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**Professional Project: Academic Vocabulary & Language Handbook
for the Field of Social Studies**

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ED 604, Dr. Joshua Schulze

Masters Science in Education

Western Oregon University

March 1st, 2022



WE, THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE GRADUATE FACULTY OF WESTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY HAVE EXAMINED THE ENCLOSED

Thesis

Professional Project

Titled:

Academic Vocabulary and Language Handbook for Social Studies

Graduate Student: Gabriela Acevedo-Solis

Candidate for the degree of : Master of Science in Education: ESOL

and hereby certify that in our opinion it is worthy of acceptance as partial fulfillment of the requirements of this master's degree.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Based on first-hand experience, and the shift into in-person learning, it has been evident that students' academic abilities have significantly changed compared to past skill sets and knowledge. In addition, there appears to be an added stress on students in schools as the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on students' mental, physical and emotional health. That is not to say that student attendance has not been the greatest, given the need to quarantine, support family at home, or other reasons. At Waldo Middle School (WMS), we have constantly seen students miss school. When students cannot attend school, their ability to function in school successfully is harmed. I have firsthand seen my students miss school for more than ten days and get unenrolled from their classes, only to see them re-enrolled a few days later.

Emergent bilinguals (EB) are recognized as students who receive either content language Programs or specific language programs that provide students with instruction that supports their English Language development. Wright (2019) describes an approach where instruction and learning are based on various subjects. For content area programs to be successful, the most effective way to teach is in the students' home language or first language (Wright, 2019, p. 96). However, when not possible, sheltered instruction can be effective in mainstream classrooms when primary or first language teaching is not obtainable. Sheltered instruction is how formal lessons and activities are structured and modified to be accessible and comprehensible for emergent bilinguals. In other words, the goal of sheltered instruction is to scaffold and explicitly teach language objectives that help increase student speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills in

second language proficiency (English language learners: Sheltered instruction - Youtube.n.d.). In my case, I have emergent bilinguals enrolled in my courses as they receive part of their language development through the content area and learning of social studies.

One of the populations that have been most strongly affected due to COVID-19 includes English Language Learners. It is noted that ELs have been most affected during the COVID-19 pandemic due to language barriers that lead to a lack of communication (Kibler, 2021). The lack of communication between a school and parents/guardians can negatively impact student learning as expectations, changes, and plans for families may come across as being unclear. This includes being in the unknown about what to expect within learning. Thus, this leads to families choosing not to send their children to school. When students are absent, the rich social interactions with peers and staff are limited, and academic language practices become reduced or nonexistent. Thus, chronic absenteeism amongst students leads to an increase in achievement gaps across academic content courses (Center for Research in Education and Social Policy (2018). The form of instruction this year has drastically changed compared to years past. This change of instruction is due to navigating a pandemic, social distancing, face coverings, and the act of decreased interactions with others are strongly encouraged by the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Before safety measures were added during the pandemic, classes like English Language Development (ELD) included daily instruction and up-close teaching as a frequent and regular practice. During COVID Safety measures, courses like ELD that previously were delivered face to face before COVID-19 were now changed to a distance delivery format. As a result,

teachers must maintain and enforce social distancing, which makes grabbing students' attention and communicating more difficult. It has also been more challenging for teachers to make their nonverbal cues indicating their interest in the children visible.

This project was implemented six months into the school year. My observations of student challenges faced in the social studies classroom included the inability to use academic language to communicate and demonstrate the ability to conceptualize what is being learned. Our school includes a large population of ELs who face poverty and other socio-political issues to provide some background. While I am only speaking for a few students, my goal is to provide students with the academic language support in my content area class, Social Studies 6, so that they can be better equipped to acquire new knowledge and skills and apply them far beyond school. Furthermore, equipped with this academic language, they are more likely to comprehend and access new findings in the world. Lynch (2017) supports the idea that a “unified mission around academic language helps districts and schools improve students’ likelihood of educational success and provides students with the tools they need to comprehend their world, in school and beyond,” (p. 1). Thus, creating a vocabulary and language handbook for my content area of social studies, and now this literature review will help me understand the facets of social studies and learn specifically the academic language of it.

I have been a teacher in the Salem-Keizer Public Schools. At the moment, our school district serves a total of 40,155 students. Overall, 18% of the student population is reported to be English Language Learners (ELLs). At WMS, we have 1,200 students enrolled (Salem-Keizer, 2022). The diverse student population includes students who identify as Hispanic, Pacific Islander, African American, Russian, and White. My day-to-

day schedule includes teaching 7th-grade social studies, 6th-grade social studies, and 6th-grade AVID. AVID, also known as Advancement Via Individual Determination, is a college readiness program for first-generation students from underrepresented backgrounds and provides rigorous support across various subject areas (Bernhardt, n.d).

Among the 155 students I teach, 82 are emergent bilinguals. A subgroup of 40 are currently active in the ELL program, and 44 are being monitored or near exiting from receiving services. Spanish, Marshallese, Chuukese, Russian, Swahili, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Arabic are the primary languages spoken. Out of these languages, Spanish is the most predominant. This year, my role is to teach social studies 6, which focuses on teaching the history of Mesoamerica, like the Inca, Aztecs, and Maya, along with indigenous groups of the United States. Social studies 7 include the history of Africa and ancient kingdoms, with a following to learn of China, the Middle East, and Oceania.

Meanwhile, in my target course (for which I intend to create the handbook), I have 24 students. To target the class with the most language needs, my fourth-period type, also known as 6th-grade social studies, has 31 students, with 15 of them being emergent bilinguals, 6 receiving special education services, and 5 of them recognized as AVID scholars. As you can see, the student populations whom I serve are diverse, as I have students that have varying needs. Other important data to consider is that 100% of students live in poverty (PD, 2022).

Teaching social studies and AVID content courses allows me to teach and interact with emergent bilingual students to help them better understand the world

around them. Social studies courses are enriched with historical events, issues, and more that individuals can use to make informed decisions about their actions and role in society as they grow older. My mantra for teaching includes creating opportunities for students to draw real-life connections to their learning to make informed decisions and interpretations and become the next generation of teachers, scientists, doctors, engineers, and any other profession they hope to attain.

To provide some additional insights into Title 1 schools, we often see students experiencing obstacles in their lives such as poverty, homelessness, and substandard housing in isolated rural areas amongst the major cities (Waters, 2019). As a result, students experiencing poverty can limit the outside learning opportunities privileged students may face. This includes instruction, modeling, and understanding academic language in speaking, listening, hearing, and writing. There is a belief that emergent bilingual students or Latinx students are deficient or unable to use academic language. However, this White standard belittles the students and their identities and especially ignores their strengths as second language learners (Garcia, 2021). However, I intend to create opportunities for my students to use their first language skills and other assets and apply them to their second language of learning. I hope that with the design of my handbook, I can inspire students to use their voices to speak their truths in either language and especially recognize the significance that their first language brings to the world and society. I have witnessed firsthand students who neglect or strive to steer away from their first language, but I hope to provide this support to communicate with students that embracing their first language should be seen as a strength or power as it shows their diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

To support my emergent bilingual students, I have endeavored to re-teach and model academic language use in my classroom this year. From summarizing a text to writing an argument and expressing our perspectives, I have designed my classroom to include content-based learning with applied support in the areas of academic language. I demonstrate the translanguaging between Spanish and English to emphasize connections and trans language opportunities between both languages.

