

From the Founder

Gathering the Tools for Learning

What do you do when your child asks you something about the world we live in? When they ask you about gravity, or motion, or the seasons, or why

there is day and night - are you at ease telling them about Copernicus? Kepler? Galileo? And Newton?

tion, I am often confronted with a gap or memory lapse from the education of my youth. And I find myself scrambling to come up with the right information so that I don't give my child just enough to confuse him. So where is that basic knowledge when I need it.?

For the past three years, the Onebranch team has been pondering this question, during our search to find useful books, videos and websites that effectively present the basics in science and mathematics. We've found some good resources, but we have wanted a place to consolidate what we have found, and make it accessible to all of our children.

So, we at OneBranch have become committed to creating a place where some of the most essential knowledge could be accessed easily, with

interactive explanations and pointers to books and useful resources.

We want to pull our resources together and build a virtual place, designed with a high priority on useability - to augment the efforts at improving proficiency throughout the nation. This kind of interactive library could be a useful tool to add to community literacy and academic enrichment programs. It could be useful to students whose first language is not English, and to foreign-language parents of bilingual children. We would also love to reach out to adult learners and reluctant readers who are embarrassed to say what they don't know.

It seems to me, that as members of our community, as parents, and as educators, we can and must

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What is an interactive learning border?

Teachers are used to decorating their classrooms with borders throughout the year. But with internet technology, we can make interactive versions of those borders, which can be clicked to gain more information, and changed daily to focus on a specific lesson. Each border can be designed with a clickable arrow at the bottom that leads to another border. As we add depth to these borders, we can also add clickable activity worksheets and book lists to add value to each border. Some of them can also be designed with drag and drop games, questions and answers, teacher/student interviews or lessons learned.



The Orion Nebular [PhotoDisc]

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Development goals tied to Math and Science TAKS

During initial development of the Nature and Science room, as well as the Technology room, we will be working to assist teachers by providing additional learning opportunities for students that strengthen classroom experiences. We will showcase and create activities that connect with the TAKS Elementary Science Objectives for Grade 5 and with TAKS Math Objectives for Grades 3-8.

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills Elementary Science Grade 5 Objectives:

Objective 1: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the nature of science.

Objective 2: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the life sciences.

Objective 3: The student will demonstrate an un-

derstanding of the physical sciences.

Objective 4: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the earth sciences.

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills Grades 3-8 Math Objectives:

Objective 1: The student will demonstrate an understanding of numbers, operations, and quantitative reasoning.

Objective 2: The student will demonstrate an understanding of patterns, relationships, and algebraic thinking.

Objective 3: The student will demonstrate an understanding of geometry and spatial reasoning.

Objective 4: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the concepts and uses of measurement.

Objective 5: The student will demonstrate an under-

standing of probability and statistics.

Objective 6: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the mathematical processes and tools used in problem solving.

You can find a complete set of TAKS information booklets (with thorough explanation of each objective and sample test questions) developed by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) available on their website's Student Assessment Division, www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/taks/booklets/

[index.html](http://www.austin.isd.tenet.edu/k12/curriculum/family_learning/index.phtml). Parents who want to know more about what their child needs to know will want to also check out AISD's Family Learning Guide, www.austin.isd.tenet.edu/k12/curriculum/family_learning/index.phtml.

Teachers with innovative lessons are welcome to join in our development discussions and share their ideas. If you would like one of your science or math lessons to be featured in an interactive border, please send an email to sherry_hammons@onebranch.org.

Knowledge Integration Project - Nature through the Seasons

You are invited to get to know the birds, animals, trees and plants in your neighborhood by participating in our Knowledge Integration Project. Art, English and Geography teachers can collaborate to help students deepen their understanding of the nature in their environment.

Project Description: Students observe birds and animals in their neighborhood. In Art class, students can draw pictures of what they observe; in English class, students can record their observations and check out books about nature in their region; in Geography, students can discuss the their region's terrain, watersheds, food supplies, and migration patterns.

