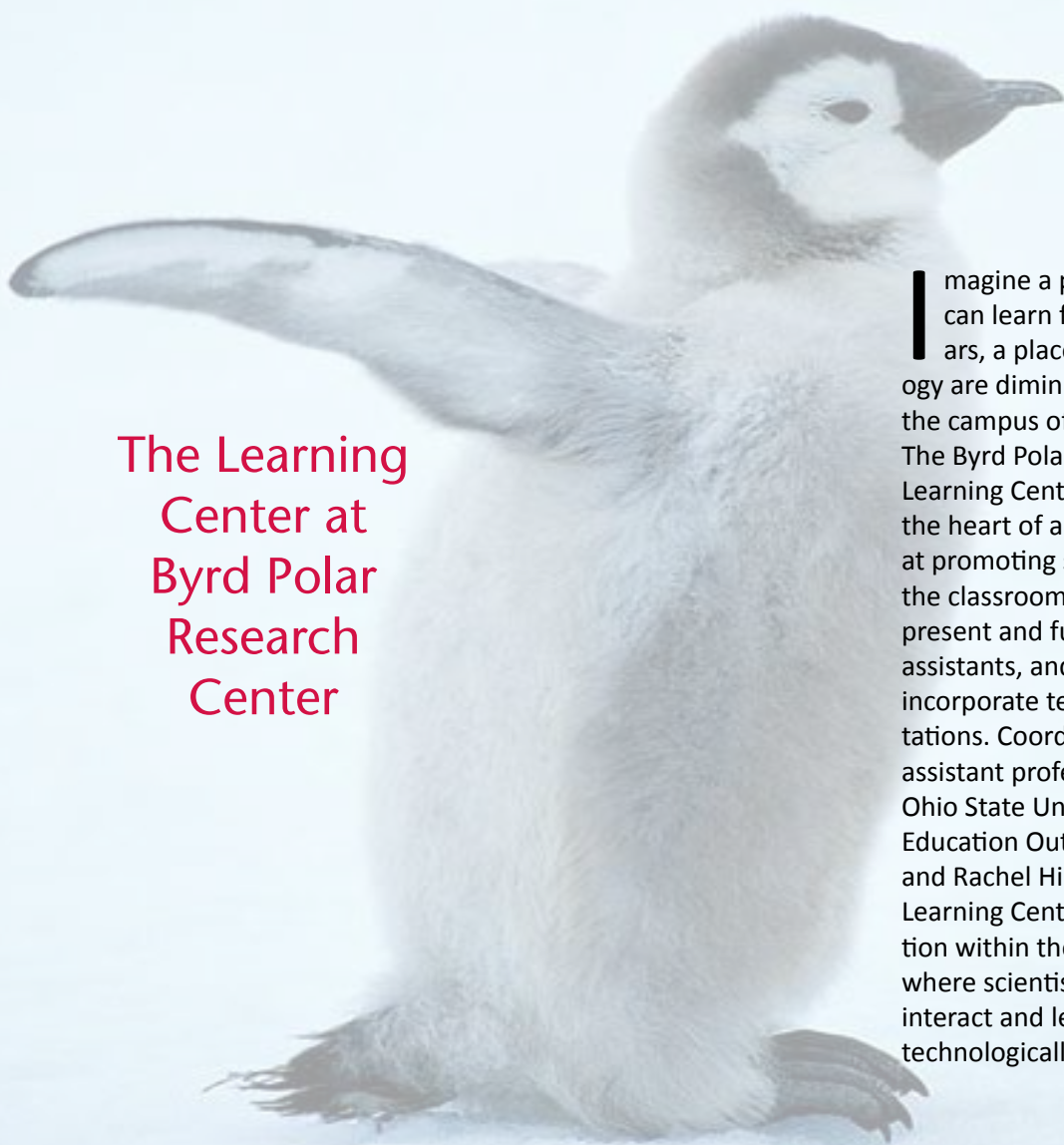


Science + Education = Science Education



The Learning
Center at
Byrd Polar
Research
Center

Imagine a place where science teachers can learn from science research scholars, a place where fears about technology are diminished, a place right here on the campus of The Ohio State University: The Byrd Polar Research Center's (BPRC) Learning Center. This Learning Center is at the heart of an outreach program aimed at promoting science and technology in the classroom. The center is open to all present and future educators, graduate assistants, and scientists who wish to incorporate technology into their presentations. Coordinated by Dr. Bryan Mark, assistant professor of geography at The Ohio State University; Dr. Carol Landis, Education Outreach Specialist at the BPRC; and Rachel Hintz, Graduate Assistant, the Learning Center has become a central location within the Byrd Polar Research Center where scientists and teachers come to interact and learn from one another in a technologically advanced environment.

Bryan Mark, Carol Landis, and Rachel Hintz



Making Technology Accessible to Educators

Technology can be intimidating for those with little previous experience in the area. Mark and Landis are conducting research to determine the degree to which sharing a technologically rich workspace among scientists and educators will affect the types of technologies and pedagogy used in science classrooms.

With funding from the Ohio State P-12 Scholars Program, the Byrd Polar Research Center purchased equipment including SMART Boards and microscopes that work together with the computer so that specimens can be viewed more easily and images can be saved for later viewing. SMART Boards allow teachers to create one continuous file that is

similar to a PowerPoint presentation, but allows easy insertion of pop quizzes and websites into the presentation.

The Ohio State faculty is continually learning how to use the technology and how to become more involved in educational



outreach. The technology available in the Learning Center has been used in three classes that met in the center, as well as a summer workshop. Teachers may come into the Learning Center and practice with the technology any time the Center is open. Also, SMART Board software is free, so teachers can work on their lessons at home and bring them in to see how they will work with the SMART Board. Awareness of what is happening in the surrounding school districts is important for Ohio State educators because incoming college students will be looking for technology at least at the level of their high school. Staying current in the available technology will make Ohio State a more appealing place for aspiring scientists to come to study.



SMART Board software is free for teachers.

Reaching a Broad Audience

News of the Learning Center at The Byrd Polar Research Center has already reached a broader audience through an article in the *Ohio Spectrum*, a journal for public school librarians that is received by every school district in the state, as well as through many visits by other interested groups. Visitors to the Learning Center include such groups as the Breakfast of Science Champions Virtual Conference, the Columbus Zoo, the Battelle Endowment Project, visiting researchers, undergraduates from other colleges in Ohio

and Michigan, the Ohio State geography alumni and other tour groups, and Ohio State undergraduate students from the Mathematics, Science and Technology (MSAT) Master's of Education (M.Ed.) program. The Learning Center has also become a meeting place for people and is facilitating increased interactions among researchers, educators, and students. Plans are already underway to host some distance

learning opportunities in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Education and the Teaching and Learning Collaborative of Central Ohio. The hope is that more teachers from area schools and people from other organizations who may benefit from the opportunity will become aware of the Learning Center.

The Learning Center at The Byrd Polar Research Center is an important investment that will yield valuable returns, now that a location, facilities, and a culture have been established. Landis says that "people come in because they heard it was cool. Then they stay and learn things they never dreamed were possible." ■

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bprc.osu.edu/education/learning_center.php