Translanguaging allows learners to use their full linguistic abilities in the languages they speak. For example, when writing or speaking takes place in the classroom, students have full ability to express themselves in English and their native language. I ensure that I develop a spatial sense in the classroom to support students in making connections in various languages when necessary. A portion of students would benefit from using a handbook that supports them in identifying different forms in structuring language use in the academic discipline of social studies.

Vocabulary development and language structure are essential for students as they may have fewer opportunities to hear academic language in English in their homes or communities. More miniature modeling of language and exploration does not provide students with the opportunities to utilize and put these skills into practice (Carlo, 2004). With students in need of academic language support in social studies, my professional project involves constructing and designing a student-friendly handbook for students to use when communicating in oral, spoken, or written forms in the academic discipline of social studies. Schools in the United States have been designed to use academic language to succeed. Thus, I have developed a guide for students in the content area of social studies to conceptualize their thinking and primarily use it to perform to their

highest linguistic level while also obtaining their cultural, and academic potential (Garcia, 2021).

Literacy skills like academic language and writing are needed for almost every setting. Literacy, reading, writing, and speaking are critical elements for engaging with others and making connections to the world around them. These are skills that are universal in all content areas. This includes math, language arts, social studies, art, and much more (Alber, 2014). Without recognizing it, adolescents are constantly interacting with various literacy components in their daily lives. This can be in reading texts, engaging in meaningful writing to inform, argue or communicate, and having conversations in various group settings.

The social development theory by Vygotsky (2020) supports the idea that children's cultural development appears two times in their lives. This is known as the child's social level and individual level. Children's zone of proximal development increases when they are mentored or guided by an adult, especially with peer interactions. As supported by Vygotsky, in this view, learning interactions play a role in the development of learning, especially in higher thinking and more (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). In terms of language, the interactions that students have with others may shape their beliefs, attitudes, and more, which in turn influences understanding and functioning.

As a result, they knew that interactions and learning with and from others are less meaningful if students are not well equipped to connect with others or draw conclusions themselves. As mentioned before, academic language demands in schools have been based on white-normative and middle-class values that place students from

culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds at a disadvantage. The handbook that I have created serves as a tool for students to communicate effectively and academically, helping them succeed through this obstacle of normative. Namely, this handbook is designed to address the academic language needs of emergent bilinguals. All other students excel in academic discourse by using language to think critically, collaborate and conceptualize their ideas and understandings. Thus, through the work of my class, I will not close all of the opportunity gaps. Instead, it was again to aid in doing so through the content area of social studies. I hope this will work because I have developed a tool to support my students now and in the future.

Academic Language

The content area of social studies is an elective that, unlike other content areas, does not require students to be assessed at the state level. *Research cites* (Szpara, 2007) the use of language is described to be interchangeably used by teachers and students in acquiring new knowledge and skills, while also “imparting new information, describing abstract ideas, and developing students' conceptual understandings, “ (p. 4). The language used in social studies has changed over time. However, this concept is not new, thus I must connect this back to my students and implement it in my classroom to bridge the gap between social studies and students themselves. In a previous study (Szpara, 2007) a school included a growing number of emergent bilingual high school students, and researchers designed instructional strategies to develop students' academic language use through a cognitive academic language approach that targeted students' comprehension skills in social studies. Some of these targeted included the

following interventions: “providing social and cultural support during the process of acculturation, providing explicit instruction in academic strategies of in-depth content using cognitive strategies, and making the curriculum accessible through reduced cognitive load without reducing content,” (p. 189). This study is a model approach to address the language acquisition needs those students who are emergent bilinguals may endure and need efficiency and rapport.

Ordinarily, other literature reviews that I have examined, all of which support my professional project’s idea, include further examining the big ideas that relate to my project; this includes analyzing and applying concepts and theories centered around collaborative work, problem-based learning, experiential learning, and more (Concept-Based Practices for Social Studies, n.d.). Furthermore, this was an area where I will continue to explore and examine while shaping my professional project as I put it into practice.

MS ED Standards

My project will align with the goals of my MS ED program and the professional standards in my field because it is centered around effectively applying my expertise and knowledge as a professional educator. My goal is to research the needs of emergent bilingual students academically and my commitment to better serving students and supporting them through academia in an elective course like social studies. It is evident that the following are the expectations for the M.S. Ed program at Western Oregon University (WOU Graduate programs, n.d.):

1. Effectively apply the professional content expertise, knowledge, skills, and dispositions of their educational profession.

2. Use research and evidence to develop environments that support and assess learning and their professional practice.
3. Show commitment to and develop professional education leadership attributes.

Social Sciences Standards, Oregon Department of Education

Along with my professional project meeting WOU M.S Ed. graduate program guidelines, my idea of the project also meets the elected standards for my content, social studies class. These are the following standards I will work to meet and support students in meeting or exceeding expectations.

- Standard 6.1: **Compare and contrast** early forms of government via the study of early civilizations of the Western Hemisphere.
- Standard 6.14: **Identify and describe** how places and regions' physical and human characteristics connect to human identities and cultures in the Western Hemisphere.
- Standard 6.20: **Analyze** cause and effect relationships within the living histories of ethnic groups, religious groups, and other traditionally marginalized groups in the Western Hemisphere (SKPS, 2022).

These social studies-based standards are drawn directly from SKPS and the U.S. Department of Education. Thus, they align with the purpose of my handbook and targeted literacy components as they can include the use of writing, speaking, listening, and reading to meet the requirements of the standard. An example that addresses standard 6.20 is proposing a summative performance task centered around the

following argument: “Why was an advanced civilization such as the Incas so easily defeated? Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, or essay) that addresses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from historical sources” (SKPS, 2022). As evident, there are many ways of responding to this prompt. Thus, using a handbook was a supportive aid to help students interpret information, analyze their findings, and especially establish an argument while drawing conclusions based on their perspectives and understanding of the Inca civilization.

Moreover, the big question now is what teachers should consider when they advocate for students and seek to support closing student achievement gaps in academic discourse professionally? The first step of this professional project was to collect data about where students are currently. Next, I was examining my 6th-grade students in their ability to communicate orally and in writing, along with their speaking and listening skills. Then, create a pre-assessment that includes a writing sample before introducing the academic language use handbook. Finally, I will collect evidence that demonstrates the student's current stance and inability to communicate and understand using the four literary elements.

Consequently, the types of assessments that I will conduct will include a variety of formal and summative assessments. This provides student writing samples with various social studies specifically related prompts (writing), observations of student discussions amongst peers and in whole-class meetings (speaking), reflections (listening), and responses (reading) during guided reading and practice. This was done through a variety of lessons within social studies. Examples of this will include topics and themes centered around Ancient Civilizations and Indigenous groups in North

America.

Following, my next steps would be to introduce the academic language handbook to students who are emergent bilinguals in my social studies classroom by reviewing and introducing various uses of language, much like academic vocabulary, transition words, sentence frames, and starters for multiple purposes and more. Throughout modeling the handbook and implementing strategies, I will collect student data to see them developmentally and academically improve their literacy skills. The data will include various samples of students' work and their progress. This will derive from daily warm-ups, instructional material, responses to guided questions, homework assignments, writing essays, projects, etc.

