

BUILDING THE NETWORK

New Strategies for Interactive Residencies & Coaching in the Performing Arts

a) Major Project Activities THE PERFORMANCE LAB proposes a collaborative initiative, *BUILDING THE NETWORK*, which will establish the effectiveness of interactive technology as a tool in arts education and performance skills acquisition. Subject areas are Dance and Theatre. Four different types of exchange will emphasize acquisition of different skills and at differing levels of mastery: (1) Principles of Choreography I/II, (2) Introduction to Acting I/II, (3) two multidisciplinary exchanges from *Artsgenesis: Tapestries* Ellis Island and *Tapestries* Two Kingdoms and (4) Dance Reconstruction. In all, the exchanges will consist of 76 interactive sessions [4 pilot sessions, 34 interactive classes x 2 years], exclusive of planning and evaluation phases. Exchanges may originate from TPL's Minnesota studios in the Hennepin Center for the Arts/Minneapolis; the Southern New Jersey Academy for Performing Arts television facility, other New Jersey school sites or from the interactive firehouse studio of DCTV in Manhattan. More specifics can be found in the ATTACHMENTS.

Approach to Interactivity TPL has identified interactive technology as an important collaborative tool for coaching performing artists and has developed techniques that 1) increase focus and therefore retention of basic concepts; 2) objectify movement in performance; and 3) combine aural and kinesthetic channels of learning in a multidisciplinary approach. TPL exchanges depend upon interactive technology and borrow from established models, yet are not traditional distance learning, videoconferencing or broadcast TV. Artists and coaches who collaborate interactively are not limited to passive TV-watching. Instead, they design and direct the actions of collaborators in a far away studio that is an extension of their own. "Drawing" on the screen with a sweep of their hands, they sculpt movement over many 1000s of miles. Style, emotion and real human contact are integral to each exchange. Ideas of artistic community and partnership are expansively redefined. Using a stable population of pre-professional dancers, TPL and partners have documented the cumulative positive effect of multiple interactive sessions over time.

b) Goals TPL seeks to be the hub of a national network of interactive studios and a leader in technology tools for art education. A step in this direction hinges on the development of strong partnerships among adventuresome arts organizations and educators and with arts high schools, institutions of higher learning, professional artists and arts groups throughout the country. *BUILDING THE NETWORK* relates to State and National Standards and various rubrics used in evaluating student achievement. See the ATTACHMENTS.

c) Schedule *BUILDING THE NETWORK* will begin in June 2004 and end 24 months later. The project will start with a 2-day interactive exchange [NJ←→MN] in which partners will present coaching models -- that may or may not involve interactivity. Interactive coaching will be tested by some for the first time and partners will evaluate and reassess how best to coach performance using technology. Evaluation instruments will be discussed. During September-December 2004, four pilot interactive sessions will be produced, each addressing one of the proposed areas of interest. Subsequent phases will produce interactive sessions. The final phase [May-June 2006] will evaluate demonstrable student achievement and assess the extent to which project goals were achieved.

d) Key individuals, organizations and works of art Our strength is in our partnerships. Artsgenesis [NY/NJ/CT], the Southern New Jersey Academy of Performing Arts and the Perpich Center for Arts Education [MN] are national leaders in the implementation and refinement of innovative methods in arts education. All train teachers. Artsgenesis, alone, has trained 30,000 teachers in the last 10 years. The New Jersey studios are fully interactive and accessible to every school in New Jersey through a Verizon "portal" link. Staff there is proficient in WEB design. TPL's studios in the Hennepin Center for the Arts [Minneapolis, MN] are exemplary interactive dance studios, the first of their kind in America. The Julliard Dance Initiative is pre-eminent among professional schools in America. Staff of the pre-eminent Juilliard Dance Initiative will adjudicate choreographic works chosen for reconstruction; all appropriate license and copyright fees will be paid. Our interactive coaches -- Marcia Chapman, Ruth Clark, Diane Aldis, David Kloss and Lawrence Rhodes -- are leaders in dance education. Playwright/actress Kathleen Gaffney received the first-ever U.S. Department of Education's John Stanford Education Heroes Award. The Project Co-Directors bring extensive experience in arts education and media. See BIOGRAPHIES.

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e) Target population As a result of our previous exchanges, teachers and students of varying ability levels have been directly involved in the design of the interactive exchanges exemplified in the present proposal. We have also identified students from urban, rural and suburban regions for inclusion in the interactive network. For example, in New Jersey, 73% of Atlantic City High School students qualify for free or reduced lunch. GCIT, our “hub” studio, is located in rural New Jersey and the Morris County Academy for Visual and Performing Arts is a suburban district in northern New Jersey.

Estimated number of participants For 40 weeks each school year, 50 Senior dance majors at GCIT [NJ] and PCAE [MN] and 150 additional dance students at GCIT will be coached interactively in choreography and performance. 800 additional students in NJ schools will participate in interactive artists’ residencies and master classes. Additional thousands of New Jersey students may view exchanges one-way through the “Verizon portal” that links their schools. Special interactive lessons will be posted on the WEB in order to involve these students in multi-disciplinary aspects of theatre and dance performance.

f) Promotion Articles regarding the interactive model and student achievement will be placed in journals for the field. Additional funding will be sought to bring the TPL WEB Tool Kit to more people.

g) Assessment We will evaluate both program and individual student achievement. We will draw a comparative analysis of sample groups of students involved in interactivity versus students from the same school who have not experienced interactivity. Some students will have been involved in interactive coaching *for a five-year period* -- thus providing an unparalleled opportunity for assessment of the effectiveness of performance coaching using interactive technologies and the degree to which skills are acquired and demonstrated.

h) Accessibility We will train and hire technical and support staff from among people with differing abilities, as identified through our ongoing interactive exchanges for children and others with disabilities. See TPL website.

i) Budget A match slightly greater than our NEA request has been committed as in-kind donation of services and staff from collaborating partners. Additional project costs will come from anticipated grants for operating expenses from corporate donors. Were only half our funding request granted, we would complete one Dance Reconstruction and one interactive Artsgenesis *Tapestry* course only.

DETAILS OF THE PROJECT 3

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