

## 2008 UF COE Writing Contest Entry

*(This is one of 27 entries submitted in the College's recent writing contest on the topic of "What's Good in Education?". Visit the [Writing Contest home page](#) for links to other entries, including the winner.)*

# WHAT'S GOOD IN EDUCATION?

## *Resources abound for teachers and students*

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On my first day of teaching five classes of English I in 1996, I received the textbook and my schedule. Much of what I learned my first year was through trial and error. Although trial and error is a part of teaching, many new teachers now have many more tangible and immediate resources to help ease some anxiety. What's good in education is the plethora of resources.

### **TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES:**

When I first began teaching, the Internet was not quite the organized system of information or social networking tool that it is now. Currently there are interactive websites, which enhance reading and math instruction. Both Clay and Duval County teachers use sites such as <http://www.thinklinklearning.org> and <http://www.pilot5.riverdeep.net> as supplemental homework activities. Additionally, teachers can blog nationally to discuss common educational issues. And, teachers who are too busy to attend professional conferences can participate in free web seminars led by prominent scholars in their field for immediate and inexpensive professional development.

### **"HUMAN" RESOURCES:**

As a new Florida teacher, I also was required to participate in the first-year teacher induction program (TIP). This program provides each first-year teacher with invaluable resources, such as a mentor and a series of professional development activities. Other "human" resources include academic coaching models. Duval County Public Schools, for example, has at least 150 academic coaches; some schools have 2-3 of these full-time resource teachers (including Reading First Coaches at select Title I elementary schools) ready to assist classroom teachers with planning, modeling, and teaching. These veteran teachers help provide professional development in reading, math, writing, and even in using the Sunshine State Standards.

**PDF/PLCs:**

As a UF Holmes Scholar, I've had the opportunity to study the level of student engagement at a Title I elementary school. The Holmes Partnership is just one example of how K-12 schools and universities collaborate to increase academic achievement among primary, secondary, and post-secondary students. Through this particular partnership, which also involves the University of Florida, scholars, teachers, and students are positively impacted through mentoring.

Other partnership resources from which teachers may benefit are through the University of Florida's Lastinger Center for Learning or the UF Alliance. Partnerships are formed with low-performing, high-poverty schools as close as Jacksonville and as far away as Miami. The Lastinger Center provides students the opportunity to receive a master's in education, field training, and experience. Veteran teachers are afforded the opportunity to become teacher-researchers as they complete Inquiry projects that help focus instruction. Additionally, the Alliance provides outreach for high school students who might otherwise not attain a college degree.

From on-site professional development opportunities, to World-Wide Web connections, Florida teachers have resources at their fingertips. These resources help teachers and students become the best part of education.

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