CAPSTONE PORTFOLIO

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Abstract

This capstone portfolio includes my philosophy of teaching and an analysis of how I have applied the knowledge of second language teaching that I have learned in Vanderbilt University into my coursework and teaching practicum. The analysis of my strengths and weaknesses is based on and divided into four professional knowledge areas (Learner, Learning Context, Curriculum and Assessment) and the subordinate 6 TESOL domains, including Planning, Instructing, Assessing, Identity and Context, Learning, and Content. For further improvement, I also discuss measures and actions that I will take in the future as a professional teacher who seek for continuous and sustainable development in English teaching.

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Philosophy of Teaching

Introduction

Before being admitted to the English Language Learners Program, I've tutored several English learners and worked as an English classroom assistant three times. Some of the students gave positive feedback after receiving my instructions, but there was also a group of them who stayed uninterested in English learning and showed limited progress during the course. I've made many assumptions about factors influencing students' achievement in English learning, including intelligence, gender, age, etc. but still could not figure out what causes the difference in students' language learning progress. However, never have I thought that English teaching is not merely about teaching a subject. In fact, there are more things to consider as an English instructor, if we see from a microscopic view—culture.

Compared to other subjects, which pass content knowledge to students and measure their learning based on pages of exam paper to test students' application of a formula or critical thinking, language teaching is entrusted with a larger task to introduce and familiarize the students with a new culture. And the test of students' progress is not that easy since it is unfair to judge one's understanding of culture and linguistic ability based on several exam papers. And the instructors shoulder the responsibility to convey a language and culture that is different from the students' native language and culture. There must be some challenges in the teaching practice since accepting a new culture is not easy, especially when there are conflicts between two cultures, it is struggling to "betray" one's native culture and conform to the new one.

Therefore, language teaching poses higher requirements to teachers, who work as a bridge between two or more cultures and are responsible for the spread of one culture and language.

Meanwhile, teachers are not the only party that contributes to students' language learning, families, communities, schools, and local government also share responsibility for language teaching and learning, although they may work in different roles. Therefore, I will actively work together with these parties to facilitate students' language learning process.

Below are some aspects that I feel are worth working on in my teaching practice.

1. **Teachers demonstrate culturally responsive care for students.**

Teachers are directly engaged in bilingual teaching. Students learn from them directly. Therefore, the quality of staff is the major factor influencing the quality of teaching.

Good educators do not simply convey knowledge. They demonstrate caring for children as students and as people. Research suggests that the heart of the educational process is the interactions between teachers and students. The quality of education children receive is mainly determined by these interactions (Gay 2010). Culturally responsive care is of especial importance in language teaching. Teachers need to know culturally diverse students thoroughly and provide spaces where ethnically diverse students feel recognized, respected and valued. And all students are held accountable for high academic efforts and performance, regardless of their cultural identities. Such care encourages confidence and provokes higher academic performance. Teachers

convey the value that the English class welcomes the prosperity of all cultures. Once students feel they are valued, personally and culturally, they would no longer show an indifferent attitude to the new culture. And they will be more open to a new culture and language, which helps the teacher eliminate students' mental barrier in language learning.

This is an aspect that I need to work on. In my previous teaching practice, I stress too much on students' progress in English acquisition and application. But I ignored that I should first establish mutual trust between students and me. I should first affirm students' cultural identities by sharing some cultural stories and letting the students talk about their culture. Following the semester, I should integrate students' cultural practices and customs into English teaching. In this way, students would not lose confidence in their own culture, and they would feel that English learning is not separated from their culture.

The above practice also comes from making use of students' funds of knowledge. Students' funds of knowledge are accumulated by observation of and participation in the household chores. And teaching and learning at home are motivated mainly by children's interests and questions (Moll, 1992). This inspires me to let the students design their classes. Instead of imposing knowledge on students, I will give them the freedom to obtain knowledge by themselves, just as how they accumulate their funds of knowledge at home. In this way, they work as active participants in language acquisition and can understand the content better.

2. Build an environment that welcomes diversity on the school level.

Although teachers play an important role in language learning and teaching, they do not make language decisions in a vacuum and have to follow school regulations to conduct their teaching practice. Therefore, it is vital that teachers' care for students and bilingual pedagogy are supported by the school, which also stresses the importance to engage teachers in the decision-making process.

If I were able to participate in decision-making, I will definitely promote the four principles for decision-making in bilingual or multilingual schools: striving for educational equity, affirming identities, promoting additive bilingualism, and structuring for integration (de Jong, 2011). These four principles are of the same significance for schools to consider. In multilingual schools, it is unavoidable that there will be diverse cultural groups of students and teachers. Therefore, a good school should first set non-discrimination rules for equal status of diverse cultures. Elimination of discrimination is not enough. Students' cultural identities should be affirmed by validating students' cultural experiences in school policies and classroom practices. And schools should also create opportunities for using multiple languages. If schools prohibit the use of students' native languages, it will be contradictory to the principle of equity and will also be impossible for teachers to implement bilingual pedagogy based on students' funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992).

3. Involve communities and families.

Communities and families are also important in students' language learning. Parents are the ones who know their children better than any other and can provide teachers with feedback on the effect of teachers' language teaching practice. If the class is a large

one where it is hard for a teacher to get to know families one by one, there could also be causal visits based on community. I can hold regular community meetings and families belonging to that community can come together to give suggestions and feedback for teaching.

Conclusion

In conclusion, teachers, schools, students, families, communities are all important parties in language learning. Language learning and teaching call for all parties' efforts since it covers a broader knowledge part--culture. As a teacher, I learn a lot about how to care for my students, affirm their identities, utilize their funds of knowledge, and carry out better bilingual teaching practices. And I'm sure the combination of these teaching methods and theories will equip me with better knowledge background to prepare for my future teaching context.

Artifact Analysis

Professional Knowledge Area 1: Learner

This professional knowledge area covers *Learner*, who is learning the subject or skill to achieve their specific goals. Understanding the learners and basing the curriculum on the needs and level of learners can maximize the effectiveness of instruction. In order to establish an effective, productive, learner-centered classroom, an instructor must know the learners - not just their names, but also their learning goals, preferred learning styles, cultural backgrounds, interests, and personalities.

TESOL Domain 4: Identity and context

Teachers understand the importance of who learners are and how their communities, heritages and goals shape learning and expectations of learning. Teachers recognize the importance how context contributes to identity formation and therefore influences learning. Teachers use this knowledge of identity and settings in planning, instructing, and assessing.

As far as I'm concerned, this domain mentions two things. First, teaching in an international context indicate that our students may come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992), which may lead to different learning habits and preferences of our learners. Also, learners' identities may vary across context. Besides the identity of students in schools, they also have different identities at home, on the playground or in other contexts (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). Teachers should consider the contexts that shape learners' identities and take good use of students' multiple identities to customize the curriculum for

learners.

This is in accordance with my philosophy of teaching. To engage learners in class, teachers should practice culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2000) to investigate students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds as well as their funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). Learners will be more focused when they see the connection between the class and their real life. Also, educators should utilize students' native language (L1) as a facilitator in language teaching practice, such as code-switching and translanguaging (De Jong, 2011), to promote a more thorough understanding of content and establish learners' confidence in their L1 and in second language learning.

Artifact A

The *Interview* aims to gather relevant information about an English learner's experiential, cultural, academic and linguistic background and conduct an analysis of the learning setting in which they operate. The student I interviewed was an English learner that I intended to teach in my practicum in John Overton High School. The interview consists of three parts: reasons that I chose this participant as my interviewee, two assessments that I chose to obtain information about the learner's cultural and linguistic background, and my interpretation and findings from the assessment.

Artifact A is used to analyze how the teacher get to know about students' identity in schools, communities and homes and how could the teacher utilize this information of learners' identity in planning and instructing. In the *Interview* paper, I gathered information about the English learner Eva's identity in three ways: an oral interview, a

school investigation, and a language assessment survey to investigate the learner's habits of language use in different situations. Then I came to a conclusion about her level of acculturation based on all the information gathered, which is closely related to TESOL Domain 4 and my teaching philosophy.

To begin with, I walked around the school and had a conversation with a lady in the International Student Center to know about the proportion and situation of international students in this high school. I came to a conclusion that "the school is considerate of the majority immigrant students (whose L1 is Spanish) but minority immigrant students are neglected to some extent." This is an important step for me to know about the school context and obtain a sketch about my learners' identity at school.

Second, when explaining my reason of choosing the interviewee, I wrote "I want to know her feeling about being a minority student and learning a second language. And I want to sort out her level of acculturation and whether the change of environment and has placed a strain on their capacity to learn." I think showing care and paying attention to minority students are important. Sometimes their feelings and learning experiences are neglected in the classroom because most of the time teacher have to take care of a whole class where only majority students' voices can be heard. But that doesn't mean that minority students are less important. They should receive equal care and attention with majority students.

Third, in the interview and assessment section, I summarized that the learner is in the midst of cross-cultural adaptation and probably still experiencing some cultural shock and acculturative stress. And my approach is to keep observe and utilize

appropriate teaching methods such as context embedded instruction and cooperative learning strategies to engage her more in English learning and assist with her acculturation process. These approaches help create an identity-safe classroom that foster belonging and value for students of all backgrounds, without ignoring culturally and linguistically minority students. The analysis and corresponding approaches also reflect my efforts to build a student-centered classroom, where every students' voices and needs are respected.

