

Activities and Strategies for Building Language Awareness

Maria Dantas-Whitney
Western Oregon University
dantasm@wou.edu
Ministry of Public
Education, Costa Rica
February 15, 2017

<http://dantas-whitney.weebly.com/>

Plans for Today

- A Situated view of language
- Types of language awareness
 - Metalinguistic
 - Metacognitive
 - Sociocultural
- Examples from the classroom

A Situated View of Language

- Language must be understood in relation to
 - speakers
 - purpose of communication
 - audience
 - context of use
- Knowledge about “ways of being in the world, ways of acting, thinking, interacting, valuing, believing, speaking, and sometimes reading and writing, connected to particular identities and social roles”



(Gee, 1992, p. 73)

Consciousness-raising Activities



- Through social interaction, learners gain **exposure** to the language, **engage** with it, and **notice** how language works
- **Noticing** leads to **language awareness**
- When students develop an awareness of how language works, they become more **confident** in their own language abilities
- As they develop an understanding of their language learning processes, they become more **autonomous** as learners

Types of Language Awareness

(Gottlieb & Ernst-Slavit, 2014)

Metalinguistic Awareness

Metacognitive Awareness

Sociocultural Awareness

Metalinguistic Awareness

Definition

- Awareness of the forms of the language. Recognition that language is a system with patterns (rules) and exceptions
- Awareness of properties of language, its creativity, playfulness and double meanings

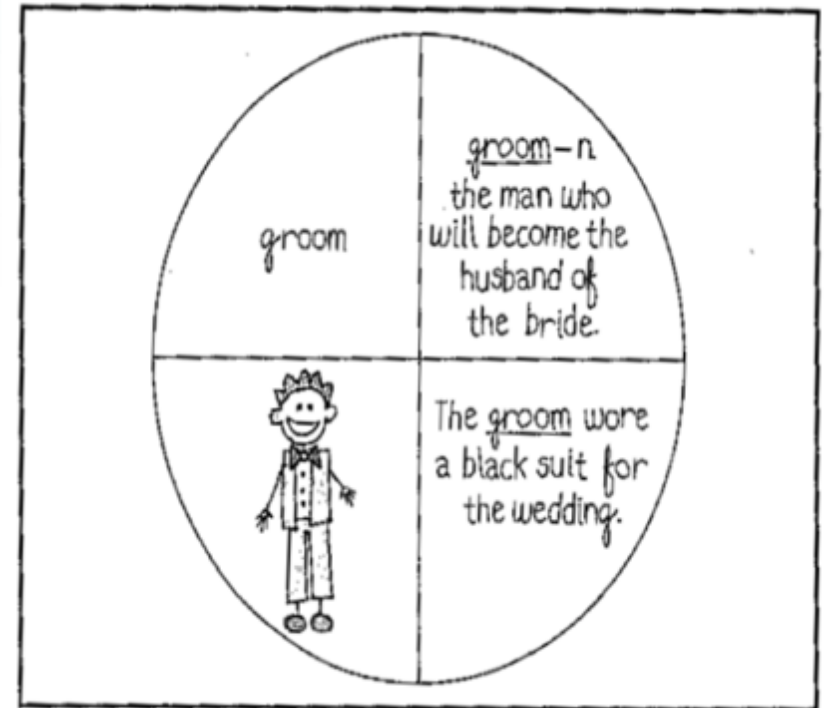
Classroom Examples

- Analyzing rules for language use
- Comparing the similarities and differences of forms and structures
- Transferring information and literacy across languages

Can you think of examples from your own classroom ?

Vocabulary Activities

Academic Word	Spanish Word	Common Word
encounter	<i>encontrar</i>	meet
observe	<i>observar</i>	watch
maintain	<i>mantener</i>	keep
ultimate	<i>último</i>	last
equal	<i>igual</i>	same
entire	<i>entero</i>	whole
quantity	<i>cantidad</i>	amount



Vocabulary Activities

Shades of Meaning



small

tiny

miniscule

microscopic

Teach classroom scripts for active participation

Language Function	Script or Sentence Starter
Ask for Clarification	Please explain that again. What does ____ mean? I don't understand. Please repeat. I thought you said _____. Is that right? Could you say that another way?
Express an Opinion	I think that ____/I don't think that ____. I believe that ____/I don't believe that ____. My opinion/view is ____. In my opinion, ____ It seems to me that ____.
Take a Turn/Interrupt	May I say something? I have an idea. Excuse me. Let me jump in. Oh, that reminds me.
Build on Another's Idea	I have another idea. I'd like to add on. To piggyback on ____ idea, I would say that ____. I agree with ____ and would add ____. I had a different thought.
Report Back on Group Work	Our group decided that ____. We found that ____. Our answer/decision/response is ____. We have a few different ideas. We didn't finish yet, but so far we think ____.

