



## Student Leadership - CyberKids - CyberTechs

Who does a teacher call to get a group at school into an IEARn Forum? How can you print out an email? You can call a Cyberkid or Cybertech! A school is a community of learners; teachers teach and learn and students teach and learn. The Cyberkids-Techs' project is an example of that assumption in practice. Help draw a continuum of technology tasks, then discuss and share the logistics and pitfalls and what is in it for the students, the teachers, and the school.

CyberKids and CyberTechs are a web of student support for teachers and classrooms. They are on call to teach students/teachers how to use new equipment such as digital cameras and scanners. They install new software and teach students and teachers how to apply it. They troubleshoot. Sometimes a teacher needs help teaching a classroom of students how to use new software. CyberKids teach a few students in the classroom how to use the software and they in turn work with their classmates and teachers.

CyberKids and CyberTechs are organized through the Technology Committee or Technology Leader. Starting up the program requires organization, patience and small steps. However, as it grows, new responsibilities can be given to students so that teachers are less burdened by maintenance and finding time outside of class to learn how to apply new materials.

The benefits to the school and to the students are numerous. The students learn valuable leadership skills as well as technical skills. Because they will discuss strategies for teaching particular topics, try out and then evaluate the strategies, they will get some firsthand practice in what a career in teaching is like. They get lots of practice in troubleshooting, in collaboration and teamwork, and in learning to follow through. All should exit as confident and competent users of technology. The school benefits from having good help maintaining equipment and managing routine tasks like replacing printer cartridges, shutting down computers at day's end, and organizing software. A teacher whose day is already full will be able to plan to use new equipment and software even if she doesn't have time to spend after school on her own learning.

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### Workshop Agenda

#### *Building Webs of Support within Schools*

URL Generation Yes: <http://www.genyes.org>

Watch and discuss video, Generation Why, if available.

## **Continuum**

At one end of the spectrum, CyberStudents - CyberTechs can have minimal responsibilities: perhaps keeping paper in the printers and turning CPUs on/off. At the other end, they can offer Just-In-Time professional development for teachers.

Draw a continuum with butcher paper or on the board and fill in the continuum with tasks students could do and responsibilities they could assume.

## **Discuss**

What is in it for the students?

What is in it for the teachers/school?

Discuss comfort levels. Would YOU be comfortable with a student teaching you a new skill? Could you model that for other teachers? How might you make this happen at your school?

## **Logistics**

Not trivial. Is it worth it? Discuss how you could organize this at school. Discuss why it might not work at your school. Could you change this?

## **Powerful Idea**

Students can act as Team Leaders. Ask a classroom teacher to select four leaders (yes! girls and boys!). Teach the team of four how to do something new - something complex like how to install and implement new software or hardware. Then, the class is divided into teams each with one leader from the Group of 4. The leaders teach that skill or whatever to the students in their classroom team. There are many ways to organize this: perhaps one of the other leaders sits in to help the practicing leader and to give positive feedback and helpful hints.

After the Leaders have practiced with classmates and feel they are prepared, they go to another classroom and work with four leaders from that classroom. Those new leaders then work with their classmates.

Clearly, this kind of peer work requires careful thought. But taking time at the front end to help the leaders prepare for their work should pay off in several different ways.

## **Pitfalls**

Students can be mean to each other and to teachers. How do you encourage/reward behavior that is open, kind, and non-ego involved?

Brainstorm ways to organize and implement in your school.