Alianza Bilingüe: An After School Program for Middle School Newcomer English Language Learners

Melissa García

New Jersey City University

EDTC 807 Implementation & Evaluation of Curriculum

Dr. Tracy Amerman

May 1, 2022

Overview

Alianza Bilingüe is an after school program that will provide additional support to newcomer English language learners (ELLs) acculturating to a new school environment from September to June. The program will serve students from fifth to eighth grade in the district of Passaic, New Jersey. Newcomer middle school students will engage in a week-long program with differentiated activities immersing in language learning with the four language domains listening, reading, writing and speaking through the use of technology. Alianza Bilingüe will serve from Monday through Friday from 3:15-5:15 pm. Through the exposure of digital applications within differentiated academic content, ELL newcomer students will be able to engage and collaborate with other newcomer students and build a sense of belonging through community building activities and hands-on project based learning. "Creating and sharing digital content can encourage students to develop a greater sense of pride in their work" (Yuan, C, 2019). This after school program will ease their acculturation process and allow ELLs to take ownership and responsibility of their educational trajectories.

Alianza Bilingue will serve as the bridge that will develop ELLs into active leaders in their communities. Creating a positive community is imperative for newcomer migrant English language learners. Positive interactions can impact ELLs perspective on education and language learning. "Connecting student learning to culturally relevant experiences provides opportunities for interactivity and collaboration." (Darling-Audana & Heinrich, 2018). Lev Vygotsky's Constructivist theory of 1978 and the sociocultural perspective of learning views social engagements as "the essence which provides the most effective and appropriate context for curriculum learning to take place" (Gibbons, 2006, p.22).

Rationale

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2018), the population of ELLS in public school increased from 2 million in 1990 to 4.8 million in 2015. Researchers in the field of language acquisition state that it is expected that English language learners will represent a quarter of total learners by 2025 (Yuan, 2019). When language learners arrive at school they often face challenges adapting to their new learning environment. While there are little to no integration programs for newcomers, these newcomer ELL students continue to fall through the cracks. Creating after school programs like Alianza Bilingue will strengthen student's identity and provide opportunities to connect meaningfully with the content and their peers. "Affirming students' multilingual and multicultural funds of knowledge can nurture their identities and their investment in learning not only in their second language, but also in their native language and in turn, foster learning autonomy." (Ntelioglou et al., 2014).

Bilingual students who oftentimes feel disconnected to the content and have difficulty making relevance to their personal lives tend to isolate themselves and not want to participate. "Unless students are presented with an education that's relevant and affirms their currency and future identities, these students will refuse to invest the energy and commitment necessary for learning to occur (Staley & Freeman, 2017). Alianza Bilingue will serve as a safe space where students will use their personal stories and speak up on culturally relevant topics that matter and they can relate to through the innovative integration of technology. "Using computer technologies creates more variation in the classroom which leads to increasing motivation and better conditions to learn authentic and up-to-date materials in the target language" (Muhamadjonovna, 2020).

As educators we must be aware of the importance of creating a safe and positive space for our students to be able to learn. Creating safe and welcoming learning environments for ELL's reduces anxiety of making mistakes. "The most effective learning environments are those that are supportive and open, allow for mistakes without ridicule, and encourage students to try, even if they might make mistakes" (Li, 2013). Alianza Bilingue will provide a student centered experience where newcomer ELL will be engaged in their learning and feel empowered to pursue their goals and dreams regardless of their language proficiency.

<div align="center">**System-Based Proposal**</div>

The Alianza Bilingue after school program for newcomer language learners will be best implemented from the beginning to the end of the academic year as immigrant students may arrive at any point of the school year. The after school program's main focus is to acculturate newcomer students into the new learning environment through digital literacy. Newcomer ELLs will make sense of what they observe and hear as they continuously participate and connect with others in their communities. (Lave & Wenger, 2011, p.102). This after school program will better prepare newcomer ELLs to participate and engage in the new content despite their language development. Moreover, it will aid in easing anxiety and give newcomer students a sense of belonging and make them feel a part of the learning community.

Before the integration of Alianza Bilingue in my district, I will first need the permission of the superintendent in my district. I already spoke to the bilingual department director and my principal and they asked me to create a proposal in order for him to get the approval from the school board of education in Passaic. The after school program will be free of charge for the students. The money I will receive as my payment will be donated to the after school program

for materials and resources. I will also be applying for grants to help with any additional cost for the after school program.

