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Soleado

Promising Practices from the Field

Summer 2018

Writing with Purpose: Elementary School Newspaper Makes Learning Authentic

by Lauren Gutiérrez, Bilingual Resource Teacher—
Coronado ES, Albuquerque Public Schools

Two students run toward me, waving their arms in excitement. "We have the BEST idea for an article! Did you know that there are different ways every month to show your support for cancer awareness?" They lift a Chromebook to my eye level, a graphic of different colored ribbons on the screen. "So, can we write the article?"

I tell them it is a great idea—amused that they think a teacher would respond to their enthusiasm with anything other than an encouraging endorsement. I guide them toward useful and dependable sources written in Spanish, and remind them how to search for Spanish content. I also suggest that they start thinking about individuals in the community they can interview as part of their research.

La Prensa reporters Ana Goñi and Vianne Pintado-Orozco conduct an interview for the article they will write about an event in the school garden.

Coronado is a dual language magnet school in Albuquerque Public Schools. We are a small school, barely surpassing 300 students each year and at capacity, with waitlists for enrollment at every grade level. Our student body is composed mostly of English-dominant students whose heritage language is Spanish. In fact, 89% of our student body identifies Spanish as their heritage language. Revitalization of the Spanish language is a primary concern for our population. If not for dual language programs like we have at Coronado, many of these families would lose their heritage language and culture in the current school-age generation.

A quality, intensive dual language immersion program is a great way to learn a target language, along with all the other cognitive benefits we know our students reap, but we found that there was an important social-oral portion that was missing for our students. Most of our students only use their second language at school, which—for all our efforts to use the language meaningfully—is still a contrived environment. We needed a way to make language use authentic and multi-modal. We have developed various ways to address this need, including a robust outdoor education program focused around applied learning in our school garden. This in-place learning eliminates some of the contrived quality of classroom simulation—the learning is real. Community service projects can also provide meaningful language experiences. But it has been writing for *La Prensa* that has provided a true variety of authentic opportunities for language use.

Printed monthly, our school newspaper, *La Prensa*, is student-authored in both English and Spanish. The project was started with a

—continued on page 14—

Inside this issue...

- Teaching Refugee Students: Considerations and Complexities
- Part III, Teacher Preparation—Re-engineering the Pipeline
- Técnica "Cabezas Juntas Numeradas" y las matemáticas
- OCDE Project GLAD® … Social and Emotional Learning at Valle Vista ES
- La Cosecha 2018
- Structured Word Inquiry: Investigating Language Scientifically

Teaching Refugee Students—Considerations and Complexities

by Rachel White, Refugee Point of Contact—Albuquerque Public Schools

Imagine this: you are a third-grade teacher and in March you get a new student who speaks Swahili, speaks no English, and has never been to school before. She doesn't know how to write her name or do subtraction. How do you catch the student up enough to learn with the rest of the class? Now imagine you are a middle or high school biology teacher in the exact same position. How do you even begin to address the student's disparate academic, linguistic, cultural, social, and emotional needs?

This is the reality for teachers in about 35 different schools within Albuquerque Public Schools (APS), the largest school district in New Mexico. APS serves the majority of our state's refugee population. In this school district there are over 300 refugee students who arrived in our country less than 3 years ago, most of whom speak Swahili or Dari.

Why would a Swahili-speaking child with little previous education be enrolling in school in Albuquerque, New Mexico? The most common reason is that the student is a refugee. According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), "A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee their country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group" (UNHCR, 2017).

Since 1975, the United States has resettled over 3 million refugees. New Mexico, like the rest of the country, has been resettling refugees for decades. While more than half of all current refugees worldwide come from Syria, Afghanistan, and South Sudan (UNHCR, 2017), the largest populations of refugees currently being resettled in New Mexico originate from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Afghanistan.

Bilingual programs are a phenomenal way to support students if the school has the resources to provide professional development, books and materials in the native language, and teachers with the cultural competence and the linguistic skills to teach in two languages. However, a bilingual program is usually not an option for schools that serve refugee students. The students speak various languages and the resources are difficult, if not impossible, to come by.

The linguistically diverse refugee population is poorly served in our state. This article will suggest distinct academic, linguistic, cultural, social, and emotional supports that need to be in place for refugee students in order for them to be successful in U.S. schools and in society.

Academic—First, there needs to be much more of an emphasis on English language development (ELD) in schools if we want to be inclusive of all our English learners. As global conflicts continue to force people to flee their home countries, the challenge of educating refugee students who speak languages that aren't supported by our bilingual programs is something that more and more teachers will face.

Educating linguistically diverse refugee students can be incredibly challenging because they come to the United States from all over the world with varying experiences of language, literacy, prior education, culture, and trauma. Some refugees have never been to school before enrolling in the U.S. educational system. Some refugees are used to a one-room schoolhouse without books and paper, much less computers and lab equipment. There are a few refugees with educational experiences that are somewhat similar to the U.S., but they were taught in a completely different language and alphabet, like Farsi or Arabic.

Most students who are brand new to the U.S. are enrolled in general-education classes. That means that they are working on grade-level content material even if they do not speak or understand any English and have never been to school before. They are placed in our overcrowded classrooms where nobody speaks their language, and their instructors are already tasked with the difficult job of supporting the English-speaking students in meeting grade-level content standards.

At the middle and high school level, most newcomers are placed in content classes with teachers who are not endorsed in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of

—continued on page 3—

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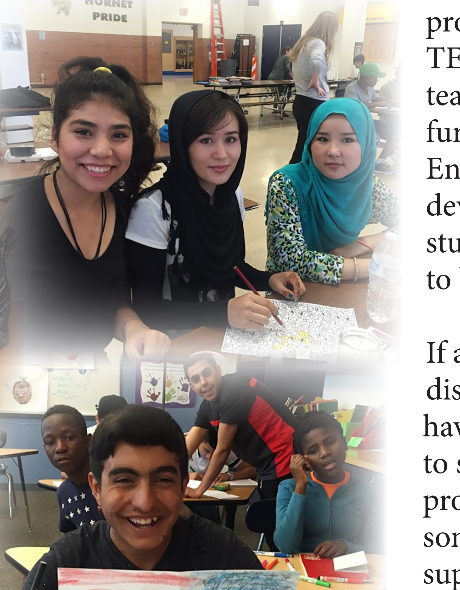
Other Languages). Even if their teachers are TESOL endorsed, it is enormously difficult to teach refugee students how to divide polynomials if they do not yet know basic subtraction. Teachers need time to work on foundational skills with the students. They are developmentally ready to understand the concepts so they learn quickly, but the instruction must be explicit.

It may sound counterintuitive to bilingual and TESOL educators because we have fought so long and hard for inclusive classrooms, but when a student with limited experiences in school and very low English skills ***first*** enrolls in a U.S. school, the most supportive environment for them is a separate classroom while they adjust to their new environments. School districts nationwide have begun to establish specific newcomer schools or programs for new immigrant students who do not yet speak English and may have limited educational experiences (Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education–SLIFE). These schools and districts realize that their immigrant students will have academic, linguistic, cultural, social, and emotional needs that must be assessed and addressed in order to adequately educate them.



