



## Case Study with Carolyn Gardner

Carolyn Gardner, the lead senior facilitator with eNetColorado, has been using the Intel® Teach Elements Courses to provide professional development for teachers across Colorado since the program's inception in 2010. Before that, she was a Master teacher and was actively involved with the Intel® Teach program from the beginning.

Carolyn has facilitated a number of courses prior to Inquiry in the Science Classroom, including *Project-Based Approaches*, *Thinking Critically with Data*, *Assessment in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Classrooms*, and *Collaboration in the Digital Classroom*. While she maintains the lead training role, she also has trained co-facilitators who help with the courses. Carolyn finds this training model to be the most useful and responsive to her participants. She adds, "I like the fact that we have a backup in each of the courses so that there is always someone who our participants can contact if necessary."

### Preparation

To prepare for the Science Inquiry course, Carolyn used the facilitation guide, action plans, marketing materials, and supplemental discussion questions found in the online Implementation Toolkit. She adapted the materials to more closely relate to the experiences and needs of her Colorado teachers. Carolyn also submitted the online course syllabus to a state university for graduate credit, and recommends ordering course CDs as a back-up plan for participants who may have Internet connectivity issues.

### Facilitation

Carolyn facilitated the Science Inquiry course online using a learning management system with asynchronous communication tools. Her blended learning courses include up to six hours of online web conferencing components, interactive tutorials, exercises, individual work, and facilitated discussions.

The primary means of communication between course participants was the online discussion forum, through which Carolyn posted questions related to each module. Participants were required to reply to the weekly discussion question and also respond to at least two or three other cohorts within the group. According to Carolyn, these discussions are one of the most positive experiences with course facilitation. She states, "Many ideas are always shared and everyone, including the facilitators, benefit. The sharing of new tools, new websites, and new resources is always top-notch. In fact, I have become great friends with many of the participants and stay in contact with them."

In addition to the online discussion, Carolyn hosted three live webinars during the course to discuss topics relevant to the readings and encourage collaboration and shared learning among the group. Participants were also encouraged to register for the monthly webinars offered by Intel, and Carolyn

reports that many have taken advantage of the opportunity to learn more about best teaching practices that enhance their learning in the course. Carolyn also required course participants to upload their Action Plans weekly. She notes, "My facilitators and I can stay closely connected and updated with what each participant is developing for their plan."

## **Outcomes**

Following completion of the Science Inquiry course, Carolyn reported that the participants came away with a deeper understanding of knowing how inquiry strategies can be incorporated in *all* subject areas, not just science. She adds that her participants noted the importance of applying inquiry-based strategies across subjects to "help build creativity and higher-level thinking."

She attributes this level of understanding to the course readings and resources, the discussion forum, and the Action Plan that participants develop in response to their personalized teaching situation and student needs. According to Carolyn, "The Action Plan is one of the strongest components of the course. Our participants feel they can incorporate their plan right away." The Action Plan gives teachers a roadmap for implementing both short-term as well as long-term goals. In fact, Carolyn reports that teachers update their plan and continue to build it further as they teach. She adds, "Our participants feel that the Action Plans and the course resource files are key. The up-to-date resource files are something that they always can come back to and find another resource to use and incorporate."

## **Future Plans**

Currently, Carolyn is facilitating the *Designing Blended Learning* course through eNetColorado, and continues to see significant improvements in the teaching approaches applied by her participants. She asserts, "I am so convinced that all teachers need to take the Elements courses. The background information is so beneficial and always up-to-date as well as high-quality. These courses not only help them build a strong plan that they can actually use, but also gives all of our participants a place that they can return to find additional resources that will help them and their students. It's a *true caring community*. A community in which all can stay connected and continue to learn." Carolyn's experiences with facilitating the Science Inquiry course have affirmed her belief that the courses offered by eNetColorado help participants become much better teachers and facilitators for all of their students.

Intel® Teach Elements: [www.intel.com/teachers](http://www.intel.com/teachers)

Teachers Engage Community: <http://engage.intel.com>