New Mexico’s Dual Language Bright Spots project is a three-year (minimum) initiative that is being led by Dual Language Education of New Mexico (DLeNM). From sixteen applications submitted, three school communities have been selected to participate in the first year: Agua Fria Elementary (Santa Fe Public Schools), and Truman Middle School and Albuquerque High School (Albuquerque Public Schools). It is the leadership team’s intent to secure enough resources to support a minimum of ten school communities within the next three years.

Authorized by the Public Education Department (PED) of New Mexico, the Bright Spots initiative is being directed by a reputable team of experts that include David Rogers and Edward Tabet-Cubero (DLeNM), Rebecca Freeman Field (Caslon Publishing), and Susana Ibarra Johnson (WIDA). In the second and third years of the Bright Spots initiative, the scope of the project will be broadened to include other school communities committed to the implementation of dual language education and representing most of the language and cultural communities of New Mexico. Many potential candidates are already participating in leadership and professional development opportunities offered by DLeNM this year.

The leadership team considers community-responsive dual language/multilingual enrichment education as the core of the initiative. With focused and sustained nurturing, the team expects the Bright Spots initiative to take root across New Mexico, providing exemplary programs that serve all New Mexico students and families who choose dual language education as the standard for their K-12 education.

Designed to realize New Mexico’s constitutional promise of effective bilingual/multicultural education for every state citizen, the Bright Spots initiative is one of the most comprehensive in decades. Comprehensive because the initiative begins and ends with leadership development and capacity building at all levels of education from the school site, to the school district, to the Public Education Department of New Mexico. Leadership development will be needed at every level in order to ensure the realization of all initiative goals:

- to demonstrate the power of dual language, multicultural enrichment education;
- to build on New Mexico’s cultural and linguistic capital;
- to narrow the achievement gap between language minority and native English-speaking students; and
- to develop a multilingual/multicultural global citizenry that is prepared to compete in the international community.

Desired Outcomes

The Bright Spots initiative aims to stimulate and support the grass-roots development and implementation of a comprehensive yet flexible dual language, multicultural curriculum that aligns to Common Core State Standards and language development standards, and for which accountability criteria aligns with the Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education and research-based best practices in the language education field. Most importantly, this initiative respects
We are two first-grade teachers from Madison, Wisconsin, where we team teach in a public elementary school with 72% low income students. We are part of a two-way dual language immersion (DLI) program, which is a strand within our school. Half of the eight sections of first grade in our school are DLI classrooms. In first grade, we teach 80% of the day in Spanish and 20% in English. During “English time,” we exchange classes to uphold the separation of languages and maintain the integrity of our program.

We both go into each school year with two separate rosters, but we team teach and share those students all year. We currently have 36 students in our class and teach in two classrooms with a partition wall that is open most of the day. The students are broken into groups of “pulpos” and “delfines” according to our rosters for the purpose of going to specials classes.

The physical environment of our classroom is colorful and open. We have nine round, color-coded tables. Four students sit at a table, with much thought given to their placement. We consider students’ dominant language, gender, academic ability level, and behavior to maximize student success. Each day, many tasks are completed within these teams. To ensure participation from all students, each student uses a different color of crayon to complete group work.

Around the room, we have many co-constructed anchor charts, including thinking maps. We recently received school wide training on the use of “Thinking Maps.” Similar to graphic organizers, these maps are a great scaffold for our dual language students. The maps serve as a tool to teach and review concepts from behavior expectations to math and science content and language. We have found them especially useful during our writer’s workshop. The visual representation of a flow chart has made it easier for students to understand the concept of story sequence. The examples on this page reflect our current use of thinking maps. The first picture shows a circular flow chart that was constructed with the students to retell a story that connects to our current science focus. In the second example, student teams used a circle map to display their background knowledge on plants during English language development.

Because 80% of instruction is in Spanish, the target language, the use of co-constructed anchor charts is essential, as they provide a meaningful scaffold throughout the school day. These charts are powerful because they give students a sense of ownership and include authentic and accessible language. Our first-year teaching in a dual immersion classroom looked different than it does now. Unaware of the importance of co-construction, we spent nights and weekends making posters and visuals. We wish we knew then what we know now, but that is all part of the journey we are on.

Another aspect of our physical classroom environment is the organization of materials. Literacy work and centers, writing materials, and math games and manipulatives are all clearly labeled with a visual and text in a designated spot in the classroom. The organization of materials not only supports student independence and responsibility, but also keeps us organized.

Creating structured routines and procedures is really the first scaffold we provide as DLI teachers. It is essential to our students in order to build independence and predictability, even when they may not understand all of the language being used in the classroom. Each routine in our classroom is taught explicitly and practiced regularly. Gradually releasing responsibility, we first model the task and then practice in groups, pairs, and finally, individually.
From the moment the students walk through the door in the morning, they follow a routine. Each day of the week has a predictable structure. For example, every Monday when the kids arrive, they start by completing a group language task. To introduce the syllables we will be studying that week, they use their background knowledge and classroom visuals to brainstorm and record words containing the focus syllables. After returning from specials classes, the students independently begin their Monday literacy tasks. Though students have differentiated work, they all follow the same Monday routine during the balanced literacy block. After finishing individual word work and literacy tasks, they choose and complete literacy centers. These incorporate the four language domains: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students are able to practice authentic and academic language with their peers in a non-threatening environment.

