



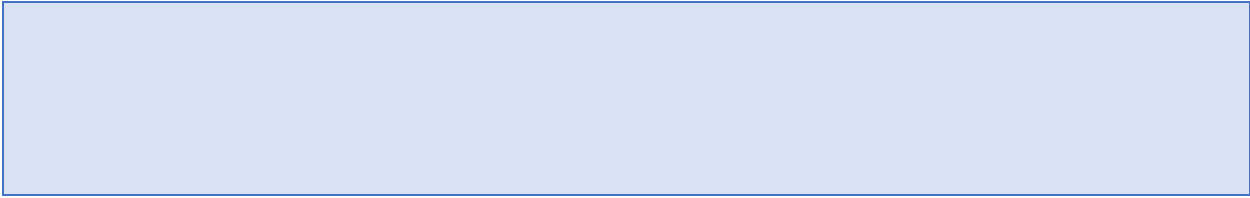
Resource :
Using a Genre -based, Multilingual Approach to Prepare for the
English Language Arts Regents Exam

Introduction:



Approaching standardized tests as a genre

In many ELA classrooms, students are often asked to write about different genres. However, standardized tests often focus on how genres are constructed and how they are used by students.





When they are done sharing their ideas about other genres, ask each group to look through the > Z P v šAE u X • dZ } μ Q } š š Q E C } _ š Z dš • š Z } μ •] u % o O E } Á • š Z O E } μ P Z each section and take notes. You can provide them with guiding questions, such as how many parts does it have? How is each part organized? What are some of the elements that they notice in the test (e.g. directions, titles, sections, layout)? Organize the groups with students who share the same home language, so they can discuss their ideas in the language in which they feel most comfortable.


After they are done exploring the test, ask the groups to share and discuss as a class: How is reading a test different than reading a poem or listening to a speech? How is it similar? How is this test its own kind of genre? What are some strategies they might use to approach the test?

Classroom example

An 11th P O E š (O E } š O Z O E } v AE Z • š E μ v š • Z % Z O E } f r a t h e W f « i ' ° V N V ð Å ð V . æ



- < Why are some words in bold or italic format? What information about the task do they provide?
- < Why a



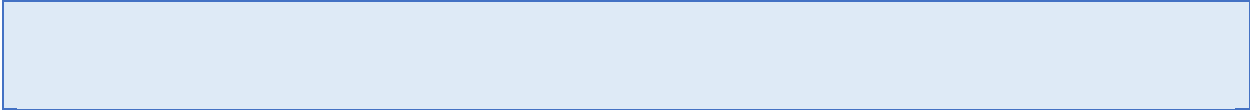
In order to implement this strategy, begin by reviewing the given prompt on the exam: What are students being asked to do? What are the guidelines? Create a collective list with the class, using English and student home languages.

For example, Part 2 of the ELA Regents requires students to write an evidence-based argument, using a collection of authentic texts that relate to a specific event, topic, or issue. After students understand the demands of the task, divide the class into small groups. First, review the rubric for Part 2. Help students understand the expectations laid out in that rubric, including the often subtle changes from one column to the next. For example, you might ask students to find 3 key features in the rubric, provide each group with two examples of anchor papers from a past exam. Ask guiding questions for each paragraph to help the students understand how the writer of the essay structured it: How does the writer begin the first body paragraph? What does this writer do after incorporating text evidence? What does the writer include in the conclusion? (See Figure 2 for an example of a handout that encourages this inquiry) You also want to direct students to specific details in the writing. For example, you can point to signal words that the author used: Students can discuss and answer the questions in their home languages or in English.

After they are finished, ask students to work together to score the work using the rubric. You can model this scoring before students do it independently/in pairs, engaging students in discussion about a particular score and the reasons it earned that score. Each group should then share their own scoring and their rationale for the score. When everyone has presented, share with them the scoring from the exam sample and deconstruct it by going back to the papers.

