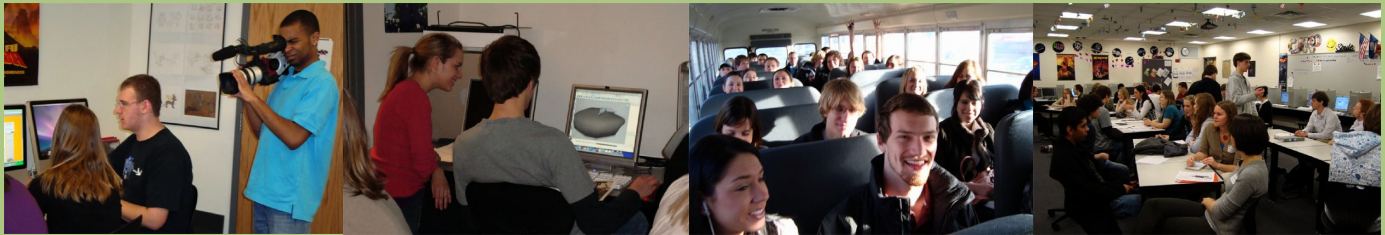


# ALTEC NEWSLETTER



MAY 2009

## SWATT Program: KU SOE Partners with Olathe School District

By Melanie Bacon, doctoral student in the SOE and staff member at ALTEC



Students in C&T 302, Integrating Technology into Middle and Secondary Education, are getting first-hand experience with the intricacies of educational game development this semester through the Students Working to Add Technology to Teaching Program (SWATT).

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Melinda Robino and Rusty Meigs, instructors in the e-Communications program at Olathe Northwest High School, are working with me to unite undergraduates at KU with high school students studying graphic design and game art and animation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century program. This idea grew from my personal experience teaching web design and game development at the high school level, along with the desire to model the use of virtual communication modalities to expand classroom walls and enrich learning opportunities for students.

My need supported a goal of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century program to provide students the opportunity to work with real clients, establish deadlines, and meet requirements in order to experience real-world demands of the profession. "Students are more likely to learn to problem solve in collaborative projects. When we teachers at ONW step back and let the students loose to work, that's

when the real learning begins," says Mrs. Robino.

KU students were paired up with ONW students and conducted a site visit to their campus in February. ONW hosts a Moodle server and provides support for virtual communication with students throughout the semester. Students use the online Moodle forums to post questions, feedback, and prototypes of games. Students also use Skype, a free video communication tool, to communicate with students in other classrooms.

The impact of the SWATT Program is already evident. Just last week ONW students participated in the KSTL competition in Manhattan and won 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the state for the work they are doing in the SWATT Program. KU students value the opportunity to learn from ONW students:

"This is a great learning experience not only for my student I'm paired with but for me and how it is easy to make teaching biology fun."  
-Leina Rogers

"As future teachers it is imperative that we keep up with technology and see the world through our students' eyes. This partnership has thrown us right into the action and

has given us a chance to talk with these students, teach these students, and learn from these students." -Jenny Mendez

This program is also making a difference for teachers and community members outside the program. Last month, ONW published a news announcement about a teacher who used Skype to communicate with parents during conferences because he worked in two buildings. His idea originated from the activities in the SWATT Program (see <http://tinyurl.com/ONWskype>).

ONW participants will be visiting campus on May 1 and will present their game development progress with KU students. Faculty and staff are invited to visit Room 201 on May 1, from 11 – 1:30, to hear explanations of each project. ONW design students will also participate in a campus tour thanks to Dr. Greg Thomas, Chair of Art & Design. SWATT games could become part of the ALTEC Learning Games available online for teachers and students.

#### **Links of interest:**

ONW e-Communications Program:

<http://www.eravens.net/>

State Media Competition:

<http://www.mace-ks.org/kstl/>

ALTEC Learning Games:

<http://matrixgames.altec.org>

Arcademic Skill Builders:

<http://arcademicskillbuilders.com>

## **WE ARE ASKING FOR YOUR HELP!**

As you may know, the 4Teachers.org online resources were developed with money from a U.S. Department of Education grant that began in 1995 and continued until 2005. Designed to help teachers improve instruction through the use of technology, tools such as TrackStar, RubiStar and Assign-A-Day became very popular over the years and are widely used throughout the world.

Since funding ended in 2005 we have been working on ways to keep the 4Teachers resources operating smoothly and, just as important, updated to meet the needs of 21st century users. One of our most popular tools, QuizStar, has changed to a subscription service and we hope it will succeed in providing teachers with a way to use online quizzes with their students. However, we at 4Teachers want to do everything we can to keep our other popular tools free and up-to-date. We need your help.

Your tax-deductible gift will help us keep the 4Teachers.org tools available to educators and students throughout the world. All donations will fund the staffing and equipment needed to maintain, update, and improve upon this suite of valuable resources. The expected cost of maintaining all of the free 4Teachers tools for the next year is \$200,000. We are making progress, but your donation will help us reach the goal.

