

Teachers step from classrooms to high-tech, financial jobs

Eight-week fellowship program in the private sector pays educators to learn different skills

BY SARAH HOLCOMB

Milpitas teachers learned lessons outside the classroom this summer as they participated in an eight-week fellowship program in the private sector. The program, called Industry Initiatives for Science and Math Educators, or IISME, brings teachers into local high-tech, financial and other industries to learn about the private sector.

Eric Orque, a history teacher at Rancho Milpitas Middle School, is working at Lockheed Martin this summer. Orque said he is working on a Web site he built last summer in the same program.

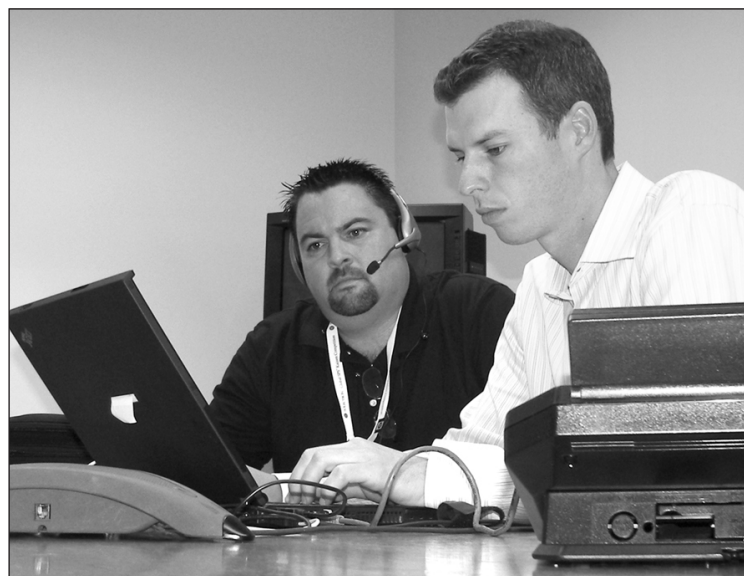
"The idea is to be out in the workforce to see what's being done," Orque said. "Then we take whatever's learned back into the classroom with us."

Orque explained that the private sector is largely different than the work environment teachers in public education face each day.

"We tend to forget what the workplace is like," Orque said. "Being in public education is a lot different than what most people experience. Most students are not going to be teachers, so going into private industries and having that connection and knowledge of being there helps teachers prepare students for that environment."

Orque participated in the program last summer to fulfill a requirement for his master's degree. Karin Laube, a fourth- and fifth-grade teacher at Sinnott Elementary School, also joined the program last year as part of her master's degree coursework.

Laube is spending the sum-



Industry Initiatives for Science and Math Educators matches teachers with Silicon Valley businesses during summer break. Here teachers Stephen Torode and Jeremy Cunningham work at Solectron in Milpitas.

Photo courtesy of IISME

mer at SVB Silicon Valley Bank in the information technology department. She's making diagrams for different process flows using Microsoft Visio.

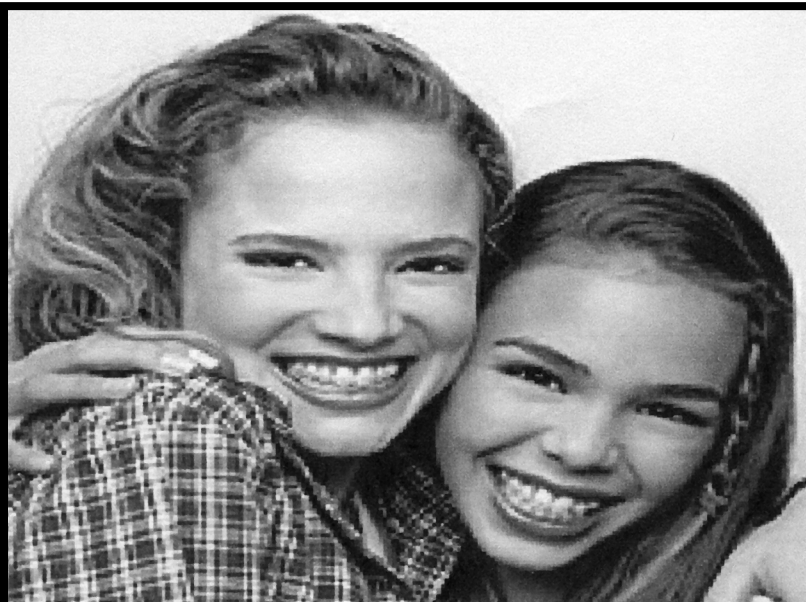
Like Orque, she first heard about the program through her graduate studies. Her focus for her master's degree was information technology, so IISME gave

her an opportunity to get hands-on experience.

"I thought the opportunity was good last year and I felt refreshed the following school year," Laube said. "Working in a different environment gave me a different perspective on my job. I realized teaching was for me, not the corporate world."

She said with the younger students, she doesn't take the same lessons away from her summer position regarding the workplace. Instead, she said she will be able to apply the process flow diagrams to academic processes in the classroom.

"I plan on using the system I'm learning, Visio, to make graphic organizers for my classroom," she said. "It can be used for reading comprehension, organizing writing and math concepts."



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