Collaborative Learning Centers

$100,000.00 Budget

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One way to insure learning is to develop environments where students of any age can explore, create and most importantly, help each other (peer-to-peer). This is particularly true with computers, cameras and other digital media tools. More often than not, computers are taught as stand-along machines, removed from many of the devices and tools for production. This is also true of media classes in which the tool (cameras, etc.) are taught separate from the computer applications needed for processing the captured media. This can be compared to having a blackboard without chalk, or paper without pen, pencil or even crayon.

It becomes apparent when working with digital media that there is no standard to who posses knowledge. Young children can often feel more comfortable navigating media and tools then adults and the elderly (or the other way around). There are many reasons for this, such as accessibility to the tools and natural tendencies to learn and explore. One thing that we do see is that sometimes teachers (of any level) do not possess the tools or skill sets to teach people who often know more about technology then them. What we also see is that these same people are more often than not willing to help each other (no matter what the age group) when working and playing together in classroom or laboratory environments, creating communities of learners.

The problem then becomes one of accessibility to technology rather than knowledge of the users. Collaborative Learning Centers attempts to bridge this gap in accessibility by installing four state of the art computer-digital technology centers in 4 different schools where technology is non-existent or minimal. These classrooms will provide state-of-the-

art computers, digital-media tools (cameras, scanners, microphones, etc) and software for learners to explore and create with. The assignments for these centers will be varied and interest-appropriate to the students of the school and will be staffed by computer and media professionals as well as community volunteers who will be able to assist with the development of actual content. For examples, students within the centers may have greater knowledge of the tools in the center, but the volunteers will be able to assist by providing content, stories and direction.

Classroom instruction is only part of the equation of this project. There are many schools (all levels) in outlying areas, suburbs and rural settings that have no access to technology and because of economic problems, little hope of obtaining the tools necessary for working and playing in the present and future. It is as if the information superhighway has passed them without building an on or off ramp. Similar to the old Bookmobiles (and to the mobile printing presses that are promoted by Bewster Kahle of the Internet Archive), the mobile labs will provide the same technology available in the classrooms to schools that have none. These mobile labs will visit one school a day, on a weekly basis for a period of several months. Although not optimal (such as providing schools with permanent labs), there will be a sense of continuity in learning, by having the mobile labs return to the same school for a period of time, allowing the students 1-2 hours a week of uninterrupted digital media time. To help promote the kind of learning experiences provided to the schools with permanent labs, the different kinds of schools would be paired with each other, creating both collaborative partnerships as well as expanded communities of learners.

The budget reflects the only capital expenses for the initial purchase of equipment. Additional budgets will be necessary for training, maintenance and upgrades.

Technology Budget for Collaborative Learning Centers

Classrooms (4)				
Computer	1	2000		
Color laser printer	1	200		
Large format flatbed scanner	1	250		
HD DV camera	1	600		
Snowball mic	1	75		
Lavelier Mic	1	300		
digital camera	1	400		
Flip cameras	1	200		
Sound recorder	1	150		
Time capsle	1	300		
Adobe suite	1	350		
ScreenFlow	1	99		
QT Pro	1	30		
parallels	1	80		
final cut pro	1	1000		
MS office	1	130		
I life	1	79		
		6243	x 4	24972
Airport (1 per class)	1	150	x 4	600
			Subtotal	**25572**
Mobile Labs (2)				
Computer	1	2000		
Color laser printer	1	200		
Large format flatbed scanner	1	250		
HD DV camera	1	600		
Snowball mic	1	75		
Lavelier Mic	1	300		
digital camera	1	400		
Flip cameras	1	200		
Sound recorder	1	150		
Time capsle	1	300		
Adobe suite	1	350		
ScreenFlow	1	99		
QT Pro	1	30		
parallels	1	80		
final cut pro	1	1000		
MS office	1	130		
I life	1	79		
Mini-van lab	1	30000		
Total per van		36243	x 2	72486
Airport (1 per van)		150	x 2	300
				72786
		Subtotal: Classrooms		24972
		Subtotal: Vans		72972
		GRAND TOTAL		**97944.00**