

Macromedia-Washington State Digital Design Curriculum Partnership

This partnership highlights a successful public/private partnership designed to develop the IT workforce—specifically in Web design. By working together, Macromedia and Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction were able to maximize the quality of the curriculum by focusing on teacher and student needs.

Program developers at the Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) knew that they wanted to develop their students' professional technology skills. They wanted a project-based, state-of-the-art program that helped teachers teach technology in ways that engaged students in real-world learning. But they didn't have the resources or broad expertise to build it all on their own. Many states face this challenge. They understand the problem but can't afford the solution—without taking an innovative approach.

Knowing that corporations want to grow technically skilled workers, OSPI sought a corporate partner with whom they could collaborate on the curriculum. They selected Macromedia because it produced industry-standard professional Web design tools that their students were clamoring to learn. Macromedia was, in turn, looking for a school system that could provide valid—and vital—educator feedback from concept through to the classroom on its new curriculum.

What OSPI brought to the partnership:

- Teachers excited and willing to try something new with their students
- Cross-demographic group of schools to pilot test curriculum
- Insight into the NWCET Pathway standards
- Opportunity for change in Ed system

What Macromedia brought to the partnership:

- Expertise in technology curriculum development
- Corporate approach, and funding, to get a curriculum project done
- Opportunity for teachers to work with industry professionals
- Business people taking teachers seriously

In the last year we have brainstormed the course content, beta-tested ideas, reshaped the syllabus based on a wide base of faculty input and pilot-tested with teachers across Washington. We've developed a curriculum that addresses classic design principles and professional design processes, but we've made it approachable to teachers relatively new to technology. We've found that students really want to learn technology. But they need projects that are relevant to them—and they want to start right away! In this session we will talk about how to make a successful partnership, describe the benefits from business/education collaboration, and share what we've learned along the way.