The above analysis demonstrates that I've realized the importance of students' cultural and linguistic identities in curriculum planning, instructing and assessing. However, what is missing here is a specific instructing plan to assist and monitor the minority learner's learning progress in the following semester. There are more to do in the domain of identity and context, such as using diversity as a resource for learning, build positive student relationships as foundational for trust, paying attention to students' emotional and physical comfort and promote prosocial development in the classroom environment.

TESOL Domain 6: Learning

Teachers draw on their knowledge of language and adult language learning to understand the processes by which learners acquire a new language in and out of classroom settings. They use this knowledge to support adult language learning.

In my view, this domain refers to teachers' comprehensive understanding of theories related to language and language learning, including the process, context, and

ways that the learners were exposed to and grasp a foreign language. Specifically speaking, teachers need to ask the question 'How does learning occur?' and the answer they come up with will inform curriculum design, teaching practices and class activities. Ultimately, teachers use language learning theories (consciously or not) and their related instructional approaches to design, develop and deliver effective learning experiences.

This domain aligns with my philosophy of teaching. A good teacher should be equipped with professionalism and expertise of multiple language learning theories. In other words, a teacher should also be an "expert" in language learning. Language learning theories provide a basis to understand how learners learn and a way to explain, describe, analyze and predict learning. Without theoretical foundation, the teaching practice lack support and will be blind. Theoretical starting points inform the teaching practices, choice of learning strategies and the types of activities that was provided to our students.

Artifact B

The *Problem of Practice* presentation aims to develop my skills in implementing high-quality instructional interactions. I discovered in my practicum that the problem of practice is lack of student engagement in class and tried to find ways to promote engagement. The presentation includes four parts: first, the problem of practice I observed in placement; second, research/theories about this problem, third, my action plan based on my experiences in the classroom along with the knowledge I have gained from research; fourth, my expectation of how the action plan will initiate change.

Artifact B is used to analyze how the teacher solve the "problem of practice" according to research and theories from the perspective of designing an "action plan" for my practicum placement. In this presentation, I used my linguistic analysis of the problem along with what the research and theories has discussed about the problem, and presented my findings and action plan for the problem, which is closely related to TESOL Domain 6 and my teaching philosophy.

First, I stated that "I will use an asset-based approach to focus on the abilities that ELs do have and incorporate these abilities in instruction". For less capable students, "I will give similar assignments but adjusted the rigor so that they would feel capable and confident that they could participate in similar ways to peers without being obviously behind academically;" This is inspired by the Universal Design for Learning theory (Eichhorn, Lowry, & Burke, 2019), which requires teachers to consider ways the curriculum can adapt to student needs rather than require learners to adapt to an inflexible curriculum. This is also consistent with *Student-Center Learning* that I stressed in my teaching philosophy.

Second, I borrow from the positive education theories and proposed that I will instruct students to write about good things that happen each day and help students identify characters strengths in themselves and others, using strengths to overcome challenges, and applying strengths in new ways. These measures help maintain positive mood in learners by producing broader attention, more creative thinking, and more holistic thinking. (Seligman, Ernst, Glillham, Reivich & Linkins, 2009)

Third, I attach importance to cultivate classroom equity (Tanner, 2013) by

"encouraging, demanding and managing participation of all students, integrating culturally diverse and relevant examples, and using varied active learning strategies". Equity is about striving to structure classroom environments that maximize fairness, wherein all students have opportunities to participate, can see personal connections, have time to think, can pose ideas and construct their knowledge, and are explicitly welcomed into classroom discussion. This is what I expect to see in my future classroom. I will try to achieve classroom equity by considering students' different cultural backgrounds and integrate their linguistic and cultural resources into the content teaching. I will also design activities that give equal opportunities to every student to share and hear from others.

Professional Knowledge Area 2: Learning Context

This professional knowledge area involves *Learning Context*, where the content is taught and learned. Learning context is important because it can impact how the content is learned or what is taught. Meanwhile, context shapes the learning experience. The learning context includes physical environment, learners' mental-emotional state, culture, and social situations. Instructors and curriculum designers should take all the above factors into account when considering the learning context.

TESOL Domain 2: Instructing

Teachers create supportive environments that engage all learners in purposeful learning and promote respectful classroom interactions.

From my standpoint, this domain suggests two ways to build an appropriate

learning context. First, teachers create a diverse platform where learners engage and interact to learn new skills. Second, learning objectives are clear and multiple resources and strategies are gathered and utilized to facilitate learning. To be detailed, teachers should practice communicative language teaching approach that emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of study. And teachers use scaffolding strategy (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2000) to move learners through their Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978) toward stronger understanding and better problem-solving. Also, differentiation should be applied to meet the needs of individual students to make sure all students are engaged.

This domain shares the same focus with my philosophy of teaching. First, for students to be able to transfer new knowledge and understanding, they have to have a grasp of how it can be used through scaffolding and multiple techniques, which emphasizes teacher's responsibility to facilitate learning rather than dominate students learning progress. Then, the establishment of a supportive learning culture, where each member of the learning community can have the feeling of connectedness, stresses teacher's responsibility to care for all students, including students' physical, mental and emotional well-beings.

Artifact C

The *Personal Video Analysis* paper aims to analyze and evaluate the instructional interaction that occurs in my own class. The video that I recorded and analyzed was one of my practicum class, where I was teaching 10th grade English learners the rules of writing plural nouns. The paper consists of three parts: first, how and what students

are learning; second, how learners support one another, how the teacher generated student thinking and acted on student ideas; third, possible alternatives for instructional interactions; finally, my own "teacher takeaways" after watching the video.

Artifact C is used to analyze how teacher create supportive environment and promote respectful classroom interactions from the perspective of watching, analyzing, and reflecting on a video of the teachers' own class. In the second part of the paper, I examine how student thinking is highlighted in relation to both content and language learning and how learners are guided to leverage their prior knowledge and elaborate upon one another's idea, which is closely related to TESOL Domain 2 and my teaching philosophy.

First, when analyzing how I generate students' thinking, I wrote "I started the class by asking students to share their last weekend, which helped arouse their interest and encourage participation by making personal connections." and "I asked students to write the word "zoo" in their native language on the whiteboard and teach other students how to pronounce these words". I made connections to students' real life and L1 because the students do not enter schools as blank states. (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2000) They have life experiences that are pertinent to the curriculum. And they have much to offer to the instructional process. And what I did in this activity, was to integrate such experiences, including students' L1, what they already know in their life (animals in the zoo), and what they learned in previous classes (plural nouns).I want to conveys a positive message to students that they can bring all their prior knowledge and resources to English course, so that they can be more motived and engage, as I stated

in my teaching philosophy.

Second, I used combinations of visual and aural supports for scaffolding through use of images, videos and songs, which ensures that students can learn from the multiple source of support without easily get distracted. As a stated in my philosophy of teaching, it is important that teachers support students in developing understandings of concepts through providing access to similar information from a variety of sources. (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005)

Third, I also reflected on the lack of enough group work for the students to support one another, which limited their opportunities of peer-to-peer scaffolding and elaborative, exploratory talk. (Daniel, Martin-Beltrán, Peercy, & Silverman, 2016) To achieve my philosophy of teaching, I wrote that "I will work on to explore ways to carry out better group work by first pairing students together and give clear instructions to get them used to cooperate with their classmates and progress step by step to enlarge the "unit of cooperation" from two to more students."

Fourth, I highlighted the importance of repetition to understanding and internalization of new knowledge. Oral repetition also provides students with opportunities to practice English speaking. In the analysis, I wrote "I repeatedly asked students to elaborate on the reason strengthen their memory and foster their application of the rules." The repetition and ensuing discussion reinforce the learning of the rules and the language needed to talk about it. Both precision and correctness in language use develop from repeated experiences, and from models offered by the teacher in summarizing or interpreting a student's statement. (Lee, Quinn, & Valdes,

2012). In a class where students' English proficiency are mainly beginner to intermediate level, repetition is the easiest but one of the most important ways to strength learners' memory of vocabulary and grammatical rules.

Professional Knowledge Area 3: Curriculum

This professional knowledge area is *Curriculum*, where the teacher applies multiple strategies to scaffold the learning process. Curriculum is important because it is how the input of knowledge happens. The content and language objective of the curriculum, the design of activities, and the order that activities are arranged largely influence the purpose of learning, the way students are exposed to new knowledge, and the effect of learning.

TESOL Domain 1: Planning

Teachers plan instruction to promote learning and meet learner goals, and modify plans to assure learner engagement and achievement.

In my opinion, there are four aspects of curriculum planning. To begin with, the teacher needs to be aware of the teaching context (environment analysis) and discovering the needs of the students (needs analysis). (Nation & Macalister, 2010) Second, the teacher carefully and clearly defines the content objectives and language objectives that will be displayed and reviewed with students throughout the semester. (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2000) Based on the objectives, the teacher integrates the teaching content, format of presentation, and design of class activities into the curriculum. Last but not least, monitoring and assessment (Nation & Macalister, 2010)

should be designed and conducted throughout the semester to examine the effect of the curriculum.

