

Educ 697T - Teaching Content for Language Development
Winter 2005
Springfield Cohort I

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Having something meaningful to think, talk, read, and write about is the catalyst for language development. Conversely, richly developed language is the foundation for thinking, talking and writing about important and meaningful content. This course will focus on developing and adapting curriculum to support language development through meaningful and worthwhile content. **The essential question that will guide this course is:** How can we design curriculum, classroom practices to simultaneously develop the language and content knowledge necessary to meet the goals of students, the expectations of their families and community, and the expectations of the broader society?

The course will center on teachers designing, implementing, and assessing a curriculum unit for their own classrooms that a) deals with content that is meaningful and comprehensible for linguistically and culturally diverse learners; b) simultaneously and explicitly attends to the development of both content and language; c) organizes instructional around powerful learning principles and strategies; d) meets mandated curriculum standards and goals while also respecting and drawing in cultural ways of knowing and learning.

APPROACH

Following a sociocultural approach in which learning occurs through interaction in purposeful activities, teachers will work in small groups and with assistance from their project assistants to develop their curriculum units (approximately 3 to 5 days in length). Sometime between the middle and end of , they will teach the unit to their students, which will be videotaped by the project assistants. In November teachers will analyze their teaching and students' learning with their group members and project assistants and prepare a short presentation of their work for a SIOP Dialogue meeting, which will occur in December.

Class time will be divided into three phases. During the first phase we will meet together as a whole group to focus on the assigned readings and relate them to the teachers' emerging questions. In the second phase, small groups will help one another to; a) apply the readings to their curriculum designs; b) share ideas and strategies; and c) analyze units, lessons, and student learning. The schedule for these phases will be posted after the Project Assistants have been assigned. The final phase will be a SIOP Dialogue among an administrator, a university representative and a fellow teacher around the unit that was taught.

PLANNING THE CURRICULUM UNIT

With the support of your project assistant and group members you will design a curriculum unit that you believe follows the principles that you are and have been learning throughout the program. You may create a new unit or modify an existing you that you have taught or find a unit that someone else has taught. However, the unit must be designed or redesigned to reflect what we are learning in this class and what you have learned in your other classes. As you plan the unit, keep specific track the “research” you are using to make decisions so that you are able to articulate and justify the choices you have made. Planning sessions will be audio-taped so that there is a record of the planning process. Keep anything any papers/evidence of your thinking from emails to revisions of your planning.

The curriculum design has five parts:

- Map out in broad-strokes a curriculum unit for your class. The unit should be centered around: a) essential questions (see Wiggins & McTighe); b) the needs and interests of the students, including the interests of the English language learners; c) your own interests and talents; d) principles of learning and teaching that you have been studying. A curriculum map outlines the major objectives, concepts, activities, materials, assessments and student-produced products and outcomes of the unit. You may select a unit that you have taught in the past or one that someone else has taught BUT you will need to modify the unit
- Decide which standards from the State, from the TESOL Organization (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), and from a relevant Disciplinary Professional Organization (e.g., such as NCTE, NCTM, or NCSS, etc. which can be found on the internet) and link the standards to the content and activities in your curriculum unit map. Keep in mind the standards to which you are being held accountable (e.g. SIOP, Teaching Standards from the State, UBD standards).
- Design a series of supportive assessments that provide feedback to the students (and their families) about their progress toward meeting the standards, your goals and the goals of the students. The assessments should also provide the teacher feedback about how to plan further instruction and information that can be used in reports to administrators.
- Design in detail the daily activities that comprise the unit and show how engaging in the/se activity/ies will enable students to develop their understanding of the essential questions and their progress toward the standards you’ve selected (including the English language learners). The activities should be designed so that English language learners are positioned as resources rather than as lacking competence. The activities should take into account what classroom instruction and organization should look like to ensure comprehensible input, interaction, support and connecting to students’ lives.
- Design in greater detail how you will scaffold (provide support for) the English language learners (and others) so that they are able to participate in the activities and make progress toward developing their academic and linguistic competence. While the

majority of activities should focus on the “content”, your scaffolding can take many forms-- from adapting materials and preparatory activities to providing explicit mini-lessons on strategies they will need to engage with the content. Scaffolding occurs throughout the process including, a) preparing students to read, write, think and talk about the content, b) supporting students while they engage in the content activities, c) helping them reflect on what they’ve learned and prepare for demonstrating what they know.

