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Professional Development: Winter-Spring Activity Report

Pace University

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Summary of Thinkfinity Activities

Winter, 2009

In the winter of 2009 the Pace Computer Learning Center continued work with the Port Chester Elementary Schools and the Columbus Avenue School in New Rochelle. In addition, we participated in Superintendent's Conference Day activities in Port Chester, Good Counsel High School, and at Bronxville High School.

The work at Port Chester was similar to what had been done in the fall, continuing with a second cohort of teachers at the John F. Kennedy Magnet School. This cohort completed a similar program to that of the first cohort. A session begun in the fall was completed at Columbus Avenue School in New Rochelle.

- All teachers, regardless of school or district, explored Thinkfinity and at a minimum had the opportunity to research material for lessons.
- Teachers received SmartBoard training; this continues to be an area of great interest to schools who are concerned that these devices are not being put to better use.
- Our training model did not change from our fall sessions: initial meetings with administrative and teaching staffs, two group sessions and a series of three 40 minute one-on-one sessions for each teacher.
- We still find that our one-on-one sessions are a valuable use of time:
 - We can work with each teacher at his/her level; no time is wasted because the training focuses on the individual
 - Teachers feel free to ask even elementary questions without feeling shy.
 - Not only is the content different for each individual, but so is the pace. Teachers who are slower in using technology are not left behind.
 - Teachers tell us they feel much more confident after these sessions, appreciate the attention and help, and, having spent so much time with Thinkfinity, are much more likely to return to it.

Superintendent's Conference Day

The five sessions presented in March allowed us to reach and influence large groups of people in three districts.

Port Chester

- In Port Chester, Babette Kronstadt presented two sessions, reaching over 100 teachers. The first session introduced Thinkfinity and gave a tour of the site, focusing on at least one example from each content partner, and showing the many kinds of resources available. The second session demonstrated techniques

for using the Smartboard to maximum advantage, utilizing Thinkfinity lessons created by Port Chester teachers as examples.

- In Bronxville, Anita Tuminelli and Sylvia Russakoff each presented sessions on Thinkfinity and on Blogs and Wikis, reaching 20 teachers. In researching blogs and wikis, Ms. Russakoff used resources and examples from Thinkfinity.
- Good Counsel High School sent over 30 teachers to Pace for their Conference Day presentation. Babette Kronstadt showed the teachers how to use Thinkfinity in the morning. In the afternoon teachers researched sites they could use in creating lessons. Of this group of 30 teachers, 12 were selected for further training in the Spring session.

General comments

- Demand for these sessions is growing, and we have had to limit the number and size of groups.
- Bronxville High School is looking forward to working with us during the 2009-10 school year.
- Several meetings and phone conferences were held with the Croton School District, and plans are being discussed for the 2009-10 school year.

Spring, 2009

In this three-month period we worked with teachers at Good Counsel High School and continued our work in the Port Chester Schools.

In Port Chester we were able to work with 14 third grade teachers representing two schools, Edison Park School and JFK Magnet School. Working with a group of teachers at the same grade level enabled us to explore the third grade curriculum in depth, letting the teachers share curriculum development and complete the program with lessons and activities spanning the year and available to all. The group sessions were held at alternating locations, allowing both groups of teachers to host each other, and the one-on-one sessions were held at the home school for each teacher. The teachers were very excited about the program, and because they were familiar with each other's work are much more likely to actually use the array of lessons that were created.

At Good Counsel High School in White Plains we worked with 12 teachers chosen from the group of 30 who attended the presentation at their Conference Day in March. These teachers had widely different levels of experience with technology, but all were interested and determined to improve their skills. Because the hardware and software in this school needed attention, our technical staff spent time at the school trying to improve the response time of the PCs and the consistency of software available. The

teachers were very proud of their work. Some of the teachers needed 'remedial' help with applications like Word and PowerPoint so they could use the Thinkfinity resources they had found. The principal and teachers both told us we had made a tremendous difference in the use of technology in this school.

Appendix A – Summary of contacts

Pace University Computer Learning Center				
Summary of Thinkfinity Contacts				
Date	School District & School	Location	Program	# Participants
Spring, 2008	Good Counsel Elementary School	White Plains, NY	Thinkfinity overview + creating lessons using resources from Thinkfinity	12
Spring, 2008	Immaculate Conception School,	Tuckahoe, NY	Thinkfinity overview + creating lessons using resources from Thinkfinity. Minimal addition of Smartboard information	14
Spring, 2008	New York School for the Deaf	White Plains, NY	Thinkfinity overview + creating lessons using resources from Thinkfinity. Teachers used Macs A presentation for parents was included	8 teachers 10 parents
June, 2008	Pace HS	New York, NY	Presentation to HS teachers of advanced Smartboard techniques using resources from Thinkfinity	15
Fall, 2008	JFK Magnet School, Port Chester	Port Chester, NY	Thinkfinity overview + creating lessons using resources from Thinkfinity. Smartboard training	14

			expanded and more fully integrated with Thinkfinity	
Fall, 2008	Columbus School, New Rochelle	New Rochelle, NY	Thinkfinity overview for entire faculty . Overview + development of curricula for group of 12	52 12
Total served by 12/31/08				137
Winter, 2009	JFK Magnet School	Port Chester, NY	A second cohort of teachers received group and one-on-one training	12
Winter, 2009	Columbus Avenue School	New Rochelle, NY	The teachers who began training in fall, 2008 continued their program and developed Thinkfinity-enhanced lessons with one-on-one support	12 (same teachers identified in fall, 2008 – not counted in total)
Winter, 2009	Superintendent's Conference Day, Bronxville High School	Bronxville, NY	One day session covering Thinkfinity, Blogs and Wikis	20
Winter, 2009	Superintendent's Conference Day, Port Chester Schools	Port Chester, NY	2 sessions, one covering Thinkfinity and one covering advanced Smartboard techniques, using Thinkfinity-enhanced lessons as examples	100
Winter, 2009	Superintendent's Conference Day, Good Counsel High School	White Plains, NY	This one-day session included the entire faculty of Good Counsel High School and introduced the Thinkfinity site and gave the teachers opportunity to begin researching sites for use in their own lessons.	30
Total for Winter, 2009				162
Spring, 2009	Port Chester 3 rd grade schools	Port Chester,	Thinkfinity overview for group of 12 third grade teachers. Teachers then	14

		NY	researched sites on Thinkfinity and created their own lessons in one-on-one sessions.	
Spring, 2009	Good Counsel HS	White Plains, NY	12 high schools teachers with varying amounts of experience with technology received Thinkfinity training and support while they created lessons and supplementary resource materials.	12
			Total for Spring, 2009	26