Amplifying the ESL Curriculum

Culturally Responsive Lesson Planning for Recent Arrivals

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Committee Approval

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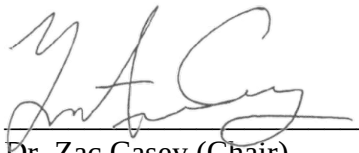

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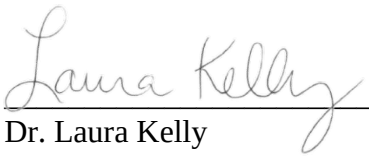

Dr. Laura Kelly

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Abstract

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The basis of this integrated curriculum incorporates the language needs of recent immigrants to succeed in their mainstream classrooms. The framework of this design is not an independent construction of ESL principles and procedures common to most ESL classroom initiatives where basic skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening are the intention. The construction of this curriculum is centered on a more practical needs analysis of the language expectations during lectures, in-class assignments, and verbal interactions taking place throughout the day. Working in tandem with core classroom instructors and bilingual paraprofessionals, a clear action plan, stressing authentic communication in these classes to assist learners in participation and the retaining of relevant information to meet their academic needs is the objective. School administrators and staff are often in need of a better formula to teach learners who are new to English. A focus on anticipated key vocabulary and critical language structures would be an effective measure to build confidence and encourage a variety of class interactions. These language points would be rehearsed in small group work discussions, role-plays, memory games, bi-lingual Bingo activities, and other assignments involving task-based information, reasoning, and opinion-gap opportunities through culturally responsive teaching strategies.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge my EFL students in Korea, China, Japan, Thailand, Cambodia, and here in the United States who helped me realize the need for a type of English as a second language curriculum that made reflections on their particular learning preferences, social familiarizes, and cultural treasures that influence how they reason, interact and learn. The one size fits all textbooks and lesson planning brought forth by global providers make little mention of the unique habits and characteristics of its followers. It was from these incidental experiences of learners that I gained an understanding of how to make English as much about their worlds as it is mine.

Introduction

This paper explores the topic of better preparing recent arrivals from regions where Spanish (L1-the learner's first language) is the dominant language in government and social environments and limited English language fluency for grade-level achievement in new academic settings through an alternative ESL curriculum. Recently Arrived Immigrant English Learners (RAIELS) arriving in an English language-dominant society (L2-the learner's target language) face the challenges of adapting to a new culture and its language. RAIELs are defined as foreign-born students who have been in U.S. schools for up to three academic years and who, upon entry into U.S. schools, were classified as English learners (CCSSO, 2022). The needs of RAIELS are broader than those of ELs as the latter represents learners with more experience in English-speaking environments that better influence their progress in adapting to English instruction and are thus placed within a setting appropriate to their age. This work centers on learners entering academic institutions at the fourth through twelfth-grade levels as these age groups experience more challenges and at-risk classifications than the better adjustable K-3 students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022).

RAIELs from Spanish first language regions represent the largest number of those entering education facilities and are typically more diverse in their migration locations (common immigration preferences) than other immigrant demographics creating a number of challenges for school districts without significant populations of recent arrivals. Amongst this group are students with refugee status, unaccompanied minors, and students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE). They enter school systems at ages that range from five to eighteen with varied L1 literacy capacities and limited English exposure. Younger learners have the advantage of entering at an age level appropriate for grades K-3, whereas younger less inhibited minds are better equipped to acquire rather than learn a second language (Short & Boyson, 2012).

Those arriving in a new social and linguistic environment are exposed to a host of dramatic lifestyle changes in a bid to adapt to a new culture and its vernacular. The hybrid formats that lump RAIELS into age-specific grade-level classrooms without being readied with precursory instruction and social conventions bear a reproachable disservice. Where those who see grade-level immersion as a non-discriminatory method of inclusion, ill-prepared learners find it irredeemably inscrutable. With so many learners performing poorly in L2-dependent testing, a method of instruction that connects L2 content with L1 familiarities would offer a near-continuous flow of linguistic equivalents from which conceptions could be drawn and stored and would lessen the burden of clarification. The daily presence of a bilingual paraprofessional, working in tandem with ESL and content instructor lesson plans would assist grouped learners with their comprehension of course elements.

