

# *Instructional Sample Practice for a First-Grade Thematic Unit on Farm Life Aligned to the Next Generation Learning Standards*

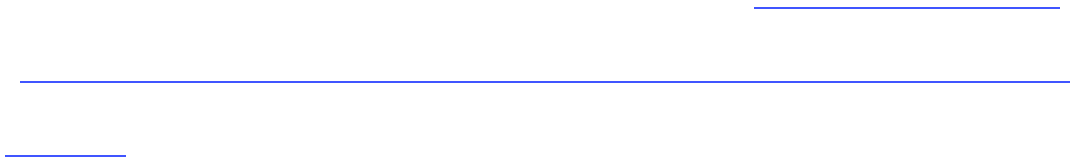
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*Underlined sentences or words constitute hyperlinks. Sentences and words in bold are classroom activities that build oral language, metalinguistic development, and flexible groupings throughout this unit.*



*New York State*  
**EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

*Learning for All > Opportunity*





Spotlight

This Instructional Sample Practice describes a unit for ~~grades one~~ ~~and two~~

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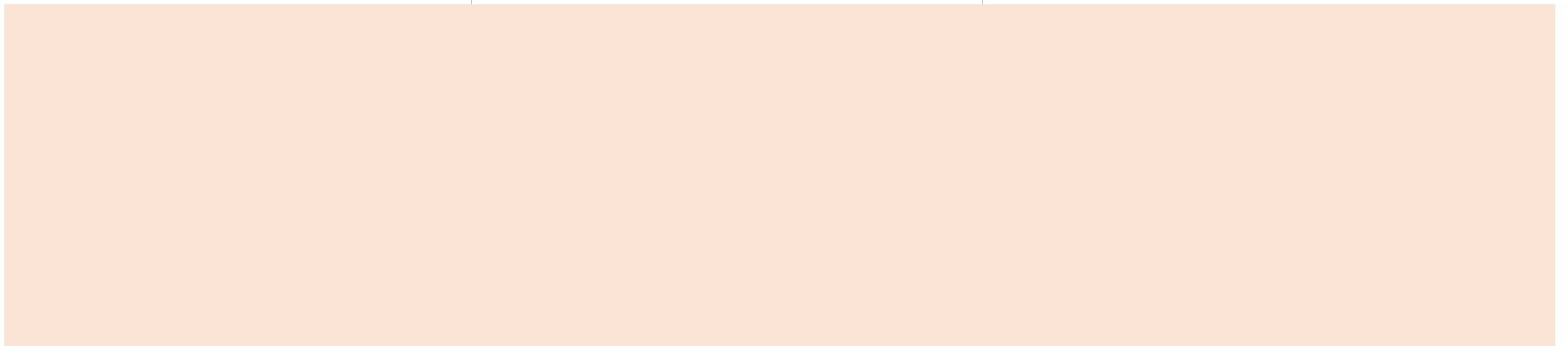
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used the previous afternoon. This means that the day begins in one language (Spanish) and usually after lunch, the teacher starts teaching in the other language (English). On the following morning, Ms. Alvarez begins teaching in the language used during the previous afternoon (English) and after the language of instruction would resume to Spanish again. The aim is to use both languages in all content areas. It also means that students, for instance, will engage in a read-aloud in English and then participate in shared reading in Spanish. While she maintains language separation, she understands that in order to convey complexity of thinking, students need to capitalize on their entire linguistic repertoire.

Family involvement is key to Ms. Alvarez's practice. She establishes strong lines of communication with her students' families and makes herself available on a weekly basis by holding office hours after school to meet with them. She also communicates with families via email and mobile messages. Teachers of diverse learners need to ensure that communication with families happen in the student's preferred language preference of their choice. She encourages families to come into the classroom to talk about and share

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Developing metalinguistic awareness

Analyzing morphemes in English and Spanish that refer to a profession-er in English, as

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<p>Celebration of learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Concluding the thematic unit of study and sharing with parents through oral presentations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Teachers of MLs can foster oral language development and academic conversations encouraging the students to use their home language when working together. Final products and/or presentations can be made stronger by practicing in small group settings.</li> <li>x Teachers of MLs can remind students that it is okay to speak in the home language as they create their final products for the celebration of learning. Students are reminded of the languages audiences might speak and should prepare presentations in the appropriate language(s).</li> </ul>
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The

