

Using Pauline Gibbons Planning Framework: Examples Of Practice

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An increasing number of teachers who work with pupils learning EAL are making use of the planning framework set out in Pauline Gibbons' book *Learning to Learn in a Second Language*. The planning framework has five columns. The first two (topic and activities) relate to the content to be taught. The next three (language functions, language structures and vocabulary) focus on the language which is relevant to the levels of the children, and which relates to the particular topic. The planning framework offers a simple and practical basis for ensuring that content and language are integrated. It also provides a focus for collaborative planning which need not be too demanding on the time available to teachers.

In the following examples Narmin Somani and Michael Mobbs write about the use and adaptation of the Pauline Gibbons framework.

A science topic on light

I used the planning framework with the class teacher as the basis for our collaboration in a Y1/Y2 vertically-grouped class. The three particular bilingual children I targeted were at an early stage in their learning of English (Stage 1). They spoke Gujarati, Punjabi and Pahari respectively.

In this context, planning for science with the class teacher paid attention to:

identifying the key concepts to be taught

- identifying the groupings (ability, gender, first languages etc.)
- the demands of the task for each group
- differentiated materials/appropriate resources
- the specific language demands and language opportunities of the task for the language support teacher's group using Pauline Gibbons' framework.

The planning framework below is an example of one lesson in a sequence which took place during one term. It gives an indication of the lesson content and is fairly typical of the way the planning framework was used.

Classroom Practice Example: Using the Gibbons Framework

TOPIC	ACTIVITIES	LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS	LANGUAGE STRUCTURES	VOCABULARY
Light and dark	Looking at objects through coloured cellophane to see if colour changes	describing comparing reporting prepositions	What colour is the basket? It is..... What colour does it become? It becomes..... I looked at the scissors..... I looked through the cellophane..... They look green. Next to, on top, through, under	cellophane red blue green black yellow orange scissors ruler pot paper basket
⊕ The topic	⊕ includes these activities	⊕ which require these language functions	⊕ which will be modelled using this language	

The term's work using this approach was evaluated. It was found that:

- the framework provided a clear focus for integrating language and content in a structured way. This clear structure helped us to assess and evaluate children's progress which in turn could be used for further planning.
- it helped both teachers to become more aware of the strategies needed to help develop pupils' academic English by ensuring that they provided good models of language use (the teachers and peers) for the bilingual children, and also by giving the pupils opportunities to use language. it made the mainstream teacher more aware of language learning opportunities in the curriculum.
- it provided a focused and structured approach to identify and teach the language that the topic demanded. Therefore children were learning the language that they needed at that time to understand the content.
- focused feedback sessions enabled pupils to gain confidence in using new ways of expressing ideas. They gave children a chance to use the language that had been taught.

Classroom Practice Example: Using the Gibbons Framework

- language resources and materials were developed. Previously the class teacher prepared materials and resources relating to content and I added to this by providing a differentiated version of the same content but using simplified language. Now I prepare materials which focus on expanding, or consolidating, the language she had planned to cover using the planning framework.

Using the Planning Framework

The 'language framework' on Page 19 of Pauline Gibbons' Learning to Learn in a Second Language ". . . can help to set language objectives in any curriculum area" (Page 18). In other words, it focuses on the bridge between content and language. In this, it is a useful aid for our own conceptual development as EAL teachers, for whom content and language need to be understood as interdependent rather than separate curricular agendas.

This interdependence is at one level perhaps too obvious to be worth mentioning (i.e. there could be no content as we know it without language to express it, nor could there be language as we know it without something to express!), yet the implications are still not widely recognised by mainstream colleagues. The recent SCAA publication on English as a cross-curricular issue in the National Curriculum: Use of language: a common approach (1997) goes beyond the usual requirements for pupils to "express themselves clearly" or "use grammatically correct sentences", and addresses the broader issue of "the role of language in pupils' learning."

While the individual subject sections concentrate on the many opportunities for pupils to use language in the classroom (e.g. pupils explain. . . , listen . . . , collect information on . . . , write about ...), the core booklet hints at the content-language interface, in the context of language support for individual pupils (Pages 12-13). In any area of the curriculum, it is suggested, teachers should consider the "language expectations" of the material, in terms of structures and vocabulary. This is where the Gibbons Language Framework comes in. As language development teachers, we may be given a "topic" (e.g. an item from the Programmes of Study). This will then be broken down into its various component "activities" (or "aspects"). Next: what will pupils need to be doing (cognitively, rather than physically) if these activities are to be engaged in successfully? The answers can be expressed as thinking processes or "language functions". If the distinction between the latter terms is too academic for our purpose, we will keep Gibbons' "language functions" as the heading for the central column, which is the bridging point between content and language. Language functions can now be translated into the "language structures" which express them (at the appropriate developmental level, of course), and the "vocabulary" will be determined by the particular activities or aspects of the topic.

