Managing "Book Clubs" for Student Success
by Tamara Edwards López, Wilson Middle School

If you are like me, you might be wondering how to implement leveled readers in the classroom. I wanted to use the High Point leveled library in a meaningful way that allowed students to retain what they read and progress in a timely manner through the books. Every time I have ever read a novel with a class, it seemed to drag on for so long that even I felt bored with the book. After working with my LCE resource teacher, I came up with a step-by-step process that solved this problem for me and for my classes. First, I selected the books to use, and then assigned books to students, explained the procedure for using the books in class, and established a purpose for collaborative group discussions. The following is what I did to get started with the leveled library.

**Selecting Books**
The High Point Teacher's Guide illustrates suggested books from the Hampton-Brown leveled library which correlate to the unit theme. The books, at varying reading levels, are listed in the introduction of each unit. The levels are represented with a system of dots. One dot is an easier level, two dots a medium level, and three for the most difficult. I grouped these suggested books together and put them into wire baskets on a table for easy access.

**Matching Books to Students**
In my grade book, next to each student’s name, I recorded results from the High Point Placement Exam. I looked at these results and drew a single dot next to names of students who scored lowest and three dots next to names of students who performed highest. Next, I looked at the names that were left, checked a writing sample, and considered how comfortable each student was speaking and reading in English. I then made a professional decision for them to be in a low, high, or medium book. Next, I looked at the names in each of these groups and thought about how the students might work together. After thinking about individuals, I made mini-groups of three or four students at each level.

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*[Also in this issue...]*

- Instituto para la adquisición del lenguaje (G.L.A.D): Un modelo...
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- Implementing Text Talk Vocabulary Instruction
- Using Power Standards for Powerful Planning in the ESL Classroom
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Este otoño tuve la oportunidad de colaborar con 42 maestros de diferentes escuelas de nuestro distrito escolar en el Instituto G.L.A.D. de desarrollo profesional. Este taller fue organizado por las maestras de recursos Susana Ibarra Johnson, Annette Maestas y Kathy Waldman para las estrategias en inglés y por Elia María Romero y Susan López para las estrategias en español. El Instituto fue patrocinado por el departamento de Lenguaje y Equidad Cultural de nuestro distrito.

G.L.A.D. es un modelo de estrategias pedagógicas que potencia una interacción más positiva y efectiva entre los alumnos y entre éstos y sus profesores. G.L.A.D. es asimismo un modelo de desarrollo profesional efectivo para enseñar a los maestros los procesos de adquisición de la lecto-escritura y el lenguaje. Es multicurricular en su concepción y promueve el uso de unidades temáticas. Su estructura se articula en forma espiral con el objetivo de mantener motivados a los alumnos estableciendo conexiones con experiencias y conocimientos previos del mundo de los estudiantes. Cada lección tiene una interconexión con la unidad previa y posterior.

Este modelo ha sido reconocido en todo el país como uno de los mejores métodos para enseñar el inglés como segundo idioma. Además cuenta con la ventaja de que se puede modificar en el aula bilingüe para enseñar el español como primer o segundo idioma.

El éxito de G.L.A.D. se constata en los resultados obtenidos en las pruebas estandarizadas por todos aquellos alumnos que se han beneficiado de sus estrategias. De igual manera, las investigaciones han demostrado que G.L.A.D. proporciona un apoyo lingüístico, sociocultural, e intelectual de gran calibre en la adquisición del primer y segundo lenguaje. G.L.A.D. pone gran énfasis en la participación activa para que los alumnos se diviertan mientras aprenden contenidos académicos de ciencias naturales, matemáticas, estudios sociales y artes del lenguaje.