We take advantage of every opportunity for students to use and extend their language skills—even snack time. We have a fresh fruit or vegetable snack four days a week, which we integrate into our current unit of study. Each table receives a card with a labeled diagram of plant parts, and table teams must decide which part of the plant they are eating. From snack, the students transition into “el dictado,” a weekly dictation connected to our unit of study and focus words. After “el dictado,” students know that it is time for writer’s workshop. They gather on the rug for a mini-lesson before working on their own writing. Throughout the writing process, students are given multiple opportunities for language use and practice with peers through “turn and talks” and peer revising and editing. Transitioning from writing to English language development, the students switch classrooms and languages.

After lunch, the weekly student leaders of the “pulpos” and “delfines” guide peers through the daily calendar routine. From calendar, we transition to math, our last subject of the day. Always assembling as a whole group first, students are given their Monday math jobs. Much like the literacy routine, students complete their differentiated tasks and then choose from different math games. During the math block, students are pulled to work in their small group, receiving guided instruction at their academic level. We finish strong with a read aloud and whole group language workshop. The predictability of our schedule eliminates the “what next” question. As a result of the consistent routines and procedures, the affective filter is lower and student language production is less inhibited.

Establishing consistent routines that cultivate language use is a norm for us. During the last school year, we were required to implement a daily morning meeting. While we liked the idea, the structure did not fit with our language goals for the dual immersion program. Without a second in our day to spare, we saw the need to restructure the morning meeting in order to maximize the students’ learning time and opportunities for structured language development. After participating in GLAD training last spring, we saw the opportunity to implement some of the strategies in the morning meeting.

Instead of a large group meeting where only a few students participate, students now work in their table teams to complete a language task that connects to our themed units. Students meet academic and language goals through cooperation and team work.

Changes such as these would not come so easily without collaboration. We started teaming together four years ago to teach writing to our third- and fourth-grade classes. The following year we both started teaching in first grade DLI. We spent the summer planning the district curriculum for first-grade dual language immersion. In the fall, though in separate classrooms, we continued to collaborate, planning our daily and weekly routines and lessons together. For the past two years we have been team teaching in our current classrooms.

—continued on page 14—
Reflecting on AIM4S³ Implementation—
What are We Learning?

by Lisa Meyer—DLeNM, with Teachers from Deming, New Mexico

A small group of energetic teachers recently met in Deming, New Mexico, to talk about how the AIM4S³ model was impacting their mathematics instruction. On the walls they hung Compendium charts, smaller support charts focusing on one key concept, and chants—evidence of their work with students. As each teacher shared classroom charts and observations, much of their discussion focused on the Compendium: the co-construction with students, including it in on-going instruction, and finally, the initial planning of the content.

All of the teachers agree that the Compendium has become an essential component of their practice and that it is not only a support for student learning but for their own instruction as well. With its concept frame and standards, the Compendium focuses the classroom community on the key concepts students need to master, and it includes student voice in the instruction right from the beginning with the inquiry chart. Used effectively in conjunction with other strategies, it is a powerful resource that supports students in becoming independent learners.

Delivery of the Compendium

The teachers discussed their realization that several basic aspects of delivery were key to success with the compendium. One of these is the importance of writing big enough for students to be able to read the chart from the back desks; another is having the current chart in a prominent place, accessible to students during mathematics instruction. Carisa Gray, second-grade teacher, shared that building the chart in front of students not only supports the mathematical conceptual understanding but helps students see the process and learn how to organize their notes, using labels, examples, and visuals to support their understanding. Another teacher added that including student voice is invaluable during both the initial construction and afterwards. The frequent use of 10/2s and learning logs/white boards allows students to process information as the compendium is being built and/or reviewed, giving students a sense of ownership in the content on the chart. Aaron Rogers, fourth-grade teacher, is experimenting with using an essential question from the unit as the title of the Compendium, guiding student discussion and the inquiry chart, as well as meeting the district requirement to post the essential questions.

In kindergarten, teacher Karen Roberts found that building the Compendium over the course of the unit works well. She revisits the last concept put on the chart before adding the new section. The consistent use of 10/2s throughout her instruction, along with sentence stems to support student participation in mathematics games, is elevating the students’ language use. She has found that, “Because I write it on here (the Compendium) and I teach it before the game, I get that language from students.” In contrast, Eddie Hernández, a mathematics instructional coach, shared that upper-grade teachers have found with Everyday Math that frontloading the unit instead of building the chart throughout the unit improved their pacing. Gen Wertz, third-grade teacher, shared that she is on unit four this year, which is well ahead of where she was last year.

Dawn Ortiz teaches math to two different groups of second graders. When asked if she can use the same Compendium with both classes, she immediately responded that students feel strong ownership of their class’s specific chart, even if it is very similar to...
that of the other class. Students look for their chart, and over time the charts differ based on student input and needs. It’s also essential that students see the actual creation of the chart from the initial (penciled in) white paper because it is more memorable to create the chart in front of students than having it made in advance. We have found student retention, engagement, and achievement are all higher when students are active participants in this process. Sharing a completed chart with a second class is the equivalent of showing them a poster. While helpful in supporting learning, it is no longer a Compendium chart for those students. It must be created in front of them.

