Advocating Change for the Twenty-First Century Learner

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The students who populate our classrooms have entered this world surrounded by digital technology. Digital technology has become an important everyday tool for work, entertainment, and socializing. However, despite the growing presence and importance of digital technology in our society, one area it has not permeated into is education. To move our students ahead and prepare them for their lives in the digital society of the 21st century it is time to let go of the past and step into the future. Online learning management systems such as RCampus are a means through which education can begin to be transformed, so that the needs of our 21st century students are being met while they learn to master their curricular goals, and develop the skills they will need to thrive in their future workforce.

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| Online Learning Management System | | | |
| **Lesson Title:** My family | | **Related Lessons:** none | |
| **Grade Level:** 5 | | **Unit:** My family | |
| **GOALS** | | | |
| **Content Standards:**  American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (n.d.)   * Standard 5.1: Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting.   Common Core State Standards Initiative (2012)   * CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.7: Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or beauty of a text. * CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. * CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. * CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. * CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly. * CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.5.2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. * CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.5.3: Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. * CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.5.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 5 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. | | | |
| **ISTE NETS-S**   1. Creativity and Innovation 2. Communication and Collaboration 3. Research and Information Fluency 4. Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making 5. Digital Citizenship 6. Technology Operations and Concepts   **Instructional Objectives:** The spelling course this lesson has been designed for has been specifically created to raise the students’ abilities in spelling and must incorporate various opportunities for students to practice all of their language skills with a heavy emphasis on spelling. To meet these objective students will begin to construct a short story by applying their understandings of the target language and vocabulary provided to them within the My Family unit. The students will locate or create digital images and organize them into their short stories. The students will then finalize the rough draft of their short story which integrates each of the vocabulary words using word processing software. These stories will be presented to assigned group members within an eCommunities study group within our class using RCampus to be critiqued, edited, and then reproduced using the suggestions from their peers. The students will then construct their final draft and submit it in the classroom coursework drop box within RCampus. | | | |
| **ACTION** | | | |
| **Before-Class Preparation:**  Create a short story using the target language and vocabulary from the My Family unit and print out copies for each student. Organize students into collaborative groups of three so that they have support outside of class using RCampus. Create a grading rubric for the short story, check list for each of the activities the students will be expected to complete at home with their dates, and a citation guide for using images from online sources, and then print a copy of each for all students. Create a fill in the blank story and word find for students to use as study guides for the spelling test and print out copies for each student. Take screen shots of the various links students will need to access using RCampus and attach the access code so that students and parents can access the coursework. | | | |
| **During Class** | | | |
| Time | Instructional Activities | | Materials and Resources |
| Day 1  5 minutes  10 minutes  10 minutes  15 minutes  10 minutes  10 minutes  Day 2  15 minutes  15 minutes  20 minutes  Day 3  10 minutes  40 minutes | Introduce the vocabulary of the unit using an image of a family tree. Check comprehension of family tree and translate if necessary. Ask students to elicit the spelling of the target vocabulary. If students struggle describe each then provide the vocabulary and have random students match each to the correct image in the family tree. Again translate whenever it is needed.  Introduce physical descriptions of family members using images. Ask students to elicit the spelling of the target vocabulary. If students struggle describe each then provide the vocabulary and have random students match each to the correct image. Judge whether students understand the vocabulary based on their ability to recognize the images. If students are struggling present three blank faces on the whiteboard, arrange students into three lines, call out a vocabulary, and have students run up to draw, write, and speak the vocabulary using a FC for support if needed.  Introduce the target language. Model it with the Thai assistant. Students practice the target language as a group at the board playing a simple whiteboard game. Students then practice individually using a social game with the other students in the class.  Handout the practice spelling test. Arrange students in test formation. Say each of the target vocabulary words and provide students with adequate time to write them on their practice test.  Elicit each of the vocabulary words form the students and present the correct spelling on the board. Have students write the correct spelling of the words they got wrong in the right column of their practice spelling test. Concept check with individual students.  Provide the students with a fill in the blank story and word find to use as study guides for the spelling test. Provide students with a handout of the screen shots of the various links they will need to access using RCampus and briefly walk them through logging in and accessing the links. Attach the access code as a reminder so that students and parents can access the coursework and include a check list for each of the activities the students will be expected to complete at home with their due dates.  Review the vocabulary words from the unit using images. Elicit the spelling of each of the vocabulary words from the students and have them write the words on the board. Have students practice spelling the words in a spelling game.  Handout the spelling test. Arrange students in test formation. Say each of the target vocabulary words and provide students with adequate time to write them on their test sheets. Collect the tests.  Explain to the students that they will create a short story using the target vocabulary and language structure from the unit. Provide students with a grading rubric for a short story and a citation guide for using online images, explain, check their understanding, and translate whenever necessary. Provide the students with a copy of a premade short story which has integrated the target vocabulary and sentence structures from the unit. Present the premade short story using an audio recording and have the students follow along on their handouts. Have students read the short story aloud.    