



CECA Newsletter

Connecticut Educators Computer Association

Vol. XVI No. 5

Imagine the Possibilities!

October 28, 2002 Radisson, Cromwell

Keynote Speaker

Elliot Soloway

University of Michigan

Learning and teaching have been driving forces in Elliot Soloway's research, teaching and service activities for over 30 years. In 1966, as an undergraduate philosophy major at Ohio State University, he was thunderstruck by the conundrum in Plato's Meno - how can the slave boy learn the proof of the Pythagorean Theorem?! Ten years later, using the tools of Artificial Intelligence to further explore learning for his Ph.D. dissertation in Computer Science at the University of Massachusetts, he built a computer program that learned the rules of baseball from watching example games. Teaching at Yale and having a family he came to realize that making children smarter would be a better use of his time than making computers smarter. So, he gave up AI and focused on using technology in K-12. Coming to see, the hard way, that simply building "boxes" - no matter how pretty, elegant, or amazing - is not going to make one whit of difference in a classroom he has joined up with School of Education faculty Phyllis Blumenfeld, Joseph Krajcik, and Ron Marx in the Center for Highly-Interactive Computing in Education. Together this group has produced inquiry-driven, project-based, technology-pervasive science curriculum that is making a difference in the lives of children and teachers in Detroit and around the country.



Lately, Elliot is focused on figuring out how each of the 50,000,000 school children in the U.S. can productively have and use a \$100 palm-sized computer. In the teaching courses in Computer Science, Elliot also uses inquiry-driven pedagogical strategies - though they are augmented by strategies borrowed from Zero Mostel.

At the University of Michigan, Elliot is a faculty member in the College of Engineering, School of Information, and School of Education. For over 20 years, Elliot has been married to Judy Musket, a UM alumna; they have two children, Danny 18 and Emma Rose, 13.

Website: <http://hi-ce.org> and <http://hi-ce.org/palms>

Beyond Disclaimers

Ken Royal

Prevention is the Name of the Game

When schools and classrooms make the move to the Internet they must not forget that making that move can bring about new questions to answer and problems to solve. It pays to spend some time discussing, preparing, and learning what can be done to make the Internet not only useful, but a safe place for all. Prevention is the name of the game. You're on the right track if you're thinking and planning ahead.

Disclaimers

If you don't have one, take some time and write one. Basically, you want to tell anyone going to your site that you have done everything to make that site a safe port on the Internet sea. By telling your visitors that you can control what happens on your site but have very little control over the rest of the Internet may sound like restating the obvious, but you should do it anyway. Most disclaimers don't look too different from one another. They are not creative writing. In reality, the difference between them may be the district, school, teacher, or classroom name.

Here's a disclaimer that I use for our school site. Feel free to use it or modify it to make it your own.

The primary purpose of the Head O' Meadow Web site is to provide educational information for our school, staff, students, their parents, and the community. Through the Head O' Meadow Web site, however, there are links to the worldwide resources of the Internet. The Head O' Meadow site is responsible for links on its own homepages but has no control over links to other resources on the WWW.

Filtering

A filtering discussion can cause quite a heated debate, especially if the discussion includes library and media experts. Some will argue that filtering software will filter out even some good sites, or that filtering is blocking students and teachers from the right to surf the Internet freely. Most districts opt for some sort of filtering, and that filtering can always be modified as to what can be seen and what should be blocked. In my district we use a filtering service called BESS (<http://www.n2h2.com/products/g2100/index.php>). When set up, it doesn't allow students to go to sites that you don't want them to see. I've asked some sites to be allowed that were

innocent and just caught in the filtering net. One of those sites was ePALS (<http://www.epals.com/>), a well know site for student and teacher collaborative projects. It was filtered because of its chat capabilities. In order to have it unblocked, I had to state the reasons why I needed the site, and that I would set up only short term private chats for my students.

One of our technology committee lively discussions involved whether to allow sport sites in our buildings. You can get to some pretty interesting sites searching sport topics. My suggestion was that any teacher who needed sport search sites, give a list of those sites to the technology director for unblocking. I explained some research I had done with a fellow tech member, which proved how unsafe it could be to open sport sites completely. The committee decision, though, was to open all sport links in the district, and do the same thing for commerce sites. The list of unsavory site links attempted in schools, either by accident or on purpose, makes for unbelievably interesting reading and a good reason to use some sort of filtering software.