These aspects resonate with my philosophy of teaching. The student-centered approach (Jones, 2007) justifies designing the course based on the learning contexts and needs analysis of the students. By deciding the content objectives and language objectives, the teacher identifies the desired results through a backward design approach (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998) that leads to transparent and explicit instruction. A SIOP teacher utilizes students' native language and culture as well as their funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) to build background and ensure comprehensible input (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2000) when teaching the content. And the ongoing process of assessment (Brown, 2018) is also included in a backward curriculum planning to analyze students' performance and achievement, how teaching practices can be improved, and to make decisions about where resources should be allocated. (Falk, 2008)

Artifact D

The purpose of *Unit Plan* is to apply what we have learned about TESOL methods in a curriculum design that we envision to carry out in the future. I plan to teach high school English in China after graduation. Therefore, I designed this curriculum based on a unit in a high school English textbook and Chinese Standards of English language Ability (CSE). The unit plan covers two parts: first, the introduction of the unit, including context and needs analysis, unit topic (jobs in society), unit goals, and justification for the unit design; second, three lesson plans that contribute to the

completeness of the whole unit, including language and content objectives, content and activities, and reflection.

Artifact D is used to analyze how the teacher designs a learner-centered curriculum that promotes effective learning. I tried to design the *Unit Plan* to meet students' needs, accord with national standards, scaffold students learning process through carefully designing the activities and arranging the order, and evaluate the effect of learning during and at the end of the class. These efforts embody TESOL Standard 1 and my teaching philosophy.

Above all, I analyze the teaching context (class size, length of class, location and type of institution, form of teaching) and students' background (age, performance range, language background) that would inform the way I adapt the content and arrange the class activities. This is what a curriculum should start with because at its most basic level it ensures that the course adapts to the target learners and will be usable. (Nation & Macalister, 2010)

Meanwhile, I incorporate the content and language objectives that support students' academic language development and help students build social language skills. (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2000) In my objectives, by the end of the class, students "can summarize/uses/evaluate/write/identify/share…in English". Using these "can-do" statements (ACTFL), I clearly defined the unit and lesson goals to give students an accessible picture of what they are expected to do by the end of the unit. Also, the objectives cover three aspects of communication, interpersonal (e.g. *"students can share their opinions of different jobs with their peers"*), interpretive (e.g. *"students can*

extract information exchanged between employers and candidates during an interview"), and presentational (e.g. *"students can write a 150-word job application letter"*). The integration of the three modes of communication (World-Readiness Standards, 2015) into my lesson objectives displays my emphasis on communicative language teaching. (Spada, 2007)

Moreover, each lesson is divided into three phases: the into phase, through phase, and beyond phase. The teacher gains students' attention and activates their prior knowledge in the into phase. Then the input will be provided during the through phase. Once students get familiar with the new knowledge, the teacher elicits students' performance in the beyond phase to check students' understanding, provide feedback for improvement and enhance retention and transfer of the knowledge. This into, through, and beyond framework (Brinton & Holten, 1997) recognizes content-based instruction (Richards & Rodgers, 2001) as an important instructional paradigm in the teaching context.

As for the activities, at the beginning of the first lesson, I planned to lead a discussion in Chinese about "what are your family members' jobs?" and "what do you think of your parents' jobs?". In this activity, students' L1 (Schweers, 1999) and their funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) are utilized to encourage active communication and promote understanding of the unit topic. This is important to mention because students should be encouraged to draw upon the resource of their L1 literacy background to help them locate, evaluate, and analyze information. (Bunch et al., 2013).

Scaffolding is described as "the gradual release of responsibility". (Echevarría,

Vogt, & Short, 2000). I arranged the order of activities from explicit teaching, guided practice to collaborative and independent practice. This is an application of the GISI model (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2000) for procedural scaffolding to promote students' independent practice and learning.

Besides the above assets that contribute to an effective curriculum design, there are also some deficits in my unit plan. Although I've inserted forms of assessment (e.g. peer evaluation, teachers' oral feedback of students' in-class writing, etc.) There should be measurement and evaluation that quantify the observed performance of the learners, because numbers allow teachers to provide exact descriptions of student performance and tell students to what extent they have mastered the knowledge. (Brown, 2018)

TESOL Domain 7: Content

Teachers understand that language learning is most likely to occur when learners are trying to use the language for genuine communicative purposes. Teachers understand that the content of the language courser is the language that learners need in order to listen, to talk about, to read and write about a subject matter or content area. Teachers design their lessons to help learners acquire the language they need to successfully communicate in the subject or content areas they want/need to learn about.

In my opinion, this domain communicates three points. First, the content used in language teaching is closely connected to real life and the ultimate goal is that students can communicate in L2 in different situations. Second, the content is comprehensive to facilitate the development of all the four skills including reading, listening, speaking

and writing (Nation & Macalister, 2010). Third, students need to learn a set of language specific to a subject or a content area to acquire the content knowledge and present their learning results.

These points resonate with my philosophy of teaching. To make the language learning process more practical and engaging, teachers use authentic materials that are not created for intentional use but from real life. And teachers should instruct students to be proficient in the academic language for the subject areas to make students better equipped with skills to acquire new knowledge through reading and listening and to express the knowledge and their ideas through oral presentation, discussions, writing and test taking.

Artifact E

The *Complex Text Selection* project aims to choose appropriate complex text for students and implement teaching techniques that engage multilingual students in reading, writing, speaking, and listening within and across the disciplines. I chose *The Necklace* by Guy de Maupassant and record a video to clarify my instructional steps. This project includes three parts: first, choice of text and rationale; second, focal language of the text to support students in building associations across words; third, a video that scaffolds learners' comprehension of the text and encourages them to apply skills or strategies that help them analyze and respond to the text.

Artifact E is used to analyze how teachers carefully choose and adapt content to meet students' level and needs from the perspective of the creation of a complex text video. In the video, I identified parts of the text that are critically important to

understanding and guide learners in attending to and making sense of critical parts of the text using an activity structure, prompts and student-friendly explanations, which is closely related to TESOL Domain 7 and my teaching philosophy.

First, in the *Rationale* section, I explain my reason of choosing this text that "the vivid details in this text inspire students to enrich their narrative writing with use of adjectives, synonyms and active voice". I used the strategy of text engineering to chunk the text and analyze the use of vocabulary and sentence structure with students. Then I gave students time to practice adding details to their stories to improve their writing skills, because language learning is effective when learners try to communicate by use of that language. (Filmore, 2012)

Second, in the *Complex Text Video*, I also introduced the literal device of symbolism by discussing "What does the necklace symbolize?" so that students can grab a picture of how symbols are created and used in literature. This text also deals with irony. After learning these forms and techniques, students can understand better next time when they read a critical realism literature. The language used in complex texts differs enough from the English familiar to most students that it constitutes a barrier to understanding when they first encounter it in the texts they read in school. (Filmore, 2012). And it is teacher's responsibility to remove the barriers by helping students understand how information is communicated in a content area.

Third, at the end of the video, I led a discussion about the relationship between materials possessions, social status and happiness to inspire higher order thinking, (Echevarría, Vogt & Short, 2013), which is consistent with my teaching philosophy that

language teaching should not be limited to acquisition of a language but also can inspire students' critical thinking in other subject or context, such as social studies, literature, and psychology.

Professional Knowledge Area 4: Assessment

This professional knowledge area is enclosed with *Assessment*, the evaluation of the learner's ability or course effectiveness. Assessments are important because it examines whether the learning objectives in a course are being met. Assessment helps visualize learners' performance, enabling learners to check their progress and instructors to adjust the curriculum. There are various types of assessments that serve multiple goals. Instructors can choose tests and assessments based on their purpose of assessing.

TESOL Domain 3: Assessing

Teachers recognize the importance of and are able to gather and interpret information about learning and performance to promote the continuous intellectual and linguistic development of each learner. Teachers use knowledge of student performance to make decisions about planning and instruction "on the spot" and for the future. Teachers involve learners in determining what will be assessed and provide constructive feedback to learners, based on assessments of their learning.

From my viewpoint, this domain conveys three messages. First, teachers gather information about students' performance to check students' learning progress and the efficiency of the curriculum. Second, the results of the assessment are used as a resource

to help adjust the difficulty and pace of the curriculum in the future. Third, besides test results and teachers' feedback, learners' self-assessment is also valued as an important part of assessment. (Brown, 2018)

These messages align with my philosophy of teaching. Assessment plays a crucial role in the teaching-learning process. Instructors use the assessment to place students at appropriate levels, to diagnose their strengths and weaknesses, and to evaluate learners' performance during and at the end of the course. Moreover, the planning and administration of language program should be aided by the assessment to guarantee the effectiveness of instruction.

Artifact F

Evaluate Student' Level of SLA paper aims to determine the stage of English language acquisition based on learners' language sample. I reviewed two language samples of reading and writing from a 12th grade English learner and applied them to a commonly used rubric to determine the stage of English language acquisition that I believe this learner is operating from. This paper includes parts: First, description of the learner's receptive, productive and discipline specific language use; Second, assessment of the learner' oral language and comment about which stage of English language acquisition I believe this student is operating from; Third, critical evaluation of the rubric that I used and my instructional recommendation given the assessment results.

