

Instructional Sample Practice for a Fourth-Grade Segment of a Social Studies Unit of Study Aligned to the Next Generation Learning Standards

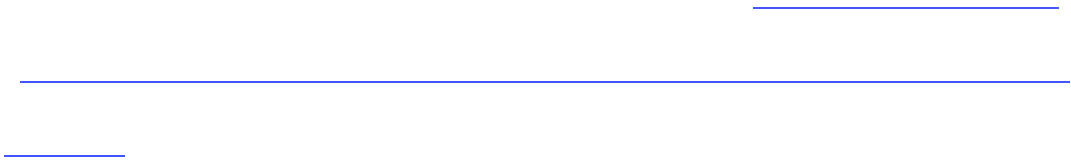
*Underlined sentences or words constitute [hyperlinks](#). Sentences and words in **bold** are classroom activities that thread oral language, metalinguistic development, and flexible groupings throughout this unit.*



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Spotlight

This Instructional Sample Practice describes a fourth-grade, dual-language (Spanish-English) classroom in which the teachers embedded oral language development, metalinguistic awareness, and flexible groupings in a Social Studies unit that centered on the Algonquian and Mayan creation myths. This Instructional Sample is for teachers and those who support teachers working with Multilingual Learners (MLs)¹ to build understanding and experience with instruction aligned to [the New York State Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards](#) as well as the Lifelong Practices for Readers and Writers that are embedded within them. This instructional unit highlights oral language through conversations that take place within flexible student groupings. The unit incorporates activities that target metalinguistic awareness to support the gradual and dynamic development of linguistic knowledge within and across languages.

This description of a fourth-grade, dual-language (Spanish-English) classroom centers on Unit 2 of the fourth-grade social studies curriculum, which focuses on aspects of some Native American cultures. This unit seeks to answer an essential question: What makes for a complex society? In the spotlight sample presented here, the teachers and students were working on creation myths from both American and Mexican cultures. Although Ms. Smith and Ms. González could have centered their instruction solely on the Algonquians, they decided that the interests, cultural backgrounds, and motivation of their students could best be served by having Ms. Smith develop a unit on Algonquian creation myths in English while Ms. González developed a unit on Mayan creation myths in Spanish. Both teachers incorporated oral language, metalinguistic awareness, and flexible groupings throughout this instructional sample.

This instructional sample starts by describing the importance the two teachers give to oral language.

Speaking

F R Q YH U de P M to R p e N In this specific case, the students were required to come up with their own questions to clarify meaning and make inferences.

A central aspect Ms. Smith and Ms. González emphasized is metalinguistics. The activities described below focus on the dynamic development of linguistic knowledge within language by targeting the analysis of word meanings, cognates and a false cognate, semantic gradients, and transitional words. As part of developing student metalinguistic skills, both teachers structured the translation of selected texts from Spanish to English and vice versa. Both teach.348 (t0 Tw -11.395 -19.128.4567 (t)-4.4-1.005 (f ext)-4i61)3.089 (s)3.149

The last section of this instructional practice covers ~~Students~~ ~~Writing~~ ~~Sriting~~ ~~Sritrug~~.

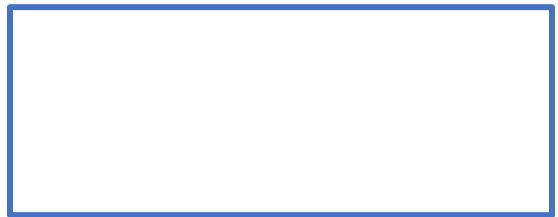
Table 1: Road Map of the Instructional Unit for Grade 4 Social Studies: Algonquian and Mayan Creation Myths

		<p>x Teachers of ML can foster the discussion and translation of a sentence or paragraph by grouping students (if possible based on their home language). The discussion can take place in the students' home language, and they can translate a text excerpt in English into their home language. Web-based translation tools can be useful in aiding a</p>

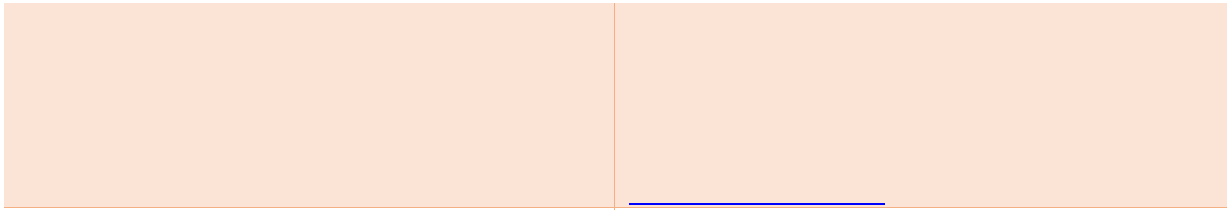
Overall Description of the Classroom Setting

Ms. González and Ms. Smith work in a side-by-side dual language bilingual (Spanish/English) program. They have 53 students in all. The students switch classes every day alternating between Spanish and English instruction. On the days that the students in Ms. González's receive Spanish in the mornings, they follow with Ms. Smith, who teaches the curriculum in English the afternoon. In the case of this social studies unit, the teachers were pursuing two different creation myths: an Algonquian myth, and a Mayan myth, but they had the same learning objectives in both classrooms. The program is a one-way dual language program since all students share Spanish as their home language. Except for seven students who were born in Mexico, the other 46 students were born in New York, but they come from families where at least one parent is Mexican, Dominican, or Guatemalan. (o) - (ilih).>>4DCU08 Tw1yf









made a dart from an owl feather and killed Glooskap.