Newcomer schools and programs typically have transitional classes that the newcomers attend for up to 1 or 2 years. Here, the students learn the grade-level content in a uniquely supportive environment. Their teachers all have TESOL endorsements and regularly attend training in poverty awareness, newcomer issues, trauma-informed teaching, and teaching for English language development. There are educational assistants who speak the languages of the students. Strong academic counseling, vocational training, and job internship programs are available to help the newcomers understand what their options are upon graduation. Mental health services are also provided to the students. When the students transition out of the newcomer program, they have the opportunity to attend a mainstream district school that has strong ELD programs and TESOL-endorsed teachers who further focus on English language development, so the students continue to be supported.

If a school or district does not have the resources to start a newcomer program, there are some classroom supports that teachers can implement to help their students gain access to the academic content:

- Use realia, photographs, videos (with English subtitles), and other visuals to build background and accompany important information.
- Assign cloze notes that highlight important vocabulary and concepts. Make sure students have the opportunity to use English to read or explain information to peers (or to you if they are not yet comfortable interacting with peers).
- Organize field trips. Your SLIFE students have not likely had the opportunity to engage in experiential learning.
- Set up parent meetings with interpretation. The meetings can focus on individual families or a whole language group—the important thing is that families feel welcome at the school.
- Ensure your students understand the A–F grading system (and that an F means they have to retake the class). Explicitly teach them the language needed to advocate for themselves, to ask for make-up work after an absence, and to learn how they can improve if they are dissatisfied with their grade. Dedicate time to

—continued on page 16—

Teacher Preparation—Re-engineering the Pipeline, Part III

by James J. Lyons, Esq., Senior Policy Advisor—Dual Language Education of New Mexico
—Last in a Series—

We opened this series of articles by examining teacher supply and demand from several perspectives. We found that while, in the aggregate, there are a sufficient number of certified teachers for the nation's current total student enrollment, there are crippling teacher shortages in certain academic subjects and specialties, including bilingual and dual language education, ESL instruction, and special education. We also found that teacher shortages are more common at the secondary level and are particularly severe in low-income rural and inner-city schools. These shortages overlay a universal deficiency in U.S. school staffing—the gross underrepresentation of teachers who reflect the racial, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and economic backgrounds of their students.

The second article focused on how we can re-engineer the teacher preparation pipeline and processes to address these challenges. Students could be exposed to a variety of teaching careers through middle school clubs and then have the opportunity to enroll in dual-credit teacher academies for high school. The suggested grow-your-own (GYO) program would provide a mechanism for addressing critical teacher shortages and for overcoming three problems inherent in our current higher education-based system of teacher preparation—decontextualized, book-based, non-clinical instruction which fails to prepare teachers for the rigors of the classroom; the prolonged time required to complete teacher preparation programs; and the high cost of these programs.

This article concludes this brief series on teacher preparation by identifying some state-based initiatives to promote GYO programming, including some specifically focused on the preparation of future dual language educators.

Last year, the state of Washington enlarged the scope of their GYO teacher preparation programs to include a "Bilingual Educators Initiative" focused on facilitating the entry of local bilingual high school students into the teaching profession. Initial competitive grants are summarized at the site of the State of Washington Professional Educator Standards Board (*https://www.pesb.wa.gov/innovation-policy/grants-pilots/bilingual-educators-initiative/*).

In Texas, more than 200 school districts participate in GYO teacher preparation programs which offer firsthand classroom experience to career education students with an interest in teaching. As the Texas State Boards of Education (November 2015) noted in its *HR Exchange*:

> Diane Salazar, state director for career and technical education at the Texas Education Agency (TEA), noted that grow-your-own teacher programs are essentially a field-based internship for a high school student, one that provides them with child development knowledge and teaches them the principles of effective teaching practices.
>
> The benefits of the program are many. Participants get a real taste of what it's like to be a teacher through their work in district classrooms, helping them determine whether teaching is truly the career path they want to pursue. Districts get additional helping hands in the classroom and potentially increase their pipeline of educators in the future.

Eleven states—Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Missouri, Mississippi, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, and Wisconsin—have joined with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) on an initiative to produce sufficient new minority teachers to eliminate teacher-diversity gaps within their states by 2040. Saroja Warner, the director of educator preparation initiatives at CCSSO, noted that "grow-your-own programs, targeting high school students, have emerged as one of the best practices across state lines" (Will, 2017).

Indeed, the outcomes of secondary school GYO teacher clubs and academies are often impressive. Consider the following from a story last year in the *Omaha World Herald* (Duffy, 2017) entitled "Districts find mutual benefit in providing student teaching opportunities for high-schoolers."

> ... Jack Bangert, a teacher and curriculum specialist at Omaha South High, watched South struggle for years to find enough bilingual teachers for its dual-language program. The school's student population is heavily Latino, and nearly 90 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

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The Omaha school district is the state's largest, and more than 70 percent of the students are nonwhite. By contrast, in 2015-16, nearly 89 percent of the district's teaching force was white.

"It seemed odd to me and my team that we were sitting on this huge pool of bilingual, diverse potential teachers, and we were doing nothing to encourage that field. ... It just seemed kind of asinine, quite frankly," Bangert said.

So in 2010, he helped launch an education academy at South. Fourteen kids enrolled, all dual-language students who learned subjects in both English and Spanish. Now in its eighth year, the program enrolls 90 students. Most are bilingual and nonwhite. Bangert, an assistant football coach, and co-teacher Sam Bojanski, are constantly trying to recruit more boys.

Juniors and seniors can sign up for an introductory course and enroll in a more intense senior capstone that places them in OPS schools for an internship.

"The goal is to scare them in or out of education," Bangert said. "We don't want them on the fence. Our biggest problem is not having people who are committed. You student-teach your senior year (in college) and find out you hate it, you're kind of stuck at that point." ...

... South, Papillion-La Vista and Millard have all hired former students who went through the education academies and graduated with an education degree.

Students at all three Millard high schools can enroll in the academy, which is based at Millard West. They can take 15 courses over two years, including a class on special education and communication disorders. In a practicum, students spend four days a week working in a classroom, including planning and executing lessons. ...

DLeNM will continue to explore GYO dual language teacher preparation programs as part of our effort to expand quality dual language educational programs. *Soleado* readers who are interested in learning more might want to consult the following two documents.

- "Grow Your Own! A Resource Guide to Creating Your Own Teacher Pipeline," 2016, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (*https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/Grow-Your-Own-Resource-Guide.pdf*)
- "'Grow Your Own' Resources," 2018, State of Washington Professional Educator Standards Board (*https://www.pesb.wa.gov/innovation-policy/grow-your-own/grow-your-own-resources/*)

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Técnica "Cabezas Juntas Numeradas" y las matemáticas

por Emmy Hernández, Maestra—Escuela Primaria Adobe Acres,
Escuelas Públicas de Albuquerque

La técnica de aprendizaje cooperativo "Cabezas Juntas Numeradas" incrementa el aprendizaje de los alumnos de manera significativa, fomentando de forma positiva el compañerismo al darles la oportunidad equitativamente a cada alumno de la clase de aprender unos de otros, compartir sus conocimientos previos, expresar sus ideas y compartirlas con sus compañeros. Esta técnica es empleada en todas las áreas académicas dado que les da la oportunidad a los compañeros de la clase de expandir sus conocimientos a través del diálogo.

