



MathAmigo. Your Helping Hand.

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News Release

For Immediate Release

Valiant and Education Technology Think Tank Kick Off Project to Help High-Poverty Schools Improve Math Skills, Ready Tomorrow's Workforce

Brooklyn educators visit Jamesburg, N.J., school to see MathAmigo in action

FOREST PARK, Ill. (April 20, 2005) – Valiant USA, a provider of innovative K-12 science- and math-based technology products, today announces its partnership with the Education Technology Think Tank (ET³) to address math literacy in high-poverty schools.

ET³ and its TEC Watch Alliance seek to mobilize community stakeholders to eliminate the achievement gap and disaffection of youth in urban settings. Partnering in this cause are Valiant USA, providing *MathAmigo*[™] software and training; AlphaSmart, donating Dana computer companions with training support; and the New York City Department of Education. In addition, the Department of Education and Office of Academic Technology at Medgar Evers College and Rutgers University Center for Math and Science Education are providing professional development and project evaluation.

Together, the seven entities are introducing the technology-based program of *MathAmigo* software delivered on Dana handhelds to PS 161 Crown School in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, one of New York City's poorest neighborhoods. The study designed by Rutgers University will examine how the program affects the teaching and learning of math. During the project, educators receive pre-service and in-service professional development to help them improve math education through technology. Evaluation of program accomplishments and outcomes will be conducted in the 2005-2006 school year.

The collaborative project kicks off today with a visit by Brooklyn educators to JFK Elementary School in Jamesburg, N.J., to observe classrooms successfully using *MathAmigo*.

Harriet Schweitzer, co-director of Rutgers Center for Math and Science Education, has been studying the use of *MathAmigo* with handhelds for several years. She notes that teachers appreciate the scope of individualized learning programs aligned to standards, as well as the tracking of students' progress on an individual, class and school level. "Students are excited about learning mathematics because of *MathAmigo*," said Schweitzer. "They actually learn math concepts, often for the first time, and have a great time doing it."

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The first phase of the project was launched during meetings convened by ET³ in conjunction with its honorary co-chairs, U.S. Rep. Major Owens (D-NY) and Dr. Edison Jackson, president of Medgar Evers College. While visiting PS 161 Crown School, Rep. Owens expressed his appreciation for this project, which continues the long-term *Harnessing Technology to Empower the Community* campaign he advocates. Rep. Owens stated, “This technology-based project offers a creative solution to a significant educational need of fostering math skills,” which are critical for students to compete for jobs in an increasingly technological world.

“*MathAmigo* and Dana provide a powerful teaching and learning environment for every student no matter what their background,” said Dave Catlin, managing director of Valiant. “We hope that this partnership model will be replicated across the country to address the issues of student motivation in science and math and student achievement.”

About MathAmigo

MathAmigo is K-8 standards-based math software for handhelds. It features more than 2,500 activities on topics ranging from counting to pre-algebra at a fraction of the cost of other comprehensive math products. The activities test students’ understanding of concepts, offer an engaging platform to practice their knowledge and encourage problem solving. Students can use the program daily without repeating a question. The PC-based *MathAmigo Manager* enables teachers to quickly and easily plan daily math lessons individualized to each student, from struggling to gifted learners, and provide instant feedback. Teachers can monitor student progress and create assessment reports that illustrate students’ needs.

About Valiant USA

Valiant USA, based in Forest Park, Ill., is a wholly owned subsidiary of Valiant Technology, Ltd., headquartered in London. Valiant USA was established in 2004, and serves the K-12 U.S. education market. The company’s mission is to provide educational technology products that help students fulfill their potential by teaching them to think, to understand and to use their knowledge in creative and positive ways. The company’s science and math product line includes robotic educational tools, *Roamer*® and *Turtle*; the design technology kit, *Inventa*™; and the electronics kit, *Tronix*®; the control and data logging product, *SenSci*®; as well as the math software, *MathAmigo*™. For more information, visit www.mathamigo.com or call 888-366-6628.

About Education Technology Think Tank and TEC Watch Alliance

The Education Technology Think Tank (ET³) is a nonprofit organization committed to improving the conditions of the growing digital divide throughout America. It accomplishes its mission by creating forums for exchange of information for various education stakeholders: educators, private sector, community-based groups, and government; and by catalyzing technology partnerships to achieve economic and educational empowerment in traditionally underserved communities. Its TEC Watch Alliance is a comprehensive community action model that mobilizes education stakeholders around technology to create an Ecology of Community Renewal for youth and their families. For more information, visit www.et3online.org.

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Editor’s Note: Pictures of the school visits can be viewed and downloaded at www.cblohm.com/pages/news.html