In discussions concerning how best to accommodate RAIELS, the question of how long and what type of intervention services will be needed to advance academic proficiency is far from static. What would contribute to better success is an ESL strategy incorporating information, reasoning, and opinion-gap instruction of core content-based L2 particulars and L1 reflections that prepares for better transparency of written and verbal instruction in core classrooms.

Background

My interest in developing such a strategy came from my own experience as an ESL instructor working with recent arrivals. Being in the position of teaching from a fifth grade coursebook to learners with little background in English vocabulary or syntax quickly became an exercise in futility. They had every desire to learn and do well in their classwork but lacked the background knowledge needed to manage the material. I sympathized with these learners and knew that their transition from one culture to another must have involved all manner of insecurities. Attending classes where coursework and

lectures are delivered in an unfamiliar language was to undergo yet another wholesale renovation on their morale. Determined to find a solution to this issue, I sought to find an alternative curriculum only to discover that no other discretionary options were in place. I thought back to my time teaching English in a Korean school where my curiosity for their culture led me to the idea of developing lessons where gamification and translanguaging became a culturally responsive way of rallying their spirits. When lessons are developed with learner engagement in mind, reluctant attitudes towards English pass from sight. Yet changing educational attitudes and traditions involves a prolonged series of modest steps. Pointing those steps in the right direction and observing their modest successes along the way is gratification enough for those of us who love our profession and intend for our learners to accomplish great things.

Theoretical Framework

The framework of this curricular design borrows from the principles of the Task-based Approach (Prabu, 1987) with the premise that learners are more likely to learn when they can find interest in the material presented and occasions to self-reflect on content. The design pays renewed attention to the notion that RAIELs should be immersed in grade-level English-driven instruction as a means of adapting to academic expectations in monolingual institutions with deliberate speed. Though a challenge for K-3 learners, it turns formidable for learners entering the 4tth grade and beyond (Menken, 2013; Oikonomidoy et.al., 2018). What many of these learners are experiencing is both in contrast and accord to the running theme of academic inequity in Lisa Delpit's (2013) book, *"Multiplication is for white people: Raising expectations for other people's children."* In opposition to the thin curriculum black students are proffered, where simple tasks, conspicuous by their want of critical thinking opportunities, have been the sustainer, post-third grade RAIELs find themselves in the rigor of a thick curriculum that places unrealistic expectations on their linguistic facilities. A perfect coincidence

between the two is whether taught down or taught steeply, neither group is afforded the opportunity to align their true intellect.

Though most ESL learners in the American school system were born and raised in the United States and have had adequate exposure to the complexities of the English language to succeed at grade-level designs, the increase in recent arrivals with measured L2 exposure heralds an examination of how best to acclimate them into school classrooms and curriculums. Without admissible knowledge of the language and social content, many of these students are in a constant struggle to gain a foothold in an atmosphere of ever-expanding responsibilities. Teachers as well sense the discouragement of learners, their reliance on bi-lingual classmates for translation interventions (Han & Park, 2017), and lower than average performance scores during assessments.

For RAIELs, curriculums incorporated into ESL classrooms or provided as a separate or additional entity for those whose exposure to English is modest makes appreciable grade-level advancement through existing ESL programs exceedingly ambitious. The pace of most classrooms, especially those of middle and high school core courses, constrains the ability to absorb and advance effectively. As Menken effectively stated, “It takes many years for emergent bilinguals to perform to the level of their peers on tests in the language of the state, if indeed they ever do, particularly when instructed monolingually in that language” (2013, p.440). Even when successes are achieved, the ability to foster acquired knowledge in long-term memory banks is problematic due to the abundance of material and limited processing or practice time. In what is referred to as educational regression (Kreisberg & Hsin, 2021), a learner’s inability to maintain acquired knowledge often becomes evident in higher education environments. As they progress through grade levels, often by the charitable resolve of instructors, the challenges are exacerbated. It is more sensible to align the ESL curriculum with those of core courses in a manner that takes into account who the learners are (Walqui & Bunch,

2020).

Language skill leveling

Compounding the successful development of language preparatory initiatives is the diverse literacy spectrum of recent arrivals and how to begin organizing learners into a grade level that matches their capacities while being mindful of their date of birth. Learners at a fifth-grade level age, for instance, with comparable content experiences in their L1 scholastic progression, might demonstrate an English proficiency awkwardly lower than their peers. A move to draw such students away to lower class levels would likely abase and invite an extricating resolve (Rodriguez et al., 2020) (Kent et al., 2017).

