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Overall Goals

I propose to conduct my research on the efficacy of literature-based elementary social studies program (LESS) on students' reading comprehension and prepare several publications. The LESS program is being funded by Faculty Research Grant awarded by Sponsored Program Office of SUNY Cortland prior to the Drescher award semester (Spring, 2009). More specifically, with the collaboration of faculty members from Literacy Department and teachers in local schools, I am developing the LESS program as the instrument of the research project. I have not been able to conduct the program in local schools. My goals are: 1) conduct the study in local schools to collect data in spring 2009; 2) prepare several manuscripts for publication in highly competitive and prestigious journals such as *Social Education*, *Social Studies Practice and Research*, *the Social Studies*, and *International Reading Journal*.

In order to ensure a successful project and publications, I need to collaborate with local school teachers, students, and parents to administer this research program. I also need to observe classrooms, collect and analyze data, and write up articles with rigorous arguments, sound theoretical frameworks, and rich descriptions of research methodologies. This will require extensive theoretical background research, sophisticated formulation of theoretical frameworks, detailed analysis of teacher and student participants' observation notes, responses, and meticulous interpretations of my research data.

I am obligated to report my research findings in a timely fashion to the academic community and the social studies and reading realms, not only to facilitate future academic endeavors in the field, but also to help design more efficacious intervention programs to improve students' reading comprehension. I need to enhance my scholarly status to keep up with my colleagues in my department [Childhood and Early Childhood Education] who are reputed with outstanding scholarship. With the two-year prior service credits I received from my previous associate professorship at Beijing Foreign Studies University, I will be reviewed for tenure in fall of 2009. My two reappointments reviews were successfully approved in 2006 and 2008.

Contribution to the Larger Scholarly Community

The research project examines the impact of the Literature-based Elementary Social Studies (*LESS*) program on the reading achievement of 4th grade students. The *LESS* program contains 4th grade standardized packages comprised of 10 children's books with 10 matching lessons. Four 4th grade teachers in the Cortland City School District will participate in this study to test the effectiveness of the *LESS* program on learning comprehension of 80 students. Two teachers will implement the *LESS* program to students in the experiment cohort. The reading achievements of these students will be compared to a control cohort who will use 10 children's books that are not included in the *LESS* program (taught by two other teachers in the same school district) to determine the effects of the *LESS* program on reading achievement. Statistical analysis of reading comprehension scores of the participating students will assess if the *LESS* program improves the reading comprehension scores for students who were taught using the

LESS program. The experimental data will be used as data for a larger study within New York State that will be proposed to the *U.S. Department of Education*, Educational Sciences Division that funds research studies that impact student learning.

The data and analysis from my project will significantly advance the field of social studies and reading fields. In particular, my research results will explain why literature-based social studies program will be able to enhance students' reading comprehension. My research will depart from previous analytical frameworks that emphasize "reading dominating curriculum" in public schools. Content-based reading will not just increase students' reading comprehension, but also enhance their learning about the relevance of school work to their lives in society.

For detailed information of this project, please see attached (4 pages including a reference list)

Contribution to SUNY Cortland

To date I am fortunate to be the member of an ongoing initiative of establishing Professional Development Schools by School of Education with teachers in Cortland School District. Working with local school teachers and students through this proposed research project will make a significant contribution to PDS initiative and the local community. My previous analysis of social studies and reading texts has received much recognition from the field of social studies education. As I noted above, the projected publications will make a significant contribution to the field.