Artifact F is used to analyze how the teacher examine and assess students' language use from the perspective of evaluating students' language sample in the area of reading

and writing. In this paper, I gathered and interpreted the learner's reading and writing language sample and made some recommendations of planning and instruction for the future, which is closely related to TESOL Domain 3 and my teaching philosophy.

First, in the *Reading Assessment* section, two assessments are used to assess the learner's reading ability: running records and short answer tasks. After analyzing her oral reading rate, accuracy, expressions (pitch, tone, volume, emphasis, pause and rhythm), and understanding of meaning, I came to a conclusion that the assessment result "recognizes her satisfying reading performance and affirms her as a successful reader of the given texts". This assessment process and conclusion is based on the premise that efficient readers must know the purpose in reading, the strategies for accomplishing the purpose and how to retain the information. (Brown, 2018)

Second, in the *Writing Assessment* section, I used 6-Trait Scoring Rubrics, which is "a set of rubrics that specify how to assess the quality of student writing and tailor instruction to students' needs". The analysis of the learners writing ability was focused on the six traits including voice, word choice, sentence fluency, ideas, organization, and conventions. And I concluded that the learner "has a strong writing ability, can engage reader, use appropriate words, write complete and readable sentences, present clear ideas, showcase smooth organization and demonstrate a good grasp of standard writing conventions" Evaluating students' written language use from multiple aspects is important because writing is not simply about vocabulary and sentences. The key to strong writing is the micro- and macro skills that are essential for mastery of intensive, responsive and extensive writing (Brown, 2018), which is crucial in writing assessment.

Third, in the *Instructional Recommendation* Section, I summarized that the learner should improve her reading skills by focus more on the enhancement of comprehension of a text in a content-specific area that Stacy (the learner) is not familiar with and her writing skills can be enhanced by teachers asking for elaborations to elicit more details in writing. A diagnosis of students' level and stage of language use based on the assessment is useful for both teachers and learners to know learners' strengths and weaknesses. But the result itself is not enough. The diagnosis will be clearer and more useful when it is accompanied by instructional recommendations that give students visible goals and practical steps to make changes, which connects to the *Practicali*ty *of Instruction* in my teaching philosophy.

Application to Practice: Implications and Future Considerations

TESOL Domain 8: Commitment and Professionalism

Teachers continue to grow in their understanding of the relationship of second language teaching and learning to the community of English language teaching professionals, the broader teaching community, and communities at large, and use these understandings to inform and change themselves and these communities.

In my understanding, teachers should continuously reflect on their teaching practice and communicate with colleagues to learn from excellent teaching examples and to get feedback for future improvement. In this section, I will discuss what I have done in my practice and what I should work on more in the future.

Implications from my learning and practice

Having learned theories of teaching ELLs and applies the knowledge in my coursework and practicum, I've improved a lot in professional teaching.

For example, in my practicum during the 3rd semester, I took use of culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2000) and students' funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) by asking students to share expressions in their cultures and native languages and integrate their daily experiences in language teaching. In my class, students' culture, language, and life experiences are valued and well-utilized in English teaching.

Students are always the at the center of learning (Jones, 2007). All the materials for learning and practice are chosen, adapted and designed based on their needs, actual proficiency level, abilities and interests to better engage them in the learning process. The emphasis of my teaching is put on facilitating students' understanding rather than merely realizing teachers' goals. That's why I always leave enough time for practice in class, instead of keep explaining the concepts and presenting how to apply the knowledge.

And I align the practice with the "I do, we do, you do" stages to ensure that students are well-scaffolded (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005) to apply the knowledge independently. To be specific, the practice session usually starts with my leading instruction. In the "I Do" stage, I explain the content and model the application process. Then, during the "We Do" stage, I watch and help the students by providing scaffolds such as prompts or personal advice. Finally, in the You Do stage, it's time for students to finish the procedure on their own. The gradual release of responsibility (Tanner, 2013)

works well in my class and my students tend to have better mastery of knowledge when they can work independently without guidance.

Also, I realize the importance of providing right scaffolds and avoiding over-scaffolding (Daniel, Martin-Beltrán, Peercy, & Silverman, 2016), which indicates that teachers shouldn't underestimate students' capability and should give them enough space and freedom to explore and apply the knowledge on their own. I avoid over-scaffolding by believing in students' ability to learn and explore and ask them to teach me something that they learned in and outside the class.

In general, the theoretical knowledge that I learned in class has facilitated and strengthened my teaching practice, empowering me to adjust and redesign my class according to my students' characteristics. I do benefit a lot from this two-year program and feel that I'm ready to become a professional teacher in the future.

Weaknesses and room for improvement

What I've learned in this program has also made me realize that there are still some weaknesses in my teaching practice and I would need to work on these areas to polish my teaching in order to bring my students better English learning experiences.

First, I'm perplexed by over-planning. As a new teacher, I always try to plan every lesson meticulously and orderly. I list everything clearly and try to finish them one by one in class. However, students do not tend to finish everything as I expected. Some unplanned events may interrupt my planned teaching time. For example, sometimes students have problems understanding the instructions and it takes time to explain again and again. Sometimes students take longer than I expect to complete the practice. As a

result, I have to end the class with some important content missing. I need to become more flexible with changes and have better control of time so that I can deal with different circumstances appear in class without delaying the teaching and learning process.

Second, I lack experiences in diagnosing students' strengths and weaknesses, which places an obstacle in realizing differentiated instruction (Tanner, 2013) in my class. I tried to assign tasks with different degrees of difficulty to address the diverse needs of students in different levels. But the thing is, I have limited experiences in assessing students comprehensively, plus it might be unfair to appoint tasks of a specific level of difficulty to specific students, which run the risk of an inaccurate estimation of students' ability, leading to the opposite of expected positive effects of differentiated instruction.

Understanding my weaknesses in English teaching enable me to explore more in professional area to find ways to adjust my teaching methods and achieve better teaching results.

Looking ahead: future considerations

In order to promote continuous development in my teaching career, I have mapped out a set of plans to make progress in the future.

First, I will record my lessons and reflect on my instructions. Each time I will note down my achievements and room for development, with solutions to make progress in the next stage. To avoid subjectivity, I will also invite my colleagues to comment on my teaching and interactions with my students, so that I can have a much better

understanding of my strengths and weaknesses.

Second, I will seek opportunities to observe other colleagues' class and communicate experiences with them. In this way, I can accumulate more experiences of dealing with different students and class to complement my teaching practice.

Moreover, I will cultivate positive individual relationships with my students. Knowing my students from multiple perspectives contribute a more comprehensive understanding of my students' background knowledge, ability and potential. And the key to know them is to establish mutual trust between them and I. Under mutual trust, they will be more open to share their thoughts and experiences with me, which also helps boost classroom equity and democracy.

Last but not least, I will work on effective ways of cooperative learning to engage students in groupwork in order to complete an assigned task. Cooperative learning is important as students can maximize their potential when working together to achieve the outcome. It also develops teamwork skills in students, which are extremely useful for life outside of school.

Summary

To summarize, in this capstone portfolio, I set my career outlook in my *Philosophy of Teaching*, analyze my progress towards realizing my teaching philosophy in the *Artifact Analysis*, and further state my future plans to continuously working towards my goals in *Application to Practice: Implications and Future Considerations*. Aligning my work with my teaching philosophy enables me to always plan and implement instruction purposely and orderly. I have benefit a lot from this capstone project by keeping my philosophy of teaching in mind for self-reflection and career development.

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Appendix A

Interview

This semester I taught English as a second language in John Overton Highschool in Nashville. Here students' cultural identities are diverse and there is a large number of English learners. It is shown on a school bulletin (Picture 1, Appendix 1) that there are 688 immigrant/refugee students in this high school. The majority 52% of immigrant students are from Latin America. The group of African and South-east Asian immigrants each account for 17%, while there is only 1% of immigrants from Europe and 3% from South America. The school welcomes culturally and linguistically diverse students. The slogan on the bulletin is "Many Bobcats, One Overton" There is an International Student Center where youth development specialists, EL counselors, translators, student ambassadors, and EL assistant principal are ready to help the immigrant students at any time (Picture 2, Appendix 1).

The school is considerate of the majority immigrant students. Spanish is seen and spoken on campus. For example, there is a Spanish slogan "Asista Hoy, Tenga Éxito Mañana" (attend today, succeed tomorrow) at the entrance of the gate (Picture 3, Appendix 1). And a Spanish translation of the counseling links is stuck on the door of a counsellor's wall. (Picture 4, Appendix 1) Students are allowed and supported to use Spanish in class to assist learning in class. For beginners in English, Spanish-speaking students are taught by teachers who can speak Spanish or the class is equipped with a Spanish translator. Compare to the students whose L1 is Spanish, minority immigrant students are not that lucky. Languages other than English and Spanish are not seen on

campus. And there's no translation service accessible for them. They learn English in a pure English-speaking environment at school, without any assistance from their L1.