The WIDA ACCESS test is an evaluation given to English language learners upon entering an English L1 academic institution (WIDA English standard development (ELD) standards, 2015). The tests are administered yearly to these students to gauge progress and determine when a learner has met the appropriate scoring criteria to exit the ESL program. The WIDA consortium, used by 40 U.S, states as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Northern Marianan Islands, identifies six performance levels for L2 English learners (entering, beginning, developing, expanding, bridging, and reaching in receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing) tasks, with each stage representing a critical transition that is suggestive of where a learner's present level of fluency lies and what performance gradation is needed to transition to the next stage of development. Often for RAIELS, the alignment of capacity and grade level are at odds and students struggle at multiple stages of academic development that rely on a particular performance level needed to produce spontaneous language (WIDA, 2020). The further a learner is from the necessary contingencies and reinforcers of a particular level, the less likely messages will be understood, absorbed, and acted upon. The parlance of classroom dialogue and banter is visceral to those born and bred in the tongue and ethos of their surroundings. For RAIELS without such faculty, authority in remarking

upon, alluding to, or giving an account of an issue brought forth by the instructor or classmates is apportioned to those better acquainted with such particularities.

Related Curriculum Description and Analysis of Existing Curriculum

The American education system continues to maintain a monolingual and monocultural approach to English as second language instruction. Eurocentric history and its conceptions continue to be the foundation of curricular content at every grade level (Reyes, 2018). Proponents argue that American citizens, or those on the path towards a new national identity, should immerse in the instructional habits of their peers and equip themselves with the tools to pass and progress from one grade level to the next. Curriculum content offers little regarding scaffolding ideas and concepts that would better connect with the retrospections of immigrants from Hispanic cultures (Oikonomioy et. al., 2018).

The frustration brought about by the need to memorize increasingly complex vocabulary items and language functions that braid into the comprehension of new curricular content and assessment contribute to learner disillusionment (Amuedo-Dorantes & Lopez, 2015). The dropout rate of Hispanic learners in the American school system, for these and other causes, has brought concerns to the forefront (Odo, 2012). The message is that current practices in ESL environments are afflicting the ability of learners to achieve academic success and dissipates further from one grade level to the next until apathy and disengagement become the norm for many. Proposals for new programs that make use of a learner's cultural assets (Kelly, et al., 2021) is a promising concept that has begun in a number of school districts. In areas where immigrant populations are fewer in number, better efforts are needed in bringing these cultural resources into the learning environment. The existing curricular formats continue the idea of complete linguistic and cultural acquisition through a monolingual/monocultural repertoire that hinders preparatory progress for recent arrivals.

Marrero (2016) makes reference to Vygotsky and his writings on how peer interaction is a basis for understanding and developing abstractions for new concepts, and it is this group participation that links community and participants to the shared experiences, retrospections, and familiarities that aid in the learning process. To disassociate or replace acquainted chronologies with foreign registers that align singularly with native participants leaves a gap in the way new knowledge can be processed. Soltero (2008) adds that taking the stance of English-only in the classroom as a way to expedite acculturation is finding immigrant communities drawing inward and distancing themselves from the predominant population as a way of maintaining linguistic and communal harmony. The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (August 31, 2021) makes a case for exploring new avenues in curriculum design that reflects more of the culture of immigrants by suggesting that the approaches and methodologies used must be rooted in evidence-based research. Local educational agencies (LEAs) may develop and implement new language instruction programs and expand or enhance existing programs. LEAs also may implement schoolwide programs within individual schools or implement systemwide programs to restructure, reform, or upgrade all programs, activities, or operations related to the education of their EL students.

Renovating the Existing Curriculum

As a step toward threatening established protocols in ESL classrooms, a more culturally relevant syllabus design is offered to shoulder more weight on the ethos and familiarities of the learner's first language and culture within the parlance of English. A framework for such an endeavor would, in this instance, center on a task-based methodology. Task-based learning is designed to exhibit a variety of information, reasoning, and opinion-orientated material. How the term task can be described can differ considerably. However, an underlying theme appearing in these various definitions is that a task focuses on meaning over form and contains authentic material based on real-life

situations. In a procedural sense, it can be said that the components of standard tasks include goals, procedures, and specific outcomes. These tasks can be seen in activities that prompt learners to arrive at an outcome from provided information through some process of thought, and which allows instructors control and regulation of these processes. The learning preferences of Spanish L1 students should also be explored and considerations made when drafting task material. Language families differ, to some degree, on which teaching approaches are better suited to the affinities of a culture (Figueiredo, et al., 2019).

