

Students & teachers speak out about STARLAB . . .

"STARLAB is a wonderfully exciting experience for all involved. As instructors we see all the benefits beginning with in-class instruction to the thrill of going through the tunnel into a nighttime setting, to being able to recognize the constellations."

"STARLAB is motivational. It is a high-tech teaching tool that you can walk in, plug it in and it's ready. It is so usable and it focuses the children on the natural world."

— Teachers, Connetquot Central School District of Islip, NY

"I like STARLAB, it is fun and interesting. It is cool. It is like sitting in your backyard looking at the stars, but it's better because you are closer up to the stars."

"I loved STARLAB. I had fun and learned a lot. Maybe I liked it because my aunt teaches me about stars. Like what their names are. Not as much as STARLAB does."

"I think that STARLAB was a fun learning experience. I liked how you can look at the continents from inside. I liked finding constellations with a flashlight."

"Excellent! That's what STARLAB really is!"

— Students, Connetquot Central School District of Islip, NY

"I was so impressed with STARLAB that I asked how I could get it to [my school]. . . . [It] is an excellent teaching tool that combines all study areas . . . We can measure stars for math, discuss sound waves for science and talk about their eyes dilating for health. . . . They are so excited to learn because their interest is really piqued when they come inside."

—Teacher, St. Alban's Episcopal School, Waco, TX

"The children loved it. They absolutely loved it."

—Librarian, Banyan Creek Elementary School, Delray Beach, FL

"This is a really powerful way to get kids to understand the relationship between the sun and the moon. . . . Astronomy involves learning about three-dimensional moving things. Without this, it's much harder. You have to go back to the blackboard."

—Teacher, Wellesley High School, Wellesley MA

"It's a whole new world!"

"Cool!"

"Are these the stars that are outside? It feels like we're outside!"

— Students, Camden-Frontier Elementary School, Hillsdale, MI

"It is the most realistic encounter with the night sky available during school hours on school grounds . . . you can make it fit your lessons."

—Teacher, Henderson Independent School District, Henderson, TX

"I had no idea it would be like this. It's so realistic. This will open a whole new world for the kids."

—Teacher, Sacred Heart School, Southaven, TN

"I saw that every class was more excited than the next. That's when I thought it would be great if every school had a chance to experience this."

—Teacher, Anna Reynolds School, Newington, CT

"It's dark and like an igloo, but when you go inside it shows constellations — it was neat because I saw the same ones at night in the sky."

— Student, Anna Reynolds School, Newington, CT

"STARLAB provides a unique way for students to experience the relationships of time, stars, and lunar cycles. I feel 100x better—prepared to teach astronomy!"

—Teacher, Tyler, TX

"The introduction of STARLAB was a landmark in educational technology. Since the 1950s, it had been an accepted expectation that technology would transform education. Television was going to allow master teachers to lecture in every classroom, every day. Then filmstrips and tape recorders and filmloop projectors would bring the world outside into every classroom. Next it was videotapes and soon CD-ROMS which would be bringing in the world. Soon we were expecting that computers, not television, would replace teachers, and would allow custom learning plans for every student. Oh, wait, now it is the World Wide Web which will do all these things; sometime real soon.

Half a century later, none of these technologies has worked the educational miracles that we expected. They are useful tools, alright, but none has solved major problems or given us transforming new paradigms for education.

But one technology quietly worked a revolution in the teaching of astronomy: STARLAB. It wasn't so much hi-tech as it was brilliantly designed low-tech. The end result was putting a powerful new technology into the hands of thousands of individual teachers, who did not require a backup cast of experts to program their lessons, develop animation and sound effects, or create canned programs. Instead, STARLAB allowed each teacher with modest training to work quickly and easily with a three-dimensional domed sky filled with stars. This sky could be produced in a few minutes, used for lecture or hands-on activity or student projects, and then packed away just as quickly. The power and imagination remains in the hands of the teacher and his/her students, not in the domain of some distant producers of mass media.

I think we are returning to an understanding of the importance of the individual teacher and of the crucial relation between teacher and student. Technology which gets in the way, or even seeks to replace this personal relationship, hasn't worked and may never work. But technology which truly becomes a tool to expand the powers of the teacher does work: STARLAB is the best example the 20th Century produced."

— Alan J. Friedman, Director, New York Hall of Science, New York, NY