Student Photos

I remember discussing the use of student photos on the Internet with a friend of mine. He was adamant that in no way would he allow his child's picture to be put on the Internet. I listened carefully, offering possible ways that it could be done safely. He didn't buy any of it. A few weeks later, we were at lunch when someone at another table congratulated him on his son's picture on the front page of the local newspaper. He was very excited about it too and stood to share the news front page with picture. His son was clearly depicted, sitting and working at a computer.

I couldn't help myself. I said, "What's so different about having your son's picture in the newspaper?"

"It's the newspaper and not the Internet." He said.

I continued, "Come to my classroom after lunch and I'll find that picture on the Internet."

"No way!" He said

I knew that the newspaper was also on the Internet in a very complete way. He came to my room, I accessed the news online and we were face to face with his son's article and photo, accompanied by his son's full name, age, address, and school.

He was incredulous.

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The policy for putting photos and videos of students on the Internet is different everywhere. At one school site you can find many student photos, while at another, you may find none. Some districts say it's OK to use students in group photos and without names. The policies are as varied as the different districts.

Interestingly, a parent established the policy in my district a few years ago. The parent happened to be with a government agency. In a meeting with two administrators who were truly beginners, technologically, the parent convinced them that any photo of a student was dangerous on the Internet. In less than a day we went from photos on the Internet to none at all. That rule has become more flexible with different approaches for posting photos and has been modified to include the use of permission slips for Internet use of photos.

These permission slips can offer many choices for parents, including the "No, I never want my child's picture on the Internet."

Here's an example of a simple permission slip I wrote for use with my own students:

Parental Permission Form for Classroom Internet photos and demonstrations

Photos

Yes, _____ can be photographed for use on our school Internet site.

Options:

Face _____ No Face _____ Costumed only _____

Never use my child's photograph in any way. _____

Parent / Guardian Signature:

Video

Yes, _____ can be filmed for video use on our school Internet site.

Face _____ No face _____ Costumed only _____

Never use my child in any of the video productions

Parent / Guardian Signature:

Additional information:

Only first names will be used, and no addresses or telephone numbers will ever be used.

It is the district's policy to always place the safety of students first, and to respect individual needs and wishes in this matter.

Thank you for your support,

Teacher's Name: _____

Date: _____

Student work and artwork

The use of student work and artwork can also fall into the permission category. Students have rights where their work is concerned, and beyond that, their parents may not want their child's work displayed any further than the kitchen refrigerator door

Here is a possible permission slip that, again, can be used or modified.

Permission to post student work and artwork on the WWW

My child's artwork, writing, and projects can appear on the WWW. A copyright notice prohibiting the copying of this work without written notification and permission will be posted with the work. Requests for that work will be forwarded to me. No identifying information other than a student's first name will appear with the work. The work can be posted to the WWW, and can be removed by my request at any time.

I will receive a copy of any work before it's publication.

Parent/Guardian signature:

I give my permission to publish my work on the WWW:

Student signature:

Date: _____

I have to say, I've photographed students in costumes, cropped their ears off, fuzzed them out, made wonderful pictures into just contour lines, and posted more backs of heads than most. You can still make photos work and be safe too.

Now What?

Pop Ups and Pop Unders

Pop ups and pop unders are advertisements that show up and annoy you while visiting Internet sites. When they happen at home it is bad enough, but in the classroom or computer lab, it needs to be addressed.

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Often, a student will shout excitedly from a computer, “Mr. Royal! I’ve won!” There on the screen above the browser is usually a pop up flashing something clever. When the student asks, “How do I collect?” I tell the student that he or she is a winner in my book, but a pop up is just a worthless advertisement. Sometimes pop ups will be pop unders and won’t be found until a student quits for the day. I sometimes find them diminished on machines, placed there by students who don’t know what to do with them. Pops ups and pop unders are a nuisance and a lesson unto themselves. If you have a PC, you might want to try free software called Pop-Up Stopper (http://www.panicware.com/product_dpds.html). There is also a version you can buy as well.