Los estudiantes de primer grado cooperan al aprender vocabulario nuevo.

Cómo establecer "Cabezas Juntas Numeradas"

Para crear un ambiente ameno y divertido durante matemáticas se emplea la técnica de "Cabezas Juntas Numeradas" propuesta por Spencer Kagan (Kagan & Kagan, 2015). Primero, se forman los grupos cooperativos heterogéneos con estudiantes de diferentes niveles académicos. De esa manera tienen la oportunidad de aprender juntos. "Utilizamos los métodos grupales no solo con fines de socialización sino también de adquisición y consolidación de conocimientos: Aprender a cooperar y aprender a través de la cooperación" (Linares Garriga, p. 2).

Al principio del año escolar se debe establecer la rutina para que los alumnos se acostumbren a dialogar entre sí. Desde el inicio del año, los integrantes de cada grupo discuten y deciden un número del uno al cuatro que los identificará en su grupo, así como también el color que será su grupo. Los materiales que se necesita para llevar a cabo esta técnica son cuatro cucharas de plástico numeradas con los números de uno a cuatro. Los estudiantes se sientan en la alfombra en mini círculos para dialogar entre sí. Toman turnos para opinar o cuestionar sobre las respuestas de sus compañeros o bien para apoyar los comentarios hechos durante la conversación. Los alumnos adoptan la técnica "Cabezas Juntas Numeradas" a medida que transcurre el tiempo durante el año escolar. Etxebarria (traducido de Kagan) describió la técnica de esta manera:

1. "Se enumeran los miembros del equipo.
2. El profesor plantea cuestiones para resolver al grupo.
3. Los grupos trabajan juntos para responder a la cuestión de modo que todos puedan responder la pregunta.
4. El profesor elige un número y le solicita una respuesta".

En mi clase los estudiantes disfrutan participar con sus compañeros en estos diálogos. Hay 16 alumnos en la clase, ocho niñas y ocho niños. Formé cuatro grupos integrados por dos niños y dos niñas cada uno, de distintos niveles académicos. El nivel académico de los integrantes varía, para que aprendan a tolerar y a cooperar con cada individuo, dándoles oportunidad a todos los integrantes del grupo a que comprendan el tema en cuestión. De esta manera los cuatro integrantes del equipo estarán preparados para responder a la pregunta que discutieron.

La estrategia en acción

Aquí comparto un ejemplo del uso de esta estrategia en la presentación del compendio, de AIM4S^3. Comencé primero con escribir el título del compendio, Geometría, y les pedí que se acordaran de la definición de ese término. Los niños se acercaron y hablaron de lo que significaba dicha palabra. Una vez que los alumnos discutieron y argumentaron sobre la definición o aproximación de la palabra, yo escogí la cuchara numerada con el numero dos. Los estudiantes numerados con el número dos de cada grupo se pusieron de pie para dar su explicación, que acordaron todos los miembros del equipo. El equipo rojo dijo que era como se había mencionado en el libro que habíamos compartido en otra ocasión: *El principito* (de Saint-Exupéry, 1943). En el libro el personaje principal quería estudiar la *geografía*. Este estudiante confundió las

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palabras pero ninguno de sus compañeros lo sacó de su error. Esto me enseñó que necesitaba dar ejemplos de geometría y geografía para que los estudiantes pudieran averiguar la diferencia.

El estándar de geometría en que nos enfocamos para el compendio fue, "Distinguen entre los atributos que definen las figuras geométricas (por ejemplo, los triángulos son cerrados con tres lados) y los atributos que no las definen (por ejemplo, color, orientación, o tamaño general); construyen y dibujan figuras geométricas que tienen atributos definidos." Una vez que lo escribí en la cartulina los estudiantes lo leyeron mientras yo lo escribía palabra por palabra. Después, los estudiantes en cada grupo identificaron las palabras que no entendieron. Otra vez, utilizando las cucharas de plástico numeradas escogí una cuchara con el número cuatro y esos estudiantes se pusieron de pie para exponer lo que sus compañeros habían dicho. El grupo café dijo que no entendieron la palabra "distinguen", entonces la recalqué con el marcador. Los estudiantes discutieron la palabra "distinguir". Un grupo dijo que utilizan los ojos para distinguir las cosas; así que dibujé un ojo sobre la palabra "distinguen". La siguiente palabra fue atributos. Dieron ejemplos de los atributos del sol: *amarillo*, *rojo*, *anaranjado*, *caliente*, *calor, fuego*, *luz estrella*, *lava*, *gases*. La pregunta entonces fue: ¿Qué son atributos? ¿De qué estamos buscando los atributos? Ellos respondieron que buscamos los atributos de las figuras geométricas. Los estudiantes dialogaron y después les di la señal de silencio y todos levantaron su mano. Entonces escojí la cuchara con el número tres y esos estudiantes se pusieron de pie y expusieron las ideas discutidas en su grupo. El grupo rojo dijo que la palabra atributo es lo que tienen las figuras geométricas. Así que sobre la palabra atributos escribí, "Lo que tienen". El grupo amarillo dijo, "lo que hacen" y lo escribí también sobre la palabra atributos. El grupo verde agregó que era "la diferencia". Los estudiantes discutieron todas las palabras remarcadas para entender el estándar en que nos estábamos enfocando.

Utilizar la técnica de Cabezas Juntas Numeradas en matemáticas permite que los estudiantes comprendan mejor los términos nuevos. Esta técnica les permite aprender de forma cooperativa, donde cada estudiante como individuo aporta información a todos los integrantes del equipo. Los autores Johnson y Johnson (1999, p. 5) indican que el aprendizaje cooperativo

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Tips for Using Numbered Heads in the Secondary Classroom

Numbered Heads can be a powerful strategy with older students, shifting the energy and culture of the classroom. Here are some tips for implementing it in secondary classrooms.

- ❖ Put students in heterogeneous groups of four. Have students choose numbers from one to four. Negotiating their own numbers increases student buy-in and choice.
- ❖ Give students a specific question or prompt to discuss *with their teams.* Having them talk with their team before calling a number is key to this strategy. It communicates that all student voices are valued, promotes risk taking and learning by giving all students a chance to process the information in smaller groups before sharing out, and increases student engagement *and* accountability.
- ❖ Pull a number. That student represents the team. If a team isn't ready, have them put their heads back together. "Red team, put your heads back together. I'll come back." Make sure to go back to them and have them report out. Stay positive about expecting them to be ready—avoid berating a team. Over time, they learn you're serious about expecting them to participate.
- ❖ When you introduce the strategy, do it with familiar content in a low-stress manner. This will increase participation and risk taking. Once students are comfortable with the strategy, then add more challenging content.
- ❖ Sentence stems support students in reporting out in full sentences and can help a student get started. For example, "Our team's prediction is…"
- ❖ It's important to support a safe, respectful environment. If other students laugh or make comments about responses, teachers need to be firm about clear expectations for respect and risk taking. Students need to know you have their back.