The designing of new tasks to meet the ever-shifting humor of learners is often an adventure. Practitioners are continuously exploring new tasks and ways to incorporate them into a revised syllabus while anticipating which might be received favorably or unfavorably. By describing L1 objects or events in English, in an oral narrative task, for instance, the instructor is relating a new linguistic speech sequence to what is referred to as existing cognitive concepts or propositions. In this circumstance, the instructor is intentionally making available new knowledge through more familiar offerings, bringing forth an understanding through a context the learner already mentally possesses. The the task-based approach took hold in response to the standard teacher-centered approach that offered little in the way of promoting anything other than rote memorization of stilted material. It was discovered that students were more likely to embrace a language register if they were focused on a non-linguistic problem rather than concentrating on language forms (Prabu, 1987). Students could thus be presented with a task they would have to perform via first cultural reference with a more incidental input of English language structure. Known as pragmatic processing, the outcomes of such task-based lessons could be assessed by establishing whether the relevant propositional content had been transferred. The struggle between unfamiliar content and language is often the cause of disengagement among second language learners (Al-Hazza, 2010). Motivating disengaged readers through multicultural children's literature stratagem could better

assist these learners in arriving at a more tangible comprehension of new content.

Culturally Responsive Instruction

An ESL curriculum that guides a learner through the daunting vocabulary and chunks of language offered in grade-level courses, with a point of reference to their L1 and culture, will arguably better prepare learners for core classroom English language instruction. Such a curriculum might take a direct alignment with core courses or advance learner capacity through incidental observations. To further this resolve, ESL instructors, working with or independent of bi-lingual paraprofessionals, may acquire additional knowledge about the socio-cultural particulars and interests within Hispanic communities. Students respond positively to an instructor's attempt at learning some of the language and culture of their learners' origins (Gay, 2018). Leading by example puts the instructor and students in a similar quest to explore the new culture. Such a disposition influences how students will react to the challenges of learning the English language and its cultural proprieties. Parenthetically, what past experiences in their first language can they feed upon to attach cognitive hooks to second language instruction that could aid with associations that enables them to draw a better understanding of familiar topics in a not-so-familiar language.

The ESL Classroom

With ESL class time arranged as the first period of the day, learners would use this time to work with the ESL instructor and paraprofessional to review content for the upcoming lessons, rehearse responses and actions that tasks will require, and field any concerns of the learners. With an ESL instructor, paraprofessionals can review daily content and derive strategies that bring L1 into play to make the preparation for absorbing core class content more effective. An example of how science terminology may be presented, translated, and reinforced through repetition in an interesting manner is through Bingo.

A popular vocabulary activity that found favor with my EFL learners in Korea, China, Japan, Cambodia and Thailand is Bingo. This version of the game contains cards with English words with support images. The words are selected after consulting with core content teachers to find what challenging vocabulary items will appear in their next lesson. These words are placed on cards with translations but only the English words read during the game. When the words are called out, an accurate pronunciation of the word is conveyed. A visual image of the word is available at a glance. When a winner is determined, the next round begins. Again and again the vocabulary items are read, pronunciation is repeated, and the images are looked upon less frequently. This method is akin to flashcards where spacing replaces singular repetition. The idea of spacing, in this instance, is that between the repetition of any individual bingo word and its translation, students work through many others. Research has shown that this form of spaced practice is an effective way of retaining information (Brown, et al., 2014. p.64).

Goal- Students learn accurate pronunciation, word stress, and image identification of targeted vocabulary.

Strategy- Words selected are from upcoming lesson material.

Introduction

a) Learners are given one card with vocabulary items.
b) Rules of the task and advice on how to view images are offered,

During the task

a) Instructor speaks slowly and clearly allowing learners to watch the articulation.
b) Monitor the class for speed and tone considerations.
c) Check winning cards for accuracy before proceeding to the next round.