**Continued Use of the Compendium**

A number of teachers asked for ideas on how to encourage students to use the chart as a resource. They felt successful with the initial construction, but they didn’t see students actively using the Compendium throughout the unit. Other teachers shared that they use exit slips with questions that not only serve as formative assessment but also push students to use the chart as a resource. These teachers also structure some of their mathematics workshop activities to encourage use of the chart. These are some of the ideas that they offered: 1) teach someone in your group about one of the key concepts on the chart, 2) use the compendium to complete math boxes on page____, and 3) put a sticky on the concept shown on the Compendium that has helped you the most and explain why.

All of the teachers who said their students regularly use the Compendium as a resource also refer to it frequently during instruction. They use it as part of their warm-up activities and are intentional in modeling for students how to use the chart and then expecting them to use it independently. So if a student asks them a question that could be answered from the chart, the teacher would ask, “Where can you get that information in the room?” Teachers intentionally do not make themselves the one with the final answer in the room. They expect students to be active learners, using their resources (charts, other students, examples) to support their own learning. Gen Wertz also noted, “Students need power to own the room. They need permission to move and an expectation that they will get up and use the resources.”

This use of the Compendium as a resource doesn’t end with the unit. One teacher added, “My Compendiums never die.” They are hung on top of each other, creating a “tablet.” Students go back to the charts and know where to find information on the previous charts. Other teachers said their students ask if they can take home all or part of the Compendium to hang up in their rooms.

**Planning of the Compendium**

Near the end of our meeting, teachers discussed how they plan the Compendium and the lessons they’ve learned. There was consensus from the group that they put less information on the chart now but look more closely at student needs than they did initially. Their planning includes looking carefully at the Common Core Standards, the

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**Chants Reinforce and Extend Content Language and Concepts from the Compendium**

**Place Value**

by Carisa Gray

We’re gonna do place value right!
Everybody can learn it tonight.
No more will you lose your mind, sing with me
and just take your time.

___PLACE VALUE_______
ones, tens, hundreds, comma, thousands,
ten thousands, hundred thousands,
comma, millions!

Now remember to start from the right and move
it left to do it right.

___PLACE VALUE_______
ones, tens, hundreds, comma, thousands,
ten thousands, hundred thousands,
comma, millions!

*(Sung to Party Rock. For the naming of the
place values, a steady beat works well.)*

**I Know How to Make Change**

by Carisa Gray

I know how to make change.
Yeah, I know how to make change.
Count up and think.
Just count up and think.
Choose which coin will work the best.
I choose which coin will work the best.
Penny, nickel, dime, and quarter, count them up
in proper order!
Count up till you find the dollar.
Making change is easy...HOLLER!!!
IDEA para mi hijo: Participación de padres de familia para una educación especial efectiva

por Amalia Tomlinson—Escuela secundaria Eldorado, Escuelas públicas de Albuquerque

De acuerdo al último censo 2010, en los Estados Unidos, aproximadamente un cuatro por ciento de alumnos que reciben educación especial, en escuelas públicas, son de origen latino/ hispano. Gran parte de ellos, al igual que sus padres o tutores, el español es el idioma que usan con mayor frecuencia. Al mismo tiempo, padres de familia y tutores representan una fuente muy importante de recursos en términos de educación de sus propios hijos. Quién mejor que ellos y ellas para decírnos a los maestros las habilidades y destrezas de sus hijos/as, lo que les gusta hacer, les motiva para aprender, necesitan, les molesta, lo que pueden comer, etc. Un instrumento legal, a nivel federal para promover dicha colaboración escuela-hogar, se especifica en la Ley de Mejoramiento de la Educación para Individuos con Discapacidades, 2004, IDEA (The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act 2004).

Por ello, estimado educador bilingüe, y/o ESL, sirvan estos principios de IDEA, que más adelante se describen, para su difusión entre nuestra comunidad hispanoparlante, ya sea mediante la distribución de fotocopias y/o talleres de reflexión, entre padres de familia o tutores especiales.

Al respeto la ley nos dice que: “En 20 años de investigación y experiencia ha sido demostrado que la educación de niños/as y jóvenes con discapacidades, puede ser más efectiva mediante el fortalecimiento del papel de los padres (...) tanto en la escuela como en el hogar. [Sección 601 (c) (5) (B)]"

IDEA cuenta con seis principios básicos, mismos que enfatizan la intención de la ley, y formas de participación de padres de familia y tutores en programas de educación pública especial y servicios coordinados de apoyo en las escuelas del país.

Principio 1: Educación pública adecuada gratuita (Free Appropriate Public Education, FAPE)
Este primer principio de IDEA garantiza que todo niño/a o joven, en edad de entre 3 y 21 años con alguna discapacidad, asista de manera gratuita a la escuela pública más cercana a su casa y reciba educación especial de acuerdo con sus necesidades. En su caso alumnos de preparatoria, tendrán la posibilidad de participar también en actividades vocacionales.