Lisa Meyer

OCDE Project GLAD® Frames Schoolwide Social and Emotional Learning at Valle Vista Elementary School

by Natalie Olague, Instructional Coach—Valle Vista ES, Albuquerque Public Schools

In the 2016–2017 school year at Valle Vista Elementary School, we saw an alarming spike in the number of crisis calls for our students. As we analyzed the data, it became apparent that we needed to take a different approach to the social and emotional learning (SEL) of our students. This necessary change was consistent with the 2017 Aspen Institute's National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development, where leaders from education, science, government, and the private sector agreed on the urgency of integrating social and emotional development into K-12 education (*aspeninstitute.org*). Our plan for the 2017–2018 school year was to start off the year with integrated language arts units focused on developing the social and emotional skills of our students, K-5. These units would not only provide the initial "teach-tos" for our classroom and schoolwide behavior plans, but could also be used throughout the school year as a resource for re-teaching and extensions.

Valle Vista Elementary School is located in the South Valley of Albuquerque, New Mexico, and we have 515 students Pre-K–5. We are a Title I school, with 100% of our students receiving free lunch. We have a 50:50 dual language program; about 30% of our students are classified as English learners and 30% of our students have Individual Education Plans (IEP). Our mobility rate is between 30% and 40%, approximately 20% of our students have parents who are incarcerated, and about 15% of our students are classified as Title I Homeless.

Five years ago we decided to adopt Guided Language Acquisition Design (OCDE Project GLAD®) schoolwide as our framework for content-based language arts (LA) instruction. Project GLAD® is a model of professional development that is licensed by the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE). Project GLAD® is based on a collection of research-based, effective classroom strategies that focus on integrating language development and content learning. In addition, two of the Project GLAD® strategies focus on SEL—the Three Personal Standards and the T-Graph for Social Skills.

Given our SEL focus, Project GLAD® units were developed and implemented in the fall of 2017. For the primary grades (K-2) the units were based on the Project GLAD® K/1 Good Citizen unit. The heart of any Project GLAD® unit is the Process Grid, which is where the content that you want students to learn is organized. The Process Grid for these units was built around Project GLAD®'s Three Personal Standards (Make Good Decisions, Solve Problems, and Show Respect) and was also our behavior matrix for our recently developed schoolwide PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Support) System (*www.pbis.org*). The Process Grid for these units is shown in Table 1.

	Make Good Decisions	Solve Problems	Show Respect
Everywhere	• Keep your hands and feet to yourself.	• Take turns. • Seek help from an adult.	• Raise your hand to ask a questions. • Listen while others are speaking.
Cafeteria	• Remain seated. • Only touch and eat your own food.	• Raise your hand if you need help.	• Thank the cafeteria staff.
Bathroom	• Use the bathroom correctly. • Use only what you need of water, soap, paper towels, and toilet paper.	• Report maintenance issues to a teacher. • Report inappropriate use of the bathroom to a teacher.	• Allow other students their privacy.
Playground	• Use the playground equipment correctly. • Play fair and take turns.	• If someone is bothering you, ask them to stop, walk away, and tell a duty teacher.	• Keep our playground clean. • Invite others to play.
Walkways	• Be quiet. • Walk with your eyes forward.	• Give others their personal space.	• Admire student work with your eyes.

Table 1. Good Citizen Process Grid

Each of the units was backward planned, based on grade-level specific CCSS LA standards, using the *Understanding by Design* (UbD) planning framework (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). In addition to integrating the language arts standards and PBIS behaviors, we also wanted students to have a basic understanding of the relationship between the human brain and behaviors. To accomplish this we developed a developmentally

—continued on page 9—

—continued from page 8—

appropriate brain graphic organizer that combined a diagram of the brain (*www.blissfulkids.com*) with self-regulation strategies (Kuypers, 2011)—see Figure 1. This graphic organizer also became an anchor for our school counselor's SEL curriculum, in which she used it to review and introduce additional self-regulation strategies with lessons in each classroom.

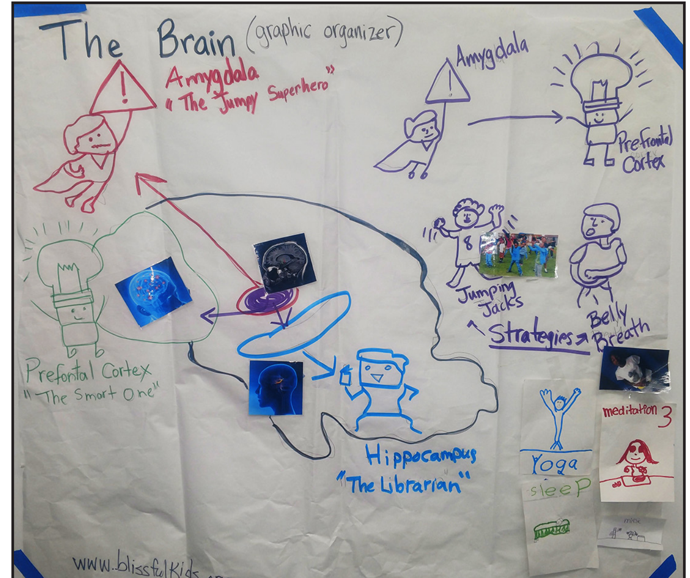

Figure 1. "The Brain" graphic organizer for primary grades (www.blissfulkids.com)

We also wanted our K-2 students to be exposed to the idea of a growth mindset (Dweck, 2007) as part of our schoolwide SEL LA units. For our dual language (DL) classrooms, the narrative strand of Project GLAD® strategies was implemented in Spanish with a fictional story that demonstrated the key growth mindset concept of "effort equals mastery" (kindergarten—*La pequeña locomotora que sí pudo*, first grade—*Sílbale a Willie*, second grade—*Irene, la valiente*). Additionally, in English, the video *Austin's Butterfly* (*http://modelsofexcellence.eleducation.org/resources/austins-butterfly*) was shown and analyzed by students as another resource that demonstrated the growth mindset idea of effort equals mastery.

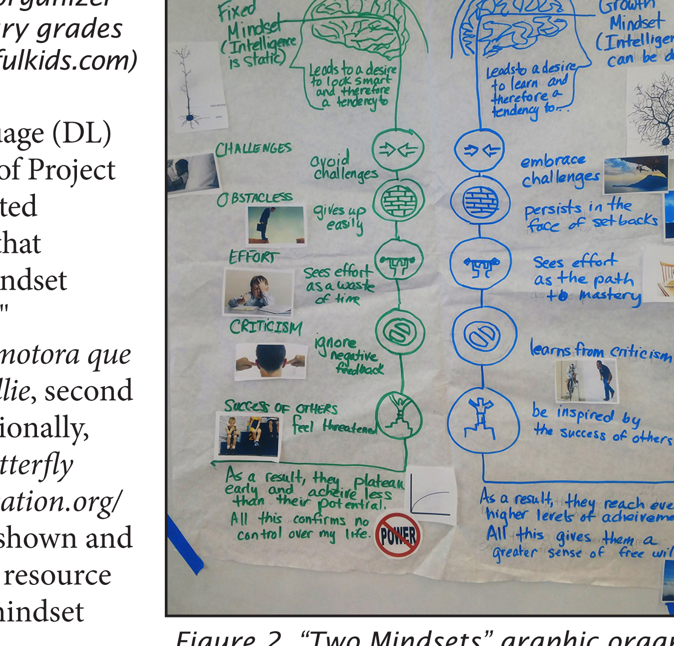

Figure 2. "Two Mindsets" graphic organizer for fourth and fifth grades

In Grades 3–5, the units that were developed were based on Character Counts! (*charactercounts.org*). The Process Grid for the fifth grade unit is shown in Table 2 on page 18. The Process Grids for third and fourth grades were scaled down to be more developmentally appropriate.

