Scaffolding Projects: Stages of Learning and Feedback

Stage 1: Understanding the Assignment
Students and instructor move toward a shared interpretation of goals/outcomes for the project
- Implementation ideas
  - In-class group assessments of sample projects: put in groups of 3-4; grade and give feedback on these different components that need to be in the assignment (give them rubric if you have one); get them thinking about the goals/outcomes from the get-go
  - Individual assessments of sample projects as homework (credit/no credit; if they did it or not...)
- Feedback ideas
  - Affirmation and adjustment with reasons
  - Verbal or written

Stage 2: Identifying Guiding Questions
Students develop a list of what they want/need to know to successfully complete the project
- Implementation ideas
  - In-class brainstorming using assignment/interviewing each other about the topic/issue they are thinking about writing about... (ask reporter questions, report back to the class on their interview)
  - Homework: Questions and Answer Plan: have them generate a list of questions they need to answer, and what they would do to answer the question (credit/no credit)
- Feedback ideas
  - Affirmation and adjustment with reasons
  - Additional sources for/ pathways to answers

Stage 3: Reviewing Discovery
Students gather and present their data or information that they believe will help them respond to their guiding questions.
- Implementation ideas
  - Research journal
  - Annotated bibliography (to ensure they have adequate sources)
  - Progress report/presentation
- Feedback ideas
  - Source “Buddies”: review this person’s progress report, and find additional sources for them to use, and explain why you think they should consider these sources
  - In-class group review and responses

Stage 4: Establishing Positions, Points and Take-Aways
Students provide an overview of the position they will take and/or the points they will advance and the key “take aways” they intend to leave with their audience. Part of this overview might indicate where research/data can be integrated
- Implementation ideas
  - Informal outline
  - Share sample outline first
- Feedback ideas
  - Provide opportunity for students to respond to each other’s outlines (and having students write what they will do with the feedback they’ve received)
  - Point students to additional research/sources

Stage 5: Submitting Portions
Students submit key sections of the project for feedback
- Implementation ideas
  - Share samples of portion first
  - Have students review each other’s work in-class or out-of-class
  - Ask for students to explain connections to goals of project with submission
- Feedback ideas
  - Provide opportunity for students to respond to each other
  - Provide opportunities for students to review and assess the feedback they receive

Stage 6: The Whole Draft
- Implementation ideas
  - Peer review (in class or out), with example first
  - Require composition of a “follow up plan”
- Feedback ideas
  - Rely on students – guide, but share, the responding duties
  - Collect and value “follow up plans”

Stage 7: The Final Draft
- Implementation ideas
  - Students submit a “Writing Self-analysis,” “Writer’s Memo,” or “Revision Memo” with this final draft (1-3 pages)
    - What aspects of your writing in the project are effective and why do you think they are effective?
    - What do you think could be improved in your written project and how could it be improved?
    - Briefly describe the process you used to write the project. Do you think the process you used was effective? Why or why not?
    - Have you applied anything that you learned in previous WI courses to the writing that you have done in this course? What have you applied and how have you applied it?
  - In-class editing prior to submission
- Feedback ideas
  - Affirm/respond to self-analysis/memo
  - Assign a “Response Reply Letter” (read my responses, explain how you’re going to try to improve on the areas you struggled; can give extra credit for)