



## IN MY CULTURE...

Creating Culturally Integrative Writing Assignments for ELLs  
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## The Freemans' Framework

- 3 traditional, yet discredited, views of students' academic failure:
  - Genetic inferiority
  - Cultural inferiority
  - Cultural mismatch
    - "Differences between the language of the home and the school or differences in how cultures typically interact" (39).
    - Viewed as a student's or family's "problem" and something to be fixed (39).
    - "If teachers or other school personnel take the view that a cultural mismatch is the cause of a student's poor academic performance, they may send the message that something is wrong with the student's culture and stress the importance of the student's adopting school norms at the expense of his or her native language and culture" (39).
- Let's listen to a quote from Loretta, a Hispanic teacher.

Please use the sticky notes to record some thoughts:  
Take 2-3 minutes to record your thoughts and share with others at your table.

- Note One (Post on Chart Paper at front when finished discussing):
  - Why is this workshop's topic important to you as a teacher of ELLs?
- Note Two (Keep):
  - What are some challenges you could face in creating culturally responsive or relevant assignments?
- Note Three (Post on Chart Paper)
  - What is one question you would like to have answered or addressed today?

## The Freemans' Framework

- The Freemans suggest that a "better approach is to recognize that school performance depends on the interaction of a number of factors both inside and outside of school" (40).
- The Contextual Interaction Model (see handout)
  - Let's brainstorm some of the factors in each level: in your groups, come up with an example of an influential factor in each of the concentric circles, starting with the outer and ending with the inner. (3 minutes)
- Two school (pedagogical) approaches (Cummins, 2001):
  - Intercultural (integrative) orientation (valuing home language and culture and integrating these into the curriculum)
  - Assimilationist orientation (acknowledgement of "others" but expectations of students to assimilate into dominant culture at the expense of the C1 and L1)

## Theoretical Background

- We all know that our students need to feel connected with their at-home culture in order to become secure, functioning individuals (Maslow).
- We also know that when students learn, their schema is activated by "what they know" already (background knowledge=home culture).
  - The issues for our students sometimes come with "what they know" or "what they don't know" when they enter our classrooms.
- David and Yvonne Freeman have addressed these issues in the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of their text *Between Worlds: Access to Second Language Acquisition* (2011).

## The Freemans' Framework

- Characteristics of an Intercultural Orientation
 

Aspect	Action
Students' languages and cultures	Add to curriculum
Minority Community Members	Involve them in school
Teaching	Use transformative methods
Assessment	Help students show what they know
- Transformative methods:
  - "Transformative pedagogy uses collaborative critical inquiry to enable students to relate curriculum content to their individual and collective experience" (Cummins, 1996).

## The Freemans' Framework and WIDA

- Just for good measure, how does the Framework measure up to standards?

Let's see!

## A classroom example, continued

- The lesson transformed
  - This was a separate assignment since the MIG for social studies must be met and is valuable.
  - WIDA Standard: The Language of Social Studies: Students produce reports by summarizing information (using 1<sup>st</sup> person)
  - The Language of Language Arts, Writing: Revise, edit, writing (various levels)
- I structured the lesson to begin after P/T conferences (spring conf) so that I could use interpreters to help me explain the assignment to all parents.
- **Together** parents and children chose a famous person from the home culture/country for the student to study (did not have to be historical).
- Students researched the person they chose both online at school (with specific questions we devised as a class) and by interviewing their parents.
- Students then wrote a short informational piece (more guided if needed, with sentence and paragraph starters for lower students) about their person.
- Students presented at their own "International Living Museum" both for entire school and at the International Fair.

### The Defining Features of Academic Language in WIDA's Standards

The Defining Features of Academic Language operate within a sociocultural context for language use.

Performance Criteria	Features	Examples
<b>Language Level</b> Discourse Complexity (Quantity and variety of oral and written text)	Amount of speech/written text Structure of speech/written text Density of speech/written text Organization and coherence of discourse Variety of discourse type	Video Movie Collaborative Know (informal, repetitive) Collaborative Know (type and content and key words for written language) Admission, requesting, and drawing attention to topic for oral language Legal testimony Debate/discussion Organizational type (e.g., narration, repetition, description)
<b>Formal Level</b> Language Forms and Conventions (Type, usage and use of language structures)	Type and variety of grammatical structure Conventions, mechanics, and fluency Match of language forms to purpose/perspective	Video Agent (e.g., progressive, perfect tense) Simple, compound, and complex sentences Word order Debate/discussion Description and comparison Formal register Interruption Formal features (e.g., stress, intonation, rhythm of speech) Agreement (e.g., subject-verb)
<b>3-Phase</b> Vocabulary Usage (Frequency of word use across contexts)	General, specific, and technical language Multiple meanings of words and phrases Formal and informal register Phrases and shades of meaning Collocation	Social-symbolic-pedagogy course products Word lists/notes (e.g., online, comprehension) Cross-functional descriptions Description and comparison Perspective (e.g., perspective)

These standards concern the language we involve the interaction between the student and the language environment, encompassing the...

- Register
- Genre/Text type
- Topic
- Task/Situation
- Participant: situated and social role



## Matching the assignment to the Framework

Aspect	Action
Including students' home languages and cultures into curriculum	Students studied about home culture and worked with parents on the assignment—probably used L1 in most cases.
Involving Minority Community Members	Parents had a vital role in the assignment. Interpreters helped with parent communication and planning.
Transformative teaching methods used	Assignment was transformed to one that was connected to students' home culture and language.
Assessment allowed them to show what they know	Living museum allowed students and community members to see and hear what the ELLs knew about something unique to them.

## A Classroom Example

- So, how does this "integrative" approach work in the real world?
- Here is one quick example from my own classroom:
- The 4<sup>th</sup> Grade classroom assignment and MIGs
  - (4<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies) **The students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of continuity and change in the history of Missouri, and the history of the United States and the world as it relates to Missouri.** C) identify and describe the significance of the individuals from Missouri who have made contributions to our state and national heritage; examples include Lewis and Clark, Mary Easton Sibley, John Berry Meacham, George Washington Carver, Laura Ingalls Wilder, Mark Twain, Harry S. Truman and Thomas Hart Benton\*
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing: *Audience and Purpose: The student will write informational reports, diary/journal entries, organized friendly letters, thank-you letters and invitations in a format appropriate to an intended audience and purpose.*
  - The Classroom Assignment: Students research and write an informational report on an important person from Missouri's history. Students turned in the report but also presented their information in a "Living Museum."

## Your Turn: Planning a culturally integrative assignment

- Use your planning guide to create a sketch of a culturally integrative assignment
- Think of an assignment you know your students complete in another class (ELE, MS, or HS is OK).
- Consider how this assignment might be transformed into a culturally and/or linguistically integrative assignment, focusing on the 4 aspects on the matrix.
- Keep in mind any challenges you might face but don't fill them in yet.
- We will share in 5-6 minutes.

## Your Turn: Challenges Matrix

- Please look at your sticky note from the beginning of the workshop.
- What are some challenges you might face in creating this type of assignment?
- Use the “Challenges” section to record your thoughts. (5 minutes)
- Share with your team—and possible solutions.
- Popcorn some ideas you shared.

