

Supporting Upper Elementary Newcomer Students in the Areas of Speaking and Writing

By

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PROJECT SUMMARY

This project is a five-week curriculum novel study that is based on the novel *Efrén Divided* by Ernesto Cisneros and is meant to be taught in a fourth grade classroom. The novel's main character Efrén, who lives in California, struggles with the deportation of his mother to Mexico and has to grapple with his new reality while caring for his two younger siblings. This novel was intentionally chosen as it may reflect the lived experiences of those who are meant to benefit from this curriculum and website project.

Newcomer students, those who have recently arrived in the United States with limited English language proficiency, come to our schools with a unique set of skills and experiences. Unfortunately, their experiences are not always seen in school curriculum which is especially problematic since the demographics of this country are drastically changing as we see more non-native English speakers in regions that have previously been mostly monolingual (Hiatt & Fairbairn, 2018). For that reason, this curriculum was built around a novel whose main character identifies as Mexican American and who interacts in both English and Spanish.

This curriculum has multiple influences. The main influence for this project was a previous teaching position where nine newcomer students were in a fourth grade classroom and received language support during language arts instruction. The students came from Spanish speaking countries including El Salvador, Honduras, and Mexico and they had varying levels of literacy proficiency in Spanish. Throughout the school year their class read multiple novels but there was not any guidance on how to teach a full novel in English to students who were still at the most basic or beginning level of English proficiency. Novels are full of text with little or no visual support. On top of that, the

vocabulary goes beyond the basics that a newcomer student would be able to comprehend without explicit and visual instruction. This teaching environment was the main reason this project became necessary since there is no curriculum available that specifically addresses the needs of newcomer students while completing a novel study.

Another influence for this curriculum was the need to build on newcomer students' productive language. The productive language domains are speaking and writing. In personal experience, multilingual students tend to perform more poorly on these domains when taking the WIDA ACCESS test which is a test administered yearly to monitor language proficiency and growth in the areas of speaking, reading, writing, and listening. This curriculum is meant to support teachers in building both oral and literacy skills in newcomer students through the research done by Pauline Gibbons (2015). Gibbons introduces the idea of a *mode continuum* to create a bridge between spoken and written language. On one side of the bridge is spoken, informal, language that is specific to the here-and-now. Students talk about what is directly in front of them which would include visual support. From there, the teacher builds on what students produced orally but puts their ideas into content-specific academic wording. Moving to the other side of the "bridge" is the exercise of writing. Students in this phase are engaged in written reflection with scaffolds and sufficient modeling from the teacher. This curriculum is meant to show that even beginner English learners are able to produce academic language when following this mode continuum.

Over the five-week novel study unit, students are engaged in exercises that build background knowledge, content-specific and general vocabulary, and writing. They are also creating brief sketches that are labeled. For example, throughout the five weeks they

will continue to add details about the main character and his personality on a sketched drawing of Efren. This is done to demonstrate what they know about the main character's personality and events throughout the book. Another example of an exercise that is done several times during the novel is a sketch and write activity to build comprehension of chapters that are heavy in terms of important events. Students will be drawing the key chapter events, they will be labeling their pictures, and they will be writing sentences to demonstrate understanding.

As a final writing piece, students will take all that they have learned and they will compare themselves to the main character of the novel using appropriate phrases for comparisons and evidence from the text. All of the sketches and writing pieces done throughout the novel study will be used to support this writing piece that also aligns with the Common Core language arts standards for Minnesota as well as language standards from WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) language standards framework of 2020.

Capstone Project- Curriculum Accessible Via Website

Link to Website: <https://sites.google.com/hamline.edu/bridge-to-language/home>

This website contains a complete 5-week curriculum for a fourth grade language arts class. The front page of the website includes a brief background on why the curriculum was created and inspiration for the project. It also includes descriptions of the weekly lessons and sample materials. The tabs on the upper right corner break the unit up into weeks one and two, and weeks three, four, and five. All lessons and sample materials are accessible by clicking on the lesson and sample images.

Below are screenshots of the different website pages.

Front page:

Bridge to Language Home Week: 1, 2 Week: 3, 4, 5 Sample Materials

Week: 1,2

Curriculum for the first few weeks of the novel study for *Ehrenfeld* by Ernesto Cisneros.

1. Building background knowledge
2. Introduce the novel and main characters
3. Bridging speaking to writing.

Week: 3,4,5

Curriculum for the last half of the novel study. Students engage in oral and written activities.

1. Continue to build comprehension of the novel's main events.
2. Build connections from personal life to that of the main character.
3. Bridging speaking to writing.

Sample Materials

A look at some of the whole-group writing activities students will be engaged in.

Worksheets are embedded in the weekly lesson plans.

Week: 1, 2 Tab:

Bridge to Language Home **Week: 1, 2** Week: 3, 4, 5 Sample Materials

Week One

Students begin building background knowledge on some key details from the novel. They will be looking at and talking about pictures and making connections to their own lives. Students build comprehension through images and writing.

