Peer Review and Feedback in the Middle School English Learner Classroom

by

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Summary of Project

The purpose of this capstone project is to answer the research question: *How can I integrate peer review and feedback activities into instruction in order to improve the writing skills of middle school English language learners?* Information that was found and analyzed in the literature review was utilized in creating this curriculum unit. I wanted to create a curriculum unit that has been found to effectively improve the cooperative learning and writing skills of middle school English language learners (ELLs). I chose to create a peer review and feedback curriculum unit because I found a vast amount of previous research that encouraged utilizing the peer review process for middle school ELLs. However, I could not find a resource that contained the appropriate lessons and activities for teachers to be able to easily incorporate into their own English language classes.

For this project, I designed and implemented a 4 week curriculum unit for middle school ELLs. I implemented this curriculum unit in two of my classes, of which the average class size is 10 students. The classes that I implemented this unit in are ELD (English Language Development) 6 (6th grade) classes. This class is a year-long course where the students have the same peers throughout the school year. Within the four weeks, there are nine lessons. Multiple lessons will take more than one day to complete. This unit is not meant to be the sole focus every day during class for four weeks, but to spend two to three days a week on the unit. The purpose of this unit being spread out is to avoid burnout and maintain a high level of motivation. The independent variable for this unit is the process of peer review and feedback. The dependent variable for this unit, that will be influenced by the independent variable, is the students' writing skills. The

students' English proficiency levels range from 2-Emerging, 3-Developing, and 4-Expanding. The focal point of this curriculum is to provide lessons and activities that the students can engage in that incorporate cooperative learning by means of peer review and feedback. The domain of writing is the main focus for this unit. However, due to the nature of the activities, students also utilized the reading, listening, and speaking domains as well. Specifically, argumentative writing was the type of writing that students peer reviewed and provided feedback on. Students have written an argumentative essay based on the book they previously read in their English Language Arts class, *Percy Jackson and the Lighting Thief* (2008). By incorporating a topic that is cross-curricular, the goal is to create a stronger sense of motivation because it relates to another class.

In designing the unit, I followed the guidelines of Wiggins and McTighe's (2011) Understanding by Design (UbD) unit format. This format focuses on unit creation from the end to the beginning, in that order. First, I needed to establish what long-term and short-term learning goals I wanted my students to gain from the completion of this unit. Second, is the creation of the assessment. It is necessary for the assessment to be able to accurately evaluate if the students have obtained the short-term and long-term goals. Once the assessment is determined, activities are created that follow an appropriate scope and sequence to guide students to the learning goals. This backwards approach to unit design ensures that I created a unit that focuses on the critical thinking required to fully engage in the peer review and feedback process. The students will be able to utilize the cooperative learning skills they learned not just in this unit, but in future units in the English Language Development classroom and in other classroom settings.

Understanding By Design Unit Template

Title of Unit	Peer Review and Feedback	Grade Level	6
Subject	English Language Development (ELD)	Time Frame	4 weeks - lessons will be spread out and happening only 2-3 times a week
Developed By	Alyssa Schuler		

Stage 1 - Identify Desired Results

Broad Areas of Learning How are the BAL incorporated into this unit?

Citizenship and Community Life
Students will be working cooperatively to learn about peer review and feedback. Students will also work cooperatively to provide feedback and improve the writing of others. The final aspect of working cooperatively is that students will need to trust their peers that the suggestions they have provided are for the improvement of the project at hand.

Personal and Career Planning
Students will be practicing new skills such as: cooperative learning, providing feedback, editing their own work based on the suggestions of peers, conferencing, and reflecting on their work and participation. All of these skills can be considered teaching moments for the students to notice if there are any particular skills they feel they excel at or enjoy doing. When students learn about their talents, they can refine those skills to prepare them for the future. Likewise for skills they currently struggle with.

Cross curricular Competencies How will this unit promote the CCC?

1. Intellectual Competencies
   Students will be provided with new information (peer review and feedback) and use that information in order to benefit their peers and themselves. Students will be creatively reviewing written work and using their best judgement to make improvements to written work.

2. Methodological Competencies
   Students are learning a new method of providing feedback and are provided different methods of communicating the feedback that they are providing.

3. Personal and Social Competencies
   Students will be working cooperatively with others to practice peer reviewing, students will also work cooperatively to decide necessary revisions that need to be made to a piece of writing. Students will also reflect on their own progress and identities at the end of the unit, both individually and with a teacher.

