

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Examining The Relationship, If Any, Between Using Socratic Seminar (Verbal Discussion Instructional Strategy) On Written Constructed Responses Of 6th Grade Native American Students' English Language Arts Formative Assessments

By Wendy Hunt

PROBLEM:

According to the 2014-2015 Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) only:

- 3,609 students were classified in the subgroup of American Indian or Alaska Native out of 426,452 total students.
- In this American Indian or Alaska Native subgroup 18.1% were a level 4 or 5 (met or exceeded expectations).

The average scaled score was 18 points lower than all students, 723 (American Indian or Alaskan Native) and 741 (all students). (PARCC, n.d.)

Literature Review

- Common Core State Standards
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.1](#)
Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.1.a](#)
Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.1.c](#)
Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.
- PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers)

To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students must have ample opportunities to take part in a variety of rich, structured conversations—as part of a whole class, in small groups, and with a partner. Being productive members of these conversations requires that students contribute accurate, relevant information; respond to and develop what others have said; make comparisons and contrasts; and analyze and synthesize a multitude of ideas in various domains. (PARCC, n.d.)

Literature Review (cont.)

- Native American student needs and Learning styles
- “Nationally, 93% of Native youths attend regular public schools, with the remaining 7 percent attending other school systems, Bureau of Indian Education schools. For the children who do graduate, preparedness levels are unsettling, as only one-fourth of Native high school graduates are college-ready in math, and only one-third are college-ready in reading.” (Keel, 2013)
- Instructional conversation in Native American classrooms follow a sequence of instruction, demonstration, then verbal discussion. Allowing opportunities for students to initiate and terminate conversations or discussions help students to focus on their learning and understanding of the content. (Tharp, 1994)

Research Questions

- How does Socratic seminar, an instructional strategy used to encourage verbal discussion, improve 6th grade Native American written responses on constructed response formative assessments? (formative assessments)
- What relationship, if any, do students feel that the Socratic seminar has on verbal academic communication skills and written constructed response answers on ELA formative assessments? (student survey)
- How does the processes of the Socratic seminar discussions encourage effective student verbal discussions and written responses? (Teacher observations and CCSS student rubric)

Innovation, intervention,
or program structure

Socratic Seminar

“I began to wonder, can I help my students feel comfortable using discussion as a method of learning rather than a showcase for correct answers?” (Alfonsi, 2008)

Data Collection

- Teacher observation notes
- ELA common formative assessments
- Student Surveys
- Socratic Seminar Individual and Partner Grading Rubric

Goals (Findings)

The utilization of Socratic seminar in my 6th grade classroom and its effectiveness for useful dialogue among my students.



Effective verbal discussion will lead to improved written constructed response answers.



Improved teacher practice when using verbal discussion instructional strategies.

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Judy Nelson Elementary School

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Steve Carlson
Principal

Dr. Debi Tom
Assistant Principal

December 15, 2016

To whom it may concern;

Wendy Hunt, a sixth grade teacher at Judy Nelson Elementary, has asked if I would give permission to complete an action research project at our school. I think it is a wonderful idea to involve our students in such an endeavor, and I give my permission for this to happen. I assume that Ms. Hunt will go through all of the appropriate channels to make this happen. If you have any questions from me, please call (505) 598-6285.

Sincerely,



Steve Carlson, principal
Judy Nelson Elementary School
"Where learning comes first"