


E-Learning.org

By Eva Kaplan-Leiserson

As the use of e-learning around the world grows, organizations of all types are getting involved. Last fall, I profiled governments

 "E-Learning.gov" (October 2002 *T+D*). This month, not-for-profits.

CARE. Working in more than 60 countries around the world, this international humanitarian organization aims

to find lasting solutions to poverty. Its CARE Academy Online, developed by Knowledge Anywhere, provides critical job aids for the organization's employees worldwide. One advantage of the e-learning approach: easy measurement and cost accountability for reporting back to donors.

The Urban League. This not-

for-profit helps empower African Americans to enter the economic and social mainstream. The league worked with Knowledge Anywhere to augment its employment and training program with Web-based courses that help laid-off workers boost their skills. After the addition of the courses, available to users 24/7, enrollment

Electronic learning is called to serve.

in the employment and training program rose by 50 percent and job placements increased by 20 percent.

Technology for All. Bringing technology to underserved communities is the goal of this not-for-profit, which benefits from the help of e-learning companies SkillSoft and Centra. Sponsor SkillSoft has granted e-learning scholarships to TFA through the SkillSoft E-Learning Foundation, and has also given the not-for-profit complete access to its online library of more than 4000 courses.

Synchronous learning supplier Centra provides TFA with its Web collaboration platform, CentraOne, which enables the not-for-profit to host meetings and training for program administrators at 300 partnering organizations. **PBS.** The Public Broadcasting Service offers PBS Campus www.pbs.org/campus a free Website listing distance learning courses in colleges and universities across the United States. Each course listed represents a partnership between PBS and the sponsoring school. PBS provides the course materials; the college provides the instructors, registers the students, and awards the credits and degrees.

More than 230,000 students earned credit from PBS distance learning courses in 2002. Since 1981, 6 million students have been awarded credit in PBS courses.

Thinking Outside of the Box Award

Systems engineering company Veridian was used to working with the intelligence community, the U.S. Department of Defense, and other U.S. government agencies—not with elementary schools. But several years ago, the company received a federal grant to use the virtual reality technology it usually applies to tank or military flight simulators to help educate children who are hearing impaired.

The Virtual Reality Education for Assisted Learning system helps children with severe hearing impairment learn abstract concepts often lost without sound. A three-dimensional virtual world made up of a post office, police and fire stations, a farm, a greenhouse, and a coastline (a hospital and planetarium are under construction) teaches children such important life skills as looking both ways before crossing a street, not talking to strangers, reading charts, and more.

The system debuted in Orlando, Florida, and is now running in other Florida elementary schools as well as schools in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C. Veridian hopes to expand the program to higher grades. Says one school's lab instructor about the Veridian engineers, "They're all teachers at heart."

 Source/Orlando Business Journal

How to Keep Classes Calm in Volatile Times

By Mick Mortlock

A popular vocal trio insults the U.S. President, a crucial election is decided in a courtroom, a jury in Los Angeles acquits a famous athlete accused of murdering his wife. External controversy can seep into classrooms, crippling learning. How do we keep classes calm and respectful in volatile times?

Set expectations up front. Define instructor and learner expectations in the first few minutes of class. Write them down, and post them for the duration of the course as a visible reminder.

Model respect at all times. If arguments break out, call a time-out, then model and insist on mutual respect. Remind learners of the ground rules they helped develop and the importance of unhampered learning to their success.

Use controversy as a teaching moment. Help learners examine and understand each side of an issue. Diverse views can lead to learning when there's open and honest communication.

Ensure everyone is heard. A class in the throes of controversy is a great opportunity for team-building. When people work through their concerns with colleagues, they learn to be mutually supportive.

Involve human resources. Work with HR to make sure that policies are in place to protect each employee and ensure a nonthreatening classroom for all.

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SurveySays

Workforce issues are high on the list of executives' strategic priorities, says a recent study on the High Performance Workforce by Accenture. Respondents chose workforce-related issues as four out of five of their top priorities. Three out of four respondents said that people issues were more important to their company's success than a year ago. But execs are concerned that their employees lack crucial skills, which could interfere with their company's success.

Other findings of the study, which polled executives in the United States, Europe, and Australia:

- The **top four priorities** of execs were attracting and retaining skilled staff, changing organizational culture and employee attitudes, changing leadership and management behaviors, and improving workforce performance.
- About 75 percent of respondents said their companies increased or **maintained their HR and t&d budgets** over the past year; only 17 percent said that they are "very satisfied" with the progress they've made.
- A key factor hindering satisfaction is **lack of measurement**; 40 percent of companies said their organizations don't regularly measure the business impact of HR and t&d initiatives.

For a copy of the study or executive summary (you must register) www.accenture.com/xd/xd.asp?it=enweb&xd=services/hp/research/hp_study.xml

If you're sitting or typing for many hours a day, you can probably feel it in your neck, back, shoulders, and so on. Fortunately, there's My Daily Yoga www.mydailyyoga.com, a Website that offers simple exercises you can do to relieve stiffness or soreness. I especially like the animations, which work much better than a series of diagrams to explain the exercises.

Smartlink

Training Program of the Month

Gandhi said that you need to be the change you see in the world. The Rockwood Leadership Program, which provides training to managers at organizations working for social change, is based on that premise. Founded by 20-year Greenpeace veteran André Carothers, the program helps leaders not only improve such

organizational skills as presentation, teambuilding, coaching, and more, but also improve themselves with training on personal vision and calling, intuition and decision making, and inner alignment and self-care. Also offered are an advanced program and custom consulting. Says Carothers in an inter-

view by *Utne*, "Our training encourages activists to look inside and find out which part of them is contributing to their political and social goals, and which is not.... You can't get a group to work together successfully without taking care of their hearts and souls." Sources/Utne and www.rockwoodfund.org.

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