



**A Compilation
of

2011/12
Innovation Grant
Evaluations**

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About Innovation Grants

A District 300 educator proposes an innovation grant in February of each year and they are awarded in March of each year for the next school year. Proposal templates along with instructions are available at the Foundation's Web site. Upon receipt of a proposal by the February due date, the District 300 Foundation Assistant removes the submitter's name and school from the document. It is then sent to the Project's Committee for consideration. The Project's Committee presents its recommendations for Innovation Grants to the Board of Trustees at the March meeting. Criteria used by the Projects Committee include the following:

The project must be unique and never done before in District 300 as it is proposed.

The project must be innovative with clear goals aligned with State Education Standards and District 300 curricula.

The project must produce measureable results.

Innovation Grants are awarded for up to \$500. Proposals exceeding that amount will not be considered.

As a matter of policy, the Foundation does not expend funds on such items as stipends, travel, food, rewards, and incentives. The Foundation also does not expend funds on items that are considered to be necessary for the basic support of the District 300 Curricula.

Innovation Grant application forms are available at the Foundation's web site. Applications are due the first week of February each school year.

**Foundation for Educational Excellence District 300
Innovation Grant Project Evaluation**

Title of Innovation: School and Community Frisbee Golf Course

Submitted By: Rebecca Meyer

School: Sleepy Hollow Elementary School

Grade Level(s) served by this innovation: 1st-5th grades

Brief Description of the project:

The Foundation grant gave me with the opportunity to create a multi-purpose Frisbee golf course for student use during P.E. classes and recess, and for students / staff / family / and community use during non-school hours. The intention was to promote fitness, and provide our school community with access to a fun, healthy, and free recreational / lifetime activity, right in their own backyard.

How was the effectiveness of the innovation measured?

Posts 9, 1, 2, and 3 were used for the entire school year as a recess Mileage Club, and Morning Fun Run course. Mileage Club and Fun Run data was collected for this portion of the project.

We held a mile challenge event for the girls with mile scores below 11:00, and boys with mile scores below 8:30 to compete with one another. I kept data from last year's event and this year's event.

Students participated in a brief, introductory Frisbee golf unit during P.E. An all-school e-mail, along with a course map and golf card attachment, was sent out to families, inviting them to use our course. Surveys were then filled out by a random sampling of students, parents, and staff members regarding the Course.

What were the results of the measurement?

Mileage Club is a program available to all students during recess. I provide monthly individual and class challenges to help motivate students to complete as many miles as possible during recess. Participants include: 74% of 5th grade students, 64% of 4th grade students, 89% of 3rd grade students, 100% of 2nd grade students, and 100% of 1st grade students. One 4th grade student completed 100 miles during recess. A second grade student completed 75 miles. 4 students completed at least 50 miles, 50 completed a marathon (26.2 miles,) and everyone else completed 5 or more miles. Most first and second grade students completed 20 or more miles during the year.

We held four, before-school, Morning Fun Runs during the 2011-2012 school year. Students' participation was completely voluntary. October: 384 participants November: 354 participants March: 380 participants April: 347 participants.

Last year we had 27 girls and 27 boys qualify for our Mile Challenge event. This year we had 38 girls and 46 boys qualify to participate in this event. This year, several participants in the challenge were in second grade. It is very possible that their dedication to Mileage Club throughout the year helped to provide these youngsters with the endurance to compete with students in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades.

I am very pleased with the participation in our Mileage Club and Fun Runs, and the increase in the number of students who qualified to participate in our Mile Challenge.

From the survey that I asked students, parents, and staff members to fill out, I learned that:

- Students have used our course during P.E., recess, and after school.
- Parents know that they can find a Frisbee Golf Card on our PTC website; however, most students were not aware of this information.
- The course is well marked.
- Participants have enjoyed using the course, and most hope to use it again.

Please identify any part of the innovation that you would modify in the future.

One of our posts is quite a distance from the building; however, it is up on a hill. We have had several Frisbees get stuck up on the roof of the building due to this situation.

It is not necessary to modify; however, it is necessary that I do a better job of informing my students where they can get a Frisbee Golf card that they can use when they want to play on our course during the summer and after school.

Does this innovation hold possibilities for other subject areas and / or grade levels?

