

Mini Project Planner

Project Seed

Logging into my teaching class, I was intrigued to discover that our class would be taught in Spanish that night. For me this was a welcome challenge. I learned later that this activity was more of an isolating and frustrating experience for those with no previous knowledge to rely on. What really struck me however was how my bi-lingual peers led the class: the act of changing the language completely reversed the power dynamics in our Zoom room. At High Tech High I have served a diverse community of students many of whom do not speak that language. How might constructing or learning a new language together equalise power dynamic in the classroom?

About the same time I discovered Lisa Delpit's "The Silenced Dialogue," where she argues that power is a language and that it can be learned: and moreover as educators we have a duty to teach it. Since then I have made intentional attempts to empower young people in my classes with the skills of that language by conducting workshops on grammar and applying intense focus to the structure of student's writing. In the same breath, I recognise that I serve and aspire to serve students from a range of cultures and linguistic backgrounds. I want them to know that language is context dependent and certain contexts explicitly or implicitly require that it takes a certain form. The language of power is not the only valid or acceptable way to communicate but it is useful. How could explicit instruction in the language of power be used to overturn power dynamics in the future? Connecting this idea to Lisa Delpit's other work around placing student identity at the core of our pedagogy, I began to dream about how I could use my Humanities focused classroom to explicitly teach the language of power and elevate other languages.

Authenticity Check:

- ☐ Will it engage my students?
- ☐ Will it engage me?
- ☐ Is it meaningful work?

Products

What will students create/produce?

Synthesis essay
Analytical essay outlining behavioural findings in diverse linguistic context
Script for interactive multi-lingual theatre experience
Theatre performance

Authenticity Check:

- ☐ Will it "hook" multiple types of learners?
- ☐ Do students get to use their minds *and* hands?
- ☐ Is it something professionals create in the real world?
- ☐ Will there be an authentic audience?

Essential Questions

What meaningful question(s) will students explore?

How might constructing or learning a new language together equalise power dynamics in the classroom?
How does it affect power dynamics in other social, academic and professional settings?

How does explicit instruction in the language of power be used to overturn power dynamics in the future?

Authenticity Check:

- ☐ Do people explore this in the real world?
- ☐ Is there any easy answer? (Hopefully not.)
- ☐ Will it ignite students' imaginations?



Learning Goals: CONTENT

Kumeyaay history, culture and heritage

Body language cues

Verbal power cues in different cultures and contexts.



Learning Goals: SKILLS

Standard Written English Grammar

Argumentation and rhetoric

Essay structure and MEAL paragraph structure

Script writing

Acting/ Directing/ Stage Managing

Content standards [here](#)



Literacy Connections

What will students read, research, or write?

Delfina Cuero by Dr. Florence Connolly Shippek

Indians of the Oaks by Melicent Lee

Beloved - Toni Morrison



Real World Connections & Collaboration

What types of field work, field trips, professionals, or community partnerships might enhance this project?
Who can you collaborate with at your school? Outside of your school?

Kumeyaay Museums and non profits

Mission Trail Dam

SDSU classrooms

A court

Social occasions in the cultures of the students represented.



Exhibition

Where will the work live? Where can students exhibit?

Who is the audience?

Natural amphitheatre space at Mission Trals Damn.



Critical Lens

How does this project invite students to critically explore questions of positionality and power in the classroom and/or the world?

Engagement with the history of San Diego land and Kumeyaay culture.

Learning to observe and understand the languages of different social and cultural contexts.