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Learning as a Sociocultural Process



Why is a student's personal, cultural, and world knowledge important to learning academic language? Why is it also important to connect learning to issues that are socially relevant for students?

Let's begin this discussion by introducing Michael, a ninth-grade student who is an academic language learner.

Michael is a student in Mr. Franke's ninth-grade biology class. The class is studying a unit on genetics, and the biology course text includes a chapter on the scientific study of reproduction. Mr. Franke begins the unit by stating the day's learning objective. He tells his students, "Today, we will learn about gender probability followed by a preview of key vocabulary that will be included." He has taken time to review the text and select key terms, words, idioms, and phrases that his students will need to learn. These include *chromosomes*, *genes*, *DNA*, *RNA*, *sexual reproduction*, *zygote*, *X-chromosome*, and *Y-chromosome*. Mr. Franke has written these terms on the white board. Prior to class, he required his students to read the chapter on reproduction in their textbook and to jot down notes about what interested them. The lesson that he has planned for today's class includes a culminating activity of flipping coins to help his students understand the concepts of gender prediction. Let's have a look at his class.

Mr. Franke tells the class that they will be learning about genetic probability and determining the sex of a baby. After the class giggles quietly, Mr. Franke addresses the whole class with this question: "What do you know about probability and gender?" A few students raise their hands. They are the students who typically raise their hands in his class. They draw from the terms that are listed on the white board. Mr. Franke responds to them with his usual positive response: "Yes, good, and what else do we know?" When he is done calling on these students, he begins his "on the spot" callout to other students in class, including Michael. Michael responds to his query with "I don't know." Mr. Franke does not chastise or remark negatively to Michael. Rather, he continues to call on other students in class. As this is occurring, Mr. Franke responds to each student with "Good, what else do we want to add?" These Mr. Franke–student–Mr. Franke–student sequences occur for a period of time. During the exchanges, Michael jots down some notes, including "Gender Probly." He is not familiar with these two words or the term, and is having a hard time following the rapid student–teacher exchanges, but does not want to indicate to anyone, especially his peers, that he is having difficulties. He also found that he did not really understand the text that his class was assigned to read. There were too many terms to learn, and the explanations and photographs that were provided were not helpful to him. In short, he is not as able to grasp the concepts as comprehensively as some of his classmates.

In the next segment of the same class, Mr. Franke shows students two coins. He asks for a volunteer to label the coins. One side of one coin will be covered with an X, and the other with a Y. The second coin will be covered with an X on both sides. Michael does not volunteer to cover the coins. When Mr. Franke asks for a volunteer to flip the two coins and see where they land, Michael decides to volunteer and is selected. He hopes that Mr. Franke will see that he is trying to be a good student and hopes that his volunteerism is viewed positively. As he flips the coins, he sees that his first and second tosses include an XX combination and that his third results in an XY. He is not sure what these results mean. When Mr. Franke asks him about the results, he initially gives him a vacant look. Michael then looks to his classmates and the white board to see if there are any clues as to a response, and he doesn't see any. With the little information that he has written in his notes, he smiles and says, "Gender probly." Thinking that Michael understands the content, Mr. Franke smiles in response and then goes on to divide the class into pairs, furnishing each pair with two coins that they label with XX and XY, and engaging them in the coin toss activity. At the end of class, Mr. Franke reviews the day's objective and asks the students if they have met it. All respond in unison with, "Yes, Mr. Franke." However, the next day, when Michael is given a quiz about the meaning of gender probability, he leaves the section blank. He is not sure what he is being asked.

Let's look at another biology class. Mrs. Delgado is a ninth-grade biology teacher who is also teaching from the same course text. While she has preselected the same vocabulary, she has also secured a video about the birth of a baby called *Life's Greatest Miracle* (WGBH Educational Foundation, 1996–2012). The video depicts the life cycle of a baby from conception to birth. Mrs. Delgado decides to show the video to her students before they read the chapter and preview the vocabulary. On her white board, she writes, "How does life create life, including how do people create babies?" She introduces the unit by telling students that they are going to see a movie that was created for television and that taught her a lot about how babies are formed. "I never really thought much about what my body did inside my mother's body before I was born," she tells her class. She divides her class into pairs and asks each pair to describe what they think the movie will be about. "What do you think that you will see?" she asks her students.

