

Fostering Collaboration and Engagement during Writing Workshop through the Integration of
the Storybird Web 2.0 Tool

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Setting and Context

The proposed project will take place at Whitehead Road Elementary, a public school in Clarke County School District. Whitehead Road is in the Northwestern part of Athens, Georgia. Whitehead has the largest student body of all the elementary schools in Clarke County, serving over 800 children in grades pre-kindergarten through fifth. According to The National Center for Education Statistics (2017), Whitehead Road has a student ethnicity population of 42% African American, 38% Hispanic/Latino, 13% Caucasian, 4% Multi-Race and 3% Asian/Pacific Islander. The student population is diverse while the teaching body is majority Caucasian. According to Georgia Department of Education (2017), Whitehead Road received a CCRPI score of 74.1 and a 4-star School Climate Rating. Whitehead Road is a Title 1 school with 76% of students eligible for free and reduced lunch (The National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). This number is high across all schools in Clarke County. “Because Clarke County’s schools meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s requirements for high-poverty schools, each school in the district can now provide free breakfast and free lunch to each and every student (Schumaker, 2015).

In an effort to cut red tape, the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 allows schools with high poverty rates to offer free meals to all students, rather than go through the hassle of processing applications for low-income families’ children to receive free or reduced-price meals. After sitting out the implementation of the expanded Community Eligibility Provision last year, Clarke County schools have adopted it for this school year district-wide, resulting in fewer students going hungry during the school day. (Schumaker 2015)

Whitehead Road serves a wide range of students, and Clarke County continues to seek aides for those families and children to ensure successful school experiences despite socio-economic status.

Whitehead Road Elementary made headlines when it opened its doors to teachers and students in 2015 with a brand new building. An Online Athens author writes, “Eight hundred of the nearly 14,000 students returning to classes in Clarke County’s public schools this morning will be coming into a building that’s not quite ready for them” (Thompson, 2015). In the 2015-16 school year, classrooms were filling because an unfinished building will not prevent students from coming to learn at Whitehead Road. Teachers had to yellow cone the front parking lot to create barriers for students playing during the construction. The playground was still a moat at this point in the school year. The fences and playground were not complete. Again, in 2017, a student made history for Whitehead Road. Shearer (2017) suggests, “Winning the Clarke County spelling bee has made young Sebastian Paragas a celebrity at his school.” Student academics and other successes are a top priority for Whitehead Road families, staff and community members alike. Shearer (2017) continues, “The principal is having a second copy made of Sebastian’s first-place trophy so it can be displayed in the school’s trophy case.” Whitehead applauds students who strive to make these kinds of achievements. Achievement deserves recognition. The Whitehead Road School Community is diligent in celebrating hard work.

In the last two years, Whitehead has created new teacher lead teams that provide opportunities for teacher leaders. The various team of teacher leaders has a specific focus and interest in Literacy, Math, Positive Behavior Intervention System, Hispanic Heritage, Technology and Black History. The goal of these different teams is to meet the dynamic needs of the students at Whitehead Road.

The SGP indicates 90% expected student growth or higher in the areas of literacy and numeracy. Literacy, Phonics, and Fluency, Comprehension and Writing are the top priority initiatives. According to the SIP, the 90% goal will be reached through the following criteria:

- Students will show progress in Phonics and Fluency on the Dibels Oral Reading Fluency Assessment (DORF) in grades 2nd through 5th and on the Reading Inventory.
- Students will demonstrate Comprehension progress on the Reading Inventory and through Georgia Milestones ELA: Reading and Vocabulary.
- The Georgia Milestones ELA will measure writing progression through Writing, Language and Common Formative Assessments: Narrative Writing.

For Numeracy, students will show progress in Number Sense through grade level Numeracy Assessments, Fluency through multiplication facts and progress in Problem Solving. In the area of Social Emotional growth, the School Improvement plan states that Whitehead Road will receive a 4-star rating for school climate in the 2017-18 school year based on attendance. The Social Emotional Learning Curriculum (SEL), provided by the counselor and implemented through the school-wide Positive Behavior Intervention System. The expectations for students at Whitehead Road are high, and teachers influence this progress by setting reasonable goals and conferencing with students routinely to meet these goals. This may seem a bit ambitious, but Whitehead Road is passionate about improving student progress in these specific areas.

