

More Educational Opportunities

Helping Your Students Find Them

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Learning Unlimited

April 27, 2010

Outline

Learning Unlimited
What this session is about
General strategies for finding opportunities
So, my kid likes...
How to engage your child
Personal stories

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Learning Unlimited



Learning Unlimited is a nonprofit founded by alumni leaders of Splash programs.

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What this session is about

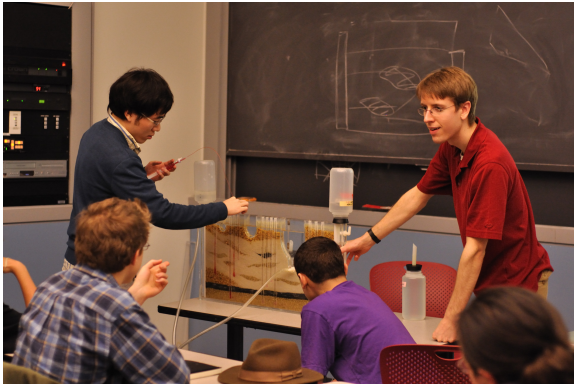
General strategies for finding opportunities

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We bring Splash *everywhere*.

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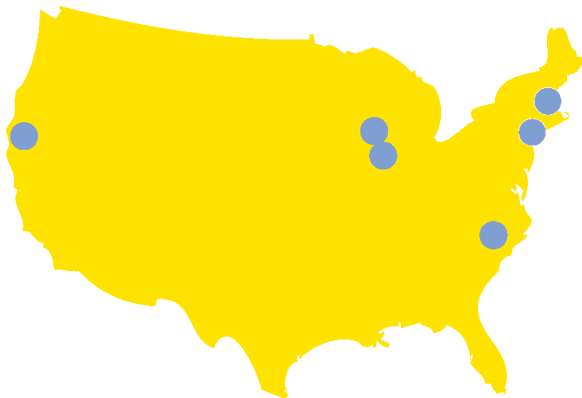
And we work to improve your Splash as well.

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Thank you for your support!

What this session is about.

Splash is a **start**.

What next?

There's a *tremendous* amount out there.

- We'll explore it through examples and ideas.
- Let's start with some general ideas.

The Web

- Google.
- Wikipedia.
- Online communities exist for everything. (And kids will like interacting with adults as equals.)
- E-mail.
- OpenCourseWare — ocw.mit.edu.

Universities

This shows my personal biases, but universities are a center of human knowledge. Take advantage of them!

- Professors.
- Student groups.
- Talks and seminars.
- When in doubt, e-mail and ask.

The Community

- Community service. (In interesting places!)
- Community theater.
- Libraries.
- Meetups, other groups that get together.

Summers

- Good times for relevant work, labs, or volunteering.
- Summer programs, especially residential ones.
- More intense, interesting academic programs.
- Free time to pursue projects.

Miscellaneous

- Magazines or other periodic interesting sources of knowledge.

So, my kid likes...

math!

So, my kid likes math!

Real mathematics is very different from school mathematics.

- Mathematics competitions have a strong record of getting students involved:
 - Within school, Mathletes teams (local to national), the AMC, etc.
 - USAMTS.
- Math circles (all over the Bay Area — mathcircles.org).
- Online communities (especially www.artofproblemsolving.com).
- Most importantly, summer programs.
 - I like Mathcamp (www.mathcamp.org), but there are many others.
 - Investigate what people say online or ask someone, because reputations vary widely.

So, my kid likes...

astronomy!

So, my kid likes astronomy!

Community opportunities are plentiful nearby, especially in mountainous areas.

- Observatories have public observing times and programs.
 - Plus volunteer opportunities!
- Contact university astronomy departments; work with a professor or take a class.
- Build a telescope (or buy one) and go out with a star map.
- Subscribe to *Sky & Telescope* or *Astronomy* and let your child read and decide to go out.
- The Sloan Digital Sky Survey — www.sdss.org — and their education links like SkyServer.
- Again, summer programs will often take kids on amazing trips to observatories for several weeks. (Investigate them online.)

So, my kid likes...

writing!

So, my kid likes writing!

- Find a community writing circle or group; they will be very inviting.
- Create your own writing circle.
- Join the school newspaper or literary magazine.
- Submit work to competitions, online magazines, or others.
- Join an online community and share writing.
- Summer programs.
- NaNoWriMo — November, <http://www.nanowrimo.org/>.
- Subscribe to a writers' magazine or buy a guide for where to submit your work.

So, my kid likes...

building things!

So, my kid likes building things!

- Let them play!
- Hackerspaces — www.hackerspaces.org
- FIRST Robotics — www.usfirst.org
- Science Olympiad — www.soinc.org
- Kits and others, especially from science museums.
- Rubik's cubes.
- And again, summer programs.

So, my kid likes...

computer games!

So, my kid likes computer games!

This seems like the least productive interest. So let's see how to turn it around to something productive.

- Create your own computer games (through lots of online software).
- Study interactive storytelling.
- Computer programming, through camps or other programs.

So, my kid likes...

everything

So, my kid likes everything!

- Help them explore many interests.
- Let them explore a few things in-depth as they're interested.
- Find online communities.
- Find summer programs with a variety of courses.
- Look into programs like Academic Decathlon.

So, my kid...

doesn't like anything!

So, my kid doesn't like anything!

- Let them explore: Splash!
- Build on their Splash experience: expose them to stimulating ideas that further the classes they liked.
- Encourage them to stay in contact with Splash teachers; e-mails are available.
- Try out lots of things, from sports to after-school. Don't force it; they'll find what they like.

How to engage your child

- You want to build genuine interest in your child.
 - Genuine interest comes from a feeling of ownership; “doing what your parents want” doesn’t help.
 - Build their own initiative and interest, not outcomes.
- Judge your own relationship. If pushing your child to do something will push them away, then back off.
- *Provide opportunities.*
 - Provide exciting books or trips without forcing them.
 - Share what *you* love.

How to engage your child (cont'd)

- Be genuinely curious, and share your curiosity.
 - Explore a Wikipedia article and pass it on.
 - See a webcomic that is interesting and pictures a scientist or an artist or a writer? Pass it on. (www.xkcd.com is a good example).
- Seek out talks at universities.
- Lastly, don't violate your child's independence. That just invites rejection.

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