TechEngage helping laid-off workers improve job skills

By JONATHAN B. COX

RALEIGH, N.C. — As James A. White entered his local McDonald's and plugged in his laptop computer, he knew that his world was in turmoil.

"I had a good job," he said, "I was happy. I was doing well. And then it all just fell apart." White, 38, lost his job as an executive at a software company, and he's now looking for another one.

But when he found himself at the end of his rope, he turned to a new calling: helping others find theirs. He started a group called TechEngage, which aims to help laid-off technology workers improve their skills so they can get back into the workforce.

"I thought, 'Well, if I could teach this to someone who actually wants to learn, what a great way to give back,'" White said.

And so, he began teaching classes on a variety of technology topics, from software development to project management. He also started a newsletter and a website, where he shares tips and resources for finding new jobs in the tech industry.

"I've had people say, 'Thank you, you're helping me,'" White said. "It's really rewarding to see people improving their skills and finding new opportunities."