This project would be possible at the elementary, middle and high school levels if the school had adequate space for a course. Frisbee golf is a great recreational activity / lifetime sport for people of all ages.

Additional comments:

I look forward to incorporating Frisbee golf more into my curriculum, to help students increase their skill and knowledge of the game.

This year, in an effort to help improve fitness and camaraderie, I organized some different physical activities for our staff to participate in together. Next year, I intend to invite the staff to participate in our first SHES Staff Frisbee Golf Tournament.

In the future, I plan to continue to work to enhance our Mileage Club Program in order to maintain participation at the lower grade levels, and to help increase student participation at the higher grade levels. I hope increased participation in our Mileage Club Program will lead to improved mile times during fitness testing, and a continued increase in the number of students who qualify for our end-of-the-year Mile Challenge. Overall, it is my hope that The Sleepy Hollow Frisbee Golf Course will be a tool that helps more and more students to get excited and motivated to get, and stay fit.

Thank you for supporting this project. I believe it will provide years of fun and fitness for Sleepy Hollow students, staff, and families.

**Foundation for Educational Excellence District 300
Innovation Grant Project Evaluation**

Title of Innovation: Summer Reading Library

Submitted by: Carol Anderson

School: Neubert Elem.

Grade level(s) served by this innovation: K-1

Brief Description of the project:

This grant was used to buy leveled books for the kindergarten and first grade levels. These books were available for checking out once a week in June and July. The levels for these books are hard to find in libraries and stores. The intent was to provide books for beginning readers so there wouldn't be much summer loss.

How was the effectiveness of the innovation measured?

The effectiveness of this innovation was measured by keeping track of how many students came to check out books and how many books were checked out. We also compared the children's fall benchmarking score for AimsWeb to grade level expectations for those who read these books during the summer.

What were the results of that measurement?

Seven kindergarteners participated in the program. A total of 98 books were checked out by these students. Every student that participated in this program met grade level expectations on the first grade benchmarking probes. This indicates that the program was successful for these children.

Please identify any part of the innovation that you would modify in the future?

One reason for the low turnout might have been the time frame for checking out books. We were only able to open the library once a week for three hours. The time chosen may have been difficult for families. Surveying families prior to the start of summer may give us a better idea of when to have the library open.

Does this innovation hold possibilities for other subject areas and/or grade levels?

If more money was available, we could purchase leveled books at higher levels so more children would have the opportunity to read "just right" books for them. We did have some families asking about leveled books for their older children.

Additional comments?

The books that were purchased for this innovation are now being used by students I see for reading interventions. They provided another source of books for students to take home to read to improve their reading skills. The books have also been made available to first grade teachers to use with their students.

**Foundation for Educational Excellence District 300
Innovation Grant Project Evaluation**

Title of Innovation: Soar into Summer Reading

Submitted by: Kari Brandstedt **School:** Algonquin Lakes Elementary

Grade level(s) served by this innovation: First grade emergent readers – 26 students

Brief Description of the project:

The 2011 summer was a longer summer than in years past and the chance of summer reading loss was real. Research shows that reading just six books during the summer may keep a struggling reader from regressing (Alexander, 2007). Therefore, the Foundation grant provided our first grade struggling readers with accessible and appropriate leveled texts throughout the summer months. Students received “just right” leveled books in the mail starting in the month of July until the start of the 2011-2012 school year. Students, along with parents, signed a summer reading contract indicating their responsibility to read 20 minutes a day and maintain a summer reading log. This created an innovative learning experience because students had a summer reading library in their home consisting of at least six appropriately leveled books to read in order to sustain their reading skills. These materials were collected in the fall and planned to be reused each year for summer reading.

How was the effectiveness of the innovation measured?

A parent survey was sent home along with the summer reading materials. Student’s Fall and Spring guided reading levels were reviewed along with student’s Fall and Spring Aims Web Reading Curriculum Based Measurement scores (R-CBM).

What were the results of that measurement?