Similar to the K-2 Good Citizen units, each of the third through fifth grade units was backward planned, based on grade-level specific standards, using the UbD planning framework. The brain graphic organizer included more information, depending on the grade level, and a graphic organizer of growth mindset versus fixed mindset was also used in the fourth and fifth grades (see Figure 2).

For the dual language classrooms, the Character Counts! unit was done in English. However, in fourth and fifth grades, the next language arts unit was done in Spanish and was an extension of the Character Counts! unit, in which students researched an influential person (living or deceased) and had to prove that the person had a growth mindset (opinion/persuasive writing). In fourth grade, the students presented their findings by recording themselves as the person they researched, using ChatterPix (©Duck Duck Moose, LLC)—an application that lets you take a picture and record your voice, then the picture appears to be doing the talking. In fifth grade, the students presented their findings in a living museum.

Implementation of these units was deemed a success on many different levels. There was an overall cultural shift from both staff and students regarding student behaviors. For example, staff could be confident that they could tell any student to "use belly breathing to calm down your amygdala" and they would be understood. One teacher commented that the unit provided the current "science" behind

—continued on page 18—

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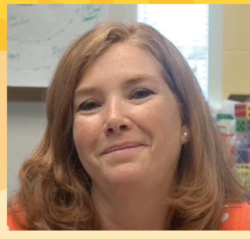

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8 am - 4 pm	Pre-Conference Institutes*
12 pm - 5 pm	Early Check-In
1 pm - 5 pm	Exhibits Open
5:30 pm - 7 pm	Opening Session
7 pm - 8:30 pm	Night at the Exhibits
7 pm - 8:30 pm	Opening Reception

Thursday, November 15th

7 am - 12 pm	Check-In
7 am - 5 pm	Exhibits & Job Fair
7 am - 8 am	Breakfast
8 am - 9:45 am	Opening Sessions
10 am - 5:30 pm	Concurrent Sessions
11:30 am -1:15 pm	Networking Luncheons
7:30 pm - 10:30 pm	Peña Musical

Friday, November 16th

7:30 am - 11:30 am	Check-In
7 am - 4:30 pm	Exhibits & Job Fair
7 am - 8 am	Breakfast
8 am - 9:45 am	Opening Sessions
8:30 am - 4:30 pm	Student Leadership Institute
10 am - 5:30 pm	Concurrent Sessions
11:30 am -1:15 pm	Networking Luncheons
7 pm - 10:30 pm	Conference Dance/Fundraiser with *Lila Downs**

Saturday, November 17th

8:30 am - 9:30 am	Breakfast with an Expert
9:30 am - 11 am	Concurrent Sessions
9:30 am - 11 am	Community Outreach w/ Lila Downs
11:15 am - 11:55 am	Closing

*ticketed event

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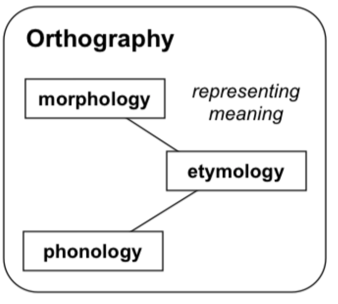
Structured Word Inquiry—
Investigating Language Scientifically

by Scott Mills, Fifth-Grade Dual Language Teacher—Francis Scott Key ES, Arlington, VA

For 2 years, I had no idea how to approach word study with my fifth-grade students. Teaching prefixes and suffixes is part of the Virginia state standards, but I really wasn't sure what morphology was. I didn't know how affixes functioned in the context of a sentence, and I saw morphology as something that could be shoved into vocabulary instruction. That all changed the first time I was introduced to Structured Word Inquiry (SWI) (Bowers & Kirby, 2010). I had always assumed spelling had irregularities and that students just had to memorize sight words in order to proficiently read words that weren't readily sounded out. SWI quickly brought an end to that belief. Over the past year, I have shifted from that thinking to knowing and, more importantly, being able to investigate scientifically the highly regular and ordered way written English is structured.

I currently teach 44 students (50% English speaking, 50% Spanish speaking) in a dual language immersion program in Northern Virginia. Over the past year, my students' growth on state tests has been eye-opening, but more importantly, I have seen my students and their families become excited and curious about how language works. SWI opened my eyes to new discoveries, and I would like to explain some fundamentals so that others can try incorporating these principles into language instruction.

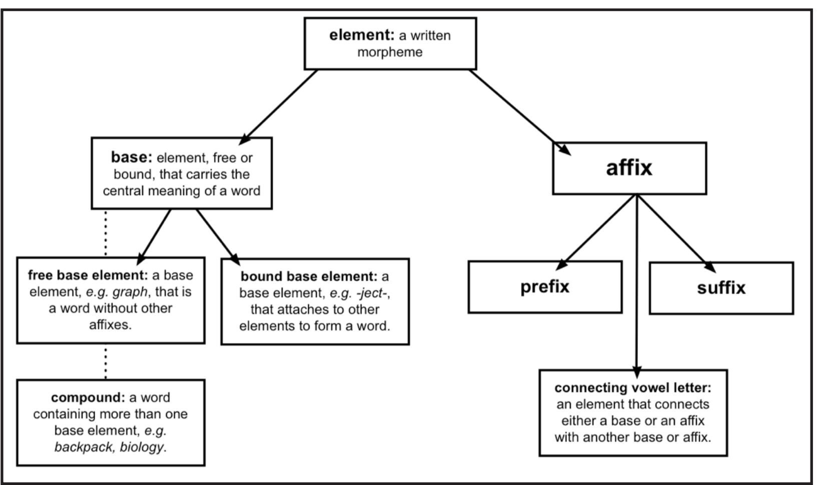
SWI is an educational framework for scientifically studying the English writing system. Below is a model of this hierarchical framework.



This model can be described in a practical way through SWI, which poses four questions:

1) What does the word mean?
2) How is the word built (morphology)?
3) What are the word's relatives (etymology and morphology)?
4) How do the aspects of pronunciation of the word effect its meaning (phonology)?

When working with the four questions, I introduce my students to some specific linguistic vocabulary. I use the chart below as a guide, along with hand signals (multisensory), to pre-teach some of the terms we will use to discuss spellings all year long.



Students color code this chart and use it as a reference all year. When we start investigating words and creating hypotheses for what the elements are and how they "join" together, we can look back and use our vocabulary to describe these processes accurately.

