IdealStudent
Blog4College
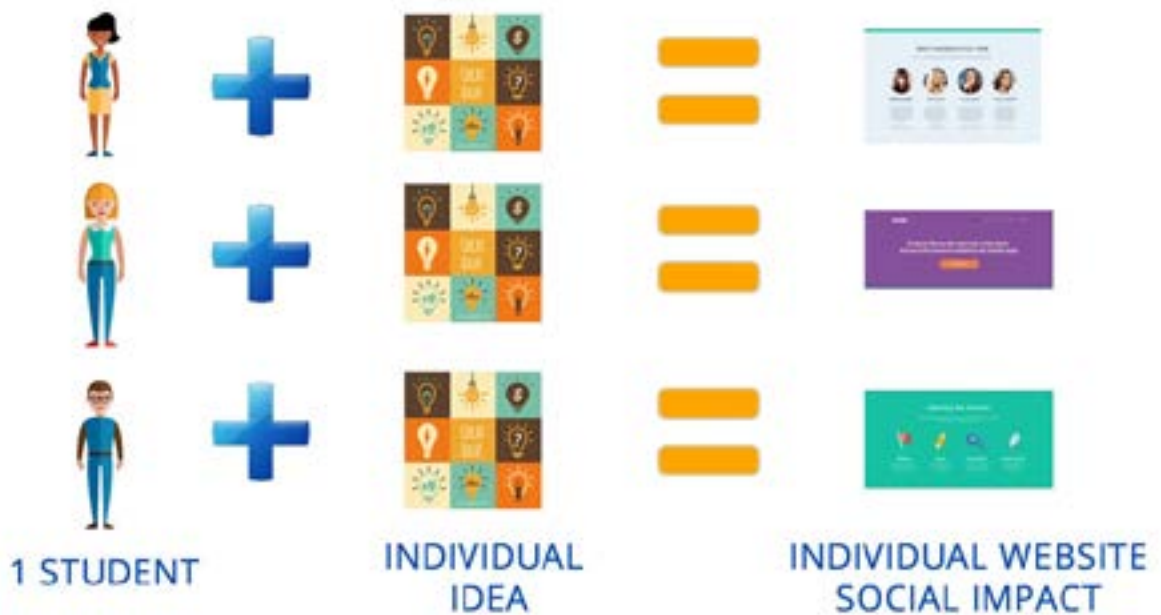
1 STUDENT + **INDIVIDUAL IDEA** = **INDIVIDUAL WEBSITE SOCIAL IMPACT**

Prepared by:

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BLOG4COLLEGE

An education-technology, student trajectory aligned resource designed to help schools and school districts implement and maintain Common Core State Standards that support 21st Century Skills initiatives.

Insightful Decisions, Inc.

we provide the *insight*, you make the *decisions*

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B4C

B4C AT-A-GLANCE

Grade level: Middle School - High School
10 Week Program: 2 classes /week, 1.5 hrs. /class

Objective: Blog4College is an innovative, education-technology program that is designed to help schools and school districts implement and maintain Common Core Education Standards that support 21st Century Skills initiatives.

