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Not a Moment Wasted: Language and Literacy Through Science in a 90:10 Classroom

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Bellevue is a suburban school district in Washington state where students speak more than 80 languages. The Sherwood Forest Elementary School 90:10 Dual Language Program was implemented to help close the opportunity gap for our Spanish-speaking population. Data showed that native Spanish speakers were not passing the state tests, were overrepresented in special education, and were not graduating high school at the rate of their peers. In response, the program started in 2011 with one dual language class, two English instruction classes, and one functional life skills special education class. Students receive

90% of their weekly instruction in Spanish in kindergarten and first grade, with additional English instruction in social studies or science delivered by a partner teacher.

Planning for dual language English instruction is a complex process. Faced with 125 minutes per week of English instruction, K-1 grade-level teams realize that every second must be carefully planned to promote English language development and emergent literacy skills. Science is the only content area taught in English to first graders. In this context, the first-grade team approaches content as the vehicle through which to teach language. Through backwards mapping we create pacing guides and other

essential overview documents for each unit to ensure language and literacy development are intentionally targeted. Pacing documents also provide a road map for new teachers and teachers new to the grade level.



Students write about solids and liquids on Observation Charts.

At a first grade planning meeting, teachers bring the Foss Science Curriculum, a list of OCDE Project GLAD® (Guided Language Acquisition Design) strategies adopted by Sherwood Forest E.S., Common Core State Standards (CCSS), English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS), and Project GLAD® artifacts previously created for this unit. The ELL Facilitator, also a district Project GLAD® trainer, supports the team with

planning, modeling for new teachers, and Project GLAD® artifact creation.

Before creating our unit pacing guide, we identify expected student engagement strategies in a document titled *Language Partners and Seating Expectations*. Consistent partnering allows a familiar linguistic model for Spanish and English language learning. Students are more successful in taking risks linguistically because they develop a trusting relationship with their partner. Teachers are more likely to attend to thoughtful student pairings when the expectations are explicit.

We begin designing our unit pacing guide by including the content objectives and target vocabulary provided by the Foss curriculum. Next, we identify corresponding Common Core literacy and language standards. In the first grade “Solids and Liquids” unit, students describe

Inside this issue...

- ▣ The Dynamic and Complex Nature of Language Learning Programs
- ▣ AIM4S³™—Matemáticas que fomentan logros académicos y apoyan al estudiante hacia el éxito
- ▣ Taking Stock—The State of Dual Language Education...
- ▣ DLeNM Expands its Mission to Develop ... High Quality Dual Language Programs
- ▣ La Cosecha 2017
- ▣ Kellogg Update: Promoting Involvement to Sustain Positive Change



—continued on page 10—



—continued from page 1—

and sort solids and liquids based on their different properties. We align the content objectives in this unit to Common Core literacy standards in the areas of reading foundational skills and reading informational texts and to a variety of Common Core Speaking and Listening Standards. The ELPS (Washington state, <http://www.k12.wa.us/MigrantBilingual/pubdocs/ELP/WA-ELP-Standards-K12.pdf>) provide us with even more specific language standards to include. For this reason, we select those ELPS that best align with the identified Common Core literacy and language standards.

Project GLAD® is our district's adopted elementary sheltered instruction model. Therefore, it is essential

to include those Project GLAD® strategies that will best support our dual language learners in acquiring the target vocabulary and meeting the objectives and standards addressed in the unit. Project GLAD® strategies used in Spanish instruction are familiar to students, allowing them to develop the awareness of language differences between Spanish and English. The strategies are listed in an overview document and more fully explained at the individual lesson level.

Including sentence frames for each lesson in our pacing guide is critical to supporting students in meeting both CCSS and ELPS. Teachers post sentence frames on the board or on individual sheets, depending on whether they are used for turn-and-talks or teamwork. A variety of frames are included to differentiate for English language learners at differing language acquisition stages. The frames promote the development of

listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills and improve students' ability to recognize and respond to a summative assessment prompt. Teachers and student peers are more successful in holding students accountable for using target vocabulary when sentence stems are posted.

Since English language development is as important as content in this context, we also make a commitment to posting both content and language objectives on the board. It is important for students to attune to the language expectations as they navigate complex investigations and conversations with peers. Not only do these language expectations help students

learn language, they also help students understand and access the content, as the language and content standards are carefully aligned. Students never know how much effort goes into planning! By making a commitment to

post the content objectives, language objectives and sentence frames, our planning "comes alive" for students.

In the first investigation, we use Project GLAD® literacy awards designed to teach the three states of matter. Each student earns at least one of these awards during the week, based on adherence to the Three Personal Standards. The target vocabulary for the lesson is *matter*, *solid*, *liquid*, and *gas*. The content objective is "Matter exists in three states: solid, liquid, and gas." Realistic visuals are included in the awards to reinforce the key vocabulary and concept. The literacy awards also reinforce the corresponding CCSS K-5.RIT.6, which relates to distinguishing between information provided by pictures and information provided by words and text.

