

Meeting 07 • 26 January 2010

Version:

1/26/10

Today • my deadline page

numbers in () = minutes planned for activity/ topic

√ = topic / activity that was adequately dealt with during the class

+ = topic needs more attention & will be resumed at next / subsequent meeting(s)

- = a topic / activity that was proposed but not carried out (but will be taken up later)

~~Struck through text like this~~ = a topic / activity that was proposed but not included / is not going to be taken up after all

Italic text like this = comments after the meeting

	Main topic(s): Introduction to Assessment; the FL and AL Cultures
(5)	(possibly a regular feature:) assessment in the news! PPS trying to improve high school programs, including languages (0767); and a sad anecdote about education and assessment in Tanzania (0770)
(45)	The OPI (media clips) - structure, examiner stance, question types; OPI familiarization workshop manual (1994, 0036); a high-level German sample; maybe some ESL samples; how to write the rating: 1) state the rating; 2 [or 3]) describe (10 words) the text type; 3 [or 2]) summarize the functions and contexts/contents encountered; 4) (and only now) offer evidence about accuracy. See example (0269, but note that the grade is too high); technology to use
(15)	Assignments - checking in and up: 1) reading, see the "schedule & assignments" page (under modification); 2) Assignment 2: Rate your own proficiency - discuss today, along with Assignment 1 (reflection about assessment experience and news article); 3) Assignment 3: do a pseudo-OPI - are we ready to activate it?
(5)	maybe: brief intro to rubrics
(30)	The (withdrawn) ACTFL language-specific guidelines for German (0033a & 0033b, with culture guidelines and grammar grids!) - try mapping some grammatical features (pronouns? past tenses? acc-dat prepositions? past perfect? Konjunktiv [I? II?]) onto the proficiency levels)

*yes,
after all*

Upcoming class meetings

28 January: intro to ACTFL Guidelines / Testing for writing (••reading:); intro to rubrics (••reading)

Upcoming assignment(s)

This section offers a PREVIEW, not activated assignments. Assignments are made, with announcement of their deadlines, both in class and on the "schedule" page. The next topic (week 4, 26 & 28 January): rubrics; testing (& teaching) writing

Announcements

The change of the course to German-only participation requires some more rethinking of the syllabus. So I'm dropping any specific ESL aspects, at least temporarily, and we'll resume the discussion in a week or so.

Misc.

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High school reform: Writing success across all of Portland

By Guest Columnist
January 19, 2010, 9:00AM

By Xavier Botana

Portland's high schools need to change. Today, too many students don't graduate, too many graduates struggle in college and too many students lack equitable access to the core elements of a high school education.

A recent editorial in The Oregonian ("Sweeping plans in Portland deserve a skeptical eye," Jan. 4) worried that families "will not send their child to a school they perceive as low-quality unless they have no other choice."

At Portland Public Schools, we agree.

That's why our current plans would guarantee a well-rounded core program at each community high school. And those plans aren't based on wishful thinking -- they're realistically budgeted, based on current resources and forecasted enrollment. They're also based on what today's students need.

What if students gifted in writing, science or math could demonstrate proficiency and move on to more challenging material? More students could test their upper limits and be better prepared for college.

What if students could see counselors more easily to get help making responsible school, career and life decisions? Fewer might drop out.

What if high school students could take rigorous courses online or after school? More students might take college classes or recover missed credits, without waiting for summer school and dropping through the cracks.

No matter what Portland's high schools do well, none offer these kinds of challenges and supports today.

It's not enough to say, "Just fix the broken schools." We've tried. But no school stands alone. Subsidizing low-enrollment schools drains resources from high-enrollment ones. That's why we need to stabilize enrollment by making all of Portland's high schools attractive options to our families.

Under the proposed plans, every community high school would deliver a full array of college-prep and catch-up courses, languages, visual arts, choir, instrumental music and theater or dance. All would foster stronger connections between students and teachers in ninth-grade academies, which have been shown to prevent dropouts.

To offer the program to all, our high schools would each have an enrollment of about 1,350 students. Some schools would grow; some would shrink slightly.

What would larger high schools lose? If Wilson High downsized from 1,480 students to 1,350, it could lose approximately 18 of its 283 course sections, depending on staffing choices. Roughly six of these would be elective sections. Since each course averages two sections, losing six could mean a loss of three electives.

These are small but real tradeoffs. They're also necessary to bring a high quality education to all.

No one is proposing cookie-cutter schools. Successful programs (such as Franklin's Mock Trial program) need not go away. Nor are we proposing to eliminate things that set Portland apart, such as our innovative language-immersion programs. We are discussing with educators and parents in language programs how to improve, not diminish, the quality and accessibility of immersion in our high schools.

We don't presume that input from 10,000 Portlanders constitutes buy-in. Many at our community meetings had questions. That's the point of the meetings. We're not presenting a done deal.

Can we pull off our plans? Ten years ago, Cleveland High suffered from a less-than-stellar reputation. Cleveland instituted a rigorous college-prep program, ninth-grade academies and Mandarin Immersion. Now it's a thriving, high-demand school.