Para IDEA, una educación adecuada, debe diseñarse sobre la base de las necesidades particulares de aprendizaje de cada alumno/a. IDEA requiere que tanto la escuela como padres de familia o tutores especiales, identifiquen dichas necesidades del alumno/a para definir un programa educativo anual efectivo.

IDEA establece que los distritos escolares, deberán contar con personal de apoyo en diversos idiomas, teniendo como base, las características lingüísticas de cada localidad. De igual manera, las escuelas públicas deberán mostrar apertura y respeto hacia los alumnos, alumnas y familiares de diverso estrato económico y de diferente condición socio-cultural.

Principio 2: Evaluación adecuada o apropiada
Antes de que los alumnos/as reciban cualquier tipo de servicios de educación especial, deberán someterse a una evaluación diagnóstica o inicial, por parte de especialistas de la escuela o distrito. Esta evaluación servirá para determinar el programa de educación individual y de apoyos necesarios. Ninguna evaluación diagnóstica o inicial, se llevará a cabo sin la autorización de los padres de familia, los tutores o representantes legales.

El evaluador de la escuela deberá reunir información sobre las habilidades y destrezas, del alumno, de modo que le permitan identificar y proponer a los padres de familia, un programa educativo adecuado que le sirva al alumno/a para integrarse, lo antes posible a programas de educación general, o bien, para diseñar un programa educativo que prepare al alumno/a para una vida independiente llegada la edad adulta. En el caso de infantes que aún no están en edad escolar, el objetivo de la evaluación inicial o diagnóstica se centra en la identificación de necesidades de estimulación temprana adecuadas que los prepare para la transición hacia la educación primaria.

Tipos de evaluación por parte de las escuelas públicas
Además de la evaluación diagnóstica, misma que se actualizará cada tres años mediante una re-evaluación. El segundo tipo de evaluación se refiere al mejoramiento de las habilidades y destrezas, o conocimientos en los alumnos/as. Esta evaluación, se lleva a cabo por parte de los educadores, se basa en los objetivos de educación e instrucción especializada establecida. Es como comparar una foto de “antes” de iniciado el programa educativo y de “después” de concluido.
El tercer tipo de evaluación es por parte del Estado, se refiere al aprovechamiento escolar. Se realiza en diferentes momentos del año escolar. Estos exámenes deberán ser adaptados a las necesidades físicas e intelectuales de los alumnos/as de educación especial.

Cuando los alumnos/as están exentos de este tipo de examen, deberán responder a un examen alternativo. Todo ello deberá especificarse en el programa educativo del alumno/a. Los procesos de evaluación, como los materiales, deberán ser seleccionados y administrados evitando cualquier tipo de discriminación racial o cultural. Así también, la información que se reporte acerca de cualquier evaluación deberá ser estrictamente confidencial.

Principio 3: Programa de Educación Individualizada (Individualized Education Program, IEP)

Cada alumno/a, deberá contar con un Programa de Educación Individualizada, conocido como IEP. Es un documento legal establecido conjuntamente con los padres de familia, tutores o representantes legales, educadores especial, y al menos un educador de educación general que trabaje con el alumno/a. En su caso, por representantes de alguna organización o institución local que brinde a los padres de familia asesoría educativa o legal. De igual manera, cuando sea necesario, el educador especial solicitará al distrito la presencia de un intérprete.

Generalmente el educador especial del alumno/a prepara el documento-IEP para su revisión y aprobación, de los padres de familia o tutores legales. Se revisa en una reunión inicial del alumno/a, anual, o de re-evaluación cada tres años. Ese proceso deberá realizarse hasta que el alumno/a cumpla 21 años 11 meses.

Una vez aprobado el documento oficial/legal por los padres de familia, la escuela proveerá la educación especial y los servicios acordados. Durante la reunión, los padres pueden solicitar y obtener la versión en español del IEP de su hijo o hija.

En el caso de los infantes y/o familias que reciben servicios de estimulación temprana, IDEA cuenta con un documento legal similar al IEP, donde se especifica un plan individualizado de desarrollo, conocido como Plan de Servicio para el Individuo y la Familia (Individualized Family Service Plan, IFSP).

Principio 4: Mínima segregación escolar (Least Restrictive Environment, LRE)

IDEA señala que la educación debe ser incluyente, de ahí la importancia de la participación de los padres durante la evaluación y la selección de una educación apropiada para sus hijos. Estudios han comprobado que grupos donde participan alumnos/as con y sin discapacidades resulta muy benéfico para todos en términos de aprendizaje y habilidades o destrezas. De esta forma se ofrece, entre otros, la oportunidad de desarrollar amistades y mutuo apoyo entre niños y jóvenes de la misma edad. Beneficiando desde aspectos sensoriales, motivación, aprendizaje en grupo y aprovechamiento escolar.

Principio 5: Participación del alumno/a y padres de familia en la toma de decisiones para la elaboración del programa educacional ... (Parent and Student Participation in Decision Making)

IDEA afirma que no es posible tomar decisiones, que afectan la vida de los alumnos/as sin la participación de los padres, o de sus representantes legales. Los alumnos/as deberán tener voz y voto para definir su vida adulta.

Principio 6: Procedimientos de seguridad (Procedural Safeguards)

Las escuelas no deberán tomar decisión alguna en relación con los alumnos/as sin informar previamente a los padres de familia/tutores legales. Incluye el permiso para sacar fotos o videos de los alumnos, permisos para paseos o actividades vocacionales en la comunidad local.

