Creating a Website: a collaborative project

Goals:

NCTE Standards and Common Core Standards for the unit (and this particular activity):

Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

 CCSS RI.6.2: Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

CCSS RI.6.3: Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated and elaborated in a text.

CCSS W.6.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

CCSS W.6.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.

CCSS W.6.6: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others

Rationale:

I chose the Reciprocal Teaching strategy in order to model and help students gain an understanding of summarizing text. Summarizing provides an opportunity to identify, paraphrase and integrate important information in the text. As students become more proficient, they are able to integrate larger portions of text. What I find with my students is that they have difficulty putting things in their own words and explaining what they've read, so summarizing is an important skill; it also shows me that they truly do understand what they've read.

Objectives:

Students will read articles and write summaries on a class wiki online as part of a website project.

Students will work online in order to give each other feedback.

Students will practice and maintain good online etiquette.

Prior Knowledge:

Students will need to have a definition of summarizing and have a general idea of what it is because this is the main skill they will be practicing. They will also need to know the purpose and function of a website. They will need to know how to edit and update a wiki. They will need to have a good understanding of safe and respectful online interactions. The teacher needs to know how to manage and maintain a class wiki so that students can edit and easily access information without destroying each other's work. For this activity, it is assumed that students have already introduced themselves in the wiki and gotten to converse with the other class online a little bit; this is also a culminating project for the immigration unit, so students will have extensive background knowledge on the topic.

Materials:

        Email access (and accounts); a Wiki prepared ahead of time by the teacher with at least 20 articles (or related text) already linked to the site; the Wiki should be sure to include a forum page for student introductions and a help page for student questions, comments and concerns. An ELMO, projector and an assortment of practice paragraphs (with copies for each student) will be needed for this particular lesson as well.

Lesson Overview: This is a week-long project for 2 small groups of middle school students (in my school, this would be 2 separate classes). Students will work in their small groups online via a class wiki to read and discuss informational text related to the topics of immigration and refugee resettlement. They will write summaries of articles; sort and classify information according to topic, generate topic questions and answers, and research information in order to create a website resource of articles, links and up-to-date information that is targeted toward a middle school audience. The activity for this lesson that I am focusing on is only 1 part of the project; it is the skill of summarizing articles.

Lesson Procedures:

- Introduction: Tell students that they are going to work with another class online to create a website resource that middle school students can access for information. The site is going to contain information and biographical stories about our current topic of study: immigration, and refugee resettlement. Tell students that you (the teacher) have begun the site and you have included a jumble of articles and links that need to be sorted and summarized.
- Main activity (for the summarizing portion of the project):
    - Using an ELMO and a projector, project the first practice paragraph so all students can see. The teacher will review what a summary is by definition. Then the teacher will read the paragraph while the students follow along. The teacher will verbalize the topic of the paragraph and will express how she came to that conclusion. The teacher will paraphrase after each couple of sentences in order to model how to come up with a summary. When the paragraph is complete, the teacher will write her short summary of the paragraph, modeling how to complete it. The students will each try it on their own with a second paragraph. On a third paragraph, students will work in pairs to come up with a summary together. If more modeling is needed, then additional paragraphs can be provided. The teacher will then let students know that they will be reading short articles and they will be working with another class to write short summaries of articles for our class website. Tell students that the purpose of the article summaries is so that someone using the website as a reference can read the summary of the article to help them decide if it contains the information they seek.
    - Students will read the online articles then submit their ideas (within the wiki) for what they believe to be the article topics. Remind students that all conversations should happen online so that students are showing how they are participating in the project.
    - Once the articles are sorted into their topics, the students should write a summary for each article (the teacher should make sure there are 2 articles for each student

to work on). Students can communicate with each other to let others know who is reading each article and writing the summary for it (or the teacher can assign articles based on individual reading levels). Students should each read all of the submitted summaries and provide feedback, questions and corrections to each other.

o Also, students should make sure that all articles and anything included on the site is tagged so that internet searches can find it more easily.

- **Conclusion**
  - o When the students have finished working on the wiki, the site administrator can add a counter gadget on it so the students can track the traffic on the site. The students can introduce their site to other schools in the district via the district email service, the district newsletter or some other method they desire (Facebook, Twitter).
  - o The students should give each other feedback within the forum of the wiki (based on a rating rubric) for how they worked together to complete the project. The teacher should also give each student feedback separately.
  - o The teacher should ask students for feedback about the project: what worked, what could have been better, how can we do something like this in the future?

Assessment:

Students are assessed by the teacher according to a rubric that assesses grammar, usage, mechanics, and summarizing. *All of my students are diverse learners in a special education environment, so when I plan the project I will automatically be choosing articles that students can read independently, and I will likely have to assign articles to students according to reading levels). I will also probably need to have a scribe for students who have significant writing disabilities. Students can write their thoughts on paper and then type them into the Wiki as well because I have students who have great difficulty thinking about what they want to write + typing. I also need to alter how I grade students because of their lack of self-esteem. If something doesn't meet the standard, then I tell them it's not finished yet— otherwise they can develop behaviors and refusal strategies.*

Rubric to grade the summaries:

	Not yet Finished	**Meets the Standard**	**Exceeds the Standard**
Mechanics	• More than 5 errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar or usage • Lack of structure • Ideas do not progress in any logical or evident order	• 1-5 grammar, spelling, punctuation or usage errors • clear structure evident • ideas progress logically or in evident order	• No errors with grammar, spelling, punctuation or usage • Structure is coherent with use of transitional words and phrases

			• Ideas progress logically and with varying sentence structure
Summary	• Summary is not in student's own words and/or cutting and pasting from other sources are used without proper annotations • Main ideas are missed	• The topic of the article is clear • The summary gets to all of the major points • The student paraphrases succinctly	• The summary gets to all of the major points • The student references where more information can be found on the topic and/or leaves the reader with interesting questions to think about. • There is a creative spark to the summary, which is paraphrased and restated so that others can easily understand it

Students will also be assessed by how much they participate in the conversations in the class wiki. The teacher can use the following rating scale:

	Needs work	Meets standard	Exceeds standard
Comments (general)	• Less than 3 comments are added • May be inappropriate for audience or purpose • Suggestions don't make sense or are randomly added	• 4-7 comments are added • Suggestions are useful, though short • Comments stick to topic	• 8-10 comments are added • Suggestions are extensive and understandable • Comments stick to topic and give the reader additional thoughts or questions
Purpose	• Comments have no purpose or reason for being submitted	• Comments have a clear reason for being submitted • Comments are only positive, avoiding any true constructive help for improvement	• The purpose of the comments is to help the reader improve • Negative feedback is given with social skills in mind