After the task

a) Count points, offer prize, and allow students to bring cards to the core content class.

b) Check for understanding with handout listing the words in Spanish and gap-filling English translation.

Table 1 Science Bingo- Plants

B	**I**	**N**	**G**	**O**
leaf	seed	habitat	fertilize	pedal
bark	stem	root	pollen	grain
spores	branches	**Free space**	fruit	oxygen
nectar	dormant	flower	stamen	stalk
cardon dioxide	berries	stigma	ovules	sap

Role play is another activity that will prepare learners for a core content class. In this example for an ELA classroom reading the novel Esperanza, collaboration with the ELA instructor will determine the relevant storylines of the day and which might appear, in some form, on an assessment. Learners are provided with scripts in English and Spanish typically involving exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution aspects of the story. As students rehearse their English-speaking parts, they are practicing modal learning as it involves kinesthetic movements as well as auditory and speech components. The combination of these features promotes the preservation of complex ideas. Rehearsing and acting out storylines help learners process and retain key features of the story. An additional benefit to role play is that the whole class is participating either as actors or members of the audience. Role-play pedagogy is effective in achieving learner outcomes in the affective, behavioral, and cognitive domains (Rao & Stupans, 2012).

Introduction

a) Learners are offered scripts from the story to practice in small groups.

b) Actors are encouraged to use body language and other forms of emotion.

c) Instructor and bilingual paraprofessional assist in preparations.

During the task

a) Note pronunciation issues

b) Encourage the use of dramatic expression.

After the task

a. Congratulate learners on their performances.

b) Review storylines and offer or solicit predictions on what might follow in the story.

Becoming familiar with modern trends in music, food, tech gadgets, animation characters, movies, and other aspects of a learner's native pop culture, which is the object of wide attention and memories for learners, provides instructors with inspiration on how to better facilitate material for their learners (Weiner et al., 2000). In the process, instructors become familiar with the cultural affinities of their language while gaining a better understanding of what engages their interests. This suggests that instructors consider an effort to acquaint themselves with the pop culture of the day. Students are driven by these trendy task types and show favor to instructors who familiarize themselves and take interest in target-group interests (Gentner, 2015). In matters of language and culture, these elements are of significant importance since constructing discernably themed tasks would allow the learners to train their sights on the English discourse with feedback from their recollections available to assist in their comprehension of the narrative.

Though lesson material in the social sciences is more reflective of national or local occurrences, a curriculum design for recent arrivals could align such social events with their impact on or contributions from their native L1 culture. Finding intersecting avenues, where ESL lesson plans maintain a focus on academic coursework while infusing elements of the recent arrival's collateral social and linguistic associations,

weaves familiarity into L2 instruction. In addition, the possibility of belittling the past or present habits of a nation or the sacrosanct cultural properties of a country by incidentally contrasting it in one form or another to the environment of their L2 culture is diminished. Practitioners warn of elitist attitudes and perceptions when English teaching is fused with cultural ideologies (Montecel, 1997). Infringements may lead to learner withdrawal and apathy towards the material. Profiling, contrasting, and historical bias can come about unintentionally. McGrath (2002) offers suggestions on how to personalize lesson plans by constructing topics and activities that students can best identify using their life experiences and learned knowledge such as having students create menus in English displaying their preferred familiar dishes from their home culture.

Bi-lingual Paraprofessionals

To better serve RAIELs in an amplified ESL curriculum, preparations begin with close coordination with the core content teachers regarding the lesson plans, particular relevant vocabulary, and phrases, as well as predictive antecedents that learners might anticipate. A bi-lingual paraprofessional, working in concert with the planning process, supports learning by offering input based on the needs of students. By collaborating with teachers, the bilingual paraprofessionals would assist in the preparation of lessons, assess assignments, correspond with parents, and advise on community resources available for family support and volunteer programs providing opportunities for English language development. The role of the paraprofessional continues into the classroom as a presence providing support by working in close proximity to the huddled desks of RAIELs and allowing the classroom instructor to move along unabated. In this form of sheltered content instruction (Krashen, 1991), the paraprofessional incorporates background-building strategies for substantive interactions.

