

# Flashes

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**Inspiration**  
SOFTWARE, INC.  
The Leader in  
Visual Thinking and Learning™

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## District meets standards with Kidspiration™

Carteret County School District in North Carolina discovered a tool that crosses the curriculum, meets standards, can be used for enrichment and assessment, and on top of all that is fun! The tool is Kidspiration! Primary teachers in the district's K-8 schools are excited to see the broad range of uses for Kidspiration with their students.

Janet McLendon and Mary Willis, technology facilitators for the district, were instrumental in getting Kidspiration up and running in all seven schools this past year. With funding from the district's Technology Literacy Challenge Grant, they trained the elementary teachers on Kidspiration and helped them develop activities for their students.

### Aligning with standards

During staff development sessions, Carteret County teachers were introduced to a number of Kidspiration activities created by McLendon and Willis. According to McLendon, "The ultimate goal in using Kidspiration is to create activities that align with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) objectives to assess student knowledge." To that end, each activity includes information on the state standards addressed by the lesson. Covering many of the major curricular areas—math, science, social studies, and technology—each Kidspiration activity can be used as an enrichment or assessment tool.

With Kidspiration, students learn and practice a variety of skills set forth in the NCSCOS, and demonstrate their knowledge in activities about classifying, recognizing patterns and shapes, learning numbers and money, and analyzing feelings and community issues. "Teachers have found the ready-made Kidspiration activities to be

very useful for pre- and post-assessment," says McLendon. "As the students demonstrate what they know, it is easy to see where their misconceptions and misunderstandings lie."

### Assessing student knowledge

McLendon and Willis integrated Kidspiration into a unit that introduces first and second graders to their local community, a unit designed to meet several NCSCOS standards. In one Kidspiration activity, students create KWL charts to brainstorm what they think their city was like in its early development. A guest speaker teaches them about wants and needs of the town's first citizens; a discussion of wants and needs in the present day follows. The students' knowledge is then assessed with a follow-up activity in which they move various symbols to the appropriate SuperGrouper™ category titled "Wants" or "Needs." When the activity is completed, the students discuss their decisions in groups.



According to McLendon and Willis, teachers need minimal training to get started using Kidspiration. They offered Kidspiration workshops for teachers in each school and found that teachers were excited to discover a tool that was so easy to learn and implement into their classrooms.

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# Fourth Annual Inspired Teacher Scholarships for Visual Learning

## Flashes Staff

Editor: Robin Christensen  
Writer: Charis Loeung  
Designer: Carole Smith

Questions? Comments? Story ideas?

Email us at:  
marketing@inspiration.com

## Conference Update

### SPRING CUE

California Computer  
Using Educators  
Spring Conference  
May 9-11 • Booth #601

### NECC

National Educational  
Computing Conference  
June 17-19 • Booth #488

Visit our web site at  
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Each year, Inspiration Software, Inc. awards educators who champion the integration of visual learning and technology in classrooms around the world. In order to support their ongoing professional development, and to reward their innovation and commitment, the following educators have been named recipients of the 2002 Inspired Teacher Scholarships for Visual Learning.

- **Danielle Abernethy**, instructional technology consultant for Sumter School District Two in Sumter, SC, integrates visual learning into all areas of the curriculum in kindergarten through eighth grade.
- **Duncan Anderson** is the library coordinator for River Glen School in Red Deer, Alberta. He was instrumental in incorporating visual learning into a province-wide initiative integrating technology into the curriculum.
- **Sister Rosemarie Baglivio, CSJ**, an English and study skills teacher for Bishop Kearney High School in Brooklyn, NY, uses visual learning to teach her students critical thinking and writing skills.
- **Megan Bozios** at Orchard School in Ridgewood, NJ helps her third grade students use visual learning techniques to improve the writing process.
- **Barb Bumgardner** is the library media specialist at Briarcrest Elementary School in Seattle, WA. She champions visual learning in her school, district, and internationally.
- **June Casey**, reading resource specialist for Oconomowoc High School in Oconomowoc, WI, was instrumental in making visual learning a mandatory part of her high school's curriculum.
- **Kathy Cross** is a speech language pathologist and assistive technology specialist for Green Valley AEA#14 in Creston, IA. She coordinated a grant project implementing visual learning to improve literacy skills in Central Decatur Community School District.
- **April DeGennaro** uses visual learning to introduce unit concepts and to assess her gifted students' knowledge at Kedron Elementary School in Peachtree City, GA.
- **Susan Fernandes**, sixth grade language arts teacher at Union Middle School in San Jose, CA, was instrumental in writing visual learning into her school's technology plan.
- **Joshlyn Foreman** is an earth science teacher at J.I. Watson Middle School in Iowa, IA. She uses visual learning techniques help her students learn new material and organize their monthly research projects and presentations.
- **Sara Gupta**, IT curriculum coordinator and teacher at Bayview Glen Independent School in Don Mills, Ontario, helped to improve her students' writing skills by using visual learning tools to organize and plan.
- **Barbara Hendee**, speech language pathologist at Edgar Martin Middle School in Lafayette, LA, has found that visual learning techniques help her students express themselves better in speaking and writing.
- **Karen Kliegman** is a library media specialist at Searingtown School in Albertson, NY. She creatively integrates visual learning into lessons she teaches in her elementary school.
- **Vicki Krogstrand**, a gifted and talented facilitator at Linden Park Elementary in Idaho Falls, ID, teaches her students higher level thinking skills with visual learning techniques.
- **Lisa K. McGrath** is an instructional technology specialist for Judson Independent School District in San Antonio, TX. Visual learning was a key element in lessons she created for the National Teaching Training Institute.
- **Diane Naff** and **Tamra Oliver** are gifted resource teachers for Montgomery County Public Schools in Blacksburg, VA. They teach visual learning techniques to help their K-5 students organize for research and writing, and hold workshops to show teachers how visual learning supports state standards.
- **Dayle Payne** is a special educator at Candler Elementary School in Candler, NC. Visual learning helps her students develop cognitive frameworks they need to succeed in the learning process.
- **Kathy Ricke** at Hingham Middle School in Hingham, MA uses visual learning in almost every major assignment she gives her seventh grade students.
- **Cheryl Scales** is an English teacher at Tupelo High School in Tupelo, MS. She has found success with her students by using visual learning tools to help them plan and organize.