The learner I interviewed is a tenth-grade English learner Eva (name has been changed). She is selected as my interviewee for her cultural and linguistic identity as a minority group student (African immigrant) in the school. I want to know her feeling about being a minority student and learning a second language. And I want to sort out her level of acculturation and whether the change of environment and has placed a strain on their capacity to learn. Also, she is the first student that came to me during my first observation to ask whether I was a newcomer and had a small conversation with me, when other students were chatting in groups with their classmates or quietly sat on their chairs. This is a sign that she is open and comfortable to share her ideas with me in the interview. She is in an EL class with eighteen students, most of whom speak Spanish as their native language and talk to their peers in Spanish during the break between classes. During three classroom observations, I didn't see her interact with others except for Ms. Conn, the teacher of the EL lesson. Ms. Conn is a kind teacher in both students' and other teachers' eyes. She greets each student in a gentle voice when they enter the classroom and talk with them about their weekends, feelings and new discoveries. She cares for them and always walks and looks around the classroom during class to check whether students have understood the instructions for the practice.

Before doing the assessment, I briefly introduced to her the purpose of the interview and thanked her for being willing to be interviewed to help me complete a

school assignment. Then I start with basic questions to ask about her nationality, first and second language, the number of years she had been in US and the age that she started to learn English. After the conversation, I knew she is an immigrant student from Rwanda, a country in east Central Africa. Her native language is Kinyarwanda and she has been learning English for two years since 2019, when she moved from Rwanda to Nashville. Now she speaks two languages, Kinyarwanda (L1) and English (L2)

The assessment I used in the interview (Appendix 2) include an oral language use survey (Gottlieb & Hamayan, 2006) and a literacy survey for English Language Learners (Gottlieb, 1999). These two surveys help me understand Eva's language usage. *The Essentials Book* (Herrera et al, 2006) is also used as an assessment of both Eva's English writing and her level of acculturation.

I started by telling her how to respond to the survey and explain words that she didn't know, such as "subtitle" "broadcast" and "adjustment". In the 15 scenarios given in the oral language use survey, including 6 around her home, 5 around her neighborhood and 4 around the school, Eva use her L1 around her home with her parents and grandparents and around the school in the lunchroom and during free time. She only uses English around her neighborhood, including at the store, clinic, restaurant, etc. And she uses both L1 and L2 with her relatives and friends around her home and in the school. As for the literacy survey, there are two circumstances (reading brochures and poetry) that she uses her L1 only, and for most of the time she uses English or both languages. Based on the two surveys, she use English more often

for communication and academic purpose in her daily life, while Kinyarwanda serves

the function of maintaining family ties and friendship.

I dug more into her background and feelings about immigration after we finished

this survey by asking a list of questions in the form of casual conversation. And I

realized that she is a refugee student. I asked why she came to the United States. And

her answer was "*You'll see chances are when… Do you have people helping you?*

When they say we have to go to another country…Another thing, in the Africa, we

don't have enough food. Here they got us food, enough food. In Africa, they don't go

to school like enough school. But here they help you. If you want you can go when you

already know English." She said there are six people in her house, including her

grandparents, her parents, a 11-year-old brother and her.

She had received formal education from kindergarten to middle school in Rwanda

before she came to Nashville. She had English classes there, but students learn

English only for fun because "*nobody there know English in Africa*". Even the

English teacher had only limited language skills. What the English teacher usually do

is teaching simple words and the meanings. "*And she say A-fri-ca, and she translate*

like… stupid things".

She is still experiencing difficulties and mental rejection in learning. When I

asked her "which class is your favorite class?" Her answer is "*English. Ms. Conn.*"

Hearing that she enjoyed the English class, I thought her acculturation in the new

culture was smooth. But then she added, *"I hate all class, not teacher, I hate classes.*

But my favorite one was Ms. Conn, the English Teacher. She is so cool. She go step by

step, step, step, by step…" Then I ask "so do you like Ms. Conn's class?" She responded "*No, I don't like it.*" It is surprising that she likes the teacher but shows a negative attitude towards the class. I also observed in class that she sometimes bends over the desk and doesn't listen to the class. This made me want to explore more about her acculturation level, which might have an influence on her willingness to learn.

She did have a hard period when she feels it painful to integrate into American culture. When she first came to Nashville in 2019, she cannot speak English. *In the Essentials Book* she wrote the response to "the most difficult adjustment for me have been *to*" as "*see people speak English when you don't speak".* But now, as she had learned English for two years and can use English for daily communication, she had gone beyond the survival stage and enter a new acculturation stage. She said she likes to be in the United States.

One thing I feel glad about is that Eva is confident of her native culture and is willing to share with me. In *the Essentials Book*, she wrote down food as the most important thing of her culture. When we talked about what we eat in Nashville. She told me that African food is delicious and told me how to make fufu, an African staple food. She showed me the picture of fufu by searching on Google. She said that I should try fufu and invite me to go to her house one day and she will make fufu for me. It's a sign for an openness to acculturation process that she cam share her personal experience with me in English.

Based on the above analysis and the Sociocultural Checklist (Collier, 2002),

Eva's acculturation level is "in transition". She is in the midst of cross-cultural

adaptation and second language acquisition. She is probably still experiencing some

cultural shock and acculturative stress. I will keep observing during my practicum and

try utilize appropriate teaching methods like context embedded instruction, peer

bilingual tutoring, cooperative learning strategies and so on to engage her more in

English learning and give her more chances to interact with peers from different

culture to assist with her acculturation process.

Appendix 1 The School Context

Picture 1

Picture 2
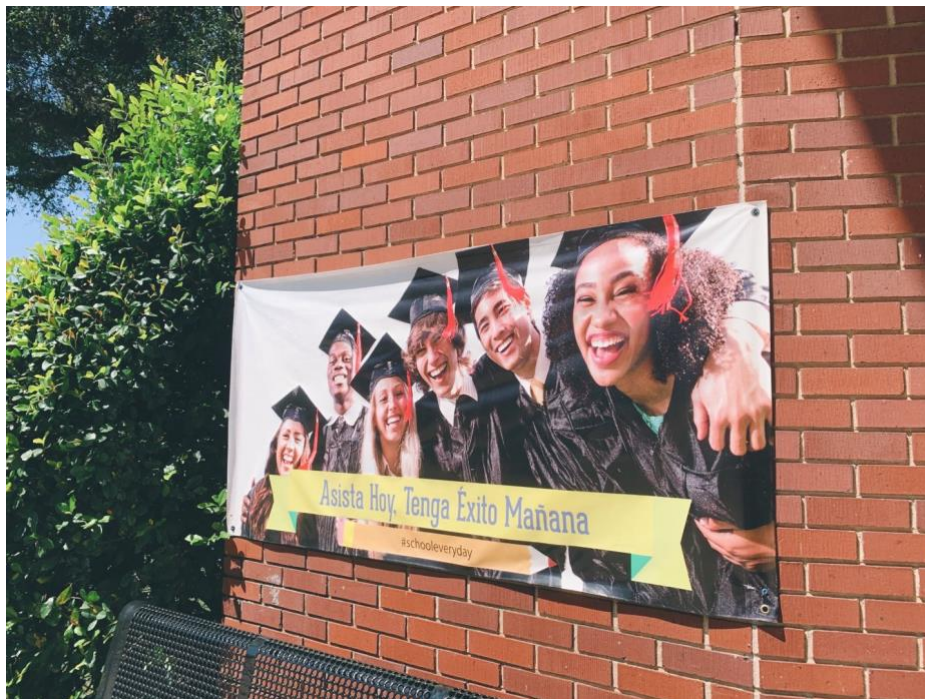
Picture 3

Picture 4
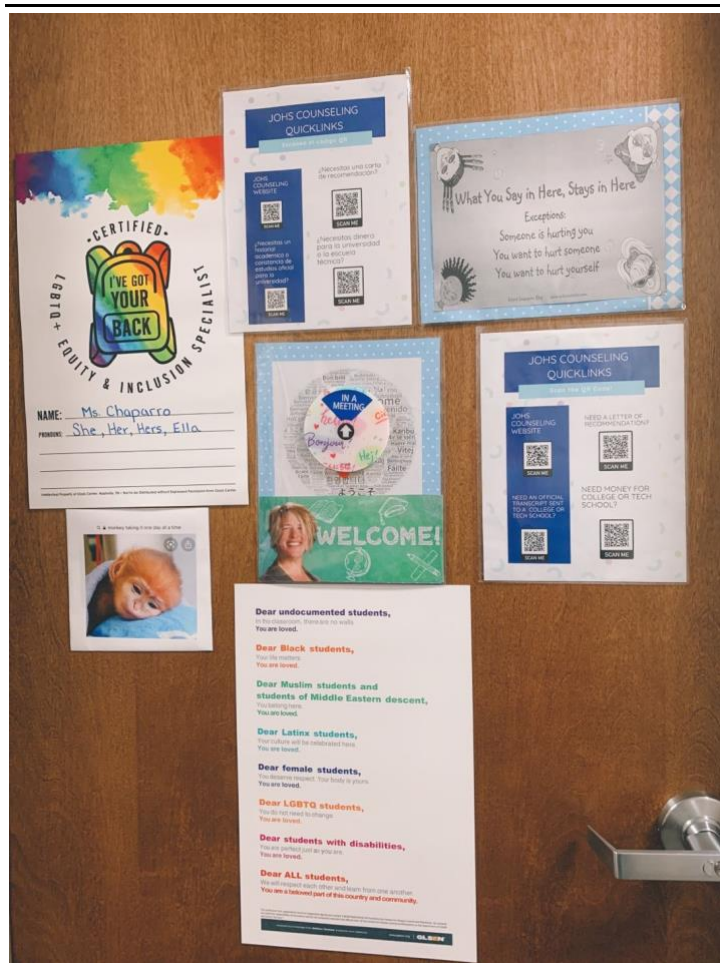
Appendix 2 Language Assessment Survery