What do we see as the strengths of this simple Framework? Going back over the columns in reverse order, from the right:

- Vocabulary comes last. Because it is the most "visible" dimension of language, it would be easy to place it first and to be satisfied with: "These are the special words pupils need for this topic." But by giving priority to structures, we are recognising that in real language, words contribute to meaningful utterances, which perform functions.
- Functions are central to the Framework. It would be easy to omit this column and to say: "These are the sorts of things pupils need to say in this topic, so these are

the relevant language structures". But that would ignore the cross-curricular dimension of language. By training ourselves to use the general and powerful terminology of functions, rather than the very particular and weak collection of "the sorts of things pupils need to say", we will be better placed to contribute to pupils' language development across the curriculum (as well as to mainstream colleagues' awareness of Language Across the Curriculum). Moreover, the functions terminology reminds us of the cognitive skills which are being practised simultaneously.

- Activities/aspects of a topic: this column encourages us to explore the opportunities provided by a topic in a systematic way. The Programmes of Study set out the topics of a subject, and a subject specialist may list the knowledge/skills which are the components of each. But again, we can take the broader view: what are the general components of each topic, what aspects of each topic are mirrored in other topics, in other subjects? At this level of generality, we are making even more explicit the cross-curricular dimension referred to above. For this purpose, we are tentatively suggesting the use of Mohan's "Knowledge Framework" (B. A. Mohan, *Language and Content*, New York: Addison-Wesley, 1986). For any given topic, it should be possible to identify some, if not all, of the six components of the Knowledge Framework (Classification; Principles; Evaluation; Description; Sequence; Choice). These can then be interpreted as activities/aspects of the topic, mapped on to whatever aspects the subject specialist has identified.

The value of the Knowledge Framework is that it can help us identify aspects of a topic which a narrow focus on subject knowledge skills might have ignored, but which are important from a cross-curricular point of view (e.g. the "Principle" of cause-effect is important in many topics of History and many topics of Science). An added bonus, in the context of the Gibbons Language Framework, is that Mohan very conveniently suggests the thinking processes/language functions which are typically used in each of his six components. The application of the Knowledge Framework to a Science topic, together with suggested teaching/learning materials developed from that analysis, is presented in NALDIC Occasional Paper 1 (C. Leung and M. Vazquez, *Integrating Content and Language: a Science Lesson*, 1994). The illustration below is one of our attempts to apply the Mohan Framework to a History topic, within Pauline Gibbons' Language Framework.

Having identified the "language expectations" of the topic, in this way, the next step is of course to plan teaching and learning materials, appropriate for the particular pupils. The Language Framework itself does not attempt to do that. What it does is to help us answer the question which Gibbons says we must ask before we even begin the teaching: "What is the language that I want children to be able to use by the end of this unit?" (Page 20) The value of the Language Framework which we wish to emphasise is that it is not merely a tool which can help us crack the language expectations of any particular topic, but that it can help us analyse classroom language at a much higher level of generality and that it makes explicit the cognitive processes implicit in topics. It is therefore a valuable tool for raising our own, and mainstream colleagues', awareness of the interdependence of content and language, in the context of a whole-school approach to language and learning across the curriculum.

Classroom Practice Example: Using the Gibbons Framework

CONTENT - LANGUAGE

TOPIC	ACTIVITIES OR COMPONENTS	LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS	LANGUAGE STRUCTURES	VOCABULARY
KS3 History:	Classification: Concepts of W/Class M/Class	Classify	There were two kinds of... some people...but others..	servant, governess
	Principles: W/C kids work poverty disease	explain means/ends explain cause/effect	had to... (in order) to... because...	tasks + equipment e.g. mangle
	Evaluation: Fair or unfair?	express opinion express emotion invoke standards	It was right/wrong to....(do that)	black leading tripe, dripping
Living conditions in 19th century towns	Description: video: conditions of W/C + M/C families	observe compare	simple past used to... much more/less... hardly enough/plenty	rag rugs sewer sewerage cholera
	Sequence: video: servant's routine	narrate tasks explain purpose of tasks	because... so that... before...	infect infection overcrowded
	Choice: What if?	hypothesise express possibility	if they had...they would have... I (don't) think they should have...	educated uneducated
Ⓢ The topic	Ⓢ includes these activities	Ⓢ which require these language functions	Ⓢ which will be modelled using this language	

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