The pre-planning role of the paraprofessional begins with an examination of the language the instructor will use in a particular phase of the lesson, where a slight pause in

the lecture might be arranged to check for understanding, and how such compensations can appear as a normal transitioning act that doesn't unsettle the classroom dynamic. These natural script breaks provide the paraprofessional with a brief opportunity to recognize uncertainty and minister to immediate needs in either Spanish or English. In preparing learners for the class, after-school accommodations would take place that offers a preview of what the learners will encounter in their core classes the following day. During this stage, the paraprofessional provides varied activities designed to include the background of the subject matter to be discussed in class, a vocabulary reference sheet for quick review during class times, and engaging activities that incorporate elements of the lessons.

Curriculum Design

The design of the ESL curriculum corresponds to that of the core content classrooms. Where core content teachers provide an outline of what students should expect during the semester, the ESL curriculum develops a strategy whereby RAIELs can rehearse expectations with the aid of guided practice from the ESL instructor and bilingual paraprofessional before entering the English-only environment. Close coordination with the core content teacher allows specific lesson plans and material to be discerned and formulated to fit the preparatory needs of learners. Content and learning objectives remain synonymous. The following ELA and ESL curriculum maps reveal how such a correspondence would emerge.

Table 2 ELA Curriculum Design

ELA Month/ Book Title	Responding to Essential Questions	Reading	Writing	Check for understanding
August Read 'Esperanza'	Describe main characters, setting, describe story flow (introduction-	Read aloud, comprehension questions, word wall pronunciation	Short answer responses, summary, gap=fil handout	Kahoot quiz, multiple choice worksheets, short answer worksheets

	conflict-climax-conclusion)			
September Read 'The Wishing Spell'	Inferences and summarizing	Literature circles	Compare two books of this genre	Handouts, short answer quiz,
October Read 'Because of Winn Dixie'	Theme, moral, lesson	Text evidence	Outlining writing process	Key spelling principles, Kahoot quiz
November Read 'The Girl Who Drank The Moon'	Main ideas-key-details	Read with partner check for understanding	Taking notes	Comprehension quizzes
December Read 'All are Welcome'	How do chapters fit together	Read aloud-field questions	Free write	Text-based informational essay

Table 3 ESL Curriculum Design

ESL Month/ Book Title	**Responding to Essential Questions**	**Reading**	**Writing**	**Check for understanding**
August Read **'**Esperanza' Spanish/English version	Bilingual bingo w/ Story components-Describing-vocabulary w/translations	Information-gap activities, pronunciation exercises, Read alouds	Opinion-gap activities, translating word wall, present tense character descriptions	Spanish language story quiz followed by English version quiz
September Read 'The Wishing Spell'	Matching activity of story components-Spanish words to English	Pronunciation exercises. Short sentence meaning	Character description from bilingual-description word wall - Writing process practice	Multiple choice quiz (bilingual) matching Kahoot quiz English only
October Read 'Because of Winn Dixie'	Bilingual bingo w/ Story components-Describing-vocabulary w/translations	Story-based Role play-English script construction	Guided outline writing process	Comprehension quiz-English questions Spanish answers-then, Same quiz-Spanish questions English answers

November Read 'The Girl Who Drank The Moon'	Video of synopsis and Bilingual bingo w/ Story components- Describing- vocabulary w/translations	Read with partner check for understanding Note-taking practice	Guided note-taking practice	Comprehension quiz Spanish/English
December Read 'All are Welcome'	Guided story chapter tie-discussions	Read aloud- asking prepared questions	Guided Free write w/ sentence constructions	Guided informational essay writing

Table 4 Science Curriculum design

Subject	**Responding to Essential Questions**	**Reading**	**Writing**	**Check for understanding**
August Life systems of a plant	Describe the components of Plants	Read aloud, Comprehension questions, word wall	Short answer responses, summary, gap-fil handout	Kahoot quiz, multiple choice worksheets, short answer worksheets
September The Water Cycle	Discuss the meaning of water cycle/stages	Evaporation Rain, Fog, Snow Small group discussions	Role of Clouds in the water cycle (descriptive essay)	Handouts, short answer quiz
October Reusable energy	Discuss recycling and other ways to reuse energy	'Where does waste go'? comprehension questions	Ways you can recycle and reuse.	Comprehension Quizzes
November Animal Kingdoms	Videos The evolution of animals	'Wolves to dogs' Read alouds	Describe how animals evolved (three paragraph essay)	Short answer quizzes on animals and their predatory habits
December The solar System	Discuss the nine planets in our solar system	"Why is only Earth inhabitable?"	Short answer descriptions of each planet	Gap fill exercises- planet names and positions

