

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. Most often this is through extension activities that explore the same concept in different contexts. The exception to this is that I did the first BUF in English because the population of my classroom this year is such that only 25% of my students understand Spanish well enough to understand instruction in Spanish. I feel that at the beginning of kindergarten, it is vital that a critical mass of students understand the procedures and routines that I explain so that most are serving as models for those who do not understand. Because the critical mass of students in my class this year are more expert English speakers, I feel that doing the first BUF in English is the best way to create a positive and orderly classroom climate. This first BUF in English lasts 2-3 weeks and is then bridged to Spanish, and then extension activities in Spanish focus on creating charts and other materials that will remain in the classroom to remind students about rules and procedures using the visuals introduced in English.

¹ http://www.authenticeducation.org/ae_bigideas/article.lasso?artid=99

September

What Does It Mean to Be a Good Citizen of a Classroom Community?

- Procedures, Routines
- Rules, Hopes & Dreams

How Do We Learn About and Describe the World Around Us?

- Five Senses
- Learning a/b Reading & Writing
- Learning a/b Counting

What Does It Mean to Be a Good Citizen of a Classroom Community?

- Review/Create Charts for Procedures, Routines
- Review/Create Charts for Rules

October

What Makes People Unique?

How Do Living Things Change Over Time?

- Self/All About Me (How I Have Grown)

How Do We Learn About and Describe the World Around Us?

- Counting, Comparing Measurable Attributes, Sorting/Classifying (Apples/Pumpkins)
- Field Trip: Apple Orchard

November

How Do Living Things Change Over Time?

What Characterizes Interactions Between Living Things and Their Environments?

- Weather/Seasons: Fall
- Fall Trees
- Field Trip: Arboretum/Guided Tour

How Do We Learn About and Describe the World Around Us?

- Counting, Comparing Measurable Attributes, Sorting/Classifying

December/January

How Are We Connected with Others?

- Family
- Our Celebrations & Traditions

How Do We Learn About and Describe the World Around Us?

- Counting, Comparing Numbers, Composing/Decomposing Numbers, Sorting/Classifying (Family)
- Field Trip: Theater/Goldilocks & 3 Bears (Dec)

What Does It Mean to Be a Good Citizen of a Classroom Community?

- Skills for Learning (Second Step: Sept/Oct)

How Do We Learn About the World Around Us (Tools)?

- Using the Five Senses
- Field Trip: Kohl Child Museum/Workshop (Sept)

What Makes People Unique?

- Others/Similarities & Differences
- Feelings (Second Step: Nov/Dec)

How Do Living Things Change Over Time?

- Tree Life Cycles

How Do We Learn About and Describe the World Around Us?

- Counting, Comparing Measurable Attributes, Sorting/Classifying (Other Food From Trees, Seeds)

What Characterizes Interactions Between Living Things and Their Environments?

- Animals in Fall/Preparing for Winter

January/February

How Do Living Things Change Over Time?

What Characterizes Interactions Between Living Things and Their Environments?

- Weather/Seasons: Winter
- Winter Trees
- Field Trip: Maple Tapping (March)
- Animals in Winter/Adaptations
- Field Trip: Brookfield Zoo/Bears Workshop

February/March

How Are We Connected with Others?

- Friendship
- Field Trip: Theater/Elephant & Piggie (Feb)

April

How Do Living Things Change Over Time?

What Characterizes Interactions Between Living Things and Their Environments?

- Weather/Seasons: Spring
- Spring Trees
- Conserving Natural Resources (Wood/Paper)
- Field Trip: Kohl Child Museum/Reuse It Wrkshp

May/June

What Characterizes Interactions Between People in a Community?

- School/Neighborhood Community
- Community Workers
- Needs and Wants

How Do We Learn About and Describe the World Around Us?

- Describing shape and location

How Are We Connected with Others?

- Celebrations & Traditions of Others/Similarities & Differences
- Empathy (Second Step: Jan)

What Characterizes Interactions Between Living Things and Their Environments?

- Animals in Earth's Regions/Adaptations

How Are We Connected with Others?

- Emotion Management (Second Step: Feb/March)

How Are We Connected with Others?

- Problem Solving Between Friends (Second Step: April/May)

How Do Living Things Change Over Time?

What Characterizes Interactions Between Living Things and Their Environments?

- Animal Babies/Life Cycles