

MAKING IT HAPPEN (IN EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY) GAZETTE

IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE CHALLENGES OF NCLB: THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/TRAINING

Richard J. Schaar is President of Texas Instruments (TI) Educational & Productivity Solutions (E&PS) business, and Senior Vice President of Texas Instruments, Incorporated

The passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has brought many new requirements and challenges to the world of education. One of the largest changes in NCLB surrounds professional development and teacher quality.

Education Technology: Expectations of Teacher Training

Those who drafted NCLB did not expect teachers to become proficient on an educational technology product the first time they used it, but the benefits of training are obvious. Professional development customized around the use of a technology product ensures that teachers are using the technology in ways that are intended, and in ways that help increase their success in their specific classrooms. This includes properly integrating the technology into the curriculum and using it on a regular basis to support learning.

Teachers who don't have access to training—either because of lack of resources on their part, or lack of availability on the product manufacturer's part—may not learn how to use the tools appropriately, which could encourage misuse and bad habits among their students. Relying on spell check and using calculators for simple computations are two examples of usage that provide benefits in the right circumstances, but should be managed to ensure they're used to support learning, not replace it. Training helps all educators, including classroom teachers and administrators, understand that technology is only a tool, and that it's up to the teacher to use it correctly and frequently in a way that impacts classroom success. In addition to training, we also provide books, videos, and

online activities to further reinforce this message and provide guidelines for usage.

Training also helps ensure that teachers use the products as they were evaluated in evidence research. A product that is purchased based on usage cited in the evidence, then used in a different manner, can result in unhappy suppliers and customers, and ruin future business opportunities. Training helps ensure alignment between the customer and provider's expectations, increasing successful technology integration.

TI has opted to provide a variety of training options, because we found that customers had different needs that couldn't be met with just one option. We offer institutes that focus on how to successfully integrate our technology into specific classes such as Algebra or Biology. These institutes are offered in varying time frames ranging up to five days. Professional development packages can be customized to specific standards and/or special needs of groups of teachers and we also offer a systemic train-the-trainer program. We recently added an online component that provides an alternative to those unable to access other training options, or have been through training before and are looking for a refresher course. We've found that customers appreciate the ability to choose the option that best fits their needs both in terms of format and content. Customized content has been particularly popular as the focus on standards and testing has increased.

We've also found that customers value reinforcement training that provides a way to follow up on the initial training. We began offering train-the-trainer options in which we provide individuals

with the skills they need to lead a training session of their peers. Schools, districts and other organizations use this program to help ensure that teachers who need a refresher course have a local or familiar resource they can access. Our online training can also be used to reinforce initial training and remind teachers of the different ways they can use their classroom technology.

The payoff from providing professional development on the use of your products can result in long-term customer satisfaction and loyalty, which is one of the hallmarks of success in the educational technology industry. And for those disciplined enough to listen, this product training can also provide valuable feedback that can be applied to future iterations of a product, or entirely new products. Watching and listening to your customers' first interactions with your products can show you how intuitive and friendly they are. Or aren't. Customer expectations based on marketing, or evidence may be different from actual product abilities. These disconnects are critical to capture and remedy.

While our customers continue to work their way through the choices and challenges in educational technology, we can help them by evaluating what we can provide them now, working with them to help figure out what they'll need going forward, and aligning with them on product development. They don't expect us to have all the answers, but by working together we can provide better products and increase teacher success, which ultimately translates into student success.

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PLATO LEARNING CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY AS EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY LEADER

Minneapolis – PLATO Learning has announced that in 2003 it will celebrate its 40th anniversary as a leading provider of computer-based and e-learning solutions. Building on its heritage of award-winning, research-based products, PLATO Learning has emerged as the leading developer of innovative and comprehensive technology solutions for schools and colleges. For over four decades, PLATO Learning has touched the lives of millions of students each year and helped many gain the

academic skills and self-esteem they need to transition successfully into productive careers.

PLATO Learning was conceived at the University of Illinois in 1963, and funded by a National Science Foundation grant. The first national effort to bring the power of technology into the classroom, it formed the foundation stone of what has become the educational software industry.

