



contents

- 01** • Back to School - Already?
• Further Distractions

- 02** • No Smoking: Diesels Clean Up Their Act
• The Ins and Outs of School Bus Safety
• Kids Covet Grandpa Cars
• Pop Quiz

- 03** • Everybody's Talking About Forensics
• Teachers' Referral Program

- 04** • Pinch-Hit Pros

Further Distractions:

DISTRACTED DRIVERS MAY CAUSE **MOST** ACCIDENTS

Multi-tasking is the way to go for many drivers – until they get stopped by an accident or, if they are lucky, a police officer. In the Fall 2004 edition of ChalkTalk, we reported that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimated that 25 percent of all crashes involve some form of driver distraction.

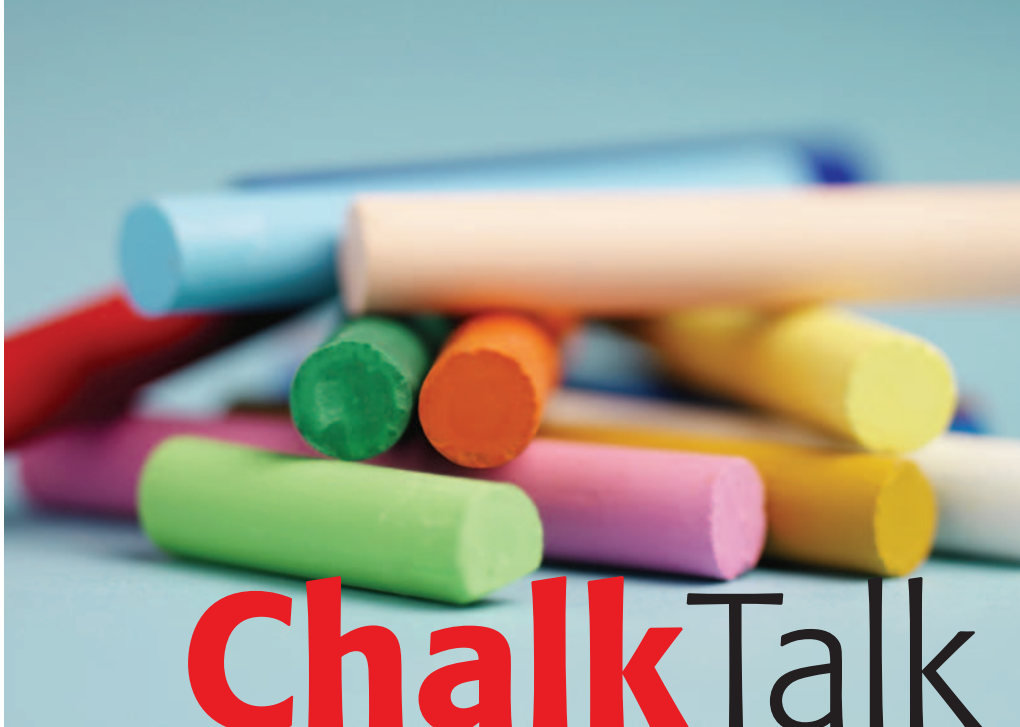
Now, a landmark large-scale study provides startling evidence that distraction may be the cause of most accidents and near-accidents. According to NHTSA, "nearly 80 percent of crashes and 65 percent of near-crashes involved some form of driver inattention within three seconds before the event. Primary causes of driver inattention were distracting activities, such as cell phone use and drowsiness."

The year-long "100-Car Naturalistic Study," conducted by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI) under the auspices of NHTSA, recorded the behavior of 241 drivers between the ages of 18 and 55 doing their normal driving behind the wheels of their own vehicles. The cars, rigged with inconspicuous video cameras and other sensors, captured data and images during 42,300 hours and approximately 2 million miles of driving.

continued on page 3



Special rates for a special class of people®



ChalkTalk

An exclusive member service from Teachers' Insurance Plan™

SUMMER 2006

*"We either make ourselves happy or miserable.
The amount of work is the same."*

— CARLOS CASTENADA, MYSTIC AND AUTHOR

Back to School – Already?!

GET AN EARLY START FOR A GREAT YEAR.

We're sorry to distract you from your summer novels, travels or chores, but ready or not, a new school year awaits. Here are some ideas to help you get a fast start:

...3...2...1...Contact

Start your back to school countdown a little early. Contact your new students and their families with a mailing to help you get to know each other, and to establish the idea that you are all teammates.

Give your pupils a comfortable way to tell you about themselves, even before you meet. For early grades, send along a simple fill-in-the-blanks template with spaces for words (parents can write for the littlest ones) describing appearance, interests, and favorites as well as room for the child to draw a self portrait.

continued on page 2



Teachers... looking to make some extra money?

