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Fletcher-Maynard Students Get Organized!

Productive Education (PE) LLC working with Tutoring Plus of Cambridge has implemented the Inventive Learning™ Curriculum, using the BinderBuddies®, system for students in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades at the Fletcher-Maynard Academy.

In February 2007, Ellen McLaughlin, Tutoring Plus' Executive Director, provided an opportunity for David Schwartz, CEO of Productive Education (PE LLC), to teach organization skills to the students in the "Future Engineers" evening program. The Future Engineers program is Tutoring Plus' newest initiative, which runs for sixteen weeks, and is housed at the Fletcher-Maynard Academy. In a two session workshop, David, working with Nikki M. Fyfield, Tutoring Plus' Director of Programs, worked out a simple "front end" curriculum for teaching and motivating students to think inventively about the process of organizing and building an intelligent machine. The tools used employed an innovative binder organizing system, based on the BinderBuddies® system that is available from PE LLC (<http://www.bookwindows.com>).

The sessions were attended by Robin Harris, Principal of the Fletcher-Maynard Academy. Robin was inspired by the shift in motivation she observed in the students, a number of whom got very enthusiastic about the project. Robin reached out to Tutoring Plus and David, to see if PE LLC could deliver that same workshop to her middle school students as a way to help students improve their binder organization in the classroom.

As students search for ways to organize themselves, it is evident that this task is difficult to accomplish for many, and presents challenges to both teachers and parents. In mid April, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students and teachers at the Academy were provided the Inventive Learning™ Curriculum in a series of training sessions, where the teachers were first trained in a 1.5 hour session. Following this, the students were trained in groups, gathered in the gymnasium along with their cluster teachers. The installation went smoothly. 6th, 7th, and 8th grades were taught and ready in one morning. The initial results have been very favorable with the students taking personal responsibility for their own success with the binder system.

"Well over 80% of the teachers and parents we interviewed, indicate to us that lack of organization is a real problem with their students," according to David C. Schwartz CEO

PE LLC. "Providing a solution to the problem of disorganization that works from the child's perspective may be the single most important leverage point in improving educational outcomes for students." He continued, "When classroom operating efficiencies can be positively impacted by student behaviors around the process of organizing, the shift in attitude about learning is astounding."

According to Schwartz, "Employing a natural cycle in Recording information, Rediscovering it, Reprocessing it, and Reviewing it in a collaborative process," what he calls the 4-R's, "is essential to improved learning. When the 4 R's are integrated with an organizing tool and methodology that follows a simple "grammar," like a well-formed sentence, it is possible to affect a rapid and positive shift in executive function for the middle schooler. That shift can move all students up a rung from their current performance levels."

The complete solution provides students with specific pockets and note-taking tools that allow them the flexibility to tailor their own organizing system, and it is guaranteed to teach the fundamentals of organizing literacy™. Through the use of this system, students find it easier to organize themselves, learn more, and get better grades. BinderBuddies® tools have been proven to offer a systematic approach that organizes graded tests, quizzes, and homework, as well as the other types of documents students are expected to handle day in and day out. Delivering the kit as a complete turn key solution with rings and covers solves additional problems these binder solutions suffer from, excessive weight and poor durability. The tool kit is a reliable, light weight, and effective mechanism for students to refer back to work done including major projects. Moreover, the system plays a significant role in improving communication among students, teachers, and parents. With improved communication from day to day, the flow of thought and energy can shift to content and learning, a step which can be a catalyst to improving a student's performance.

Use of the system has proceeded with students energized in the spring term, a time when attention and focus always wane with the warm weather. Robin Harris asked PE LLC to review the way binders are used at the school as an extension of the project. Robin felt that a "plug-in" for the binders that worked for ALLL students across all classes, not just special tutorials, might give their implementation a boost. This work is in progress with compelling insights and plans for the fall.

PE LLC's pilot liaison, Tutoring Plus of Cambridge, is ecstatic about the collaboration and continues to support the project with the Fletcher-Maynard Academy. Everyone involved is committed to this endeavor and will ensure that the recently implemented curriculum is a success!

DocOA™, as the system is now called, is built on BinderBuddies® a tool kit from PE LLC that has benefited from extensive research and testing over the past 15 years and has been used thousands of students. The new curriculum, Organize360™, enables schools to take full advantage of this proven organizing system.