The time frame for this project was during a trimester class. I was able to begin the procedure and implementation of this project at the end of trimester 2 of the school year. I wanted to start my project during the start of a new trimester with new learning so that my students can set academic SMART goals to achieve academic success in effective language strategies. In summary, this project has taken me 6-8 weeks where I have been analyzing and comparing students' progress from their skills, through the development of supported learning using the handbook, followed by the post-assessment as we are at the end of the year. Students' work was used now to demonstrate growth and comprehension of academic discourse. I know that I have achieved success as I have seen all of my students in social studies show 100% growth by incorporating elements from the student handbook into their writing, speaking, listening, and reading skills.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This literature review aims to determine the common barriers that students experience in the content area of social studies and evaluate the role of academic vocabulary and language by assessing how they are presented and used in the classroom. This literature review also aims to find the supporting research that determines the best methods for implementing the academic handbook. Then, in the attempt, I explored the guiding questions I had using a mixed process of classroom observations and experience as a teacher in the classroom, followed by a critique of the current research and studies. Lastly, the methodology included discovery researchers in the field and assessed their view of how history can construct meaning with the use of language.

Another way I discovered current themes was to use the Western Oregon Universities library page to use their scholarly search engine and research keywords related to the field of study and overall project. Words include keywords like social studies, academic language, emergent bilinguals, teacher, scaffolding, supporting language development, effects of COVID-19, and other terminology that came to mind. This next section, Thus, thoroughly discusses resources, studies, and a variety of frameworks that will shape the creation of the professional project handbook.

Theme 1: The common barriers to student success in the social studies

classroom.

Many learners face a challenge across the United States by accessing the language of school-designed curricula, specifically classroom texts. Neugebauer and Heineke (2020) describe the causes of misunderstanding academic language as relative to students' lack of understanding of vocabulary, syntax, and discourse associated with such disciplines (p. 159). Students are expected to communicate through different forms across content area subjects, like math, social studies, language arts, science, and more. One of the outlooks on the barriers limiting students' ability to access academic language is based on the preparation of licensed teachers. Ideally, students cannot comprehend or achieve a level of understanding of what they are learning due to their teachers' levels of experience, which may impact their ability to create and implement scaffolds of support. The amount of knowledge and experience a teacher has an impact on student learning. When the teacher may have a general understanding of how academic language and functions work, and they cannot translate, they may have a challenging time when it comes to bridging content to students. Additionally, as a bilingual teacher, I have increased my awareness and knowledge of the benefits of using two languages as it can help students navigate those linguistic differences when learning. Research again points to challenges of vocabulary development as an area that many students are not meeting based on their prior-background knowledge. In another study conducted by Ilhan Filter (2017), it is described that teachers' experiences and self-reported practices in teaching social studies impact the implementation of embedded writing opportunities and inquiry for students. The qualitative study focused on a middle school where teachers were

interviewed about their perceptions and feelings towards content-specific instruction and techniques.

Additionally, licensure programs and school districts should create opportunities for teachers to gain professional development and training on academic writing and language to remain connected to it and better understand their content area classrooms. Furthermore, this research will identify areas of improvement for myself and help me develop a means of support for future educators throughout the field. In essence, being better trained and informed will bridge together the gaps I may have in my academic ability as a teacher to improve and refine my understanding, which would impact students' conceptual understanding of social studies in the classroom.

Theme 2: The common barriers that affect students who are emergent bilingual.

Other barriers to student learning identified by the research include three key issues that emergent bilinguals face when learning in mainstream content classrooms: timing, use of multiple modes of input and output, and simultaneously learning about and through language (Gibbons, 2015). Carrier (2005) refers to timing as a vital issue in student learning in a classroom with various emergent bilinguals; it can take several years for students to develop proficiency in conversational or written language (Collier, 1987). It is clearly explained that there is great significance in providing students with extra support in content-specific vocabulary, and some strategies that are universal across subject areas include word walls and word sorts, among other techniques like sense structures (p. 6)—incorporating vocabulary and accompanying sentence structures as language objectives. The author indicates that this approach provides

learning tools to help learners engage and participate in content classrooms. This study supports my professional project by highlighting the implementation of my academic language handbook and scripts that I was working on providing for students. It was the foundation for designing proper scaffolds and instructional strategies for students.

On the contrary, burnout and decreased engagement amongst adolescents became challenging to manage during the outbreak of COVID-19. Salmela-Aro (2021) identified the COVID-19 pandemic created instability for students, thus impacting students' overall socio-emotional skills. One of their compelling arguments is that socio-emotional instability has increased “significantly during secondary education” (p. 796). I found this statement to apply to the experiences my students have experienced as they navigated through the remainder of the pandemic. For example, when planning for instruction, I plan for activities that involve classroom sharing or participation. I oftentimes must try various strategies to get students to participate or their answers. I have tried turn and talks, pair-share, drawing names, and much more. While I find some of the claims questionable in the studies, I consider this study as some commonalities that adolescents experience is provided within this academic journal.

In like manner, Hermann-Spitzer and Musslick (2021) describe the findings of adolescent students experiencing increased difficulties in math due to the school shutdowns. In addition, students' educational gap in mathematics increased due to curriculum-based online learning, which included technology software different from in-person learning. While this study informs educators of the appropriate learning methods for supporting students in mathematics, it does not entirely address the overall goal of my professional practice. It will instead be used to compare other subject areas, given

that this is a primary set on mathematics education.

In brief, the commonly formed barriers that students who are emergent bilinguals face which are limiting to their success in social studies include accessing school-based curriculum based on their prior background knowledge, amount of learning time, uses of multiple modes of input and output, alongside taking on two roles of learning a new language and using their prior learning to make sense of the content. Due to my critical findings in the literature review, I was using this to shape and support the creation of the handbook as the studies reveal experiences, examples, and supporting evidence that pertains to my professional project.

Theme 3: The importance of academic vocabulary and language across content subjects in K-12 public education.

In various public educational institutions, writing is used to communicate across all academic disciplines and grade levels. Used as means for communication, there are multiple challenges in curriculum design that teachers in the field of education have faced that have limited their ability to promote and incorporate student voice in the classroom. Using self-directed writing to give voice to students is the primary focus of Lovejoy (2009), where the author reclaims the importance of reading and writing as schools are becoming increasingly diverse and legislative mandates reinforce the form of testing learners (p. 79). The typical classroom across our nation is becoming increasingly and demographically diverse, and educational pedagogy must adapt to meet the needs of students in the school.

Lovejoy (2009) describes the social context of typical classrooms to embody “open

and honest communication among students and between students and teacher, along with respect for and knowledge about linguistic and cultural difference,” (p. 6). Thus, this article shows how academic vocabulary plays a role in student writing to promote the use of the student's voice.

One of the supporting ideas by Lovejoy centers around giving students opportunities to write about their topics and experiences and using that platform to write for different purposes and audiences so that students can see the other processes and forms of having written for other occasions. Another remark by Lovejoy (2009) suggests that writing is expressive and develops through the various modes that include expression, transactional, or poetic leading to writing, editing, polishing, proofreading, and publishing. Also, to summarize the author's findings, it was proved that the best form of writing to engage students of all learners is by providing students with autonomy and freedom to write and express themselves on topics they find important to them. This provides students with a safe space to communicate their perspectives and opinions. This current study is relevant to my project proposal as it focuses on teachers' relationship between students and writing, determining how to engage students in learning and how to support students in hiring them.

