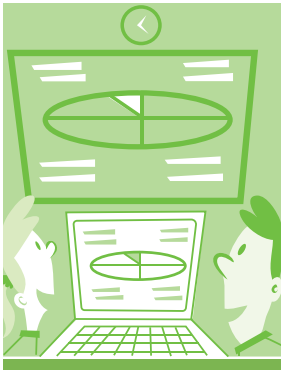
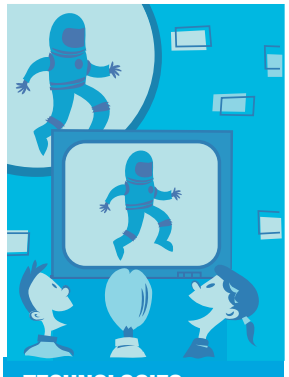
"HOW I DID IT!"

8 TEACHERS SHARE THEIR TOP TECH SOLUTIONS



TECHNOLOGIES THAT SAVE TIME

TEACHER	THE PROBLEM	THE TECH TOOLS
Nicole Hepworth Technology/curriculum coach in Bellevue, WA	Nicole's lessons required a lot of prep time. "When I teach science, I need to write out a lot of formulas, equations, and bulleted directions. That's easily five to ten hours of work each week!"	SMART Technologies' interactive whiteboard 580 (www.smarttech.com); Dell MP 2300/3300 LCD projector; Dell Latitude D600 notebook (www.dell.com)
Michelle Wood First-grade teacher in Deposit, NY	Michelle must assess her students' reading three times a year. "It takes me three or more hours just to administer the assessments, plus another two hours to analyze and grade each student."	Palm m515 handheld (www.palmone.com) with Wireless Generation mCLASS reading assessment software (www.wirelessgeneration.com)
Elise Mueller Fifth-grade teacher in Bellingham, WA	Elise's students weren't learning from one another. "They couldn't share techniques for solving math problems and were isolated from fellow classmates during math and science lessons."	HP Compaq Tablet PC tc1100; HP vp6111 digital projector; HP Officejet 7140; HP PhotoSmart 735 digital camera (www.hp.com)
Summyr Arnold Fourth-grade charter school teacher in Weston, FL	Summyr wanted better communication with parents. "It's hard to rely on students to convey information, and be sure that parents get the message."	Web-based e-mail that teachers can access from school, home, or anywhere else they can find an Internet connection



TECHNOLOGIES THAT INNOVATE

David Carberry Fifth-grade reading teacher in Bloomington, MN	Student information was difficult for David to access. "If I wanted an emergency number, that was a walk to the nurse's office. To see a student's record, you had to track down a hard copy."	FileMaker Pro database (www.filemaker.com)
Mickie Spurgin Fourth- and fifth-grade special education teacher in Red Lake Falls, MN	Mickie wanted more opportunities for her students to explore science. "Our water unit used to be as simple as measuring water temperature and quality and showing data on poster-board charts."	Palm m500 handheld, (www.palmone.com) with Magellan GPS add-on modules (www.magellangps.com); HP Compaq Tablet PC tc1100 (www.hp.com)
Kathleen Ferguson First-grade teacher at a math and science magnet school in Schenectady, NY	A tight budget meant Kathleen's students could take only a few field trips. "I wanted to be able to give my students more hands-on learning experiences, beyond what my district could afford."	Two-way videoconferencing with teacher training and technical support provided by a grant from ProjectView (www.projectview.org)
Kathy Perry Fifth-grade teacher in Rotterdam, NY	Kathy's students weren't connecting in a real way with the science curriculum, even weather lessons. "We might have been able to find weather data for the local airport, but that was it."	An on-site WeatherBug station (www.weatherbugachieve.com) and school home page (www.mohonasen.org/staffdev/weather5/weatherstationpics.htm)

Who doesn't want to save hours of planning per week, as well as create innovative lesson plans that connect with kids? Meet eight teachers around the country who are doing just that by embracing technology in their classrooms, from videoconferencing to handheld computers to electronic whiteboards. The best part? You can do it, too! Here's how. **By Ron Bel Bruno**

THE SOLUTION	BENEFIT	WHY IT'S WORTH IT
"This system saves a great amount of prep time—I'm done in 30 minutes! I can add hyperlinks and annotations to display in my lessons, print slides from classroom exercises for students, and even e-mail lessons to parents."	**Time saved:** About eight hours per week.	"Using technology helps my students recall the content much better. It's much more interactive—it captivates them! They can listen to what's being said without having to take notes."
"I track fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, phonics skills, and language development as students read designated mCLASS-compatible books. Now I can create progress reports—including test results—for parents and students, too."	**Time saved:** Five or more hours per week.	"Before, it was certainly possible to give parents reports, but who had the time? Maybe if we didn't have our own kids, activities, lives."
"With the projector, children can show each other how they solve math problems, which I save for parent conference time. And viewing specimens this way is far better than students crowding around a table waiting for a turn!"	**Time saved:** One or more hours per week.	"It's like a little theater that levels the playing field. For my student population, which is 65 percent free and reduced lunch, this is exciting."
Brief but important e-mail is common to most parent-teacher communication. "A mass e-mail replaces a call to 50 households. Or I can write to parents simply, 'Your child scored low on this test, would you like to receive a copy?'"	**Time saved:** Two hours per week.	"I send a group e-mail to parents about every other day. It doesn't just save me time; it *makes* time. I can now maintain a rapport with parents at their convenience."
"My peers and I now submit student evaluations electronically, so everyone can access these comments easily. And we can now really help kids who need special attention, are transient, or could fall through the cracks."	**Innovation:** It's easy to identify kids in need and get them back on track.	"Technology really is a beneficial tool. I'm much more likely to make a parent contact when that student information is handy."
"Now, my students work with the Nature Conservancy Glacial Ridge Restoration Project. Students digitally collect water-sample data from many locations in the area, enter it into the computer, and map it to make comparisons."	**Innovation:** It levels the playing field for all students.	"In our rural county, 40 percent of kids don't have Web access at home. These tools have really helped them—and given us a renewed focus and attitude towards teaching."
"Our recent virtual trips have included a visit to the Louisville Science Center for simulated astronaut training. The kids re-created the zero-gravity of space by assembling Legos in a tank of water."	**Innovation:** Curriculum transcends financial and geographical constraints.	"My students retain more information, just like they would with a real field trip." Plus, by appearing and conversing on camera, "the kids build social and public-speaking skills!"
"Three of our classes are doing video newscasts and morning announcements using the weather information. And as students go through the lessons, they learn how to predict weather. For example, they know how latitude affects climate."	**Innovation:** Students can gather and analyze real scientific data.	"It's not something my students are just reading in a textbook. We're teaching real science now; the kids *are* scientists."