Tanto padres de familia o tutores y en su caso alumnos/as tienen el derecho de acceder a la información personal existente en la escuela. Por ejemplo, los resultados de la evaluación diagnóstica. Existe también una ley a nivel federal que refuerza este principio. Esta ley se conoce como Derecho de la Familia, Educación y Privacidad (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, FERPA) cuya finalidad es proteger la privacidad de información de los alumnos/as existente en las escuelas.

Fuentes de información


http://www.disabilitystatistics.org/reports/acs.cfm?statistic=1
By the time students reach the secondary level, the expectation is that they should have a ready repertoire of writing skills. After all, elementary teachers spend a good chunk of their day reviewing spelling rules and patterns, practicing a variety of written genres and celebrating students’ written accomplishments. For many students, however, the expectation that they jump from some kind of in-class activity (engaging in a science experiment, watching a video, reading from a textbook) to producing a written account results in a poorly crafted, meandering piece of writing—or paralyzed student writers.

I have struggled to help the pre-service teachers in my ESL Methods class at the University of New Mexico recognize how critical scaffolding is to that move from thoughtful and motivating hands-on activity to a written piece. The required texts for my class have long been Pauline Gibbons’ Scaffolding Language Scaffolding Learning and Jeff Zwiers’ Building Academic Language. This year I traded Zwiers’ first book for his latest, written with Marie Crawford—Academic Conversations: Classroom Talk that Fosters Critical Thinking and Content Understandings. As I prepare and plan for a way to help my students understand how much we ask of both elementary and secondary students—and how necessary it is for us to scaffold their work to grade level standards—I’m continuously drawn back to Gibbons’ Mode Continuum.

The Mode Continuum reflects the kind of “text,” whether it is oral or written, that is typical of students engaged first in a hands-on activity, then in a kind of report-out to classmates who have engaged in the same activity, then a preliminary written account of the activity to an audience not familiar with the event, and finally, a written academic text of the concepts that underscore the original activity. While tasks and interactions are frequently recursive, the general progression along the continuum follows.

Gibbons’ discusses how contextualized the oral language is that the students use while involved in the initial activity. Because the interaction is usually face to face, there are many instances of “this” and “that” and many requests of fellow students to “put that in now” or “watch this one.” Unless you are there, you have little idea of what is being discussed!

The first report out by students begins to attach labels to some of the items being discussed and move from phrases to sentences, but the assumption of the speaker is that the audience is familiar with the event, so the language is still fairly general and contextualized.

At the next level of the mode continuum, the students’ written piece uses language to set the context: Our experiment was to test different things to see if they would stick to the magnet. By this phase, the language is more formal, more content specific in language and syntax, and the organization is more structured.

By the time students are exposed to the abstract and highly academic fourth level, they are more prepared conceptually and linguistically to understand the text as readers—and to include its characteristic features in their own content area writing.

Fortunately, Gibbons and Zwiers both provide many suggestions to scaffold students from one level to another, helping us help them to build cognitive and linguistic knowledge and skill. Gibbons recommends that we closely monitor the kind of language students use during the hands-on activities we plan. Do the students seem to have the concepts: These plastics things don’t stick but the paperclip does! Can they relate what they are seeing to previous knowledge or experiences: When my dad’s working on cars he uses this thing that finds nuts that fall in the engine. This allows us, as teachers, to layer new vocabulary on language the students already use: Some tools have a magnet embedded in the tip so that small metal nuts and bolts are attracted and adhere to the tool and can be removed from tight spaces.

All of our great vocabulary-building strategies work at this point. From word lists to labeled pictorial charts,
using the Frayer vocabulary model, and developing a powerpoint with lots of images to clarify vocabulary, there are many ways that we can support students in developing specific vocabulary along with the phrases and structures that allow them to use that vocabulary effectively. Without those phrases, students may know the words, but still be unable to use them to communicate their thinking and learning.

With exhortations to “talk like scientists,” students can be taught to use Zwier’s powerful Academic Conversations Placemat (for this and other resources, see www.jeffzwiers.com) to apply their developing conceptual and linguistic understandings to elaborate and clarify, build on their conversation partner’s ideas and experiences, and synthesize their collective thinking as they read the text, investigate and discuss the concepts throughout a unit of study. The more the students engage in extended academic conversations, the longer and more complex the language they produce—and the deeper their content understandings. Now they’re ready to write!

Assigning some kind of reflective writing piece gives the students the chance to begin to consolidate the thinking and language they have shared with conversation partners. Learning logs, journal formats, exit slips are all ways to begin to develop a more formal written text. They can almost serve as an outline or note cards to required grade-level writing. And that extended, academic, content area text is the writing at the end of the mode continuum.

Providing the structured, scaffolded tasks and interactions to build students’ language along with their growing content knowledge helps bridge the significant gap between informal, contextualized language and the abstract, content-specific language of academic text. Through those experiences, students move not only into more successful content area writing, but also into fuller participation in the life of the classroom and the ability to more accurately represent their own content learning.