In Short (1994)), the author describes her findings on research conducted where the academic levels of English Language Learners are analyzed in social studies content-based classrooms. The overall research design includes the outlook on social studies classes and the “cognitively demanding and context-reduced communication. The project examines how social studies knowledge is constructed in middle school classrooms with ESL students and what linguistic and cultural competencies students

need to engage effectively in this domain of discourse and learning” (p. 585). It is apparent that after having conducted the study, research revealed that reaching social studies to emergent bilinguals could be challenging or overwhelming overall for educators and students. However, with proper support for beginning and intermediate learners, students can access learning materials through given texts and communicate their interpretations and discoveries with scaffolds.

One of the exciting findings I discovered in the study was that when the researchers were able to see cultural diversity and representation of students in the social studies textbooks and other readings, students were able to understand better and felt comfortable with being vulnerable and willing to attempt trial and error within their writing. Additional relative information to know is the emphasis on explicitly teaching vocabulary to students. Short (1994) describes this as ensuring that teachers do so by developing word webs, graphic organizers, eliciting relationships amongst words, drawing associations with other known words, demonstrating, and especially sentence frames, and accessibility to use of language is key to helping students to make connections to their learning. It is evident that this study greatly supports my project proposal as it lays out the foundations for educator preparation, while it also brings to the prime light an example that students need to successfully use language to communicate and make sense of their learning.

Another study that points out the best strategies for implementing vocabulary development is Flynt and Brozo’s (2008) publishing of *Content Literacy: Developing Academic Language: Got Words?* This article unveils the importance of vocabulary instruction in classroom settings regarding how students interact with vocabulary and

instructional strategies that teachers should implement or use in their pedagogy. For example, teachers should be highly selective of the words they use to effectively improve vocabulary comprehension, provide exposure to vocabulary through collaborative learning, and plan for lessons involving hands-on activities and word associations (p. 502). In addition, various studies suggest that teacher instructional planning should address more professional development and awareness of students' abilities to ensure students' needs are met. While this article may have great potential to support my professional project, I have some reservations due to the repetitive nature of other academic journals I have reviewed. Nevertheless, I will consider some of its findings to support the idea of teacher preparation programs providing professional development.

Townsend, Lesaux, and Schmitt (2012) describe words as tools for communication. They bring attention to the significance of academic vocabulary and how to use it in any given academic language. It is emphasized that proficiency is ideal for success, and there are demands needed to be met to obtain proper use of academic language. This study explains the importance of using specific discipline-specific words and aligning them with school-wide academic language. I intend to utilize this research as a foundation for conducting research in my discipline and becoming informed of the school-wide goals at WMS.

Theme 4: Research shows that students who can use academic language and vocabulary in any school subject area will generally do better in school. Having access to models and academic language can be demonstrated through the content

areas of social studies, mathematics, language arts, science, health, and many more disciplines. Reflective journaling is a process in which writing takes place that reflects on current or prior experiences. In *Reflective Journal Writing as a Tool to Teach Aspects of Social Studies* by All-Karasneh (2014), one suggested practice for understanding values, attitudes, and beliefs is preparing students for constructive writing to communicate. However, this study places a significant emphasis on the teacher preparation in pre-educational licensure programming and professional planning to “the constructivism and include teacher-led, student-driven, and teacher reflections” (p. 395). The argument proposed in this study includes the idea that journal writing is the type of writing that can aid student teachers in reflecting on their experiences and help them conceptualize their roles and discover their understanding.

This study explores the impact of “learning from experience on teaching practice.” The methods component included 140 social education student teachers in their first year of the licensure program. The findings included student teachers identifying the journal writing process throughout their experience to be “useful, significant, and a valid tool regarding their learning to teach social education” (p. 403). Further findings include the attempt to implement writing journals in programs like general education courses to discover new results and determine its benefits for other learners. This current literature review aligns with my overall project proposal because it goes hand in hand with my initial idea of incorporating writing and communication practices to help students use their voices in social studies.

Janzen (2008) examines the research behind English Language Learners in the

content areas subjects of history, math, language arts, and more. The author focuses on the socio-cultural features of academic literacy and investigates the methods used to teach learners in this subject area (p. 1010). One of their main findings is that “how teachers understand language, content, teaching, and context, they can implement that knowledge into their fields” (p. 1031). This infers that student were better prepared and modeled how to use academic language. Thus, they will have been exposed to it by professionals who are well versed in it.

In contrast, Gritter, Beers, and Knaus (2013) conducted a study in a U.S History class where various scaffolding strategies are implemented to aid students in their learning. The suggested moves for creating accessible material for students include “schema building, top-down schemata, metacognition, identifying prompts, modeling questioning, bridging, comparing, conceptualizing” (p. 6) and a variety of other strategies to use in social science specific instruction. Thus, I was utilizing both mentioned studies to structure the handbook design that was created. I will simply use this as a straightforward guide to ensure that I provide scaffolding to meet the needs of students while also following the recommended structure suggested in his historical-driven research study.

The C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards is a guide that helps teachers strengthen and plan for social studies content-based learning instruction. It applies to civics, economics, geography, and history throughout elementary, intermediate, and secondary educational institutions. In my thorough literature review, I discovered that this publishing focuses on teachers who structure their teaching to implement new literacy demands and primarily provide rigorous questioning in their

curriculum. In addition, this literature describes how literacy plays a role in social studies. Other key findings within Cuenca's (2021) C3 framework are the highlights the author brings to content area reading and disciplinary reading. For example, in social science, content-specific literacy is described to focus on the context of the reading experience and especially the intersection between the reading experience of students and the characters or figures they interact with within any given text. Meanwhile, as Cuenca describes, the disciplinary literature involves the necessity to include skills centered around skills used for understanding, creating, and using a means for communication. Evaluating this qualitative content analysis of inquiry-based lessons will help me frame together academic language tools to help students in my social studies classes.

Researchers like Schleppegrell and de Oliveira (2006), Yoder (2016), and Unsworth (1999) write about how social studies and history construct meaning by using academic language. They describe the best uses for implementing academic language and vocabulary development in various social studies class settings, much like a variety of history courses. Because of their scholarly written work, I became a more informed and better-prepared teacher who will use various of their findings to inform the implementation of the handbook.

Language teaching in content area classrooms can function as a crutch to support and bridge the academic language challenges of classroom discussions in secondary history classrooms. Schleppegrell and de Oliveira (2006) find that Content-Based Instruction, also known as CBI, is vital for educators in the social studies discipline, especially as it is one of the most virtual forces of teaching English a Second

Language. The authors argue that for content to be meaningful for students, language and content must go together and be used interchangeably as it provides opportunities for students to expand their academic learning and language development.

Schleppegrell and C. de Oliveira (2006) suggest that to “learn history, students have to read difficult texts, engage in discussion of complex issues, and write in ways that present their judgments and perspectives at the same time they report on what they have learned,” (p. 255). As I have witnessed myself, this applies as a significant component of the course itself is designed by the State of Oregon, and the curriculum is often designed to evaluate historical texts and current events and use writing to interpret what is learned. Schleppegrell and de Olivera’s (2006) message to their audience is to understand that “students need to be able not only to understand sequences of events and the roles historical participants played in those events but also to recognize the interpretation that is an integral part of all historical reporting and is built into every text,” (p. 255). As a dedication to ensuring that students can recognize historical events and their roles in history and our society, the handbook will incorporate academic vocabulary and language to advance students’ ideologies and perspectives.