Recipients of the Inspired Teacher Scholarships for Visual Learning receive a \$500 stipend to offset costs associated with attendance at a conference, class, or workshop with a focus on visual learning and technology. For more information, and to apply next year, visit [www.inspiration.com/scholarship](http://www.inspiration.com/scholarship). ★

# Inspiration® prepares students for state testing

## Students in New York learn to write better essays with Inspiration

Students across the state of New York use Inspiration to prepare for The New York State Regents Comprehensive Examination in English. Taken during a student's junior year, a passing score on the exam is a requirement for high school graduation. Essays make up a significant portion of the test, and require students to analyze and interpret information to write clear, organized responses. New York teachers find that using Inspiration helps students prepare for the test by learning to organize their thoughts and write clearer essays.

### Organizing for writing

Sister Rosemarie Baglivio, CSJ, an English and study skills teacher at Bishop Kearney High School in Brooklyn (and a 2002 Inspired Teacher Scholarship winner), has used Inspiration for the past two years with her ninth and tenth grade students. According to Baglivio, the biggest problems her students face in writing are poor organization and a lack of critical thinking skills. Inspiration helps her students develop and organize their thoughts, enabling them to write better essays.

Baglivio creates a variety of Inspiration activities to prepare students for the Regents exam. For example, one section of the exam presents students with a quote from a literary work and requires students to respond with an essay discussing the quote using two additional pieces of literature.

To practice this skill, Baglivio gives her students a quote from Shakespeare's "Macbeth" and asks them to write an essay discussing the quote, pulling in examples from the text. The class first discusses what makes a good essay response using the scoring rubric from the Regents exam. Baglivio then shows them how to use Inspiration to organize their essay. Her students use an Inspiration template she created to help them organize their work to develop a fuller, more focused written response.

Using Inspiration helps Baglivio's students prepare for the Regents exam, but visual learning has also become a larger part of their learning. "They really enjoy using it to organize for writing," says Baglivio. "Many of them have started to organize other

papers in Inspiration—even when it is not required."

### Learning literary elements

In Westchester County, at Walter Panas High School in Lakeland Central School District, Sue Erichsen's students also use Inspiration to prepare for the Regents exam. She created a series of graphical organizers in Inspiration to help her eleventh grade English students compare the literary elements in the various worlds or "sivilizations" that Huck Finn experiences throughout Mark Twain's classic, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

***"Using Inspiration to organize for writing can mean all the difference between a poorly written, weak response to one that is coherent and strongly supported."***

