

Strengthening Biliteracy Development in OCDE Project GLAD®

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OCDE Project GLAD® is an instructional framework designed to support second language learners in accessing grade-level content and academic language in an inclusive and asset-focused classroom environment. Although the framework was originally conceived to support English language learners, it is well suited for learners of all languages and provides an ideal context for dual language teachers to coordinate literacy instruction across languages and develop biliteracy with their students.

In *Teaching for Biliteracy: Strengthening Bridges between Languages*, Beeman and Urow (2013) share the following conditions as paramount for effective biliteracy instruction in a classroom.

- ❑ Begin with highly comprehensible, concrete, and interactive activities focused on preparing students to comprehend text.
- ❑ Integrate content and literacy instruction.
- ❑ Include strategies to support comprehension throughout the unit.
- ❑ Provide multiple opportunities and supports for oracy and literacy work.
- ❑ Bridge to the other language.

When planned and delivered at a high level of implementation, OCDE Project GLAD®, or Guided Language Acquisition Design, aligns perfectly with the first four conditions. Project GLAD® instruction is thematic, providing a context rich in big ideas and connections across content areas. It is a highly scaffolded teaching protocol that moves students from concrete experiences with content and language to the abstract, using supports from multiple modalities (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, etc.) that ensure comprehension and support application. Planning and delivery maintain a central focus on language, guiding students through oral reflection on content to oracy work (oral language that mirrors the language of text) and finally, literacy activities with language supports at all levels. Project GLAD® emphasizes a gradual release of responsibility with instruction and practice that sequences from whole group to partner or small group work and then to the individual.

The practice of intentionally planning for cross-linguistic connections between languages is also a natural fit with Project GLAD® instruction, but shifting the focus to the development of literacy in two languages requires the addition of strategies. Theorists in the field of biliteracy development such as Beeman and Urow (2013) and Escamilla et al. (2013) have much to offer along this vein. In this article, we will explore the integration of two powerful instructional protocols—the *Bridge*, from *Teaching for Biliteracy: Strengthening Bridges between Languages*, and *Así se dice* (“That’s how you say it”), from *Literacy Squared®*—that can be utilized as part of a Project GLAD® unit to take advantage of the linguistic repertoire of emerging bilinguals while building metalinguistic awareness and biliteracy skills.

The *Bridge*, as defined by Beeman and Urow, is “... the instructional moment in teaching for biliteracy when teachers bring the two languages together, guiding students to engage in contrastive analysis of the two languages and to transfer the academic content they have learned in one language to the other language” (2013, p. 1). The *Bridge* occurs at the end of a thematic unit. Teacher and students together create anchor charts, often in the form of a T-graph, listing key words and linguistic features from the unit in the language in which they learned and then generating equivalent words and linguistic features in the second language. Next, students use the language they have generated to engage in oracy and literacy extension activities that develop and deepen their linguistic skills around the content in that language.

Así se dice is a strategy from *Literacy Squared®* that uses structured translation activities to explicitly teach students in bilingual classrooms cross-linguistic connections that enhance their “... cognitive and linguistic growth while providing a place in the classroom to use two languages in an interconnected way” (Escamilla et al., 2013, p. 75). The procedure for *Así se dice* includes choosing a text with targeted language for students to collaboratively interpret and translate to the other language. These translations are collectively shared, discussed, and revised as the teacher guides the students in understanding that word-for-word translation is not sufficient, while

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exploring the similarities and differences in how the two languages are formed and used.

How can these two strategies be utilized in a Project GLAD® unit to develop biliteracy? There are various opportunities for contrastive analysis of language in such a unit. One approach is to consider the Project GLAD® strategies that are intentionally sequenced to build from concrete oral language experiences to more abstract literacy experiences around content (Maestas & Waldman, 2015). The strand of strategies that I am proposing to connect with the Bridge and *Así se dice* is the “expository strand.”

The expository strand of strategies in a Project GLAD® unit moves students through the following learning experiences: Pictorial Input Chart, Expert Group Texts, Whole Class Mind Map, Process Grid Game, and the Cooperative Strip Paragraph.

These are highly contextualized, language-rich instructional experiences that are scaffolded for gradual release from teacher-directed to student-directed and from the concrete to the abstract. In the Cooperative Strip Paragraph, the culminating experience, the teacher and students collaboratively create an academic, language-rich paragraph around the content they have learned, focusing on grade-level language standards.

The Cooperative Strip Paragraph provides a perfect opportunity for the class to engage in cross-linguistic analysis using the Bridge and *Así se dice*. Figure 1 shows a Cooperative Strip Paragraph that was created by a second grade class during a unit on the Human Body. Note that the paragraph was collaboratively created with the topic sentence generated in black by the teacher and student groups adding their supporting sentences in their group or team color. Revisions and editing based on a standards-based writing checklist were done collaboratively in a whole-class format with the teacher serving as the facilitator and scribe (in black).