Las estrategias de G.L.A.D. proporcionan múltiples oportunidades para aprender y practicar un vocabulario avanzado de uso frecuente que permite un avance académico sostenido. Los conceptos se presentan de diferentes formas partiendo de lo concreto, a lo semi-concreto, y llegando a lo abstracto. De este modo, se parte de la observación de dibujos y láminas. Se crean tablas de formación de oraciones en grupos y se continúa con diálogos, cantos, lectura de cuentos, drama y música, así como con el uso de diccionarios cognitivos, ola de palabras y organizadores gráficos. Finalmente se crean textos y contextos que ayudan al alumno a comprender y expresar tanto su propio conocimiento como el conocimiento adquirido. La participación de las familias en el proceso de aprendizaje a través de proyectos que extienden los conceptos aprendidos en la clase es otro elemento integral de G.L.A.D.

Susan López lee un “libro grande” para introducir el vocabulario académico del tema ‘las arañas’. Los niños están en la clase de kindergarten de la maestra Julia Tapia en la primaria La Mesa.

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Este modelo de desarrollo profesional comenzó con un taller teórico para los maestros donde se exploraron las más recientes investigaciones científicas sobre los procesos de la lecto-escritura y sus procesos neurológicos, así como las teorías sobre la adquisición de un segundo idioma. Cabe destacar el gran beneficio práctico obtenido por los maestros después de profundizar en las técnicas de planificación de unidades temáticas y el uso de gráficas. También se trató con intensidad la elaboración y uso de libros grandes como herramienta básica para la adquisición del lenguaje.

Tras este taller inicial, las maestras de recursos llevaron a la práctica estas estrategias en un aula modelo. Los maestros participantes observaron el desarrollo de estas clases y tomaron apuntes de cada estrategia demostrada. La unidad en inglés tuvo la inmigración como tema principal, mientras que la unidad español se centró en los arácnidos. El último día del taller, los maestros participantes tuvieron la oportunidad de discutir sobre todo lo observado y sus posibles aplicaciones concretas en sus aulas.

Este Instituto es en suma una evidencia más de cómo el departamento de Lenguaje y Equidad Cultural continúa a apoyar la enseñanza bilingüe en nuestras escuelas. Por todo esto, animo a maestros y administradores a que participen activamente en el verano 2009 en este modelo de desarrollo profesional tan efectivo que beneficia de forma directa tanto a los maestros como a sus alumnos.
On October 15, 2008, the sounds of nervous laughter and Indian flute music wafted through the Highland High School Performing Arts Center as Highland High School Native American students prepared for their annual pageant competition. Several days later, a new Miss Native Highland High and a new Chief of Highland High School were crowned at the 9th Annual Highland High School Fall 2008 Crowning Powwow held at the historic Highland gym.

At the pageant, nine judges were commissioned to decide the next Highland High School royalty to represent the high school and local Native American community. This year nine girls and three boys ran for the honor of being crowned Miss Native Highland High and Chief of Highland High during the pageant. In addition to their beautiful traditional Native outfits, the students brought with them a variety of talents ranging from singing, dancing, and comedy routines to cultural demonstrations from their respective tribal cultures. It was truly a night to remember for many of the students, their families, and community members who attended the event as they enjoyed a night of wonderfully prepared talent demonstrations while donning elegantly made Native American dress and attire.

Preparing for the Events

A great deal of preparation is necessary to get ready for and put on such events. For example, on October 1st, the Native American student organization at Highland High held a community dinner to raise money for the upcoming scheduled events and provided some great Native cooking for all who were fortunate to make it. Additionally, graphics programs such as Illustrator and Word were used by students to create flyers and programs well before the events were to take place. This involved a lot of planning, preparation, collaboration, and decision making. Also, some marketing efforts were necessary which include faxing and posting flyers around the community and at other schools. Students also spoke on the radio to promote their events. Finally, there were many after-school and evening meetings to prepare
their scripts, PowerPoint presentations, and to practice performances.

EVALUATING LEARNING AND SUCCESS

As part of the APS Indian Education Department’s emphasis on continuous assessment of their programs, an evaluation based on reflection was used to gain insights to how students felt about their efforts throughout the events. Using an Indigenous Evaluation Rubric developed by the Indian Education Department, students were asked to self-reflect throughout the various activities.