<http://4teachers.org/support>

With your donation, we will be able to keep these tools free for teachers to use in their classrooms. We will also be able to enhance the tools you use every day with new features for the 21st century classroom. Imagine being able to rate TrackStar tracks, and being able to search for the best ones to use in your lessons. How would you use RubiStar if it allowed students and teachers to work together seamlessly to build rubrics? Your donation can help make that happen.

You can pledge your tax-deductible donation of \$10, \$25, or more through the University of Kansas Endowment Association. When you donate, you can choose to support a specific 4Teachers tool, or your gift can work to improve all of the 4Teachers resources. Please visit the 4Teachers Support page at <http://4teachers.org/support> for more information.

Thank you for your continued support as we strive to make the 4Teachers tools the most valuable resources they can be.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Ault

# Create Technology Rich Classrooms in Your District

ALTEC can help duplicate the TRC project in your district.



Elementary school classrooms across Kansas have been transformed into highly engaging and interactive learning environments thanks to an innovative program called Technology Rich Classrooms (TRC). In 2003, the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE), ALTEC, and Wexford set out to provide evidence that a technology-rich learning environment, combined with ongoing professional development, can significantly improve student learning in the areas of math, reading, and science.



ALTEC's role in TRC is to provide formal implementation of the project, evaluation, and program management. ALTEC's experienced staff provides systemic professional development, web-based instructional resources, a data reporting system, communication protocols, and an internet-based domain. Since its inception, TRC has transformed 228 classrooms in 80 school districts into technology-rich learning environments for students in grades three through six.

Each TRC classroom is first equipped with the minimum technology requirements needed to successfully implement the program:

2:1 student to computer ratio

Interactive whiteboard

Media projector

Digital still camera

Printer

Scanner

Internet access

Software to support instruction and curriculum projects.



Teachers then participate in a web-enhanced lesson-planning course called TRC Boot camp. They leave boot camp with the essential skills they need to begin using the technology in their classroom in effective ways. They are then provided with ongoing professional development, resources, and

support so they continue to grow their skills and implement them in new and exciting ways with their students.

On April 29, 2009, several TRC classrooms presented their latest projects at the 2009 TRC Classroom Celebration(need to say where?). Classrooms from around Kansas showcased the outstanding work they've been doing. Here is what teachers are saying about the TRC program:



The impact of technology on the ELL students at Riley has made the biggest impression on me! Such a different attitude about things that can be quite laborious for English Language Learners! I will never forget the time an ELL sixth grader was pulling on my shirtsleeve, anxiously wanting to know how to say what he wanted to say in English for the PowerPoint project he was creating. You could really see how technology could really level the playing field for this lower socio-economic group, too. It felt good sending them on to middle school with some strong technology skills.

~TRC Facilitator

The biggest change in teachers is, confidence. I see teachers becoming risk takers and planning engaging lessons with tech. Both of the teachers in the building seem to have more confidence with the Smart board, and they are using lessons that have hands-on capability.

~TRC Facilitator

Attendance has increased in our classes where TRC is implemented. Behavior and motivation have increased in our TRC classrooms. Our state assessment scores have increased dramatically in both math and reading. Teacher motivation has also increased as they become more familiar with the tools and their potential.

~TRC Facilitator

If you are interested in duplicating this project in your school or district, ALTEC can help. You can read more about TRC at the web site <http://trc.altec.org>. There you will read the latest news about TRC, best practice examples from TRC classrooms, and upcoming TRC events you won't want to miss!

**TRC is funded through the competitive portion of Title II.D funds for Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT).**



**Conference Calendar**  
**Meet ALTEC Staff at these Upcoming Conferences!**

**NECC 2009**

**National Educational Computing Conference**

**Date:** June 28-July 1, 2009

**Location:** Walter E. Washington Convention Center, Washington, D.C.

**Web site:**

<http://center.uoregon.edu/ISTE/NECC2009>

**SUMMER MACE 2009**

**Homegrown Visionaries Shaping the Future**

**Date:** July 23-24, 2009

**Location:** Wichita State University Metroplex, Wichita, KS

**Web site:** <http://www.mace-ks.org/>

**MITC 2009**

**MORENet Instructional Technology Conference**

**Date:** October 18-20, 2009

**Location:** Tan Tar A Resort, Osage Beach, MO

**Web site:**

<http://www.more.net/conferences/mitc/>

**2009 T+L Conference**

**Technology and Learning Conference**

**Date:** October 28-30, 2009

**Location:** Colorado Convention Center, Denver, CO

**Web site:** <http://www.nsba.org/tl/>

**ALTEC PROVIDES SERVICES TO SUPPORT YOUR EXISTING PROJECTS**

If you have an existing or proposed project, ALTEC can develop and host your Web site, support your online community with discussion boards, set up your video conference, or custom-design a software application to meet your needs. Propose stronger projects and programs using ALTEC's over 15 years of expertise in educational technology, special needs, professional development, and evaluation. Please call us at 785 864 0699 to set up a free consultation. We're happy to assist you with all your technology needs.

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