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Thinkfinity.org Videos

Robert Del Greco, Graduate Assistant
Pace University

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Thinkfinity.org End of Semester Status Report

Robert Del Greco
Thinkfinity.org Graduate Assistant
mr.delgreco@mac.com

Original Goals:

- To establish a rapport with a school in which Thinkfinity.org videos could be produced.
- To create a reproducible format that could be used to create future Thinkfinity.org videos.
- To create a video series (no less than 5 videos) of interactive whiteboard enhanced lessons based on Thinkfinity.org lesson plans that demonstrate how teachers can utilize both resources.

Progress: (Mid Semester)

My first and most difficult goal has required the entire first half of the fall 2008 semester. There are many obstacles associated with creating a video series in a public school setting. The administrator of my school had questions and concerns that needed to be addressed prior any videos being completed. The major concerns are:

- How will completed videos be used?
- How will students be exposed in the video series?
- What types of liability waivers are required and what does Verizon currently use?

Given the frantic nature of the first few weeks of school, communication with the building principal was slow. I did not badger the principal to avoid straining the relationship with the project. My patience has paid off. As of October 21st, the principal at Kensico School has given me a green light to start the production part of the project.

The next phase will be to establish what lessons are being taught that have Thinkfinity.org resources. No lesson will be taught that does not fit into the pre-planned curriculum of cooperating teachers. In the past several weeks I have become very familiar with the technology available on interactive white boards, as well as the resources available on Thinkfinity.org.

I expect that video production will begin in the next few weeks. After the first video is complete I will have a better idea of how I can create a template for future videos in this series.

Progress: (End of Semester)

Video production was halted by a lack of support by parents in the classroom I was placed for student teaching. Despite cooperation by the principal and mentor teacher, over 50% of my student's did not return the release form I sent home with a letter of explanation. One student who did return it did so to ensure that it was made clear he was not permitted to be filmed. This sentiment seems to be common among parents. They do not want their children's likenesses to be on the internet, even though I made it clear that no names would be used in the video. The fact that anyone would have

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access to video of their child is enough to stop them from giving permission. I asked my cooperating teacher if I could produce the videos anyway but not release them to Thinkfinity.org until all release forms were returned. I felt that this would be good practice for me to test my format for the videos as well as give to the Verizon Foundation a screen test; even if they could not publish it. My mentor teacher did not feel comfortable with this scenario and that put the project on hold.

As it currently stands, none of my semester goals have been met, but I have agreed to continue working on the project (through Professor Flank and Pace University's Literacy Center) next semester pending further instructions from the Verizon Foundation.