The students reported significant growth in their mastery of communication and language arts skills related to the tasks of coordinating, planning, and participating in community-wide events and in the area of Native American studies. They gained a new appreciation of belonging to a group with similar goals in mind and sharing with others/peers. For the first time, many of these students documented that they were going out of their way to help and support each other. In addition, some of the experienced Native Leadership students volunteered their knowledge from participation in past events to ensure the success of others throughout the pageant and powwow events.

In the end, the Highland High School 2008 Crowning Powwow was a great success as many people from the surrounding community came out to attend the event. Joining in the wonderful dancing and music at the powwow were some of the featured groups such as the La Mesa Elementary School singers and drum group, and several fancy shawl dancers, along with the Wilson Middle School Fancy Shawl Dancers.

It was estimated that over 500 people attended the powwow as well as many local champion powwow dancers and nine world-renowned and local drum groups. There were also many vendors selling beautiful handmade Native crafts, and there was even a delicious home prepared dinner for most of the participants. Many of the dishes were provided by students’ families and friends.

The highlight was the crowning of the new royalty when the outgoing Miss Native Highland High School Ariel Ellsworth passed her crown to Chantal Francis, and Chief Laniel Muskett passed his sash to the new Chief, Kameron Begay. Given the positive response from students and the community, the Highland Pageant and Powwow promise to be even better next year.
Jason: Is this going to be an ordinary day?
Ms. H: What would make it ordinary?
Jason: If we like did the same old thing.
Ms. H: What might make it not ordinary, make it exceptional?
Jason: If you gave us prizes for being good—I mean exceptional and mature.

(Beck et al., 2003, p. 36)

This kind of exchange is not uncommon in classrooms using Text Talk vocabulary instruction. The conversation above took place in a first grade classroom where all of the children were struggling with reading.

Teachers from pre-kindergarten through elementary school can use oral language to build young children’s vocabularies. Text Talk focuses on teaching words from texts that are read aloud to children rather than read by children. The premise is that young children can understand more sophisticated content in oral language than they are able to read independently. Text Talk, developed by Beck, McKeown, and Kucan, is a playful, interactive way to teach students academic vocabulary through the use of trade books read aloud by the teacher. (See also Making Connections, February ’05, Robust Vocabulary Instruction for Secondary Students and Making Connections, September ’03, Desarrollando Vocabulario.)

**What are Tier 2 Words?**

- Words that are high frequency and found across a variety of domains.
- Words that provide precision and specificity in describing concepts.
- Words that can be worked with in a variety of ways.

Instruction directed toward Tier Two words can be the most effective for academic vocabulary growth. Tier Two words are those that are high frequency for mature language users and are found across a variety of domains. They are likely to appear in a wide variety of texts. Some

Teacher: In the story, Lisa was reluctant to leave the Laundromat without Corduroy. Reluctant means you are not sure you want to do something. Say the word with me.

Someone might be reluctant to eat a food that he or she never had before, or someone might be reluctant to ride a roller-coaster because it looks scary.

Tell about something you would be reluctant to do. Try to use reluctant when you tell about it. You could start by saying something like, “I would be reluctant to______.” What’s the word we’ve been talking about?

When one of the students provided the example “I would be reluctant to change a diaper,” the teacher knew that the children would remember the meaning of reluctant easily.

**Selecting the Target Words**

Beck et al. characterize vocabulary as being divided into three tiers. The first tier includes the most basic words – clock, baby, happy, walk, etc. Tier One words rarely need direct instruction in the classroom (except maybe with beginning English language learners). The third tier is made up of low frequency words that are often limited to specific domains; e.g., refinery, peninsula, lathe. These kinds of words are best learned as the need arises.
examples are coincidence, absurd, industrious, fortunate. Tier Two words such as glare, stare, glance, gaze can provide precision and specificity in describing concepts or events. Teachers should select words that can be worked with in a variety of ways so that students can build rich representations of them and their connections to other vocabulary, syntax, and concepts.

For example, many bilingual students may understand that the word interpret means to translate. But they may not realize that there are different facets to the word. In The Circuit, the main character who couldn’t read English tried to interpret the English letters on the page. A person can try to interpret a painting or an author’s message.

