

# AN INTEGRATED COLLABORATIVE BILINGUAL UNIT

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## **Project Description**

In order to improve the writing skills of our students, we decided to teach collaboratively by focusing on writing concepts that students were not demonstrating proficiently in both languages. We did this by separating the various common grammatical and writing needs of the students between the two languages as shown in the Progression of Learning. The areas chosen were; proper sentence structure, proper use of detailed writing (word use), conventions of print and editing.

The advantages were a more efficient, non - repetitive method of introducing and reviewing key writing skills. This consistently demonstrated the link between the two languages and encouraged a more bilingual mindset. The plan was that it provided the teachers an opportunity to save valuable instruction time. This was important because we work in a bilingual environment and have a limited time to review and teach all essential language skills.

The largest challenge was to take the time off from our mutual classes to plan. We only took advantage of one day ,when we planned our activities that allowed the flow of information to be consistent. We also scheduled our common work time, so that we could merge the classes and have them work bilingually instead of a distinct language.

We had to use release time to meet with the consultants and present the poetry project and ask for feedback which was very positive.

We were delayed in starting the project so the final assessments are ongoing.

## **Project Goals**

Our goals for the project were two-fold :

- 1) To target and address more issues than if working in isolation. Reduce the amount of time to prepare and teach basic language concepts. It is important that educators realize that by working with our language partners and focusing on common areas of difficulty, all can benefit by having a stronger more developed student outcome.

This was achieved successfully. By working together we were able to develop a more comprehensive, extensive and creative project than if we would have done alone. We covered all the concepts that we had targeted. The use of both languages was not an issue for the students.

- 2) Increase the level of proficiency of the following 4 areas:

- Proper sentence structure
- Proper use of detail in writing (word use)
- Conventions of Print
- Editing

We have had limited data to confirm the success of this goal. The use of detailed writing was enhanced using the poetry model of writing. Conventions of print and editing were demonstrated in both languages but are not proficient at this time.

In activities, the students were very successful in proper sentence structure but when applying sentence structure to writing stories and poetry, they were still experiencing difficulties.

## **Project Outcomes**

As anticipated, the teachers were able to interact and get creative in order to produce a unit that would engage the students and challenge them in both languages. The amount of time saved and the support of each other is invaluable.

The students were involved in all the activities and some found their inner poet and /or rapper. We look forward to seeing the presentation of their favorite work for their parents at the planned poetry cafe.

## **Reinvestment**

We created a culminating activity that lasted for two weeks and a poetry cafe to showcase the work to the parents, at the end of May. It was a poetry unit that is of use to bilingual partners in cycle 2 and 3 (see attached). It can be adapted to meet the needs of an individual group.

We stored all the units in clear bins. Each had an attached lid with the title of the unit. Inside was all the materials needed, an instruction card and a check in list to keep control of possible absences.

The initial activities were:

Conventions of print lesson and practice exercises in French (capital, period, apostrophe, comma, quotation marks and titles of books). Editing task to evaluate in English.

Proper sentence structure; in English a review of the parts of a sentence and types of sentences created slide show). In French: word sentence fragment activity to consolidate the information.

Lesson in French of the proper details (adverbs, adjectives and prepositions). Consolidating activity in English.

Verb use was taught in both classes

## **Bilingual poetry stations**

Introduction video in order to engage the students in the next activities

There were 11 stations (french and english) that gave them an opportunity to create and write poetry.

Station 1: Blackout poetry

Station 2: Book spine poetry

Station 3: Senses Poem

Station 4: Paint chip poetry

Station 5: Reverse poetry

Station 6: Baggie Haiku

Station 7: newspaper poetry

Station 8: Illustrate the poem

Station 9: Roll the dice poetry

Station 10: Collaborative poem

Station 11: Rap poem