Success stories like Cleveland's show that a strong program and dedicated staff, principals and families can turn around a school. These are the kind of success stories we want to write across Portland. That's not wishful thinking.

Xavier Botana is chief academic officer for Portland Public Schools.



Xavier Botana

...and want to
take advantage of the opportunity to explore Greece. My guidebook reminds me I have the Greeks to thank
for Democracy, thermometers, geometry, umbrellas, and more recently, the Pap-smear. I think, though, that
it will be especially interesting to contrast education in Tanzania with that in Greece. Liv has told me the
Tanzanian government's educational curriculum includes Organic Chemistry in high school and that 95% of
students fail the government's benchmark tests. Most students are failing so miserably after primary school
that they lose motivation to work hard, have difficulty with root memorization let alone analysis and higher
levels of information processing, and therefore don't take school seriously. This leads to disrespect of
teachers, which in turn leads to situations like one Liv encountered last week where the teachers beat all
600 students for poor test scores. Quite a contrast to Greek civilization and the development of geometry,
astronomy, public school systems and a policy the keep historical sites and museums cheap to encourage
students to visit and learn. I think I'll get quite a different picture of Tanzania this time around.

That's exciting that you might get to travel to East Africa, though I guess you'd probably be more in Kenya

FIGURE 1
TESTING PROTOCOL

- LEVEL 0+: Tried to have conversation? _____
- Covered 0+ Subject Areas: Which?
- | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------|-------|
| Basic objects | _____ | Months | _____ |
| Basic colors | _____ | Time | _____ |
| Clothing | _____ | Weather | _____ |
| Day's date | _____ | Weekdays | _____ |
| Family members | _____ | Year | _____ |
-
- LEVEL 1: Tried to have conversation? _____
- Checked for minimum courtesy requirements? _____
- Checked that he can handle simple situations of daily life and travel (S-1 Situations)? _____
- Had him ask you questions? _____
- Tried props when conversation fails? _____
- Probed for past tense(s) and future? _____
-
- LEVEL 2: Checked how he can satisfy routine social demands? _____
- Checked how he talks about autobiographical information? _____
- Checked how he talks about current events? _____
- Checked how he uses basic structures? _____
- Checked how he uses more complex structures? _____
- Checked for description? _____
- Checked for narration, particularly in past & future? _____
- Checked how he handles simple situations of daily life and travel (S-1 Situations)? _____
- Checked how he joins sentences in connected discourse? _____
- Probed for how he handles an unknown topic or situation? _____
- Probed for supported opinion? _____

- LEVEL 3: Checked both everyday and abstract subject matter? _____
- Placed him in unfamiliar situations and topics? _____
- Checked his control of grammar? _____
- Checked for supported opinion? _____
- Checked for description? _____
- Checked for narration? _____
- Checked how he uses low-frequency structures? _____
- Checked how he uses complex structures? _____
- Checked for broad vocabulary? _____
- Checked how he answers hypothetical questions? _____

- LEVEL 4: Checked both everyday and abstract subject matter? _____
- Placed him in unfamiliar situations and topics? _____
- Checked his control of grammar? _____
- Checked for supported opinion? _____
- Checked for description? _____
- Checked for narration? _____
- Checked how he uses low-frequency structures? _____
- Checked how he uses complex structures? _____
- Checked for broad vocabulary? _____
- Checked for how he answers hypothetical questions? _____
- Checked how he handles an unknown situation? _____
- Checked how he tailors his speech to his audience(s)? _____

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- LEVEL 5: Checked both everyday and abstract subject areas? _____
 - Checked for high-level colloquialisms? _____
 - Checked for pertinent cultural references? _____
 - Checked his ability to converse freely and idiomatically in his special fields? _____
 - Checked that he speaks and sounds like an educated native speaker in all that he says? _____
 - Checked how he handles unknown situations and topics? _____

SAMPLE SITUATIONS

You are in Buenos Aires and you have to travel to Mexico City. You go to a travel agent to inquire about travel arrangements. Ask the agent:

1. The best way to get there.
2. How long it takes.
3. How much it costs.
4. When you can depart.
5. The best way to get to the airport.

You call a friend.

1. Invite him to an informal party for Saturday evening.
2. Tell him who will be there.
3. Ask him to bring a couple of friends.
4. Ask him if he needs directions to get to your home.

You go to the reception desk of a hotel:

1. You ask for two connecting rooms with full bath for three nights.
2. You inquire about the price.
3. You ask about check-out time.
4. You ask whether breakfast is included in the price of the room.
5. You ask if it will be possible to have a room on the seventh or eighth floor (you don't like the noise of the street).

You bought a pair of shoes. When you try them on again at home, they don't fit and you also decide that you hate the style. You go back to the store.

1. Explain to the clerk why you want to return the shoes.
2. Tell him you want your refund in cash, even though the store's policy is only to give credit when merchandise is returned.

We realize that you may not have the exact vocabulary for this situation, but do the best you can to make yourself understood.

Your national soccer team is playing against an American team in the U.S. Convince the man at the ticket window of the stadium that he should let you in even though he says that there are no tickets left.

We realize that you may not have the exact vocabulary for this situation, but do the best you can to make yourself understood.