4. Communication-related Competency
   Students need to frequently communicate with other peers since this is a unit focused on collaborative learning, peer review, and peer feedback. Students will also communicate with the teacher.

Learning Outcomes
What relevant goals will this unit address?
(must come from curriculum; include the designations e.g. IN2.1)

Students will be able to peer review the writing of others effectively, providing their peers with ideas to improve their writing.

Students will be able to use the feedback that was provided to them by their peers in order to improve their writing.

Students will take what they learned from their peers to improve their overall writing skills into future assignments and future classes.

Students will gain knowledge on how to write argument pieces, which is a Minnesota Standard for sixth grade.

Students will gain a more solid comprehension of the novel "Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief" (they are reading this novel in their English Language Arts class).

LA.6.7.1.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

a. Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly.

b. Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and

demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons.

d. Establish and maintain a formal style.

e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.

LA.K-12.L1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

LA.K-12.L2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Enduring Understandings	**Essential Questions**
What understandings about the big ideas are desired? (what you want students to understand & be able to use several years from now) What misunderstandings are predictable?	What provocative questions will foster inquiry into the content? (open-ended questions that stimulate thought and inquiry linked to the content of the enduring understanding)

Students will understand that...	Content specific....
Their peers provide excellent ideas and advice that they can utilize to improve their own writing pieces. When a student gives advice and ideas to others, they themselves gain a better understanding of the topic. Being able to effectively write an argumentative piece with specific evidence will prepare them for future education and when it is necessary to explain your reasoning in everyday situations. **Related misconceptions…** Students may have the mindset that their peers are not knowledgeable enough to peer review writing and provide valid ideas. Students may value the teacher's feedback more than their peers'.	When do you ask your classmates for advice? Have you ever asked your classmates for help with school work? Did you listen to their thoughts? When do you ask the teacher for advice? If you ask your teacher for help with school work, do you listen to their ideas? **FNMI, multicultural, cross-curricular…** When you are discussing books with your classmates, do you provide real evidence or just say "I like it/don't like it"? What type of books do you think students should read in English classes? Should students be able to pick the books they read for class, or should the teachers pick them out for students? Why?
Knowledge: What knowledge will students acquire as a result of this unit? This content knowledge may come from the indicators, or might also address prerequisite knowledge that students will need for this unit.	**Skills** What skills will students acquire as a result of this unit? List the skills and/or behaviours that students will be able to exhibit as a result of their work in this unit. These will come from the indicators.

Students will know...	Students will be able to…
About the novel "Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief" (prerequisite)	Work cooperatively and collaboratively with peers
How to analyze writing and look for grammatical mistakes, paragraph structure mistakes, and poorly communicated ideas.	Use ideas and advice from peers in order to improve upon the created product
How to form an effective argument, providing facts and evidence	Create an argument that contains facts and evidence
	Convey thoughts and ideas in a cohesive manner of writing

Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

Performance Task
Through what authentic performance task will students demonstrate the desired understandings, knowledge, and skills? (describes the learning activity in "story" form. Typically, the P.T. describes a scenario or situation that requires students to apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate their understanding in a real life situation. Describe your performance task scenario below)
By what criteria will performances of understanding be judged?

GRASPS Elements of the Performance Task

G – Goal
What should students accomplish by completing this task? | The performance task is in two pieces.

The first piece is that students will effectively peer review another classmate's writing. They will be able to identify grammatical mistakes, sentence structure errors, and provide ideas to improve the classmate's writing. |
| **R** – Role
What role (perspective) will your students be taking? | |
| | The second piece of the performance task is for the students to take the feedback provided to them by their classmates and improve their own writing. |
| **A** – Audience
Who is the relevant audience? | The specific piece of writing will be a short argumentative essay focused on what the students have just finished reading in their |

S – Situation The context or challenge provided to the student.	English Language Arts class. Once they have finished writing the essay, students will help a classmate improve the essay and be helped by a classmate to improve their own essay.
P – Product, Performance What product/performance will the student create?	The teacher will assess the original essay and will assess the essay again after it has been peer reviewed. The assessment tool is a rubric that is provided to the students.
S – Standards & Criteria for Success Create the rubric for the Performance Task	[Essay Directions](#) - this essay was previously completed in the students' English language arts class [Persuasive Writing Rubric](#)

