PROGRESS REPORT: Innovation Workshops for Children with Cognitive Disabilities

Objectives
Create fun expression and innovation activities for children with a variety of ability levels and interests.
Introduce children to new forms of language and expression using creativity and design
Allow children to explore expressive media

Funding Awarded  $87,451

Funding Expended to Date  $78,140.06 ($6,484.12 Free Balance as of 1/8/14)

Progress to Date
Design and innovation workshops were developed through observation and pilot projects to develop a model for introducing creativity and design experiences to children with different physical and cognitive ability levels.

Ethnographic observation techniques were developed to train workshop leaders and prepare them to work with these children effectively.

Pilot workshops were conducted at the following places:
  ChildServe in Ames as part of their respite weekend program;
  ChildServe Summer Camp program; and
  Gilbert Middle School Special Education Classroom;

Students participated in expressive mark making activities, color in design activities, and sound making activities.

The ages of children ranged from pre-school through high school.

The ability levels and cognitive levels of the children varied with regard to developmental stages, behavioral and cognitive abilities and speech/language abilities.

Next Steps
Initial meetings have been conducted with representatives of the Iowa Special Olympics program with regard to creating a design activity to reach the families and athletes that attend the state Special Olympics event held in Ames.

Initial conversations with Camp Sunnyside in Des Moines have been held to discuss participation with that community of students.

On-going relationships have been formed with ChildServe, Gilbert School District, and the Ames Area Home Schooling organization.

Further pilot programs can be explored using the models developed to determine how this can be reproduced in other communities and other organizations.