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ECOMP 6106
Key Assignment

Problem Statement

I am focusing my design thinking around my English Language Arts curriculum that is currently in use. I would like to focus specifically on the writing aspect of the curriculum. I think that our writing curriculum is not meeting the needs of our students. Our current test scores also agree with my reflection. Students need to work specifically on capitalization, punctuation and idea organization. As an ELL department, we have made a plan to try and focus on different writing strategies that will help my students improve their writing. I am hoping through the design cycle, I will be able to develop more strategies and ways to integrate technology to improve students writing. I also hope that the cycle can help us focus and guide our research process.

As teachers, we have noticed that students struggle with writing. They often do not include mechanics such as punctuations and capital letters. At times, their verb tenses are wrong. Students also seem to struggle with identifying when to stop a sentence or paragraph. Generally we focus on topic sentences and supporting details in specific types of papers but they don't often apply those same skills to every writing response that is expected. Students' writing needs specific new ideas for instruction. The curriculum currently does not seem to help students improve in their writing. The focus seems to be more on reading.

Staff generally feel that the curriculum is not meeting the needs of our students and is leaving gaps in their reading and writing education. Teachers are interested in finding new ways to supplement or make changes to the curriculum to meet the needs of our students. Current data also shows that students struggle with writing and need additional support to increase those scores. Our IB (international baccalaureate) rubrics show students struggle with mechanics and include topic sentences, details, and evidence to support their writing. Students also need more information and education on the appropriate register and style. Our ACCESS scores show that our writing scores are their lowest scores and prevent kids from exiting.

I don't believe that our writing curriculum is culturally responsive or focuses on what the students actually need to learn to make improvements in their writing. Our curriculum also doesn't consider students' prior knowledge or experiences learning in another language. I also don't think that our curriculum follows the UDLs of engagement, representations, action, and expression. The curriculum limits that amount of options and topics students can explore. In some of our topics, there is nothing students are interested in or want to explore. This also prevents students from fully developing their skills because they are focused on moving on.

Solution

Below are some of the ideas to change and improve the writing curriculum currently in place.

Ideas	How does this idea connect to my problem of practice?	Where does this idea fall on the SAMR model?	How does this transformative idea advance your practice?	How does this idea impact the student experience?
Class Editing of Example Paper	Students need to improve on writing mechanics such as capitalization, punctuation, and correct verb tense. By doing editing of a class example paper, students will be able to analyze and mimic the correct and appropriate procedures in their own papers.	Depending on the manner in which the editing is done, may determine where in the model it would fall. If a computer or AVER is used instead of paper, it would be substitution. If students are able to comment and make suggestions on a document it would make it modification because they are could be doing it simultaneously.	Class editing of a paper could advance students' abilities to correctly edit and revise a paper. By editing and revising the paper as a class, students will be able to practice and view the language structures in an authentic manner. They may also develop a new awareness of their own mechanics and writing errors.	This may be a more meaningful and engaging way to edit. It would give students enough background and experience to edit their own and other students' papers. This would also be more authentic instead of sample sentences or something similar to that.
Fun Writing	Writing opportunities and projects that are fun are more engaging to students. If students are more engaged and interested in their writing they will be more likely to continue working and improving on their writing piece. Fun writing assignments also help students to change their perspective and opinion of writing resulting in higher scores and improvement.	Most examples I can think of would be substitution. If students were to write a blog or Google document, it would be simple substitution of materials. It is possible to move farther up the SAMR model if students are able to collaborate and work with others through that way.	Writing that is engaging to students would advance my practice by increasing students' interest and time spent writing. I also think this will help students do better at writing.	Students will be more engaged and interested in writing because of the fun topics that they were able to choose. Students will also be more willing to spend lengths of times working on the same piece when they find it fun and engaging. By including more fun pieces that are quick, students will also have a more positive opinion on writing and the writing process.
Collaborative Webs	Collaborative webs are also a great way to help ELL and high poverty students build background and discuss their ideas before they begin writing them. By working collaboratively they are also able to add more ideas and thoughts related to a topic. Webs are also a great way to determine just how much information or knowledge you have about a topic.	Students can create webs on the computer and work collaboratively with partners in the class (augmentation). Students could also work with other students in different classes or schools on a collaborative web (redefinition).	This will also increase engagement for students. This will also help by allowing students to gain more knowledge and comfort about their topic before they begin writing. By being more knowledgeable they will be better able to include detailed information and accurate information.	Students will be engaged in the writing process because they will be able to collaborate with other students. Students will also feel more comfortable writing about their topics because of the information they were able to organize.

For my solution I focused on integrating collaborative webs and student discussion with the collaborative webs into each writing project. The goal is that using collaborative webs and discussion will help students be more engaged and interested in their writing topics. It will also help students to be able to write more knowledgeable about the topic they are writing about. Webs will allow students to organize their thoughts and ideas before they write. This will also assist them in developing topic sentences, organizing the relevant details, and concluding each sentence. Some of the websites that students can use are bubbl.us, mindomo, and dotstorming. These websites allow are students to work collaboratively with others and create graphic organizations with pictures and different colors. This is also more engaging for students.

Some of the standards this will focus on are

1. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content,
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences,
4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

Outcomes

Students will

- Organize ideas using a graphic organizer
- Brainstorm ideas with others
- Organize paragraphs
- Revise and edit collaboratively
- Develop knowledge through conversations with others