Other Evidence Through what other evidence (work samples, observations, quizzes, tests, journals or other means) will students demonstrate achievement of the desired results? Formative and summative assessments used throughout the unit to arrive at the outcomes.	**Student Self-Assessment** How will students reflect upon or self-assess their learning?
Students will demonstrate achievement through the use of informal observations during lessons, feedback provided to others, partner work samples. These are considered formative assessments. Students will demonstrate achievement through their edited and completed paper, their conference with the teacher, and their reflection. These are considered summative assessments.	Students will complete a self-assessment of their essay before and after being peer reviewed. Students will also reflect on their experience with the unit. The reflection will is a brief questionnaire that contains yes or no questions, open ended questions, and answered questions based on a likert scale.

Stage 3 – Learning Plan
What teaching and learning experiences will you use to:

- achieve the desired results identified in Stage 1?
- equip students to complete the assessment tasks identified in Stage 2?

Where are your students headed? Where have they been? How will you make sure the students know where they are going?
What experiences do the learners bring to the unit? How have the interests of the learners been ascertained? Have the learners been part of the pre-planning in any way?
What individual needs do you anticipate will need to be addressed?
Learning environment: Where can this learning best occur? How can the physical environment be arranged to enhance learning?

The students will be headed towards a deeper understanding of cooperative learning. A goal (in addition to improvement of writing skills) is a deeper appreciation and understanding of cooperative learning. The students are extremely social and bring the enjoyment of working with others to this unit. Students will also have an incentive of receiving a better grade on their paper in their English Language Arts class due to improving the paper from this unit.

There are some students who struggle with working with others, for a variety of reasons. I anticipate providing these students with additional support that can help them succeed when working collaboratively. Scaffolds may contain an information sheet that provides sentence stems and ideas to watch for when providing peer feedback.

Another struggle some students may have is the lack of language abilities to convey information to their peers. These students will also receive an information sheet that will help guide them to providing useful feedback to their peers.

The learning environment will have a physical arrangement that best suits group work. The tables in the room are arranged to face each other. Students will also be allowed to spread out throughout the room to find a quiet space to collaborate.

How will you engage students at the beginning of the unit? (motivational set)

Students will begin with a survey pertaining to how they feel about working with classmates. This is more meant for myself to get an understanding of where students are coming from when it comes to cooperative learning.

For an activity, students will do a team building exercise that is also a competition within the class. The groups need to build the tallest tower they can out of index cards. Every card that is used needs to have one thing written on it that everyone in the group has in common. Students are not allowed to rip or cut the cards and only index cards can be used for the tower. Students have 20 minutes to complete their tower. We will then end the activity with a discussion about teamwork and the pros and cons of cooperative work.

What events will help students experience and explore the enduring understandings and essential questions in the unit? How will you equip them with needed skills and knowledge?

#	Lesson Title	Lesson Activities	CCCs	Resources
1	Pre Assessment and Tower Game (60 minutes)	--Survey about work with others --Tower Activity --Post tower building reflection	Intellectual Methodological Personal and Social Communication	Pre Assessment Build a Tower and Reflection Slides
2	Introduction (60 minutes)	--Class discussion: What is peer review? --Presentation that overviews peer review and feedback --Example videos --Exit Ticket: How confident are you in understanding what peer review and feedback is?	Intellectual Methodological	Peer Review and Feedback Presentation What Not to do Peer Review Video Peer Review in Action Video Peer Review in Action

				Video 2 Exit Ticket
3	Gallery Walk (60 minutes)	There will be three blank anchor charts on the wall around the classroom. Students will work in small groups for five minutes at each station to respond to the prompts. *Have you ever done peer review before? What was your experience? *How do you feel about doing peer review with your classmates? *If your peers give you feedback about your writing, would you listen to them? Once students make their way through each station, they will go around one more time to see everyone else's responses.	Intellectual Personal and Social Communication	Gallery Walk 1 Gallery Walk 2 Gallery Walk 3
4	Practice Peer Reviewing (60 minutes)	--Whole class instruction: peer review a piece of writing together --Partner Practice: peer review a piece of writing that was provided by the teacher --Reflection: How did it go? Did you feel that you and your partner agreed on most revisions? If you didn't agree on a revision, did you make a compromise?	Intellectual Methodological Personal and Social Communication	Whole Class and Individual Practice Hand Activity Partner Practice Peer Review Reflection
5	Station Activity (120 minutes)	--Students will do an activity with each other that spends time looking at individual pieces of their paper --Each station focuses on one aspect, students will look at both papers with their partner	Intellectual Methodological Personal and Social	Station Activity Slides