- Teach one or two scripts at a time
- Post charts with the expressions on the classroom walls
- Add expressions over time, according to language functions

Linguistic Landscape Activities



- Why is English being used instead of Spanish?
- Can you translate these English expressions to Spanish? What is the effect?
- Contextual analysis: Audience? Location? Intended message?



Correct the error



- Why was the wrong spelling chosen?
- What is the effect?

Metacognitive Awareness

Definition

- Awareness of how language is learned and developed
- Awareness of strategies and processes for language learning and development

Classroom Examples

- Reflecting on preferred language learning styles. “Thinking about thinking”
- Practicing different strategies for language learning
- Linking new learning to prior knowledge
- Conducting self-assessments

Can you think of examples from your own classroom ?

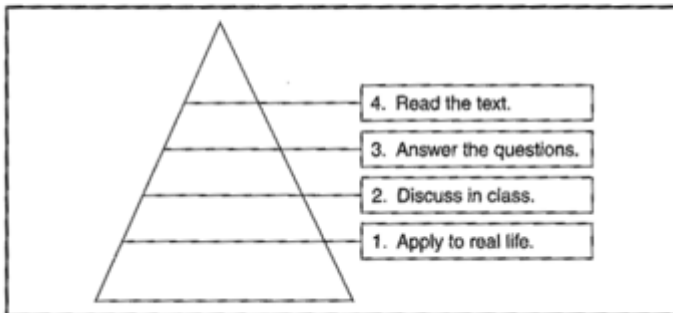
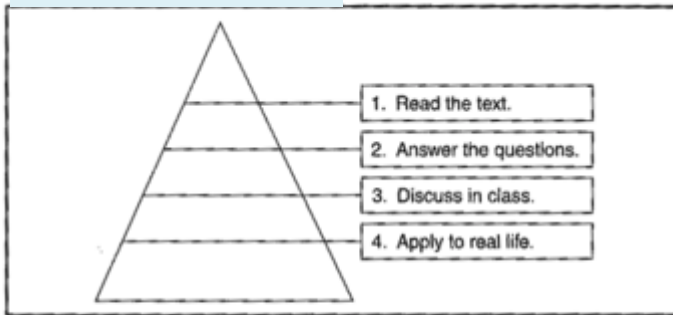
Cognitive Strategies



- **Summarizing:** Making mental, oral or written summary of information gained at certain points in learning process
- **Deduction/Induction:** Use a rule/Make a rule
- **Imagery:** Make a mental picture from the information
- **Auditory Representation:** Mentally replay a word, phrase or piece of information; self-talk
- **Making Inferences:** Use context clues to guess meaning and predict upcoming information; questioning for clarification

Reading in Reverse

Traditional Model



New Model

Step 1. Apply to real life.

Talk about:

- personal experience with moving.
- immigration experiences.
- experiences with frequent moves to seek employment, other reasons.
- migrant worker experiences.

Step 2. Discuss in class.

Talk about the following:

- Is moving from place to place "fun?" Why/why not?
- Does it feel different if the move is voluntary or forced?
- Compare leaving school, friends, and family behind to taking it all with you. (This is the time to introduce the word and the concept of *nomads*.)
- Look at pictures in the text to compare differences among nomad homes and students' homes.

Step 3. Read the questions—and the section and subsection headers.

Ask the following:

- What is this section about?
- What information will this section focus on?
- What is the main idea of this section?

Step 4. Read the text.

- Read one section at a time.
- Follow each section reading by discussing the questions in Step 3.