When they write their own practice essays, the students can work in pairs and score each other's. They can also practice scoring their own essays. It is important that, as they score, they ask the questions as the ones that you asked while they read the anchor papers.

Figure 2. Handout for students



You can also do an analysis of recent Regents exams and come up with a list of key words and/or anchor concepts that have appeared multiple times on the test. This can include words that are important for understanding the exam itself and those that relate to common topics that have been included on the exam. Then, you can have students look up those words using bilingual dictionaries and create a list of those words in both English and the home language. Their notebooks and use to practice their bilingual dictionary skills. These can be shared and class and newcomers.

Classroom example

An ENL teacher in Queens who worked with a group of 11th grade/ELL gave her students three paragraphs from a reading comprehension passage. Since all the students in her class shared Spanish as a home language, she provided them with



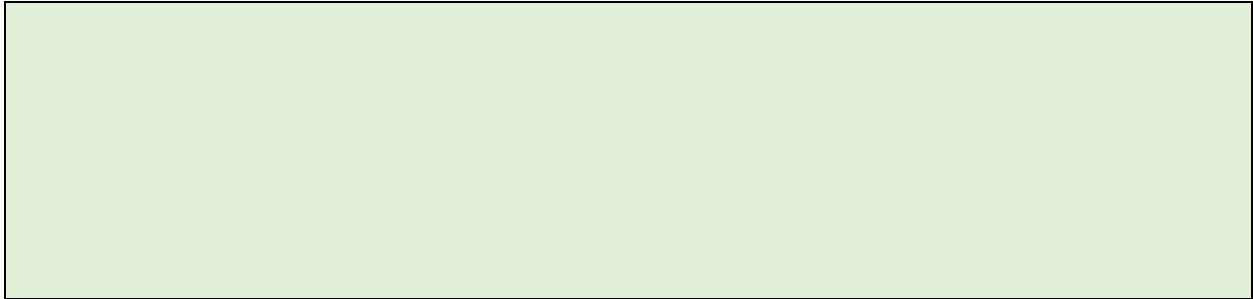
x Develop a counteargument

& } 07 CE š i Analysis task, you ca



For an analysis response task, you can encourage students to go through the following annotation steps as they read both the task and the accompanying text except:

- x Read the excerpt and, using your home languages and **What, What, Why, How** asking yourself:
 - o Who is the passage about?
 - o What is happening to them?
 - o Why is it happening?
 - o How is the writer telling the story (writing strategy)?
- x Decide what you think the big idea or message is (i.e.: the central idea of the excerpt)
- x Underline text evidence that helps convey the central idea and use your home



Classroom example:

An 1st grade ELA teacher in Brooklyn was preparing MLs/ELLs for the ELA Regents exam and did a close read of several recent exams to look for general academic vocabulary that might have cognates in the main languages of her students: Spanish, French, and Creole. As she read, she found many cognates, including some whole phrases from the exam, such as:

^ D]v š](v} Œ u o Á 6EQ š]v P
^ D v š μ Œ š](o} Œ u o • Œ]š μ Œ ~ ^ %o v]• Z •
^ D]v š μ Œ Œ o (} Œ u o - Œ]š μ Œ _ ~ & Œ v Z •
^ < v G š Œ o u (o v | Œ]_ ~, Œ]} Œ •

Using what she found, the teacher created a cognate and etymology chart that she put up on the wall of her classroom. With the help of MLs/ELLs in the classroom, as well as several bilingual staff members, the teacher continued to find new cognates and shared word parts on the ELA Regents and added to the chart. In preparation for the exam, MLs/ELLs studied the cognates and shared word parts in the personal charts that they kept in their notebooks so that they would recognize them when they took the exam.



Part III:
An ELA Regents Exam Project: Students Teach Students through a Genre-based, Multilingual Approach

A project-based approach to preparing for the ELA Regents exams engages students as knowledge producers and capitalizes on the skills they bring to the classroom. Proje

