

## Curriculum Mapping | La Sierra High School

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### Lets talk ... about Perpetual Maps

by Warren Ediger in [06b. Perpetual Map](#) on Tue, 27 Nov 2007 at 9:11am

According to the curriculum mapping glossary, we are working on what is called an *Essential Map*, a map which provides overall guidance for an entire program in multiple locations. It is the map which teachers will use to write their *Projected Maps* during pre-school planning and to evaluate their *Diary Maps* at the end of a teaching period – a month, semester, or year. An *Essential Map* is driven by standards and best-practice research and includes identification of skills, activities which develop those skills, and assessments which measure skill development.

There is another layer, called a *Perpetual Map*, which identifies skills and processes which may not be reflected in the *Essential Map*, but which we believe to be integral and important to completing our overall objective: *self-directed, lifelong acquirers and competent users of English*. These are skills and processes that should be taught, developed, and practiced – with appropriate sequencing – in every class, all the time.

I can think of a number of possibilities: SSR, toolbox vocabulary development, basic keyboarding skills/functional computer literacy, reading strategies, uniform revision/editing strategies (appropriately sequenced) . . . .

What would you put on your list for the *Perpetual Map*? Let's use the comments function to brainstorm and discuss a preliminary list between now and Friday, December 7. Who'll be first?

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#### 7 comments so far

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##### [Barbara Jindra Mon, 3 Dec at 1:28 PM](#)

This should be no surprise to anyone, but I would put SSR at the top of my Perpetual Map layer. Reading is a life-long skill for L1 and L2 users. The simple act of reading improves reading skills, and our goal is to create independent acquirers and users of English. It therefore follows that more reading equates to improved acquisition and use of English.

When students read more, they have more opportunities to internalize the structure of the English language without the burden of cumbersome grammar and writing rules that, once memorized, don't necessarily translate into usage by the learner. We all know that there are rules which students can recite in their sleep; however, the students' speaking and writing don't necessarily accurately portray the appropriate use of those rules, no matter how well the students believe that they know those particular rules.

When students read, they have opportunities to imprint the correct way of speaking and writing in their heads. The more times that students see a "rule" in actual use, the easier it is for them to recreate accurate usage in their spoken and written communication.

They also acquire vocabulary in the easiest manner possible—in a rich context that allows them to absorb new words without the use of archaic strategies such as the highly questionable Friday vocabulary tests.

A side benefit to this is improved spelling. For most students, imprinting the proper spelling of a work

into his/her head multiple times, which happens during the process of reading, will help the students learn how to spell words as a natural extension of the reading and learning environment.

Many of our students juggle work, families, and school into their hectic lives. By providing an environment where it is not only okay to sit and read, but it is an actual part of the daily class routine, we are providing our students with the ultimate opportunity to practice (and therefore improve) their reading. This makes them better readers, and has the additional side benefit of giving them opportunities to improve the quality of their output as well.

Warren, I really like each of the possibilities you put out there. Each one has a solid rationale. I would just put SSR at the top of the list as the highest priority because of the positive impact it has on the reading skills of learners, and how the reading overflows into additional areas of learning with positive results.

Barb

[Tracy Fenstermaker Mon, 3 Dec at 7:37 PM](#)

I agree with both of you. The only other thing I can think of that seemed to make my class comfortable speaking and writing was a daily journal. The topic was the same for all of them and they had to write and discuss with the class. Most of the time they read their answers to the whole group, occasionally I had them read to a friend and the friend shared with the class. They had the opportunity to listen, ask questions and bring up related topics based on what was said. It really made them comfortable speaking and was informal enough to relieve most of their anxiety.

[Laurie McGee Tue, 4 Dec at 8:32 AM](#)

As Barb clearly argued, SSR is essential and worthwhile.

Journals could be useful but can also be misused/overused so we have to be careful.

Toolbox vocabulary development is great, and would be wonderful if essential words were agreed upon by level...this does require extra time to make it work though. I put a lot of time into this for my lessons, but I'm not sure that every teacher (esp. those who haven't seen Kate Kinsella) would do that. But I am going to go ahead and say that it's high on my list...because it does so much more than just "define" words, which I suspect is how most teachers treat vocabulary.

Computer literacy is tricky. It's not really part of learning English, yet it's required to be successful in class and therefore learn English...also to be an independent acquirer and take advantage of the online resources available. Maybe if we could identify some very basic skills that they need in order to participate in the class?

For reading strategies, I think the prereading strategy of text surveys should be included...what else would you all say is essential?

Finally, editing strategies. This sounds wonderful, but I'm not sure what it would look like. Can someone elaborate?

[Barbara Jindra Tue, 4 Dec at 10:37 AM](#)

I completely agree with Laurie about toolbox vocabulary. Without a common academic vocabulary base, it is almost impossible to communicate beyond a very basic BIC level. Meaningful output can't take place without this type of vocabulary knowledge. I love her idea of creating a list of words by level, and we should probably go so far as to create sample materials (demonstrating classroom strategies for implementing the teaching of toolbox vocab) for teachers. Obviously, that is a separate item from

determining perpetual map goals.

It seems to me that some of what we are talking about is really has to do with strategies for achieving perpetual map goals. For example, text surveys and journals are classroom strategies. Having strategies modeled certainly makes using said strategies easier, but I think Warren is asking us what concepts we want to see as perpetual map goals, not how we would implement the goals. Am I off base here, Warren?

NOTE TO NARDY:

SSR materials are available for all levels, but not all classrooms have an adequate supply of SSR reading choices. I have previously identified some good sources of materials if you want to discuss this at some point.

Barb

[Warren Ediger Tue, 4 Dec at 2:24 PM](#)



Barb, it will come as no surprise that I also put SSR at the top of the list. There is nothing that we can do to promote current and future language acquisition than help them develop the habit of reading and understand why.

Tracy, I like your idea; I would put it in a list of recommended techniques rather than an everywhere, all the time list. However, I'd be happy to hear the case for inclusion in a Perpetual Map.

Barb, Laurie, I think including toolbox vocabulary in a Perpetual Map assumes identification of the specific vocabulary involved and, even, suggestions for how to approach it.

Barb, you're right on target! For all of us, I'd like to be idealistic – let's talk about the ideal situation! – and we can deal with the pragmatics later. Let's not pre-edit!

Warren

[Susan Lozeau Wed, 5 Dec at 12:28 PM](#)

In a Perpetual Map I would like to focus on ideas and strategies which encourage student responsibility for their own learning. Last year with my Orientation class I tried a new attitude. Instead of guiding them so much in their language acquisition I instead started to challenge them more. I made them responsible for figuring meanings and exercises out. If they made mistakes...Great! They learned from them. By the end of the year when I began an activity they were way ahead of me. They were also so in tune with doing it on their own that they showed me new and better ways to teach something. (A major activity where this was highly visible was in the construction of graphic organizers) I'd like to successfully map activities and strategies that promote learner self reliance at all levels.

[Warren Ediger Wed, 5 Dec at 1:25 PM](#)



Susan, good to hear from you! What you are suggesting is related to an issue that I had planned to introduce later: we need – all the time, everywhere – to be helping students understand how language is acquired and what they can do to contribute to the process (explaining in their own language, if necessary

at the lower levels).

This is mandatory if, as we stated last year, we want them to become self-directed, life-long acquirers and competent users of English, for all the reasons we've already discussed.

Warren