See page 3!

Follow-up:

KIDS "COVET GRANDPA CARS"

Extra! Extra! ChalkTalk scoops The Wall Street Journal!

Well we didn't win a Pulitzer Prize, but we were pleasantly surprised to see that our article, "Choosing a Car for a Young Driver: First Redefine Cool" (ChalkTalk, Fall 2004), apparently spotted a trend that the Journal recently featured on page one. Our article, which was primarily concerned with safety and reliability, opened with a very cool young man cranking up the stereo and driving off in his older model Lincoln Town Car that had once been his grandmother's. The Journal's article, under the headline "Hip to Be Square: Why Young Buyers Covet 'Grandpa' Cars", focused on "old models...tricked out to make fashion statements".

Source:
The Wall Street Journal, May 10, 2006, Section A, page 1

Pop Quiz

Q: The national shortage of substitute teachers has drawn attention to the salaries paid to subs. What is the national average?

No Smoking:

DIESELS CLEAN UP THEIR ACT.

Each time there has been an attempt to sell diesel-powered automobiles in the USA, a few people bought the promise of excellent fuel economy and longevity. But, millions turned up their noses – or held their noses – at the diesels' smelly, sooty exhaust. Things have changed. Diesel technology has made great advances. And so have gasoline prices, which should make diesel-powered vehicles look more attractive. Instead of the clattering, smoky, old diesel, the buzz is about **clean diesel**, the new breed of engines. These engines run much cleaner and quieter than their ancestors, provide zippy performance – and still squeeze more miles from every gallon of fuel.

Unlike a conventional gasoline engine that ignites the fuel mixture with a spark plug, a diesel compresses the fuel so tightly it causes combustion (that's the clattering noise) without the complication of an ignition system. And since diesel fuel contains more energy per gallon than gasoline, it provides significantly better fuel mileage. But there's a dark side. Diesel exhaust contains harmful pollutants that have been very difficult to control. The exhaust contains particulates, oxides of nitrogen and sulphur dioxide, which have been linked to disease and environmental degradation.



In recent years, European car makers (with Japanese and US catching up) have developed "clean" diesel engines and cleaner fuels that dramatically reduce pollutants.

As of late May, only two makers, Volkswagen and Mercedes-Benz, offer diesel passenger cars in the United States, but neither company offers those models in California, New York, Maine, Massachusetts or Vermont.

And, new, more stringent US emission standards for diesel-powered vehicles that go into effect this Fall may slow the appearance of new diesel models.

Sources:
The Diesel Dilemma, Diesel 's Role in the Race for Clean Cars – Union of Concerned Scientists report http://www.ucsusa.org/clean_vehicles/fuel_economy/the-diesel-dilemma.html

Clean Diesel vs. Hybrid – a look at how they compare in terms of emissions. <http://www.hybridcars.com/clean-diesel.html>

Back to School – Already?!

GET AN EARLY START FOR A GREAT YEAR.

continued from page 1

Make Parents Part of the Team

It's never too early to get parents involved and to suggest an active role for them. Send along a simple questionnaire asking the parents about their interests, occupations, skills, hobbies and background to create a knowledge resource you can draw on. Plant the idea of having parents volunteer to come talk or present a demonstration to the class during the term.

Banish Time Wasters

Head off mundane problems that can eat up class time. Establish "no-excuses" rules for turning in assignments, permission slips, and "trip money," as well as bringing required books and supplies. Provide parents of younger children with suggestions for labeling clothes, packing lunches, etc.

Help for the Jittery

Every new school year is a time of transition that can provoke anxiety, especially in kids entering elementary, middle school or high school for the first time, or transferring from other schools. The American School Counselor Association has written an informative article for parents describing a variety of ways to cure early-grade anxieties. Family Education offers help in coping with anxiety for high-schoolers. (See Sources.)

"What I'm Going to Learn in School"

Right from the beginning, make your teaching goals your students' learning goals.

The promise of achievement combined with children's natural curiosity is a great motivator. So, set specific, intriguing targets that students will reach by attaining specific skills and knowledge. For example, "When we finish this section, you'll know how explorers can tell where they are, even if nobody has ever been there before."