Hand students back their graded spelling tests. Review the vocabulary and language structure from the unit using images. Present the spelling of each of the vocabulary words on the whiteboard.  Explain to the students that they will be taking an end of the unit test which will be used to assess their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills using the target language and vocabulary from the unit. Arrange students in test formation and handout the end of the unit test. Review each portion of the test to ensure understanding. Complete the listening section as a group and then once they have completed the reading and spelling section on their own they will be asked questions from the unit which they will be required to comprehend and respond to individually. When students are finished they may complete a handout of various word games using language from the unit. | | Laptop computer with internet connection, presentation software, whiteboard markers, whiteboard, projector, flash cards, game cards for social activity, spelling practice sheets, fill in the blank study guides, word find study guides, RCampus screen shots handouts, and check lists.  Laptop computer, presentation software, whiteboard markers, whiteboard, projector, flash cards, spelling tests, premade short story, premade short story audio recording, premade short story handouts, and short story grading rubrics.  Laptop computer, presentation software, whiteboard markers, whiteboard, projector, flash cards, graded spelling tests, end of unit tests, and word games handouts. |
| **Notes:**  The design of this lesson plan incorporates the expectations of the curriculum designed for the IEP spelling course. The end of the unit tests is to prepare the students for their Cambridge young learners’ exams. After reviewing the students’ results in these exams from the previous year it was found that the majority of our students did poorly on spelling. For this reason this course has been specifically created to raise the students’ abilities in spelling and must incorporate various opportunities for students to practice all of their language skills with a heavy emphasis on spelling.  All students who are enrolled in this course have access to computers outside of schools. Therefore, as an effort to help develop their comprehension and boost their language skills I felt that incorporating an online learning management system where students could collaborate and share their artifacts would be appropriate and effective. After the first day the students will be encouraged to go home and explore the various links on RCampus on their own time. By doing this the students should have all practice they will need to be able to navigate the website easily when it comes time to begin writing and sharing their short stories. | | | |
| **MONITOR** | | | |
| **Ongoing Assessment(s):**  Observe the students as they engage in the classroom activities. Record observational notes of student interaction, dialogue, word comprehension, and spelling proficiency. Monitor student spelling test results and feedback where needed. Engage in dialogue with the students each day regarding the progress they are making on their short stories to ensure they are on track and have the resources they need to complete their artifacts.  **Accommodations and Extensions:** After the first day of class the students will be expected to complete the provided fill in the blank story and word find study guides. They should be refereeing to the provided check list each day after school to ensure that they are on progress for completing the requirements of this unit before the due dates. The fill in the blank story will be used as a scaffold for helping the students create a short story of their own and the word find is simply an enrichment activity to help prepare the students for the spelling test. Both study resources will be accessible through RCampus and the screen shots handout will help them locate these files. Although they will be expected to complete both, they are simply indicators of progress, and not a directly recorded for a grade.  After the second day the students should have a complete understanding of their expectations for creating their short stories. They will be provided with a grading rubric, premade short story to use as a scaffold, and they will be asked once again to refer to their checklist to ensure they are on track. The students must complete a rough draft of their short story using word processing software and include any relevant digital images. The students will refer to their citation handout to cite the sources where the images where obtained. They will also collaborate with their learning group using RCampus to make sure everyone is on track and understands their expectations.  After the third day the students will refer to their checklist to make sure all prior activities have been completed. They will collaborate with the members of their learning group using RCampus to share their stories, provide one another with ideas and perspectives, help one another edit their short stories, and reflect on the learning activities from the unit. The students must then create the final version of their short stories and submit it online in the course assignment drop box on RCampus before the due date.  **Back-Up Plan:**  If for any reason the students struggle navigating the online course management system, cannot access the internet from a computer outside of school, or struggle with the difficulty of the learning task I can provide them with a template to complete their short stories by pencil and paper. I will also arrange time in class so that group members can share their stories, discuss their perspectives, and edit just as they would have in their online learning community. Once the problems are resolved the stories can be scanned and uploaded onto the online learning management system. By printing all handouts prior to class any problems which occur during class can be resolved using traditional methods as this lesson is not heavily dependent on technology. | | | |
| **EVALUATE AND EXTEND** | | | |
| **Summative Assessment:** The summative assessment for this unit as with all future units is called the Cambridge Young Learners exam. This assessment determines the overall language skills of English language learning students through various sections. These sections include listening, reading and writing, and speaking. Within these tests students are not graded in any one section such fluency or spelling abilities alone but rather their overall comprehension. For this reason having the students transfer the language they have been taught from a specific unit to design a short story and reflect on it with their peers seems like a logical course of action to help them develop comprehension at a deeper level.  **LESSON REFLECTIONS AND NOTES:** The purpose of using the online course management system is to get the students familiar with collaborating online in a work environment. In addition I hope to combine all of the artifacts each student creates in a digital portfolio. This way they can share their learning with their family, peers, other teachers, and potential employees. The students could also use these digital portfolios to refer back to at any time to help them prepare for a future test such as the Cambridge exams. | | | |

