

Backward Mapping

EAL friendly planning framework which includes strategies for improving writing.

Decide on the "big questions" in your unit of work.

- What are the key concepts and big ideas you want all learners to understand and to be able to use?
- What kind of assessment task(s) will you use to assess students' understanding of these big ideas and key concepts?
- What do students already know about these ideas and concepts? How can you introduce the key concepts in language that is familiar to students, drawing on their own experiences? How are these concepts and ideas expressed in the academic language in your subject?
- What can individual learners contribute to the learning of everyone in the class (e.g. because they have special knowledge about or interest in the topic)?
- What classroom activities can you use to introduce the new academic language students need to acquire and link it with what they already know?
- Using "backward mapping", what general sequence of activities will lead up the final assessment task?

Consider how spoken language can be used to support both content and language learning.

- How will you provide opportunities for students to use language with one another to talk through complex ideas or concepts (i.e. to have substantive conversations)?
- What opportunities are there for learners to work collaboratively in groups on subject related tasks?
- Are there structures in place that will help ensure that substantive conversations occur (e.g. thinking/ prompting, graphic organisers)?
- Are the group tasks worth doing for their own sake? Are students given opportunities to pose their own questions?
- Are there planned times for teacher-student interactions about what students have learned?
- Are there opportunities for talk about learning and about language?
- In what ways will you make complex or academic language more comprehensible (e.g. through recasting and mode shifting)?
- How and at what point in the unit will you model academic language in your own talk?

Identify what texts students will need to read.

- What aspects of the language of the texts might cause difficulties for your students?
- Are there conceptual or cultural aspects of the text that may be unfamiliar and hinder learning?
- How can you address these difficulties and help learners access the texts.
- What before-reading, during-reading, and after-reading activities will help learners access these texts?
- How will class work help learners understand the reading they will be doing?

Identify the writing you expect learners to do.

- What kinds of ways of writing will learners be expected to use?
- Are you able to be explicit about the language features of the writing type you want students to use?
- If this is the first time learners are being asked to write in this way, how will you deconstruct the kind of writing, and what topic will you choose for the joint construction stage?
- What extra scaffolding will you provide for those students who need additional support to help them complete the writing successfully?

Sequence activities broadly according to the "mode continuum".

- How will you sequence the teaching and learning activities so that learners begin with familiar (probably spoken) language and then move toward the new academic language.
- What opportunities are there for EAL learners to use "literate" spoken language prior to writing tasks?