Digital video and case studies are revolutionizing teacher-preparation practices. In fact, affordability of digital video has generated new opportunities for pre-service and in-service teachers. Videotaped lessons allow teachers to reflect on their own practices and to discuss tensions or issues that affect teaching and learning in a manner that was not possible before (Sherin, 2003). Research suggests that the discussion of teaching cases, and even more, the construction of their own cases by teachers produces a significant effect on the way they teach (Barnett, 1998; Barnett & Friedman, 1997): teachers assume their role as being more reform-oriented and supportive of student-centered activities, using constructionist and collaborative learning environments. This reflective practice is expanding, since many school districts and colleges of education (Moore Johnson, 2002), as well as professional associations, such as National Board for Professional Teacher Standards (NBPTS, 2002), are demanding that teachers, or future teachers, document and reflect on their professional practices. During 2001-2002 alone, there were 7894 National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) and the figure is increasing. Building digital portfolios is a prerequisite for national certification.

To pursue the opportunities for improving their skills using video cases, teachers must overcome their fears of technology. Then they can build their digital portfolios and discuss them. Failure to use video cases to improve teaching deprives American education of significant resources. Teachers need these resources, since No Child Left Behind has called the educational community’s attention to the challenge of improving the quality of teaching and the professional development of teachers.

As a response to this technological and political challenge, the Concord Consortium and TERC have formed a strategic alliance to produce and test VideoPaper Builder 2 (VPB2). The powerful VPB2 is a robust, user-friendly and free software that allows teachers to build their own interactive video cases of a
lesson worthy of pedagogic or content analysis. In order to make a teaching case, the teacher focuses on one storyline and incorporates digital video, still images, surrounding material to enhance viewer understanding of the lesson. The teacher then invites viewers to reflect on the case study. Teachers do not need advanced technical expertise to use VPB2; computer-literate teachers, working on Mac or Windows platforms, can use VPB2 to generate their own videopapers. Any Internet Java-based browser can display the product, an HTML-coded video case.

Presenters from TERC and Concord Consortium will demonstrate how to build a videopaper using VideoPaper Builder 2 in the proposed interactive session. We will use video clips, digital images, and hypertexts. The audience will view sample videopapers and analyze their major characteristics, as well as the way they were created.

Participants will be encouraged to join the VideoPaper Builder online community, in which teachers share their findings while they build and use videopapers, noting their problems and insights throughout the process. Participants will also be invited to join the National Digital Library of VideoPapers on Mathematics and Science Education, a project that intends to organize a national network of contributors and reviewers of teacher-created videopapers, and to disseminate these educational resources using a national digital library.

Facilitators of the interactive session will be Alvaro Galvis (Concord Consortium) and Ricardo Nemirovsky (TERC), two of the leaders of the Videopaper initiative.

References