This project will support the SGP by fostering engagement and motivation, specifically in the area of writing. The goal of this project is to implement and monitor student engagement and collaboration using Storybird, a digital writing tool, to support writing instruction and student learning. Storybird will serve as the collaborative Web 2.0 tool to foster communication among students and the classroom teacher. With support, students will learn to utilize Storybird as a tool for enhancing their collaborative communication to strengthen their writing through peer review and editing strategies and techniques modeled in writing workshop. Students will have the ability to publish their writing in a safe environment for a clear audience, their peers. The Principal and

Assistant Principals have granted approval for this proposal. The Principal is involved in the planning process, particularly in the development of goals and evaluation of this project. Check-ins and collaboration during evaluations and conferences helped this project take shape.

Statement of Problem, Need and Rational

Through careful examination of the literature, School Growth Plan, and feedback from administration, advancement of students' progress in the area of writing will be the project's focus. Fostering collaboration and engagement are the two areas attempting to be addressed in this project. In one study, "If students do better in writing, they will do better across the board in other subject areas" (Demski, 2012, pg. 24). Written expression is a critical component of student academic success. This project will observe the effects of peer collaboration in relation to student writing engagement. Demski (2012) writes, "Writing not only helps develop students' critical thinking skills, it also is a skill in and of itself that is applicable throughout the curriculum" (pg. 24). The goal is to use technology in such a way that captures student's interest and sustains a meaningful relationship with the writing process and its importance for future endeavors. According to Demski (2012), evidence shows that when students publish their writing, the writing process is more worthwhile to students. "By posting content online, writing becomes much more important and relevant to the students. Writing activities suddenly take on a new life. You could not incorporate the social aspect of writing at this scale without technology" (pg. 28). Storybird provides a place of publication for students. Students have an immediate audience, their peers. The ability for students to see their peers work, provides a foundation for collaboration. With intentional instruction on how to use this to engage writers in meaningful conversations about their writing, students are able to grow and improve their writing with a purpose.

By providing students with the opportunity to explore and analyze peer work, their editing and writing practice of their own work will benefit positively. As students continue and work through this process, editing and proofreading their writing will become a common practice. The goal is that students are cognizant of this step in the writing process.

This proposal will engage many stakeholders in various roles. Teachers will have the opportunity to learn more about how to incorporate Storybird to support their student's growth in the writing process. The role in this proposal is to collaborate with teachers who are interested in using this technology tool to explore and reflect on collaboration and engagement during pedagogical practice. This project will start at the fourth grade team to develop consistent feedback and dialogue on writing lessons, student accomplishments and student work samples. The fourth grade team will develop structures and classroom activities to engage students in collaboration with Storybird. Students will learn to navigate, share and have conversations about writing assignments. Teachers will discuss in depth how to foster communication among students.

Objects and Deliverables

The goal of this project is to address the need to promote engagement and collaboration during writing workshop starting with the fourth grade team. The project will explore the integration of Storybird as a strategy to increase student engagement and collaboration in the writing process. Based on the needs of students at Whitehead Road Elementary, this project will address the area of writing through the following objectives and deliverables. These goals will be achieved by the end of May 2019.

Project Objective One: By the end of November 2018, students will learn how to use Storybird efficiently to publish their writing in the platform for their peers to preview.

Deliverables:

1. Students will create a collection of stories written for pleasure in the platform. These will be ungraded posts for peer review, communication and feedback practice tasks during writing workshop. Creation of these posts allows students to learn about the StoryBird dashboard.
2. Each student will have at least one assignment shared in the platform. This assignment will be graded and used for peer review and collaboration during the work sessions and will be ongoing to address various writing skills/lessons.

Project Objective Two: By November 2018, students will engage in a collaborative peer editing process through a series of writing workshop lessons. These lessons will engage students in collaborative dialogue about writing samples. Students will make corrections to their posts and document these revisions in their writing journals. These corrections occur during writing conferences and in peer groups.