Student’s reading levels were assessed at the start of the 2011-2012 school year. Unfortunately, none of the 22 students who received books over the summer were meeting grade level expectations for reading during the 1st trimester of second grade. However, several students did move up at least a reading level or two and/or either maintained their reading levels. Fortunately, none of the student’s reading levels regressed. By the end of second grade, 10 of the 22 students (55%) were reading at grade level. According to the AimsWeb R-CBM, only 29% of students were meeting the Fall benchmark for 2nd grade. By the end of the 2nd grade, 22% of students met the Spring benchmark for R-CBM. Only four out of 22 parents returned a survey. Out of the four that were returned, 90% of the parents felt that the use of the summer reading books increased their understanding of how to help their child at home. Additionally, 95% of the parents felt the summer reading books supported their child’s literacy development. Below are some additional comments from the parents:

The most important thing I learned about reading with my child is....

- Reading is a very important part of study
- What a good reader my child has become
- The excitement in his face

Something I will do differently regarding my child’s reading...

- Make it a part of everyday homework
- To read more with her
- Have her read to the family. She’s a little timid of audiences
- Is to try and hide the pictures

Suggestions for improvement....

- Reading should be made a necessary part of everyday school
- Receive books earlier in the summer

Questions I still have about my child’s reading....

- How to show him that reading is very important
- Should I get more books with less pictures

Please identify any part of the innovation that you would modify in the future? I was unable to mail out the books on a weekly basis starting in June due to the grant money not being accessible until July 1st. Now that we have a supply of books, I would like to mail them out the first week of summer and continue to mail the books out on a weekly basis until the students return in the Fall. I was also unable to purchase the T-shirts this time around but do see the value in uniting the students with a common T-shirt for all to wear, (including staff), at an end of the year summer reading assembly. I would also like to extend the program by supplementing each book with specific reading strategies and purchase additional leveled books to widen the range of reading levels. Finally, I would like to print postcards and supply postage for students to update me on their summer reading progress and also extend the summer days/hours of our media center library so there are more opportunities for students to have access to reading materials all summer long.

Does this innovation hold possibilities for other subject areas and/or grade levels?

Absolutely! This innovation could be extended to all grade levels and to other core subject areas such as math. As a parent myself, it is difficult to make sense of the usual lengthy summer packets that come home. It can be overwhelming to parents yet if it is done on a more scheduled and purposeful manner such as mailings on a weekly basis it may yield a more successful result. Furthermore, students love to get mail!

**Foundation for Educational Excellence District 300
Innovation Grant Project Evaluation**

Title of Innovation: Using Video Technology to Expand Classroom Walls

Submitted by: Michael Kasper

School: Carpentersville Middle School

Grade level(s) served by this innovation: 7th and 8th Grade Students

Brief Description of the project:

Technology is a medium to distribute information. Using cutting edge technology allows teachers to best communicate with students. The grant involved buying an iPad for students to use in a musical setting. On the iPad, students use various music related apps to enhance their learning, take tests, and communicate with other musicians.

How was the effectiveness of the innovation measured?

The CMS Music Department assesses students often. Using data from assessments, we can provide interventions when needed for students needing more or different support. Struggling students, or those just needing a new way to learn the material, found success in using the iPad. One student in particular, an autistic student, was never able to read notes or rhythm in 6th grade. In 7th grade, using the iPad, he now fully participates and reads his notes and rhythm. In measuring all of our students, we looked at their grade and musical improvements.

What were the results of that measurement?

Students using the iPad music apps improved their music reading skills and rhythmic understanding. Their improvement was reflected in their grades and overall performance ability. In addition, using the camera feature on the device has allowed use to record individual performances for assessment and for other teachers to view and recommend plans.

Please identify any part of the innovation that you would modify in the future?

We would like to find a better way to rotate the iPad in and out of our classrooms more frequently. Perhaps a certain schedule where each kid gets the iPad for a day.

Does this innovation hold possibilities for other subject areas and/or grade levels?

Yes. The iPad is a technology that students interface well with, and , there are apps available for almost every subject.

Additional comments?

Thank-you for everything! This has been a great asset in our classroom. We intend on using it even more this year to aid our instruction.

**Foundation for Educational Excellence District 300
Innovation Grant Project Evaluation**

Title of Innovation: Lakewood Soul Survivor

Submitted by: Nicole Murphy, Amy Griffiths

School: Lakewood

Grade level(s) served by this innovation: 5th and 6th grade students

Brief Description of the project: Students will use nonfiction materials to enhance their writing skills. Students will also spend time of vocabulary as well as comprehension utilizing the nonfiction readings.

