

Packetville Press

Newsletter for Educators

Did you know?

There's a site dedicated to ensuring that women are fully represented in the influential world of information technology and computing?

The National Center for Women and Information Technology or NCWIT (http://www.ncwit.org/what_mission.html) tackles gender-related issues such as innovation and competitiveness, jobs, and social impact. The site includes a special section for K-12 schools, which provides guidelines related to role modeling, encouragement, recruitment, and classroom practices and pedagogy.

Check out *Women & IT in the News* for some great motivational stories for your students, and don't forget to introduce them to *Careers in IT* and NCWIT's *Digital Library*.

And you'll want to browse through NCWIT's blog. It's packed with articles and links that will help you lessen that great gender divide when it comes to IT careers.

Have you seen Packetville's MP3 lessons?



Think Differently

We read in the media that we need a new way of teaching students—that we should *think differently* about how girls and boys learn. Why aren't girls taking the courses they need in mathematics, science, and technology at the pre-college and college levels that will qualify them to move into career opportunities in these fields? Why do so many boys opt out of the more difficult courses in high school and sometimes opt out of school altogether?

As for the girls, research tells us that most continue to go into what have long been considered *women's occupations*. Most who select computer-related fields, for example, have jobs that feature clerical or secretarial-type skills. According to the Women's College Coalition, Mount Holyoke College (academic.org/surprise.html), "Girls begin to go underground with their talents and abilities sometime between fifth and ninth grades." The reason often given is that teachers and teaching materials target boys because boys are more aggressive and demand more attention.

Another reason seems to be how girls view themselves. At the age when they need to start concentrating on taking more difficult courses in math, science and tech, they are faced with peer pressure. While peer pressure can sometimes propel them into excellent career preparation, often preteen and teen peer pressure leads more toward traditional female roles.

As for the boys, they know that they are

expected to do well, but if they don't pay attention in beginning courses, they won't get the foundation they need to move ahead successfully. Many boys enjoy fooling around and showing off in class rather than being serious about their work. Extracurricular activities often become more important to them than schoolwork, and they don't put in the time they need on their studies.



We hear, *teachers teach to boys*, but also, *schools are designed for girls*, which doesn't seem to make much sense. What does make sense is that some students aren't achieving as they should.

Good teachers have always worked hard to help each student achieve the best, but sometimes they don't have the time or materials to teach as they'd like. With the growth of the Internet,

resources are available to support teachers. *Technology & Learning* (techlearning.org) and *ISTE* (iste.org) offer suggestions for thinking differently about using computers to enhance learning; *Engineer Girl* (engineergirl.org/) and *Girls Go Tech* (girlsgotech.org/) encourage girls to consider tech-related careers; online articles like *Raising Boys* (pbs.org/parents/raisingboys/school.html) help us understand the problems many boys face in school; and our own *Packetville* community (www.cisco.com/go/packetville) provides lessons, activities, and resource materials that can be used to enhance learning related to technologies, careers, and community service.

What's new in Packetville as of Fall 2006?

- Lessons for **Penny's Search** are now available online. Use them to reinforce the learning in the Penny's Search game and to challenge the creative talents of your students. All Packetville lessons are tied to ISTE standards and include resource materials and assessment ideas.
- You'll find the **Packetville Tour** a perfect quick guide to the site for your students and their parents. Download it in pdf format to hand out or put it to use online.
- **Ask Peter** has been updated with answers to your questions, and in the student sections of Packetville, the Internet IQ quiz is now interactive. Why not check your INet IQ?

Global E-Learning

Preparing Tomorrow's Technology Leaders

Consider:

1. Cisco's Packetville (for students ages 8-14) and Cisco's Networking Academy (for students in high school and college) are leading the way in global e-learning. Both are communities of learners who are on the path to the future—a future where their skills will be in demand.
2. Packetville offers students an excellent foundation both in understanding of the Internet and in learning about exciting careers in IT. It's packed with activities and content young people enjoy and is an ideal setting for encouraging girls to consider moving forward in curricular areas such as math, science, and technology. The Packet Riders and Hacker Busters of Packetville will be well prepared to move on into the more advanced learning in the Networking Academy.
3. The Networking Academy is designed to provide students with the Internet technology skills essential in a global economy. Academy curriculum features web-based content, online assessment, hands-on labs, instructor training and support, and preparation for industry standard certifications. Students in over 150 countries are studying Academy curriculum and over a million and a half students have entered the Academy since its inception in 1997.
4. Packetville and the Networking Academy are anytime, anywhere learning—what is needed to be competitive in the 21st century.

Packetville

<http://www.cisco.com/go/packetville>

Networking Academy

<http://www.cisco.com/web/learning/netacad/index.html>

Do You Know Your Way Through Packetville?

After signing up for Packetville, you are given access to everything on the site. Although you'll find the Educator area the most valuable, the student areas will be useful to you because they include student activities you can use in your classroom. You may also want to check out the Parent and Advisor sections for additional ideas.

It is the lesson plans, units and teaching resources that set the *Educator* area apart from the other areas of the site. These resources are divided into two sections, the *Packet Riders* section for younger students (approximately 8-11 years old) and the *Hacker Busters* section for students a bit older (approximately 12-14 years old). The materials at both levels target the same content but in a slightly different way. There are, in addition, some lessons and activities that are not covered in both areas.

Let's suppose you want to do more than just have your students play the *Peter Packet* game. You're looking for ways to reinforce the learning in the game, which includes information about servers, routers, wireless communication, community service, and careers. Just head to *Instructional Materials* and click on *Lessons & Units*. There you'll find lessons, teaching materials, assessment ideas, and information about the International Society for Technology in Education National Education Standards (ISTE-NETS).

You can modify the lesson suggestions to include a variety of other resource materials that are available on the site. All of Packetville's characters, for example, are available as jpeg images that you and your students can use, and the music can be downloaded for student projects.

Take the time to look at the plethora of resources available in Packetville, and don't forget that introducing your students to the content on the Packetville site will give them a strong foundation in learning about how the Internet works and how to use its resources wisely and efficiently. The site is, in addition, designed to motivate both the girls and the boys in your classes to consider preparing for careers in Information Technology.

See you in Packetville!