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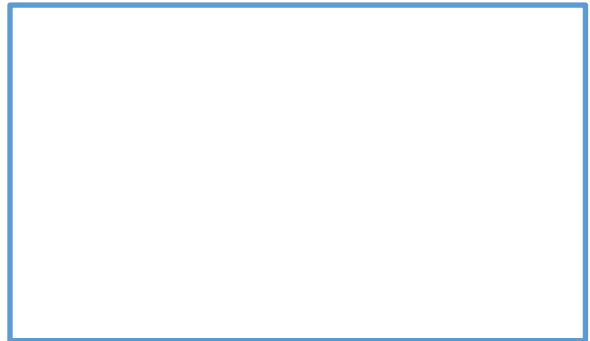
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## Importance of Developing Language and Content Through a Thematic Unit in First Grade

Ms. Alvarez understands that when planning a thematic unit, student's interests, inquiry, curriculum needs, age and stages of linguistic and cognitive development need to be considered in order to develop an effective thematic unit. Thematic units promote collaboration, contextualize language learning, expand skills, teach appreciation of cultural diversity, nurture investigation in children and



She used a KWL chart<sup>9</sup> that was useful to find out what children knew and what they wanted to know. When filling out the K portion of the chart, Ms. Alvarez modeled by asking herself what she knew about life on a farm. Ms. Alvarez taught this portion of her unit in English, but accepted contributions in Spanish or English. She then created a trilingual (Spanish/English/Polish) word bank with the animals the students had brainstormed. At this point in her lesson, Ms. Alvarez presented probing questions which led to her students noticing that both Polish and Spanish use accent marks on some letters [winia/pig]. As the conversation extended, the students discovered that the markers in Polish appeared in consonants, but in Spanish they occasionally appear on vowels (e.g., mamá). The students also noticed that the Polish word looks like the English one [cow]. The students also noticed that none of the English and Spanish words in word-bank resembled each other and were not cognates. Ms. Alvarez thought that these insights arose from the natural curiosity that bilingual students have about languages and that lead to analyzing and reflecting about language (metalinguistic awareness).

The teacher covered the following standard

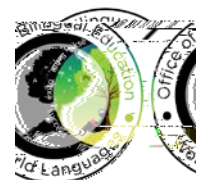
x 1 Speaking and Listening 1: Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse peers and adults (e.g., in small and large groups and during play)

### A Virtual Field Trip to a Farm

After the discussion about what students knew about farm animals, Ms. Alvarez and her students spent time watching a video that showed what a farm might look like. The video introduced a farmer who explains to a small group of children some of the characteristics of the animals that live in this setting. The children in the video have, among other experiences, the chance to milk a cow. To watch the video, Ms.

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<sup>9</sup> A KWL chart stands for what students know, what they would like to know and what they have learned. It is usually completed as a whole class as the teacher fills it in front of the students.



Alvarez used for this portion of the uniplease

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LIFELONG PRACTICES FOR READERS:  
THINK, WRITE, AND LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND  
LIFELONG PRACTICES FOR WRITERS:  
THINK, WRITE, AND LISTEN TO SUPPORT  
WRITING.

approach<sup>10</sup> a type of literacy engagement where the teacher takes notes of the children's words and the class composes a collective text that helps the class collectively gather the information learned. Often, this is a text the children can read because it contains their own words and comes from a shared experience. This activity helps the teacher informally assess what the class whole learned about the content.

This activity was followed by shared writing that took place during Spanish time. This writing engagement allows for a more knowledgeable writer to demonstrate different aspects of how a text is composed.<sup>11</sup> The students were able to use what they had learned from the video, Read Aloud, and retelling. The shared writing exercise required Ms. Alvarez to do the writing while her students decided on the brief summary. As a scribe, she modeled the decision-making process that takes place when writing. Punctuation, text organization, and word choice were some of the elements they discussed when the whole class participated in creating the short text. This activity also helped Ms. Alvarez assess what her students were learning about writing, as well as content