In the next lesson, the content objective is for students to describe the properties of solids and liquids. CCSS K-5.SL.1, "participating in collaborative conversations with diverse peers about grade-level topics and texts," aligns perfectly with our content objective. The target vocabulary listed includes property words for solids

GLAD: Pre Assessment: Observation Charts
SCAFFOLDS/LANGUAGE STEMS/LANGUAGE STEMS POSTED
Observation Charts:

- a, b, c chart
- Language Stems with focus on 1st Stem if Beginning of Year
 - I observe _____
 - Question Words
 - Sentence Stems:

The _____ is _____.

The _____ is _____ and _____.

The _____ is _____ and _____.

TARGET VOCABULARY

- Properties of Solids:** flat, flexible, rigid, hard, opaque, transparent, pointed, smooth, rough, straight, pointed
- Properties of Liquids:** bubbly, foamy, colored, colorless, translucent, transparent, viscous

CONTENT OBJECTIVES to be assessed:

- Visuals will represent all concepts in unit
- See content objectives for investigations

CCSS:

CC.1.1:

- Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade level topics and texts with peers and adults in small or larger groups

ELPS 2:

Participate in grade appropriate oral and written exchanges of information, ideas, and analyses, responding to peer comments and questions.

What this looks like for an ELL who is a:

- Level 1 Newcomer:** listen to short conversations, respond to point to prompts, yes/no questions
- Level 3 Intermediate:** participate in sort conversations and written exchanges, follow rules for discussion, ask and answer simple questions
- Level 5 Mainstreamed:** participate in extended conversations and written exchanges, follow rules for discussion, ask and answer questions, build on the comments of others, contribute to his or her own comments

—continued on page 11—



—continued from page 10—

and liquids, such as *bubbly*, *foamy*, *viscous*, *transparent*, and *rigid*. The Project GLAD® strategy is a pre-assessment strategy called Observation Charts. These charts include photos of solids and liquids categorized and mounted on posters. ELPS 2 aligns with our Common Core

Speaking and Listening Standard. To support students in reaching this standard, we include differentiated sentence frames on each poster. The simplest frame says, “This (noun) is (property).” Students collaborate with their opposite language partner to say and write a sentence related to the photos.

The FOSS curriculum does not include abundant literacy activities, but we know we need to reinforce the unit’s academic vocabulary and concepts through engaging texts. The Observation Chart responses confirm this. As a form of text, we write a variety of Project GLAD® chants aligned with CCSS K-5.RF.1.4.B, which relates to reading grade-level text orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expressiveness, based on repeated readings. Students access grade-level text by chanting daily and processing the vocabulary they identify as new or high level through sketches and Picture File Cards. For the second week of our unit, our ELL Facilitator creates another form of engaging text called the Project GLAD® Teacher Made Big Book, which supports students in meeting CCSS K-5.RI.10, relating to using pictures and text to understand the main ideas and to read informational text appropriately complex for first grade. ELPS 1.1 corresponds to this standard. We make several smaller copies of this text for students to reread independently or in pairs throughout the unit. This, coupled with the chants, allows students multiple opportunities to learn new vocabulary and more deeply understand core concepts related to solids and liquids.

The first core FOSS investigation in this unit asks partners to play a game in which they take turns identifying a common property shared by two solids. The content objective is “Students can sort solids by different properties.” The target vocabulary remains the properties of solids. In order to play this

GLAD: Teacher Made Big Book

- The Important Thing about Solids and Liquids

These **solid** objects feel nice, too. They are all **fuzzy**.

Which **solid** objects in your home feel **fuzzy**?

But the important thing about matter is that it comes in 3 different states: **solid**, **liquid**, and **gas**.

CCSS:

K-5.RI.7:

- Use the illustrations and details in text to describe its key ideas

K-5.RI.10:

- With prompting and support, read informational texts appropriately complex for grade level

ELPS 1.1:

Construct meaning from oral presentations and literary and informational text through grade appropriate listening, reading, and viewing.

What this looks like for an ELL who is a:

Level 1 Newcomer: identify a few key words.

Level 3 Intermediate: identify main topics, answer questions about key details, retell some key details or events,

Level 5 Mainstreamed: identify main topics, ask and answer question about key details, and retell stories including key details

game effectively, students need to make comparative statements. CCSS K-5.SL.6 and corresponding ELPS 1.7 align with this activity. ELPS 1.7 requires students to use complete sentences. Rather than using a Project GLAD® strategy for this lesson, the team develops a sentence frame protocol. A handout of the frames and a word bank of properties are available to students. As students work with language partners to play the game, player one says, “Can you say the common property?” Player two responds, “Both items are ____.” Player one then responds, “I agree,” or “I disagree. They are both ____.” By carefully planning for these supports, emerging English speakers use high level content and language processes to access science content.

Ultimately, the development of a pacing guide integrating content objectives, target vocabulary, Common Core Literacy and Language Standards, ELPS, Project GLAD® strategies, and differentiated sentence frames increases student achievement in the areas of science content, English language, and literacy skills. Student engagement is high, as kids interact enthusiastically through literacy awards, chants, Teacher Made Big Books, interactive games, and other strategies listed later in our pacing guide. Students use comparative language with their peers and Tier 2 vocabulary words while sorting properties. The dual language students, receiving 90% of their instruction in Spanish, will not master the content and standards in English without teachers intentionally embedding the language and literacy components. The team purposefully and creatively uses every second of the 125 instructional minutes each week to improve student outcomes. We challenge you to do the same!

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