In contrast, Tier One words and Tier Three words do not tend to be words that can work in a variety of ways. A clock is usually just a clock, and a peninsula is usually just a peninsula. Having students learn the many usages of words can greatly improve their vocabulary knowledge.

**HOW TO GET STARTED WITH TEXT TALK**

Introduce the target word by contextualizing it within the story.

- Have the students repeat the word.
- Provide a student-friendly explanation of the word.
- Present examples of the word used in contexts different from those in the story.

  Example #1___________________________
  Example #2__________________________

- Engage students in activities that get them to interact with the word.

  “Tell about something that_____________. Try to use the word ______________ when you tell about it. You could start by saying _________________________."

- Have the students say the word again.

  “What’s the word we’ve been talking about? ______________

**HELPING STUDENTS OWN THE WORDS**

Students need to keep using words if they are to “own” them. Teachers can invite the students to try to use the words in the classroom, at home, or in their writing. They can get points by bringing in evidence of having heard, seen, or used the target words outside of the classroom. The teacher can make a chart with tallies for earning points. The student has to describe the contexts in which the words were used. Maybe they used it with an adult, heard it used on the television, or saw it in another book they were reading. (Even if it is a fabrication, it accomplishes the purpose of the activity.) Target words can be placed on a bulletin board next to the cover of the story. Tally marks can be placed next to the words when they are mentioned by the teacher or the children. The teacher may just want to have the students see which one is their “favorite” word.

Students need rapid and rich access to word meanings for them to really learn new vocabulary. Text Talk provides frequent, consistent exposure to vocabulary in an interactive way. Learners actively engage with word meanings and connect new words with known situations and ideas. Reading aloud from trade books allows the struggling readers access to academic vocabulary, thus providing students with an entrée into the world of texts.

Based on the work of Beck, McKeown & Kucan (2002), Bringing Words to Life: The Guilford Press, New York; and Beck, McKeown & Kucan (2003), Taking Delight in Words, American Educator, Spring, pp. 36-46.
High school ESL teachers received a new textbook series in August. I love the new book, Hampton-Brown *Edge*, but who has time to add one more thing? The trick, I found out, is to stay organized and to look at the big picture before planning the details of daily curriculum.

To begin the year, I review the district ESL course description, the language arts power standards which are supported by all the other standards, and the newly developed curriculum map which advises when to teach what, in order to prepare for the short cycle A2L assessment. I also consider grade-level requirements at my school, because the ultimate goal of my ESL class is to prepare students for success when they test out of ESL and then are placed in a regular English class.

This big picture guides me when I’m examining the margins of the Teacher’s Edition for *Edge*. There are many interesting and varied activities such as small group fluency reading, partner grammar exercises, or filling in the Venn diagrams, vocabulary webs, and t-charts that aid comprehension. Activities are arranged in categories with clear references to further support material that comes with the text. Grammar activities are clearly numbered for a logical progression of skills.

Because I am preparing students for general English courses, I assign activities to support the power standards, just like I do for my regular language arts students. Students work on the eleven-sentence paragraph which leads to a five-paragraph essay, on the writing process learning to respond to prompts, on giving speeches in front of the class, on reading novels independently, and on research and related skills in the library.

The textbook supports all of these power standards. Each unit has a major writing project such as a personal narrative that can then be presented as a speech to the class. There are many prompts related to the reading and to contemporary topics that inspire students to do quick-writes. I add the eleven-sentence paragraph pattern to writing instruction because it is a grade-level expectation. So, I don’t do everything suggested in the text. Instead, I choose the topics and skills that suit my students’ backgrounds, experiences, and needs.

The series nicely supports independent reading. There are 21 high interest and high quality novels for the Level A textbook. The red dots on the back of the novels indicate easy-to-hard reading levels. I let students choose which of the first three books they want to read and then form three groups for cooperative learning. I downloaded the packets that correlate to each novel from the website. The packets are easy for small groups of students to understand and answer as they read the book independently over a period of a couple weeks. In the packets there are varied activities that keep students engaged, such as writing a question and passing it to the right in the small group. Students

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**Using Power Standards for Powerful Planning in the ESL Classroom**

by Judy Pinto, Sandia High School

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**Jesus Hernandez and Ben Ma read aloud in their group during ESL class at Sandia High School.**
answer the question and pass it back to the originator. The small group also draws a plot map, because it is a grade-level requirement, and presents it to the class so that other students are familiar with the book.