**Report**

There are numerous ways which students could use RCampus, or any other online learning management system for learning in any content area. However, to better understand how online learning management systems can improve the academic outcomes of our students, I have created a learning activity for my fifth grade English language learners who are enrolled in our IEP spelling course. This learning activity will require the students to use resources available within RCampus to create a short story which integrates the language structure and vocabulary from their coursework.

The students in this course are expected to be able to read, write, listen, and speak but simple spelling practice and a few opportunities to engage in listening and speaking activities aren’t enough for them to be able to master their learning content. Therefore, they need more opportunities outside of school to practice their English language skills, and they need to be able to use these skills and understandings in an authentic context. For this reason, an online learning management system is a great compliment to helping our students master their English language skills, as it provides a single platform through which our students can collaborate online with their peers, access assignments, and use provided multimedia resources.

By teaching the students the language focus and vocabulary in class, teachers can ensure that students develop the necessary comprehension to be able to apply their understandings in the creation of a short story. This short story will be created using word processing software, templates, and other learning resources, all of which will all be accessible through the online learning management system. The students will also be required to engage with group members in an assigned learning community using the online learning management system. During their collaborative efforts the students will be asked meet the requirements of a grading rubric by evaluating the short stories of their group members, sharing their perspectives and insights, discussing the learning content and any other academically pertinent information, and reflecting upon their experiences. By collaborating with their peers the students will be able to develop a deeper understanding of the content and will hopefully feel more meaningfully engaged in their learning.

Due to the extensive exposure of digital technology students today have developed different learning needs which traditional teacher-centered lectures cannot address. According to Lemke and Coughlin (2009) with access to an abundance of multimedia resources and a world of knowledge, students bring varied background knowledge into the classroom, they communicate with others from around the world in their social networking sites, and demand the fast pace knowledge which the internet provides for them. In addition, students are able to share their artifacts outside of school with a world audience, and therefore it is discouraging for them to be restricted of this inside of school. To ensure that students remain engaged in their learning teachers need to provide them with authentic and meaningful learning tasks which build a bridge between their academic lives and their lives outside of school.

The learning activity I have created can meet the 21st century learning needs that our digital students bring with them into the classroom. Students can have access to fast pace and easy to obtain learning resources which can address the needs of a variety of learning modalities. They can have access to social networks through which their communication efforts are focused on gaining and better understanding knowledge, and they can take control of their own learning being able to choose which resources they engage with, what topics they discuss with their peers, and what tools they will use to support their learning. An additional benefit of having students create their short stories within an online learning management system is that the students will then able to store their artifacts for all of the years to come. This will allow the students to share these artifacts with not only the peers in their class, but other teachers, family members, and potential college or job recruiters, and all of this can be accomplished within a single online learning management system.

