

WinkWorld February 2007

Hello Friends,

This month in *WinkWorld*, I am sharing a few interesting sites which I used this month; my favorite read of the month; Teachers, Parents, Students Bill of Rights from Altwerger; the 10 Big Effects of NCLB; a poem by Taylor Mali; and the regularly repeated features, *Prairie Pedagogy*, *New Angles*, *The Real World*, and an update on the research nomination. Thank you to Jim Burke and colleagues CATENet: January 29, 2007 for the Mali poem and discussion. One addition this month: At the very bottom of each *WinkWorld*, I am now including the APA-style for online source citations. You only need copy/paste the citation, and include the date you retrieved any information. The purpose of my web pages is to share materials and ideas, and I very much appreciate the citation, just as I try to cite others who share with me.

[GiveKidsGoodSchools.com](http://www.givekidsgoodschools.com)

If you are a school board member, a city council member, a county commissioner, a parent, or teacher, you will find their Tips For Starting Conversations About Public Schools helpful. I also liked their Glossary and their Materials in Spanish.

Not on the TEST

<http://www.tomchapin.com/>

Be sure you turn up the volume.

Kid-Safe Search Sites or Great Web Sites for Kids

<http://www.trelease-on-reading.com/links3.html#safe>

<http://www.trelease-on-reading.com/links4.html#teaching>
ala.org

Riverbank Language Academy

www.riverbanklanguageacademy.org

In the Central Valley, we have a large network of former credential students/masters students, who are working in maintenance bilingual and/or dual language model programs. The truth is that they are the leaders of these programs. The Riverbank program is a typical example, in that Rosie Ramos and other former students have been activity involved with families and their local school board to create this program. Congratulations to all of you involved in these programs.

My Favorite Read of the Month

Bilingualism retards senility: Canadian study

Fri Jan 12, 2:48 PM ET from Yahoo News

News.yahoo.com

Speaking one or more languages can stall the onset of dementia, according to a new Canadian study. "Our study found that speaking two languages throughout one's life appears to be associated with a delay in the onset of symptoms of dementia by four years compared to those who speak only one language," Ellen Bialystok, lead researcher and professor at York University in Toronto, said in a statement. Her research team examined the medical records of 184 patients with cognitive complaints. Ninety-one spoke one language and 93 were bilingual, speaking a combination of 25 different languages,

including Polish, Yiddish, German, Romanian and Hungarian. They found that monolingual patients showed evidence of Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia at 71.4 years of age on average, while the bilingual group manifested symptoms at 75.5 years. This difference remained even after considering the possible effects of cultural differences, immigration, formal education, employment and gender on the results. "There are no pharmacological interventions that are this dramatic," said Morris Freedman, study co-author and an expert on the mechanisms underlying cognitive impairment due to diseases such as Alzheimer's. The results will be published in the February issue of *Neuropsychologia*.

Teachers, Parents, and Students Bill of Rights

Altwerger, B. (2005). Reading for profit: How the bottom line leaves kids behind, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. (p. 259)

For a published letter to Education Week, 6/15/05, click on

http://susanoonian.org/show_letter.php?id=543

Thank you also to Carole Edelsky and Patricia Richard-Amato and their discussion of this contribution from Beth Altwerger on ELLADVOC@asu.edu

Full and equitable allocation of public funds for every public school system, including resources for classroom, school, and neighborhood libraries

Education free of mandated programs and high-stakes testing resulting in punitive consequences for students, teachers, and parents

Curriculum decisions determined by and reflective of the unique goals and needs of local school communities

Instructional decisions based upon individual needs of students as identified by classroom professionals through ongoing assessment

Availability of the full range of instructional approaches and materials for selection and use by classroom professionals

Fully funded professional development opportunities designed and selected by local school communities to improve and maintain quality of instruction

Freedom from corporate intrusions or legislative politics that infringe upon the above rights of teachers, parents, and students.

10 Big Effects of NCLB

Center on Education Policy, CEP

www.cep-dc.org

Jack Jennings and Diane Stark Rentner are the authors; a more complete version of these results were also published in *Phi Delta Kappan*, Oct. 2006 Thank you to my colleague, Dr. Mary Borba, for sharing this with us.

1. State and district officials report that student achievement on state test is rising, which is a cause for optimism.
2. Schools are spending more on time on reading and math, sometimes at the expense of subjects not tested.
3. Schools are paying much more attention to the alignment of curriculum and instruction and are analyzing test scores data much more closely.
4. Low-performing schools are undergoing makeovers rather than the most radical kinds

of restructuring.

5. Schools and teachers have made considerable progress in demonstrating that teachers meet the low's academic qualifications-but many educators are skeptical this will really improve the quality of teaching.
6. Students are taking a lot more tests.
7. Schools are paying much more attention to achievement gaps and the learning needs of particular groups of students.
8. The percentage of schools on state "needs improvement" lists has been steady but it is not growing.
9. The federal government is playing a bigger role in education.
10. NCLB requirements have meant that state governments and school districts also have expanded roles in school operations, but often without adequate federal funding to carry out their duties.

Teachers Make a Difference

<http://taylormali.com/index.cfm?webid=13>

Thank you to Taylor Mali for permission to publish his poem. This poem was triggered when Taylor was sitting at a dinner table and another person said, "What's a kid going to learn from someone who decided his best option in life was to become a teacher?" He then reminded the other dinner guests that it's true what they say about teachers: Those who can, do; those who can't, teach.

Taylor muses: "I decide to bite my tongue instead of his and resist the temptation to remind the other dinner guests that it's also true what they say about lawyers. Because we're eating, after all, and this is polite company."

"I mean, you're a teacher, Taylor," he says.
"Be honest. What do you make?"

And I wish he hadn't done that
(asked me to be honest)
because, you see, I have a policy
about honesty and ass-kicking:
if you ask for it, I have to let you have it.

You want to know what I make?

I make kids work harder than they ever thought they could.
I can make a C+ feel like a Congressional medal of honor
and an A- feel like a slap in the face.
How dare you waste my time with anything less than your very best.

I make kids sit through 40 minutes of study hall
in absolute silence. No, you may not work in groups.
No, you may not ask a question.
Why won't I let you get a drink of water?
Because you're not thirsty, you're bored, that's why.

I make parents tremble in fear when I call home:
I hope I haven't called at a bad time,
I just wanted to talk to you about something Billy said today.

Billy said, "Leave the kid alone. I still cry sometimes, don't you?"
And it was the noblest act of courage I have ever seen.

I make parents see their children for who they are and what they can be.

You want to know what I make?

I make kids wonder,
I make them question.

I make them criticize.

I make them apologize and mean it.

I make them write, write, write.

And then I make them read.

I make them spell definitely beautiful, definitely beautiful, definitely beautiful
over and over and over again until they will never misspell either one of those words again.

I make them show all their work in math.

And hide it on their final drafts in English.

I make them understand that if you got this (brains)

then you follow this (heart) and if someone ever tries to judge you by what you make, you
give them this (the finger).

Let me break it down for you, so you know what I say is true:

I make a [gawddamn] difference! What about you?