Planning a Middle School Dual Immersion Curriculum
Based on Social Studies Thematic Units and Backwards Design for Language Learning

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Based on work with Mercer International Middle School Team in Seattle and Curriculum Consultants: Dr. Svetlana Abramova and Dr. Veronika Egorova, University of Washington STARTALK Program
Background

Mercer International Middle School in Seattle is preparing for incoming 6th graders from Beacon Hill International School from Two-Way Dual Spanish and Dual Immersion Mandarin programs

**Challenge:** How to create an engaging curriculum in an “Immersion Continuation” context (one period of Spanish or Mandarin language per day in 6th grade)

**Solution:** Focus on Social Studies thematic units and backwards design for language learning
Social Studies Context

- Social Studies State Standards
- Social Studies Recommended Scope & Sequence
- Suggested Unit Outlines (6th grade)
- Classroom-Based (OSPI-Developed) Assessments (CBAs)
- World-Class Instructional Strategies
World Languages Context

• “Refreshed” World Readiness Standards for Language Learning
• Focus on developing language proficiency through performance opportunities (tasks)
• 21st Century Skills
• Common Core State Standards (ELA)
• Planning for Learning: Curriculum
The Keys to Planning for Learning: Effective Curriculum, Unit, and Lesson Design

by Donna Clementi and Laura Terrill

Key Question: Who are YOUR learners, and what do they need?
Immersion Students Coming to Mercer Intl MS Fall 2014

- Current 5th graders at Beacon Hill International School
- Spanish Two-Way Dual Language Program
  - At least 50% are native or heritage Spanish speakers
- Mandarin Immersion Program
  - Some students speak Mandarin, Cantonese, or other dialects of Chinese
- Many students are learning Spanish or Mandarin as a 3rd language
### Proficiency Targets in Seattle

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<th>Targets</th>
<th>NL</th>
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**Based on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines:**
- NL = Novice Low, NM = Novice Mid, NH = Novice High
- IL = Intermediate Low, IM = Intermediate Mid, IH = Intermediate High
- AL = Advanced Low, AM = Advanced Mid
What will the incoming 6th graders be capable of?

- Based on STAMP testing results with other 5th grade immersion students in Seattle, the majority will likely meet the 5th grade proficiency targets: Novice High to Intermediate Low
- **They are capable of performing at the Intermediate level**
- What do language teachers need to do to meet the needs of students at the Intermediate level?
Backwards Design

1. Identify desired results.
   > Aim for building Intermediate-level proficiency in all communication modes

2. Determine acceptable evidence of learning.
   > Develop Integrated Performance Assessments (IPAs) as summative assessments based on the Social Studies Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs)

3. Plan learning experiences and instruction.
Curriculum Development Plan

Working with STARTALK curriculum consultants, use the Keys curriculum template to create a 6th grade Curriculum Plan and 4 Units based on themes from the OSPI Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) for Social Studies

- Unit 1: People on the Move
- Unit 2: Enduring Cultures
- Unit 3: Meeting Needs and Wants
- Unit 4: Why History
Next Steps (for the Mercer Team)

- Develop lesson plans for each unit
- Identify and develop resources in Spanish and Mandarin
- Finalize the Unit Summative Assessments and plan Formative Assessments
- Begin drafting 7th and 8th grade Curriculum Overviews (using a similar process)

Challenges:
- Lack of teaching materials (especially for Chinese)
- Teaching stereotypes (“How can we teach without textbooks?!“)
- Lack of teachers who are ready to develop lessons and teach new courses
Questions?

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View resources at:
https://sites.google.com/site/duallanguagecurriculumwa/seattle-projects/mercer-international-middle-school