Sources:
Cure the First Day Jitters – Tips from counselors and teachers for parents who are preparing to send their kids to their first day of school. Article at Family Education website. <http://school.familyeducation.com/back-to-school/anxiety/38785.html>

Coping with Back-to-School Anxiety for High-Schoolers -- How parents and students can deal with high school fears, from making the team or AP class to bullying. Family Education. <http://school.familyeducation.com/high-school/anxiety/37641.html>

They're Baaaaaack. Tips for getting the year off to a great start. One of several articles at TeacherNet. <http://www.teachnet.com/how-to/backtoschool/index.html>

The First Day of School...for Principals – Article in Communicator, newsletter of National Association of Elementary School Principals, September 2005. Also available on web at <http://www.naesp.org/ContentLoad.do?contentId=1688>

THE INS AND OUTS OF SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

While crediting school buses with being "safer than cars," the National Safety Council (NSC) reports that last year approximately 9,000 children were injured, 26 fatally, in incidents involving school buses. More often than not, these deaths and injuries didn't occur in a crash, but in the bustle of entering or exiting the bus. The NSC offers these safety tips for children who ride school buses, which you may want to pass along to your students' parents:

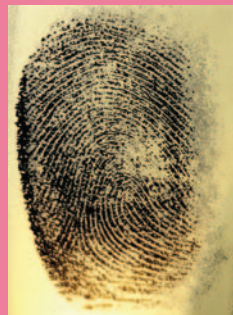
- Have a safe place to wait for your bus, away from traffic and the street.
- Stay away from the bus until it comes to a complete stop, and the driver signals you that it is okay to approach and enter.
- When being dropped off, exit the bus and walk ten giant steps away from the bus. Keep a safe distance between you and the bus. Also, remember that the bus driver can see you best when you are back away from the bus.
- Hold the handrail as you enter and exit the bus.
- Be aware of the street traffic around you. Drivers are required to follow certain rules of the road concerning school buses. However, not all drivers obey the rules. Protect yourself and watch out!

SCHOOL BUS

Everybody's Talking About....

FORENSICS

School in Austin, TX. The National Digital Science Library



Across the Curriculum of PBS TeacherSource. Includes materials for grades 3-5, 6-8, 9-12; <http://www.pbs.org/teachersource/this-month/may06/index.shtml>

Crime Scene: How Investigators Use Science to Track Down the Bad Guys by Vivien Bowers, Martha Newbigging, 64 pages. Maple Tree Press, 2006; ISBN: 1897066562. Grades: 3-5; 6-8

Forensics: The Investigative Science, A Look Inside..., a student project at ThinkQuest, sponsored by the Oracle Education Foundation. Learn how forensic science solves crimes. Includes projects on hair and fibers, blood, fingerprints with quizzes and many fascinating web links.

Tiny URL: <http://tinyurl.com/fg3j5>

Uncompressed URL: <http://expertvoices.nsd.l.org/k12-forensics/2006/04/07/discovery-team-introduction-elizabeth-abernathy-middle-school-teacher/>

Forensic Science – in archives of Concepts

If you need evidence that science and even law can grab and hold a young audience, just check out all the television crime shows with “forensics” in a starring role. Okay, so they’re not for real, but forensic science certainly is. And at many schools, it has become a popular elective in the upper grades.

“Forensics” is defined as the use of science or technology in investigating and establishing the facts or evidence in a court of law. Elements of forensics (relating to legal argument or public discussion) and forensic science can be drafted into learning experiences at any grade level, across almost any subject. Have your preschoolers do fingerprint paintings. For high schoolers, consider biological and chemical tests, or even declaiming Shakespeare. Here are some sources:

Students Digging Forensics – a curriculum article, Education World, including tips for starting a forensics course at your school. http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/curr407.shtml

Boneyard Science: Investigating Forensics – by Elizabeth Abernathy, teacher at Kealing Middle



Talk to your colleagues and make extra money at the same time.

For every educator you refer to Teachers' Insurance Plan™ that requests a **FREE** quote, you can receive \$20*.

- Refer 20 valid quotes and you'll receive \$400.
- Refer 50 valid quotes and you'll receive \$1,000.

Want to participate in the Teachers' Referral Program™ and make extra money?

Email us at trp@teachers.com with your name, address and phone number.

Or call us at **1-888-288-6080 extension 7448.**

We'll send you your personal **REFERRAL KIT** that includes all you need to know in order to participate in the program.

There's no reason to delay!
Request your REFERRAL KIT today.

*Subject to TRP guidelines.

Further Distractions:

DISTRACTED DRIVERS MAY CAUSE **MOST** ACCIDENTS

continued from page 1



Here are some of the findings:

- Drowsiness is a significant problem that increases a driver's risk of a crash or near-crash by at least a factor of four.
- The most common distraction for drivers is the use of cell phones. However, the number of crashes and near-crashes attributable to dialing is nearly identical to the number associated with talking or listening.

Drivers who engage frequently in distracting activities are more likely to be involved in an inattention-related crash or near-crash. However, the report says, drivers are often unable to predict when it is safe to look away from the road to multi-task because the situation can change abruptly leaving the driver no time to react even when looking away from the forward roadway for only a brief time.