DOCUMENTING THE TEACHING OF YOUR UNIT

The project assistant will arrange to document the entire unit so you will have a complete record of your teaching of this unit. In addition to video recording each lesson, he or she will need to make digital copies of all presentation materials, resources, instructions, homework assignments that you use in delivering and assessing the lessons as well as all student work. It’s not enough just to have it on video because often the video isn’t clear enough to really see what’s going on. The goal in this section is to have a full record of the implementation. Make sure that you have your permission slips for the students in your class. It is vital that you and the project assistant make a list of what needs to be documented and recorded prior to recording the teaching of the unit (there’s no need to wait until you are teaching to document the materials the kids will be using while engaged in the unit—e.g., a story you will read to them, any presentational materials, etc.). Of course, during the implementation, there will be surprises so work out a signal system whereby you can direct the project assistant’s attention to something you want recording. Also, select focus students and make sure that the project assistant knows when and where to situate him/herself to get what’s needed. Use your SIOP instrument to help you decide where to focus the camera to get the evidence you need to show how you were meeting the particular items on the SIOP. Finally, if something interesting is happening, whether or not it on any of the protocols or planning documents, make sure to capture it. We want to allow room for the unexpected. If you were able to capture something you thought was important, jot down some notes about it so you can use it when analyzing your lessons.

ANALYZING OUTCOMES OF THE UNIT

With your group members and project assistant you will analyze how and whether the goals for the unit were achieved and what may have been the reason for some of your expectations not being met. What’s important here is not that things did not go as planned (they never do) but understanding why? Was it the goals themselves were not suitable? The scaffolding wasn’t quite right? The institutional structure got in the way? Some activities may have gone in a different direction than what you had planned but in fact met your goals better than your planned activities. Sometimes the scaffolding you planned ended up being more complicated than the focus of the lesson itself. Everything may have gone exactly as you planned and yet you found the students didn’t learn what you wanted them to? Or maybe they went way beyond the goals you had set for them. Make sure to move back and forth from plan to the evidence and back again. What you want to do is to come up with your own interpretation of the lesson with evidence to back up your interpretation.

PREPARING YOUR PRESENTATION FOR THE SIOP TEAM DIALOGUE

The aim of the SIOP dialogue is NOT to present the perfect lesson, but to demonstrate your thinking and growth and to help the administrators and university staff to better understand the realities of the classroom. “Perfect lessons” exists only when you edit out the messiness of teaching and it’s not believable. We need to understand how the patterns of the “messiness” can lead to student learning if analyzed and drawn on in planning. While you do not want to edit out the flaws, you do need to direct the SIOP team to your **interpretation and the evidence** you’ve used to develop it. It needs to be concise. Include: 1) Context (briefly) and overview (your brief summation of how the unit went), 2) the Mapping, 3) video excerpt of you “presenting the goals, overview, etc. of the unit to the students 4) brief lesson plan of one lesson with a short excerpt from the lesson in which we see a) classroom interaction, b) scaffolding c) sample of student work; 5) the work of your focus student over the course of the unit (with your feedback) with context about why you focused on this student. In each section, help the team understand why you did what you did (be able to articulate the why). Make sure to present your lesson in a way that the team can address the items on the SIOP. You can bring more extensive documentation to use if needed to answer particular questions but do not present them. Remember, take the position of “informing the team” about the nature of teaching your particular students and getting their feedback.

GRADING POLICY

The course is offered for a **letter grade with an option for pass/fail**. Students will be graded on effort, participation in learning activities and growth in developing the concepts of the course, rather than on a fixed standard of achievement. Participation should demonstrate a developing awareness of the concepts, skills and theories presented in the readings, presentations and discussions and a promise of continued growth after the courses finishes.

Attending the SIOP Dialogue meeting is mandatory. You will receive feedback on your work based on the assessment rubrics we develop in class but it is possible to receive an A even if you are not high on the developmental stage of the rubric. The goal of the class and the SIOP assessment is to prepare you for your assessment at the end of the program. The purpose of taking this course is to learn something new not merely display what you already know. It is possible, therefore, that you are higher on the developmental line of the rubrics we create together than others in the class and yet receive a lower grade.

RESOURCES

Class text:

Wiggins, G. & J. McTighe [Understanding by design](http://shop.ascd.org/productdisplay.cfm?productid=198199). Alexandria, VA: ASCD. Please order online <http://shop.ascd.org/productdisplay.cfm?productid=198199>

Group texts:

Each person in the class will be lent a resource book on content reading and writing. While most of the books cover the same broad categories (e.g., “preparing to read content), they may have different ideas and strategies. If you see that a group member might benefit from something you’ve read, please share with him or her what you’ve read. Some of the whole class meetings will focus on particular topics that are covered in these books so I will ask you to find the subject in your text and read it, prepared to summarize what your author says about the topic.

Internet Sites:

Each professional organization has websites filled with information and ideas. Make sure that you explore the website that is the most relevant for your unit. Some of them are:

National Council of Teachers of English

<http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/index.asp?grade=0&strand=3&engagement=0>

Science Links

<http://www.sciencenetlinks.com/matrix.cfm>

Geography

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/>

Math

<http://illuminations.nctm.org/index.aspx>

Marco Polo (all subjects)

http://www.marcopolosearch.org/MPSearch/Basic_Search.asp

Economics

<http://www.teachersfirst.com/getsource.cfm?id=769>

Children’s Literature (must sign on to your UMASS library account)

<https://silk.library.umass.edu/cgi-bin/ezpauth?url=http://clcd.odyssey.com/member/csearch.htm>

Humanities

<http://edsitement.neh.gov/>