Figure 9.6 Reading "Nomads" in Reverse

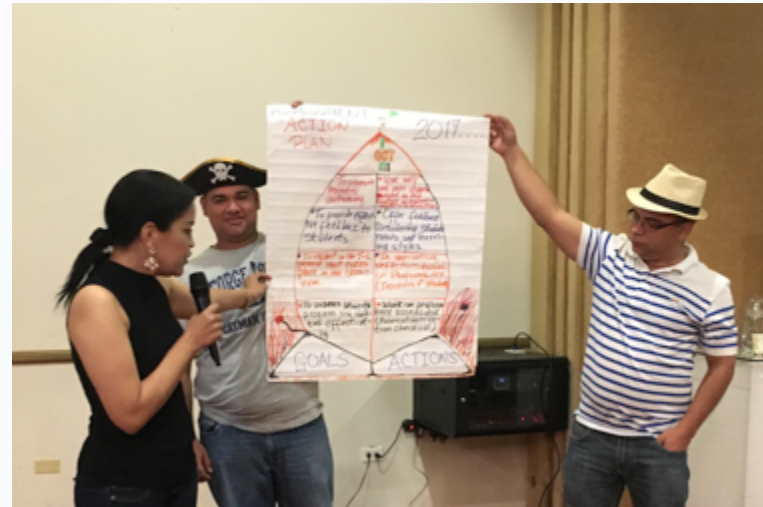
Note-taking

Main Ideas	Details/Examples
1. Nomads are groups of people who	1. move from place to place 2. _____ 3. _____
2. Nomads are hunters or herders ...	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____
3. Nomads are people who live (where?)	1. in the desert 2. _____ 3. _____
4. Bedouins	1. are _____ 2. travel _____ 3. herd _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____

Graphic organizers

Four Square Plan

Transition word: Topic #1	Transition word: Topic #2
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
Introduction: Hook: Topic/Rephrase Prompt: Introduction of ideas:	
Transition word: Topic #3:	Conclusion
1.	
2.	
3.	