Challenge: To responsibly prepare students for today's global marketplace, students must be exposed to a curriculum that successfully bridges the considerable gap between the knowledge and skills traditionally learned in school and the knowledge and skills required to succeed in an increasingly more competitive and connected, technology-driven workplace. A curriculum for today's students must prepare them to successfully face rigorous higher education coursework, career challenges and a globally competitive workforce. U.S. schools must align classroom environments with real world environments by fusing the 3Rs and 4Cs (communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity).
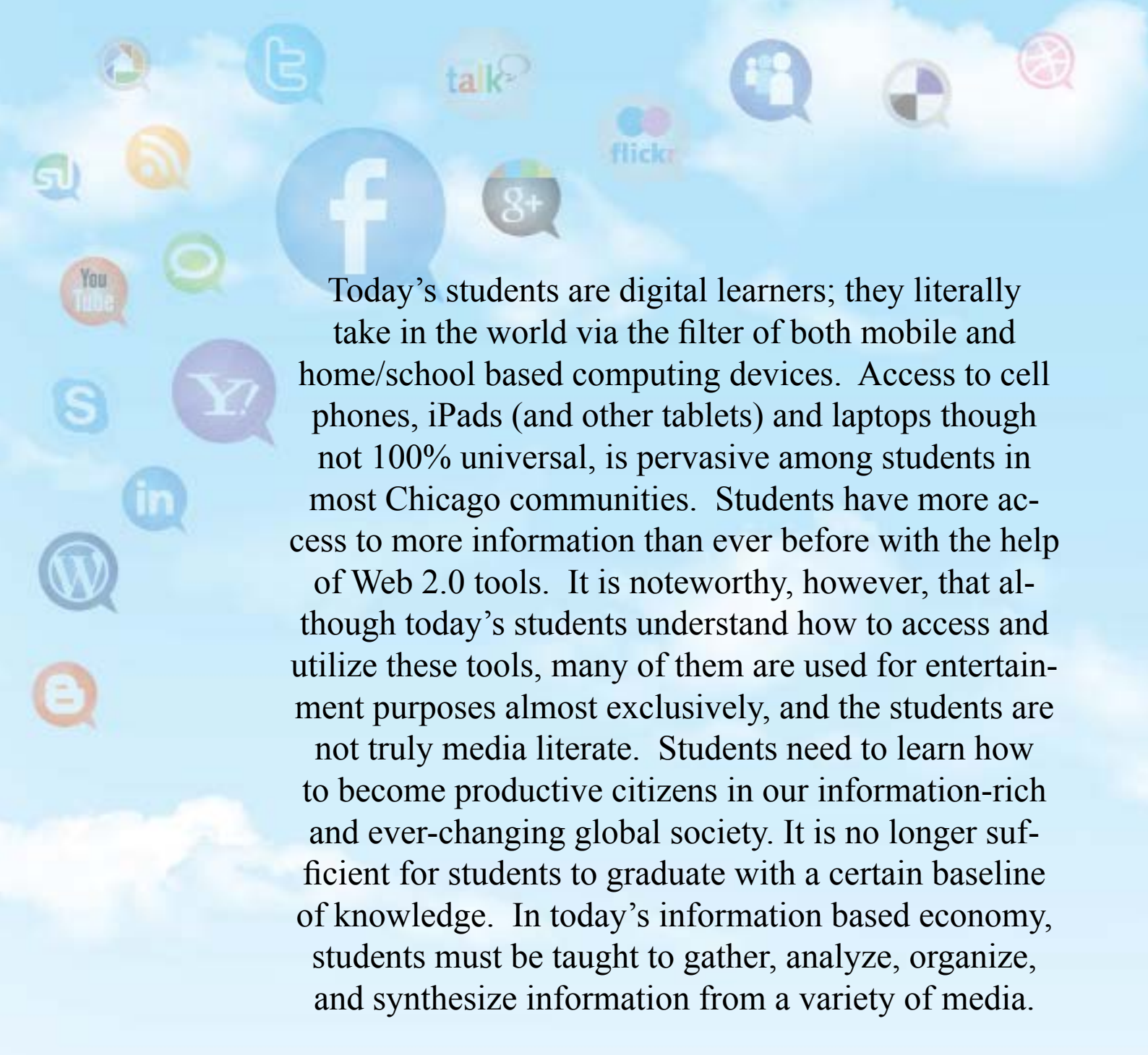
Solution: The Blog4College program integrates 21st Century skills and Common Core Standards, and utilizes numerous Web 2.0 tools which inherently support these standards. Through B4C, students develop the desired technical skill sets and become subject matter experts, while developing (or significantly enhancing) their ability to:

   communicate , collaborate, think critically, and create viable solutions and engaging blogs.

Curriculum: B4C is self-directed and highly interactive. The program starts with a brain storming session for each student to select their own compelling topic and research it thoroughly. Students are then guided through the process of developing a WordPress website, complete with customized plug-ins and content. They will learn to design, build and manage a professional web presence, using the latest technologies available. They will also come to understand both the power and the responsibility inherent in communicating to a global audience.