Interviewee: _____ Eva (name has been changed) _____

Interview conducted by: _____ Yali Chen _____

Date: _____ September 7th, 2021 _____

1. Which language do you seem to understand? ikinyarwanda (Kinyarwanda), English

2. Which language did you first learn to speak? ikinyarwanda (Kinyarwanda)

3. How long have you been learning English? Two years.

4. Which language to you prefer when listening to music/watching videos/reading/talking to

   your friends…?   English

CAPSTONE PORTFOLIO

Oral Language Use Survey

	First or Native Language (L1)	Second Language, English (L2)	Both languages (L1+L2)	Not Applicable
Around Your Home				
With your parents or guardians	√			
With your grandparents	√			
With other relatives who live with you			√	
With your caregivers (if any)				√
With your neighbors		√		
With your friends			√	
Around Your Neighborhood				
At the store		√		
At the clinic or doctor's office		√		
At church (if applicable)		√		
Outside, as in a park		√		
At a restaurant or fast food place		√		
Around Your School				
On the playground or outside			√	
In the lunchroom	√			
In the halls		√		
During free time	√			

A Literacy Survey for English Language Learners

Before or after school…	First or Native Language (L1)	Second Language, English (L2)	Both languages (L1+L2)	Not Applicable
I Read				
Street signs and names		√		
Maps or directions		√		
Schedules (e.g. school bus or train)		√		
Newspapers			√	
Magazines		√		
Notes from friends, such as e-mails		√		
Information from the Internet			√	
Brochures/pamphlets	√			
Short stories		√		
Poetry	√			

CAPSTONE PORTFOLIO

Books			√	
I write				
Information on papers or forms			√	
Lists			√	
Memos or notes		√		
E-mails		√		
Letters to my family members or for school			√	
Short stories		√		
Poetry or songs				√
I listen to…				
Music		√		
Videos (without subtitles)		√		
Videos (with subtitles)		√		
Broadcast				√

"The Essentials Book"

The most important thing about me is <u>the out with my friends</u>

The most important thing about my name is <u>like my name its from my grandmother</u>

The most important thing about my family is <u>good family they help together</u>

The most important thing about my language is <u>not difficult</u>

The most important thing about my culture is <u>food</u>

The most important thing about my school is <u>learining english</u>

The most difficult adjustment for me have been <u>to see people speak English when you don't speak</u>

Appendix B

Problem of Practice	Lack of student engagement
What does the field have to say? (3 articles)	1. Eichhorn, M.S., Lowry, A.E., & Burke, K. (2019). Increasing engagement of English learners through universal design for learning. *Journal of Education Research and Practice, 9*(1), 1-10. *"As teachers plan, they consider ways the curriculum can adapt to student needs, rather than require learners to adapt to an inflexible curriculum."* 2. Seligman, M.E.P, Ernst, R.M., Glillham, J., Reivich, K., & Linkins, M. (2009) Positive education: positive psychology and classroom interventions. *Oxford Review of Education, 35*(3), 293-311. *"Skills that increase resilience, positive emotion, engagement and meaning can be taught to schoolchildren."* *"Positive mood produces broader attention, more creative thinking, and more holistic thinking."* 3. Tanner, Kimberly D. (2013). Structure matters: Twenty-one teaching strategies to promote student engagement and cultivate classroom equity. *CBE—Life Sciences Education, (12)*3, 322-331. *"Equity is about striving to structure classroom environments that maximize fairness, wherein all students have opportunities to verbally participate, all students can see their personal connections to biology, all students have the time to think, all students can pose ideas and construct their knowledge of biology, and all students are explicitly welcomed into the intellectual discussion."*
Strategy/Action Plan What steps should educators take? How do you suggest educators approach this type of problem of practice in the future?	**Universal Design for Learning (UDL):** (1) <u>Asset-based approach</u>: focus on the abilities that ELs do have, what they already know, and incorporate these abilities in instruction; (2) For less capable students, <u>give similar assignments but adjusted the rigor</u> so that they would feel capable. This give them the confidence that they could participate in similar ways to peers without being obviously behind academically; (3) <u>Reward for small success;</u> (4) <u>Make explicit mention of students' success and progress</u> during class as their proficiency and confidence grew;

	(5) Foster <u>peer collaboration and communication</u> to provide support for sustained engagement; (6) Give choices. Students have a choice between a traditional pen-and-paper option, an online option, or an art project or other representation of the math concept. **Positive Education:** Positive Psychology Program: (1) <u>Three good things</u>: Instruct the students to write down three good things that happened each day for a week. Then write a reflection on one of the following questions: 'Why did this good thing happen?', 'What does this mean to you?', 'How can you increase the likelihood of having more of this good thing in the future?' (2) <u>Using strengths in a new way</u>: help students identify characters strengths in themselves and others, using strengths to overcome challenges, and applying strengths in new ways. **Cultivate classroom equity** (1) <u>Encourage, demand and manage participation of all students:</u> Assign reporters for small groups. The assignment of reporters can be random and publicly verifiable, such as assigning that the reporter will be the person wearing the darkest shirt. Or hand colored index cards to students as they enter the class and assign students with red card to report; (2) <u>Integrate culturally diverse and relevant examples:</u> Connect topics to the lived experiences of students; (3) <u>Use Varied Active Learning Strategies:</u> see a concept from multiple perspectives, make multiple associations between the concept and other ideas, and practice a variety of approaches to exploring the concept.
Group Feedback	(1) Also foster students' self-regulation skills. Give chances where students can guide their own thoughts and behavior to achieve goals. In this way, they can have a sense of achievement and gain confidence in learning. (2) Provide opportunities for reflective assessment: encourage students to reflect individually or with their peers to evaluate their strengths and progress in learning and reflect on what improvement they can make to learn better. And include this form of self-assessment in teachers' assessment process.
Additional Notes	There's a student in my class that doesn't listen to the instructions. He stands up and walk around during the practice and sometimes he watches the video on his computer in class. And he refuses to communicate with the teacher. How should I deal with this situation?

Slide 1

Problem of Practice

In a 10th grade EL class

Yali Chen

Slide 2

1

Problems

Poor engagement

Slide 3

Students are not engaged

Sleepy — Talking to others — Uninterested — Distracted

Slide 4

2

Research

Theories and studies about engagement

Slide 5

1. Universal Design for Learning
2. Positive Education
3. Cultivate classroom Equity

RESEARCH

Slide 6

Universal Design for Learning （UDL）

"As teachers plan, they consider ways the curriculum can adapt to student needs, rather than require learners to adapt to an inflexible curriculum."

Slide 7

Positive Education

"Skills that increase resilience, positive emotion, engagement and meaning can be taught to schoolchildren."
"Positive mood produces broader attention, more creative thinking, and more holistic thinking."

Slide 8

Cultivate classroom Equity

"Equity is about striving to structure classroom environments that maximize fairness, wherein all students have opportunities to verbally participate, all students can see their personal connections, all students have the time to think, all students can pose ideas and construct their knowledge, and all students are explicitly welcomed into the intellectual discussion."

Slide 9

The connection between these theories

UDL

Positive Education → appropriate content, set foundation → Classroom Equity

Slide 10

3

Action Plan

Putting theories into practice

Slide 11

Asset-based approach

(1) Focus on the abilities that ELs do have;
(2) For less capable students, give similar assignments but adjust the rigor;
(3) Make explicit mention of students' success and progress;
(4) Give choices;

Slide 12

(5) Use Varied Active Learning Strategies.

(6) Encourage, demand and manage participation of all students:
   e.g. Assign reporters for small groups.

(7) Integrate culturally diverse and relevant examples

Slide 13

4

My prospect

How will the action plan initiate change?

Slide 14

Build interest & confidence

Build teacher-student trust

An active and engaging atmosphere

Set comfortable environment for participation

Slide 15

alpaca — meerkat — red panda — flamingo

There are … in the zoo.

Slide 16

Reference

Slide 17

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Slide 18

Happy Halloween!

Appendix C

Personal Video Analysis

In this video, I was teaching 10th grade English learners the rules of writing plural nouns. The students have learned 4 rules in previous classes and I was to teach the last 2 rules. The language objective of my lesson is "*students can write plural nouns correctly in example sentences*". The content objective is "*students will be able to define, identify and give examples of singular and plural nouns.*"

I started the class by asking students to share their last weekend, which helped arouse their interest and encourage participation by making personal connections. After students share their weekend, I talked about my last weekend in Nashville Zoo and asked students to write the word "zoo" in their native language on the whiteboard and teach other students how to pronounce these words. Students participated actively, coming to the board and write "zoo" in Spanish, Russian, Kinyarwanda… Then I stepped further to ask whether they had been to a zoo and let them brainstorm as many kinds of animals as they can and give the answers in plural forms.

As Echevarría, Vogt, & Short (2000) proposed, the students do not enter schools as blank states. They have life experiences that are pertinent to the curriculum. And they have much to offer to the instructional process. And what I did in this activity, was to integrate such experiences, including students' L1, what they already know in their life (animals in the zoo), and what they learned in previous classes (plural nouns).I want students to feel that their English course is closely connected with their life and other subjects. They can bring all their prior knowledge and resources to

English class, and they can use knowledge learned in English course to expand their knowledge base and even use as a resource for studying other subjects. If a teacher conveys such a positive message to students, students could be more confident, motivated an engaged to learn in the English class.