Deliverables:

1. Students will have their revisions documented in their writing journals.
2. A writing engagement inventory to monitor student engagement during writing workshop

Project Objective Three: By March 20, 2019, a professional learning opportunity for teachers who are interested in learning how to use Storybird to support collaboration during writing workshop.

Deliverables:

1. A professional learning session is held. The session will include training on how to use the platform, how to engage students in collaborative practices, and answer any questions the attendees may have.

2. Survey for attendees on their intentions to use Storybird in their classrooms to support collaboration and engagement in their writing workshop.

Project Objective Four: By May 2018, writing engagement inventories are conducted and shared with administrators and grade level team.

Deliverables:

1. The teacher will provide a summary of data collected on student engagement and pre and posts assessments during this project.
2. The teacher will hold a meeting with key stakeholders. Provide an agenda and survey of completion for the attendees.
3. The teacher will hold a meeting with grade level team to report findings for the project. Provide an agenda and survey of completion for the attendees.

PSC Standards

The Georgia Professional Standards will assess the projects' effectiveness with an emphasis on the standard addressing diffusion, innovations and change. This project will explore if students who engage in instructional technology tasks see increased interests in the writing process.

1.1 Shared Vision - Candidates facilitate the development and implementation of a shared vision for the use of technology in teaching, learning and leadership. (PSC 1.1/ISTE 1a)

1.2 Strategic Planning – Candidates facilitate the design, development, implementation, communication and evaluation of technology-infused strategic plans. (PSC 1.2/ISTE 1b)

1.3 Diffusion of Innovations and Change - Candidates research, recommend, and implement strategies for initiating and sustaining technology innovations and for managing the change process in schools. (PSC 1.4/ISTE 1d)

2.1 Content Standards & Student Technology Standards - Candidates model and facilitate the design and implementation of technology enhanced learning experiences aligned with student content standards and student technology standards. (PSC 2.1/ISTE 2a)

2.2 Research-Based Learner-Centered Strategies - Candidates model and facilitate the use of research-based, learner-centered strategies addressing the diversity of all students. (PSC 2.2/ISTE 2b)

2.3 Authentic Learning - Candidates model and facilitate the use of digital tools and resources to engage students in authentic learning experiences. (PSC 2.3/ISTE 2c)

2.6 Instructional Design - Candidates model and facilitate the effective use of research-based best practices in instructional design when designing and developing digital tools, resources, and Capstone Proposal 7 technology-enhanced learning experiences. (PSC 2.6/ISTE 2f)

3.1 Classroom Management & Collaborative Learning - Candidates model and facilitate effective classroom management and collaborative learning strategies to maximize teacher and student use of digital tools and resources. (PSC 3.1/ISTE 3a)

5.1 Needs Assessment - Candidates conduct needs assessments to determine school-wide, faculty, grade level, and subject area strengths and weaknesses to inform the content and delivery of technology-based professional learning programs. (PSC 5.1/ISTE 4a)

5.2 Professional Learning - Candidates develop and implement technology-based professional Capstone Proposal 8 learning that aligns to state and national professional learning standards, integrates technology to support face-to-face and online components, models principles of adult learning, and promotes best practices in teaching, learning and assessment. (PSC 5.2/ISTE 4b)

5.3 Program Evaluation - Candidates design and implement program evaluations to determine the overall effectiveness of professional learning on deepening teacher content knowledge, improving teacher pedagogical skills and/or increasing student learning. (PSC 5.3/ISTE 4c)

6.1 Continuous Learning - Candidates demonstrate continual growth in knowledge and skills of current and emerging technologies and apply them to improve personal productivity and professional practice. (PSC 6.1/ISTE 6a, 6b) **6.2 Reflection** - Candidates regularly evaluate and reflect on their professional practice and dispositions to improve and strengthen their ability to effectively model and facilitate technology-enhanced learning experiences.

6.3 Field Experiences - Candidates engage in appropriate field experiences to synthesize and apply the content and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions identified in these standards.