There are no major policy changes which would need to be made in order for online learning management systems to be successful within our learning community. However, there are recommendations on how to ensure that integrating an online learning management system will be successful, quick, easy, and pain free. Hargis and Schofield (2007) have suggested that in order to successfully integrate an online learning management system into a school community it will take the commitment and teamwork of both teachers and administrators, it must be easy to use right from the start through premade resources, and partnerships with community leaders and family members must be established. The benefit of RCampus is that it is very easy to use right from the start and membership to basic services is free.

To make this heart filled and meaningful experience come to life, all it will take is approval by parents and administrators to push the students’ one step farther towards success, by having them engage in an online learning management system as a homework assignment each week. No adjustments need to be made to the IEP course itself. As it can be seen in the lesson plan that I have created that the students would simply be learning a little bit more on their own time. As it is likely the goal of all teachers to create students who want to become lifelong learners, there is no reason to delay. This learning activity can mark their starting point on their journey as lifelong learners and the online learning management system can unlock the door.

**Debrief Summary**

The report I presented to my colleagues regarding the 21st century skills and content knowledge students can gain through using online learning management systems and the lesson plan which integrates this technology was an expansion of a report regarding the characteristics of online learning management systems, which I had presented about three weeks prior. I feel that the lesson plan helped my colleagues better understand how easy it is to integrate online learning management systems into our curriculum. A concern which was brought up in the initial presentation was that these online learning management systems would cause disruptions in student learning. However, I feel confident that this concern was completely resolved by demonstrating the lesson which integrated online learning management systems as a way for students to become meaningfully engaged with their homework while learning important digital literacy and communication skills which cannot be addressed in the classroom.

By helping my colleagues understand that no policy changes, additional training, or extensive lesson plans would be needed to integrate online learning management systems into our curriculum I feel that we are one step closer to adopting this technology. During the presentation I walked my colleagues through the basic services the online learning management system RCampus provided through free membership. This was the hook which changed all conflicting perspectives as it helped my colleagues understand how easily our Thai students could navigate the website with its neatly organized tools and a simple in class demonstration. The only concern which remained after the presentation was how we could afford the upgrades to get the most out of the services provided by RCampus. I made it clear that grants and partnerships with organizations or community members were possible solutions and that the Embassy of Japan in Thailand was a possible source as they provide grants for grassroots movements in education.

**Grant and Partnership Proposal**

To better prepare Thai English language learners for their futures in the 21st century workforce it is important to build connections between academics and their lives outside of school. In addition, Thai students often have very few opportunities to engage with others in English outside of school and without an authentic and meaningful context to use their English skills it is just another skill which may soon be forgotten. As English is the second language of Thailand and can lead students to successful careers in international business and affairs they must understand just how meaningful English truly is to helping them transform Thailand into a prosperous nation. The RCampus online learning management system can aid these students in developing a meaningful connection between academics and their lives outside of school through access to multisensory digital learning resources which can be adapted to meet all interests, learning profiles, and curricular goals.

To get the most out of RCampus it will require access to more than just the basic services provided by the free membership. In order for our teachers to create and store curricular resources for the entire school year in a digital format which can be adapted to meet any learning need and for students to create and store digital artifacts to represent their mastery of curricular goals it will require the RCampus Personal Edition Upgrades. As described by Reazon Systems, Inc. (2014) with access to all of the tools available within the RCampus Personal Edition Upgrades students can create detailed ePortfolios which can be shared with all stakeholders and they can develop leadership and digital literacy skills by having the option to assist in developing matrices and websites. The RCampus Personal Edition Upgrades can also benefit teachers being able to guide an unlimited number of students more efficiently to successful outcomes through message boards, class teams, rubrics, quizzes, and gradebooks.

To ensure that the Thai English language learners are prepared for living, working, and learning in the 21st century they will need to develop 21st century learning skills. According to the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (n.d.) to thrive in both work and life students will need to develop creativity, innovation, critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, digital literacy, flexibility, self-direction, leadership, and accountability skills. The RCampus learning management system offers students a medium through which they can develop personal learning networks, collaborate, and share with students in classrooms from various geographic locations thus helping them develop problem solving, social, communication skills while providing them with a meaningful context to practice their English skills. It also enables students to create innovative digital artifacts, engage in self-directed lifelong learning, and act as mentors for their peers. As it can be understood the RCampus learning management system will help to ensure that Thai English language learners are not only prepared for the digital society of the 21st century but will be become leaders of change.

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