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Case Studies of At-Risk Middle Grades Students and Literacy Applications Including Technology

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Mid-Project Progress Report

Case Studies of At-Risk Middle Grades Students and Literacy Applications Including
Technology

Cornerstone I: Expansion and Enhancement to the *Thinkfinity* Platform

Principal Investigator: Francine Falk-Ross

School of Education – Literacy

May 27, 2011

Mid-Project Report

Original Objectives and **Progress Notes to Date:**

- A) To identify and share the educational needs, personal interests, and learning attitudes of middle grade students having literacy challenges on the *Thinkfinity* website;

On the original timeline for the grant, June and July of 2011 were the assigned times for the analysis of the data and the preparation of the case studies, or profiles, of the students, and August and September were assigned for the posting of the profiles. The formalization of the results still needs to be completed.

- B) To identify and share the assessment process and results of informal surveys and running records as they target the literacy needs of middle grade students having literacy challenges on the *Thinkfinity* website;

The data has been collected and the transcriptions of interviews have been sent out and received at this date (i.e., May 2011). The results of students' running records (i.e., the reading assessment data) have been collected and need to be formalized. This work will be completed in June and July of this summer.

- C) To provide undergraduate (specifically TCH 410-Reflective Literacy Methods focused on intermediate and middle grades students) and graduate degree (specifically ED 755B-Literacy Methods for Middle Grade Students in Literacy and ED 656-Content Literacy in the MAT program) candidates on the Pace University campuses and on other campuses with models of assessment and instruction through case studies for discussion in university classrooms.

The data is ready to provide to the two classes in Fall 2011 in packets, and to the extension courses (if the instructors are open to this during this summer 2011). The plan for this data is to provide the raw data of the case studies to the university students (i.e., preservice and practicing teachers) to have them build the recommendations for instruction as an assignment. For the TCH 410 class, this will be for a lesson plan. For the ED 755B class, the assignment will be in preparation (i.e., a model) of a profile of a student. This information is already collected and can be compiled into packets.

The goal for sharing this information with other groups will be made available on the *Thinkfinity* website and, hopefully, and at the national Middle School Association.

- D) To provide teachers in school districts (Pace University partnerships and outside educational forums) and other educational settings with professional

development opportunities to learn more about middle grade students who struggle with literacy achievement.

I have already scheduled several dates in June to follow-up the case studies with strategy instruction. I have obtained a small grant to provide new tradebooks (short novels or biographies) purchases for the students and strategy textbooks for the teachers of those students who participated in the study. Hopefully, the impact on students and teachers will increase once the profiles are posted on the *Thinkfinity* website in September 2011.

- E) To provide parents and community members a section on the *Thinkfinity* website that addresses the concerns for their middle grade children's literacy development and achievement, and suggests online applications that they may use at home.

This has not occurred yet, and will be completed following the posting and advertisement of the Profiles on the Thinkfinity website in September.

- F) To develop publications that share/disseminate the above information and advertise the pace university *Thinkfinity* website for many applications.

The proposal for presentation of this information at the National Middle School Association's (NMSA) annual conference in October 2011 has been accepted. The Pace University Thinkfinity website will be advertised at the conference, and the information will be shared. Hopefully, this same information will be written up for a publication for the NMSA's several journals.

Impact on Students:

The teachers of the students have already commented that the students appreciated the individual attention to their reading challenges. During the interview, the students were observed to talk more about their interests and attitudes about reading than usually occurs in this resource classroom. In response to the students' needs, I have obtained a small grant to provide new tradebooks (short novels or biographies) purchases for the students and strategy textbooks for the teachers of those students who participated in the study. Hopefully, the impact on students and teachers will increase once the profiles are posted on the *Thinkfinity* website in September 2011.

Impact on Faculty:

Except for my example supporting students in a partnership school, there has not been an impact on the faculty yet. The plan is to share this information at one of the Fall 2011 SOE Faculty Sharing sessions that occur before (or just after) each faculty meeting each month.

Next Steps:

Data analysis and case study development (June/July 2011).

Postings of results on *Thinkfinity* website (September 2011).

Presentation of selected case studies through inservice meetings and faculty workshops to:

-members of the School of Education (ED 755B, TCH 410, middle school extension courses)

-other departments at Pace University and in school districts

THANK YOU!