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Literacy Center Initiative

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Literacy Center Initiative

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In January, the initial plan was as follows:
- Select a student to be the pilot pupil.
- Analyze his needs
- Engage him with interesting topics in the website, going by his specific needs.
- Record his progress on a weekly basis.
- Interact with his guardians to record his performance at home.

Stage one: Selection of student

Name: Nicholas

Background: Nicolas is a first grade student and an attention deficit child, hyper-active and finds difficulties dealing with reading/writing/de-coding skills etc.

Objectives and Expected Results: Improve Nicholas' deficiencies using the interactive tools of the Thinkfinity website and hopefully transform the child's attitude and response to his studies.

Stage Two:

Activities involving Nicholas: Initial target was to increase his motivation level. Started work by giving him what he wanted the most - computer games. The various interactive games that are there on the www.thinkfinity website are good enough to pull a child's attraction. While he enjoyed his 'games', it was made sure he was experiencing the various drilling activities that the games provided. Here are some of the game-like websites, all on the Thinkfinity site, that proved to be very beneficial, given in random order.

http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/wordwizard

http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/picturematch
http://www.econedlink.org/lessons/em461/popupActivity.html
http://www.econedlink.org/lessons/em285/flash/draganddrop2.html
http://www.econedlink.org/lessons/EM642/em642_popupActivity3.html
http://www.econedlink.org/lessons/em252/flash/popupActivity.html
http://www.econedlink.org/lessons/em465/popupActivity.html
http://www.pbskids.org/

After the first month, a remarkable change was noticed in Nicholas' attitude and he showed signs of "enjoying his studies" because it was more of an audio-visual interaction for him. Gradually, in the second month, many other websites, targeted towards improving his literary skills were implemented on him. Some links, also from the Thinkfinity site, on which Nicholas worked successfully are as below.

http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/Games/mag/spelling.html
http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/wordsandpictures/clusters/index.shtml
http://www.starfall.com/
http://www.dositey.com/language/phonics/phonics1.htm
http://funschool.kaboose.com/arcade/language/index.html

However, if a particular topic seemed too difficult for Nicholas on the first day, it was again dealt with on the next day and so on. Examples of some such links are:
http://interactives.mped.org/view_interactive.aspx?id=69&title=
http://interactives.mped.org/view_interactive.aspx?id=123&title=

Nicholas' work with the thinkfinity website is not restricted to the Center alone. Selected and hand-written links from the thinkfinity website are given it to his guardian. They work on the same with him in his free hours at home. Often it is the same work that he did the Center or it can be absolute different areas, like the ones mentioned below:

http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/player/environment/threats-to-animals-environment/polar-bears.html
http://www.sciencenetlinks.com/matrix.cfm

Achieved Results:
A remarkable change in Nicholas' attitude towards studies has been noticed by his guardians, teachers in school and us. Now he likes his lessons on the computer and is already improving a lot on his spelling and reading. However, his thinking process, retention techniques and writing skills still need to be worked upon. The spring session was just enough to work on his motivation level and reading and spelling skills.

Stage Three:

Future Planning based on Evaluation:
Since our work with Nicholas is proving to be a successful one, we will continue our work with Nicholas We will also work on the website with other students in different grades, with varying ability.

Recommendation on improvement for site:

1. Resources need to be properly targeted towards desired audience. For example, the mathematical tools (say, multiplication) provide the same information for any target group, be it student or teachers or parents. Though it is apparent that these target groups' compose a wide variety of maturity and ability levels.

2. Additional links on the Webpage as oppose to relying on the search box would enhance the navigation of the page. We always have to allow room for the younger audience who prefer to point and click as oppose to using a search box to obtain results.

3. One aspect of the site I think is good is that it is focused on the main subject areas. It may, in the future, include technology and other subjects, but we think this is a good resource for teachers who want simple, direct plans to take advantage of.

Future plans:

1. For the summer, 08, we will broaden our target audience at the Literacy Center, using what we've learned from the pilot study. We'll continue to categorize the sites by specific

reading problems, such as learning phonemes, vocabulary, so that we can target the sites to specific children.

2. In the fall, there are a number of courses in teaching of reading being given for students who are in programs for in the initial preparation of teachers, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The Thinkfinity links will be placed on the BlackBoard sites for the courses and used as part of the teaching of reading courses.

3. We're also exploring a course in Literacy and Technology for the Master's degree in Literacy. In the summer of 2008, we'll begin discussion of a Literacy/Media Literacy certificate as part of that Master's degree.

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