



Innovation Project Application

Library: Warrington Middle School (Pensacola, FL - Escambia County School District)

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Name of Project: Ignition for Cognition

Project Amount requested: \$1,085

Scope of the Project:

Students need screen-free critical thinking games in the library. Middle school students are constantly under pressure to show growth every week in their classes and spend too much time at their desks and behind computer screens while the dreaded testing season looms in the distance. With Ignition for Cognition, students will learn how to strategize on a grand scale with a giant chess set. Students will have to move around to play giant chess and think critically to make their moves. Mock Ups and Disruptus are collaborative card games that will require students to communicate with each other to create fun, new ideas and products. Creating and communicating can be intimidating tasks for middle schoolers, so the QBall, which is a tossable ball with an internal microphone, will help students become confident as they learn how to think critically all while having fun in the library.

What need in the library/community will this project address?

Students need the six C's to succeed--collaboration, communication, critical thinking, creative innovation, and confidence, but so many flashy apps and high-tech gadgets are creating students who are only capable of shallow thought. In order for students to deepen their cognitive skills, students need to be collaborating, communicating, thinking critically, creating innovatively, and building confidence. In today's climate of high-stakes standardized testing, students are drilled and tested constantly, which is all the more reason that the school library is still relevant and vital for students. By providing critical thinking games, students will be challenged to think on deeper levels, but with engaging learning games in a more relaxed environment-- the school library.

A giant chess set will surely turn heads in the library, but the vision for Ignition for Cognition is that the giant chess board will be more than a conversation starter. It will be a hotbed for creativity, concentration, and critical thinking. According to the nonprofit U.S. Chess Trust, which our school has recently applied for membership, "chess has been shown to augment problem-solving capabilities, provide cultural enrichment, advance intellectual maturity, and enhance self-esteem." What better way to boost memory and retention for our students than by challenging them to strategize and think several steps ahead. Students may choose to engage in school-wide chess challenges with prizes, join a student chess club with opportunities for district competitions, and play freely during library time with their classmates. Checkers pieces will also be available for students who may not always have time to complete a game of chess or for special needs students who may need a less complex game to play.

Students enter middle school knowing how to talk to one another, but that does not mean they know how to effectively communicate and collaborate with each other. After all, effective communication and collaboration requires confidence which is not always a developed trait by middle school. The Qball is a soft but durable ball that can be tossed around for students to speak their answers into. The QBall will help students who struggle with speaking in front of the class because students will be so engaged with tossing the ball that they will not worry about the judgment of their classmates. The QBall can be paired with almost any activity in the library or classroom, including the card games Mock Ups and Disruptus.

In both card games, students work together to invent new products or services based on the descriptions or illustrations on the cards. The premise of Mock Ups is that each group picks three cards that will establish a challenge. For example, one group may get the following challenge: Construction workers (card 1) need a way to save water (card 2) that works on the moon (card 3). The group will brainstorm to think of a new product or service that completes the challenge. Each group shares, and the class votes on the best product or service. The premise to Disruptus is similar except that groups have to either improve an object, transform the object to give it another use, or disrupt the object so that it can be used to create a new market or change the human experience. For example, if a student pulls a card with a fork on it and the "transform" card, all groups would have to come up with another use for the fork aside from eating utensil. The groups share their answers and the game judge awards points to the most creative answer. These games will ignite students' creative energies, and sharing their outlandish answers into the QBall will be an added bonus.

Resources required and budget (NOTE: for items whose unit price exceeds \$500, 3 quotes are required or an indication that the vendor is sole source.):

MegaChess Giant 25" Plastic Chess Set- \$468 from Amazon (<https://tinyurl.com/yyhnpzuj>)

MegaChess Giant 9.5' x 9.5' Plastic Chess Board- \$199 from Amazon (<https://tinyurl.com/y5kna6t8>)

MegaChess Giant 10" Checkers Set- \$199 from Amazon (<https://tinyurl.com/y49alzlz>)

QBall- \$179 from QBall.com (<https://buyqball.com/product/qball-2-0/>)

Mock Ups Card Game- \$20 from Amazon (<https://tinyurl.com/yyj2e2bk>)

Disruptus Card Game- \$20 from Amazon (<https://tinyurl.com/yx9xae5>)

Activities/Timeline (include estimated completion date):

October 2019- Student Promotion & Buy-in

Generate interest in chess and checkers by setting up small chess and checkers boards on the tables in the library for students to play at their leisure. Post and explain the rules of chess and checkers. Start lunchtime chess club with standard size chess boards for students who are interested.