"Now remember," she says, "it is a movie that actually depicts what a baby's life is like inside a mother during pregnancy. It is how life creates life, and it is amazingly a real movie that is about a real baby. With a partner, come up with five things that you think you will actually see when you watch this movie. Now, I am asking you to do this task. Here is one example that I think I will see in the movie. I think that babies look like babies from the beginning, so I think that I will see miniature babies with eyes, hands, feet, and so forth." As she says this, she points to a poster of a newborn

baby that she has tacked to her classroom wall. “Now, I want you to enact the following roles with your partner: One partner must be the listener first, and the other the speaker, then rotate roles. Share five things that you think that you will see. Use your book, the photos that I have displayed on the class wall, and anything else that you think will help you in this task. You can point to pictures, passages in the book, or other supports that will help us see five different things that you think we will see in the movie.” In this scenario, Michael is also a student in Mrs. Delgado’s class.

The following reflection prompts have been separated for individual study and team study. Complete the prompt that applies to your particular context.

REFLECTION PROMPT FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDY

Time for Reflection:

Reflect on the following question, and write a response.

- Contrast the differences between Mr. Franke’s and Mrs. Delgado’s lessons.
- Do you believe that one is a more effective approach for academic language learners such as Michael? If yes, list three to four reasons why it is more effective.



Each pair in Mrs. Delgado's class engages in the task. Some predict that they will see just what Mrs. Delgado thinks she will see, a miniature baby that will grow into a large baby and then will be born. Others predict that they will see the outside of a mother's "belly grow large" and that they will not see an actual baby until it is born. Others think that they will see a "blob that forms into a baby." Many are familiar with some of the vocabulary that Mrs. Delgado will be using. "We will be watching a movie about our DNA, about reproduction," some respond. Each pair shares their thoughts, and Mrs. Delgado notes these on the white board. They then spend the next segment of class watching the movie. When it is completed, Mrs. Delgado reviews with the class what they have watched. She connects what they discussed earlier in class with what they viewed in the movie. She then asks them to meet with their partner and discuss what they thought they would see versus what they actually saw. They share these differences with the whole class. At the end of the class period, Mrs. Delgado revisits the learning objective. Each student writes a short statement about what they learned and shares it with a partner. Mrs. Delgado tells them that they will be reading the chapter on the scientific study of reproduction later in the week.

She tells students that scientists have figured out a way to self-select whether they will have a girl baby or boy baby. For homework, she gives them the following task: "I would like you to discuss the following question with either a family member or a friend: Do you think that it is a good or bad thing for people to be able to select whether they will have a boy or girl baby? If you think it is good, why is it good? If it is a bad thing, why is it bad?" Mrs. Delgado writes the question on the white board and asks her students to copy the question in their notebooks. "Come to class tomorrow, and let's discuss our responses to this question," she says to her students as the end-of-class bell rings.

Let's have a closer look at the two scenarios. In the first one, Michael is in a class where his teacher, Mr. Franke, has taken the time to identify the key vocabulary that Michael and his classmates need to learn about the scientific study of reproduction. Mr. Franke has also prepared an activity, the coin toss, as a means to depict gender probability. He also has asked his students to prepare for this study by reviewing a chapter on this topic in their science text and jotting down things that interest them. Mr. Franke is trying hard to be a positive teacher, and he includes a variety of activities, including what he thinks will be a fun game, that he believes are targeted for his students to learn the content. However, while he is trying hard to be an effective and positive teacher, at least one of his students, Michael, is not able to learn successfully.

In the second scenario, Mrs. Delgado has also taken time to identify the key vocabulary that her students will need to learn the biology of

reproduction. She has also prepared an activity that she believes will help to activate their prior knowledge and enhance their study of the biology text. Mrs. Delgado concludes the lesson by having them write a short statement about what they learned. Like Mr. Franke, she does this to have a means for knowing whether they have learned the content of the day's lesson. With all of these commonalities, however, there are fundamental distinctions between Mr. Franke's and Mrs. Delgado's lessons.

