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The Thinkfinity Center for Innovative Teaching, Technology and Research

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Literacy for Life

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TITLE:	LITERACY FOR LIFE
Cornerstone # 2	COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EMPOWERMENT
INVESTIGATORS	SR. St.John Delany
	Caitlin Gordon
DATE:	MAY 1, 2010

Final project report

Original goals: a) emphasize a practical, skills based approach to literacy education with an emphasis on Literature, art and music

b) Use technology for instruction

c) promote and utilize the Thinkfinity platform

d) provide a safe and nurturing environment for students and families to learn

e) increase the literacy skills of the participants

f) reach out to the community to determine the needs that the Center for Literacy can serve

Achievment of goals:

During the spring semester, we worked with third and fifth grade children from the public and parochial schools in Elmsford, New York which brought the name of Pace to individuals who had never been on the campus before.

The numbers of children who participated on a weekly basis developed skills directly re-Lated to literacy but they also learned skills indirectly related to literacy. Their reading and writing skills improved through the use of a variety of materials primarily using Traditional literature but, also their higher order thinking skills were challenged, their visual literacy skills were enhanced and their imagination and creativity were heightened.

Using traditional literature as a vehicle, the students learned the characteristics of That genre, learned about and read from the variety of categories, evaluated the Literature, wrote their own stories, dramatized them and performed for an Audience which included their parents. Technology played a large role in the Program in particular with the Thinkfinity lesson plans serving as a basis each week For each lesson, with the Smartboard, with the laptops which the student used

As a resource for research and for writing and with the document reader.

By the completion of the project at the end of May, all activities will have been Accomplished.

Outcomes:

a) Children learned to enjoy and appreciate a genre of literature
b) Children learned and improved their skills in a non threatening environment
c) Children became more confident as each week passed; they learned about their own talents, their ability to be more successful ,literate individuals
d) Parents were impressed with their child's skills, their child's talents and willingness to give up a Saturday to accomplish something so academic.
e) The community of individuals from Elmsford have not had contact previously with Pace and it appeared to us at the Center that the parents also learned something very positive about Pace University

Impact on students and faculty

Pace SOE students saw this program on a weekly basis and, with the assistance of my Graduate student, all the students learned more about the progress of the program. At our monthly faculty meetings, I informed the faculty as to progress but, since the program took place in White Plains, no faculty attended.

Other outcomes: it was truly amazing to watch the growth, the interest and the earnestness of these young people. There was never an absence and each week the sub ject was introduced with a new approach and never once did I hear a comment such as "it was boring!" Our goal was to help children enjoy and appreciate literature and to want to become more competent readers and writers. In retrospect, I believe much more was accomplished. The children loved coming to Pace University, enjoyed reading and writing and learning and, as a teacher, it was thrilling to see the thinking that occurred, the

Initiative each participant demonstrated and the enjoyment each one experienced.

Thinkfinity Cornerstone brought Pace to the community and the community to Pace! Children learned through Thinkfinity lessons that reading and writing can be fun, can be successful and that there is a future for a literate person. Our future plans:

Seek further funding to develop a literacy curriculum which would teach literacy In a challenging and non threatening manner

Continue to involve the community to participate in a variety of ways in the development of and execution of such a project