LRC 699 – Richard Ruiz and David Betts
Spring 2013
Independent Study Proposal

1. Rationale for conducting the independent study
    a. The Youth Literacy Project is in need of an administrator/facilitator for the spring of 2013. This is an opportunity to conduct original research to satisfy the research requirements for coursework in the PhD program of Language, Reading and Culture.
    b. The program is located at the South Park Literacy Center (used to be called the Annex) of the Quincie Douglas library. It is 949 E. 35th Street, about 35th and Park. The point is to target the youth in this neighborhood. From campus, it is about 4 miles, and depending on traffic, usually takes about 10-15 minutes to get there.
    c. Responsibilities would be to essentially oversee the program, including what actually happens with the students while they meet, and the administration parts. This includes turning in and picking up timesheets for payment to Literacy Connects (located right near campus), turning in a monthly invoice and very brief progress report, etc. It is a pilot project with a lot of potential, but also a lot of flexibility to allow for improvements and adjustments.
    d. The idea is for the students to choose projects to work on, and run with them. You will be there to oversee and provide help and guidance, but we are really hoping it will mostly come from them.
    e. This project does have a digital literacy component. The meeting space has 12 laptops available, as well as some desktop computers. We are also in the process of buying cameras/recorders for community stories or whatever else they want to do with them. To what extent they will choose to use technology for their projects is still an unknown because we have never done this before, and it may really depend on their interests.

2. Purpose of the study
    a. The research study would focus on exploring the digital literacy of both the mentors and mentees in the after school program to determine the educational value of using technology for teaching and learning.
    b. I am interested in finding out if:
    1) student prefer using technology over traditional method
            (ie. Notebook journal vs. word doc or blog)
    2) technology is more effective or engaging in project construction
    3) what they learn in the after school setting transfers to school and
            home life (ie, do they share projects with parents and teachers)
    4) the level of digital literacy increases throughout the semester
            (ie, pre and post survey on digital literacy)

3. Objectives: Upon completion of this independent study, I will have:
    a. Been exposed to and worked with both middle school and high school students in an after school setting
    b. Completed the IRB process
    c. Designed a research study, gathered and analyzed data on the digital literacy of the students participating in this project
    d. Produced a professional paper in the area of digital literacy
    e. Submitted the paper to peer reviewed journals for publication
    f. Produce and submit a presentation for conference

4. Activities to accomplish Objectives: To achieve the above objectives, I will:
    a. Help to administer/facilitate the Youth Literacy Project
    b. Design and conduct a research study with the students in the Youth Literacy Project.
    c. Complete the IRB forms and submit for approval
    d. Meet weekly with Dr. Ruiz and Dr. Betts for guidance and to report on my progress
    e. Write a professional paper and submit for publication and conference proceedings.

5. Required Readings
    a. Consult with Dr. Ruiz and Dr. Betts

6. Evaluation Process
    a. The evaluation will be conducted on the following:
    20% - Weekly Meetings
    10% - IRB Approval
    20% - Completion of Research (collection and analysis)
    50% - Written Paper and Submission for Publication