Table 1

<i>Project Activities Alignment</i>		
PSC Standard	Project Activity /Objectives	Deliverables
2.1 Content Standards & Student Technology Standards 2.6 Instructional Design 6.1 Continuous Learning	Teaching how to use Story bird: expectations and requirements for writing. By November 2018, students will be able to use Storybird to publish writing works.	1. Students will post a collection of stories for the class library in the platform. 2. Students will post one writing assignment in the platform for collaborative revisions.
2.2 Research-Based Learner-Centered Strategies 2.3 Authentic Learning 3.1 Classroom Management & Collaborative Learning 5.1 Needs Assessment	Teaching how to engage in collaborative “talk” for peer editing and collaborative revisions. By the end of November 2018, students will make corrections to their assigned writing works and discuss these changes during one-on-one conferences with the instructor.	1. Students will provide documentation on revisions. 2. Writing engagement inventory to monitor student progress.
1.1 Shared Vision 3.1 Classroom Management & Collaborative Learning 5.2 Professional Learning 5.3 Program Evaluation 6.3 Field Experiences	Provide professional learning opportunity for teachers to explore Storybird. By the end of March 2019, meet with grade level representatives to discuss how Storybird supports collaboration for the ideas and revision processes.	1. Agenda for Professional Learning session to discuss engagement and collaboration 2. A survey for participants on their likelihood of using Storybird in their classroom.
1.1 Shared Vision 1.2 Strategic Planning 1.3 Diffusion of Innovations and Change 5.1 Needs Assessment 6.1 Continuous Learning 5.3 Program Evaluation 6.3 Field Experiences	Complete data collection for engagement. By May 2018, data collected from the project shared with key stakeholders.	1. Provide agenda for sessions. (one with grade level and one with administrators) 2. Provide a survey of completion.

Project Description

Over the course of this project, the goal is to promote engagement and collaboration through digital writing processes using StoryBird as a technology tool in the classroom use modeling explicit writing strategies and monitoring the learners is at the heart of the instructional practices at Whitehead Road. The process will begin in one fourth-grade classroom, as the teacher works to embed Storybird into the writing instruction practice to gather examples and strategies to monitor the learners in that specific classroom. First, the teacher will monitor student engagement in the digital writing tool. Next, the teacher shares discoveries to help other teachers on the fourth grade team to embed Storybird into daily writing workshop model. Finally, the teacher will meet with grade level team and administrative to report on the project successes/failures and student engagement surveys.

Project Activity One

First, students become acquainted and work with Storybird as a digital writing tool to use at their leisure. This will provide the opportunity for students to engage in the tool without expectation. Next, before embedding Storybird into the daily writing practice, the classroom teacher will model and teach students how to use the tool effectively. I will model how to post and create stories in the platform. Students will build the classroom library of stories. Students will use this tool during reading small groups when they finish their assignments. One assignment will post and all students will submit one piece of writing for peer review purposes.

Project Activity Two:

After students have had some time to adjust to the platform and freely create works or writing, then we will move to daily implementation. Collaborative discussion practice will happen during a series of lessons in writing workshop. Collaborative verbal skills will increase effective use of Storybird writing creations and student output within the digital library. The

teacher accomplish this by modeling how to submit and open various works by various artists. Students will dive in and look at the work of others. Then, the classroom teacher will model how to look at a piece of writing using rubrics from our writing curriculum. The students and teacher will engage in collaborative discussions to reinforce the work they will do in partnerships. Students will engage in the process of collaboration many times to ensure they know what it looks and sounds like. When ready, students will use collaborative “talk” strategies and help one another to grow in their writing using published writing works in the Storybird platform.

Project Activity Three:

This stage of the project focuses on sharing Storybird with other teachers. An in depth exploration of StoryBird happens at a grade level meeting. This informative session provides insight for how Storybird supports the collaborative practices that are happening in the classroom. It is a tool designed to enhance the learning process for students; focusing on the engagement trends on the engagement inventory data and the collaborative observations and improvements students have made based on daily conference data. During the meeting, teachers discuss any questions or concerns at this time regarding Storybird and implementation. Attendees will then take a survey about their intentions on using Storybird to support writing engagement and collaboration.

Project Activity Four:

The last activity of this project is to share out the findings with key stakeholders. The key stakeholders are administrators and any grade level teachers that wish to take part in the final presentation of my project. The teacher will share the intentions of my project, the steps of implementation, and the trends noticed based on the engagement survey and individual conference notes from students. Those in attendance will take a survey of completion and

recommend some follow up steps, any questions or concerns they have regarding the implementation of this project.