My students come from very diverse backgrounds: half speak Spanish from Cuba, Peru, and Mexico; the others speak Chinese, Vietnamese, Maylasian, Thai, Afghani, Navajo, and Danish. The variety of readings in the *Edge* text engages my students even though they have different background experiences. The autobiographical writing by actor and comedian John Leguizamo inspired each of the students to give an example of humor in their first language.

I’m discovering that the lesson plans that come with the new text, the day-by-day cluster plans, are an easy-to-understand system. I like the fluency reading evaluation that comes after each major reading. Students keep an index card to record their fluency rating for each reading. I put the students into groups of three, and they take turns reading aloud and rating each other according to the rubric the text provides on the same page. I can tell by looking at a student’s index card how well peers think a student is reading. I’ve noticed they generally rate each other more severely than I would, but that’s okay because it motivates improvement.

I use each Cluster Test as a review for the Unit Test. I know my students have learned the material, but they need practice with the format of standardized tests. The text assumes students are reading about one cluster per week, but we are not up to speed yet. I’m still becoming familiar with students’ individual skills and with the textbook, in addition to all of its supports.

Standards-based teaching encourages multiple opportunities for the student to learn. I like Nancy Atwell’s writing workshop approach as a way to provide students with the chance to revisit and refine their work. Writing workshop allows students to work together while the teacher walks around and assists students who need individual help.

Adam Yeap is a student from Malaysia in the Sandia ESL class. He has been in the United States for about four months. He had recently presented a PowerPoint show about Malaysia to his classmates and answered their questions. Adam was very willing to talk about his experiences in acquiring English, and he noted that he had learned to read and write some English before coming to the U.S.

When asked what were the most helpful aspects of the ESL class, he responded, “You don’t have to be shy that you pronounce words wrong, words you don’t know. You can speak out loudly.” And he noted that the most difficult part about learning English was that it was hard to understand students that speak too fast: “Sometimes you never heard the words before.” But he smiled when describing his favorite learning activity in the class: “You can discuss with a partner.”
I put the students in groups of four, give them a check list of steps to keep them on task, and let them discuss common problems in writing such as “What is a good topic sentence for this paragraph?”

While each student creates their own final paper, I have time to circulate and answer individual questions. Multiple opportunities to learn occur when students are able to rewrite assignments all semester long to receive a higher grade by the end of the semester. Sometimes a student will finally understand a writing pattern halfway through the semester. Having an opportunity to go back and rewrite previous assignments with the new understanding allows the student to raise his or her grade and motivates learning.

Standards-based teaching suggests providing examples of different levels of work. After I get student permission and I remove the student’s name, I post examples of "A", "B", and "C" papers with explanations of why the paper received that grade. Then I can send students over to examine these examples when I’m encouraging them to see the five spaces required to indent a paragraph, for example, or how a final copy should be on only one side of the paper.

Having consistent routines and procedures in the classroom allows more time to focus on working toward the standards. For example, when students are absent, they ask for make-up work by writing the word make-up and the dates they were absent on a piece of paper, and then hand that paper to me before class. That way I can create a written record of what needs to be done. I write due dates on the handouts and assignments so there is no confusion when each is due. The student is responsible for asking for make-up work, and I am merely answering a request for work rather than trying to monitor make-up work for everyone.

Another very valuable system in my room is keeping a calendar on the white board with due dates and site-based events. This is especially important for students new to U.S. schools. I keep students informed about which book they need, when there will be an assembly schedule, semester finals, and other important activities.