November 2019- Teacher Promotion & Buy-in

Purchase grant supplies from vendors and advertise new critical thinking games and challenges coming to the library. Unveil new games and explain activities to teachers during a faculty meeting. Invite teachers to toss around the QBall with each other and play Mock Ups, Disruptus, and giant chess. Encourage teachers to participate in upcoming school-wide chess play and to allow students new to chess to learn how to play by visiting the library this month.

Promote the QBall and the two card games by encouraging teachers to sign up for library time this month. Teachers will be more apt to bring their classes for a library lesson or collaborative project if they know that students will be required to use the 6 C's in the activities. Some teachers are hesitant to bring students to the library because they may have a rowdier class, but the QBall allows students to communicate in a fun but controlled way, and the card games can be quick ways to start or end class by having students brainstorm innovative ideas. Teachers can continue to sign up for library time throughout the year and use the QBall or card games as they see fit.

December 2019- Begin Class vs. Class Chess Play

School-wide chess play will start with two 6th grade classes, and those two teachers will select one student to make a play during each of the six class periods during the day. Plays will have a time limit of five minutes so that students can return to class in a timely manner. After each play, students will take a picture of the board with an iPad to ensure the board pieces are not moved around outside of a chess move. Students may also check the previous player's picture to make sure the board is correct before their play. There will be a total of twelve plays between two classes during the school day. The librarian will share a Google Doc that lists the students who have played that week so that all students get a chance to play. Also, if a student plays for one teacher, they cannot play in that same game for the opposing teacher. The winning students and teacher will win a prize. The winning teacher will have his/her students play against a new teacher's students until all 6th, 7th, and 8th grade classes have played. This will probably take a few months to complete. The winning teacher will get a small chess set for their classroom. Different competitions can be student vs. faculty games, grade vs. grade games, and free play among students during the school day.

January 2020- Introduction to Mock Ups and Disruptus

Meet with classes after winter break and have students use the QBall while playing Mock Ups and Disruptus. Play Mock Ups and Disruptus with students during special events like Florida Literacy Week. Display student creations from the games around the library by letting students illustrate what their products would look like if they really existed.

February 2020- Continuing Critical Thinking Game Play

Invite any classes who have not participated in any of the critical thinking games to visit the library. Allow individual students to play the card games or chess and checkers and encourage activities as a way to relieve stress as standardized testing begins.

March 2020- Continuing Critical Thinking Game Play

Place giant chess & checkers set in the garden for students to play during lunch as a reward. There is also a gated grassy area behind the library for the chess set to be placed for outdoor use. The library back door can be propped open for supervision.

April 2020- Ignition for Cognition Wrap Up

Wrap up school-wide chess competitions. Activities will be completed by the end of April until the following school year starts. Cognition has been ignited. Checkmate!

How will the library sustain this project?

The plastic chess and checkers set is durable and will hold up after many years of play. Pieces are large enough that they will not be lost easily but light enough to move around. The card games are a good staple for year-round use in the library and can be checked out for teachers to use in their classrooms. The QBall can be used for any kind of activity where speaking and engagement is key. The QBall can be used with ice breaker activities, test review, games, and even faculty meetings. As long as students need the 6 C's to thrive, these critical thinking games will be used in the library to ignite their cognition.

Library Director's signature: *Aana Kadijoff* Date: 10/17/19

[Signature] Date: 10/17/19
Signature of agent, office, or board to whom the Director reports

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Approved _____ Not Approved _____

PLAN Executive Director _____