One student wrote this reflection comparing two different grade-level experiences:

> In third grade we did word study by cutting words out and gluing them in the correct place. The words that they had were like "ends with <e>" or "ends with <ing>" and they had oddballs which did not go in any column. In Mr. Mills' class we do word study like you have NEVER seen before. We don't glue or cut. We use a sequential order. First, what does it mean? Next, how is it built? Then, what are its relatives? Finally, what is the pronunciation? Some words that we have done are vociferous, transfer, design, significant, and so on."

Question one is the primary question of the entire framework. The meaning of a morphemic (sublexical) unit and how it combines with other morphemes to create words is the foundation of SWI. Authors such as Kate Kinsella and Anita Archer address how to teach the meaning of new vocabulary words, so I won't go in depth here with how to address meaning, but I do want to note that the teaching of morphology

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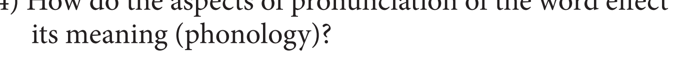

—continued from page 12—

and etymology has a strong impact on the entire reading block. After teaching a few affixes, students start to analyze and synthesize words for meaning. For example, in the word *photography*, if a student understands the base <*phote*> means light, and the base <*graph*> means write, students make the connection that photography is essentially writing with light. When they know that *one job* of an <-ed> suffix is to create the past tense form of a verb, they can use a word sum to change *photography* to *photographed*, and construct the sentence, "Yesterday, I photographed the sunset." I italicize *one job* because another job of an <-ed> form is to function as an adjective. In any case, none of this is possible without meaning. If an <-ed> means nothing to a student, how can we expect him or her to manipulate it? More often than not, students need more structure, not less. The structures of the English writing system rely on meaning.

Question two addresses the morphological structure of the word. After explicitly teaching vocabulary, I incorporate morphology into the instruction. For example, the words *telegraph, telegram, monograph,* and *monogram* share the cognate base elements *graph* and *gram*. A matrix, below, is a generative tool to help show all the different elements that make up words.

Prefixes	Base	Suffixes		
bio geo mono photo picto tele	**graph** *'write'*	ed ing y		
		ic	al	ly

I taught my students how to create a word sum using the lexical algorithm, as below.

bio + graph -> biograph
geo + graph + y -> geography
graph + ic + al + ly -> graphically

Notice that a word can compound and have multiple affixes.

I generally incorporate word study into vocabulary routines, but students often have questions about words they discover when reading passages or social studies or science content. I am looking for the transfer application to their writing, and when the opportunity to connect morphemes to grammar occurs, it can be generative. For example, the morpheme <-ed> is often used as a past tense inflectional suffix, but it can function adjectivally as well (e.g., *the bearded man*).

While using a word sum, a student had this question, "What about the <o> in *pictograph*? Why wouldn't the <o> be by itself since you have words like *picture*?" The student actually discovered the connecting vowel letter <o> in the word pictograph and wrote this word sum: <pict + o + graph -> pictograph>.

Once students start understanding that the vertical lines in a matrix represent the "joins" or plus signs in the word sum, they can begin to look at other languages. Consider the Spanish word for geography: *geografía*. What is different? What is the same? A word sum in Spanish might look like this: <geo> + <graf> + <ía>. Now we can see that the <ía> suffix in Spanish and the <y> suffix in English are performing the same function. What other words do these suffixes appear in? Consider the opportunities to construct and strengthen vocabulary with second language learners, struggling readers and writers, and maybe more importantly, in spelling. The consistency of the lexical algorithm (word sum) and the matrix allow students to generate words that share structure and meaning.

Question three asks learners to investigate the history of the word (etymology) to understand it more fully. In other words, what is the story of where this word comes from? In our examples of *telegraph, telegram, monograph*, and *monogram,* the base element <graph> comes from the Greek verb *graphein*. Other present-day English (PDE) words come from this root as well. The linguistic term used to describe these relatives is *cognate*. Some PDE cognates of *graph* are *graffiti, carve, cut* and even *crab*!

One important thing to note about questions two and three—as a learner investigates a word, these two questions are interchangeable. I would never try to answer question two before question one, but I could look at questions two and three at the same time. Likewise, the framework falls apart if I try to answer question four before all others.

Finally, **Question four**, as it pertains to words, asks what pronunciation aspects of the word are important for the meaning of the word. The word *photography* as commonly divided through phonics programs looks something like this:

Phonics: pho / tog / raph / y
SWI: <phote/ + o + graph + y>

The difference between this division and the lexical

—continued on page 19—

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generous grant from the Albuquerque Public Schools Education Foundation. Every class in the school, from kindergarten to fifth grade, writes articles. Each month, two to four classes contribute articles written collaboratively about their learning in class. If a class is studying something they want to share in English, then they contribute an article in English. Articles are not translated. As an 80:20 program, most of our learning is in Spanish, so most of the writing is, too. This has elevated the status of the Spanish language in our community.

As an 80:20 program, most of our learning is in Spanish, so most of the writing is, too. This has elevated the status of the Spanish language in our community.

In addition to class articles, we have begun a club for *La Prensa* after school that has expanded the publication to include sections that are now dedicated parts of every issue. These include a *¿Sabías Que?* corner, *Dichos y Adivinanzas*, and a comic strip that features a misguided knight and his wise steed who helps him learn a lesson each month. It has also provided an outlet for students who are truly interested and engaged in this work, and it has inspired tentative writers to see themselves as authors. In the near future, we intend to expand the program to include digital publication and even video broadcasts on our school website.

Through our student newspaper program, we have recognized the community as a source of academic content. We demonstrate to our students that diversity is an asset, that citizenship requires participation, and we celebrate the connections fostered through collaboration. By deepening our connection with the local Spanish-speaking community, we have created authentic opportunities for real-world communication, elevating student use of the language. Our students are also learning to communicate with professionals about their work, thereby providing exposure to a world of possibilities for their own futures.

We know that Common Core standards call for the nesting of speaking and listening within the context of literacy instruction, and that speaking and listening must extend to a variety of instructional arrangements, especially peer interactions across content areas. At Coronado, we have extended this fundamental understanding to include collaboration with community members outside of the school. We want our students to grapple with the challenge of negotiating for meaning, a process that will refine their communication skills in the context of authentic language use. Students are problem solvers—they use their limited language ability to pose and respond to questions in order to get information. This critical problem solving takes place when students conduct interviews during the research phase of their writing, and then again during a rigorous and extended revision process.

—continued on page 15—

Cómo usamos el español: Entrevistas entre estudiantes del quinto grado

Escrito por la clase de Sra. Granados, 5to grado

Entrevistamos una clase del quinto grado de la escuela Duranes. Les preguntamos de su experiencia en el programa bilingüe y de la importancia del español en sus familias. Fueron 19 estudiantes que nos vinieron a visitar el 30 de enero. Pasamos una mañana nerviosa, pero interesante; aprendimos que cada escuela tiene una cultura diferente.

Más que todo, queríamos saber del uso del español en sus familias y cómo les ha motivado aprender el español en la escuela. Trece estudiantes que entrevistamos dijeron que afectaría a sus familias si no hablaran español porque si no hablan español perderían no sólo el lenguaje, pero también las tradiciones y la cultura. Cuatro estudiantes de Duranes dijeron que no les afectaría a su familia porque no les importa para ellos, no es su cultura. Para las familias de Coronado y Duranes, es importante revitalizar el lenguaje español para no perder la cultura ni la conexión con la historia familiar. Las familias también reconocen el poder de hablar español - les permite comunicarse con personas diversas.