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PAT WALKINGTON (C)

Pat is a former Kindergarten teacher and District Director of Gifted Education. She began her career in the private sector in 1983 as Director of Education for Commodore Business Machines.

Pat joined The Learning Company in 1986. As part of the founding team of The Learning Company, she managed the company's school business. From The Learning Company Pat joined Broderbund in April of 1996 where she served as Vice President of the company's Education Division.

Pat is currently an Educational Consultant. Her consulting firm, Lanier-Walkington, has worked with numerous companies, including Intellitools, Teacher Universe, NetSchools, Teacher Created Materials, and Project Achieve, to help them build their sales and marketing organizations.

Pat is the past co-chair of the Education Board of the Software Publisher's Association. She served as a peer reviewer this fall for the Technology Innovative Challenge Grants and is on the Executive Board of the Math/Science Network.

Pat has two masters degrees from Arizona State University and resides with her husband in San Francisco.

KATHY HURLEY (L)

Kathy Hurley, Vice President, Education Industry Affairs for PLATO Learning, is a 30-year veteran of the education industry. Prior to PLATO Learning's acquisition of NetSchools Corporation, Hurley served as the Senior Vice President for NetSchools,



where her responsibilities included overseeing the Sales, Marketing and Business Development departments of the company.

Hurley has also served as Senior Vice President of Education Marketing for The Learning Company, and Senior Vice President of Skillsbank Corporation. Hurley has also held important positions with IBM, Mindscape, Grolier and DLM.

She currently serves on several key industry and education advisory boards, including, the National School Boards Foundation (NSBF), the Software and Information Industry Association (SIIA), and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE). She is also past president of the Association of Educational Publishers

and she still sits on their Board of Directors.

Hurley began her career in education working with learning disabled students, after receiving her Masters degree at Jersey City State College. To this day, she continues to support her undergraduate institution, the University of Dayton, by serving on Advisory Board for the School of Education.

DEB DEVRIES (R)

Deb deVries started her career in the classroom as a special education teacher after earning her masters degree at the University of Utah. She taught in Utah, Washington, and Minnesota before joining the private sector by going to work for Control Data Corporation. At CDC she held marketing and sales positions supporting computer based education in K-12 schools nationwide.

Deb joined MECC in 1986 as a sales representative and held sales management positions including Vice President of School Sales. MECC was purchased by The Learning Company in 1996 and in 1998 Deb left TLC to pursue independent consulting work with other companies focused in K-12 educational technology. From 2000 to 2002 she was Director of Marketing Programs and Development for NetSchools Corporation until the purchase of the company by PLATO Learning, Inc in May, 2002. Deb is presently Director of Sales Programs for PLATO Learning, Inc.

Deb's proudest accomplishments are her two daughters, Mallory and Chloe, who are definitely "making it happen" in middle and high school. She and her family reside in St. Paul, Minnesota.

PLATO LEARNING CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY (CONT.)

"At its inception," said John Murray, President and CEO of PLATO Learning, "leading educators and scientists at the university, national political leaders, and forward thinkers at Control Data Corporation believed learners would benefit from easy access to state-of-the-art computer-based instruction delivered from mainframe computers to learner workstations anywhere in the world. With dedication and uncommon zeal they created a new way for learners to experience just-in-time distance

learning and today we see the heady results of these early visionaries' efforts in the Internet."

"We know the roots of PLATO Learning were born in the belief that every learner can achieve success with the proper instructional support," continued Mr. Murray. "Today, more than ever, we are still guided by this core and purposeful mission to ensure the success of all learners throughout their lifetimes. We are proud to say that we have made tremendous progress

in beginning to fulfill this mission by supporting educators worldwide with a suite of powerful courseware and accountability tools, built on the highest quality research and professional support services for teacher development. PLATO Learning has a long rich education history, built upon 40 years of passion and ingenuity, and we are delighted to celebrate this historic anniversary with our customers, partners and the education software industry."

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Priscilla Shumway at pshumway@weeklyreader.com

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