

USING BLOGGING TO DEVELOP WRITING SKILLS IN ESL STUDENTS

Maureen Kramanak, Emerson Elementary, May 2012

EXPECTATIONS FOR THE CASE STUDY PROJECT

- Work with 5 students from your building. This needs to include at least 3 ELLs.
- The project must involve interaction with the teacher(s) of the students so that they are learning with you.
- The work with the students must involve instruction using the learning from the professional learning sessions with Mary Cappelini and Diana Geisler.
- Aspects of the work may be requested for some Fridays during TL professional learning time.

MEET THE STUDENTS

- Oscar (grade 5)



- Javier (Grade 5)



- Cali (Grade 5)



- Lindsey (Grade 5)



- Vanesa (Grade 5)



THE STUDENTS WERE IN MS. GABRIELLA STANLEY'S CLASSROOM.

- Although experienced, this was Ms. Stanley's first year teaching in the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools, and she graciously accepted my offer to work with her and her class. :)



AND NOW, A LITTLE MORE ABOUT OSCAR...

- Classified as ELL, with the home language identified as Spanish
- Has attended Emerson for two years, fourth and fifth grades
- No identified disabilities
- Good attendance and behavior, has never been retained
- 90 minutes of literacy instruction daily, including Guided Reading



OSCAR'S TEST SCORES

- KSA Reading Assessment (91st percentile – “Exemplary”) – Spring 2011
- KSA Reading Assessment (95th percentile – “Exemplary”) – Spring 2012
- MAP (RIT Score 214 – “Exceeds Standards”) – Fall 2011
- MAP (RIT Score 220 – “Exceeds Standards”) – Winter 2011
- KELPA (3 – “Early/Fluent – Transitional) – Spring 2011



WHAT IS THE KSA?

- The 2007-2008 Kansas State Assessment (KSA) was given to students in grades 3 through 8 and 11.
- The KS KSA test is based on the Kansas state standards, which define what students should be learning each year.
- The goal is for all students to score at or above the proficient level on the KSA exam.

ABOUT THE NWEA MAP

- NWEA has developed a set of MAP assessments aligned to the Common Core. This first release includes items aligned to the national Common Core Standards for Math, Reading and Language Usage that can be measured using multiple-choice.
- **The Common Core Standards** aim to bring consistency and rigor to content standards across the country for the first time ever. The standards align a wide range of K-12 education content standards into a single, unified platform. Although this is a national effort, it is not a federal project. Rather, it was led by states through the associations representing governors and chief state school officers.
- The intent of the Common Core is to bring greater rigor to standards driving instruction and expectations in all of the adopting states, to focus curriculum and instruction on deeper student understanding of a few critically important areas rather than skimming a multitude of topics, and to provide clearer direction to educators on what American students should know and be able to do as they leave high school for college or career purposes.

WHAT IS THE KELPA?

- Kansas English Language Proficiency Assessment
- The KELPA assesses K-12 English Language Learners (ELLs)/Limited English Proficient (LEP) students for their proficiency levels in the domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing English. It is based on the indicators in the Kansas English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Standards. The Center for Testing and Evaluation (CETE) developed the assessment with input from the field.
- Given each year, usually in the Spring.
- The student must take each sub-test until s/he scores proficient on the entire KELPA: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

THE PROBLEM:

Upon examining Oscar's test results and grades, an obvious discrepancy appeared. Since Oscar scored consistently high on the language arts portions of the KSA (Kansas Student Assessment), in fact "Exemplary" with a 91 raw score, as well as "Exceeds Standards", on the MAP why did he score at a Level 3 on the KELPA?



Upon discussing this with the teacher, we decided that although Oscar was a fluent reader, his writing skills were holding him back!



WHY BLOGGING?

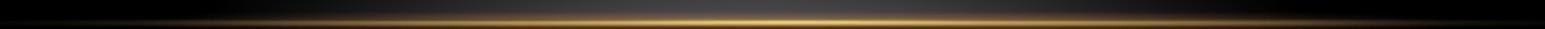
- District involvement in “Year of Study” regarding writing as it is aligned to the Common Core
 - Uses technology
 - Can be thought of as an “online journal” that may be continuously updated
 - Creates a record of learning and may provide resources for others
 - It is interactive
 - Adapts to the writing “process,”; first draft, edit, second draft, publish
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TYPES OF BLOGS

- TUTOR – Gives daily practice to learners, promotes exploration of online materials. encourages online verbal exchange through the “comment” buttons
 - LEARNER – Are run by small groups of learners or individuals constructed for a specific, usually temporary, purpose
 - CLASS – May be used as a free-form bulletin board. Facilitates project-based learning, virtual space for international classroom exchanges.
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AS OUR PLATFORM, WE CHOSE "KIDBLOG"

www.kidblog.org



OSCAR'S BLOG

- <http://kidblog.org/EmersonEagles/>



THEN, IN JANUARY, ALONG CAME THE
"EDUBLOG CHALLENGE!"

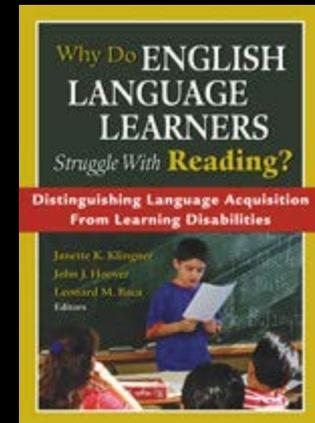
<http://studentchallenge.edublogs.org/about/>

EACH WEEK, WE DID THE “WEEKLY BLOGGING CHALLENGE...”

- Fortunately, most of the “challenges” were consistent with our GVC Writing Pacing Guide
 - Blogging assignments were given on Mondays (minilessons and writing “long & fast”)
 - Wednesdays were “editing” days (conferencing w/teacher, peer, & self)
 - Blogs were published by Thursday
 - Perusing other blogs and commenting over the next few days was encouraged!
 - A new cycle began each week
 - Skills were reinforced continually in the classroom
 - This required weekly co-planning with the teacher
 - Other students were able to view the blogs
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CONNECTIONS TO RESEARCH

- Mary Cappellini – Individualized Instruction
- Diana Geisler – Active Student and Teacher Participation
- Lucy Calkins – Writer’s Workshop



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

AFFORDANCES

- Resulted in gains in writing achievement (Oscar did score a “4” Fluent, on his Spring KELPA, with the greatest improvement in writing)
- Skills were reinforced
- Allowed for differentiation of instruction
- Encouraged cooperative team planning
- Helped foster learning focused conversations
- Resulted in higher self-esteem for the student participants
- Allowed for mentoring of teacher new to the building



CONSTRAINTS

- Start in the Fall, closer to the beginning of the year
- Start with a small group, but expand more to include the entire class
- Utilize the blog more for assignments
- Consider abilities and prior writing experience of students
- Consider teacher input
- Consider resources (home and school)



ONE MORE THING, BEFORE WE GO...

- Blogging allows you to “Keep in Touch!”



LIST OF REFERENCES

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