For students often left on the sidelines of the academic life of the classroom, whether because of inexperience with the language needed to fully engage or self-marginalizing behaviors that protect them from being exposed as struggling learners, the intentional progression of supported language development creates a much clearer path to expected learning outcomes—and to a more confident and successful role in the classroom community... a win-win for students and teachers alike.
What are cross-linguistic connections? What does it mean to teach for cross-linguistic transfer? Does this instruction fit into a high-quality dual language immersion program? Strong evidence supports the value of cross-linguistic connections (CLCs) for emerging bilingual students, but techniques for implementing this instruction in the context of a dual immersion (DI) program have yet to be well articulated. Not wanting to sacrifice fidelity to a high-quality program model in my efforts to integrate this instructional approach into my classroom, I set out to determine what available research says about how to proceed and to attempt some techniques with my students.

I read all the research and publications I could find about metalinguistic awareness and CLCs. It took time to differentiate between teaching for cross-linguistic transfer—the “application of cognitive skills developed in one language to similar specific situations in the other language” (Izquierdo, 2009)—and teaching cross-linguistic connections—explicit reflections and instruction on the similarities and differences between the two languages themselves (Herrera, Perez, & Escamilla, 2009). This distinction became clearer as I read research such as the Literacy Squared® project, which includes CLCs as a specific component of its instructional model (Escamilla, Butvilofsky, Escamilla, Geisler, Hopewell, Ruiz, Soltero-González, & Sparrow, 2010). Metalinguistic instruction of this type results in “increases in students’ self-regulatory control and enhanced language use in cognitive performance on literacy tasks” (Mora, 2012). But as I learned more about implementation in the field—Literacy Squared’s® Así se dice and Dictado processes, for example, as well as Cummins’ review of translation tasks and other bilingual strategies (Cummins, 2005), and Urow’s Bridge activities (2011)—I felt uncomfortable. In the Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education, the authors assert the importance of sustaining instruction in the target language, refraining from code-switching (Howard, Sugarman, Christian, Lindholm-Leary, & Rogers, 2007), and we are told “the two languages must be kept separate at all times” in a high-quality program (Cloud, Genessee, & Hamayan, 2000).

In the classroom, I struggled with the apparent contradiction between best practices in language and literacy acquisition and best practices in dual language education. Though models like Literacy Squared® have not yet been articulated and implemented within the context of a dual language program, there is evidence that instructional strategies like CLCs help emerging bilingual students succeed (Cummins, 2005, Escamilla et al., 2010). How could two such promising approaches to bilingual education be so contradictory?

Then one day I discovered the two are not necessarily mutually exclusive. I was reading, from my primary class’s curriculum, the Spanish translation of a story originally published in English. We paused to investigate the dashes in the text, and we determined they signified dialogue. The English copy of the story was nearby; I opened it to the corresponding page and asked the students to study the page and locate those dash marks. A student recognized that, although there were no dashes, “las dos comas flotantes” were in the same spots as the dashes from the Spanish text. We reflected on how both languages use special marks to signify dialogue, but the marks’ shape is specific to the language. We displayed this information in a Venn Diagram and later added reflections about other punctuation: both languages use the same-shaped mark to signify a question, but the location of the mark is distinct to each language.
These conversations happened entirely in Spanish (the target language), and at no point did I concurrently translate the discussion or read the English text. The students gained valuable metalinguistic awareness about the similarities and differences in their linguistic codes, as well as exposure to grade-level literacy content, all while receiving comprehensible input and conversing in the target language. I later identified many strands of the Guiding Principles (Howard, et al., 2007), as well as many components of the TWIOP model (Howard, Sugarman, & Coburn, 2006), that actually do correlate with instruction on metalinguistic awareness—see 2.1.D, 2.3.A, 2.3.B, 3.1.F, 3.4.B, and 2, 14, 20, 29, and 30, respectively.

I began to utilize a Language Comparison Chart (a permanently-displayed Venn Diagram) to stimulate ongoing conversations about the similarities and differences of our two languages. Because my classroom provides the Spanish environment for our bilingual students, the entire display is Spanish. I have found this to be a great way to increase cross-linguistic awareness among my students, while still remaining faithful to the dual immersion program essentials. After all, just because we were talking about English doesn’t mean we had to talk in English. This type of activity is adaptable (Urow, 2011); younger students can compare letter sounds and symbols, while older students compare parts of speech/word order, figurative speech, or more advanced punctuation and structures.

On my Cross-Linguistics Connections bulletin board, next to the Language Comparison Chart, is a T-chart with a running list of cognates that we discover throughout the day (older students could develop a separate list for false cognates). We know that better readers recognize and utilize cognates (Jiménez, García, & Pearson, 1996). Teaching my students these language “shortcuts” empowered them to navigate and capitalize on their linguistic schema, decreasing their reliance on the teacher. Cuadernos de comparación with individual Venn Diagram or T-Chart templates are a great way to encourage CLCs during silent reading or independent work.

While separating the two languages is critical in any dual language program, there is no evidence that careful and intentional use of translation impedes the process of effective language learning (Cummins, 2005). Many students act as interpreters in some form or another in their real lives (Orellana, Reynolds, Dorner, & Meza, 2003); teaching them to navigate their complex sociolinguistic system with eloquence and sensitivity is a fundamental component of any high-quality program. After all, it is “incumbent on professionals… caring for bilingual/bicultural children to nurture (their) unique identities…and provide them strategies for coping with these challenges” (Genessee, Paradis, & Crago, 2004).

