Scaffolding the Academic Success of English Language Learners: A Pedagogy of Promise

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Education takes place against the backdrop of an ever-changing context

• Success in life requires increasingly demanding levels of literacy.

• As the value of education increases, the individual and societal cost of high school graduates not having sophisticated literacies gets higher.

• The United States -as well as other industrialized nations- are undergoing significant demographic changes not devoid of tensions. How we resolve these tensions will determine the future of our nation.
From Literacy to Multiple Literacies

Literacy is defined as the ability to interpret a wide variety of texts, understanding their messages, the messengers’ points of view, the relationship of the interpreter to the message, as well as deciding how to respond to them appropriately.

Literacy includes all the elements of reading, writing, speaking, listening, critical thinking, engaging in new learning, and the habits of mind that foster effective civic participation.

Oral literacy (oracy), financial literacy, school literacy, bilingual literacy and disciplinary literacy constitute some examples of literacies that American schools need to develop.

The mastering of multiple literacies:

Is a long-term developmental process.

End goal: read and produce a variety of materials with ease and interest, for varying purposes, with comprehension even when materials may be difficult and not intrinsically interesting.

Thus possessing multiple literacies consists of extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement of varied types with a wide variety of texts.
Why principled practice?

Quality learning and teaching occurs when deep understandings about subject matter, pedagogy, students, the language which is the medium of instruction, and the context combine with a vision for excellence and are actualized in response to particular situations.

Good teaching then, is always situated in the particular.

Principles enable us to account for the quality of teaching across different settings and show that instances of excellent teaching can occur in a variety of ways.

Principles of Quality Teaching for English Learners

They share many of the same characteristics as general pedagogical principles but they have a special focus on the processes needed by second language learners to arrive at academic excellence.
Principles of Quality Teaching for English Learners

Sustain **Academic Rigor** in teaching English Learners

Hold **High Expectations** in teaching English Learners

Engage in **Quality Interactions** with English Learners

Sustain a **Language Focus** in teaching English Learners

Develop **Quality Curricula** for teaching English Learners

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**Sustain Academic Rigor in Teaching ELs**

Promote deep disciplinary knowledge
- Develop central ideas of a discipline
- Establish complex relations between central ideas
- Sustain focus on central ideas and balance in depth of knowledge

Use higher order thinking skills
- Students combine facts and ideas to synthesize, evaluate, generalize
- Students solve problems and construct new meaning and understandings

Develop substantive, generative concepts and skills, and support thinking with evidence
- Develop complex understandings of central concepts
- Construct explanations and arguments in the discipline
Hold **High Expectations** in Teaching ELs

Engage students in tasks that are high challenge and high support

- Use tasks that are academically challenging and engaging
- Provide scaffolds that facilitate student engagement in intellectual tasks
- Provide varied entry points for instructional tasks
- Promote apprenticeship and increased participation over time

Engage students in the development of their own expertise

- Act on the belief that all members of a class community can achieve
- Foster a climate of mutual respect that contributes to the achievement of all

Have clear criteria for high expectations

- Be explicit about the criteria for what constitutes quality performance
- Be clear with students that it is necessary to take risks and work hard to master challenging academic work

Engage in **Quality Interactions** with ELs

Engage in sustained, deep interactions to build knowledge

- Dialogue between teacher and student and between peers is sustained and builds on the participants’ ideas to promote improved understanding of concepts
- Dialogue involves the exchange of ideas and is not scripted or dominated by one party

Jointly construct knowledge mediated through language

- Talk is about the subject matter of the discipline and encourages reasoning, application of ideas, argumentation, forming generalizations, and asking questions
Sustain a **Language Focus** in Teaching ELs

- Explicitly develop disciplinary language
- Explicitly discuss how language works and characteristics of language, texts, and disciplinary discourse
- Provide deliberately crafted opportunities for students to practice new concepts and language purposefully
- Focus student performance and corrective feedback on: fluency, complexity, OR accuracy
- Amplify, don’t simplify (linguistically, paralinguistically, extralinguistically)

Develop a **Quality Curriculum** for teaching ELs

- Curriculum has long term goals that include benchmark moments
- Curriculum is problem-based and requires knowledge construction and sustained attention beyond a single lesson
- Curriculum spirals, enabling students to increasingly deepen their understanding of new concepts, new language and new skills, and enabling students to move from ambiguity to increasing clarity
- Curriculum weaves knowledge in ways that interconnect the world around him/her
- Curriculum builds from the students’ linguistic and cultural knowledge and group identities
Viewing With a Focus

Lens: You will be assigned one of the following QTEL Principles:

Quality Interactions
High Expectations

Find concrete evidence of this dimension in the video. Jot it down for discussion.