According to Yoder (2016), teacher preparation programs must work to provide service teachers with the tools and rapport to ensure that teachers are well equipped to evaluate students’ academic language performance and implement necessary scaffolds. He describes doing so as “providing structure for language production, including sentence frames and accountability for listening to peers, led to increased oral and written language production among ELLs in a middle school U.S. history classroom” (p. 28). In essence, teachers who enter the field of education overall must

be well informed about and prepared to teach culturally responsive students how to have specific learning needs. One of his key arguments is based on social studies teachers' demand for being able to serve students who are emergent bilinguals in their classroom to help them and make social studies accessible. I used Yoder's (2016) meta-synthesis for teaching practice in my classroom and during the handbook development by ensuring that I build on students' prior knowledge and work to design curriculum, instruction, and classroom learning relevant to students' culture, linguistic, and diverse backgrounds, and experiences.

Lastly, Unsworth (1999) describes the critical lens that understands the relationship between language and historical events. In his critique of a study, Unsworth describes his discovery of the benefits of promoting academic language and vocabulary awareness among students. It was evident that when exposed to higher-level thinking, vocabulary and more students can use those skills throughout their educational journey and obtain success. It is an Informative perspective to understand the value and role educators have on student learning, especially informing my understanding of the diverse needs emergent bilinguals may have in a social studies classroom. I was able to read, review, and conceptualize their research to help me understand the academic demands of social studies language. I feel confident that I know the role I have as being prepared and culturally responsive in my classroom, whereas I have the ability and knowledge to demonstrate and explicitly teach students the power of words and how they are used to communicate. Social studies are enriched with historical events that have happened in the past and continue to occur in our society and different parts of the world. By designing a handbook, I will use it to assist students in using the power of

words and language to make informed decisions about the world they live in, with, of course, emphasis on projecting their voice and their perspectives as academically performing historical scholars.

Literature Review Conclusion

In summary, my extensive literature review provided me with an informed outlook and further understanding of the importance of academic language, teacher preparation, the lasting impact of COVID-19, and especially how crucial it is to implement writing into social studies content-area classes. In addition, I learned more about the logistics of teaching academic writing, much like implementing strategies to teach vocabulary to students explicitly. Moving forward, I was reflecting on my own experiences during my licensure program, teacher candidate program, and now as a professional and identifying my strengths and areas for improvement. In contrast, I can benefit from attending professional development and other further training to become proficient in my use of academic language, especially in social studies.

My research and analysis of these literature reviews enabled me to see the impacts of COVID-19 and have helped me shape and outline the necessities for the academic language handbook that I was designing. Although various possible components could be applied or included, I will solely focus on academic language strictly tied to the standards and learning objectives of social studies. Therefore, I will take it one step at a time and make necessary changes during the process.

Chapter 3

Methods

As a social studies teacher for the past several years, one of the most recurring challenges that I have noticed and observed in my classroom is the needed scaffolding for academic writing and discussion for emergent bilinguals. As a currently licensed employee in the second largest public school in Oregon, I have seen firsthand observed student struggles and obstacles when it comes to synthesizing their knowledge. As an AVID educator and social studies teacher of different grade levels, I have compiled areas of growth that many students have and need to be addressed. This year I have sought out the need to re-teach and model academic language use in my classroom. From summarizing a text to writing an argument and expressing our perspectives, I have designed my classroom to include content-based learning with applied support in the areas of academic language. A portion of students would benefit from using a handbook that walks them through different forms of structuring language use. Following, academic vocabulary development and language structure within writing and speaking are essential for our students as they have fewer opportunities to hear academic language outside of school. More miniature modeling of language and exploration does not provide students with the opportunities to utilize their skills, even more so, put them into practice.

Based on my current research, it is evident that in Title 1 schools, we often see students who are experiencing obstacles in their lives, and those “burdens include poverty, homelessness, living in state-run institutions, living in isolated rural districts, and those still learning the English language,” (Waters, 2019, <https://educationpost.org>).

As a result, based on what I have observed, our schools' curriculum and assessment practices do not consider these students' linguistic and cultural funds of knowledge, so there remains an opportunity gap that must be addressed. Literacy, reading, writing, and speaking are critical elements for engaging with others and making connections to the world around them. These are universal skills in all content areas, including math, language arts, social studies, art, and much more (Alber, 2014).

Next, the social development theory by Vygotsky (2020) supports the idea that children's cultural development appears two times in their lives, this includes during the socialization phase and when individually develop as well. Children's zone of proximal development increases when they are gradually led by an adult, especially with peer interactions. As supported by Vygotsky, in this view, learning interactions play a role in the development of learning, especially in higher thinking and more (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). In terms of language, the interactions that students have with others may shape their beliefs, attitudes, and more, which in turn influences understanding and functioning.

Other literature suggests analyzing and applying concepts and theories centered around collaborative work, problem-based learning, experiential learning, and more (Concept-Based Practices for Social Studies, n.d.). My intention of creating and designing a student-friendly handbook for students to use in the content area of social sciences will aid their understanding and application in writing and discussion based on any social science-driven topic.

Question

The handbook was influenced based on my classroom observations and thorough research so that my learners can utilize it to conceptualize and scaffold their

thinking to perform to their highest academic potential linguistically and culturally.

Questions to consider while designing this handbook include but are not limited to: how can we support students' academic writing in social studies classes? What areas of speaking and writing need to be kept? What does modeling good writing look like at the secondary level? Finally, how can we support emergent bilinguals in content-based instructional programs?

Project Purpose and Implementation of Goals

Furthermore, it is essential to express ideas, share our perspectives, and be able to ask questions. It can be challenging to put into words what we may be thinking, feeling, or feeling the need to say. Thus, this project will act as a classroom resource that students can use throughout their participation in daily instruction. During the process of this project, I hope to learn how to best support students in their academic writing and especially improve my pedagogy by refining and learning how to best model academic language for my students.

The goal for learners will consist of learning and exploring various strategies for writing and helping them find their voice. This project aligns with the InTASC standards. It meets the expectations for instructional practice by implementing instructional strategies that “encourage learners to develop deeper understandings of content areas and their connections, to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways” (ODE, n.d). In other words, the design of my handbook was a tool that students can use to apply their learning of any theme or topic and use the provided resources to make

meaningful connections and communicate with them through writing or dialogue.

Furthermore, creating this handbook will also meet my professional responsibility as an educator based on my professional learning and observation of students' progression, considering I was adapting my instructional strategies to implement academic writing practices that meet the needs of the learners in my classroom school as a whole.

Methods

In essence, designing a handbook for the content area of social sciences will provide educators in the field with a tool to use when planning for instruction. A few tools are available for the discipline regarding sentence structure, frames, etc. However, there is no specifically designed handbook for writing and discussion for secondary social sciences based on my research. The overarching goal of this project is to implement writing and speaking scaffolds to make learning and the student experience accessible.