Having a carefully articulated time for translation literacy—during language development or as a specified block of literacy time—can provide the structure to implement this bilingual technique without blurring the boundaries around the program’s language allocation plan. The explicit study of bilingual books during paired literacy instruction provides insight into the nuances of each language (Ernst-Slavit & Mulhern, 2003). This is also a great way to introduce the relationship between language and culture. Partnering with non-DI students to create bilingual books (bilingual alphabet books for younger students, for older students bilingual idiom dictionaries or cognate card games) creates inclusion and contributes to the school community. The creation of identity texts is another way to integrate a cultural focus into literacy instruction (Cummins, 2005), while practicing the art of translating and comparing/contrasting the two classroom languages.
and responds to the diverse language and cultural communities of New Mexico.

For school communities selected to participate, there are critical components that must be embraced as we build the capacity to develop effective dual language educational programs. These include:

- distributed leadership across program sites, school districts, technical assistance organizations (DLeNM, WIDA, etc), and the PED;
- authentic bilingual and biliteracy assessments and accountability for bilingual learners;
- focused and sustained professional development;
- strong professional learning communities at the school, district, and state levels; and
- on-going evaluation of instructional and program practice in order to improve dual language education for bilingual learners in linguistically and culturally diverse New Mexico communities.

The Bright Spots Initiative in New Mexico

The leadership team understands and respects the historical role of language and culture in New Mexico. The New Mexico State Constitution sets the expectation that all of its citizenry will have the opportunity to become bilingual. New Mexicans reflect a strong multigenerational pride in this land where many languages and cultures have been celebrated for centuries. Yet we also embrace newcomers who continue to bring diversity to our state. It is to this value of language, culture, and historical pride that the Bright Spots initiative responds.

Challenges

It is in New Mexico’s best interest to develop dual language education as a standard for its K-12 educational system. Long-term research indicates that well-implemented dual language education offers a powerful model of school reform while allowing communities to build upon their linguistic and cultural capital. But with this standard come many challenges.

Dual language education is an innovative yet complex program model. For this reason, its development requires strong partnerships. The leadership team intends to build capacity and support among individuals and organizations committed to the goals of this initiative. One of New Mexico’s greatest strengths is the ability to partner across individuals, schools, districts, community-based organizations, technical assistance centers, and universities working toward the common goal of equity for bilingual learners. Through these partnerships, it is possible to develop the leadership needed to ensure deliberate growth and success of dual language education for generations to come.

As educators, we know that schools can develop highly effective dual language programs when they apply best practices—grounded in sound research and dual language guiding principles as well as content and language development standards. Effective implementation demands a shared understanding of program goals, structures, and anticipated outcomes at all levels, from the classroom, to the PED. These efforts must be grounded in the work of schools which already demonstrate a strong capacity to succeed.

Criteria for Success

Our individual and collective experience keeps the criteria for success focused on student learning and effective classroom instruction. As part of the evaluation and accountability plans, we will collect and use authentic evidence of academic achievement (including bilingual and biliteracy development) to document and guide instruction, improve teaching, focus and sustain professional development, and inform leadership and capacity building initiatives at all leadership levels.

Through the Bright Spots initiative, schools will develop balanced assessment and accountability systems driven by multiple measures of learning—including, but not limited to, standardized achievement tests. Critical components of this system must include evidence of English language development using state-mandated WIDA standards and assessments. However, since dual language education has broader goals than English-medium programs, the initiative will also collect evidence of bilingual and biliteracy development and hold participants accountable to the dual language guiding principles.

With the guidance of our leadership team, the expertise of our collaborators, and the NM Public Education Department, we will demonstrate what bilingual learners in dual language programs can do—with academic content and their two languages—in ways that are comprehensible and productive for all constituents. Our criteria for success begins and ends with shared vision, accountability, and alignment so that New Mexico may further establish itself as a national leader in dual language education.
Students in Erin Mayer’s classroom at Eubank Elementary recently began their mathematics lesson by coming to the floor for a quick review of their division homework, which was projected on the Promethean Board. As they sat on the floor with their papers, they turned to their neighbor and asked, “What questions did you have about last night’s homework?” Each night as students do their homework, they circle the problems that they have questions about so they are prepared for their class discussion. This practice also supports students’ metacognitive awareness in identifying whether they are at an independent level with a concept or still need support. As they began talking, some partners compared answers, others helped their partner with a question they didn’t know how to do, and still others grabbed cubes to check their work together.

While students were doing this, the teacher was circulating, quickly checking in with different students to see how they had done. This gave her formative assessment information on the problems she wanted to make sure the class reviewed together. It also told her that the homework review was going to take a few more minutes than usual. Division was a new concept for them this week, and they still needed additional support.

After about five minutes, the teacher pulled the class together, covering all but one problem on the page with a rectangle using the Promethean tools so students could easily focus on the problem at hand. They read the first problem out loud together. As they talked through the problem, Erin did a quick sketch as a model for students. She then asked, “How many of you were able to do this problem independently at home?” “How many of you needed to talk with someone here?”

