

How the InvenTeam Has Been Useful to Me

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This semester has been a very useful and exciting one. We started out with the news that our preliminary application had been accepted and that we needed to write a more in depth one. We then went on to discovering how a good team works and how to get the job done right. After we had written done brainstorming, idea generating, and research we set out to write a winning grant application. Then we went to work with Microcontrollers. With the news of our final grant proposal acceptance we started new research on that. We have then done some work with analog to digital conversions.

Learning how a good team worked I feel was a very useful lesson for everyone in the class. Knowing how to build something as a team is an important life skill that everyone needs. We learned that a good team needs to have smaller teams that all work together, because any complex job would be very inefficiently done with one massive team because one person or team can only do one thing at a time. Learning how to break down the project into tasks that are related for one team to tackle is crucial as well. We learned all of these useful things before we started even writing our application.

Researching for this project taught us valuable lessons on the proper way to researching something. We started out just looking around on the Internet for what we thought we needed. This is incorrect. We then figured out that it went a lot faster if we asked our contacts what they thought we should do research on. Plus they helped out a great deal with telling us things that we probably couldn't have gotten from anywhere else.

Working with microcontrollers has been a lot of fun and will hopefully will help us with control over all systems of our invention. We started using parallax's basic stamp homework boards to do work with the basic functions of microcontrollers. We've learned how to use switches, outputs, inputs, speakers, and lots of other cool stuff. We are still however trying to figure out how to store data to the EPROM, but this small problem has caused us to learn a lot more about the microcontrollers then we would have just doing the projects that parallax has set up. Learning how to use problems to your advantage has been a plus of this project.

We had to learn a lot about the proper way to write a scientific paper in order to write a good grant application. And by our being accepted we fell that we must have learned at least something about how to write a good scientific paper. We had to learn about the writing of narratives especially. That was a little difficult because we wanted to say so much but we needed to keep it to as few words as possible.

This project has been very useful in the fact that it helps us get into colleges. Our acceptance counts as a national achievement as well as special acceptance to MIT. Plus it will look good on our college applications due to the prestige of the school that is financing our grant.

We got the chance to speak in front of our school board. That was pretty fun. We explained to them the process in which we got the grant, and how we expect to go about achieving our task in time. It was a really good experience to see how our school district handles its board meetings. It was especially interesting because the teachers union was asking for a raise in salary when California is in a budget crisis. I liked how all the board members listened intently and were respectful. That was very good of them.

I think that our project will also teach us many lessons in the future. I feel that we've learned a lot and we are only a third of the way through our project and we really haven't started doing anything construction wise, so I think that there will be a lot of growth in our knowledge in electronics and programming and the internet. I'm hoping to learn how to program in Java for the posting of our data to the Internet. I think that this is a very good skill because I want to pursue a career in computers and that is directly involved with computers.

My belief is that we will be able to receive a patent on our design that could potentially make the team money if we design it to the proper specs of our contacts, which we are planning to do. Also it will be a neat thing to be able to tell potential employers that I have a patent on a remote water quality-sensing unit. I think that being fortunate enough to be in our InvenTeam will have effects on my life that I cannot think of right now.

I'm really looking forward to being able to go to the showcase in June and seeing all the other team's inventions. I think that it will be a great experience to meet all the other creative people who set out to solve completely different problems than us. I'm especially interested in meeting and seeing the avalanche warning device. That has the possibility of saving thousands of lives, really great idea.

The media attention that we have received because of our acceptance has been really fun as well. We have learned how to take interviews and the proper ways to answer questions and being able to give more information than they really wanted in the first place. It's a lot of fun to get to see how much our community admires the work that we are doing. I feel really privileged to be a part of this great program. It would have been

cool if all the teams that entered into the competition were able to receive grants because this is such a wonderful experience.