Where do you want to go next?

School: International High School, La Guardia Community College

Students: 9th and 10th graders Humanities class. In the U.S. between three weeks and two and a half years

Teacher: Anthony DeFazio
Pedagogies of Promise: Realizing Students’ Potential

- Development follows learning (therefore, instruction precedes development)
- Participation in activity is central in the development of knowledge
- Participation in activity progresses from apprenticeship to appropriation, from the social to the individual plane
- Learning can be observed as changes in participation over time

Understanding Learning/Teaching Zones: QTEL Pedagogy
(Walqui, 2007, adapted from Mariani, 1997 and Hammond & Gibbons, 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>High Challenge</th>
<th>High Support</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘FRUSTRATION’ ZONE</td>
<td>‘APPRENTICESHIP’ ZONE (ZPD)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘TWILIGHT’ ZONE</td>
<td>‘POBRECITO’ ZONE</td>
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</table>

low challenge

low support
Students learn by participating in well-constructed interactions

Similarly, through well-constructed subject-specific interactions teachers develop their Subject Matter Knowledge, Pedagogical Knowledge, and Pedagogical SMK.
Let Us Analyze Another Class and a Very Different Context

To observe:

• Language Focus
• Quality Interactions
• Quality Curricula

The Oral Development Jigsaw
Teacher has scaffolded understanding of the genre: Description

• **Discussion of purpose:** why do people describe scenes to others?
• **Structure:**
  Where does the scene take place?
  Who is the central character(s) in the picture?
  What does this person look like (approximate age, gender, height, face, hair, clothes)?
  What is this person doing?
  Any other relevant information?
Teacher has also offered students models of the language they may use:

This scene takes place in …
My picture shows …
The picture I have shows a …

The central character in my picture is
In my picture you can see a …

Jigsaw Project

**BASE GROUP**

Students work in heterogeneous groups and review the genre of description

**EXPERT GROUP**

Picture A  Picture B  Picture C  Picture D

Students describe their pictures following guidelines and models
Jigsaw Project

**BASE GROUP**

Students work in heterogeneous groups and review the genre of description: purpose, structure, linguistic characteristics

**EXPERT GROUP**

Picture A
Picture B
Picture C
Picture D

Students share their descriptions. Then discuss the genre of narrative to create one

**BASE GROUP**

Now students apprentice a second Genre: Narratives… Short Stories

**Purpose:** Why do people tell stories?

**Structure:**
- Setting, title
- There is a central character, the protagonist (and other character/s)
- Something happens to the character
- Resolution
- The event transforms the character

**Language:**
- Connectors related to time: Once upon a time, then, after that, suddenly, etc…; verbs in the past tense…
Video Exemplar 2

Teacher: Roza Ng
School: MS 131, Chinatown, NYC
Class: Intermediate ESL
Students: Between 6 months and 3 years in the U.S.

The Oral Development Jigsaw in Roza Ng’s Class: An example of Quality Curriculum

Discussion of the purpose and generic structure of descriptions
Students jointly create a description
Individually students share oral descriptions with new groups
Discussion of the purpose and generic structure of narratives
Collaboratively students construct an oral narrative
Students jointly write their narrative
Narratives are performed
Independent written narrative
### Assessing the difficulty of a task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Description</th>
<th>Degree of difficulty</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Static task</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task A</td>
<td>Description of one scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task B</td>
<td>Description of 4 different scenes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task C</td>
<td>Construction of a narrative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Degree of difficulty
- **Static task**
- **Dynamic task**
- **Abstract task**

#### Degree of difficulty
- Many elements, relationships, characters, etc. (more difficult)
- Few elements, relationships, etc. (less difficult)

### Academic Uses of English Development Continuum

This development should be tracked over a unit of work that takes place over several classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Uses of English</th>
<th>Continuum</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More spoken</td>
<td>More written</td>
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