

# Under construction

## The California Heritage Project's K–12 outreach experience at the University of California, Berkeley

by Lisa Yesson and Lynn Jones

**Model:** 1) a set of plans for a building; 2) copy, image; 3) structural design; 4) a usually miniature representation of something; 5) an example for imitation or emulation . . .<sup>1</sup>

This is just an excerpt of Webster's entry for the word *model*. In a perfect world, a successful community outreach project could be easily replicated with a "set of plans" or "structural design." However, the University of California (UC) Berkeley Library's experience with K–12 outreach suggests that models for university-school partnerships are living, evolving organisms. Yet, as this series on community and collaboration suggests, there are some clear common elements.

### Leadership

The California Heritage Project was the result of a convergence between two timely initiatives at UC Berkeley. One began in the Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley's special collections library, with the development of the Encoded Archival Description (EAD) standard.<sup>2</sup> Initial funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities in support of EAD enabled the digitization of a critical mass of the Bancroft's historical photographs in the California Heritage Collection<sup>3</sup>—a Web-based digital archive of nearly 30,000 items. Library leaders recognized that the Web allowed

these valuable primary sources to be shared beyond the walls of the university.

Almost concurrently, UC Berkeley Information Systems and Technology (IS&T) department began to coordinate a campuswide initiative to explore how Internet technology could best be used to share UC Berkeley resources with local inner-city schools. The campus was supportive of such outreach efforts, given a renewed commitment to the local community in the 1996 Berkeley Pledge,<sup>4</sup> a response to the UC Regents' repeal of affirmative action as an admissions category. IS&T applied and received a Telecommunications and Information Infrastructure Assistance Program (TIIAP) grant from the Department of Commerce in 1996.<sup>5</sup> This TIIAP grant initiative was named the Interactive University (IU).<sup>6</sup>

### Infrastructure

To mobilize campus departments to extend access to their resources, IU issued a request for proposal to the campus and used the TIIAP grant to fund 20 one-year projects from multiple campus departments. The library

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received one of the IU awards and was able to turn the California Heritage Project into reality.

IU provided the seed funding for a project coordinator, but also provided other important infrastructure. It created liaison positions with each targeted school district to build key district relationships, to facilitate the selection and participation of K–12 teachers, and to help bridge the divide between the K–12 and university cultures. Teacher recruitment included identifying school locations that had the necessary infrastructure—not only equipment and Internet connectivity, but also the people to keep it all working.

### Commitment

One of the primary goals of the California Heritage Project was to create materials (e.g., lesson plans, guides, etc.) to make the California Heritage Collection more accessible to K–12 audiences. We needed teachers to make this possible. We recruited eight teachers and conducted a weeklong summer institute and several daylong workshops throughout the school year to give them an overview of California Heritage and other library resources, technology training, and hands-on work time.

Through IU support we were able to get the teachers compensated for their time—another key element—although the work still required a significant commitment from the teachers.

### Time

Lack of time continued to be one of our greatest challenges. After several classroom visits, it was easy to see the enormous demands on a K–12 teacher's schedule. Not only did we struggle to give them enough time to complete their materials, but we were also just getting warmed up when the one-year IU grant was nearly over. It took nearly a year to build the relationships, provide the training, and troubleshoot the infrastructure. IU recognized this and extended the grant to three years in the second phase.

### Partnerships

With IU's help, the California Heritage Project has continued into a second phase. Although we continue to struggle with many issues (e.g., teacher turnover in urban schools, time, technology, to name just a few), we have made some changes that have made a real difference in the quality of our work. Perhaps the most valuable change has been an increased reliance on strong, real partnerships to accomplish our goals.

- We adjusted project coordinator resources from one full-time coordinator to two part-time coordinators with different, complementary backgrounds. The ideal coordinators for this work understand both K–12 and university cultures; know technology, pedagogy, and library resources; and have strong project management skills. As finding this mix of skills in one person is quite a challenge, the ability to collaborate in the coordination of the project has greatly enhanced the program.

- We partnered with a local school reform organization, the Bay Area School Reform Collaborative,<sup>7</sup> which shared our interest in primary sources and technology, brought expertise from the Library of Congress's

American Memory program, and filled in key gaps in our own knowledge of K–12 pedagogy.

- Following the American Memory model, we recruited teacher-librarian teams to develop our learning materials. Bringing in school librarians has made the most notable difference in the quality of our work. School librarians are more accessible on a daily basis than teachers, are less likely to change positions, support the teachers, and are able to extend the project—not just by working with the teachers at their own school site, but also through librarian organizations across districts and beyond.

### A model?

Leadership, infrastructure, commitment, time,

*(continued on page 306)*



Student using the California Heritage Collection online in her school.

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(“Standards” continued from page 305)  
proficiency and professional effectiveness (performance, service, and scholarship) consistent with stated campus standards. The peer review system should be an integral part of procedures for promotion.

**7. Leaves.** Sabbatical and other research leaves should be available to librarians consistent with campus standards.

**8. Research and development funds.** Librarians should have access to funding

for research projects and professional development consistent with campus standards.

**9. Academic freedom.** Librarians must have the same protection of academic freedom as all other faculty. Censorship of any type is unacceptable whether individual or organizational. All librarians must be free to provide access to information regardless of content. ■

(“Under construction” continued from page 297)

and partnerships—these are probably not great surprises. However, it is surprising how difficult it can be to orchestrate and sustain the supporting activities to the level of a true model. But the payoff is there. Opening the virtual doors of the university not only extends rich, new resources to K–12 classrooms, it also promotes the skills and awareness needed to open the physical doors to historically hard-to-reach students.

## Notes

1. <http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary>.
2. <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/ead/>.
3. <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/calheritage>.
4. <http://www.chance.berkeley.edu/bpledge/>.
5. The Telecommunications and Information Infrastructure Assistance Program (TIIAP) grant from the Department of Commerce is now the Technology Opportunities Program at <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/otiahome/top/index.html>.
6. <http://iu.berkeley.edu>.
7. <http://basrc.wested.org/basrc>. ■

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