How was the effectiveness of the innovation measured? The effectiveness was seen each week through dialog with students about the previous reading/video. Students also gained practice in creating paragraphs they wrote summarizing the text they had read.

What were the results of that measurement? As a result of providing guided practice based of the text we had read, students then were able to apply what they had to create their own paragraphs. Students improved on providing stronger leads, details and conclusion each week in their writings.

Please identify any part of the innovation that you would modify in the future? Providing student with a notebook to hold on their writings would help them keep organized and allow them to look back on their past writing samples.

Does this innovation hold possibilities for other subject areas and/or grade levels? Students spent time on the vocabulary; so 5th grade was a good starting level. This would transfer well to a Social Studies class.

**Foundation for Educational Excellence District 300
Innovation Grant Project Evaluation**

Title of Innovation: Multi-sensory Approaches to Increasing Reading Comprehension

Submitted by: Megan Pankau

School: Westfield Community School

Grade level(s) served by this innovation: 6th-8th Special Education students

Brief Description of the project:

It cannot be argued that academic achievement is increased when the instructional material is presented in a way that compliments the students learning style. The goal of this project was to increase reading comprehension by allowing students to access and practice comprehension skills by using multisensory tools. This project provided teachers with additional opportunities to expose students to necessary comprehension skills via multisensory tools and differentiate the instruction in the classroom.

The program consisted of a variety of multi-sensory tools/games teachers were able to utilize within the classroom. They were used as small group interventions, focusing on one comprehension strategy or individually thus increasing the ability to differentiate instruction.

How was the effectiveness of the innovation measured?

We progress monitored the students instructional level by using AIMSWeb Maze (Maze-CBM). Maze is a multiple-choice cloze task that students complete while reading silently. The first sentence of a 150-400 word passage is left intact. Thereafter, every 7th word is replaced with three words inside parenthesis. One of the words is the exact one from the original passage. Science-based research has shown that this provides a reliable and valid measure of reading comprehension. In addition to MAZE, student and educator feedback was taken informally.

What were the results of that measurement?

Using AIMSWeb Maze progress monitoring, the students demonstrated a mean increase of 9 corrects from baseline at their instructional reading level. The most impressive results were the comments from students and educators as they loved the tools and used them frequently throughout the year. The games were especially helpful during ISAT testing time when the students were feeling stressed but continued to need skill development.

Please identify any part of the innovation that you would modify in the future?

The program was very successful and I don't feel modifications are necessary.

Does this innovation hold possibilities for other subject areas and/or grade levels?

Absolutely! I feel that all students benefit from material being presented in a multi-sensory fashion.

**Foundation for Educational Excellence District 300
Innovation Grant Project Evaluation**

Title of Innovation: Brain Camp

Submitted by: Michelle Soland

School: Westfield Community

Grade level(s) served by this innovation: 3-5

Brief Description of the project:

To provide "Brain" activities to give student an extra boost toward learning. To provide strategies to help lower students prepare to learn.

How was the effectiveness of the innovation measured?

We gave timed fact tests and timed reading passages each week.

What were the results of that measurement?

Most students made solid gains in both areas. The students with motor delays did not increase speed as much.

Please identify any part of the innovation that you would modify in the future?

Brainware Safari is a great program and a good learning tool but the sight licensing is unreasonable.

Does this innovation hold possibilities for other subject areas and/or grade levels?

Yes, we will be holding camp again this summer and have been using the materials in the classroom as well.

**Foundation for Educational Excellence District 300
Innovation Grant Project Evaluation**

Title of Innovation: Tag! You Can Read It

Submitted by: Nikki Zolotar

School: Parkview

Grade level(s) served by this innovation: Kindergarten

Brief Description of the project:

In this project we purchased 4 Tag Readers, 4 cases to hold them, and over 30 books for their use.

How was the effectiveness of the innovation measured?

Originally, I thought I would be using AimsWeb data as well as the students guided reading levels. As the students used the books and readers I realized that this was not the best way to gather data on the effectiveness of the grant. While my students showed amazing growth this year, I can't pinpoint the direct impact that the Tag Readers had on it.