Then I reviewed the content and language objectives with the students and reminded them of the definition of single nouns and plural nouns. Before new knowledge input, I showed a video of a family singing "The Plural Song" (with subtitle) and assigned a task to review the rules that students have learned to write plural nouns when watching the video and listening to the song.

Teachers supported students in developing understandings of concepts through providing access to similar information from a variety of sources. (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005) I used combinations of visual and aural supports for scaffolding through use of the video of a song. Assigning tasks for a video session ensures that students can learn from the visual support without easily get distracted.

After watching the video, I led students to tell the four rules that they have learned in previous classes. For example, for regular nouns, add "s"; and for nouns end in consonant plus "y", remove "y" and add "ies", etc. I listed examples under each rule on the slides so that students know how to apply the rules when they write plural nouns.

I made a transition to new knowledge input by congratulating them on having mastered the four rules and telling them they were "one step forward to success" and "great man never does things by halves". Then I shared the last two rules for writing

plural nouns, including nouns end in consonant plus "o" and nouns end in vowel plus "o". Then I guided students to practice their new knowledge by give pictures and ask students to tell me the nouns in single forms, then they were asked to write down plural forms based on the new rules they have learned in the class. For further practice writing, I designed a sentence completion task, asking students to copy and complete the sentence with plural nouns on their paper. I read the sentence for them when they are copying and completing the sentences and walked around the class to observe students' progress and gave some personal instructions. After 5 minutes of individual writing, I ask students to tell me the answer and give the reason they write plural forms in that way. For example, when students tell me they add "s" after "kangaroo", I ask for elaboration by posing the question "why do you add 's' here?" I showed them a sample answer first: "I add 's' after 'kangaroo' because it is a noun that end in vowel plus 'o'. For nouns end in vowel plus 'o', we add 's' when we change it into plural forms". For the following sentences, I repeatedly asked students to elaborate on the reason strengthen their memory and foster their application of the rules. After the practice, I praised the whole class for applying the rules flexibly and correctly.

For English learners, repetition is important for understanding and internalization of new knowledge, and the oral repetition also provide students with opportunities to practice English speaking. The repetition and ensuing discussion reinforce the learning of the rules and the language needed to talk about it. Both precision and correctness in language use develop from repeated experiences, and from models offered by the teacher in summarizing or interpreting a student's statement. (Lee,

Quinn, & Valdes, 2012).

There were also some improvements that I can made in future class. It seems I over-scaffolded the learning process by modeling too much, which possibly diminishes students' pleasure in inquiry and exploration by themselves. (Daniel, Martin-Beltrán, Peercy, & Silverman, 2016) For example, instead of reading each sentence for them during the practice, I should ask students to read in turns to promote engagement. And rather than providing a list of rules in the review session, it would be better if I ask students to remind me of the rules, by which they can feel they are able to teach what they have learned and gain a sense of achievement. Also, I didn't provide enough group work for the students to support one another, which limited their opportunities of peer-to-peer scaffolding and elaborative, exploratory talk. (Daniel, Martin-Beltrán, Peercy, & Silverman, 2016) I didn't design group activity because according to my mentor teacher, previous attempts of group work usually ended in a mess. And she suggested not adding a form of activity that students are not familiar with. I will work on to explore ways to carry out better group work by first pairing students together and give clear instructions to get them used to cooperate with their classmates and progress step by step to enlarge the "unit of cooperation" from two to more students.

After watching this video, analyzing my strengths and writing down possible improvements in future practice, my "teacher takeaways" can be summarized as follows. I will continue to integrate students' life experiences in teaching and use a variety of sources for scaffolding. As for improvement, I will prevent over-scaffolding by release the responsibility to students and promote autonomy. And I will guide

students to build on each other's idea and support each other through group activities.

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Appendix D

SIOP-based Lesson Plan

Language	English	**Approximate Length of Unit**	High school (12th grade)
Performance Range	Intermediate (WIDA Level 4)	**Approximate Number of Minutes**	60 mins
Student Age	16-18	**Class size**	50
Form	In-person	**Location and type of institution**	China--Public high school
Language background	The students are all native speakers of Chinese. Although some students might have attended bilingual kindergarten or additional English class provided by educational institutions earlier than the other students, most of the students started to learn English in the third year of primary school, when English becomes a required course at school, as regulated by the national standards of nine-year compulsory education.		
Topic	Jobs in Society		
High Order Questions	What are the qualities of a qualified job candidate?		
Materials	Chinese EFL textbook for high school students; Authentic materials of job advertisement/interviews/résumés...		
Lesson Objectives			
Language Objectives	1. Students will be able to use new vocabulary to describe their ideal jobs: qualified, salary, average, analyst, biochemist, accountant, secretary... (Presentational) 2. Students will be able to evaluate jobs and share their opinions of different jobs with others. (Interpersonal)		

	3. Students will be able to write a job advertisement according to given information and revise according to the feedback from peers and teachers. (Presentational)		
Content Objectives	4. Students will be able to understand and summarize the structure and content of a job advertisement. (Interpretive) 5. Students will be able to distinguish between job requirements and candidates' responsibilities. (Interpretive)		
SIOP Features			

SIOP Features

Preparation
- ✓ Adaptation of Content
- ✓ Links to Background
- ✓ Links to Past Learning
- ✓ Strategies incorporated

Scaffolding
- ✓ Modeling
- ✓ Guided practice
- ✓ Independent practice
- ✓ Comprehensible input

Grouping Options
- ✓ Whole class
- ✓ Small groups
- ✓ Partners
- ✓ Independent

Integration of Processes
- ✓ Reading
- ✓ Writing
- ✓ Speaking
- ✓ Listening

Application
- ✓ Hands-on
- ✓ Meaningful
- ✓ Linked to objectives
- ✓ Promotes engagement

Assessment
- ✓ Individual
- ✓ Group
- ✓ Written
- ___ Oral

Justification for the Lesson Plan

Rationale	1. How does this lesson align with the CLT approach? The qualities that describe CLT include frequent interaction among learners or with interlocutors to solve problems, use of authentic texts and real-world communication activities, and learner-centered instructional design that take into account learners' backgrounds, needs and goals. (Wesche and Skehan, 2002) In this lesson,

students are always asked to interact with their peers, including but not limited to discussion of their opinions on different jobs, the reasons that people choose a job and their ideal jobs. These discussions are all real-world communications people are faced with. Also, materials that used in this class are all authentic text. The advertisements presented to students to compare or fill in the blank are all real advertisements found online or in the newspaper. Students backgrounds, needs and goals are considered. After graduating from high school, some of the students will go to work directly. Other students who go to university for further study will also apply for an internship during their undergraduate years. Therefore, reading the job advertisement, understanding the process of job applications, and evaluating the values of jobs not only expand students' English knowledge and abilities, but also help them gain basic skills to be prepared for job applications and guide them to establish their career outlook and life values.

2. To what extent are the content and language objectives clear and productive in helping students learn? Which features of communicative competence can learners develop in this lesson? How?

Content objectives are what students need to learn about the content topic; language objectives are what students need to learn about English in order to learn and apply new information, demonstrate knowledge and perform academic tasks. (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2000) In this lesson, receptive (learn new vocabulary, read job advertisement) and productive skills (describe jobs, write a job advertisement) are clearly stated in the objectives. And four dimensions of English proficiency (reading, listening, writing and speaking) are clarified in

the language objectives. Meanwhile, the objectives take into account three modes of communication proposed by 2015 World-readiness Standards for Learning Languages, including interpretive, interpersonal and interactional skills.

The Canal and Swain (1980) construct of communicative competence integrates linguistic competence actional competence, socio-linguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. (Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, & Thurrell, 1995). In this lesson, Linguistic competence can be developed through learning of new vocabulary and sentence structure. Discourse competence is achieved by understanding the ways ideas are connected through the structure and content of job advertisements. Students will learn rules to write an job advertisements, including formality, directness, and politeness, to achieve socio-linguistic competence. Strategic competence will be realized by students' comparing and assessing the effectiveness of communication in job advertisements.

3. How does the lesson plan set up environments, questions, and tasks that have strong potential for engaging learners in meaningful, rigorous higher-order thinking related to content and academic language?

The lesson plan set up from what students are familiar with (their family members' jobs), so that they can relate to the new topic. By asking questions that require higher-level thinking ("What are the qualities that make a person qualified for the jobs?") and assign tasks that practice academic skills (comparison, summary and composition of a specific text type (job advertisement)), this lesson plan has a strong potential to engage learners

in meaningful higher-order thinking related to content and academic language.

4. How does the lesson allow for opportunities for investigating, activating, bridging, and building background knowledge?

Students' prior experiences are activated with new learning when they start from describing their parents' jobs. And they investigate when they are asked to compare two job advertisements. Moving from description to evaluation of jobs is kind of bridging the gap between a casual conversation and an academic discussion. When summarizing the structure and content of job advertisements with the instructor, students are building new background knowledge.

5. How are activities in the lesson plan sequenced and designed to scaffold tasks that challenge students to develop new disciplinary and linguistic skills? How do you envision opportunities for differentiation?