Assessments: Ongoing assessments are integral to this project. Each week, each student group does a presentation outlining their progress to date. The update will include what they have accomplished over the last week/ review period, what has to be completed to move to the next step and what is required to launch the project by the target date. The assessment includes information on what has been tested, what is completed and what challenges may be blocking or hindering progress. Students will also be evaluated on the presentation skills demonstrated during product releases and a "Pitch" exercise. In addition to self-ssessments, students will be required to assess their classmates. It is important to note here that the program coordinator will maintain a safe and supportive learning environment so that students learn how to give and receive constructive feedback that is helpful and supportive.

Benefits: A program of this nature is deliberate and intentional and marks the Principal of the School as an innovative, Educator and Thought Leader who is highly effective in preparing students to succeed in college and in the workplace as not only workers but leaders and successful, independent entrepreneurs.

Today's students are digital learners; they literally take in the world via the filter of both mobile and home/school based computing devices. Access to cell phones, iPads (and other tablets) and laptops though not 100% universal, is pervasive among students in most Chicago communities. Students have more access to more information than ever before with the help of Web 2.0 tools. It is noteworthy, however, that although today's students understand how to access and utilize these tools, many of them are used for entertainment purposes almost exclusively, and the students are not truly media literate. Students need to learn how to become productive citizens in our information-rich and ever-changing global society. It is no longer sufficient for students to graduate with a certain baseline of knowledge. In today's information based economy, students must be taught to gather, analyze, organize, and synthesize information from a variety of media.

LIFEBLOOD OF 21ST CENTURY ECONOMY

"Individuals who not only know how to obtain digital information, but can also analyze, evaluate and apply what they find to solve everyday problems are the lifeblood of the 21st century economy..."

(Ref.: Ray Kelly, President of Certiport, 31 July 2009)

B4C

HOW B4C WORKS?

The Objective of B4C is to assist students in learning 21st Century Skills and Common Core Standards, while utilizing selected Web 2.0 tools which inherently support these standards. Through B4C, students learn the desired Learning, Literacy and Life Skills presented in the Overview Section of this document.

BRAIN STORM

1.   Students begin by brainstorming a topic they are passionate about. While our preference is that students choose a topic that aligns with their future college and life aspirations, such as "How to Become a - Film Director, Physical Therapist, Teacher or Web Developer," for example. Students are encouraged to choose topics based on what they are most interested in researching

RESEARCH

2.   After the students choose a website topic, which sets the theme for their project, they will be taught how to thoroughly conduct research.

DEVELOP

3.   Students will be taught how to develop a WordPress website that is not only beneficial for them but useful to others who are interested in the same topic. (Each student's website will be publicly accessible for any other student via the web.) Students will move beyond the fundamentals of posting a blog, and delve into more advanced functions as the administrator of the back-end component. This entails, learning to create pages, posts, setting up the menu navigation, adding widgets, installing/customizing themes, installing/customizing plug-ins, adding media such as images, and documents, and integrating a variety of Web 2.0 technologies to better communicate their message. These are the exact steps any Web developer follows when developing a WordPress website for clients.

DEEPER LEARNING EXPERIENCE

4.   Students will end the program with a very thorough understanding of WordPress, from both, a front end and back end/ administrator perspective. In addition, they will have: (1) excellent, in-depth research experience on their selected topic; (2) a web application which they built to show the "how to" information they gathered during the research phase of the program, and most importantly (3) a thoroughly researched trajectory that can serve as a roadmap in assisting them to achieve their college and career goals.

B4C

SOCIAL LEARNING & LITERACY THROUGH B4C

Why Participate in social media?

Given the nature of the method of engagement in B4C, it is important to note the importance of Social Learning and Literacy. These are included in 21st Century skills. The idea of social learning encompasses the way students interact with others as they research, organize, prepare and report information. The social aspects of this process are important in that collaboration requires that students:

1. find and organize data/information from multiple sources,

2. reach beyond personal networks for "other trusted sources of information,"

3. obtain "online coaching and support," (through online files, and user comments and feedback) as needed.