What were the results of that measurement?

This year I had an average of 30 students in my class. In the Fall, 79.1% of my students were not meeting the goal for Letter Sound Fluency on their AimsWeb Letter Sound Fluency Assessment. To meet that goal you need to be able to identify 13 letter sounds in one minute. 20.6% of my students were able to meet that goal in the fall.

At the Spring Benchmark, 41.2% of the students did not meet the goal of 40 letter sounds in one minute. 58.5% did meet this goal.

Out of my 30 students, there were 10 students who went from knowing between 0-3 letter sounds at the Fall Benchmark, to meeting the goal of 40 at the Spring Benchmark. Many of which actually scored in the 60's and 70's.

Please identify any part of the innovation that you would modify in the future?

One of the major changes I will be making for next year, is to instead of using AimsWeb data to measure the success of this project, I will instead have the students complete a simple book review. There are a couple of different ones I can use, they will cover; beginning, middle, and end of the story, character identification, and the students rating how much they liked the book they read. We also found the carrying cases are very clumsy and hard for the students to use independently. For the upcoming school year we will be switching to book bags.

Does this innovation hold possibilities for other subject areas and/or grade levels?

I think this project could easily be used at the Pre-K level; they have a similar product called the Tag Jr. It also could be used in 1st grade classrooms. I wouldn't go much beyond 1st grade because the books that are used are not suitable for higher reading levels.

**Foundation for Educational Excellence District 300
Innovation Grant Project Evaluation**

Title of Innovation: CAFE Strategy Boxes

Submitted by: Barb Malinger

School: Perry Elementary

Grade level(s) served by this innovation: 1st-3rd

Brief Description of the project: The project created strategy boxes that were filled with items that anchor each reading strategy with a hands-on manipulative that can be used during whole group shared reading instruction and small group guided reading instruction. Each strategy has a picture card and an object to help students remember that strategy. There is a use of common vocabulary, visuals and anchors that are shared across grade levels.

How was the effectiveness of the innovation measured? We gave a full day presentation to all of our teachers during Kane County Days. Teachers filled out an evaluation reflecting on the effectiveness of the strategy boxes.

What were the results of that measurement? Teachers agreed that the use of common language, pictures and hands on materials are helping students remember the strategies and use them during reading. They commented that even when they get reading students from other classrooms they say we have that poster in our room or I know that. Here are some comments from teachers: "These boxes are treasures. My students and I are both excited to learn and implement the strategies during their reading time." Students ask, "Aren't we going to use the strategy boxes to learn today?" "This has really helped our students anchor their learning." "As a teacher, I finally have a map of what to teach and when and have a better understanding of how to teach my readers these strategies."

Please identify any part of the innovation that you would modify in the future?

Include 4th grade.

Does this innovation hold possibilities for other subject areas and/or grade levels? I think this idea of creating common vocabulary, pictures and anchors that are shared and utilized across grade levels could definitely be used for other subjects.

Additional comments? This was one of the most rewarding projects I have been a part of at my school. The teachers were as excited as the students when using the strategy boxes. A key component of this project was the opportunity to have a full day training for teachers in the implementation of these reading strategies and the use of the strategy boxes. Our thanks to the Foundation.

**Foundation for Educational Excellence District 300
Innovation Grant Project Evaluation**

Title of Innovation: Formation of Strategy Game Club

Submitted by: Michael D. Block

School: Dundee Crown High School

Grade level(s) served by this innovation: Grade 9-12

Brief Description of the project:

The money from the innovative grant allowed me to purchase a number of strategy games in order to start up a strategy game club for Dundee Crown High School. I specifically chose strategy games that require critical thinking skills, social interaction and simple math to play. The intent was that the fun playing of these games would act as an intervention to the many students from lower income families who did not have the advantage of playing games growing up in their houses.

How was the effectiveness of the innovation measured?

Weekly attendance was kept track of the students participating in the game club to look at the breadth of students served by the club. In addition observations of interactions was made throughout the weeks to witness the improvement of math, social and thinking skills as games were being played. The students that participated in both the club and my classes were observed to see if those skills would translate to better performance within their classes too. Finally I talked with some of the repeated attendees about the game club and its impact on them.