The free version has enough options to take care of those nasty pop-ups and the pay version has more options. It works extremely well. Be aware that some Pop-Ups created on Web sites can be good. My son recently tried to take a university quiz on my computer. Every time he clicked the link for the quiz, nothing appeared. I thought maybe it was a problem with the quiz page but then realized that the quiz was actually a pop up page and was being blocked by the Pop-Up Stopper software.

Who’s Watching?

You’d be surprised to find that you probably have some sort of Adware, which is sometimes known as spyware or trackware on your computer. It’s supposed to be a harmless way to track shopping trends, but it’s more like a form of ‘Big Brother’ to most of people. The kicker is that you probably don’t know it’s on your machine. How did it get on your computer? Well, it’s probably there because of one of those free software downloads educators and students enjoy. If you’d like to check your PC machines, try a free download called Ad-aware (<http://www.lavasoftusa.com/downloads.html>) that safely removes these hidden spies from your computer. I found eight of them on my own computer, and I’ll probably find them on school PCs too.

Junk E-mail

Recently, I’ve been getting a lot of junk e-mail, otherwise known as SPAM. I make it a point to never open any mail in front of students. Too many unwanted surprises can happen. If you’ve done any sort of business online, your e-mail address may have been traded to an Internet mailing list. I usually have five or more of these unwanted e-mails in my inbox daily. I’ve had to create public e-mail addresses and one that is private. In that way, I have a better chance of having at least one without much SPAM.

Many e-mail clients come with some sort of precautions. Most of my students use AOL and I recommend that their parents set Parental Preferences for e-mail. I set my own Outlook Express e-mail preferences so that I’m blocking some of these unwanted e-mails and deleting them when they arrive. I’ve also set the e-mail rules in Outlook Express to look for and not accept e-mail in certain categories. Most of these things don’t completely fix the problem, and so that’s probably why some software has been developed to remedy the problem. A free e-mail controller is Mail Washer – (<http://www.mailwasher.net/>) and it will actually check your mail according to your specifications and only allow the mail you want to reach your inbox. Again, upgrades and other software that does the same thing can be purchased. One of these is Mailshell (<http://www.mailshell.com/mail/client/fd.html>), which offers to clean your mail for three dollars a month. Always remember to keep good and recent virus protection software on your computer and update it often. I use Norton SystemWorks (<http://www.symantec.com/>) but there are others that do the trick. It allows me to download protection against the most recent virus definitions. Make sure it’s set to check your e-mail too. If the subject line is empty or offers a file attachment from someone you don’t know, don’t open it. After having said this, I was actually caught off guard once myself by someone I knew, and a company that I thought was safe. Unfortunately, an e-mail was sent with a virus attached. My laptop, the hub of my classroom world’s connection to the outside world, was made useless. It took me quite some time to get back on track and the computer working right again.

Check Your Links

Check your links and check them often. It’s more than just checking to see if they’re active. Last year I wrote an article and included some very good links for educators and technology leaders. Well, I received an e-mail telling me that I should check one of the links because it led to a place that might not be too appropriate. I checked, and indeed it did. The link had changed. I contacted the online publisher, who informed me that it has become a common occurrence for pornographic links to take over of a vacant URL, especially those that are of an educational nature. Pretty devious, huh? So, check your school links to make sure they’re alive but not too lively!

Keep Your Guard Up!

Educators should not allow themselves to get so busy as to let their guards down when it comes to students,

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computers, and the Internet. I tell my students that there are people in the world who are not as nice as they are, and some of those people who are not so nice just happen to have computers too. If you're aware and you look towards prevention early, you may never have any gigantic misfortunes when it comes to technology. Remember to back up everything just in case!

*Ken Royal
Head O' Meadows Elementary School
Newtown*

eSchool News School Technology 2002 Buyer's Guide provides links to information for over 3500 products and services. The guide's home page allows users to search the online database for information by company name, keyword, or vendor category. Search results are returned as a list of links to the vendor listings that match the search criteria. Each listing contains the company's mailing and web-site addresses, toll-free numbers, product descriptions, key contacts, and other relevant information.

<http://www.mediabrain.com/client/eschooln/bg1/search.asp>

CECA Members

Please note that you are receiving advanced registration materials for **CECA 2002**.