Evaluation

Evaluation is a critical component to any project's success. The problem this project addresses is student engagement and collaboration during writing workshop. The goal is to engage students in a collaborative writing process that sustains growth in writing overall. Students will develop a more meaningful relationship with the writing process that transfers to a sustained engagement during writing activities, as well as authentic conversations among students based on writing activities. The teacher's role is to provide students with meaningful writing lessons that build engagement and collaboration with support from technology to enhance overall writing experiences. These endeavors will enable students to learn from one another and actively participate in the writing process fully. Students will publish their writing for peer review. This project will be assessed by student inventories, individual student conferences and teacher surveys to rank likelihood of implementation for their own classrooms.

Project Activity One:

In the first stages of my project, students will be exploring a new tool without expectation. The teacher will monitor student use, document and influence discussions about the tool. Students will be required to build the classroom library in the platform by creating various works in a variety of different formats. Students will be required to submit one piece of writing for peer review. This assignment will be collected and used in the following stages of the project.

Project Activity Two:

Next, students will actively engage in the collaborative process. The teacher will measure engagement periodically using a writing engagement survey. This will be used in the

final presentation of the project as well. Conferencing will also be used to measure revision status and writing growth. Students will document the changes they make and reflect on how their collaborative discussions are going. This reflection will live in their writing journals and during conferences, we will reflect back on how collaborative practices help us grown and engage in writing more effectively.

Project Activity Three:

This stage involves professional learning. Teacher surveys are the best gauge for effective professional learning. The teacher will model how to use Storybird with my grade level team. I ill also share any current data on student engagement and conferencing. A thoughtfully planned conversation about writing and how collaboration and engagement is supported during writing workshop. Teachers will then take a survey about their likelihood of using Storybird based on the professional learning and their classroom needs.

Project Activity Four:

Last, the teacher will present my findings to key stakeholders; teachers and administrators. This meeting will focus on the engagement and collaborative practices documented throughout the project. The pieces of data that will be explored are individual writing conference trends and the students writing inventory data trends. This will be used to support the next steps and follow up that will occur after the project itself is over. Attendees will take a survey of completion. This survey will address any concerns, questions and feedback about the project and is intended as proof of the presentation but to also influence the next plan for this particular focus and study.

In summary, the evaluation plan is to document trends in student engagement through the writing engagement inventory, reflect with students during their individual conferences and

receive various feedback from teachers through a likelihood of implementation survey and a survey of completion and final thoughts. These pieces of data will enable a decision to be made about the next steps after this project is complete.

Table 2

<i>Project Timeline</i>	
Teach students how to use Storybird Set up and sign on Daily mini-lessons for use and productivity (~5 minutes a day) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Platform (4 weeks) • Creation of works: chapter, poem, picture books (3 week) • Looking at others works (3 weeks) • Classroom Library (3 weeks) • Storybird Competitions (1 week) • Throughout the course of implementation (10 hours) <p>(60 hours)</p>	August – November 2018
Teach Collaborative “talk” during Writing Workshop to support collaborative tasks Writing Workshop Lessons (5 hours a week/ 24 weeks) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies for conversations during mini-lessons and individual conferences with students • Anchor Charts for student reference • Printouts for student reference <p>(30 hours)</p>	September 2018 - March 2019
Meet with grade level team for Professional Learning on Storybird engagement and collaboration Professional Learning Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setup data, survey and presentation (5 hours) • Meeting (1 hour) • Follow up (1 hour) <p>(10 hours)</p>	February 2019
Meet with Key Stakeholders to present findings from the project. Presentation Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setup data, survey and presentation (5 hours) • Meeting (1 hour) • Follow up (1 hour) <p>(5 hours)</p>	May 2019
Total Hours: 105	May 2019

References

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Appendix

Student Engagement Survey

1. What do you enjoy most about using StoryBird?
2. How has StoryBird help you connect with other students?
3. In what way could writing workshop be better for you?
4. What is your favorite part about writing workshop?

Teacher Survey Questionnaire

1. Can you see yourself adapting StoryBird to fit into your writing workshop model?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of using this technology tool?
3. What improvements would make this professional learning session more successful?