When developing the academic and language handbook for social studies, I will consider the individualized plans that students have integrated into their schooling and the support I provide in-class-like sentence frames, geography tools, visuals, and much more. In addition, I will implement a bilingual cover page titled “Academic vocabulary & language handbook for Social Studies,” listed in Spanish as “Academico: manual de Vocabulario y Lenguaje para Estudio Sociales.” I intend to design a cover that conveys a clear and bilingual message for students and all other audience members to view and see the light that the Spanish language is as valuable as the English Language.

When determining the importance of the handbook and what to include in it, I

envisioned an interactive handbook that students could have and access themselves at hand's length. I envision a colorful and appealing flipbook that students could easily follow along with and would have at their dispense. I will work to collect examples of sentence frames recommended by the research I have done, current literature works, and through the influence of other language stems and frames recommended by AVID program strategies and my current site and professional development workshops that I attend. I will first plan to have a cover page that includes and provides a title in both English and Spanish. Due to my current courses being only taught in English, I plan to have the Spanish language interpretation of the textbook translated and placed below English. Next, I will include a series of clipart that will demonstrate symbols that correlate to the field of social studies and the world.

The handbook will include a table of contents that lists the various topics presented in the handbook. I will have the page numbers listed to make navigating these resources much more straightforward. The current time constraints in the classroom are limited due to 50-minute class periods, and I intend to make this handbook available and easily accessible. Following this, I again included specific pages related to various skills and themes used in the classroom. Finally, I will dedicate a page to making predictions. As in units, we always begin with creating questions that demonstrate curiosity and will help us show our growth and development throughout any given unit or area of study. Within this page, I will have question stems that student can use and fill with their wonderings and use in various scenarios like speaking or writing.

Next was a page that connects to the ideas of explaining using supporting

details. This page will have a variety of serene frames that vary in students' proficiency levels, which students will use based on their abilities and comprehension. Students needed to see the progression of words in simple and complex sentences to measure their growth and learning through academic vocabulary and language development.

Then, I will have the following page that is dedicated to the ideals of comparing and contrasting. Students will see specific words that correspond to the action of comparing and contrasting. Sentence starters and frames will then follow. Thus, this will show students the progression of applying words into sentences or simply have them available to see and use at their discretion during classroom learning. This page and all others will include a Spanish translation for supporting emergent bilingual students in drawing connections between both languages.

Afterward, a cause-and-effect page will show students the relationship between causes and effects. I will incorporate again specific vocabulary associated with sentence stems. To follow, I will have a page that includes academic vocabulary that relates to summarizing the main ideas of a text, reading, or video. While I will not have a list of sentence frames for this page, I will incorporate an actual paraphrase that was accessible for students to use. For example, I will include the following paragraph summary frame for students to see and implement in their writing. It will read as follows:

Example: Summary Frame:

The article, _____ by _____, explains/argues that _____.
According to _____ . It also says _____. This means
that _____.

On the other hand, the sequence of words or vocabulary is essential as students will see how sequential language helps keep writing organized and easy to understand when following or reading. Therefore, I will incorporate a mix of the following words that I have collected and have used in my classroom during this and past academic school years. For example, the beginning or choices for the introduction will include the following: “First,” “Especially,” and “Ultimately.” The second set of writing words will include the following, “Second,” “Before,” “Finally,” and “From... to”. At the same time, the third sequence of words will include then,” “after,” and “next.”

Towards the end of the handbook, I will design two pages to include tools and visuals relative to basic geographical terms and skills. One of the constant needs that I have seen is reviewing basic geography skills. This includes knowing how to follow cardinal directions, identifying the seven continents, and more. Thus, I intend to provide clip art images and titles that are specific to the following topics and concepts commonly used in social studies:

- The compass rose
- Cardinal directions
- Lines of Latitude and Longitude
- The Equator and Prime Meridian
- Distance scales
- The World Map

To sum it all up, the final product of my project was a handbook that I will design

and print that will contain various academic languages and tools. This handbook will incorporate academic vocabulary related to social sciences, various sentence frames and starters, and dialogue starters that students will use to expand, question, and more their perspectives within their writing, speaking, and listening. Following, other elements will include tools for making the text, asking questions, a world map, etc. It was a classroom printed material that students will have access to daily, and I will reference it during my daily instruction. This handbook will formally be presented to the WOU faculty, staff, and students at the Academic Excellence Showcase, along with approval. Again, I will approve it. I also intend to present it at WU's Bilingual Teacher Scholars Conference that will occur in the Spring of 2022. I will reach out to the Bilingual Teacher Scholars Program director to express the importance of academic language and vocabulary, mainly as it aids emergent bilingual learning in the classroom.

Finally, I will seek to reach out and give WOU's College of Education and related organizations to share my handbook with current or future first-year teachers sometime between the end of the term or early Fall of 2022. During my undergraduate license, I did not find a social studies-specific handbook that supported emergent bilingualism, and I hope that this handbook is a resource for others in the professional license program. My overall goal is to provide my audience with a resource guide that they can apply in their curriculum development and planning in the field of social studies. Additionally, I hope that attendees will gain a more comprehensive understanding of the importance and effectiveness of academic language in social studies.

Chapter 4

Final Project Design

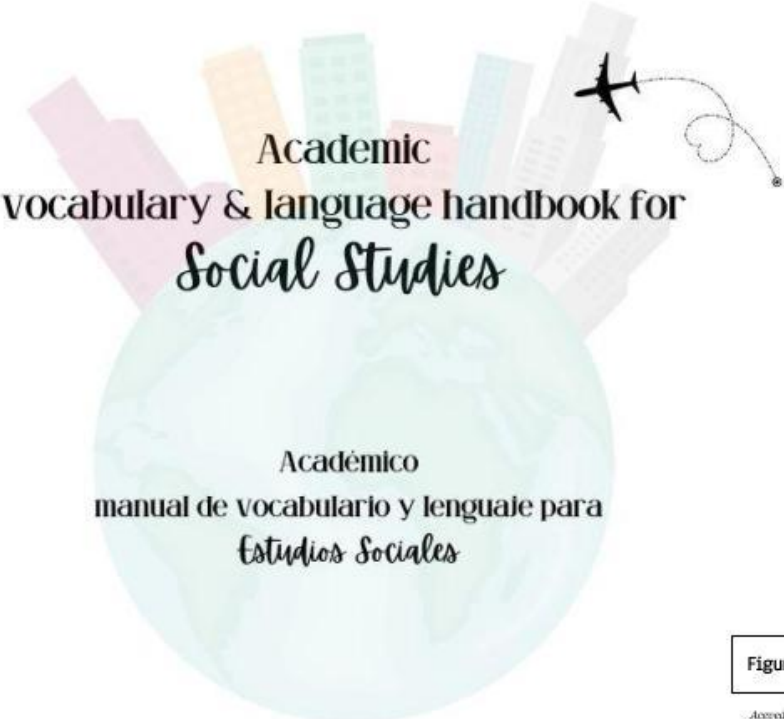


Figure 1.1

Accredo-Solis
2021-2022

Greetings Historian!

Saludos historiador!

You have newly embarked this treasure, which is designed to support you through your learning journey in social studies. Please use this guide when you feel that it is appropriate. Be sure to explore all the destinations within this handbook, without a further-a do, welcome aboard!

Se ha embarcado recientemente en este tesoro que está diseñado para apoyarlo a lo largo de su viaje de aprendizaje en estudios sociales. Utilice esta guía cuando lo considere apropiado. Asegúrese de explorar todos los destinos incluidos en este manual, sin más, bienvenido a bordo!