Research states the importance of having programs that support newcomer language learners. Newcomers are not given enough opportunities to participate in their new learning communities (Lave & Wenger, 2011). Alianza Bilingue will continue to advocate for language learners through differentiated hands-on language and digital learning. "Technology facilitates ELLs opportunities to have genuine, meaningful communication in the target language" (Brown, 2007, p.54). When we acknowledge that newcomer students come with rich culture and knowledge of their own, "ELLs and immigrant students will find their place in the world and will acquire the power and agency they need to make changes in their communities" (Crosby, 2018, p. 54). Integrating technology and second language acquisition will prepare ELL's for the 21st century.

<div align="center">**Evaluation Plan**</div>

Providing students opportunities to acclimate to a new learning environment requires educators to create a safe and positive learning environment. "The more you can do to smooth out the journey, the more likely your learners are to succeed" (Dirksen, 2016, p. 269). Studies have shown that school environments tend to "lean heavily on a handful of test results from one year to the next" (O'Neil, 2016, p. 18) However, Alianza Bilingue will redirect the focus and by creating safe spaces for newcomers to be valued beyond their score on a test.

We live in a world where education is being run as a factory. The educational system of our country continues to design tests and evaluate teachers that serve different socio-economic communities under the same standards. It is a given fact that a student from a privileged background will have a higher chance to succeed on a given test compared to a student from a

tough urban community (O'Neil, 2016, p. 25). Regardless of the reality we live in today, as educators we must advocate and create spaces where newcomer ELL students are given equitable opportunities to succeed.

Alianza Bilingue's curriculum is designed with the implementation of the World Class Instructional Design Assessment model (WIDA). Incorporating personalized and adaptive learning into our classroom environments respects the differences of each unique child. "Students learn more effectively when instruction is individualized to the learner's needs and that a new pedagogy of personalization recognizes that each student is different" (D.L Taylor et al., 2021, p.19). Therefore, students will be evaluated with a pre and post assessment on the four language domains and student interviews depending on the level they fall in at the end of each developmental stage.

Researchers argue "the first challenge newcomers face upon arrival is to be placed at the proper levels of knowledge of the language acquisition instruction. These decisions are based not only on the assessment of the student's knowledge and skills, but often on a variety of other considerations including assumptions about student abilities" (Soliman, 2020, p.6). Alianza Bilingue's language and digital curriculum is structured in the four stages of the butterfly life cycle in order to properly serve newcomer ELL students based on their arrival time to the country. Every newcomer student that joins my after school program will start as an egg then move up to a caterpillar, chrysalis and finally a butterfly. In other words, L1 students according to the WIDA rubric, will be divided into four levels based on their date of arrival. Newcomer ELL students will be given the opportunity to listen, speak, read and write in both Spanish and English and integrate technology through their daily activities in order to increase their interest and engagement in language and digital learning (Appendix A, B & C). "Practicing digital

literacies in the classroom engages ELLs to develop as active participants who gain ownership of learning and the command of English through connecting school literacy with their funds of knowledge (Moll et. al., 1992). Alianza Bilingue will create communicative competence regardless of language proficiency level and promote camaraderie through teamwork based communication and learning so that no L1 ELL student experiencing the silent period feels intimidated or anxious to take an active role in their new learning community.

Alianza Bilingue will be a place where newcomer ELLs will feel empowered and accepted through the use of acculturating and merging their two cultures together while also being able to acquire a third language, digital literacy. "Technology integration in language teaching for our ELLs advocates for engagement, improvement in academic ability, assessment shift and collaborative learning enhancement." (Riasati et al., 2012).

Related Course Reading Reflections

As technology continues to evolve there are many questions on the role that it should play in the newcomer ELL experience. There is not enough exposure to digital literacy in bilingual classrooms. In the world that we live in today, surviving a pandemic, language learners not only face the task of acquiring a second language, but a third, learning how to navigate the world of technology all while trying to integrate to the new school environment. We must ensure that our newcomers experience a positive experience of acculturation. A key element of student success is being able to allow learners the access to important learning opportunities and resources such as being able to embrace one's native language in their learning (Lave and Wagner, 2011).

Alianza Bilingue will provide more opportunities for genuine rich conversation and shared experiences in a safe and inclusive environment. This differentiated newcomer education model of Alianza Bilingue is to "ignite students to pursue their creative passion and placing it as the driving force of their learning (Weller, 2015). The National Association for the Education of Young Children argues that "often there is a mismatch between the school culture and the children's background" (NAEYC, 2009, p.2). Alianza Bilingue will serve as the bridge that allows students to connect to their culture, language and the ever growing digital world.