Figure 1

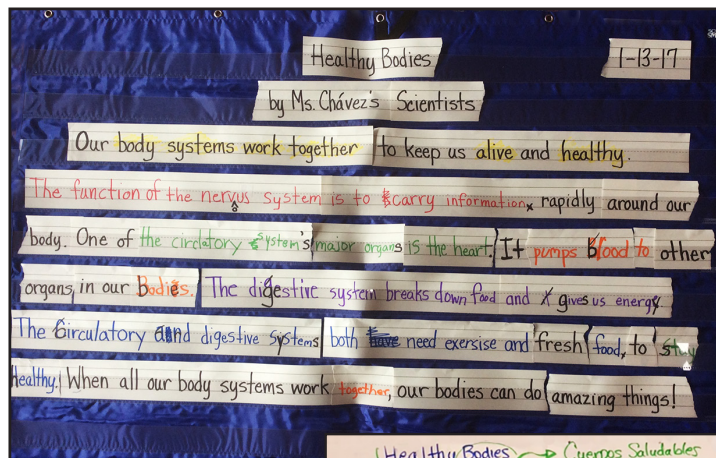


Figure 2

English	Español
our body systems	nuestros sistemas corporales
work together	trabajan conjuntos
to keep us	mantenernos
nervous system	sistema nervioso
major organs	organos principales
rapidly	rápidamente
breaks down food	descompone la comida
to stay healthy	para mantenerse saludable

At this point in the unit, students have developed a comprehensive understanding of the content and a facility with the academic language needed to express themselves both orally and in writing. This is the perfect time for the Bridge! The teacher and students can collaboratively create an anchor chart with a list of key terms and linguistic features from the content of the Cooperative Strip Paragraph. Then, using discussion and out-loud thinking, they collectively generate equivalent words and terms in the partner language, in this case Spanish. (See Figure 2.) This Bridge should focus on key terms and linguistic features only and not lead to a word-for-word list of translations.

Once the Bridge, or anchor chart of key terms and linguistic features in each language, has been scaffolded and discussed, the class is ready for an extension activity using the *Así se dice* strategy. The text to be collaboratively translated is that of the Cooperative Strip Paragraph, a piece of writing that has been created, analyzed, revised, and edited with and by the students. A topic sentence in the partner language can be provided by the teacher or generated with the class. When ready, the students are directed to reference the Bridge

anchor chart as they work in partners or teams to discuss and translate pieces of the text with the teacher's support. (When using this protocol for the first time, teachers will need to determine if this needs to be a whole-class shared activity with the teacher scribing or if the students are ready to work independently with teacher support.) Once the students have added their translations to the class paragraph, the teacher gathers the students together to collectively read, revise, and edit the paragraph. The discussion around what works and does not work in the translation provides many

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con los estudiantes en un ambiente favorable para el estudio y el amor por los saberes. En este contexto, el objetivo de desarrollar una identidad académica se logra mediante el compromiso que asume el estudiante consigo mismo de presentar proyectos de alto rigor académico. Por ejemplo, un estudiante aseveró: “Maestro, me sentí muy bien al hacer esto porque todo el mundo nos veía y hablaba.” Este comentario nos hace reflexionar sobre cuán importante debemos hacer sentir a nuestros estudiantes con relación a sus proyectos pues en ellos imprimen, no solo letras, sino también parte de su carácter sobre el papel.

Es responsabilidad de la comunidad escolar crear y promover espacios donde el estudiante pueda asumir una identidad académica. Los estudiantes reaccionan entusiasmados y llenos de orgullo al ver que un escrito de su autoría se exhibe en la escuela ante cientos de personas. Más allá del salón de clase y la escuela, el próximo paso consiste en fomentar la inclusión de otras escuelas en la conferencia académica y trascender de identidades académicas positivas a una identidad académica colectiva que incluya todo el distrito.

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opportunities for deepening students’ understanding of the similarities and differences between the two languages. The two Cooperative Strip Paragraphs can be read aloud and compared, with any additional revisions or edits based on discussions added to the paragraphs. At this time, additional information regarding terms or linguistic features of the two languages could be added to the Bridge anchor chart or recorded in another chart that the students can reference in future work.

This is but one example of how the Bridge and *Así se dice* could be used in an OCDE Project GLAD® unit to support the development of biliteracy with students in dual language programs—other opportunities for this integration need to be explored. It is important to note that while programs often begin with a focus on allocation of time across languages, the quality and intentionality of instruction are equally important in impacting program effectiveness and student outcomes. OCDE Project GLAD® provides a powerful model of effective instruction for grade-level acquisition of academic content and language, and the Bridge and *Así se dice* are quality instructional protocols for intentionally developing metalinguistic awareness and biliteracy with students. The thoughtful and careful integration of these complementary protocols has the potential to support teachers and students of dual language classrooms in working smarter, not harder, in their development of academic excellence and biliteracy.

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