LEARNING BY BUILDING CONNECTIONS

Mrs. Delgado has figured out a way to help her students be invested in learning. She has done this by connecting the unit of study with their personal interests and knowledge (Vasquez, 2010; Zacarian, 2011a, 2011b). She builds connections between the biology content about reproduction and issues that are personal to her students' lives. Rather than focus on the course content through the course text, Mrs. Delgado secures a way to connect content to something that might be of interest to her students. She intentionally focuses on the language—the academic conceptual and conversational language that her students need—and its connection to their personal, cultural, and world experiences. She also is invested in capturing their interest in studying biology and helping them see value in learning so that they will be compelled to attend and stay in school (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012). She does this because she knows the critical importance of hooking student interest and, more important, investment in learning. While many educators might think that learning must be connected to prior learning, it must first be connected to issues that are personal to students in order to help move academic content from being impersonal to personal (Zacarian, 2011b).

This is where the craft of teaching comes into play. While textbooks and other instructional materials may include activities that are intended to help spark student interest, we have to ask ourselves whether the activities that the text provides will really help our students be compelled to learn. Vasquez (2010) refers to this as our means for helping to rouse student interest in learning. A second and equally important element is that student investment must be maintained so that they can see value in it. We must do this by connecting the content that is to be learned with our students' personal, cultural, and world knowledge. This requires that we think carefully and creatively about building these important scaffolds to learning. Rather than do this alone, as many teachers do, an *our-o-logue* can be a very helpful means for collectively securing effective ways to spark student interest. Even the driest of curriculum can be made to come alive by creatively building personal connections to it in ways that are socially relevant for our students.

BUILDING SOCIALLY RELEVANT CONNECTIONS TO STUDENTS' LIVES

To engage in this important work, we must first consider sociocultural elements in planning and creating high-quality classroom, school, and parent engagement environments. Specifically, we need to identify what is relevant and compelling for our students in our teaching decisions as well as how we can help students and their families become invested in what is to be learned. Paulo Freire (1970) acknowledges this as our means for supporting student engagement. It is a critical way for framing learning as being personally and socially relevant to a student's life from a social justice perspective. It is our means for helping students consider social issues that are personally relevant to their lives. In Mrs. Delgado's class, for example, what would happen if all of her students think that it is good to be able to choose the gender of their babies and they all choose boy babies? What might happen to our world if this were to occur? This critical social question is an important means for hooking and investing student interest. Further, helping students see how what they are studying is related to social justice issues can greatly help in defining the teacher's role. Building connections that are socially relevant helps to connect content, in this case the scientific study of gender probability, to students' lives and cultures in ways that do more than draw from their prior academic and literacy backgrounds. This type of connection-making builds from students' personal, cultural, and world knowledge in ways that support their interest in the society in which they live and its connection to the content being studied. Connecting curriculum to issues that are relevant and personal to students' lives not only helps to spark student interest but also helps to keep them continuously invested in learning.

A fine example of this type of relevancy is Mrs. Baldwin's kindergarten science class. Drawing from the Massachusetts Department of Education's (2006) *Science and Technology/Engineering Curriculum Framework* section on Living Things and Their Environment, she is creating a science unit in which her students will engage in inquiry-based instruction through scientific exploration. Following the Skills of Inquiry, Experimentation, and Design section of the *Curriculum Framework*, Mrs. Baldwin knows that her lessons must do the following:

- Ask questions about objects, organisms, and events in the environment.
- Tell about why and what would happen if . . .
- Make predictions based on observed patterns.

- Name and use simple equipment and tools (e.g., rules, meter sticks, thermometers, hand lenses, balances) to gather data and extend the senses.
- Record observations and data with pictures, numbers, or written statements.
- Discuss observations with others.

But what Mrs. Baldwin teaches in terms of how she will engage students in this study involves thinking creatively. What does she do? She knows the importance of connecting the science unit to her students' personal lives. Many her students live in an apartment complex. It faces the back of the school, where there is a vernal pool that fills with water during the fall and spring months and freezes in the winter. Figure 3.1 is an example of a vernal pool.

The vernal pool behind the school has been slowly filling with trash, including a broken bicycle, cans, bottles, and old newspapers. Many of Mrs. Baldwin's students have told her about it, so she decides to create a yearlong science unit on the effects of pollution. She shows students the photo found Figure 3.1 and asks them if they have ever

Figure 3.1



seen such a pool of water. All of them respond about the pool behind their schoolyard.