Table 5 ESL Science Curriculum Design

Subject/date	Responding to Essential Questions	Reading	Writing	Check for understanding
August Life systems of a plant	Use a plant model and identify its parts	Guided comprehension with Word Wall references	Gap fil labeling parts of a flower	Short multiple choice quizzes on vocabulary/image match
September The Water Cycle	Connect images and vocabulary of water cycle phases	'Types of Precipitation' Guided small group discussions	Clouds Short sentence descriptions and drawings	Kahoot quizzes on cloud names, water cycle definitions
October Reusable energy	Small group discussion on solar and wind energy	Short reading on what you and your school can do to recycle	Guided writing of examples for recycling paper, aluminum, and plastic waste	Comprehension short answer quiz on renewable energy
November Animal Kingdoms	Videos and discussions on types of animal kingdoms	Guided readings on the origins of dogs, cats, and other animals.	Guided Writing on selected animal kingdom paragraph essays of the student's choice	Multiple choice quiz on animal hunting techniques
December The Solar System	View model of our universe…name the planets (note similarities of planet names in Spanish)	'What makes Earth Unique?" Solicit responses to questions from story	Draw and name a characteristic of each planet	Handout with gap-fil answers to planetary questions

Similar Projects

One of the more impressive additions to a recent arrival curriculum is a newcomer's series ("Ready, Set, Go!":2010) whose content promotes a sequenced workbook series to assist RAIELs with content language vocabulary that frames core content language from multiple disciplines. Reading, writing, listening, and speaking

audios accompany each lesson. Teacher support literature offers lesson planning with methods, goals, and means of assessments to guide instructors through the tiered process. In step with cultural relevance, this series prompts the use of cultural awareness and social-emotional growth. Although not necessarily established as a curriculum design, this series offers a strategy by which a curriculum could incorporate elements of this series into an extended curriculum model. A second source that again adds to a curriculum scheme for newcomers is offered by the Bell Foundation. Most relevant to the curriculum design I propose is the use of prior knowledge that encourages top-down processing to facilitate the learner's understanding of lesson constructs. L1 associations with the L2 register foster a better understanding of concepts and promote the transition from short to long-term memory. This approach also supports the use of visual associations where L1 reflections and L2 observations can find validation.

Another Curriculum design project for recent arrivals ("Finish Line for ELLs", 2010) can be employed as a supplemental addition to an ESL program or a stand-alone curriculum. This series offers the integration of authentic material with foundational-skill material to ease the learners' progression to mainstream classrooms. This alignment to the English Language Arts Curriculum provides diverse assessment strategies in each of the four English language development domains. The similarity between this approach and the curriculum design I advocate is the use of cultural reflectors that allow the students to see themselves and their culture as they build on the foundations of English and practice the language with a closer association to their own identities. The "Finish Line" curriculum design allows learners to participate in readings, conversations, and writing assignments with familiar topics that promote the use of cultural recall that better contributes to group activities through the adaptation of new linguistic choices and stimulates the use of long-term evocations that hang on mental pegs and merge with new linguistic concepts when engaged in individual assignments.

Conclusion

An ESL curriculum design that centers on preparing learners for success in core classroom instruction would incorporate a variety of strategies and content to engage learners and prepare them for the classes ahead. Implementing a communicative task-based approach in the ESL classroom will not, on its own, resolve all the English concerns that weigh heavily upon recent arrival students. Additional opportunities for classroom preparation is needed. Opportunities during homeroom class, flex time, intervention, lunch groups, and after-school clubs would provide additional prep time to meet the challenges of core classrooms. The conflict between inclusion and performance will have to find a middle ground. Culturally responsive tasks, it is hoped, will alter the students' impression of English, and instill a desire to peruse the English language with all its amenities in a variety of fashions. The road to fluency for recent arrivals is paved with many obstacles that are accompanied by a myriad of social and economic concerns that weigh on the minds of these learners, A methodology that addresses the linguistic concerns of these learners and their families will lead to more conversant recent arrivals communities in mainstream America.

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