

## **Abstract for *Touching the Future with a Spark: How iPod Touches and Studywiz Spark Facilitate the Learning of At-Risk Students***

Research team members Megan Whitmore, graduate student/ Principal Investigator and elementary school teacher, Southgate Community School District; Dr. Susan Everett, Coordinator-Science Education and Assistant Professor-School of Education at the University of Michigan, Dearborn; and Robert Longo, Etech Group North America creators of Studywiz Spark, propose a collaborative research project employing iPod Touches and Studywiz Spark, a virtual learning environment.

The investigation focuses on the educational impact on reading and writing among fifth grade general education students and students with learning disabilities through innovative applications of iPod Touch media players performing a variety of different tasks relevant to reading and writing in the classroom. Using affordable, mobile technology with an online, teacher managed learning space provides individualized instruction and fosters independent learning conducive to improved learning outcomes.

The protocol uses action research conducted through June 2009. The Principal Investigator, Megan Whitmore, will conduct research activities and collect resultant data. Professor Everett, a published author in the field of science education and action research, will be an external evaluator. Etech Group specializes in the development of online learning spaces for K-12 education. Etech ongoing research centers on practical applications for global mobile technology, a cornerstone of this project.