

Putting Research into Practice— First Steps in Planning and Implementing Project GLAD®

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Promising practices...

One of the most difficult challenges I faced as a third-year teacher was the task of synthesizing and applying new information gained from professional development to my classroom practice—bridging the gap between research and implementation. This article is a reflection of how I applied and adapted OCDE Project GLAD® (Guided Language Acquisition Design) to directly impact student learning in my fifth-grade dual language classroom.

After a week of Tier 1 Project GLAD® training, I immediately decided to try out several strategies with my students in Alexandria, Virginia. I teach English Language Arts and Social Studies content in English and my colleague teaches Math and Science content in Spanish and Spanish Language Arts. With so many strategies outlined in the training, how did I choose? My school works under an instructional model of gradual release of responsibility. To be honest, missing from my teaching competencies was the quality modeling and teacher-directed instruction that allow students to take on independent responsibilities. Given this, I chose a few strategies from Project GLAD® that best fit with teacher-directed modeling and instruction.

I knew my students needed to be explicitly taught reading skills, but I wasn't quite sure, until Project GLAD®, how to develop and implement this instruction. For example, drawing an anchor chart and coloring it to make it visually appealing is quite different from developing and presenting a Pictorial Input Chart or leading a class in adding information to a Process Grid. It was the theoretical foundation and steps for implementation that helped me outline a purpose and motivation for making these charts.

Project GLAD® trainers reinforce the idea that the charts presented during the Input component serve as models for the students to learn content, be introduced to the language associated with that content, and have the opportunity to practice that language. Input demonstrates how to intentionally use consistent language, visuals, realia (real items), and gestures to support understanding (Echevarría & Short, 2010). When the focus shifts to Team Tasks, students practice completing content-related tasks with their teammates. In this way, they are primed for confidence and success when asked to complete individual work. Project

GLAD® strategies also made it easier to break the content standard into manageable parts, giving students a solid foundation from which to build their skills.

I chose three Project GLAD® strategies to connect to the Virginia Standards of Learning 5.5c, which states: “Students will describe the development of plot and explain the resolution of conflict.” The Virginia Department of Education curriculum framework was my starting point for developing exactly what I would teach. What do students need to know in order to be able to describe plot and explain resolution of conflict? The curriculum framework outlines the essential knowledge, skills, and processes for this standard:

- understand that the main character has a conflict that usually gets resolved,
- identify the conflict or problem of the plot,
- understand that plot is developed through a series of events, and
- identify the events in sequence that lead to resolution of the conflict.

After researching several plot diagrams available on the Internet and the questions students are asked on state tests, I realized a few things:

- The plot diagram is a good starting point because it basically has five categories: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution. These categories can be presented in the same way that “habitat, diet, location, reproduction, and classification” can be added to a science-based chart for a unit on living organisms.
- The definitions for each category on the Internet don't match the language suggested by the state of Virginia and need to be revised to match.
- There are standards that can be reinforced while teaching the plot diagram: figurative language, context clues, and inference about characters and setting.

The three strategies I determined would best match my needs for direct instruction and addressing the state standards were a hybrid Graphic Organizer/Pictorial Input Chart, a Process Grid for comparing and contrasting stories, and the Team Tasks (I adapted this to fit my whole group and small group instruction). I also chose a new word from the graphic organizer to use as a transition word each day.

The first strategy was a Graphic Organizer/Pictorial Input Chart hybrid. I used the five words from the

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plot diagram as categories: Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, and Resolution. The exposition had its own key words: characters and setting. Rising action is a series of events that present the main conflict. In our state standards, the word “conflict” is crucial for students to know and be able to locate in a text. Climax is sometimes defined as the most exciting part of the story, but really, shouldn't every part of the story be exciting or compelling? I redefined climax for my students as the part in the story where the main character has a change in attitude or emotions in order to resolve the conflict. The falling action is when the character(s) works to solve the conflict, and the resolution is the end of the story after the conflict has been resolved.

I used a concrete example of *Finding Nemo* with pictures from the movie as visual inputs. After going through the color-coded direct instruction of each category on the graphic organizer, I asked students to do pair-shares to review each category. Then,

I used the *Finding Nemo* pictures and told the story while adding the pictures to the correct categories, again having students reflect and talk to each other after posting the images. After this, I used the Tiered Question grid to pull a small group of English learner (EL) students and had them point out the parts on the chart. This, combined with the transition words, helped them retain the information they needed.

The second strategy was to take the information from *Finding Nemo* and chart it on a Process Grid. The color coding helped to reinforce each part of the Graphic Organizer and set up the reading of each narrative story nicely. Some students were able to compare and contrast characters from different stories and then develop their own narrative writing using the five parts of the plot diagram as a guide. Others simply pointed to the correct categories or details labeled on the chart.