For drivers, the conclusions should be obvious.

- Don't drive when you are tired or have not had a full night's sleep. If you are starting to fade behind the wheel, pull into a rest stop or well off the road and take a nap rather than struggling to stay awake.
- Don't engage in activities that are proven distractions – even if you think you can do them.
- Don't dial or talk on a mobile phone while driving. If you must make a call, park or pull off the road and stop.
- Make sure everything in the passenger compartment is secure and will not move while you are driving. And never try to reach for something on the floor, in the glove compartment or behind the front seat while the car is moving.

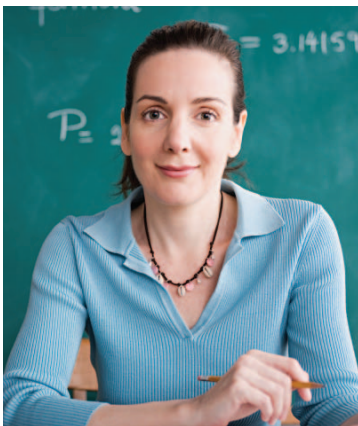
Sources:

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration publications and press releases on distracted and drowsy driving. <http://nhtsa.gov/portal/site/nhtsa/menu-item.54757ba83ef160af9a7ccf10dba046a0>

100-Car Naturalistic Driving Study Tracks Drivers for a Year – Virginia Tech Transportation Institute press release. <http://www.vtti.vt.edu/index.cfm?fuseaction=displayhundredcar>

Pinch-hit pros:

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS GET SOME RESPECT.



Sure, you could think of substitute teachers as the pinch-hitters, understudies or even the paratroopers of the education system. They're dropped into unfamiliar, possibly hostile, territory and expected to take control and perform like heroes. No wonder there is a nationwide shortage.

By its very nature, substitute teaching is a difficult job. It often means entering a class with less than optimal preparation and probably little or no first-hand knowledge of the class' dynamics and personalities. And as we know, students can be quick to sense uncertainty and slow to grant the sub the same respect and discipline they show their regular teacher.

NEW, IMPROVED SUBSTITUTES

Today, school districts tend to see substitutes as professionals, an integral and valuable part of the staff, rather than just "temps." Meanwhile, subs are earning and winning respect with more supporting resources than ever before.

The Substitute Teaching Institute at Utah State University (STI/USU) was founded in 1995 and has evolved into a leader in the improvement of substitute teaching by providing products and services to school districts and substitute teachers nationwide. STI publishes a number of printed handbooks as well as online and multimedia materials to help substitutes develop proficiency in class management, teaching strategies, fill-in activities, special education and other skills. STI also has an online SubManager track for school officials with responsibilities for substitutes.

Sources:

The National Education Association (NEA) has published some tips for regular teachers to help substitutes take over, from suggestions on communicating the class plan, routine and insights about students to fire drill directions. <http://www.nea.org/tips/relate/subs.html>

Substitute Teacher Resources – includes kits of grade-specific stand-alone units and individual lessons for

use by teachers and substitutes. <http://www.teachervision.fen.com/classroom-management/behavior/6284.html>

Status of Substitute Teachers State by State – includes policies, requirements for employment, pay rates, etc. <http://www.nea.org/substitutes/statebystate.html>

Guest Teacher, an online "professional resource for educators" offers plans, tips, worksheets and other materials. Members can post questions and comments on a number of forum discussion boards. <http://www.guest-teacher.com/>

Schools Respond to Substitute Shortage, an EducationWorld school administrator article, relates strategies and techniques schools around the country have been using. <http://www.educationworld.com/admin/admin/admin054.shtml>

"In a Sub's Shoes – Transforming into a Teacher" by Ellen R. Delisio, news editor of Education Week, who "lived the story" on substitute teaching. <http://www.educationworld.com/issues/subshoes/subshoes001.shtml>

Pop Quiz

A: According to the National Education Association, substitute teacher salaries average about \$65-\$70 per day. In rural areas, rates are often as low as \$40-\$45.

©2006 Direct Response Corporation. ChalkTalk is published by Teachers' Insurance Plan. Underwritten by a licensed member of the Response Insurance Group of companies, as authorized by law. 500 South Broad St., Meriden CT 06450.

IN CALIFORNIA, TEACHERS' INSURANCE PLAN IS UNDERWRITTEN BY RESPONSE INSURANCE COMPANY.



Teachers' Insurance Plan

Special rates for a special class of people®

500 SOUTH BROAD ST., MERIDEN CT 06450



here's your issue of...

ChalkTalk

Teachers...

looking to make some extra money?

See page 3!

1.800.2TEACHERS

www.teachers.com