In addition to studying the properties that would typically be found in the vernal pool, including frogs and other living things, Mrs. Baldwin divides the class into pairs and asks each pair to talk with another pair about their thoughts about the trash. As she walks among the small groups of students, she hears almost all of them respond that they don't like the trash. She helps her class think of ideas that they might have for making the vernal pool as pretty as the one in the photo. This leads to the students engaging in a "cleanup campaign." During the fall months, they enlist the school's students, staff, and parents, as well as community members, in cleaning the pool. While they are engaged in this effort, they also study the properties of a vernal pool. They observe the plants and animals that are indigenous to the area in and around it. The students not only engage in the inquiry-based science activities included in their state's curriculum framework, but they also engage in a powerful social justice activity that helps to improve their immediate environment. Mrs. Baldwin's students were very invested in this unit of study because it was personal and relevant to their lives.

The following reflection prompts have been separated for individual study and team study. Complete the prompt that applies to your particular context.

REFLECTION PROMPT FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDY

Time for Reflection:

Reflect on the following questions, and write responses.

- Mr. Silverstone, a second-grade teacher, is planning a unit of study on adding and subtracting numbers up to 100. What types of activities might he include to help connect this unit of study to his students' lives?



- Mrs. Ortiz, a middle school science teacher, is planning a unit of earth science study on tectonic plates. What types of activities might she include to help connect this unit of study to her students' lives?

- Mr. Crafts, a U.S. history high school teacher, is planning a unit of study on the Treaty of Versailles. What types of activities might he include to help connect this unit of study to his students' lives?

REFLECTION PROMPT FOR TEAM STUDY AND OUR-O-LOGUE



Time for Reflection:

Reflect on the following questions, write a response, and prepare to discuss it with your team.

- Mrs. Leighton, a fourth-grade science teacher, is planning a unit of study on the solar system. What types of activities might she include to help connect this unit of study to her students' lives?

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- Select a math, science, or social studies topic that you teach or might teach that is connected to a standard (e.g., a state standard). With a partner, discuss how you might connect this topic with something that is socially relevant to your students' lives. Write your ideas for building these connections.

LEARNING AS AN INTERACTIVE SOCIAL PROCESS

Thus far, we have read about three different science teachers. Mr. Franke and Mrs. Delgado teach high school biology, and Mrs. Baldwin teaches kindergarten. Mrs. Delgado and Mrs. Baldwin engage their students in a large amount of paired and group work. For example, Mrs. Baldwin grouped pairs of her students together so that they filled the roles of observer and recorder. The pairs travel to the vernal pool on a weekly basis to note their observations. Why are she and Mrs. Delgado engaging in this method of teaching? Especially since many of their colleagues have told them that while paired and group work is nice, students often fall off task, and it is easier to do what Mr. Franke does, that is, keep the flow of conversation continuously directed through the teacher.

The small interactive space of paired and group work is an essential method for all educators. It provides an important time for students to practice using the language of content, or academic language, and to learn from peers (Cohen, 1994; Haynes & Zacarian, 2010; Zacarian, 2011b; Zacarian & Haynes 2012; Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). However, using paired and group work is no guarantee that students learn effectively. It requires many considerations.

First, it involves our willingness to reduce our authority in favor of a belief that students can and do learn effectively from and with each other (Cohen, 1994; Zacarian, 1996). Think of a classroom like Mr. Franke's. He is in control of all of the talk. It flows to and from him. Each exchange is between Mr. Franke and one of his students. While he asks open-ended questions, he asks them of the whole class and uses a method that requires individual students to respond to him. This teacher–student–teacher–student

mode of interaction means that almost all of his students (with the exception of those who volunteer to speak or those he calls on) passively listen to the teacher–student exchanges. This type of classroom is one in which the majority of students are passive in the learning process.

Some teachers report that while they believe in the ideals of group work, it is often too difficult to manage, and they resort to a method like Mr. Franke’s because it is their only way to ensure that the curriculum is covered. In an era of high-stakes tests in which teacher performance is being tied to student learning, it is understandable why teachers might feel pressured to be like Mr. Franke. Other teachers report that it is difficult for them to select groups because there are so many interpersonal dynamics among their students that are out of their control, and they cannot safeguard that any group will be effective. Indeed, group work is a complex method and endeavor that requires us to think deeply about it and plan carefully to enact it well (Zacarian, 1996, 2011a, 2011b). The following are some important considerations.