The power of good is so strong, however; that Glooskap rose from the dead, ready to avenge himself. Alive again, Glooskap also knew that Malsum would continue to plot against him.

Glooskap realized that he had no choice but to destroy Malsum, so good would survive and his creatures would continue to live. So, he went to a stream and attracted his evil brother by loudly saying that a certain flowering reed could also kill him.

Glooskap then pulled a fern plant out by the roots and flung it at Malsum, who fell to the ground dead. Malsum's spirit went underground and became a wicked wisp spirit that still occasionally torments humans and animals but fears the light of day.

amarillas. Así tuvieron fuerza en sus músculos vigor en sus brazos y agilidad en sus piernas.

English Translation:

At first, everything on Earth was quiet, nothing moved. There were no animals, trees, or stones. Only the gods called Kukumatz and Huracán were found and were surrounded by clear and transparent waters. They dressed in red, blue, and green feathers. First, they created the word to be able to talk among themselves. And they agreed to create life.

And when the light came, they created valleys, mountains and long rivers. Kukumatz and Huracán were filled with

ck(h)-2 (e)-1.3 (r)2.7 (yo)-211 ()1 (th c.



In these conversations, the following Speaking and Listening and Reading Standards were covered:

x

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four students working in a small group. Elyas & Sha (2018) have shown that interactive activities that trigger peer engagement can increase students' control of target vocabulary. For this activity, a student received a card with a clue. The first clue had the first letter of the target word that the teacher had selected (in this case it was; 't'), the second card presented the final letter of the target word (e); the third card presented the number of syllables (four syllables) and the fourth one had a short definition (claro, que se ve a través de /clear, that you can see through). The following is a sample of the four cards with the four different clues in order to locate the word transparente/transpare in the Mayan creation myth:

La primera letra de la palabra es /t/

(The first letter of the word is /t/)

La última letra de la palabra es /e/

(The last letter of the word is /e/)

La palabra tiene cuatro sílabas

(The word has four syllables)

La

- x 4 Reading 4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases, figurative language and academic and content specific words (RI & RL)
- x 4 Reading Foundational Skills 3a: Use combined knowledge of all letter sound correspondence, syllabification patterns and morphology (e.g., roots and affixes) to read accurately unfamiliar, multisyllabic words in context and out of context



When do literacy home practice of track used in practice in text? (children and use to)

Semantic Gradients

Another pedagogical practice associated with vocabulary growth is the use of semantic gradients of adjectives. Semantic gradients allow students to analyze words that have similar meanings but contain subtle differences. In the English class, Ms. Smith introduced a semantic gradient by referring to Glooskap, who in the text is referred to as wise. The students received the words clever, careful, intelligent, wise, and astute in separate cards that they had to organize and discuss:

Ms. Smith: How would you organize these words , which have to do with intelligence , from less to more ? What made you organize them in such a way?

Clever Intelligent Careful Wise Astute

She followed this exercise with the prompt: Can you tell which of these words are cognates (words that look alike in Spanish and English and share the same meaning)? Ms. Smith was referring to the word intelligent, which in Spanish is inteligente, as well as the word astute/astuto.

In the Spanish class, Ms. González engaged her students in a semantic gradient by analyzing the word “vigor.” The men created by the gods are referred to as having “vigor en sus brazos/ vigor in their arms.” The teacher gave the students cards on which the following words were written: debilidad/weakness; fuerza/strength; vigor/vigor.

Debilidad Energía Fuerza Vigor

Students worked in partnerships with the students sitting right beside him/her. The purpose of this exercise is not so much that all partnerships develop the same gradient, but that the activity elicits discussion around the meaning of words.

