

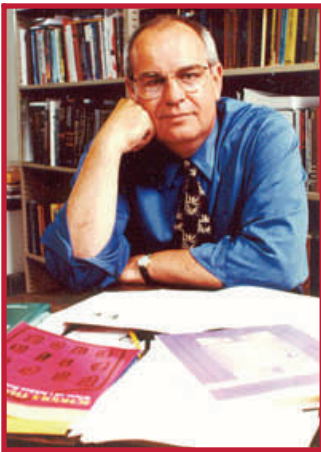
Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program Chronicle

Volume 3, Issue 2

December 2008

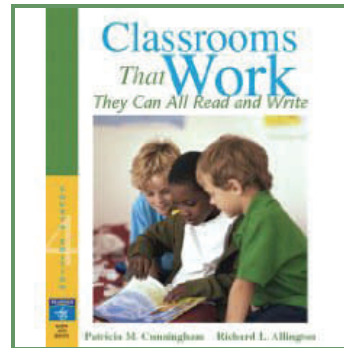
NNRPDP Symposium

The Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program (NNRPDP) will host its annual Symposium on January 23-24, 2009 at the UNR Fire Academy in Carlin. This year's keynote speaker is Dr. Richard Allington. Dr. Allington is professor of education at the University of Tennessee. He is past president of both the International Reading Association and the National Reading Conference. Dr. Allington has received numerous awards for his contributions towards understanding reading and learning disabilities. He is the author of over 100 published papers and several books including Schools that Work, No Quick Fix, What Really Matters for Struggling Readers, and Response to Intervention.



Dr. Allington, speaking on Friday evening and Saturday morning, will address creating life-long learners in this day and age. Saturday afternoon sessions will focus on four areas—

math, science, language arts, and teacher inquiry. These sessions will include valuable instruction for both elementary and secondary teachers. For registration information contact Chris Back at cback@elko.k12.nv.us or call at 775-753-3879.



Resources

International Society for Technology in Education provides leadership and service to improve teaching and learning by advancing the effective use of technology in education. www.iste.org/

At **Teacher Vision** you can discover a wide range of professional development resources. www.teachervision.fen.com/pro-dev/resource/5778.html

Tapped In is the online workplace of an international community of education professionals.

K-12 teachers, librarians, administrators, and professional development staff gather here to learn, collaborate, share, and support one another. tappedin.org/tappedin/

PBS TeacherLine's high quality, standards-based graduate-level courses offer teachers the professional development opportunities they need in an accessible online format that makes learning fun, flexible and collaborative. www.pbs.org/teacherline/

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Special points of interest:

- ☉ Check out our website at www.nnrpdp.org.
- ☉ Visit our calendar of events at www.nnrpdp.org/pages/calendar.html.
- ☉ Mid year site facilitator reports are due by December 15.
- ☉ NNRPDP Symposium will be held on January 23-24, 2009.

Podcasts

A podcast is a series of audio or video digital-media files which is distributed over the Internet by syndicated download, through Web feeds, to portable media players and personal computers. Though the same content may also be made available by direct download or streaming, a podcast is distinguished from other digital-media formats by its ability to be syndicated, subscribed to, and downloaded automatically when new content is added. (Taken from Wikipedia)

If you are looking for content to teach with and about you may want to check out the Education Podcast Network at <http://epnweb.org/>. This is a great spot to find a wide range of podcast programming.

Science High School Proficiency Exam

The Science Proficiency Exam now joins the writing, reading, and math exams administered yearly in the state of Nevada. The Science Proficiency Exam was administered for the first time last year to the class of 2010. These students are the first group who must pass the exam before their graduation. This test is composed of questions from previous field tests.

The science portion of the HSPE is composed of 60 multiple-choice questions that demonstrate the student's depth of knowledge (cognitive domains). Students demonstrate science proficiency by responding to questions based on skills pertaining to:

- Physical science;
- Life science;
- Earth/space science; and
- The nature of science.

The Southern Nevada RPDP has developed a site, TIPS: Targeted Interventions for Proficiency in Science, which focuses on helping teachers fully prepare their students for this exam. The *TIPS* site has a wealth of information to provide content background to teachers, particularly Nevada science teachers who are preparing their students to take the High School Science Proficiency Exam (HSPE). The site is broken down into Nevada's 63 high school benchmarks covering Life, Earth, and Physical science content, as well as Nature of Science. The web address is http://rpdp.net/sciencetips_v3/.

Alternative Education Contracts

It is common knowledge that every state is competing for good teachers. Our college graduates can select from a multitude of high paying jobs and teaching is not always their first choice. Nevada is certainly struggling with this issue.

