PROFESSIONAL LEARNING TEAM REPORT
School Year: 2013-14

PLT Title

Don't Be Queasy: DBQs are nice and easy

Blurb for PLT Conference Brochure

After reflecting on our curriculum, we realized that students were not getting enough practice analyzing documents and making claims. Based on these needs and the need to prepare students for a possible PARCC English exam, we developed a rubric for assessing Document Based Questions (DBQs). We created rubric and DBQs for students in grades 5, 6, and 7. Through a series of lessons, students learned to use multiple documents to help them develop and support a claim in response to an open-ended question.

Contact Information *(Write * next to facilitator's name.)*

Name	School	Grade Level or Subject
Peter Tausek*	Chenery	Grade 6, SS
Andrew Semuels	Chenery	Grade 7, SS
Adam Weldai	Chenery	Grade 7, SS
Rebecca Bourke	Chenery	Grade 7, SS
Nicole Feroleto	Chenery	Grade 5
Karen Duff	Chenery	Media Specialist

PLT SMART Goal

By the end of the year, students will improve scores when forming claims supported by reasonable evidence when looking at primary and secondary sources about a topic in "Document Based Questions" (DBQs)

Key Actions

-Researched DBQs and examples -Determined places in the curriculum where DBQs would fit well -Researched and developed DBQ checklist for success -Revised Checklist with SS Direction -Designed, taught, and assessed first round of DBQs (grade 7) -Revised rubric (with SS Director Assistance); created two-column rubric -Designed, taught, and assessed first round of DBQs (grade 6) -Completed Protocol for the Examination of Data

Findings

-Initial rubric was not specific enough; students needed more explicit criteria
-Students benefited from being able to use a variety of sources (primary sources, secondary sources, info graphics, text, charts, etc)
-Two-column rubric approach was a new challenge to many students
-Students need practice quoting and paraphrasing
-Students created claims at varying levels
-Some of this was due to limited background knowledge and the set-up or potential vagueness of specific sources
-Completion of second or third DBQ per grade level will help assess student growth and development over time

Recommendations / Next Steps

-Create models for DBQs to help scaffold responses
-Develop lessons to teach students to determine main idea, paraphrasing, and using specific quotes from specific or multiple documents
-Develop additional DBQs using Summer curriculum money for next year to better measure student growth over time
-Continue to revise and develop DBQs based on student results