

This is a year-long plan for a kindergarten dual language classroom that specifies the science and social studies essential questions that we will explore and the topics that we use to explore them. Biliteracy Units (BUFs), which integrate the science and social studies content with literacy and math content, are being developed to correspond with each topic specified on this year-long plan, as well as sample daily schedules that demonstrate how the units are implemented in the context of an 80/20 program.

My understanding of big ideas and essential questions continues to evolve as I engage in this work. According to Wiggins & McTighe, a big idea “helps us make sense of lots of otherwise meaningless, isolated, inert, or confusing facts. A big idea is a way of usefully seeing connections, not just another piece of knowledge. It is more like a lens for better looking than something additionally seen; more like a theme than the facts of the story.”¹ The following reflects my current understanding of big ideas and essential questions.

Big Idea	Essential Question
Individual behavior impacts and shapes how a group functions.	What does it mean to be a good citizen of a classroom community?
We can understand the world around us through inquiry.	How do we learn about and describe the world around us?
Identity is shaped by personal history and shared experience (culture).	What makes people unique?
Living things change in predictable, ordered, and cyclical ways.	How do living things change over time?
The characteristics of living things influence how they function in their changing environments.	What characterizes interactions between living things and their environments?
Many factors contribute to our way of relating to others.	How are we connected with others?
People build communities to support the needs and wants of its constituents.	What characterizes interactions between people in a community?

Green boxes indicate content delivered in Spanish. Purple boxes indicate content delivered in English through extension activities that explore the same concept in different contexts.

¹ http://www.authenticeducation.org/ae_bigideas/article.lasso?artid=92

