



netTrekker Educators Explore 21st Century Teaching and Learning

School Districts Maximize netTrekker Investment Returns With CyberSmart! Online Workshops.

In seeking to expand the conversation about what it means to be a 21st century learner and educator, netTrekker awarded several school districts around the United States with grants enabling teachers and other instructional staff to participate in a CyberSmart! Online Workshop on the topic of Authentic Learning and Creativity.

Hands-on Experience

Research shows that all teachers—even technology-savvy young teachers—have moderate to low confidence levels in their abilities to use online resources in support of 21st century learning. In response, CyberSmart! Online Workshops enable educators to experience the same kinds of learning they are

expected to encourage in the classroom, supporting increased use of netTrekker resources.

Diverse Teaching Challenges

Hailing from schools in Los Angeles, California; Fort Smith, Arkansas; Forsyth County, Georgia; Austin, Minnesota; and the Southern Oregon Education Service District; 20 educators participated in the workshop. Ranging in enrollment from small (4400 students) to extremely large (688,000 students), these districts fairly represent a cross section of student populations, learning needs, and teaching challenges. Participants in this professional learning community represented a variety of professional roles, including educators teaching from Kindergarten through 12th grade in the language arts, math and science, administration, and special needs areas.



“While working with my geometry students I would think back to some of the strategies I was exposed to in the CyberSmart! Workshop. This is what is so great in working in a collaborative environment; when the workload is split and work is shared, it gives a teacher time to investigate other creative, engaging lessons without being overwhelmed.”

*— Jessica Nelson
High School Math Teacher
Forsyth County, Georgia*



The Ten Percent Rule

In one workshop forum participants discussed the challenges of finding the planning time to develop instruction that engages students and prepares them for 21st century work and citizenship. They explored a clever solution in what came to be known as the “10 percent rule”—trying to change 10 percent of their lesson plans to authentic learning tasks each year. In other discussion forums and in a wiki, participants collaborated in developing such lessons.

While discussing in a workshop forum how to get started with practical authentic learning projects, participant Zena Johnston, a resource science teacher at South Forsyth High School, made the connection between authentic learning and netTrekker resources. “I was trying to find an affordable, fun way to show my students a timeline. On netTrekker I found an idea using toilet paper as a timeline and putting on sticky note events. It was on a fifth grade level but I can bring it up to a high school level.”

Fort Smith, Arkansas Technology Specialist George Lieux found the CyberSmart! Online Workshop helpful in designing staff development for his district that will encourage teacher use of netTrekker resources for communication, collaboration, problem solving, and other 21st century teaching and learning. They will also access and learn to use netTrekker teacher tools.

Impacting Instructional Practices

Ultimately, professional development should positively affect instructional practices in the classroom. At the conclusion of this CyberSmart! Online Workshop, the overwhelming majority of surveyed participants reported they are now more likely to use online resources and tools to increase student engagement in learning. Because these educators teach in schools that subscribe to netTrekker, the result is value-added for their district's netTrekker investment.

“...The expert videos in the CyberSmart! Knowledgebase are loaded with material—direct, short, and to the point. They provide easy-to-understand reasons for implementing technology in the district classroom in order for students to learn 21st Century skills through authentic learning.”

— George Lieux
District Student Assistance
Technology Academy Specialist
Fort Smith Public Schools Arkansas