Collegial Circle Final Report

Please complete all information on this form. After it is complete, send it to the Teacher Center along with other supporting documentation. Electronic copies are preferred whenever possible.

COLLEGIAL CIRCLE INFORMATION

Title of Circle: **6th Grade S.S. Summer/Fall 2017**   Standards Area: **S.S.**

Facilitator: **Liesa Ehrlich**   School(s): **BRMS/CRMS**

Beginning Date: **8/28/17**   Ending Date: **10/18/17**   # of Hours: **12**

Please submit copies of the following to this report:

- ✓ Collegial Circle Attendance Log
- ✓ Collegial Circle Meeting Log
- ✓ Samples of strategies implemented, materials created, or student work samples where applicable
- ✓ Collegial Circle Reflection Sheets - completed by each participant

COLLEGIAL CIRCLE DESCRIPTION

What was the anticipated goal(s) of this Collegial Circle?

The goal of this circle was to share strategies and project ideas/activities designed to help students build requisite skills needed to successfully engage in S.S. inquiries, DBQs, thematic essays, and projects. We hoped that participants would build a bank of resources that will be shared via Office 365 and/or in a folder in the PCSD shared drive.

What grade level(s) and or subject area(s) will benefit from this Circle?

6th grade social studies

FINAL REFLECTIONS

Was the goal of your Collegial Circle met? Please explain.

For the most part, yes—circle members shared a number of project ideas and literacy-based strategies; they further discussed scope and sequence, and we looked at a few articles. While we did create a shared folder with subfolders to store information, most information has not yet been moved into those folders.

How did the members of this Collegial Circle assess whether the outcome was met? What evidence was utilized to assess your progress?

Our discussion notes, reflection, and samples of work created (attached), as well as some pieces of student work, provide evidence.

How did your work impact teaching and learning? [include student work samples, lesson plans, peer reviews, etc.]

See attached evidence, including notes.

Did your work align with the Level of Evaluation you identified in your proposal? Please explain. [Refer to the document, *5 Levels of Professional Development Evaluation*, on the TC webpage.

Yes—we anticipated our work would align with the participant's level. In fact, we extended our circle a bit into the fall, so we actually exceeded our estimated level of evaluation a bit since participants were able to try out some strategies with students. (A few student work samples are included in our evidence.)

Participants learned from one another as activities and strategies were shared. We discussed historical thinking skills and enduring issues, going deeper versus wider, and the need for students to shoulder more critical thinking through "messier (open-ended) tasks requiring evidence-based thinking." Recently, for example, students segued into analyzing documents by analyzing video game ads and then pictures of classrooms, one from the late 1800s and one from around 2015. As they worked, teachers

used probing questions to facilitate thinking. Students made assertions about audience, purpose, central idea, and historical context, supporting their claims with evidence from the documents and their background knowledge. They further discussed the concepts of continuity and change over time, using these documents to infer cultural values as well as the impact of technology over eras. Using these documents enabled students to try out these skills in an engaging context. We then tied the use of these skills to the study of ancient civilizations by pointing out these are artifacts that others will study in the future, and in turn, we use those skills to analyze documents/artifacts from the past to see what they reveal about past cultures. Discussion of continuity and change over time further helped form a connection to ancient civilizations. For example, while technology has changed over time (using sticks/stones to wood, cardboard, plastic to electronic games), there is continuity in the fact that people through time have sought some form of entertainment; we can infer from the two video games (*Dungeons and Dragons* vs *Dora the Explorer*) that we protect and try to ensure appropriate levels of challenge for our youngest members of society and gradually release those holds as our children grow; while the nature of challenges might change over time, we can expect that those from ancient civilization also leveled challenges. From there, students will move into applying skills to analyzing documents pertaining to Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt.

We further discussed defining essentials and using formative assessment as tools for informing instruction in our attempts to meet the needs of diverse learners. Time is always a concern when attempting to move toward instruction that allows for more discussion-based learning, so participants brainstormed ways to peel back some of the details (the need to define what is nice to know, things that students need to know, and what is essential). This discussion is not finished and will continue over time.

Please include any additional comments you would like to share with the Collegial Circle Committee. This may include unanticipated outcomes, next steps, new learning, etc.

This group will continue to share their work throughout the year. I plan to continue to meet with teachers in both schools throughout the year as well. They are collegial and invested in continuous improvement. It is always challenging to capture the quality of discussion in notes, but I was impressed with participant's willingness to ask really thoughtful questions of one another. I would be remiss if I did not reference the risk-taking these teachers took when implementing some of the ideas shared and the rich instruction those risks yielded.