"We Americans habitually underestimate the capacity of pupils" (Kliebard, p.10, 2004) especially newcomer language learners. Empowering newcomer ELL to use their voice and providing them with developmentally appropriate practices based on their language proficiency will make sure students are not experiencing pressure to assimilate rather than acculturate. "In the high pressure classroom, children are less likely to develop a love of learning and a sense of their own competence and ability to make choices, and they miss much of the joy of expansive learning of childhood" (NAEYC, 2009, p.5). Exposing ELLs with differentiated levels of language and digital experiences that might not have been possible back in their home countries will help develop newcomers into confident leaders and digital natives. With the ongoing battle of educational reform, it is important now more than ever that our newcomer ELLs are exposed to culturally relevant and developmentally appropriate instruction through the incorporation of up to date technology in order to compete and participate in a global technology economy and digital era.

Appendix A

Alianza Bilingüe

Aculturación y Perseverancia a través de la Tecnología Educativa

Programa Después de Escuela

Melissa Garcia M.S. Ed.
4th & 5th Grade Bilingual Teacher
Daniel F. Ryan School 19
320 Highland Avenue Passaic NJ 07015

Overview: Provide additional support to bilingual newcomer students in the Passaic public school district and empower English Language Learners (ELL) to acculturate and become active citizens in the 21st century through language and digital development.

Rationale: Bridge the digital and language divide among newcomer language learners by providing additional support that will prepare them to successfully develop academically, socially and emotionally and compete in the 21st century.

Vision: Alianza Bilingue strives to empower bilingual students to successfully acculturate to a new learning environment.

Mission: Alianza Bilingue will provide differentiated language and digital development for newcomers to empower and create active leaders in our community.

Goals: Prepare English language learners to explore and utilize all the tools around them to succeed in our digital era.

Ideals: Cultural Empowerment, Leadership & Civic Engagement

Philanthropy: Biliteracy

Motto: Aculturación y Perseverancia (*Acculturation and Perseverance*)

Slogan: Fly with Pride

Mascot: Monarch butterfly

Logistics:

Location: Daniel F. Ryan Room 325

Time: September -June Monday through Friday 3:15-5:15 pm

Who: 6th-8th grade newcomer L1 students

Purpose: Create additional support for ELLs through differentiated language and digital development activities to help them acculturate in their new learning environment

Appendix B

Weekly Breakdown

Monday *Listening & Speaking*	**Conversaciones y Más:** How do we continue to embrace Bilingualism & Biculturalism? Monday Mindfulness Meetings: opportunities to empower ELLs in becoming leaders and confident public speakers Potential topics: Acculturation vs Assimilation, Embracing our differences and highlighting what unites us, Staying true to our raices (roots) **Digital Literacy:** Google Chat
Tuesday *Reading*	**Bilingual Scholastic Lit Club** with culturally relevant books **Digital Literacy:** Digital Storyboards with Google Slides
Wednesday *Writing*	**Writing Extension of Writer's Workshop & Prep for NJSLA** (this domain is usually harder for ELLs to master when acquiring a second language) **Digital Literacy:** Typing program Learn Touch Typing Free - TypingClub
Thursday *Techy Thursday*	Engage in **Digital literacy 101** **How To Series:** powerschool, google classroom, google slides, google chat, google sites

Friday *Activism*	**Project-Based Learning** Community service projects to involve ELLs in their new community and give them a sense of belonging **Digital Literacy:** Create promotional flyers of events using Microsoft Publisher
Monarch Showcase	**Marking Period 2:** Open Mic: Yo Soy! I am., poetry **Marking Period 4:** Student Digital Stories of School Experience

Appendix C

Newcomer Differentiated Stages of Language and Digital Development

Stages *2.5 months*	Monday *Speaking & Listening*	Tuesday *Reading*	Wednesday *Writing*	Thursday *Digital Literacy*	Friday *Activism*
Huevo **Egg**	**Ice breaker** Build It - Give each person a small amount of building supplies, such as Play-doh or LEGOs. Ask them to build a structure or image that relates to their reason for joining the group or club. Then, take time to share what they created and why.	**Current Events:** Exploring Historical Figures in Latin America & U.S history *Main Idea & details *Character Analysis *Compare & Contrast **Digital:** Google Docs	**Digital storyboards:** Personal Narratives	**How to:** Powerschool *School ID *Log in: Username *Class Schedule *Grades	**Community Service:** Bowling for Books event to restock books in library
Oruga **Caterpillar**	**Cultural Background Project** Collage **Digital:** Google Jamboard	**Current Events:** Historical Landmarks in Latin America & U.S *Sequence *Important Events *Compare & Contrast **Digital:** Google Docs	**Digital storyboards:** Informational Piece	**How to:** Google Classroom *Find course content *Post assignment *View Grade *Email Teacher	**Community Service:** Volunteer at a local food kitchen / Create Food Basket
Crisálida **Chrysalis**	**Goal Setting:** Creating personal vision boards **Digital:** Google Slides	**Current Events:** Endangered Species around the world *Plot *Cause & Effect *Drawing Conclusions **Digital:** Google Slides	**Digital storyboards:** Opinion Piece	**How to:** Google Slides *Post content *Illustrations *Videos *Voice Recording	**Community Service:** Read Across America Week: Cohort will read a bilingual book to students from the lower grades