Because we need to have qualified people in our classrooms, schools have started to look at 2nd career teachers. These teachers have retired from business, industry or military and have a desire to teach.

Elko County School District in conjunction with the RISE program developed a three year Alternative Route to Licensure in Pedagogy to aid the placement of 2nd career teachers.

The requirements aren't easy. The teacher is expected to complete the alternate route while maintaining high standards in the classroom. A major requirement of the alternative route teacher is the development of a portfolio of education experiences, including examples of lesson plans, lessons taught and reflective analysis of education experiences, evaluation processes and interaction with staff, mentor teacher, and administration.

Since there is not a universal requirement for alternative route teachers, the Nevada Department of Education and Great Basin College have been communicating with Elko County School District and are considering making this contract a state-wide requirement. Since the NNRPDP has included a coaching unit in the plan, the RISE coaches and the NNRPDP are working closely to provide the mentor teacher and support required for each participant.



An Invitation to Learn

NNRPDP is extending an invitation to students to learn . . . hands-on. Model classroom science kits were delivered to several 5th grade teachers in several districts as a pilot program to promote inquiry-based learning. Inquiry-based approaches to science education focus on student constructed learning as opposed to teacher-transmitted information. Science supplies and equipment were ordered this past summer and assembled into kits that were given to 5th grade science teachers at the beginning of this school year. The kits include non-consumable items such as microscopes, balances, beakers, and calculators. Also included were consumable items such as potting soil, batteries, flour, sugar, cornstarch, and coupons for live pond snails and earthworms. In addition to providing the kits, the NNRPDP put together some resources that will help teachers align the lessons in their textbook with the Nevada State Science Standards. Additional support is offered to assist teachers with science lessons and experiments, setting up labs, or finding supplemental resources on specific topics.

Regional Coordinator Valerie Byrnes has been in classrooms delivering hands-on lessons on cells and landforms that align to the curriculum standards. The goal of providing these model classroom science kits is to encourage teachers to engage their students in the exploration process of inquiry based science. Students become better problem solvers in the process of learning. At the same time, teachers have the resources they need to develop independent and critical thinking skills, positive attitudes and curiosity toward science.



Students showing their work

"Study without desire spoils the memory, and it retains nothing that it takes in."

—Leonardo da Vinci



Students using the microscope

"Tomorrow is the most important thing in life. Comes into us at midnight very clean. It's perfect when it arrives and it puts itself in our hands. It hopes we've learned something from yesterday."

– John Wayne

Professional Development Blogs

What are blogs?

Blogs (short for “Web logs”) are web-based diaries or journals where you can write your thoughts. A blog can be private, or it can be shared with others. You can have your students create their own blogs, work in conjunction with your students in a blog, or use one yourself. One can even just look at other’s blogs for information. The following are various blogs that you might want to look at to give you ideas of either how to use blogs in your classroom or just for your own professional use.

- **The Eleanor Rigby Project**—introduces you to real people behind the homeless facade—www.masters.ab.ca/bdyck/Homeless/
- **Extreme Biology**—Biology students contribute to this teacher’s blog—missbakersbiologyclass.com/blog/
- **Mr. Kootman’s Class**—showcases the daily activities of a classroom—kootmansclass.blogspot.com/
- **2¢ Worth**—David Warlick’s educational chatter about teaching and learning in the new information landscape—davidwarlick.com/2cents/
- **Blue Skunk Blog**—commentary on school technology and library issues—doug-johnson.squarespace.com/blue-skunk-blog/
- **Edublogs**—information on teaching and blogging along with setting blogs up for students and teachers—edublogs.org/

Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program

1290 Burns Road
Elko, NV 89801
Phone: 775-753-3879
Fax: 775-753-3961
E-mail:
cback@elko.k12.nv.us



Who are we?

The Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program (NNRPDP), established and funded by the Nevada State Legislature, is committed to providing quality professional development to teachers in the school districts of Elko, Eureka, Humboldt, Lander, and White Pine counties.

Our Mission Statement:

Our mission is to enhance student learning within the context of Nevada State Professional Development Standards by recognizing and supporting research-based instruction and by maintaining a collaborative learning culture and facilitating instructional leadership.

2008-2009 NNRPDP Staff

Valerie Byrnes	Robin Johns	Jerre Lamb
Holly Marich	Sharon McLean	Teresa Noland
Vicki Rossolo	Cathy Smales	Jessie Westmoreland

Chris Back (Office Manager) Robert McGinty (Consultant) Hugh Rossolo (Director)