At the end of the school year students can share their work in an interactive notebook. Showcase student work in your school library and offer to exhibit in your local library as well.

Overview of Room Development Plan

Our initial efforts toward building a interactive library have focused on setting up the structure to house a collection of essential knowledge. We have decided on five rooms to develop initially, considering ways to integrate knowledge from a variety of subject areas. As we develop each of the subject rooms, we'll place topical bibliographies in easy to find places.

A few features to consider for each room include:



Main Room:

Features information every librarian wants every patron to know, including the Dewey decimal system, boolean searching, and many other tools for

library and information literacy.

Nature/Science Room:

Features books and websites on nature and science, quotes to enhance thinking, and clickable exploratory multimedia facts and ideas about basic science knowledge. We are planning to start with some basic concepts in nature, such as the water cycle, the difference in acids and bases, and the reason for the seasons.

Technology Room:

Features a scrollable timetable of technological innovation of the past, with books and websites that discuss technology and invention. Student projects include comparing and contrasting inventions and analyzing ways in which new technology is capable of enhancing life and learning.

Theatre:

Features video clips from

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Tools for Learning

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significantly impact the quality of information and ideas our children receive. And I have a hunch that information and ideas with just the right mix of curiosity and enthusiasm, can lead to innovation that will further enhance our life and our ability to do productive work. All of us at Onebranch - the Board of Directors, the Development Team, The Volunteers, and the Advisors - are anxious to hear from parents, teachers, principals, librarians, and students. We hope you will get involved in our effort to make the Onebranch Interactive Library a valuable place for accessing information essential to our lives and our children's future.

We know we have a long way to go! Please join us. The value of your experience will enrich the journey, and perhaps shorten the process.

Lisa Westbrook

Room Development

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educational videos, including short video clips that promote longer videos that are available for purchase to aid teacher development.

Art and Music:

Features student nature drawings, basic information about art materials and musical instruments, books and selected websites about all kinds of art and music.

Reading Room:

Features a Book Lover's Lounge where out-of-print books are showcased, plus a virtual café where youthful patrons can practice English proficiency.

Notices and Requests

To Parents and Teachers

Can you guess how many books are published each year? You might be surprised at the sheer volume. According to Bowker's, just in the year 2000, in the U.S., over 122,000 books were published. So how does even the very best teacher or parent sort through all that is available in the time they have? Frankly, even if you are fortunate to have a moment of leisure on your hands, isn't there just too much information to go through, in addition to too much new information coming at all of us in increasing amounts on a daily basis? Let's help ease the information overload by sharing our best finds and experiences with each other. As we develop the different areas of the interactive library and work to add depth, we invite participation, cooperation, advice, criticism, suggestions, and lessons learned.

Invitation to Librarians

During our conversations with librarians in

Central Texas, we heard a common need - the need to make "how to use the library" more comprehensible to patrons. So we'd like to invite your input in developing a general orientation to the library, that makes explicit some of the things you find yourself explaining again and again. A few of the things we are talking about now are providing information about the Dewey Decimal System and other basic information on conducting searches for books. We'd also like to hear about your favorite science and nature titles. We have lots of ideas but we'd love to include yours.

Bookstore Grand Opening

Even though the interactive library is not officially ready for the public, we couldn't wait any longer to share some of our favorite books from Central Texas Libraries. We put the ones that are still in print in the Onebranch online bookstore. Check them out and let us know what you think. And if you already have these titles in your own library, consider

buying a few of them to donate to your neighborhood library or community center. Good books can add enormous value to a child's learning, and each of us can participate in improving the quality of their experience.

Help decorate the Art and Music Room

Share student art work from your Knowledge Integration Project. The theme we will be starting with is "Birds in the Neighborhood."

