



Ronald C. Fortunato
United States McAuliffe Educator & NASA Space Ambassador
President, Trillium Learning

Ron Fortunato is a pioneer and innovator in the development and implementation of educational technology. He is one of the original five Christa McAuliffe Educators in the USA selected by the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, and a **NASA Space Ambassador for the United States**. His understanding of teaching and learning processes, real world project-based learning and program implementation enable him to design and produce effective academic and business training solutions. A best-in-practice exemplary teacher, Ron is a national and international keynote speaker on the development of 21st Century learning environments.

Ron is President of **Trillium Learning**, and his current activities include the development of international, collaborative, performance-based learning projects and professional development services for Asian, U.S. K-12 and university markets. The Global Language & Culture Project (GLCP), associated with the U.S. Department of Education's Foreign Language Assistance Program, is a model for worldwide authentic classrooms that participate in activities where students teach and learn language and culture from each other. GLCP demonstrates the processes for teaching the global student, and training the global teacher, while integrating life-long learning skill pedagogies with educational technology. His work supports departments of education in the USA, China and Taiwan engaged in the development of systemic globalization efforts, and the integration of multidisciplinary/multilevel curriculum, educational technology and STEM.

Ron began his teaching career for the Norfolk, Virginia Public Schools, where he 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.

Ron was selected a NASA Teacher in Space Finalist from Virginia, and is currently 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. After his selection as a national Christa McAuliffe Educator, he co-designed and taught at the Christa McAuliffe Institute at Stanford University to establish a lead educational restructuring group for the United States. 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 district-wide strategies, funding and budgets for numerous technology integration and professional development programs for 40,000 students and 65 K-12 schools.

Ron then chose to help a national educational audience becoming a **Senior Partner in the Confluence International Group**, where he designed and implemented project based, real-world learning 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.

He became a **Senior Scientist for the Educational Technologies Division of Bolt, Beranek and Newman (the company which created and developed the internet, now owned by Verizon)** where he helped to design and implement school-wide Project Based Learning programs in districts around the United States and internationally. 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 continued in the educational business sector, becoming the ***Project Manager of the Timeless Math product line for The Lightspan Partnership, Inc responsible for the design and development of 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. His evolving responsibilities at Lightspan included Curriculum Field Liaison, Senior Manager of Curriculum & Instruction for Marketing Development, and the Director of Curriculum and Implementation for School Marketing Development, 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 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, and received Lightspan's President's Award.

Ron's additional work included a ***partnership with the Distance Learning Resource Network (U.S. Department of Education)***, 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 internet-based Star Schools Showcase utilizes the *Knowledge Builder Interface* designed and developed by Ron allows users of different learning styles to interact, explore, learn, build custom media journals and acquire products and services. Star Schools products and services content were repurposed into learning objects, and indexed across multiple taxonomies (e.g., objectives, 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 continues to ***work with NASA to design and develop highest quality educational simulations and games utilizing advanced NASA open-source applications and content***. He obtained a formal Memorandum of Understanding under the Space Act Agreement and In-Kind support from NASA for this initiative.

Other Awards and Recognition

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

- 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
- Phi Kappa Phi National Honors Society
- Excellence in Education Award, Virginia Tech

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

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