I’m learning about this new book, Hampton-Brown Edge, as I go. I’m excited to read the rest of the excellent novels that accompany the textbooks, and I’m interested in the progression of grammar instruction. Once I get to know this series more thoroughly, I’ll be better able to meet the needs of my students, even if they have just transferred here from another district high school. And starting from the big picture using the power standards helps me organize and implement instruction with the end in mind. My curricular activities are designed using both the publisher’s materials and my own, and they all lead toward expectations for students as they transition into regular English classes.

A plot map helps students review reading from the leveled library.
Using the Books Daily

Students pick up their assigned book from a basket as they enter the classroom and read independently for the first ten minutes of class. After this, we transition into our lesson for the day. On Fridays, instead of reading alone, they join their group-mates and discuss their book. They use a worksheet to help facilitate conversation (see top right). Upon completion of a book, students read independently in their personal library book until their group can meet again and select a new book to read. When the entire group has finished the selection, students fill out a book report worksheet (see bottom right) and record their successful completion both in the back of their school agenda and on our class thermometer, which illustrates the class goal for completed books and our progress to that end. It is posted in the room.

Group Meetings

Students work collaboratively to complete a worksheet that focuses on both language usage and comprehension through identifying elements of plot. Each group then reports out to the whole class sharing a piece of interesting language, which could be a phrase, a sentence, or a word that was interesting to them.

The Hampton Brown website hosts a teacher’s guide and often a student journal for each book in the leveled library. These guides are available at http://hbavenues.com/highpoint/library/index.asp. These guides contain graphic organizers for students to make predictions, organize information, and set personal goals for completion. There are also guiding questions for each chapter of the books so that students can review as they read and work together.

Good luck getting started in your own class, if you have not tried yet. With each book students read to completion, their faces beam with pride at their accomplishment. How privileged I am to witness their success!

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Making more connections!

Coming Events

❖ National Association for Bilingual Education, NABE 2009—Bilingual Education: Strengthening America Through a Multilingual Society: February 18-21, 2009, in Austin, Texas. There is a Dual Immersion Pre-Conference on February 18. For more information, please visit www.nabe.org.

❖ International Reading Associations Annual convention West—Multiple Pathways to Literacy: February 21-25, 2009, in Phoenix, Arizona. For more information, visit the IRA website at www.reading.org.

❖ New Mexico Organization of Language Educators—Strengthening Second Language Acquisition Across New Mexico: February 20, 2009, at the Nativo Lodge in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Presenter Greg Duncan’s workshop will focus on best practices for language and literacy development; language educators at all grade levels are the intended audience. For more information or a registration form, visit www.nmole.org.

The State Spanish Spelling Bee, sponsored by NMABE, will be held on Saturday, April 18, 2009, at the National Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque. The Albuquerque Public School District Spanish Spelling Bee will be held on Feb. 4, 2009, in the Annex room of the Montgomery Complex, 3315 Louisiana Blvd. NE, at 9:30 a.m. Each cluster is responsible for its own cluster Spanish spelling bee. For more information, contact LCE Resource Teachers Annette Maestas, maestas_an@aps.edu, or Greg Hansen, hansen_g@aps.edu.

Cross Cultural Resource Library

Tuesday and Wednesday: 7:30-5:00
Monday, Thursday, Friday: 8:00-4:30
Closed daily for lunch: 12:00-1:00
Library Specialist: Karen Hedstrom
Please call 880.8249, ext. 154, before making the trip to be sure the library is open.

Bilingual Methods Courses in Spanish for APS Teachers—Spring 2009

Two courses for the bilingual endorsement will be taught at the College of Santa Fe (in Albuquerque) this spring: Spanish for the Bilingual Classroom and Literacy in Spanish. The courses provide strategies for teaching language arts, social studies, math and science in Spanish. The courses will begin as soon as ten people sign up for the courses. Participants must be fluent in Spanish, since the courses will be taught entirely in Spanish by a native speaker of Spanish. Tuition for APS teachers for each of the courses is $525, which will be reimbursed by the Department of Language and Cultural Equity to those committed to the entire Bilingual Endorsement. For more information, contact Professor Henry Shoner at 855-7271 or at hshonerd@csf.edu.

FYI...
Making Connections back issues and articles are archived at lcequity.com! Check it out...