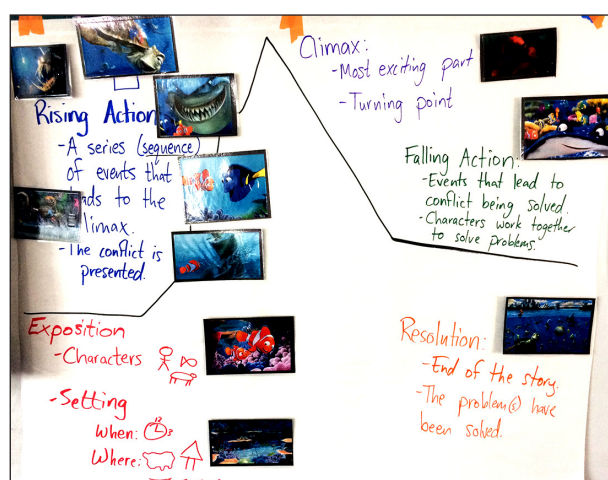
The final strategy I used was the Team Task, which I adapted to fit our needs. I used texts from previously released state tests and reformatted them with blank

Title	Exposition	Rising Action	Climax	Falling Action	Resolution
Finding Nemo	Characters: Nemo, sharks, Dory, Marlin Setting: Ocean, coral reef, fish	Nemo captured Dory & Marlin search for Nemo (sharks, the whole)	Marlin & Nemo reunited	-return to coral reef together	all fish go to the deep ocean
Foolish Choice, Wise Lesson	Characters: Nicholas, Tanya, boat Setting: shop, cottage, village	Nicholas sees daughter is boat -buys boxes & gives it to her -but she has to change wisely -she chooses poorly	Tanya is ashamed of her choices.	Nicholas smiles at daughter	beauty is inside, not appearance

Process Grid

boxes underneath for the purposes of annotating and chunking text. We discussed these questions: “What is a narrative text? What is the author’s purpose?”

What should we look for when reading a narrative text?” I then modeled how to annotate, with arrows, key words, and sketches, the same five parts that students should look for when reading the text. Students read their own passages once for flow and then went back and annotated appropriately. They had an evaluation rubric to assess their work and met as teams to discuss what they recorded. This evaluation is high on Bloom’s taxonomy, so heterogeneous grouping was important. Having teams with mixed reading proficiency levels allows students who might not normally interact with grade-level text to do so in a peer-supported environment.



Graphic Organizer/Pictorial Input Chart Hybrid

After the basic plot development week got underway, I realized that I could use yet another input chart to go deeper into character development. Our state standards note that characters “... are developed by

- what is directly stated in the text,
- their speech and actions, and
- what other characters in the story say or think about them.”

Name: _____ Date: 4-16

Foolish Choice, Wise Lesson

Once there was a tailor named Nicholas who was known far and wide for making fine clothing. Nicholas took great pride in everything he made, which is why his shop was often busy. Every night Nicholas would retire to the small cottage behind his shop that he shared with his daughter, Tanya.

Tanya was a bright girl, but she was vain and spoiled. She wasted her days admiring herself in the mirror and boasting her long, beautiful hair. Her father's shop was the busiest in the village, but she would not pick up a needle to help him. When customers sang the praises of his well-made clothes, she snorted, “They are too plain.”

Nicholas loved his daughter, but he hoped to find a way to help her realize that beauty lies within. He worried that she did not value the things that were important. He became puzzled over the problem. One day help arrived in the form of the village peddler. Every Saturday the peddler drove his wagon past the shops and cottages in the village. He sold all kinds of goods, and people crowded around him to buy everything from kitchen pots to silk dresses.

One Saturday while looking at the peddler's goods, Nicholas was struck with an idea that could help Tanya. He purchased two small boxes. One was bright and covered with sparkling stones. The other was made of dark wood with worn sides and corners. At the end of the day, Nicholas found Tanya in the cottage. He showed her the two boxes. “You may have only one,” he told her. “Be careful how you choose.”

Characters: Nicholas, Tanya, tailor, spoiled

Setting: clothes, cottage, historical

Conflict: Tanya has to realize that beauty is not what she thinks it is. She has to value the things that are important.

Rising Action: Nicholas buys two boxes that he thinks will help Tanya choose.

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Sample Team Task

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I made a new Pictorial Input Chart with a picture of a character in the middle and included each item on the bulleted list above as a category. My students were asked, “How do authors describe characters in stories?” The answer was three-fold: “What the author directly states in the text, the character’s speech and actions, and what other characters in the story say or think about that character.” Students were presented with the exact information they needed to know, straight from the standards, without having to guess. Even though this isn’t exactly to script as a Project GLAD® strategy, the research behind the inputs is what makes the strategy so powerful. It is that exposure to authentic input through multiple means and the opportunities to attend to meaning as they expand their language system that provide academic language learners with the support they need (August & Shanahan, 2010; Silverman & Hines, 2009). The charts helped my students visualize and take in exactly what they needed to know about characters.

In conclusion, Project GLAD® strategies helped me clarify for myself and for my students precisely what they needed to know based on the English language arts standards outlined by the state of Virginia. These strategies provided tools for me as a teacher to plan and deliver intentional, focused instruction that supported successful outcomes for my students. It

was a sort of road map with checkpoints along the way. I saw a rise in students’ state assessment scores, and while that may not be directly linked to Project GLAD® instruction, I also observed greater student engagement, success in formative observations, and the transfer of skills from one task to another. Though I was hesitant, maybe even a bit scared, to take the first step in trying out completely new strategies, the payoff was worth my own insecurities as a teacher. My students and I benefited from the experience, and after all, isn’t that what education should be about?

The Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) holds full license to Project GLAD® and Project GLAD™. For more information about OCDE Project GLAD®, please visit <http://www.ocde.us/projectglad>.

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