



## Cobb County eSchool Uses Wimba to Energize K-12 Students

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*-Cheryl Rowley, Administrator, eHigh School, Cobb County (GA) School District*

eHigh School (eHS) does not fit the description of a traditional high school. Located in Marietta, Georgia, eHS was created in 2001 by the Cobb County School District for students who wanted to take courses for acceleration or credit recovery outside of the regular school day. eHS offers quality, Internet-delivered high school courses to more than 1,300 students annually, incorporating Wimba Classroom and Wimba Voice to add collaborative elements to its online Blackboard courses. Traditionally, eHS has offered tuition courses to students who wish to take a class in addition to their regular school day. However, in accordance with the Georgia Virtual School legislation signed by the Governor in May 2005, eHS now offers online courses to students as part of the regular school day.

During the 2005-2006 school year, eHS served over 1,300 students taking over 1,600 seats in 45 courses. As in face-to-face classes, eHS online classes include a teacher, lessons, homework, class discussions, and assessments. Except, eHS students have access to a wider range of coursework and more flexibility in scheduling. More im-

portantly, students have the opportunity to develop as independent learners - because learning online is neither time nor place dependent.

### Enter Wimba

When eHS considered offering foreign language courses, which require vocal interaction among students and instructors, it needed more collaborative online technologies. eHS turned to Wimba Classroom and Wimba Voice solutions to add those collaborative elements. After only a few days of using these tools, eHS quickly realized the potential they held for the entire school. Cheryl Rowley, an administrator at eHS, knew that the Wimba tools could make a difference in the school's entire educational program, which, until the use of Wimba, had been asynchronous.

When eHS first purchased Wimba's collaborative technologies in Spring 2006, Ms. Rowley decided that school-wide software adoption would happen quickest if the administrators led by example. Since the majority of eHS instructors are adjuncts who have full-time jobs, they had limited



eHigh School  
Cobb County School District  
Marietta, GA USA  
[www.cobb.k12.ga.us/eHigh/eHighSchool/ehighclass.htm](http://www.cobb.k12.ga.us/eHigh/eHighSchool/ehighclass.htm)

### WIMBA PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

- Wimba Classroom
- Wimba Voice

### KEY BENEFITS

eHS uses Wimba to offer courses for acceleration and credit recovery. Teachers can also convey rigorous concepts to students and even collaborate among themselves to find new and innovative ways to teach.

### eHS Service Region

*eHS serves students throughout Cobb County in Northwest Georgia*





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### **1,500 STUDENTS USE WIMBA**

During the 2007 school year, the 45 person staff and 1,500 students at eHS used Wimba's products in more than 50 different classes such as Geometry, Latin I, American Literature, Government, Algebra II and III, and World Literature.

### **ABOUT WIMBA**

Wimba develops web-based collaboration software designed for online education, language learning and live interactive communications. Our collaborative applications enable learning professionals to fully embrace the new wave of teaching and learning opportunities afforded by the Internet; regardless of geographic location, bandwidth or operating system. Our classroom collaboration solutions enable educators to conduct live, online classes, meetings, office hours and other collaborations, and our language learning tools add oral interaction directly into course content, web-pages, study groups and assessments. With simplicity and power, Wimba adds new dimensions to online, accessible education, enhancing the learning experience for both students and instructors.

time to learn new software programs, so it was critical for them to understand the importance of these tools and their relative ease of use.

Therefore, Ms. Rowley decided to hold faculty meetings online via Wimba Classroom – meetings that had previously been conducted face-to-face. These meetings quickly enabled many instructors to overcome their fear of taking on the challenge of learning new technologies because while they were participating in their faculty meetings, they were actually learning how to use Wimba Classroom. Ms. Rowley admits the faculty was initially hesitant about taking on this new idea, but the addition of the online meetings quickly enabled them to see the potential for Wimba Classroom in eHS courses.

The Wimba software is easy to use and therefore allows instructors of varying technological skills to implement it based on what they might need in order to reach all their students. These tools allow eHS instructors to set up private tutorials for students according to their schedules and availability. The tools also help teachers to better convey to students more rigorous concepts that would otherwise be difficult to deliver. This allows teachers to differentiate student instruction. It also allows the instructors to collaborate among themselves by sharing their ideas and finding new and innovative ways to teach.

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### ***Enticing the Technophobe***

Although Wimba's collaborative products have been a great addition to eHS, there is one unique challenge that these students and instructors face. Since new students enroll in eHS each semester, it can be difficult for them to grasp this new technology. New enrollees are usually tentative with the tools in the beginning, but they often become more comfortable as the semester progresses. In order to address this apprehension, eHS uses a scaffolding method to help the students become more familiar by consistently making it a bigger part of their online classes. In fact, Rowley states that given the choice between over-the-phone instruction or Wimba Classroom, the students overwhelmingly choose Wimba Classroom because it allows them more flexibility in interacting with their instructors. For example, students can post their PowerPoint presentations or current assignments in Wimba Classroom and receive immediate feedback from their instructors.

### ***Embracing the Future***

eHS is looking toward the future with Wimba Classroom and Wimba Voice by using Wimba Classroom to take over the face-to-face orientation for its students. eHS is looking to evolve, and with Wimba, is embracing collaborative technology and making it a permanent part of its future.

### ***About eHS***

Cobb's eHS offers quality, Internet-delivered online high school courses for students enrolled in the Cobb County School District. Since summer 2001, eHS has served almost 5,000 students. During the 2005-2006 school year, eHS served almost 1,300 students taking over 1,600 seats (.5 units) in 45 courses.