What were the results of that measurement?

Throughout the year approximately 80 different students came to the club with 30 students attending each week. These 30 people had a core of consistent attendees with other groups regularly attending as other commitments like sports, musicals or class work allowed. Many of those students transitioned from shy, even withdrawn personalities to regularly pulling games off the shelf and inviting new attendees to play as they explained the rules to their favorite games. As students played the games from week to week, I observed them changing strategies of play, taking different approaches, making better analysis of game situations and working the simple math more quickly. While hard to quantify the effect on classroom ability, I did see many of these same analysis, articulation and social skills being applied by club members in my class. The co-sponsor Scott McNees also commented on similar observations from his students in the club.

A number of club members made comments that "I always wanted a club like this, but there wasn't one till now. Now I feel like there is a place for me to fit in at school", "Wednesday (the day of game club) is my favorite day of the week. I work hard at school the rest of the week so I can have fun on Wednesday", "Game club has changed my life. I never would have talked to so many different people before. Now it's no big deal" and "I'm going to miss playing games when I graduate. I'm going to have to see if there is a game club at college or I might have to start one."

Please identify any part of the innovation that you would modify in the future?

Since purchasing the original games (Dominion, Settlers of Cataan, Stone Age, Power Grid, and Takall) I have found a few other games that have an even better ability to be math interventions and test critical thinking skills, because of some of their game dynamics. King'sburg is particularly good at testing math skills and Roborally particularly good at critically thinking ahead.

Does this innovation hold possibilities for other subject areas and/or grade levels?

There is no reason why these same games can't be purchased and a similar club be done at the middle school level.

Additional comments?

The game club was a terrific success, particularly because of the extra games that were able to be purchased from the grant given by the foundation. My co-sponsor, and myself greatly appreciate the ability to do this grant and the significant positive impact it has had on our students at Dundee Crown High School. Thank you.

**Foundation for Educational Excellence District 300
Innovation Grant Project Evaluation**

Title of Innovation: Dry Erase Boards

Submitted by: Pierre Thorsen

School: H.D. Jacobs High

Grade level(s) served by this innovation: 9-12

Brief Description of the project: I used the small dry erase boards for students to write their answers to discussion questions or Pictionary Game questions.

How was the effectiveness of the innovation measured?

I compared the logistical effectiveness of using the dry erase boards for activities such as Pictionary to not using them. I also looked at scores from classes that used the boards for certain parts of the curriculum against those classes before I had the boards for the same parts of the curriculum.

What were the results of that measurement?

The student involvement increased dramatically since every student had access to a dry erase board instead of only using the chalkboard, which has limited space. I found the students much more eager to participate through activities centered on the dry erase boards (such as Pictionary) instead of previous ways I taught the curriculum. An example would be having the students cover the Scientific Revolution through creating a newspaper before dry erase boards. With dry erase boards, the students preferred and got more into the material by playing Pictionary. The class average for the Scientific Revolution increased by 1%. This percentage would have been much higher if some of the students remembered to read the material in preparation for the activity.

Please identify any part of the innovation that you would modify in the future?

I will incorporate more of the individual use of the dry erase boards than the group activities to ensure more individual accountability and involvement. I believe this should increase performance on assessments.

Does this innovation hold possibilities for other subject areas and/or grade levels?

Absolutely, the dry erase boards can be used beyond what I did. It does not matter the subject matter or the age level. You are merely changing the subject matter used in the activities and the difficulty level.

Additional comments?

The use of dry erase boards has opened up more logistical capabilities that I did not have before using them. I can now pass out a board to each student and get immediate feedback to discussion questions by the students writing their answers on the boards and holding them up in class. I no longer have students racing to a limited space around the chalkboard to write answers to the game questions, where collisions or pushing occurs. The advantage of some group's closer proximity to the chalkboard is eliminated with the dry erase boards. Do not let the students' scores on the above-mentioned activity overshadow these logistical improvements. Summative assessments do not take in consideration the excitement I see in students to participate more through the use of the boards. Furthermore, with spontaneous changes that occur through time I am confident there will be a greater impact on student performance on summative assessments.

