



CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Office of Early Childhood Education

THINK THEMES!



Dual Language Education Program
Thematic Units PreK-3



Office of Early Childhood Education
Dual Language Education Program
Blanca A. Treviño, Executive Director

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook is intended as a resource for Dual Language Education Program teachers. The primary goal of this book is to help guide teachers in using and implementing the thematic approach. It includes the process taken in developing broad themes and condensing them into more specific topics with lessons that are developmentally appropriate for students in prekindergarten through third grade. In addition, Chicago Public School goals and curriculum framework statements, as well as Second Language goals, were aligned to correspond with the themes.

Dual language programs incorporate two languages in the teaching of content areas, allowing students to practice and apply skills in natural and meaningful contexts. This type of program creates an environment conducive to learning two languages and promotes positive attitudes toward all cultures. Its main goal is to foster bilingualism and biliteracy for both English language learners and native English speaking students.

The thematic approach is one of the recommended, effective teaching strategies for Dual Language classrooms (PreK-3). Teachers can integrate content, literacy and language development through the thematic approach. This approach allows teachers to plan a school day full of activities that are cohesive and that lend themselves to natural language development, academic content knowledge and biliteracy development. The main focus is to study a topic in-depth by integrating all curricular areas. In addition, learning centers can be set up to use and apply skills through interaction and hands-on activities. While at centers, students are able to develop their language by interacting with others and at the same time are developing socialization skills. Learning centers encourage independent use of classroom/materials, reinforce concepts previously introduced, extend and enrich concepts, stimulate creativity, foster experimentation and discovery, and provide opportunities to make choices.

This thematic handbook includes a section of definitions of the thematic approach and second language instructional approaches that can be used when doing the activities for the topics selected from each theme. The next four sections of the book present specific topics selected from the themes. They are: Plants, Insects, Magnets, and Simple Machines. Within each topic, you will find the following:

- **CPS academic goals/standards/frameworks**
- **CPS second language goals and standards**
- **activities:** lessons to be implemented
- **lists of materials:** tools needed to conduct the activity
- **strategies:** includes the grouping of students as well as approaches to assist and enhance learning
- **resources:** list of teacher books, technology, field trips, etc.
- **word bank:** key vocabulary
- **key concepts:** curricular connections
- **literacy connections:** language arts activities that tie in with state goals
- **activity sheets:** worksheets to assess prior knowledge and reinforce what students learn through activities
- **assessments:** suggested activities on assessing student learning on topics presented
- **extension activities:** other activities you could incorporate to each unit
- **list of children’s books:** books to supplement your teaching

The last part of the book includes a “Teacher Resources” section, which includes a list of books, computer software, and/or internet resources for your use.



THEMATIC APPROACH

Definition

- ✓ Based on a topic, theme, author, idea, literary genre...
- ✓ Organizes instruction, learning, and assessment around a theme
- ✓ Has specific learning goals and outcomes that students are to accomplish
- ✓ Integrates content areas, language, and literary instruction

Learners

- ✓ Build on student's interests and prior knowledge by focusing on topics that are relevant to them
- ✓ Helps students link background knowledge to new knowledge
- ✓ Allows for authentic learning by utilizing problem solving across content areas
- ✓ Supports students' learning styles in a variety of interactive and collaborative ways

Time Line

- ✓ Varies according to students' interest in the theme, and/or complexity of the theme
- ✓ As short as two weeks and as long as an entire school year

PLANNING THEMATIC INSTRUCTION

1. Choose the theme, idea, genre, author....

consider students and grade level selection

2. Identify learning objectives

what are the students going to learn

3. Select material and resources

books, videos, software, magazines, brochures, field trips, guest speakers, artifacts, music, manipulatives, instruments...

4. Select activities

that are meaningful, cognitively demanding, context embedded, grade and level appropriate, interconnected, integrated, interesting, engaging, related to learning objectives....

5. Identify assessment instruments

authentic and performance based assessment (portfolios, rubrics, checklists, anecdotal records, journals, miscue analysis, reading inventories...) related to learning objectives

SECOND LANGUAGE INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES

Anticipation Guide (PreK-3)

This strategy helps to activate prior knowledge and sets the purpose for reading. The teacher or the students select important ideas or concepts in the text about to be read. These are discussed and a list of students' predictions and inferences is created, with which students agree or disagree. The text is read followed by a discussion where students verify or refute their predictions.

Number Heads Together (2-3)

In this cooperative learning strategy groups of four number off 1-4. The teacher gives the students a problem to solve or a question to answer together. The students are given time to research or discuss the solution or answer, then they make sure that all the members of the group understand and can provide the answer or solution to the rest of the class. In this cooperative learning variation, all the students in the group are responsible for knowing the answer to the problem, thus ensuring that all are participating equally, since the students do not know who will have to report to the class.

Language Experience Approach (PreK-3)

This is one of the most frequently recommended methods for beginning second language readers and writers. In this technique students provide the text, through dictation, that serves as the basis for reading instruction. The students build on stories dictated individually, in small groups or whole class. Students are able to read their own stories with minimal difficulty because they already know the meaning. In addition, students view reading and writing as purposeful communication about their own interests and concerns. As a result, this approach

is tailored to the learner's own interests, background knowledge, and language proficiency.

Sheltered Instruction (PreK-3)

Special techniques are used in this approach to help students understand English instruction. The modifications in Sheltered Instruction include speaking and enunciating clearly, repeating key point, defining essential vocabulary in context, and combining nonverbal communication cues (such as pictures, objects, gestures) with spoken or written language. This method is recommended for second language learners who have achieved intermediate level proficiency.