Please register now to ensure your spot at this exciting event as space is limited to **600** participants.

Everyone else in our database will receive registration information on **May 30**.

Advanced registration of CECA 2002 is a member benefit.

Act now as time is limited!

CECA 2002 Educator Recognition Awards

The CECA Board of Directors has announce the winners of this year's Educator Recognition Awards. They are:

Suzanne Barber, First Grade teacher, Cornwall Consolidated School, RSD 1.

This project, entitled "The Power of Poetry", took place over a three week period. Students wrote, illustrated, and recorded their own original poems. A PowerPoint presentation included photographs and animation related to the poem. The presentation generated great excitement and motivation for future writing/technology projects.

Jacquelyn Boland and John Chiapetta, Staples High School, Westport

This team project used the virtual world to make the historical experience of the Vietnam conflict real. It is titled "Virtual Vietnam". US History/English students authored webs based on interviews with Vietnam veterans and extensive research. Students illustrated several different perspectives on the conflict including a nurse, a journalist, a protester, a Chicano infantryman, an African-American Marine, a Caucasian MP, and a medic. They also compared the experiences of the veterans they interviewed with the experience depicted in war novels. Ultimately, they created for publication a fictional, but historically accurate, portrayal of the Vietnam era.

The Gateway to Educational Materials SM (GEM)

The Gateway to Educational Materials SM is a Consortium effort to provide educators with quick and easy access to thousands of educational resources found on various federal, state, university, non-profit, and commercial Internet sites. The Gateway SM is a searchable, browseable catalog of metadata records for resources from GEM Consortium members' Internet sites.

GEM is a project of the U.S. Department of Education and is a special project of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Information & Technology at Syracuse University. GEM's goal is to improve the organization and accessibility of the substantial, but uncataloged, collections of materials that are already available on various federal, state, university, non-profit, and commercial Internet sites.

When teachers connect to The Gateway, they are able to access the educational resources of participating GEM Consortium members to access Internet-based lesson plans, curriculum units and other educational materials. When they use The Gateway database, rather than an Internet search engine, teachers are able to locate resources they need quickly and efficiently.

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Design and Implementation

The Connecticut Regional Vocational Technical School system administrators set out to design a model in which the use of technology would foster constructive, active, and project-based learning in academic subject areas as well as in the trade workshops, and where the student-computer ratio in the classroom would be 1:1. They also wanted the new instruction model and learning units to (1) address the needs of limited English proficient students and special education students, (2) prepare students for the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) which is given in grade 10, and (3) align with the state curriculum goals and standards and the National Trade Standards.

The implementation process included:

1. Audit of existing technology use:

Administrators found that most computers were in library/media areas or trade area workshops. They developed the Digital Classroom model to involve all students in technology use daily and to infuse academic subject area instruction with the options of new media.

2. Assessment of technology competency levels for instructors and administrators:

Initiated at the onset of the reform, this assessment is now completed every year by schools' professional development teams or technology committees.

3. Partnership with the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium (CTDLC):

This partnership was necessary to develop a year-long staff training program for the new instructional model and a searchable database to make the Web-based learning units that teachers would develop available to teachers and students alike.

Using David Jonassens's GOOD MODES OF TEACHING WITH TECHNOLOGY (GMOTT) framework, CTDLC consultant Dr. George Cicchetti created an online course called "Designing Web-Based Learning Units." The online course and hands on sessions helped the first round of teachers develop web-based learning units that aligned with the Connecticut Framework, curricular goals and standards and the national trade standards when appropriate, incorporated the use of various kinds of media, presented clear indicators of success for students and were flexible enough to meet the needs of all students, including those with special needs.