Foundation for Educational Excellence District 300 Innovation Grant Project Evaluation

Title of Innovation: Game On! Anchor Activities to Enhance Student Support

Submitted by: Luc Miron **School:** Neubert Elementary School

Grade level(s) served by this innovation:

Brief Description of the project: In regards to primary instruction, few cross-communication (from one school to another) opportunities have been provided for teachers to explore math instruction collectively. Most, if not all, instructional decisions have been site-based.

This grant provided the grant recipients with an opportunity to explore instructional ideas across a variety of schools. What I brought to these discussions was the concept of anchor activities: an instructional strategy endorsed by math differentiation experts (Gregory & Chapman, 2007; Murray & Jergensen, 2007). To apply anchor activities, one sets aside a part of the student's learning time for self-exploration and/or collaborative experiences with peers. This is believed to benefit students in different ways, including, intrinsic motivation to complete learning tasks in a timely manner.

I also shared with them that Murray and Jorgensen (2007) had applied anchor activities as a way to free themselves of working with everyone in their classrooms, so that they could turn their attention to working with certain students who needed more, uninterrupted support during math time.

By no means did I insist that the participants use anchor activities through this grant, but the grant was an opportunity to have them consider the appropriateness and potential effectiveness of such actions. Ultimately, it will be up to teacher leaders, principals, and district leaders to determine how math instructional will be reformed (and/or altered) based on the new National Core goals. Perhaps this report can help shape that vision. Anchor activities can be a component of a differentiated classroom (Murray and Jorgensen, 2007).

How was the effectiveness of the innovation measured?

The schools this grant were Sleepy Hollow, Perry, Hampshire, Neubert, and Lake-in-the-Hills.

Here are the teacher comments that I received in no particular order:

Teacher 1:

I have been using the materials and they are great! The Can Do! game has been great for reviewing synonyms and antonyms. Roll and Read has been useful for practicing our word building skills. If I need to reteach content during math I have allowed the students who have mastered the content to play some of the games (Hoppers, Amaze, Equation Invasion). This has allowed me to focus on the group I'm working with and know that the other students are engaged and on-task. I also plan on trying flexible math groups next school year. I would like to try your suggestion and use some of these materials as anchor activities. The students find the activities engaging and fun! Thank you!

Teacher 2:

First of all, thank you so much for the games. They have been going over really well. The math games I have used for my game station at the math centers. So far the kids have used the number sense game and the fraction one. I have used it for spiral review since we have taught those skills previously, which is great because the kids can play the games independently. I used the vocabulary game with prefixes, suffixes, synonyms and antonyms one day for guided reading. We talked about the Literacy CAFE strategy of expanding vocabulary. One of the kids even asked me where I bought it! Now I keep it available for the kids to choose for Working with Words for Daily 5.

Teacher 3:

I introduced all items to my kids and they like all the games; I use the math for my guided math group activity (buddy games) and the frog game (forgive me I forgot the name of it) is something I use with my kids that quickly finish tasks and they get totally stoked. Next year, I would like to have an area of "brain gym" or "My Bright Box" where the kids who finish can do something that they like but do activities that will favor their MI (I'll give the kids the survey at the beginning of the year). I would like to get more games like this. Thank you for sharing these items with my 3rd graders and me.

Teacher 4:

I have included the material in a designated area I call game club. Students who finish their work early can access the material during that free time. The kids can also use the material during indoor recess. The resources have been a very nice additional to my already in place enrichment material. I've told the students that these logic and spatial reasoning puzzles are good "brain work" for them and builds character, as they have to be persistent when puzzles get challenging. Thanks again for your contributions to my classroom.

Teacher 5:

I used the innovation grant material in a variety of ways. I utilized it mainly during independent practice during math. I would set-up two or three of the games and choose students to participate, which allowed them a high-quality concept review activity. The activity not only benefited the children playing the review game, but it also allowed me to work with those that needed more guidance with the lesson. I not only liked the way each game covered one concept, but the fact that many smaller skills were reviewed within the broader concept. In the future I will use it with our TAP helper program in which a parent will work with a small group to either review, reinforce, or extend the concepts covered in the game.

Additional comments?

As a person who's written and received numerous grants, this was one of the most fruitful endeavors to date! Thank you foundation for your continued support!