Preview-Review (K-3)

This technique has the teacher *previewing* a lesson by providing a brief synopsis of the content in the students' native language (like an oral summary, reading a book about the subject, showing a film, asking key questions...), then *views* or conducts the lesson in the students' second language, and finally *reviews* by summarizing the key ideas about the lesson in the first language. The latter part is to check for students' comprehension and determine if additional support is needed.

Total Physical Response (PreK-3)

This method of language teaching relies on the teachers' and students' physical movements to teach and learn vocabulary and concepts in the second language. At first the teacher provides the oral commands for students to enact or do. Later students can give each other commands to perform. In 2nd and 3rd grades students and teachers can write commands for students to follow.

Cooperative Learning (K-3)

This instructional approach can be defined as an instructional organization strategy in which students work collaboratively in small groups to achieve academic and social learning. Students are grouped heterogeneously (gender, academic ability, ethnicity, language proficiency, etc.) and randomly assigned to teams. All the students of the team share the responsibility of learning the academic content for themselves as well as for the other members of the team. Procedural roles are also assigned to students, such as recorder, observer, reporter, etc., and are rotated so that all members have a chance to experience each role (Slavin, 1990). Although

this approach is not designed specifically for second language learners, it lends itself well to language development because the students share and support each other's learning in socially appropriate ways.

Using Pattern Language or Predictable Books/Songs/Poems (PreK-3)

This teaching tool allows the students to become comfortable with both oral and written language through rhythmic, repeating and predictable language. Students hear and use the language patterns in the structure of the story, song, or poem, becoming familiar with its vocabulary and the sentence structure. Later students can replace words or phrases within the pattern or the text to make their own passages or lyrics by creating their own books.

MODIFICATIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING IN THE SECOND LANGUAGE

▶ **Teacher Speech**

- use lower but natural rate
- use the rephrasing , repeating, clarifying, restarting...
- use verbal emphasis/writing on board new vocabulary, idioms...

▶ **Language in Context**

- provide concrete examples with which students are familiar
- use pantomime, gestures, facial expressions
- use pictures, graphic organizers, props, and real life objects...
- use films, videos, and software...
- do demonstrations, role play...
- use manipulatives

▶ **Giving Directions**

- do not translate, do not mix languages
- if necessary have a bilingual student do minimal translation
- break down complex tasks into simpler shorter steps
- frequently ask the students questions to verify understanding

▶ **Student Interaction**

- use cooperative groups (a bilingual student in every group)
- use the buddy system, partners, and heads together...
- organize English/Spanish partners

▶ **Error Correction**

- keep error connection to a minimal for beginner levels (students must feel safe and uninhibited)
- students and teacher should realize that errors are a necessary part of learning a second language
- function before form: focus on meaning rather than grammatical correctness
- use positive model technique, restate the statement correctly rather than correct the student directly

▶ **Meaningful Dialogue**

- engage in dialogue that is negotiated rather than just transmitted
- engage in discussions rather than straight lecture
- ask for open-ended questions, like “what do you think?”...
- personalize the conversation by saying “Maria here, took a trip...”

**MODIFICATIONS FOR BUILDING VOCABULARY
IN THE SECOND LANGUAGE**

❖ **Word Building**

- use gestures, body language, pictures, drawings, actual objects
- label objects and pictures
- print rich environments (charts, labels...)
- use role play

❖ **Mapping**

- use semantic maps, webs, diagrams, graphic organizer
- activate prior knowledge (connect to what students already know)
- model the use of webs with whole group, then students apply it in cooperative groups, then do it alone

❖ **Grouping & Classifying:**

- classifying vocabulary and concepts makes it easier for students to remember
- classify words by grammar: nouns, verbs...
- classify words by topics: plants, animals, careers...
- classify words by syntax: -ing, -ed (-ando in Spanish) endings
- classify words by function: apologizing, requests, denying...
- classify words by opposites: cold/hot, tall/short...

❖ **Word Banks**

- color code words by category
- keep a class word bank or students keep individual ones
- use with partners, cooperative groups, for homework...

❖ **Highlight**

- use color paper or markers
- **underline, bold, italics, CAPITAL LETTER, boxes** *stars*

❖ **Cognates**

- Relate new words to new words to familiar words (student-estudiante, obscure-oscuro...)

❖ **Learning Logs or Journals:**

- use as a learning tool or organizer to write:
- list of learned words, assignments, words students want to learn, summaries of content learned, as dialogue journals with the teacher or other students...

ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

➤ **KWL:**

A three-column chart with headers. The first column is labeled “**K**” for “what you know”, the second column is labeled “**W**” for “what you want to know”, and the third column is labeled “**L**” for “what you learned.” The whole class participates with teacher guidance. The “**K**” and “**W**” column are filled out at the beginning of the theme. The “**L**” column is filled out at the conclusion of the theme/unit, or as children learn new things.

➤ **Partnerships:**

Two students working together on a task.

➤ **Shared Reading:**

The process in which the teacher and the children read together. A book is read and reread many times. As the children become familiar with the book, they join in and “share” the reading. Predictable books are the best kind to use for shared reading.

➤ **Small Group:**

Consists of three to five students that work on a project together. A management system of your choosing can be applied.

➤ **Think-Pair-Share:**

Two students working together, as in the partnership. They think through questions and share answers with each other.