Figure 1.2

Table of Contents

Tabla de contenidos



1. Making a prediction	1. <i>Haciendo una predicción</i>
2. Explaining & Supporting	2. <i>Explicando y apoyando</i>
3. Compare and contrast	3. <i>Comparar y contrastar</i>
4. Cause & Effect	4. <i>Causa efecto</i>
5. Summarizing	5. <i>resumiendo</i>
6. Sequence of words	6. <i>secuencia de palabras</i>
7. Tools	7. <i>Instrumentos</i>
8. The World Map	8. <i>El mapa del mundo</i>

Figure 1.3

Making a Prediction

marcando una predicción

Sentence Frame:

- I think that _____.
- The _____ may be _____.
- He/she/they is not _____, so maybe _____.
- I (do not believe/believe that _____ is true since _____.

Marco de oración:

- *Pienso que _____.*
- *El _____ puede ser _____.*
- *Él/ella/ellos no es _____, así que tal vez _____.*
- *Yo (no creo/creo que _____ sea cierto desde _____.*

Figure 1.4

7

Explaining & Supporting an Opinion

Explicando y apoyando una opinión

Sentence Frames:

I think _____ is important because _____.

According to _____.

After listening to _____ I found that _____.

A _____ is a symbol of _____.

_____ is famous for _____.

While I was reading, I was thinking about _____.

The main idea of the paragraph is _____.

Two supporting details are _____ and _____.

_____ is important to history because _____ suggests _____.

Marcos de oraciones:

Creo que _____ es importante porque _____.

De acuerdo a _____.

Después de escuchar _____ encontré que _____.

Un _____ es un símbolo de _____.

_____ es famoso por _____.

Mientras leía, estaba pensando en _____.

La idea principal del párrafo es _____.

Dos detalles de apoyo son _____ y _____.

_____ es importante para la historia porque _____ sugiere _____.

Figure 1.5

4

Compare & Contrast

Compare y contraste

Comparison words:

similarity same
Likewise
Alike
both

Contrast Words

However	even though	yet
still	although	each
More than	instead	either.. or
One.. the other	in contrast	

Language of comparing and contrasting:

One similarity/difference between _____ and _____ is...
_____ and _____ are similar because they both...
_____ and _____ are different because while _____ has _____, _____ has...
_____ is similar/different in contrast to _____ is..

Palabras de comparación:

similarity same
Likewise
Alike
both

Palabras de contraste

Sin embargo	a pesar de que	todavía
todavía	aunque	cada uno
Más que	en cambio	o bien.. o
Uno.. el otro	en contraste	

Lenguaje de comparar y contrastar:

Una similitud/diferencia entre _____ y _____ es...
_____ y _____ son similares porque ambos...
_____ y _____ son diferentes porque mientras _____ tiene _____, _____ tiene...
_____ es similar/diferente en contraste con _____ es..

Figure 1.6

5

Cause & Effect

Causa y efecto

Cause/Effect Words

Because	then	until
when	whenever	
As a result	if...then	
hence	from... to	
since		

Palabras de causa/efecto

porque	entonces
hasta	
cuando	cada vez que
Como resultado	si...entonces
por lo tanto	de...a
ya que	

Sentence Frames

- The **cause** of _____ was...
- The **effect** of _____ was...
- It is important to _____ because...
- The most likely **cause** of _____ was...
- _____ (noun; person, place or thing) led to...

Marcos de oraciones

La causa de _____ fue...
El efecto de _____ fue...
Es importante _____ porque...
La causa más probable de _____ fue...
_____ (sustantivo; persona, lugar o cosa) llevó a...

Figure 1.7

6

Summarizing

Resumiendo

Summary Words:

Finally...	Last of all again...
Therefore...	Above all...
To Summarize...	In conclusion...
To conclude...	Most importantly...
In brief...	
To sum up...	
Ultimately...	

Palabras para resumir:

<i>Finalmente...</i>	<i>Lo último de todo otra vez...</i>
<i>Por eso...</i>	<i>Sobre todo...</i>
<i>Para resumir...</i>	<i>En conclusión...</i>
<i>Para concluir...</i>	<i>Lo más importante...</i>
<i>En breve...</i>	
<i>Para resumir...</i>	
<i>Por último...</i>	

Summary Frame:

The article, _____ by _____, explains/argues that _____ . According to _____ . It also says _____ . This means that _____ .

Cuadro resumen:

El artículo, _____ por _____, explica/argumenta que _____ . De acuerdo a _____ . También dice _____ . Esto significa que _____ .

Figure 1.8

8

Sequence of Words

Secuencia de palabras

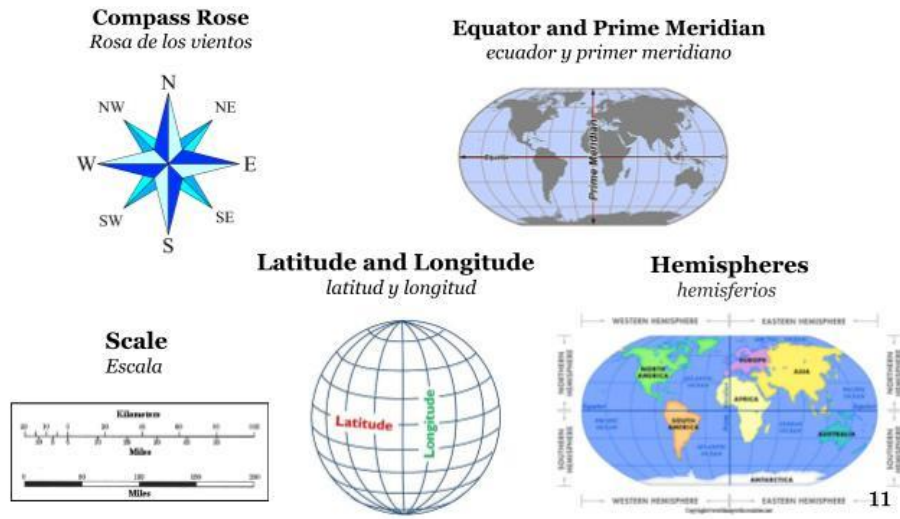
First	Second	Then
Especially	Before	After
And	Finally	Next
Ultimately	From... to	until

<i>Primero</i>	<i>Segundo</i>	<i>Entonces</i>
<i>Especialmente</i>	<i>Antes</i>	<i>Después</i>
<i>Y</i>	<i>Por fin</i>	<i>próximo</i>
<i>Por último</i>	<i>de... a</i>	<i>hasta</i>

Figure 1.9 8

Tools
Instrumentos

Figure 1.10



The World Map
El mapa del mundo



Chapter 5

Reflection and Implementation

The overall process of my professional project was enriching, as I was able to better address the needs of my students and use my professional judgment to implement a resource that supports students' language development. While conducting the literature review research, I discovered four main themes that include: learning about the common barriers to student success in the social studies classroom, the effects on students who are emergent bilinguals, following the themes that center around the importance of academic vocabulary, and language across content subjects in K-12 public education. I essentially discovered through my research that students who can use academic language and speech in any school subject area would generally do better in school. I had the opportunity to witness in my classroom where I saw students using the handbook as a writing or speaking tool.