The course also identified the strategies to be embedded in successful learning units. These included:

- **Active Learning:** Students manipulate virtual and actual materials to complete the learning activities.
 - **Constructive Learning:** Building on what they already know, students construct their own understanding of the material.
 - **Authentic Learning:** Projects revolve around real-world problems or tasks that connect students to the world around them.
 - **Cooperative Learning:** Students work in groups and have specific tasks or roles within their group.
 - **Intentional/Reflective Learning:** Students are encouraged to generate their own questions and model and explain their problem-solving strategies.
 - **Constructive reading and process writing strategies:** Literacy strategies for all students including scaffolding
 - **Dialogue Center activities:** A time when students step away from the computers and discuss, clarify and share the information they have gathered.
4. **Problem identification:** During the training, teachers encountered problems with technical issues, such as using HTML, and educational concerns such as building scaffolding for reading and writing strategies into the units or setting up rubrics for participation. Responding to these difficulties, Dr. Cicchetti wrote units addressing each problem and added them to the online professional development course for the new round of teachers
 5. **Field testing and teacher feedback:** Through field testing, the team determined that each learning unit should be completed in approximately a week and should contain three objectives or projects for students to complete. Teachers in the system said that piloting the program gave them the opportunity to learn what worked best for the students in their classrooms and to refine their lesson plans and rubrics to reflect this knowledge.
 6. **Posting of polished learning units:** Using the searchable database designed by the CTDLC, polished learning units in all subject areas have

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been posted on the Web. The units can be found at www.ctdlc.org/votech. Because the units are available to everyone via the Web, parents can learn about what their children are doing in class, other teachers can investigate what students did in other classes or in previous school years, and special education teachers can access and modify the lessons and rubrics and tailor them to students with special needs.

Replication Tips

School and district administrators hoping to integrate technology with instruction in a constructive way need to keep these tips in mind:

- **Have an action plan:** When the state of Connecticut agreed to help the Regional Vocational-Technical School System with their technical infrastructure in 1998, the RVTSS administrators had already done some planning. They had created five-year action plans detailing work to be done in each of four areas regarding technology – administrative, instructional delivery systems, technical support and training, and classroom applications.
- **Create a solid technology infrastructure:** The RVTSS had to concentrate on this part of the development before they could put any other plans in motion. This includes not only the technology resources in the classrooms but also a trained staff at the school level who are qualified to coach teachers new to the process and troubleshoot issues. External support at the district level must also be in place to troubleshoot and assist teachers.
- **Devise a professional development plan:** The RVTSS administrative group assessed their staff capabilities at the beginning of the project. They then partnered with the Connecticut Distance Learning Center to create a training program that would prepare all staff to work in the digital classrooms. The administrative group decided to train the teachers in cohorts, sending an initial group through the one-year program early on in the process and following up with a second group shortly thereafter. This training program and the shape and scope of the learning units that the first round of teachers produced were constantly being refined to make the process smoother for the next round of teachers.
- **Central office support:** The RVTSS had to work within the framework of availability and immediacy of state funding in any given year. But they were dedicated to getting this project off the ground. They continued to develop their plans and make presentations at various technology conferences to attract new money to the initiative and more support from the state.

Contact Information

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25 Industrial Park Road
Middletown, CT. 06457-1520
Bus: 860.807.2152
Fax: 860.807.2196
CT. RVTS site: www.cttech.org
Connecticut Distance Learning Center site:
www.ctdlc.org
Learning Units database: www.ctdlc.org/votech

CAIS Technology Conference for Teachers

The Connecticut Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) is hosting its first technology conference for teachers this June. at: Miss Porters School in Farmington, CT. on: June 24-28

CAIS invites teachers from all schools - public, parochial and independent -in Connecticut to join us during a week of learning and sharing.

Workshops in English, history, science, math, foreign language and web design, and a special workshop for elementary school teachers, will emphasize skills and techniques that will enrich your teaching and make learning more engaging for your students. Each day will include two or more hands-on workshops led by an accomplished teacher. All we ask you to bring is a desire to learn and a willingness to share your own ideas on technology in teaching with fellow participants.

Other conference strands include specialized workshops in Photoshop, Networking, Adobe Illustrator and more...

Please visit the conference website for details:

<http://www.caist.org/events/teaching.htm>

Statistically Speaking, Using Technology in the Middle School, Works

A 2001 CECA Educator Recognition Award Winner

by Barbara Eilertsen

We asked, "what do sixth-graders have in common?" and what we found out was surprising. armed with some mathematical knowledge and technical help, my eighty-five students discovered that they didn't have as much in common as they originally thought. of course, the yankees were still the preferred baseball team, but when asked their preferences for clothing, academic favorites, ice cream and a list of other things on an electronic survey, students consistently flaunted their individuality.

