

## ***Introduction***

For the past six years, Kolter Elementary has been fortunate to receive several FLAP (Foreign Language Assistance Program) grants from the U.S. Department of Education. One important component of these grants was the development of school-wide units allowing the integration of the foreign languages with the core content areas of teaching.

The following is an explanation of the procedures used as well as examples of the units developed. Kolter has established systematic procedures for the development of this curricular program. The scope of this process is inclusive of PreK-5 in order to provide the articulation of the curriculum. It is specific to ensure that critical components are addressed adequately, such as the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL) Standards, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and the HISD CLEAR curriculum.

The Curriculum Development project took place over one or two-week planning sessions during the summer with the participation of content area and foreign language teachers. The project was spearheaded by the Curriculum Coordinator and the Magnet Coordinator.

## ***Development Phase***

The themes were chosen for their broad approach and their multi-cultural aspects: Kites (2006-2007), the Olympics (2007-2008), Go Green Save the Planet (2008-2009) and Faces of the World (2009-2010).

In addition to the thematic units, character education words were implemented in order to bring more meaning to the theme.

The first task of the development team was to get a copy of each grade levels "Horizontal Alignment Planning Guide" – "Year-At-A-Glance" from the CLEAR HISD curriculum. This document helped to determine the **objectives** for science, math, social studies and language arts that would be encompassed by the unit theme or easily relate to it. The teachers also made sure to list the important **key words** related to the content objectives.

The second task of the development team was to brainstorm different **activities** encompassing these objectives and vocabulary words in grade level-groups: pre-K-Kinder and 1<sup>st</sup>; 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>; 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. Each team of teachers was made up of at least one foreign language teacher and one core content teacher.

Each team developed activities integrating the objectives, the vocabulary, and the unit's theme. They were detailed enough that any teacher could easily implement them. Resources (books and videos) and web-links were also included. These activities were divided into several categories: written, oral, manipulative and games, reading, Total Physical Response, Computer activities, Language Lab, co-operative learning activities

and assessment. These activities are not only considered as a helping tool but also as springboards to help the teachers create new ones.

Once each group of teachers had their activities developed for their grade levels, they shared their ideas with the rest of the development team. At that point, they swapped their activities lists in order to add new ones or give more depth and complexity to the ones already listed. We commonly called that step “flushing it out”

Once the activities were all agreed upon, the center of interest was turned towards the development of school wide projects to be implemented during the year as well as the development of a monthly calendar for the character education words.

The team created **3 to 4 major projects** involving the whole school based on the theme of study such as the creation of school-wide posters, community projects and performances.

The **character education words** define character traits that are universally accepted. Over the years, they have become a main component of our discipline management system. Banners in the hall with the words on them are displayed. Each month focuses on a different trait. Our center of attention was then to create a short list of activities that could take place either in the classroom, at a grade level, or even school-wide. When the activities have taken place in the classroom, each teacher is to share these with an administrator. Upon witnessing the activity, the administrator is to give the teacher either a ring (Olympics), a world piece puzzle (Go Green) or mask (Faces of the World) to display on their doors. The display of a reward on the door is a great incentive for the children.

### ***Implementation Phase***

Key elements for implementation are providing teachers with sufficient explanation, **enthusiasm**, resources for making the changes, and structures for accountability. Formative evaluation should be an on-going element as the theme is implemented.

Before the school year starts, a school-wide staff in-service is held. The most important piece of that in-service is to get the teachers motivated! Enthusiasm has to be contagious! The presentation should be done both by the administrators and the teachers who were part of the creative team in order to be successful.

- Procure a copy of the units developed for each groups of grade level
- Procure a copy of the resources
- Provide demonstrations on how it would look like in your classroom
- Provide ample time for the teachers to create their own activities based on what has been already suggested
- Have teachers leave the in-service with something tangible (rings for the Olympics; a small cardboard recycling bin, a mask, etc.)

### ***Follow-up Phase***

- Anticipate other staff needs
- Monitor and assess the effectiveness of the new unit
- Respond to unanticipated difficulties teacher may experience or with new staff when they are added to the instructional team
- Invite people from the district or other schools to come and observe
- Review and revise the unit development to address changing needs

### ***Conclusion***

Language and content teacher collaborating to develop school-wide units has ensured the interaction in helping students see the connection between their language of study and other academic areas.

The units developed provided the opportunity for teachers to infuse the teaching of language and culture into the content areas.