Send your scans or digital photographs, with your name to Shaun@onebranch.org

Out-of-Print Youth Titles

We found many Youth Science and Nature Titles that are now, sadly, out-of-print. Some of them are just too good to miss. So we are planning on showcasing those out-of-print titles upstairs in the reading loft of the interactive library. Here are just two of these wonderful titles written back in the 1960's that have stood the test of time:

1. Pioneer Astronomers by Navin Sullivan, published in 1964.

2. Rocks, Rivers and the changing Earth - A First Book About Geology, by Herman and Nina Schneider, published in 1967.

Look for these out-of-print treasures in your school or neighborhood library.

Become a Partner

Your Financial Contribution will help us develop the Onebranch Interactive Library. We hope you will consider partnering with us in building a place of value in our community. Contributions are tax-deductible.

Please make check payable to:

Onebranch.org

7920 San Felipe Blvd. #1703, Austin, TX. 78729-7903

Help us build a place. Play a part. Get involved. Your support matters! For more information, please call Lavon Holcomb at: (512) 250-9281.

Onebranch.org is a 501 C(3) nonprofit educational organization.

Web Resources

Teacher's helpers

1. The MacTutor History of Mathematics Archive.

<http://www-groups.dcs.st-and.ac.uk/~history/index.html>

2. Graphic Organizers. Explains graphic organizers with examples of each. <http://www.graphic.org>

3. A Collection of Assessment Strategies, Assessment in Math/Sci. http://www.educ.state.ak.us/tis/frameworks/mathsci/M25_2AS1.htm

4. Education Information for Students Across the Nation. <http://nces.ed.gov/nceskids> (Look for the *Make a Graph link*)

5. Mathematics Clarifying the TEKS. Clarifying Activities by Grade Level - K-8. <http://www.tenet.edu/teks/math/clarifying/cabygradelevk8.html>.

Projects we are excited about

1. Private Universe Project in Mathematics broadcast on Annenberg/CPB, produced by Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics. 2000. <http://www.learner.org/resources/resource.html?uid=120>

2. Looking at Learning...Again, Part 1 and Part 2, Broadcast by Annenberg/CPB, produced by Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics. 1999.

<http://www.learner.org/resources/resource.html?uid=106>

3. Rice University's GirlTech, a teacher professional development program designed to enhance girl's interest in computers. <http://teachertech.rice.edu/>

4. The Galileo Project at Rice University. <http://es.rice.edu/ES/humsoc/Galileo/>

5. Great Backyard Bird Count, sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society. <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>

6. The Library Media Project, an initiative to increase quality of video collections in public libraries. <http://librarymedia.org/>

Attn: Young researchers

1. Check out these sites and e-articles to enhance your information literacy

University of California, Learn Library Vocabulary. <http://library.ucsc.edu/ref/howto/vocabulary.html>

2. Study Skills Self-help Information. <http://www.ucc.vt.edu/stdysk/stdyhlp.html>

3. Challenges, Strategies, and Tools for Research Scientists: Using Web-Based Information Resources. http://SouthernLibraryship.icaap.org/content/v03n03/Hoggan_d01.htm (advanced)

Acknowledgements



The Movie Theater showing excerpts from Bill Grunkemeyer's *Four Seasons in the Wild*.

Thanks to Bill Grunkemeyer

The Theater Room is open! We'd like to extend a special thanks to Bill Grunkemeyer at Grunko Films for contributing video footage from his video production, *Four Seasons in the Wild*. These video clips demonstrate the purpose of the theater - to increase awareness of high quality videos that focus on science and nature. Here's a preview of what you'll see in the theater: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall.

These, and other engaging and educational videos, by Bill Grunkemeyer, are available as full-length VHS recordings at Grunko.com.

Check back soon for coming attractions!

Quote of the Month

"How does the mathematician discover what to prove and the deductive arguments that lead to the conclusions? The most fertile source of mathematical ideas is nature herself. Mathematics is devoted to the study of the physical world, and simple experience or the more careful scrutiny of nature suggests idea after idea."

- Morris Kline

OneBranchNewsletter

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