

Introducing CLAVES™—Contextualized Learning for Access, Validation, Equity, and Success

by Ruth Kriteaman and Victoria Tafoya—Dual Language Education of New Mexico

Promising practices...

For a number of years, DLeNM has offered professional development to support teachers in providing their students with the most effective way to develop grade-level concepts and skills and the language needed to participate fully and articulate the learning—regardless of the instructional model adopted by the school. Long-time *Soleado* readers will recall that, over time, DLeNM has utilized and continually refined the eight components of sheltered instruction as an organizing or foundational way to address the needs of emerging bilinguals.

Last year, two things happened that prompted a new approach and a new direction in our work around sheltered instruction. First, in working on a new publication in Spanish, we wrestled with ways to translate “sheltered instruction.” Bringing our experience and knowledge as bilinguals to this task, we sought a phrase that was more than a direct translation. We wanted a phrase that would reflect all of the nuances of meaning—of the instructional complexity of supporting our students—and the moral imperative we believe underscores our work.

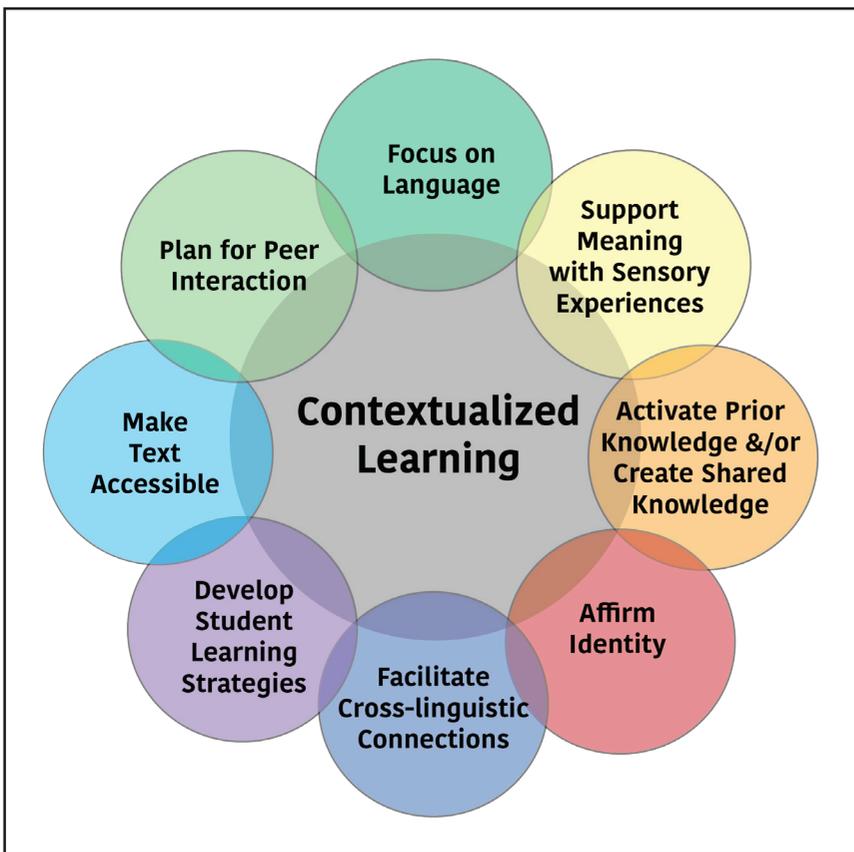
Eventually, we came to the translation: *instrucción contextualizada*. Ongoing thought and discussion, along with this idea of context, led us to consider the notion of pathways—a means of providing an environment that is both rigorous and supportive, accessible and respectful—leading teachers to affirm, validate, and accept students for the assets they bring to the learning environment. How would we share those pathways, the activities and strategies, with school communities in the most effective way?

A clarifying moment in DLeNM’s work toward more effective and compelling professional development came when researching ways to effect change. We played *Systems Thinking/Systems Changing™* (©The NETWORK, Inc.), a computerized program that simulates a 3-year rollout of an unidentified initiative. Working in teams, we were forced to keep asking... what does it take to change the way we address the needs of students in our schools? To change the culture within schools? To shift perspectives regarding students, their funds of knowledge, and their social and instructional needs? To increase the efficacy of

professional development initiatives? To infuse our work with current research in school culture, systems thinking, and shared leadership?

That thinking resulted in *Contextualized Learning for Access, Validation, Equity and Success—CLAVES™*. We believe that emerging bilinguals deserve equitable access to content and language development and that they have linguistic and cultural assets that should be validated and built upon in all aspects of a school community. In line with these beliefs, DLeNM developed a system that is deeply embedded in the school community, is highly reflective, and is understood by all educators at the site—educational assistants, teachers, and administrators alike.

CLAVES™ serves as a framework that provides the entire school community with the professional learning needed



The Eight Pathways of the CLAVES™ Framework

—continued on page 11—

Soleado—Fall 2017



—continued from page 10—

to create an environment of differentiated, inclusive, and validating instruction that serves culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students, with specific emphasis on English Learners (ELs). This is a comprehensive professional development framework aligned to the New Mexico Teach Framework, WIDA ELD Standards, and the Common Core State Standards. Instructional reform is a complex system that requires interconnected supporting elements—leaders must actively participate, understand, and intentionally support the overall systematic framework by providing on-going, effective, and responsive professional development. When all of these pieces are in place, sustainability is possible.

The eight CLAVES™ modules begin with two full days with school and district leadership to provide time for self-assessment and reflection centered around supporting their schools as learning organizations. Systems thinking and changing are introduced along with an overview of both contextualized learning (sheltered instruction) and the VISITAS™ protocol. This protocol creates intentional opportunities for teachers to observe each others' classrooms in a non-evaluative way (see *Soleado*, Winter 2016, soleado.dlenm.org). Observations are focused on sheltering “look fors” identified by the participants. An Action Plan will be developed by participating administrators around a system of identified supports necessary to maintain ongoing professional learning and sustain instructional reform. Days 3 through 8 bring the entire staff together and begin with school leaders sharing their vision of instructional reform.

This vision will serve as the foundation for intensive work toward building instructional capacity around contextualized learning. This work will provide teachers with opportunities for collaboration, professionalism, and transparency around language acquisition processes and the strategies and techniques that support those processes. Every day spent learning about the Eight Pathways will be balanced by an opportunity to use the VISITAS™ process to reflect on new learning, practice strategies, and receive non-evaluative feedback from peers. The goal is to end the eight modules with a focus on identifying the school community's next steps and reinforcing the idea of continuous improvement—viewing the CLAVES™ Pathways as essential, non-negotiable elements of teaching and learning.

The CLAVES™ framework extends beyond teachers simply taking in information regarding the Eight Pathways and shifts to include planning for ways to implement strategies and activities, participating in VISITAS™, and working and thinking together over time. This requires, for both teachers and administrators, more agency, responsibility, and accountability to ongoing professional development and learning. While the focus on sheltered instruction and effective work with emerging bilinguals continues for DLeNM and participating schools, the new framework ensures that contextualized learning is central to the school community's vision and supports teaching and learning for all.

For more information, please contact Victoria Tafoya, DLeNM Director of Operations, at Victoria@dlenm.org or visit DLeNM's website at www.dlenm.org.

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