Working with a False Cognate

Although cognates are a

Students Translating in Order to Better Comprehend the Text and Gain Linguistic Knowledge

P LIFELONG PRACTICES FOR READERS:

In preparation for this activity, Ms. Smith and Ms. González used the Linguistic Demand Section from the BCCP template for



What do you notice about the way these myths are written? / ¿Qué notas de cómo están escritos estos mitos? **Talking and Getting Ready to Write**

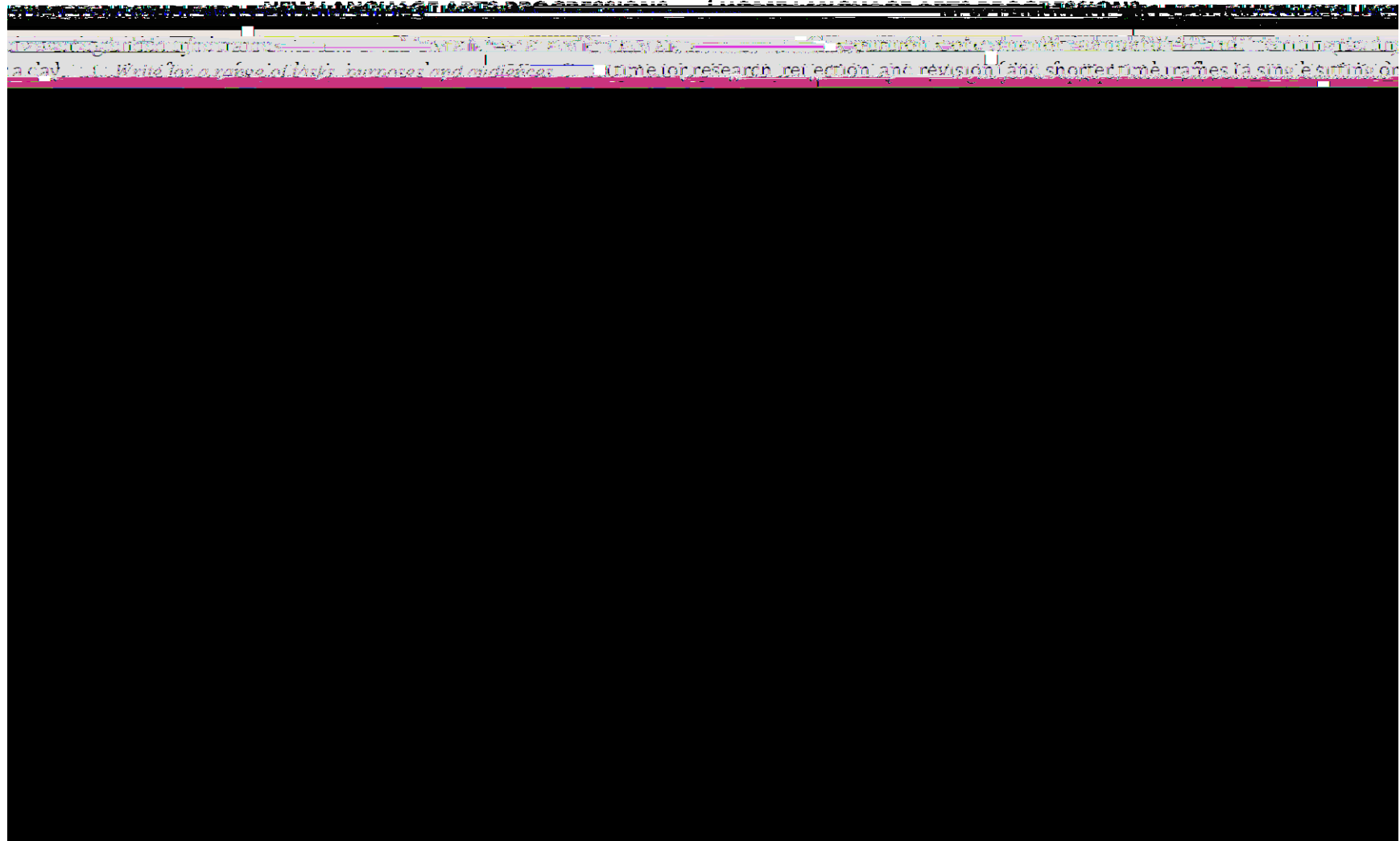
In preparation for writing their collective myth, Ms. González and Ms. Smith asked the students to draw the characters, the setting, and

LIFELONG PRACTICES FOR WRITERS:
STRENGTHEN WRITING BY PLANNING, EDITING,
REVISING OR TRYING A NEW APPROACH

the plot that would be part of their myth. This led to rich conversations that allowed the students to collectively negotiate and decide the physical traits and personality characteristics of the gods they were creating, the places where the events would take place, and most importantly, the events and conclusion their myth would have. In addition, both teachers provided a graphic organizer. At this point in the lesson, brainstorming in both classrooms took place in either English and/or Spanish (see BCCP Template for Standard 10, Writing that appears below). One myth was to be created in English and the other in Spanish, but it is important to note that the brainstorming and drafting took place in both languages and was accompanied by constant conversations. The teachers' focus was to ensure deeper dialogue among the students throughout the process even though the final product was to be produced in the target language.

The creation of each myth also required integrating visual displays. Each group had to present their own myth to the rest of the class, providing another opportunity to incorporate oral language. The written work of the students





...a day ... Write for a range of tasks, purposes and audiences ... Time for research, reflection and revision ... shorter time frames in single sessions or



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Secretaría de Educación Pública. México, Tercer Grado, p. 30
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