Before designing and implementing the handbook, I did not have a clear understanding of what sentence frames were and what topics to provide students with; now, I feel confident that I have researched the best practices and structures that I can utilize in my classroom, especially in both English and Spanish. As a second-year teacher, I am glad to have developed a tool that could be re-used and a tool that continues to be modified so that one day I have a final draft that is printed and hopefully published for others to see and use as a resource as well.

This project has allowed me to spend time on this crucial topic as I advanced my professional development by being conscious and aware of my own biases, strengths, and weaknesses and understanding my students and the best practices that support them. Before developing this handbook, I had preconceived notions regarding the use of academic language. I thought that I had to teach students the language they needed

to be in or meet the status quo, but that is not the case. I learned that emergent bilinguals have their first language, which can be a powerful tool to voice their perspectives.

My professional project influenced my professional development as a teacher in multiple ways. I was able to grow in my knowledge of and understanding of what it means to scaffold material for students and teach to the achievement gap, along with understanding how to use my strengths as a teacher to meet the needs of emergent learners. I found that I could expand my knowledge on scaffolding because I could use my background knowledge of what I had learned and put it into practice. I was able to modify scaffolding strategies that I set into place; for example, my once created sentence frames were maybe verbally said aloud or written on a whiteboard. I learned the importance of and how significant it can be for students to have immediate access to them and use them at their own pace and hands.

During the development of my handbook, I have been more aware of students and their learning needs. I discovered how students use their body language to communicate without intentionally doing so. I observed this in my classroom, where I saw students shifting in their chairs, walking around, staring at the ceiling, or looking for other outlets to avoid assignments. After creating the handbook, I held a Socratic seminar where my students and I looked around in a circle and talked about the handbook and its meaning. I held a space for them to be curious, ask relevant questions, and engage in a conversation about the importance of utilizing first languages to advance our thinking and communication with others. This experience was excellent as it allowed me to learn more about my students and see their perspectives

on their school and performance. During this time, I noted a few of my comments. This includes the following:

- “I like it because it helps me” (L.G)
- “Why do we need to use this in class?” (C. L.)
- “I can use it to organize what I want to say” (Y.R)
- “Sometimes I get nervous about writing” (F. P)
- “I want to use it in my other class so I can know what to write” (A. G)
- “Do we get to keep it?” (K. L)

When identifying my strengths and weaknesses during the process of creating the handbook, being resourceful, paying attention to detail, and considering feedback and other perspectives were areas that I initially had some difficulty with but managed to push through. I found that I can be resourceful by others and inspired by the literature review and the professional development that Waldo provided for teachers. I was able to see tools like sentence frames and more that helped me determine what was most important and what to include. I did well in seeing others' model material and viewing it to change or modify it to make it my own. Meanwhile, I found that I pay great attention to details. In the handbook, I ensured proper grammar and spelling for students to see. As a teacher and role model, I must revise my work and model what proper punctuation and grammar look like. Once students can see this in place, they were again to replicate behaviors most of the time.

I found that many students, peers, and faculty members had unique insights and

feedback to provide during the process. When I encountered myself sharing what I had developed, I always ensured that I would be authentic and honest with my audience. It was essential to explain thoroughly what I intended to do with this handbook, and in many cases, I received constructive feedback that I was able to process and apply to my handbook. In one of the written feedback that I received, I had a comment that was left and stated: “Nothing. I think it is great because it encapsulates both languages” (BTS Conference).

The Bilingual Teacher Scholars Conference (BTS) is a highly recognized conference held to create a space for networking between new and experienced educators in the field (BTS, 2022). The BTS program mission statement includes the following description:

“Bilingual and Diverse Teacher Scholars Programs align resources and opportunities for students to attend WOU. You will receive academic support, individualized advising, and professional development opportunities as part of this program. Upon completion, you may receive preferred hiring in your home school district” (BTS, 2022).

This conference was held on Saturday, May 23, 2022, and I received the honor to present it within my own designed workshop. My overall goal was to present this handbook to educators and other resources so that my audience could learn to apply and include some of the strategies presented in their classrooms or professional development.

This demonstrated that I did well in being inclusive and integrating dual-language

material. On another note, other feedback that I received included the following:

“Make both Spanish and English the same font and size. I love how you have it on the water slides, but Spanish is smaller and in a different font on the first two. It makes Spanish look “different” but rather; both languages should be equal. Also, on the table of content, the languages do not like up. They have the same number which helps but make them the same size and font” (BTS Conference, 2022).

This feedback itself brought me to see my biases regarding both languages. I realized that there was some truth to be told when creating the handbook; I subconsciously did not think about the placement of words, the sizing of font, and how it all tied together. In my eyes, I had seen a visual that was inclusive of two languages that most of my emergent bilingual students spoke. However, after an informal conversation and discussion, I quickly realized that it was essential to show students and model the significance of recognizing our native languages as tools and resources. I was then prompted to go back to my thinking board and take the initiative to make both languages equally represented within the handbook. After all, what I will model to students will speak louder than words as they will see or may interpret what I have a negative perspective on both languages. Thus, this comment itself brought me to recognize the importance of being culturally and linguistically respectful as to being inclusive and intentional during the design of the Vocabulary and Language handbook for Social Studies.

Next steps considerations for the future will include adding more topics and resources to the handbook and possibly altering it to fit across other content areas. I

believe that given the time, I included what I found most valuable; however, I may consider incorporating more elements into the handbook throughout the summer. One specific way I would do so would be to include various graphic organizers related to notetaking and especially diagrams or graphic organizers related to vocabulary awareness. This may include a section for collecting vocabulary words and definitions. Following this, I found that I have a great resource to use as a starting point that may lead to modifying the project itself to fit across various content areas. If I could go back in time, I would take the initiative to collaborate with teachers in my field and work together to do a project that could be utilized and set to be used with, of course, it being a schoolwide expectation. Some of the expectations may include providing a copy for every student or simply having them displayed in the classroom across the school.

Moving forward, I next plan to continue editing and refining my current handbook works by visiting the writing center and peer editing. I will ask questions regarding my punctuation and grammar and ask clarifying questions. As a teacher, it is my responsibility to be aware of my own writing needs and areas of improvement and being able to understand is vital as I must first understand who I am as a writer so I can authentically show that to students as role models. Once I have felt I have exhausted much of the writing center as a resource, I plan to reach out to the WMS teachers and instructional mentors during a professional development day. Many of the teachers and instructional mentors I work with are great support systems and are always willing to share their ideas and perspectives with me. I feel confident that I was able to receive feedback and additional support for review on the professional project.

In conclusion, this academic vocabulary and language handbook is an open

guide that is flexible and adaptable to various needs. It has allowed me to grow linguistically and culturally as a teacher. I felt as if I have gained a significant amount of knowledge and understanding when supporting emergent bilingual education. Feeling afraid and anxious about researching language and vocabulary, I took a risk that was well worth it and earned. I firmly believe that educators in the field should always be curious and seek opportunities (much like I have) to advocate for their students and the quality of education. I can confidently say that I feel better prepared and knowledgeable, and willing to share my knowledge with others, especially new and incoming teachers. Collaborating with students has been the most rewarding piece of the project.

I look forward to continuing to improve and being an advocate for my students who are underrepresented and often overlooked. I look forward to seeing what other opportunities I may take shortly to integrate academic vocabulary and language development in social studies and other disciplines.

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