**Are Advanced Placement Courses Diminishing Liberal Arts Education?**
Advanced Placement courses focus too much on rote memorization to truly aid college liberal-arts students, writes University of California-Los Angeles senior lecturer Paul Von Blum. He says too many AP courses fail to stimulate students' appetite for knowledge, which he views as the "antithesis of genuine liberal learning."

**Wikis in Education: Teaching Students to Share Knowledge**
Wikis can help encourage classmates to think of learning as a collaborative, interactive process and better involve parents as well, says Michael Bolognino, community marketing manager for a company that designs wiki templates for classrooms. However, educators emphasize that students need to realize that information found in such documents often needs to be verified using additional sources.

**Cell Phones Make Headway in Education**
A few U.S. universities are distributing Apple iPhone 3Gs as learning tools that professors will use to monitor attendance and distribute podcasts and handouts. "This is a new platform for learning, in the same way a laptop or a desktop was a new platform," said William Rankin, co-director of mobile learning research at Texas' Abilene Christian University, which handed out the devices to two-thirds of this year's freshmen.

**SAT Scores Remain at 10-Year Low**
A record number of students took the SAT this past year, and the makeup of test-takers reflects the changing face of education in this country, said College Board President Gaston Caperton. Minority students accounted for 40% of this year’s test-takers, and 36% were the first in their families to attend college. For the second year, SAT scores remained at the lowest level in nearly ten years, a trend attributed to the overall increase in students taking the test. The students scored an average of 515 out of a possible 800 points in math and 502 in critical reading.

**BACK TO SCHOOL: Schools separate ninth-graders**
As the new school year begins, some districts are turning to ninth-grade academies to address the staggering freshman dropout rate. Statistics reveal that there are more ninth-graders in U.S. high schools than any other class, partially because students either aren’t promoted to the tenth grade, or they drop out altogether before they get there. Over 185 ninth-grade-only public schools exist in the United States to help in areas such as overcrowding; bullying; personalization; and most substantially, to reduce the dropout rate.

**Helping Kids Who Hate High School**
Proponents of vocational education like California high school teacher Chris Peters say a radical overhaul could make U.S. secondary schools more effective. High schoolers should spend their first two years meeting basic standards, supporters say, then if they pass subject exams, they could choose between a college-prep track and a variety of community college vocational programs.
**Students face a long list of obstacles on the way to college degree**
Poor academic, study and life-management skills may keep one in three of today's college freshmen from graduating with a bachelor's degree within the next 8.5 years, according to federal statistics. Just 17% of community college students will complete a degree or certificate within three years, per this article.

**Remedial courses used by many to adjust to college**
After failing a basic college math course, high school graduate Jessica Ging enrolled in a community-college remedial math class in addition to her remedial English course. Such courses -- taken by more than a third of 2003-2004 college underclassmen -- increase the cost of college for both students and taxpayers, according to a 2006 report.

**Spot on Popularity Scale Speaks to the Future; Middle Has Its Rewards**
Teens' high-school niche and their understanding of how to leverage their own popularity may predict how well they navigate complex social structures later in life, as well as their own feelings of well-being in adulthood, according to new findings.