

RONALD C. FORTUNATO

Ron Fortunato is an innovator in the development and implementation of educational technology. He is one of the original five **Christa McAuliffe Educators** in the country selected by the **National Foundation for the Improvement of Education**. He co-designed and taught the two-week, Christa McAuliffe Institute at Stanford University for a national group of educators to establish a lead educational restructuring group for the United States.

Ron is a **NASA Teacher in Space Finalist** from Virginia, and a **NASA Space Ambassador** for the United States. He designed and implemented an international student space flight project for the **National Space Sciences Academy** taught at Stanford University. This prototype program was a joint business and education partnership involving **Stanford University, the European Space Agency, Canada, Japan, NASA Ames Research Center, NASA Headquarters, and Lockheed Missiles and Space**.

He also designed and was project manager for the **NORSTAR Project**, the first student-run space flight project ever flown on a space shuttle (Discovery). The project included the definition, design, fabrication, testing, analysis, and publishing the results of an acoustical experiment for a space shuttle flight in partnership with the **NASA Langley Research Center**. The **NORSTAR Project** was the example of a partnership between a public school system and private and public agencies from the community, and was selected as the prototype program for the **National Space Sciences Academy**. While in Norfolk, Virginia, he also developed a robotics program featuring the instruction of robotics fundamentals, computer programming, and interfacing between microcomputers and industrial robots. He then served as Director of Instructional Technology for the **Norfolk Public Schools**, where he developed strategies, funding and budget for numerous technology integration and professional development programs. His responsibilities included the integration of technology into the district-wide curriculum for 40,000 students and 65 K-12 schools.

Ron's recent work included a partnership with the **Distance Learning Resource Network (DLRN), and Digital Concepts, Inc. (DCI)** where he designed and developed an online **Star Schools Showcase** integrating metadata standards with interactive database technologies to showcase Star Schools project resources. The interface allowed use of the full capacity of multimedia resources the projects have created and allows the user to interact, explore and acquire these resources. This system is built on an object-oriented database allowing DLRN to repurpose project resources coding them as learning objects.

The learning interface and metadata toolset combination provides implementation capability for the following specific US Department of Education "No Child Left Behind" initiatives:

Supports the design, development, collaboration and distribution of a national technology strategic plan

Allows for best practices of education content, curriculum, and training models to be showcased and linked to appropriate research, evaluation and assessment, and professional development

The internet-based Star Schools Showcase utilizes the *Knowledge Builder Interface* designed and developed by **Power Learning Solutions** (Ron's Company) which allows users of different learning styles to interact, explore, learn, build custom media journals and acquire products and services. These tasks are accomplished via the Metasoft metadata tagging technologies developed by Digital Concepts. Star Schools products and services content were repurposed into learning objects. DCI's tools were utilized to index across multiple taxonomies (e.g., objectives,

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discipline areas, competency levels, etc.) and multiple domains and metadata repositories (SCORM and IMS), allowing the user to search, locate, acquire and utilize Star Schools products and services.

Ron is also working with **NASA** to design and develop online educational simulations and games utilizing NASA content. He has obtained formal Memorandum of Understanding and In-Kind documents from NASA to support his work in this area.

Ron just completed the development of an online, project-based enhanced curriculum project proposal for **Think.com**, developer of internet tools for educators and students. Think.com is a non-profit organization created by **Oracle**.

Ron recently consulted for the **Virtual Hi-Tech High School** project in San Bernardino County, California, helping to design some of their professional development and technology programs, and perform public relations work.

As a senior partner in the **Confluence International Group**, he designed and implemented exciting real-world project environments and business/industry partnerships in districts throughout the United States. He co-designed and facilitated strategic/vision planning workshops for the **National School Boards Association**, along with many other national educational technology implementation activities. He subsequently helped to develop and write strategic plans for school districts, entrepreneurial technology companies, and federal grants. Throughout the multiple initiatives he has worked on, he has presented and delivered several hundred conference keynotes, presentations and workshops.

While a Senior Scientist at **Bolt, Beranek and Newman** (the company which created and developed the internet) he helped to design and implement school-wide Project Based Learning programs in districts around the United States, as part of the America 2000/Goals 2000 initiative (The Co-NECT project). He designed and implemented worldwide collaborative projects for the **Department of Defense Dependent Schools** to demonstrate the application of advanced high-bandwidth technologies for curriculum delivery and professional development to the staff of Vice President Gore, Secretary of Education Riley, the Office of Science and Technology Programs (White House), the Defense Modeling and Simulations Office and the Department of Defense.

Ron was the Project Manager of the Timeless Math product line for **The Lightspan Partnership, Inc.** As Project Manager he designed and developed interactive television and Internet products for education, including the international award-winning **World Concept for Timeless Math**. These products won the **1996 New York Festival of Animation World Medal Award for Interactive Media; the 1997 Telly Awards Film/Video Education Award for non-network programming; the 1997 Los Angeles International Animation Competition (finalist) for Best Animation Produced for Game Platforms; and were a 1998 Telly Award Finalist in the Multimedia Category.**

While at **Lightspan**, Ron was also the Curriculum Field Liaison, Senior Manager of Curriculum & Instruction for Marketing Development, and the Director of Curriculum and Implementation for School Marketing Development. As Director for School Marketing Development, he was additionally responsible for managing partnerships including: **United States Lieutenant Governors Association, Microsoft/Compaq's Windows School Connection, the U.S. Department of Education's Comprehensive School Reform Program, Federal Grants and**

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Funding Initiatives, and was involved with Lightspan's research and evaluation programs. He was responsible for the design, development and delivery of federal grant workshops and grant-writing processes and templates. He conducted grant-writing workshops nationwide, and helped many districts with grant writing and support. Districts across the country received approximately

\$20 million in federal grant monies due to these efforts. He also served as Executive Director of Special Internet Projects where he developed strategies for internet-based collaborative multiplayer products, so that students, teachers and parents may study, work and play together from homes and schools anywhere.

Ron is currently President of **Power Learning Solutions**, a developer of educational curriculum, games and internet portals, and which designs and implements powerful internet distance learning and professional development educational projects. These collaborative programs promote higher-order thinking skills in all-ages of students around the world. He is also helping Global Knowledge Exchange (Florence McGinn, former United States Commissioner, Web-based Education Commission) to develop online projects and professional development support for the Asian K-12 market.

Other Awards and Recognition

In addition to his NASA and Christa McAuliffe Educator awards, he has received the following recognition:

- Selected as Distinguished Educator by the editors of Electronic Learning Magazine
- Selected as the Technology Teacher of the Year by the Consortium for Interactive Instruction
- Finalist for the Smithsonian/Computerworld Awards

Ron received a Bachelor of Science in Zoology from Iowa State University of Science and Technology, with a double minor in Microbiology and Russian Language; and a Master of Science in Oceanography from Old Dominion University where he also taught mathematics.