Here's how we did it:

As a classroom math teacher my first task was to teach the basics of data collection and writing surveys. Students learned how to tally, make frequency charts, draw line plots, and find percents. They needed some vocabulary such as numerical, categorical, universe, outlier, range, median, mean and mode. What could have been a cumbersome list of words became useful tools in the hands of students as they scoured classrooms and hallways surveying their friends.

For several weeks students practiced taking surveys, organizing their data and analyzing it. Toward the end of the unit students were asked to select a question in which they were particularly interested. It was stressed that the question should convey some useful and interesting information concerning the nature or life of a sixth grader. Few restrictions were placed on their questions and, as a result, a creative variety of questions emerged.

Questions were collected and typed onto a webpage form using Microsoft FrontPage. These questionnaires became part of the sixth grade webpage that the students already knew how to access. Some questions required one-line answers, some one-word answers. Other questions required a specific number and some required a numerical range for an answer. Pull down menus, radio buttons and room for paragraphs were used in consideration of the type of question being asked.

When the questionnaires were complete, the students responded to them. They enjoyed answering the questions and there were few questionable results. When a student was finished, his or her results were submitted by clicking a button on the bottom of the form. FrontPage saved the results in a text file. The text file was then imported into an Access database.

Students were now introduced to the powerful tool of database. They quickly learned how to filter data several times

over, whittling a population of people down to a selected group of sixth graders with four or five things in common. Many students looked for people who, according to the survey, were similar to themselves. There was much excitement in the computer room as students explored the capabilities of this powerful application.

On the last leg of the project, students applied their data to real life situations and presented it using PowerPoint. Many of the survey questions concerned preferences for marketable goods. Accordingly, student presentations targeted a store or industry that might find their information useful.

Certain guidelines were required of their PowerPoint slides. They needed to be colorful and animated. They needed to have graphics. Some students drew their own graphics, while others used the digital camera or imported images from the Internet. PowerPoint proved to be an extremely creative vehicle in the hands of the sixth graders.

Student's slides were combined into one large show that was presented in class. It used the information generated analyzed and presented by the students to tell the story of what sixth graders in our school are all about. It also shows that given the right materials and time to explore, students will exceed expectations in delightful and surprising ways.

This activity was basically an experiment on my part. What was originally intended to be a simple lesson with FrontPage forms soon expanded into a full-blown math/technology project. The steps to implementing technology into this project felt natural and quite necessary at the time. In my opinion, students learned a great deal more then they would have in a traditional data collection unit because of the inclusion of technology.

Students were assessed by their classroom performance in terms of hard work and attending to the task at hand. Without exception, all the students passed this assessment. Many students, who historically had not enjoyed mathematics, found this application both understandable and downright fun. This unit has been one of the most successful activities I have had as a middle school math teacher. One student, in fact, stopped on the way out of the classroom to thank me for teaching her how to use a database. That was a gift!

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GEM

Sites "Powered by GEM" include AskERIC, Canadian Heritage Information Network's Learning with Museums, MCI WorldCom Foundation's MarcoPolo Project, NASA Space Science Education Resource Directory, and the U.S. Department of Education's Federal Resources for Educational Excellence.

<http://www.geminfo.org/>

Mobile Learning Program Revisited

A 2001 CECA Educator Recognition Award Winner

*Laura Pels, Sharon Parker, Dannette Daniels,
and Doug Renfrew*

During the 1999-2000 school year, 125 freshmen students from our school received laptop computers to use at both school and home, as they would a regular notebook. Students used the Microsoft Office suite, curriculum-specific software, the Internet and other productivity tools in core subject area classes (English, Math, Science, and Social Studies). These students were grouped into two ninth grade clusters, which offered a range of ninth grade courses. The families of these students agreed to participate in a district-subsidized lease to own agreement, at the end of which they would own the laptop. This Mobile Learning Program involved seven teachers, who also were given laptops to use during the course of the program and who participated in ongoing professional development workshops. The professional development workshops covered topics ranging from the logistics of managing 25 students and 25 laptops in a classroom, security issues involving the safety of the student and their laptops, educational web sites, and technology-integrated lessons. Much was learned from the first year of the Mobile Learning Program as the program entered into its second year of implementation.