INDIVIDUALISTIC VERSUS COLLECTIVISTIC CULTURES

Some students come from cultures that are individualistic and others collectivistic. In individualistic cultures, independence is highly valued; independent thinking and choice are of primary concern to parents and families and the cultures in which children are being reared (DeCapua & Marshal, 2010; Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Zacarian & Haynes, 2012). U.S. dominant culture reflects this ideology, as do American public and public charter schools. Indeed, teachers often mirror this belief system and create classroom environments that are based on this individualistic way of being. Conversely, many cultures represent a collectivistic view in which group harmony or the good of the group is more important than are individual rights, and a person’s value is judged by his or her sacrifice of individualism in favor of a group (DeCapua & Marshal, 2010; Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Zacarian & Haynes, 2012). Collectivism is reflected in the cultures of many students whose family origins are Latin, Central, and South America as well as Asia, the Middle East, and Africa (Haynes, 2008; Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). The importance of culture cannot be overstated. While some of us may favor an alternative to paired and group work because of our strong belief in individualism, it may be an exclusionary method that is not reflective of all of our students’ ways of being and acting. A collaborative paired and group work approach is more likely to be valued by students from collectivist cultures because it is so connected to a core cultural belief. As such, it is a prime space for many students to apprentice academic language, and the effort is well worth it.

The following reflection prompts have been separated for individual study and team study. Complete the prompt that applies to your particular context.

REFLECTION PROMPT FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDY

Time for Reflection:

Reflect on the following question, and write a response.

- Identify your own orientation (individualist or collectivist), and discuss how it is or is not in sync with your students and the steps that you might need to take to expand your knowledge about different orientations in your work.



REFLECTION PROMPT FOR TEAM STUDY AND OUR-O-LOGUE

Time for Reflection:

Reflect on the following question, write a response, and prepare to discuss it with your team.

- Meet with a partner, and discuss the concepts that you have studied relating to individualist and collectivist cultures. Determine the cultural group that you each represent (they may be different), and list three to four ways that these impact your thinking about students from cultures other than your own.



PROCESS AND TASKS ELEMENTS OF GROUP WORK

Paired and group work has many implied rules that must be explicitly taught to students. Consider the classroom in which the teacher says, “Talk to the person next to you about this question, and we will then talk about it as a whole class.” This simple directive has many hidden expectations. First, that the pair of students will know to participate actively with each other in the process of paired work and will complete the assigned task successfully. These two elements, process and task, are distinct and essential elements of group work (Bailey, 1996; Cohen, 1994, 1998; Cohen & Lotan, 1995, 1997; Zacarian, 2011b). The process component has to do with students engaging actively in the interactive activity of working together.

Whether it is in a pair or a group, the social activity of engaging as a collective will not necessarily happen on its own, even when students know the rules for participating. Why? Group work is an entirely complex endeavor that is filled with implied understandings about status and positional power from an individualistic and group standpoint. Take, for example, a group of students in a general science classroom. Some may come from what Cohen (1994, 1998) and Cohen and Lotan (1995, 1997) aptly describe as positions of high status, and others from positions of low status. The ones with the most perceived status (based on either their own perception or the perception of others) are more likely to participate, whereas students with the least are less likely to do so. These perceptions may come from personal or collective beliefs about socioeconomic or popularity status and other factors, and they affect who is active in the process. Because group work and learning require an active process, we have to consider ways to make it active for everyone and remedy the status elements.

Not surprisingly, students and their groups need help to engage in group work successfully and to understand the implied and explicit tasks and processes. Chiu (2004) describes this as *teacher interventions* and states that they should be used when problems occur. For example, a teacher might note that a group is moving off-task or does not seem to be working well together. In a review of the research on this topic, Chiu found that it is helpful when teachers provide a brief intervention and then allow the group to continue to work together. Interventions of this nature help the process of group work markedly. However, Chiu also notes that students were less likely to ask for help when it was needed. Perhaps this is a face-saving measure or the politics of status at work. Regardless, group work requires a high level of monitoring each group’s process.