		--Once the time is up, students will rotate so they are at a new station with a new partner --Stations will continue until each student has spend time at every station --Students will then be given time to edit their papers based on feedback from peers **May take multiple days to complete**	Communication	
6	Glows and Grows (120 minutes)	--Students will be provided with a sheet that has sections for their classmates to write a "glow" and a "grow" about their paper --Students will be given ample time to read and provide feedback to peers --There will be three peers reviewing each students' paper **Will take multiple days to complete**	Intellectual Methodological Personal and Social Communication	Glows and Grows Worksheet
7	Editing Days 180 minutes)	--Students will now go into the final editing stages --Students will review the feedback they received from the station activity and the glows and grows activity --Students will spend time editing each section of their paper --Will turn in a final copy of their paper **Will take multiple days to complete**	Intellectual Methodological Personal and Social	Additional Peer Review Worksheet
8	Conference with Teacher (120 minutes)	--Once the unit has been completed, each student will meet with the teacher --Students will compare and contrast their original paper to the new paper that was edited after receiving peer feedback --Teacher and Student will reflect together how they think the process went, where there was improvement, and future goals	Intellectual Personal and Social Communication	Writing Conference Forms for Students and Teacher

| 9 | Reflection

(30 minutes) | --Students will complete a reflection on how this peer review and feedback unit went
**Yes and no questions, likert scale, and open ended questions | Personal and Social

Communication | [Post Peer Review and Feedback Reflection](#) |

Assess and Reflect (Stage 4)	
Considerations	**Comments**
Required Areas of Study: **Is there alignment between outcomes, performance assessment and learning experiences?**	There is alignment between the outcomes, performance assessment, and learning experiences. **Learning Experiences:** The activities the students are doing incorporates working with peers to improve their argumentative papers, this also leads to outcomes of an improvement of writing skills and a stronger sense of cooperative learning to achieve goals. **Performance Assessment:** The performance assessment is comparing the improvement of the argumentative paper due to the conclusion of the peer review and feedback unit. The positive improvement represents the outcomes of an improvement in writing skills due in part to the student participating in cooperative learning.
Adaptive Dimension: **Have I made purposeful adjustments to the curriculum content (not outcomes), instructional practices, and/or the learning environment to meet the learning needs and diversities of all my students?**	For struggling students: Students will be provided with sentence starters that can help them build confidence and a stronger knowledge of the skills needed to peer review the papers of others. I will also be observing and assisting partnerships that I believe will need more guidance when it comes to working cooperatively. I am also aware that some of my students need more flexibility when it comes to working in the classroom,

	some need active movement to succeed during activities. I will allow individual students and partnerships to move to different spaces of the school (media center, commons) in order to meet their needs. For students who need a challenge: There will be students that excel with working cooperatively and their papers are beyond the feedback that some of their peers will be able to provide. My plan is to ensure that the students who need a challenge will partner up with each other (in addition to partnering with others in the class) to bounce creative ideas off of each other to improve their papers.
Instructional Approaches: **Do I use a variety of teacher directed and student centered instructional approaches?**	Teacher Directed: Introduction Conference with Teacher Student Centered: Pre Assessment and Tower Game Gallery Walk Practice Peer Reviewing Station Activity Glows and Grows Time to Edit Reflection
Resource Based Learning: **Do the students have access to various resources on an ongoing basis?**	Students will be provided with additional resources that they can utilize during this unit. These resources will be videos of peer review in action, ideas of peer feedback that can be given, and strategies on how to compromise differing ideas with peers.
FNM/I Content and Perspectives/Gender Equity/Multicultural Education:	The paper that the students have written and will be revising in this unit is an opinion essay with their own reasonings for said opinion. Students will have flexibility in working styles and

Have I nurtured and promoted diversity while honoring each child's identity?	will be working with many different peers that have similarities and differences between them. At the end of the unit, students will conference with the teacher and complete a self-assessment and reflection based on their experience with the new unit.

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