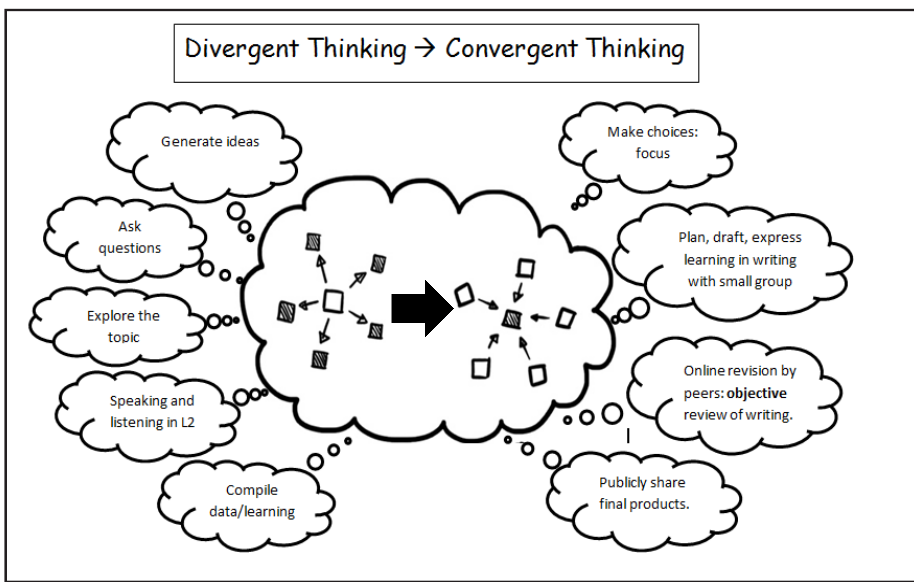
La mayoría de los estudiantes en Coronado y Duranes quieren ser bilingües porque quieren hablar con sus familias. Los otros estudiantes dijeron que es útil ser bilingüe porque les ayuda en la vida o en el trabajo. (continuado en la p.2)

¿Por qué quieres aprender el español?
Coronado
Duranes
Hablar con familia
Es util: trabajos
Experiencias te da
Puesto en el programa sin querer
0
4
8
12
16

La Prensa reporters interviewed students from Duranes Elementary School on their perspectives about the value of bilingualism. Whenever possible, math is integrated through data.

—continued from page 14—

Writing is a cognitively challenging process in itself. The writer must consider content and the arrangement of ideas; the audience must be considered, as must purpose and evidence-based support, not to mention grammar and spelling—which young students are still learning. Content must be reviewed again and again to ensure accuracy, coherence and continuity. As William Zinsser says in *Writing to Learn*, "Writing is thinking on paper." We also know that by teaching writing we are teaching reading. Writing "provides the reader with a means for recording, connecting, analyzing, personalizing, and manipulating key ideas" (Graham & Hebert, 2010). Writers gain insight about reading by creating their own texts and analyzing and revising the texts of peers. This process leads to growth in reading comprehension at the same time that students grow as writers.



Student Writing Process: From Divergent Thinking to Convergent Thinking (Lauren Gutiérrez, 2016)

Each week during *La Prensa* club, we discuss important issues such as consideration of our audience and defining our purpose for each article. We also take students through multiple revisions. Teachers do this work in classrooms during the school day, as well. As collaborative writing extends from content learning, teachers work with students to consider their audience and purpose. Authenticity of purpose is an innate quality of writing for a widely shared publication.

Since our first meeting, my students who are researching cancer have delved into reading about their topic. They learned that there are many different types of cancer, and that cancer affects many people. However, they do not yet have a clear purpose for their writing. Should the purpose of their article be to increase awareness about cancer? Is it to educate their readers using statistics about cancer and its impact on communities? We consider the possibility that their audience—their elementary school peers and their families—might not know what cancer really is. The girls realize they have more research to do. We set goals for their research, establish guiding questions, and make a plan for contacting community members to interview. Then the girls return to their reading.

What has been most notable to me in the process of implementing this project, now in our second year, has been the unwaning student interest in their writing. The monthly publication, shared with our whole student body and school community, provides meaning for students to write; it is writing for an authentic purpose. My two students and their writing about cancer are a perfect example. Upon realizing they had much more to research, they could have backed out of their article, but instead, they returned to their work with resolve. They knew they were writing an important article that would educate their community; they had a sense of purpose. They understand that their writing is a form of service and that through their work as journalists they are actively participating and contributing to their community.

References

Graham, S., & Hebert, M. A. (2010). *Writing to read: Evidence for how writing can improve reading. A Carnegie Corporation Time to Act Report.* Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.

Zinsser, W. (1988). *Writing to Learn*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.

For more information about La Prensa, please contact Lauren Gutiérrez at lauren.gutierrez@aps.edu or through the Coronado ES website, https://coronado.aps.edu.

—continued from page 3—

work with newcomer students one-on-one to assess whether or not they have the foundational skills required to comprehend the topics you are instructing. If not, create a plan to help them acquire these skills.

Linguistic—When students are in the beginning stages of learning English, it is crucial that their teachers be endorsed in TESOL and attend regular training in areas such as teaching for English language development and newcomer issues. This is especially important at the middle and high school levels, as the content gets more and more complex and scaffolding becomes more essential.

Highland High School in Albuquerque has the highest refugee enrollment in the state of New Mexico and has implemented some structures that support the refugee and other SLIFE populations. Highland levels ELD classes so that a level 1 English learner is in ELD with other level 1-2 students. This lowers the affective filter and allows the teacher to tailor and scaffold content material to the students' linguistic levels. In addition, the new students receive one period of Conversational or Newcomer English so they can rapidly learn Survival English vocabulary and structure. After all, the students have to know how to count, ask for the restroom, and express their emotions and physical well-being if we expect them to be able to function in society. They are not going to learn this vocabulary as quickly as they need to if they are only taking core classes.

It is essential to allow the students the time and space to use the language that they learn after each lesson. Dedicating the last 10 minutes of class to the students' language targets allows them to practice the new vocabulary and language structures they learned.

Cultural—Newcomer students have been living in places that operate very differently from the United States. The schools and teachers must be prepared to recognize and respect the cultural differences of the newcomer students—and teach their English-speaking students to do so as well. The teachers should be trained in the cultural and religious backgrounds of the students. Schools that enroll newcomer students should provide alternative lunch options that address various religious requirements (e.g., vegetarian or non-pork options). The teachers themselves need to understand how to be respectful of the cultural differences. Sometimes the students have different hygienic standards than we are used to. The teachers need to know how to address this with the students in a sensitive manner.

There are many other cultural topics that the new students will need to be educated about—things like standing in line, crossing the street, bike safety, using a computer, and checking accounts. The previously mentioned "Newcomer Classes" are a great place to address these issues.