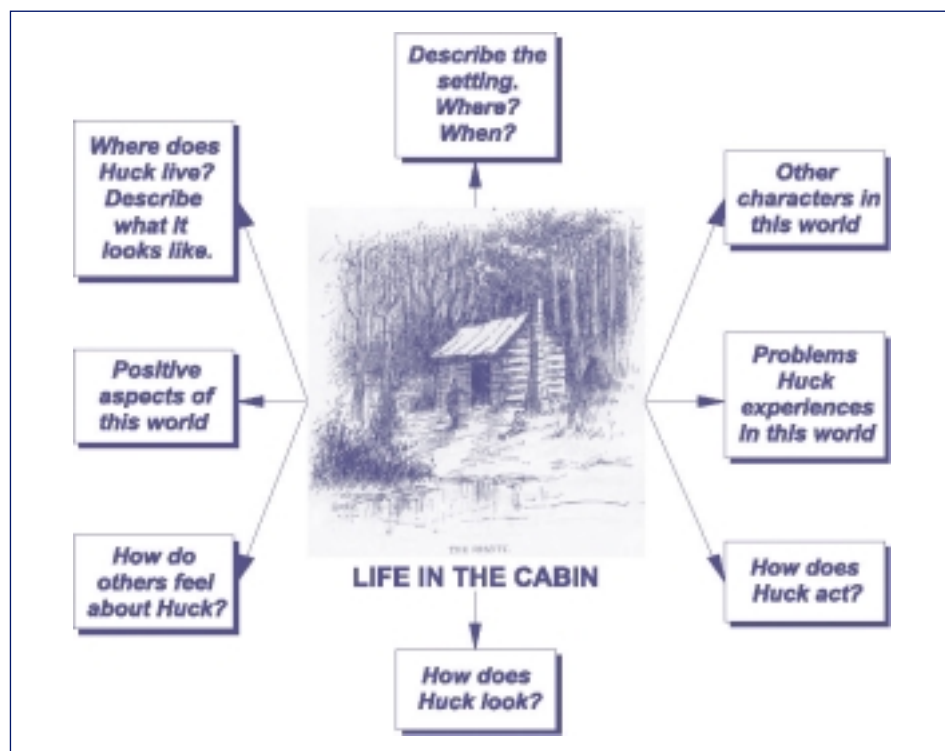
— Sue Erichsen

During a six-week unit, students read each chapter in the book and brainstorm about Huck's experiences. In small groups they create a graphical organizer depicting each of Huck's worlds and then discuss them as a class. Linda Brandon, Lakeland CSD's technology training coordinator, observed

Erichsen's students during one of these discussions. "The students were in groups, huddled around their diagrams. They were very engaged in discussing the assignment."

Using Inspiration to map out the literary elements helps Erichsen's students gain a deeper understanding of the novel. In fact, about 80% of the students will use *Huckleberry Finn* as one of the two literary works for discussion in the fourth section of the Regents exam. "To be able to write rich essays, students must get a good handle on the works they've read and the various literary elements that make up the work," says Erichsen. "Creating maps of the literary elements helps the students effectively compare and contrast Huck's various worlds."

Baglivio and Erichsen use Inspiration to help students prepare for the Regents exam, but both want to see their students develop skills that will carry them beyond their high school examinations. "Learning Inspiration has been great for my high school students," said Baglivio. "Inspiration has helped them develop skills in reading, thinking, organizing, and writing that they can apply to many other assignments." ★



Erichsen uses E.W. Kemble's illustrations from the first edition of *Huckleberry Finn* in her diagrams.

*"The Shanty"* by E.W. Kemble is used with permission from the University of Virginia Library. Permission to reuse this image must be obtained from the Electronic Text Center at the University of Virginia Library (<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu>).

## District meets standards, cont.

*continued from page 1*

By providing them with a database of ready-made activities, many were able to put the Kidspiration lessons to use immediately.

The primary teachers in Carteret County are eager to work with McLendon and Willis to create their own Kidspiration activities that

align with standards and fit in with their specific curriculum. Much of their enthusiasm is fueled by the primary students' quick grasp and enjoyment of Kidspiration. "The students took to the program like ducks in water," laughed McLendon. "They truly enjoy working with Kidspiration and technology as they learn their lessons." ★

**You can download this Kidspiration activity and many others created by McLendon and Willis:**  
<http://www.clis.com/staffdev/Kids/KidsAct.htm>.

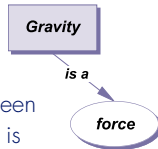
### Tips & Tricks

## Linking ideas together!

When working in either Inspiration or Kidspiration, symbols are used to represent concepts and ideas, while links are used to connect ideas and show the relationship between them. You can customize the appearance of your links, add text to them, or even include hyperlinks on them.

### Add text to a link in Inspiration or Kidspiration

Adding text to a link further explains the relationship between the two linked ideas. Link text is



often used in concept maps, a specific kind of graphical organizer. To add text to a link in Inspiration or Kidspiration,

1. Click on the link where you want the text to appear. A text box will appear.
2. Begin typing to add your text. Click elsewhere on the diagram to finish entering your text and show the label.
3. To move the position of link text, simply click on the link and grab and drag the handle on the bottom of the text box.

For more concept mapping examples visit [www.inspiration.com/VLtechniques](http://www.inspiration.com/VLtechniques). ★

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