Front-loading Curriculum Design: An Integrated Approach to the Multilingual Mason Classroom

Innovations in Teaching and Learning

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Reflect and Write!!

What **challenges** are you facing with your multilingual or international students in your classes? What **opportunities** do you feel when working with multilingual or international students in your classes?

What **strategies** do you use to gauge student understanding of your instruction and course content?
The Mason Classroom

- The benefits of our diversity
  - Potential to foster wider, global perspective
  - Greater linguistic and cultural diversity
  - High-quality technological/content expertise

- Some pedagogical concerns
  - Evaluating students’ written products (e.g. feedback strategies, plagiarism, on-campus resources for writing/grammar tutoring, source integration, conventions of writing, etc.)
  - Fostering international/domestic student engagement (e.g. out-of-class group projects, in-class small group work, class discussions, etc.)
  - Gauging international students’ comprehension of lecture/class discussion (e.g. unresponsive expressions, quietness, nodding heads, lack of questions, too many “fundamental” or “background questions,” “empty” vocabulary/term usage, idiomatic/cultural references, etc.)
  - Gauging international students’ comprehension of readings (e.g. translations in annotations/note-taking, reliance/usage of translation devices, discussions/writing about readings don’t seem to assess content knowledge, reading “through the language” to assess understanding is challenging, etc.)
Activity 1:

Critical Listening = Listening with a Purpose
Thinking about language
## Language as a predictor of academic success?

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<th>Phase I Study</th>
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Bloom’s Taxonomy

Creating
- Create, invent, compose, predict, plan, imagine, construct, design

Evaluating
- Judge, select, decide, justify, debate, discuss, recommend, rate

Analysing
- Solve, show, use, illustrate, complete, classify, compare, separate

Applying
- Analyse, explain, investigate, distinguish, compare, separate

Understanding
- Explain, interpret, compare, discuss, predict, describe, give an example

Remembering
- State, name, list, describe, label, relate, find
Unpacking the Role of Language in Academic Success

Language, or formal knowledge, includes:

- **Reading**, **Writing**, **Listening**, **Speaking**, **Grammar & Vocabulary**
- Integrated language skills used appropriately and effectively in real communication activities

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Intersectional Nature of Disciplinary Expertise

Language is one way to hack “the system”

Activity 2:

Critical Reading = Reading with a Rhetorical Purpose
Guiding the reading process

- **Scan the assigned text** with your students before they read it for homework to give them an overview of the ideas they will encounter (notice the title, section headings, purpose and relevance of the reading)
- **Provide students with a guiding question**, or series of questions, to focus their reading
- **Be explicit about the purpose of the reading**: what will they be *doing* with the reading (discussing, summarizing, analyzing, making connections to other readings, etc..)?
- **Assign students pre-reading and post-reading questions** to activate prior knowledge and make connections to the course theme or other course texts
- **Provide students with annotation guidelines** to enhance active reading and comprehension
*exigence
What is the problem, challenge, or issue that started the authors’ project? Look for terms of contrast or negation (e.g. however, despite, nevertheless, no, none, not) and terms like problem or concern.

*purpose
What is the goal of the text? In other words, what are the authors trying to do with their project? Look for terms such as aim, goal, focus, reason for, or hope.

*object of study
What is the subject that the authors are studying? Look for a key concept that shows up in the abstract, the introduction, the conclusion, and maybe the title.

*new offering
Where does this source indicate new ideas or conclusions resulting from the project? Look for terms such as This suggests..., These results mean..., One way to interpret these findings...

*relevance
What do the authors suggest is the significance of their work to the field? Look in the discussion, conclusion, or implications section.

*methodology
What research methods were used by the authors to answer their driving questions? Look for a methods section or verbs like conduct, study, gather, select, survey, interview, or observe.