As 10th grade students in courses such as Civics, Biology, Geometry and Sophomore English, most of the original students in the 9th grade cluster were able to enroll in courses with laptop teachers, using the computers as part of their curriculum. Some freshmen classes were also offered for students who did not pass all of their courses during freshman year. A second cluster of laptop students was started with one class of a bilingual Global Cluster, which included 6 more teachers, one from each of the following departments: Math, Social Studies, Science, Business, Spanish and ESL. These students and their families also agreed to a similar district-subsidized lease to own agreement, at the end of which they would own the laptop.

As the first group of students in the Mobile Learning Cluster became 11th graders, it became obvious that their academic interests in different types of classes had become a problem for keeping them together in a laptop class. Students now wanted to choose different English classes, different Alternative Language courses, different music and art classes, etc. All of these differences make scheduling a logistical problem. However, since now most of the students had become quite computer literate, it was decided that the laptop was now to be used as a tool the student would have access to in all of their courses. Of course, their

teachers could not gear as many activities towards using technology, since most of the other students in their classes did not have as easy access to technology at home. Scheduling did allow 3 laptop Science classes, 1 laptop English class, 2 laptop Math classes, and 3 laptop Social Studies classes to be created. So, some students are still using laptops in classes with laptop teachers, but not as much as in previous years. One major addition to the program during this year was the acquisition of two portable suitcases with an access point and 30 wireless network cards so that an entire class of students with laptops could be connected to the Internet at the same time in classrooms, which only had 4 network jacks. Some laptops have been returned by students, who either transferred out of the school system, or decided for one reason or another, to no longer participate in the program. Some of these laptops are being transformed into a mobile lab on a rolling cart, with a printer, a digital projector, and an access point with wireless network cards. The laptop teachers can sign up to use this cart with any of their classes, especially since many of their present students are not part of the original Mobile Learning program. Eventually this cart will be available to any classroom teacher who demonstrates proficiency in technology.

As scheduling is being set up for the Senior year of the original group of laptop students, it is expected that very few, if any, laptop classes will be offered. The students will continue to make their payments and continue to use their computers as a tool and then have the laptops to use in their post high school education or careers. Many students benefited from this access to technology, which they probably would not have had if not for this program. Many lessons were learned by the staff members involved in the program on how to manage and incorporate the use of technology into classes that normally would not have access to so much computer time. The instructional methods developed by laptop teachers have influenced how other teachers incorporate technology into their non-laptop classes. Many of these teachers have become the technology leaders of the school. These laptop teachers will use the lessons learned through this program as they instruct new students next year, using the computer labs, the Media Center, and the mobile cart to replicate some of the techniques used with the students in the Mobile Learning Program.

Has your district taken advantage of the FREE MarcoPolo Professional Development Program being offered to Connecticut school districts?

What is MarcoPolo?

Developed collaboratively by the WorldCom Foundation and several leading national educational organizations, **MarcoPolo: Internet Content for the Classroom** (<http://marcopolo.worldcom.com>) provides teachers a wealth of free resources, including dynamic standards-based lesson plans in almost every subject area and grade level as well as panel-reviewed links to top sites in many disciplines, classroom activities, materials to help with daily classroom planning, and powerful search engines.

What is new with MarcoPolo in Connecticut?

Through a grant from the Worldcom Foundation, ACES has been able to develop **CTED.ORG** (<http://www.cted.org>), a website aligning MarcoPolo resources to Connecticut State Frameworks for Education. Search by framework, subject area, and grade level. It's a work in progress, so check back often!

What is the MarcoPolo Professional Development Program?

The MarcoPolo Professional Development Program is an opportunity for teachers throughout Connecticut to receive free professional development, made possible through a partnership between ACES and the WorldCom Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization. Well over 2000 Connecticut teachers have received training over the past year, and over 600 of these teachers are qualified Field Trainers!

Is there any cost to districts?

The MarcoPolo Professional Development Program is available free of charge to teacher-trainers in every school district through Connecticut's partnership with the WorldCom Foundation. All materials are provided at no cost to the district.

How does the MarcoPolo Professional Development Program work?