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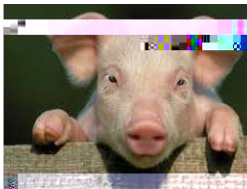
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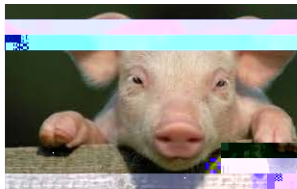
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rio



hog



puerco



quipo

cochino

puercu

cerdo

marrano





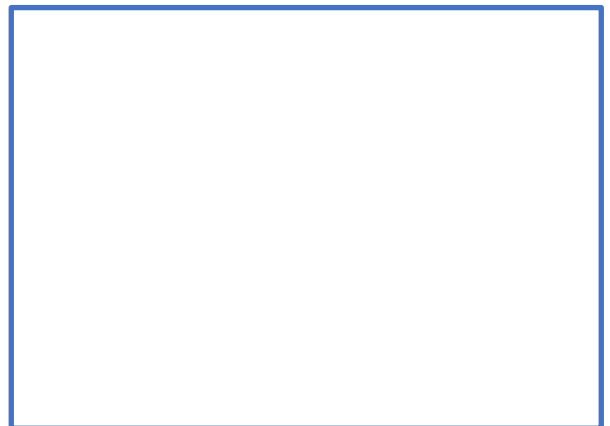
marrano, puerco can also mean "dirty" in Spanish.

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Next, she read the book aloud. She stopped at select pages and asked the students to predict what they thought might happen after. She called on students to share their thinking out loud. As students shared, she pointed to the pictures to support the construction of meaning to all students.



her students have comprehended a specific story and how they are putting together the information found in the text. Given that her students had been engaged in interactive read-alouds in Spanish and English, she knew they were ready to engage in this activity. Ms. Alvarez grouped her students according to how well they know how to retell. She asked them to do two retellings each other one in English and one in Spanish. She then arranged for the students who required more support to work with her. One of the strategies Ms. Alvarez uses is to ask for the retelling in the language that the student is more comfortable using. In the small group of students with whom she was working, she first asked the student in need of support to do the retelling. She then asked the student to elaborate on certain parts. Ms. Alvarez knew that this was an important step since students who found





## Interactive Writing : Examining the Differences between Fiction and Nonfiction Texts

TEACHERS CAN OPEN UP SPACES WHERE MULTILINGUAL STUDENTS LISTEN THE STORY IN THEIR HOME LANGUAGE OR BY WATCHING AND LISTENING TO A READ-ALOUD OF THE STORY ONLINE

After engaging her students in English and Spanish fiction and nonfiction reading, Ms. Alvarez decided to continue this unit by asking her students to engage in an interactive writing<sup>12</sup> activity outlining the differences between fiction and nonfiction texts.

In interactive writing, the students and the teachers share the pen. The students created the following chart in both languages.

Table 5: An interactive writing exercise in which the students and teacher created a chart explaining the differences between fiction and nonfiction texts.


The teacher covered the following standards

x 1 Reading5: Identify a variety of genres and explain differences between literary texts and informational texts. (RI&RL)

### Singing Songs About Farm Animals in English and Spanish

Ms. Alvarez also taught the children the song ["Los Pollitos Dicen"](#), a well-known song for children in Latin American countries. She wrote the song on chart paper. She asked a few children draw images next to key words as they were trying to figure out the meaning of the song. They also listened to the lyrics of the song and learned the lyrics to [Old McDonald Had a](#)

TEACHERS CAN ENCOURAGE THEIR STUDENTS TO SHARE SONGS IN ENGLISH AND ANALYZE THE LANGUAGE EMBEDDED IN THEM. LIKEWISE, STUDENTS CAN SHARE SONGS IN THEIR HOME LANGUAGE.



### Metalinguistic Awareness Using “Los Pollitos Dicen”

After spending some time learning the song, Ms. Alvarez studied with the children the diminutive in Spanish. She used a shared reading<sup>3</sup> chart and only one of the song’s stanzas:

Bajos sus dos alas

Acurrucaditos

Duermen los pollitos

Hasta el otro día

Ms. Alvarez wrote the diminutive ito in red. The students translated the word pollitos into English (little chicken) and they noticed how it requires two words in English, whereas in Spanish only requires the addition ito at the end of the word (pollo/chicken). One of the phrases that elicited questions was: les pite (a bird) - bajo sus alas (she folds her wings) - duermen (they sleep) - hasta el otro día (until tomorrow).











<p>writing texts and in interactive writing</p> <p>x Singing songs in both languages</p> <p>x Talking and sharing ideas in Center Time</p> <p>x Brainstorming when drawing, drafting, and creating an opinion piece</p> <p>x Sharing letters and what they learned in the culminating activity</p>	<p>x Understanding morphology markers (e.g. <i>-er/-ero</i>)</p> <p>x Analyzing the diminutive marker in Spanish (<i>-ito/-ita</i>) and comparing it to English</p> <p>x Analyzing multiple words</p>	
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they see happening. If students have not mastered writing conventions, they should draw their noticing's individually. The





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