Various activities have been found to be helpful in the process elements (Cohen & Lotan, 1995, 1997; Haynes & Zacarian, 2010; Zacarian, 2011b;

Zacarian & Haynes, 2012). Of particular note are the means by which teachers assign status to all of their students in ways that are real and honoring as well as essential to the group's work. Let's revisit Mrs. Delgado's biology class to examine this more closely. In her class are a variety of ninth-grade students. Some are from high-status and others low-status experiences. One in particular, Michael, rarely speaks in class. Mrs. Delgado knows that he has had several failing grades in other subjects and that he often views himself as one of the "dumbest kids in the school" (his words). When Mrs. Delgado shows the movie *Life's Greatest Miracle* to her class, she genuinely wants Michael participate in the group activity. To do this, she first divides the class into pairs and then places them into small cooperative learning groups of four students each. She assigns one student from each group to make note of who speaks and the type of contribution that they make. She defines the different types of contributions that each participant might make and asks for suggestions. "You might discuss what you see on this poster. What else might be included," she asks, "in our list of what we think we might see?" Figure 3.2 provides the four most common categories that the whole class suggested. Mrs. Delgado asks a member from each group to note the types of examples that are provided. Figure 3.2 also provides her with a tally sheet of who participated and who didn't, and it is a helpful means for Mrs. Delgado to see who needs to be contributing more or less.

Figure 3.2 Contribution Tally Sheet

	Suggesting a passage from the course text	Pointing to a picture in the course text	Drawing from a personal example	Suggesting an example from displays in the classroom
Michael		///		/
Tonya	//// //			//
James	////	////		/
Charlene		//// ////		////

Source: Adapted from Zacarian (2011b).

The following reflection prompts have been separated for individual study and team study. Complete the prompt that applies to your particular context.

REFLECTION PROMPT FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDY**Time for Reflection:**

Reflect on the following questions, and write responses.

- In what ways do you think that tallying the contributions of each student might support active participation?
- What additional strategies might you use to support the process element of group work?

**REFLECTION PROMPT FOR TEAM STUDY AND OUR-O-LOGUE****Time for Reflection:**

Reflect on the following questions, write responses, and prepare to discuss them with your team.

- Plan to observe a classroom setting, perhaps your own, in which a group of students will be engaged in collaborative work. Use your knowledge of the topic and Figure 3.2 to create a tally sheet that will document the

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number and types of communication that each student will engage in. Observe the group in action. Use the tally sheet to note who speaks, and document your findings here.

- Drawing from the completed tally sheet, discuss your observations in terms of what you noted and what you might do to elicit a lower or higher level of interaction among the students who spoke too little, too much, and so on.

While the process task is occurring, Mrs. Delgado asks another member of the group to note the five most common things that the group expects to see in the movie. Each group spends a fair amount of time on this task. When it is completed, Mrs. Delgado asks each group to report the most common things that they believe they will see. She lists these on the board and then furnishes each student with a sticker. She asks students to place a sticker next to the thing that they believe they will see. These activities are reflective of the task element of group work. To do this well, we must create activities that are compelling so that students will want to do them and are invested in the learning process. Creating compelling tasks has to be reflective of the first element of this sociocultural frame—learning must build connections to what is socially relevant and personal

to students' lives. When this occurs, students will be far more likely to actively participate in learning. Creating tasks and activities that are compelling must take into account the various literacy levels of students, the academic tasks, and students' thinking skills.

PUTTING THE SOCIOCULTURAL FRAME INTO PRACTICE

Build strong relationships with students

- Empathetically understand each student.
- Know students' interests.
- Personally connect with each student.
- Infuse this understanding into the learning environment.
- Help students see value in learning and their future.

Connect curriculum with students' lives to create a context-rich learning environment

- Ground learning in students' personal, cultural, language, and world experiences.
- Connect curriculum to issues that are socially relevant to students (including social justice issues).
- Help students take a critical stance on socially relevant issues through these curriculum connections.

Engage students in paired and small-group work

- Consistently use flexible grouping strategies.
- Model expectations of pair and group process and tasks.
- Assign students pair and group roles as appropriate (e.g., listener, speaker, note-taker), and rotate these roles so that students can enact each of them.
- Provide opportunities for students to give feedback about the process and product of pair and group work.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, we discussed the importance of the sociocultural frame. We described how the content to be learned must be connected to students' personal, cultural, and world knowledge. We also discussed the importance of connecting curriculum to issues that are socially relevant to students. We provided three classroom examples of how this works in the planning and delivery of curriculum. We also discussed the importance of understanding culture from collectivist and individualist perspectives and

creating classroom configurations that match the cultural orientations of our students. In addition, we discussed learning as an interactive process that gives students multiple practice opportunities to apprentice in academic language interactions. To do this effectively, we must use explicit instructions in the process and task elements of group work. We also looked at suggestions for putting these ideas into practice.

In Chapter 4, we will look more closely at the second area of the four-pronged framework: learning as a developmental process.

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