Week Two

In week two, students work with new vocabulary, they continue to build comprehension through the use of visuals, and they begin defining specific character traits for some of the main characters in *Ehrenfeld*.

Week 1 Day 1

Week 1 Day 1	Bridging speaking to writing
<p>Purpose:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Introduce novel 2) Make personal connections to novel before reading <p>Key Vocabulary: Sopas, Platanos (potatoes), sopa (soup), Chayote (cucurbit), zapapote (custard apple)</p> <p>Materials:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Printed map of Ylteses hometown. 	<p>Spanish vocabulary:</p> <p>Sopas, chapter 1.</p> <p>Encourage discussion.</p>

Week 2 Day 1 Page: 46-44

Week 2 Day 1 Page: 46-44	Bridging
<p>Purpose: Use evidence and vocabulary from chapter three to understand Elena's Age.</p>	

Week: 3,4,5 Tab:

Bridge to Language
Home Week: 1, 2 **Week: 3, 4, 5** Sample Materials

Week Three

Students will be organizing what they know so far about the main character. They will be using specific descriptive vocabulary to do so.

Week Four

Chapter four is heavy on important events. Students will be doing a lot of drawing and sentence writing to comprehend these events. Students will also be talking and writing about themselves in preparation for the final writing product.

Week Five

This is the final week of the novel study. Students will use all of the materials they created to write their final product. They will be writing a piece that compares and contrasts themselves to the main character in the novel.

ELA Standard: 4.2.2.2.9² write coherently for various purposes and disciplines, **represent one's own personal perspective, identity, and voice.**

4.2.2.3.9² Write informative or explanatory texts to **examine and convey complex information** clearly and accurately through use of informational or literary text, citing evidence.

ELD Standard: ELD-SE-4-12.9²Name. Multilingual learners will share ideas about one and others' lived experiences and previous learning.

ELD-SE-4-12.9²Form. Multilingual learners will connect reader with images and representations to add more context, or behavior.

ELD-LA-4.2.9²Name Expressive. Multilingual learners will connect language learner?

ELA Standard: 4.2.2.7.9² write coherently for various purposes and disciplines, **expressing one's own personal perspective, identity, and voice.**

4.2.2.1.9² Write informative or explanatory texts to **examine and convey complex ideas and information** clearly and accurately through use of informational or literary text, citing evidence.

ELD Standard: ELD-SE-4-12.9²Name. Multilingual learners will share ideas about one's own and others' lived experiences and previous learning.

ELD-SE-4-12.9²Form. Multilingual learners will connect reader with images and representations to add meaning.

ELD-SE-4-12.9²Form. Multilingual learners will connect reader with images and representations to add meaning.

ELD-LA-4.2.9²Name Expressive. Multilingual learners will connect language learner to that develop and describe characters and their relationships.

Week 4 Day 4 Pages 158-168	Bridging
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner. Students will participate in a close-reading activity. Partner. Read aloud part of the text and hold up character cards. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual. Partner. Listen, observe, discuss, record, share. Individual. Partner. Listen, observe, discuss, partner and read aloud the page. Line. Individual. Line read and compare/contrast between the lines and the text. 	

ELA Standard: 4.2.2.2.9² Write informative or explanatory texts to **examine and convey one's own personal perspective, identity, and voice.**

4.2.2.3.9² Write informative or explanatory texts to **examine and convey complex information** clearly and accurately through use of informational and literary text, citing evidence.

4.2.2.2.9² Develop and organize writing by using a writing process including **planning, drafting, editing, and polishing.**

ELD Standard: ELD-SE-4-12.9²Name. Multilingual learners will share ideas about one's own and others' lived experiences and previous learning.

ELD-SE-4-12.9²Form. Multilingual learners will connect reader with images and representations to add more context, or behavior.

ELD-LA-4.2.9²Name Expressive. Construct informational texts in language arts that add context, or behavior.

Sample Materials:

Bridge to Language
Home Week: 1, 2 Week: 3, 4, 5 **Sample Materials**

Sample Materials

This drive contains sample material for whole group instruction. It provides a visual for some of the ongoing projects throughout the unit as well as sample whole group guided posters. Use these materials as a guide for your own instruction-the knowledge of your students will tell you how to tweak the activities based on their unique needs.

TITLE	LAST MODIFIED
Adobe Scan Nov 05, 2022 (1).pdf	Nov 6 Amy Brown
Adobe Scan Nov 05, 2022 (2).pdf	Nov 6 Amy Brown
Adobe Scan Nov 05, 2022 (4).pdf	Nov 6 Amy Brown
Adobe Scan Nov 05, 2022.pdf	Nov 6 Amy Brown
Apa character sheet.pdf	Nov 6 Amy Brown

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- Hiatt, & Fairbairn, S. B. (2018). Improving the focus of English learner professional development for in-service teachers. *NASSP Bulletin*, 102(3), 228–263.
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