WorldCom Foundation trains the teacher-trainers who, in turn, train teachers. Training sessions usually last for one to two days and are tailored for the school district. The interactive, hands-on sessions are led by a member of the MarcoPolo cadre of trainers – all of whom are current or former classroom teachers or teacher-trainers who have

extensive experience with Internet-based instruction. Participants will be asked to train colleagues and other educators as part of a rollout of the MarcoPolo Professional Development Program. Each train-the-trainer session participant receives a free comprehensive trainer's kit to roll out MarcoPolo to other educators in the state.

What other types of FREE Professional Development are available?

In addition to the Train-the-Trainer session available for K-12 Educators, the Foundation has added several new initiatives, including:

- Training sessions designed for Administrators, addressing issues of relevance to building and district-level administrators, including assessment and evaluation of Internet content use in the classroom.
- A Large Schools Initiative, designed to bring the MarcoPolo Cadre-led Training Program directly to the building level in larger (1000+ students) schools.

How can my district obtain MarcoPolo Professional Development?

Train-the Trainer sessions are offered from time to time at each of the RESCs.

Or, to request free training for your district, visit <http://marcopolo.worldcom.com/trrequest.shtml>.

If you have questions, please contact **Janine Fiorillo, State Administrator, Technology Education Specialist, ACES, 203.407.4404; e-mail: jfiorillo@aces.k12.ct.us**.

What criteria must a district, consortium, or school meet in order to host a FREE training session?

- A group must consist of at least 15 participants who are available and willing to conduct staff development activities.
- The training must take place in a lab setting with Internet access such that all participants can have a hands-on experience.
- The Foundation must have a 45 day lead in order to guarantee all materials arrive in time.

Please share this information with the educators in your

Continued on p. 11

school, district or organization so they can take advantage of this opportunity.

MarcoPolo is a unique public/private partnership of the WorldCom Foundation, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Council of the Great City Schools, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the National Council on Economic Education, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the National Geographic Society.

The WorldCom Foundation is an active contributor to the MarcoPolo partnership, providing staff, technical support, partner funding and guidance on the overall direction of the MarcoPolo project.

Janine Fiorillo
ACES Professional Development Staff

TECH EXPO at LOB

The following schools exhibited at the LOB Tech Expo on March 27, 2002.

A great day was had by all and many had the privilege of meeting Governor Rowland. Pictures can be seen on the CECA Website at www.ceca-ct.org/LOB2002.

We thank all the teachers who brought their classes to Hartford to exhibit the work of their students so that our legislators and the Governor could see how technology is used in classrooms around the state.

Killingly, Killingly High School
East Hartford, East Hartford Middle School
Windsor, Clover Street Elementary School
Bristol, Memorial Boulevard Middle School
Wethersfield,
 Wethersfield High School
 Highcrest Elementary School
Glastonbury, Smith Middle School
Torrington, Torrington School
New Haven, High School in the Community
North Stonington, North Stonington Elementary School
Weston, Hurlbutt Elementary School
Milford, Jonathan Law High School
Waterbury, Maloney Interdistrict Magnet School
Waterbury, Wallace Middle School
Winchester
 Pearson Middle School,
 Hinsdale Elementary School
 Batcheller Elementary

Oxford, Great Oak Middle School
Colchester, Jack Jacter Elementary School
Meriden, Washington Middle School
North Branford, Jerome Harrison Elementary School
Coventry, Coventry Grammar School
Groton, CT Vocational Technical System, ET Grasso
 Technical High School
Greenwich, Greenwich High School
Shelton, Shelton High School
Newington, Newington High School
East Haven, Joseph Melillo Middle School
East Haven, D. H. Ferrara Elementary School
Middletown
 Wesley Elementary School
 Keigwin Middle School
Norwalk, West Rocks Middle School
Berlin
 Mary E. Griswold Elementary School
 Emma Hart Willard Elementary School
Stratford, Center Elementary School
Ellington, Crystal Lake School
Bridgeport, Warren Harding High School
Shepaug Valley Regional
 Washington Primary
 Burnham School
Greenwich, Central Middle School



GaelHawks Robotics Team from Shelton High School arrives at the LOB.



Michae Helfgott, Commission for Educational Technology talks with North Stonington teacher.

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PDA in the classroom breakouts

Palm training mini-sessions

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This newsletter contains important conference information and your personalized registration form.

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