Social—It is hard enough to be the new student, but it is especially difficult when you look, dress, and speak differently than everyone else in the room. When teachers are trained in working with newcomer students, they understand that they must give the students the vocabulary they will need for different situations and allow them ample time to practice alone and with their peers. They need this practice time with both academic and conversational English sentences so they gain confidence in using the language outside the supportive environment. Both linguistic and social support in this area are crucial, as the students love interacting with their peers.

Emotional—Moving to a new country in and of itself is traumatic, so the majority of the newcomer students are dealing with some degree of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). This is especially true if they have witnessed violence, death, or sexual assault in their home countries. Newcomer students need check-ins with mental health specialists. They also need teachers who want to focus on their needs and can do so in an environment that is not burdensome and/or does not take time away from the general population. Newcomer programs are a great way to provide the new students with a nurturing environment supported by a teacher who has the capacity to focus on them and is eager to help them learn.

It may sound idealistic that a school or district could provide resources like these for newcomer students, but it has been done nationwide for years. Welcoming our newcomer students with a culturally respectful space to learn from qualified teachers enables them to become productive citizens in our society.

To learn more about newcomer programs or schools, visit "Internationals Network for Public Schools" (internationalsnps.org) or "Place Bridge Academy" (place.dpsk12.org).

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—continued from page 9—

Table 2. Character Counts! Process Grid

Trait ↓	Meaning	Key Concepts	Components	At School		Influential Individuals who Demonstrated the Trait
				Examples	Non-examples	
Responsibility	• Take care of what needs to be done. • Think solid like a tree.	• "Life is full of choices." • "We are in charge of our choices."	• Plan • Persevere • Practice self-control • Strive for excellence • Be accountable • Make good decisions • Be proactive	• Keep your desk clean • Finish work • Put materials away • Pick up trash • Stay on task • Ignore distractions	• Keep a messy desk • Fail to complete work • Copy from other people • Tell people the answer	Steve Jobs Benjamin Franklin
Trustworthiness	• Do what you say you'll do. • Have the courage to do the right thing. • Think true blue.	• "Trust is earned but can be lost very quickly."	• Be honest • Keep promises • Show integrity • Be loyal	• Start assignment when teacher is busy • Stick up for your friend with a bully • Keep a promise to help with a project • Tell the truth about not finishing your homework	• Play around as soon as the teacher isn't looking • Lie about homework • Break a promise to help with a project • Share gossip	Abraham Lincoln
Caring	• Show a concern for others. • Think of a heart.	• "Your personal fulfillment makes any personal sacrifices worthwhile."	Practice: • Kindness • Compassion • Gratitude • Forgiveness • Charity	• Encourage fellow classmates • Take someone to the nurse	• Laugh at a fellow classmate • Hold a grudge	Mother Teresa
Citizenship	• Work to make the world a better place. • Think regal purple as representing the state.	• "You have an obligation to make the world a better place."	• Respect authority • Participate in the democratic process • Improve school climate • Protect the environment	• Be a peer mediator • Pick up trash	• Throw wet paper towels on the bathroom ceiling • Bully others	George Washington
Fairness	• Treat people in a way that is right. • Think of sharing your snack equally.	• "Fair is not always equal."	• Take turns • Play by the rules • Give credit to others • Ask for and take only your fair share	• Let others have turns on playground equipment • Encourage fellow student to participate	• Take credit for your group's work when you didn't do work • Blame others for you not getting your work done	Mahatma Gandhi
Respect	• Believe the well-being and dignity of all people are important. • Treat others the way you want to be treated.	• "Treat everyone with respect, even if you feel they don't deserve it."	• Be tolerant • Use good manners • Show consideration • Engage in peacekeeping	• Say please and thank you • Respect personal space	• Gossip • Argue with your teacher	Martin Luther King Jr.

the normal SEL that they would be teaching at the beginning of the school year. The schoolwide behavior data showed a significant decrease in both the number of crisis calls (69 for August–October 2016, 18 for August–October 2017) and the number of students needing crisis calls (17 for 2016 and 7 for 2017). Next steps include updating the units based on teacher reflection and feedback, identifying more explicit connections between the school PBIS system and the resources in the unit, developing ways to help students internalize SEL, and keeping the ideas from these units in focus for both students and teachers throughout the entire school year.

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—continuación de la página 7—
"consiste en trabajar juntos para alcanzar objetivos comunes". Etxebarria (traducido de Kagan) indica que el aprendizaje cooperativo "se basa en organizar el trabajo cooperativo de forma efectiva mediante estructuras que permitan trabajar los temas curriculares complejos de forma genérica, dinámicas que se adapta a cualquier contenido".

La estrategia de Cabezas Juntas Numeradas ha permitido que el aprendizaje de los estudiantes en mi clase sea eficaz, ya que esta ayuda con el comportamiento de los estudiantes, a tolerar y respetar la opinión de los demás, así como también con la adquisición de conocimientos a través del diálogo con sus compañeros. Todos los estudiantes de la clase tienen la capacidad de respetar y apreciar lo que sus compañeros aportan en las discusiones con su grupo. Esta estrategia ayuda de manera significativa a que todos los alumnos utilicen el diálogo como una herramienta que les permite incrementar su léxico al trabajar utilizando el aprendizaje cooperativo. Es muy gratificante para mí, como docente, el poder observar día a día, cómo mis alumnos aprenden y se divierten con sus compañeros conversando y compartiendo sus opiniones y aclarando sus dudas.

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—continued from page 13—
algorithm is that the syllable division is obscuring the morphology of the word! What is more interesting about this word is the connection of the <ph> grapheme to the /f/ phoneme, something that is consistent and reliable in Greek-origin words. Also of note could be a discussion of the <y> grapheme and its many phonemic variations—in *geography* the phoneme /iː/. Question four does not focus on the pronunciation of the entire lexeme. Instead, it zeroes in on specific grapheme-phoneme correspondences that impact the word's meaning. This reinforces the idea that English spelling is consistent and regular, whereas pronunciation varies.

One of the primary differences between SWI and other common word study and phonics-first programs is that SWI places orthographic phonology in its correct place within the writing system. Orthographic phonology is the study of the interrelationship between the sound system of a language and the writing system of that language. Orthographic phonology can only be studied properly by accounting for the interrelationship between morphology, etymology, and phonology. Consider the word *action.* A common phonics program, often taught in primary grades, might analyze the word according to syllables like *ak/ shun*. However, the actual morphology of the word is <act> + <ion>. The letter strings <ac> and <tion> have no meaning attached, but the base <act> and the suffix <-ion> do. When morphology is placed first, a discussion of the <t> grapheme representing the /ʃ/ phoneme can occur.

While SWI is not a curriculum or program, it is based on scientific principles and linguistic accuracy. The generative nature of this framework allows students to connect words at the morphemic (sublexical) and phrasal (supralexical) levels across English and other languages. I say supralexical because consider this analogy: a morpheme is to a word as a clause is to a sentence (Cooke, 2017). My students, especially English learners and struggling readers, writers, and spellers, have all benefited from the structure that the SWI framework provides. There are no more exceptions to spelling rules or syllable types to memorize. That is not to say that it isn't challenging to learn to read, but the idea is that language is a science that can be explored and engaged with just like any other. Students appreciate knowing this.

For more information, please visit the author's website at *www.languageinnerviews.com*.

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