Monarca Monarch	Coming to America: Student created digital stories on their experiences in a new school	Current Events: Before We Were Free by Julia Alvarez Adolescence, perseverance, and one girl's struggle to be free while living in the Dominican Republic under the rule of a dictator *Point of View *Author's Purpose *Theme	Digital storyboards: Literary Analysis	How to: Navigating NJSLA Test *Structure *Tools * Multiple Choice * Vocabulary *Essay	Community Service: Cohort selects a cause of their choice and creates awareness in a week long workshop Series

References:

Brown H.D (2007). *Teaching principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy (3rd ed.)*. White Plains, NY: Pearson Education.

Crosby, C. (2018). Empowering English language learners and immigrant students with digital literacies and service-learning. *The Reading Matrix: An International Online Journal.* 18(2). https://www.readingmatrix.com/files/19-j8sxn579.pdf

Darling-Audana, J, & Heinrich, J,C. (2018). *The Role of Teacher Capacity and Instructional Practice in the Integration of Educational Technology for Emergent Bilingual Students.* ELSEVIER. www.elsevier.com/locate/compedu

Dirksen, J. (2016). *Design for how people learn. 2nd edition.* San Francisco: New Riders Publishing.

Gibbons, P. (2006). *Bridging discourse in the ESL classroom.* New York, NY: Continuum.

Kliebard, H. M. (2004). The Struggle for the American Curriculum: 1893-1958. Routledge Falmer.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (2016). Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Li, N. (2013). Seeking best practices and meeting the needs of the language learners: Using second language theories and integrating technology in teaching. *Journal of international education research*. (9)3, 217-222.

Moll, L., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzales, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice*, 31(2), 132-141.

Muhamadjonovna, S.D. (2020). The development of sociolinguistic competence of future English language teachers through computer technologies. 8(3).

NAEYC (2009). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age 8* https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/reources/position-statements/PSDAP.pdf

National Center for Education Statistics. (2017a). *Status and trends in the education of racial and ethnic groups 2017.* Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2017051

Ntelioglou, B.Y., Fannin, J., Montanera, M., & Cummins J. (2018). *A Multilingual and Multimodal Approach to Literacy Teaching and Learning in Urban Education; A Collaborative Inquiry Project in an Inner City Elementary School.* Frontiers in Psychology.

O'Neil, C. (2016). Bomb parts: What is a Model in C. O'neil's *Weapons of math destruction: How big data increases inequality and threatens democracy.* (pp. 15-31). New York, NY: Crown.

Riasati, J.M., Allahyar, N., & Tan, K. (2012). *Technology in Language Education: Benefits and Barriers.* Journal of Education and Practice. Vol 3, No 5. www.iiste.org

Soliman, L. (2020). Perspectives of newcomer secondary school students in Ontario: A mixed method study. *Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education University of Toronto.*

Staley, B & Freeman, L.A (2017). *Digital Storytelling as Student-Centered Pedagogy: Empowering High School Students to Frame their Futures.* Research and Practice in Technology Enhanced Learning.

Taylor D.L., Yeung M., Bashet A.Z. (2021) *Personalized and Adaptive Learning.* In: Ryoo J., Winkelmann K. (eds) Innovative Learning Environments in STEM Higher Education. SpringerBriefs in Statistics. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-58948-6_2

Washer, E. (2021). Big picture learning. *Hundred.org* https://hundred.org/en/inovations/big-picture-learning#09c6c0d2

Weller, C. (2015). The thirteen most innovative schools in the world. https://www.businessinsider.com/the-13-mostinnovative-schools-in-the-world-2015-

WIDA (2026). Can do descriptors: Key uses edition https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/CanDo-KeyUses-Gr-4-5.pdF

Yuan, C.,Wang L., Eagle, J. (2018). Empowering English language learners through digital literacies: Research,complexities, and implication. 7(2), 128-136.