) to have students tell a collaborative story. Each student writes one line of the story until complete. See [ManyVoices](#) for inspiration.
- Ask students to write stories and create animated movies using [Kerpoof](#). Pre-designed sets and strips can be used as story-starters, or students can design their own stories. Studies have shown that storytelling is an essential element of building language skills and can help students improve their writing.
- Use public domain images and photos on Flickr to create story projects. Ask students to use pictures to tell a story, make up a story based on a picture, or upload their own photos (more appropriate for older students) to tell a story. Current Flickr storytelling projects include [telling a story in 5 frames](#), [telling the story of a photo in 6 words](#), and [using a photo as the basis for a creative writing activity](#). Check them out for inspiration!

- Create a classroom blog using Edublogs (or other programs) and ask students to respond online to writing prompts. Allowing students to write responses online rather than in class using pen and paper could be beneficial for students with dysgraphia or other learning disabilities.
- Create individual student blogs where students post stories, responses to assigned prompts and other high interest writing. Ask other students in the class to use the comments sections for feedback. This also gives you an online writing portfolio for each of your students so you can look back at their writing over the year. [Fifth Grade Web Writers](#) is a great example of this use of a class blog. Studies have shown that teenage bloggers write more (both in and out of school) than their peers without blogs.
- Create a classroom wiki on a topic of study (Shakespeare's plays) or with classroom information. Assign each student a section to edit and add to, either alone or with a partner. If a student is a struggling writer, they may work on a section with a stronger writer and add sound clips, videos or images to enhance their writing. Writing for an audience (even if only other students) can motivate struggling writers and encourage them to write more.
- For students who struggle with writing mechanics, try suggesting a contextual spellchecker. For many students with learning disabilities, a traditional spellchecker is not sufficient as it doesn't identify misused words, or words that are spelled correctly but not used in the correct context (their, there and they're is a good example). [Microsoft Word 2007](#) features a built-in contextual spellchecker, and other free versions exist online.
- Have students edit their documents using a [text-to-speech](#) program. Hearing their writing read aloud can help students pick out errors and misused words. Full-featured text-to-speech software programs are available, and several free (and very basic) versions can be found online. Both PCs and Macs also have simple text-to-speech capabilities built in to their operating systems.

This month's Tip and the following Featured Resources were researched, compiled and written by Alise Brann, Research Associate at [EDC, Inc.](#) Alise works for the [National Center for Supported e-Text](#) and the [Center for Implementing Technology in Education](#).

View past ISN Tips of the Month at:

<http://www.inclusiveschools.org/tips>.

Featured Resources:

Online Tools for Writing

[VoiceThread](#) (any grade level): a collaborative, multimedia slide show using images, documents and videos. Users add comments using voice, text, audio files, or videos. Features a dedicated members-only network for K-12 educators and their students.

[Kerpoof!](#) (elementary and middle school): Free, multimedia authoring software

allows students and teachers to create animated stories, original artwork and movies. Website features a variety of lesson plans and ideas for the classroom.

Flickr (any grade level depending on activity): Flickr began as a photo hosting website, but a number of educators have found ways to use the photos (both personal photos and those in the public domain) to tell stories.

Edublogs (any grade level): blogs for educators and their students. Teachers control all content and create student blogs for them, to ensure student security and privacy online.

Wikis in Education (any grade level): A number of different wiki options are available for creating a classroom wiki page. One of them, Wet Paint, has created a site with ideas/suggestions for educators using wikis in the classroom.

Ginger (any grade level): An online contextual spellchecker designed for individuals with dyslexia or other learning disabilities that may affect writing. Uses the context of a student's writing to identify errors of spelling, grammar and word usage.

Ghotit (any grade level): An online contextual spellchecker designed for individuals with dyslexia or other learning disabilities that may affect writing. Uses the context of a student's writing to identify errors of spelling, grammar and word usage.

Inclusive Practices Around the World:

International Campaign for Inclusive Education

Defense for Children International (DCI) is an organization that works in countries around the world to monitor child labor practices and advocate for policy reform. Recently, DCI developed a program linking inclusive educational practice with the protection of children's rights in Cameroon, Ecuador, Paraguay and Togo. To read more about this initiative, visit DCI's website at: <http://www.dci-is.org/dciwork/labour/campaign.htm>.

Support Inclusive Schools Network and Inclusive Schools Week!

Here's how YOU can make a difference:

Your purchase of products or tax-deductible contribution supports the work we are doing to support families, schools, and communities around the world to create awareness, build knowledge, and encourage systems change toward more inclusive educational opportunities for all children. We are a nonprofit, 501 (c) (3) organization, and we are extremely grateful for your support!

2008 ISN products are now available for purchase! Use these items, including Celebration Kits, posters, pencils and much more, to promote your 2008 Inclusive Schools Week celebration and to raise awareness about inclusive educational practices throughout the year. This year, ISN is delighted to be collaborating with the

Federation for Children with Special Needs, who will host the official online store for ISN products. To view the 2008 products, order online, or download a PDF order form, please visit our new **Products Page and Secure Online Order Form**:

<https://fcsn.org/inclusiveschools/orderform.html>

Click here to **download a contribution form** and make a donation today:

<http://www.inclusiveschools.org/files/Contribution%20Form.pdf>

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