Cause and Effect

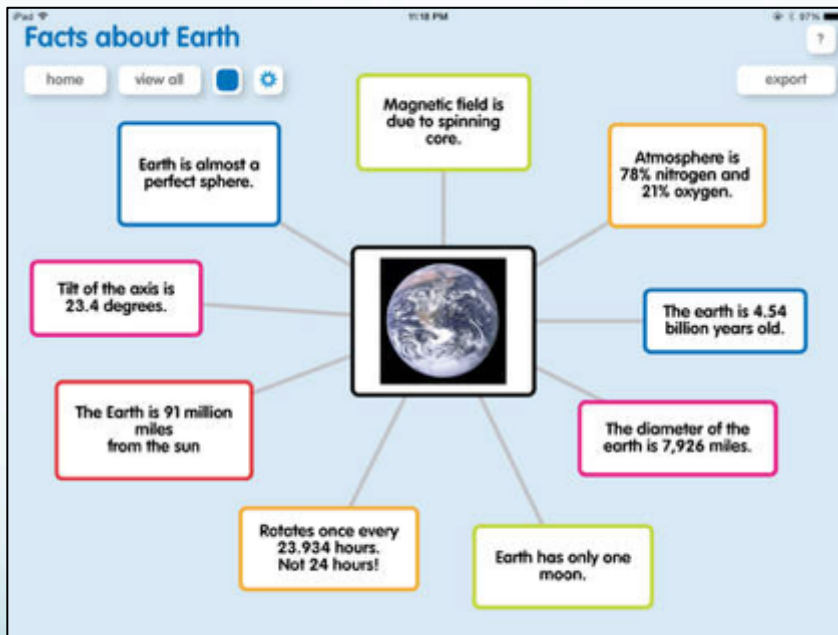
Cause	Effect
	Effect
	Effect

© 2013 K5



Mind Maps and Word Clouds

popplet.com



Tagul.com

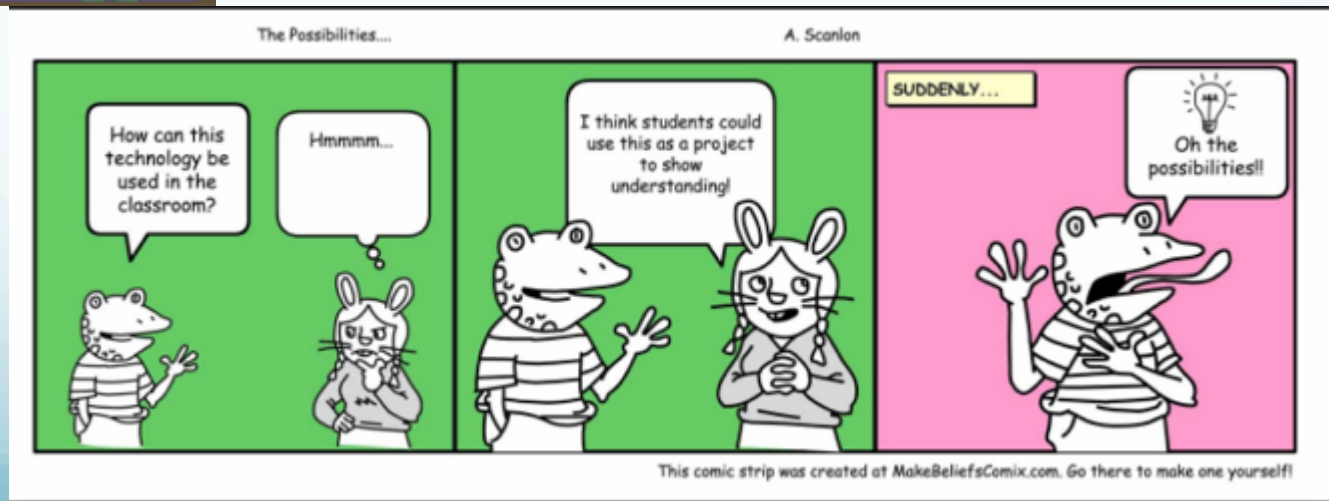


Reconstructing information with technology

<http://storybird.com/>



<http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/>



Sociocultural Awareness

Definition

- Awareness of the connection between language and culture
- Awareness of the close relationship between language and ideology (critical language awareness)

Classroom Examples

- Recognizing different situations for language use
- Learning to use language appropriately according to settings, speakers, purposes (including how to behave in class)
- Using own culture as resources for learning

Can you think of examples from your own classroom ?

Social Identity

(Norton, 2012)

“Language teaching and learning is always about acquiring new identities in a context where learners’ previous identities are respected and leveraged in the service of acquiring new ones”

(Hawkins, 2004, p. 4)



Adapt Content to Reflect Students' Realities



(Sayer, 2010)

Discourse Analysis

Data Collection Chart for Observing Discussions

Setting:

Participants:

- number:
- relationship/hierarchy (Is there an appointed discussion leader?)
- seating format (make a quick sketch - use another sheet of paper if necessary)

Discussion Strategies:

+ What does the discussion leader do to promote discussion?

Discussion Leader's Remarks (What did he/she say?)	Discussion Leader's Function (What happened?)
1.	
2.	
3.	

What do the discussion participants do to contribute to the discussion?

Discussion Participant's Remarks (What did he/she say?)	Discussion Participant's Function (What happened?)
1.	
2.	
3.	

Additional notes (on impressions regarding effectiveness, individual contributions, etc.):

Student-Generated List

What Discussion Participants Do (functions)	How They Do It (phrases used)
1. Give opinions	I believe that... In my opinion...
2. Agree	I agree that... Yeah, that's how I feel.
3. Disagree	I disagree I think that... But I don't believe...
4. Ask for information	But isn't it true that...?
5. Nominate other speakers	What do you think, _____?
6. Give feedback to others	Excellent point.
7. Clarify or ask for clarification	That's not what I meant. Do you mean that...?

What Discussion Leaders Do (functions)	How They Do It (phrases used)
1. Encourage people to participate	What do you think?
2. Manage turns	Could you expand on that? Thanks. Let's hear from someone else.
3. Provide feedback to participants	Good point.
4. Summarize, paraphrase, draw conclusions	So you're saying that...? So, it seems that we all agree that...

Investigative Inquiry

Think of a critical issue that affects you

- Pollution in my town
- Lack of access to the playground at my school
- Too much homework assigned by teachers
- Etc.

Discovery Project

- Choice of Topic
- Survey
- Poster Presentation
- Interview with an Expert
- Final Oral Presentation
- Action: Write a letter, Present findings to other audiences, Publish on the web



Dantas-Whitney, 1998