When they were ready to continue, she cleared the writing on the screen, moved the box to show a different problem, and checked to see if the students needed to review it, saying, “Let’s read the problem together. How many of you have questions on this problem?” If there were no questions, “Let’s see how you did.” She wrote the answer and then checked in with students. “Show me with your thumbs. How many of you got that on your own (thumbs up)? How many needed some help (sideways thumb)? How many of you weren’t sure what to do (thumbs down)?

They didn’t solve all of the problems as a group. Some were worked all the way through; others were checked only for the answer, and some weren’t addressed at all. This was determined by input from the students and the teacher’s observations during the partner sharing at the beginning of the lesson.

On days when the students need less support, the homework check can be as simple as students talking together and then checking their answers as they are revealed on the Promethean Board. Erin then quickly checks the homework to inform her small group guided mathematics instruction. On days like today, the review is more in-depth as they go through specific problems, discussing answers and modeling how students can show their work.

The Promethean Board is a great resource to support student learning, but using it in conjunction with partner interactions, manipulatives, and class discussions is essential. Otherwise, it is easy to slip into traditional instruction with the teacher talking and individual students responding. Reviewing homework as described here establishes for students a purpose for the homework and accountability both for getting it done and for self-monitoring their understanding. Students want to be prepared to share out to the group and see how they did. They also connect the homework directly to what they are studying in class—and see that the effort they put in at home impacts their learning during class.
Our collaboration continued when we both went back to school to pursue a Master’s degree. As classmates and professional colleagues, we had the opportunity to adapt and immediately apply what we were learning to our teaching situation. In addition, we have had several professional development opportunities such as GLAD and other district-level training to continue to expand our learning. We are without a doubt still learning and continually changing many aspects of our teaching. Collaboration has helped both of us reflect and implement new strategies and ideas. While we continue to grow as professionals, we feel confident that we are providing our students with quality education that meets or exceeds state- and district-level expectations.

Our classroom would not be like it is today if it were not for one or the other of us—we truly are a team. We accomplish more in less time... who wouldn’t want to do that? Our flexibility and willingness to try new things and make changes have made us better teachers. We’ve come to the conclusion that two teachers are better than one. When you find the right teaching partner, hold onto them, because it is a beautiful thing.

Everyday Math Units, and their students’ needs as they are planning the Focus and Motivation, Compendia, and assessment pieces. Aaron Rodgers talked about considering the skills that students often have difficulty with and emphasizing them (i.e., highlighting the importance of lining up decimals). It’s also important not to simplify concepts, thereby teaching incorrect mathematical concepts that need to be corrected in future years (i.e., the larger number always goes on top with subtraction, or you can’t subtract negative numbers).

Everyone thought the upfront time spent planning the unit and the Compendium content was invaluable. One teacher said the big picture planning is helping her to more effectively use the Everyday Math materials, going deeper with content concepts this year and better supporting her students.

In Closing
This follow-up session focused primarily on the Compendium, which is an important component of the AIM4S3 model—but it is only one piece. Focus and Motivation activities, sheltered and scaffolded lessons, student goal setting and closure activities are all necessary components of the model. All of these components, coupled with the Key Instructional Principles, make up the AIM4S3 framework. We have seen the largest gains in student achievement when all of these pieces are consistently implemented.

Thank you to the Deming teachers for sharing their experience, expertise, and reflection!
As I implemented more on-going instruction of CLCs, I realized that while it was definitely benefitting my students, I needed to be more explicit about why we were doing so much comparison of the languages. The following year, we first spent time discussing ourselves as bilingual learners, how we develop different schema in each language, and how it feels to get “stuck” in one language. We did an art lesson incorporating language and culture (depicting our schema that is specific to each language). Using these models to illustrate how our languages (and cultures) can sometimes feel like separate islands, we learned they are actually connected within our hearts and minds, and that there is value in utilizing the “bridge” that exists between the two parts. Students created a pop-up bridge on their art projects, which were displayed on a bulletin board as a reminder that we are not Spanish speakers during Spanish time and English speakers during English time, but rather bilingual students, free to access and maneuver all of our resources, no matter what the linguistic or cultural environment around us asks us to demonstrate. This project gave context to the metalinguistic awareness and language transfer studied throughout the year and reinforced a strengths-based and culturally-competent focus on language acquisition.

Finally, I wanted a method to analyze mastery of these skills. Collecting students’ cuadernos de comparación helped determine their ability to identify the similarities and differences between the two languages. Using a rubric to systematically observe the ability to translate text, code switch, identify cognates, transfer content knowledge, etc, has provided valuable information on the bilingual strategies used by a particular child. Taking this observation rubric to team meetings, where we often discuss a child’s “data-based deficits,” has been a way to encourage a strengths-based approach to designing interventions for each unique emerging bilingual student.

While more remains to be articulated regarding the instruction of CLCs in dual language programs, these are some ideas I have found to enhance learning and language acquisition without sacrificing a high-quality program model. These techniques increase metalinguistic awareness, help to reintegrate that easily forgotten goal of cross-cultural competence, and allow students the opportunity to recognize and celebrate the fascinating complexities of being bilingual and biliterate!

References


I very much welcome your communication!

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