Scaffolding are described as "the gradual release of responsibility". (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2000). In this lesson, the teacher starts from utilizing students background knowledge to describe their parents' jobs and other jobs they know. Then students are introduced new vocabulary related to jobs and are asked to think about why people choose jobs and the qualities that make one qualify for a job. To explore the questions, teacher present job advertisements that describe job requirements and candidates' responsibilities. Then the class discuss the structure and content of a job advertisement and the teacher summarize and add necessary points based on students' ideas. At last students write job advertisements based on what they have learned in class.

There are opportunities for differentiation. For example, when describing the jobs, students can use sentence patterns given by the teacher or create different sentences according to their language competence. And at the end of the class they can write advertisements based on the information given by the teacher or use information in their knowledge base. Therefore, less capable students can always find a sample for reference, while more capable students can build upon their own language skills and challenge themselves.

Reference:

1. Wesche, M., & Skehan, P. (2002). Communicative, task-based, and content-based language instruction. In R. B. Kaplan (Ed.), The Oxford handbook of applied linguistics (pp. 207–228). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
2. Echevarría, J., Vogt, M. E., & Short, D. (2000). Making content comprehensible for English language learners: The SIOP model. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
3. The National Standards Collaborative Board. (2015). World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages. 4th ed. Alexandria, VA: Author.
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Lesson Sequence: Content and Activities

Procedure	Purpose	Activities	Time (60 mins)
Into phase	Gain attention and activate prior knowledge	(1) The teacher leads a discussion in Chinese: "What are your family members' jobs? What do you think of your parents' jobs?" (3 mins) Possible words: teacher, worker, officer, official, policeman/policewoman, banker, firefighter, doctor, nurse, cook, engineer, manager, pilot, actor/actress, architect, firefighter, director... (2) The teacher displays six images of different jobs (doctor, businessman, pilot, engineer, cook, scientist) in the textbook. Students tell the name of jobs in Chinese and the teacher teaches the English words of the jobs. Then the teacher displays a vocabulary box, explains the meaning of the words to students and show examples to describe the job: *"An engineer is well paid but can be stressful" "Scientists are knowledge workers because they do a lot of intellectual work"*. Students describe the jobs with words and phrases in the box. (badly paid, dangerous, exciting, intellectual, manual, satisfying, stressful, well paid) (4 mins) e.g. The man is a doctor. Doctor is a well-paid job. (3) Students are asked to discuss in groups "Why do people choose a job? What are the qualities	10 mins
		that make a person qualified for the jobs?" (3 mins)	
Through Phase	Provide Input	(1) The teacher displays vocabulary of jobs that didn't appear in previous textbooks. (accountant, biochemist, electrician, barber, secretary, miner, volunteer, analyst, assistant). Students match the words with their following meanings provided by the teacher. (4 mins) a. We ask this person to put electricity in homes. b. This person works underground. c. This scientist studies the chemistry of living things. d. This person knows a lot about money. e. You go to this person to get you haircut. f. This person has offered to do a job-and may not be paid for doing it. g. This person works in an office. h. This person conducts analysis. i. This person ranks below a senior person and helps in particular work. (2) Students write about and then discuss with a partner which of these jobs they would most like to have and which they would least like to have, and why? (3 mins) (3) The teacher displays two job advertisements of the same length but with different structures and content. Students read and compare the two materials and answer the questions: (10	20 mins

		mins)	
		"Which advertisement is better-designed? Why?"	
		"What are the advantages and disadvantages of the two advertisements?"	
		"What kind of information should be included in a job advertisement?"	
		(4) The teacher summarizes necessary information that should be included in job advertisements. (3 mins)	
		a. Eye-catching headlines	
		b. Body part:	
		-brief introduction to the company and working environment	
		-information about the position (responsibilities)	
		-qualification of employee (requirements)	
		-welfare: salary, bonus, vacation, promotion opportunities, health insurance...	
		c. Close: Contact way and Address	
Beyond Phase	Elicit Performance	(1) Students read a paragraph. The responsibilities of the job and the requirements applicants must meet are mixed in the paragraph. The teacher explains the meaning of requirements and responsibilities. Students then distinguish between the requirements and responsibilities in the paragraph. (3 mins)	20 mins

		(2) Fill-in-blank exercise: students choose appropriate words and expressions from the following list to fill in the blanks in a job advertisement (to be designed). (7 minutes)	
		a. applicants must be able to	
		b. We are looking for	
		c. to cope with pressure	
		d. The main requirements are	
		e. The salary we offer is relatively high	
		f. well-known and respected trading company	
		g. Experience in import/export will be an advantage	
		h. to be prepared occasionally to work along hours when necessary.	
		(3) Students write an English job advertisement according to given information in students' native language. The information can be originally designed by the teacher before class, or designed in class by leaners, according to the actual classroom atmosphere, students' interest and class engagement. (10 mins)	
	Provide Feedback	(1) Students compare and revise their job advertisements in groups. Then each group elects one student to present their work. (6 mins)	10 mins
		(2) The teacher displays a sample job advertisement written by previous students who attended	

		this course. The students compare the sample with their own work and make notes about what they did well and what can be improved. The teacher provides a brief summary of the knowledge content taught in the class, and end the class. (4 mins)	
	Enhance Retention & Transfer	(1) Students revise and rewrite their job advertisements.	After class (students' homework)
		(2) Students search for a job advertisement online or in the newspaper. In the next class, students share some new/interesting jobs and the related job requirements they discovered.	
	Reflection/Notes to self	What worked well for the students? Why?	After class (teacher's work)
		What didn't work? Why?	
		How to adapt the lesson to make it work better?	

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Appendix E

Complex Text Selection and Rationale

The complex text that I choose for my English learners is *The Story of the Bad Little Boy* written by Mark Twin. The short fiction is about a naughty and rebellious little boy Jim who does many malevolent deeds but has never been punished. Below are the three reasons why I choose this text.

First, this text connects to what they have learned in the past weeks and can activate their prior knowledge. My students are 10th grade English learners and I would describe their English proficiency as moving from emerging (Level 2) to developing (Level 3) according to WIDA Performance Definitions. Last week they have finished learning the present continuous tense and the definition of fiction in the fiction *Tito* telling about a boy's experience as an immigrant. Then they started to learn how to write a sentence and add details to create a paragraph. In my opinion, *The Story of the Bad Little Boy* can activate learners' prior knowledge by checking their understanding of fiction and further increase their awareness of adding necessary details to construct a solid paragraph. Also, fiction is engaging for young learners, as it tells a story and students can use their imagination to visualize characters' experiences and relate to them.

Second, the text is complex and demanding, therefore it requires students to check the vocabulary, deconstruct the sentences, ask questions and ponder before understanding the whole story. In addition to new words and outdated vocabulary that may lead to difficulty in reading, there are many long compound sentences. For example,

"Now, I lay me down, and sing them to sleep with sweet, plaintive voices, and then kiss them good-night, and kneel down by the bedside and weep."

"Once he climbed up in Farmer Acorn's apple-tree to steal apples, and the limb didn't break, and he didn't fall and break his arm, and get torn by the farmer's great dog, and then languish on a sick bed for weeks, and repent and become good."

These long sentences demand students' concentration to follow the flow and the ability to deconstruct them into several simple sentences. And the use of various verbs also conveys to learners the idea of avoiding excessive repetition of verbs in writing.

Besides, there are many comparisons in the story. Mark Twain used a good deal of space to compare Jim with other boys and to compare his mother with another bad boys' mother, which calls for students' ability to distinguish the traits of the compared characters to avoid confusion.

Third, *The Story of the Bad Little Boy* contains an underlying irony that draws for learners' contemplation. It's widely taught in schools that people can get what they deserve. Kind and helpful people will be rewarded, and those with malice and vice will be punished. However, in this story, Jim never pays for his malignant acts in his whole life. Instead, he leads a comfortable and charmed life, being rich and respected by others in his native village. And all he possesses are obtained by all manner of cheating and rascality. A warm society is ideal but the reality is cruel. This challenges students' moral values and exposes them to a new literature form—realism. As a teacher, I want to guide learners to reflect from two perspectives. First, what is taught in schools might not be always true in real-life situations. In the real world, some bad people can live a good

life and some good people do not receive what they deserve. Therefore, students should

take a critical look at what they learn in the textbooks and connect the knowledge to

real life. Second, teachers have the educational responsibility to tell young learners that

the story simply reflects the reality of a historical period and does not mean to

encourage bad deeds. I want to guide learners to think of the following question: "Do

most people usually face consequences when they do bad things? How realistic is this

story? Should we still advocate for kindness and justice? Why?" Students will be

encouraged to share their personal experiences related to this topic. There will be much

to talk about and chew over in class.

In conclusion, considering the connection to learners' prior knowledge, the

appropriate complexity and linguistic demand for learners, and the value for further

discussion and reflection, *The Story of the Bad Little Boy* is selected as the complex

text to be presented to my English learners.

Complex Text Focal Language

Share the focal language (important contextual terms) for your complex text. (Focal Vocabulary-terms important to specific groups of people. Focal vocabulary is ever changing and heavily influenced by practices and	(1) Vocabulary describing the life of upper-class: delicacy, elegance, graceful, luxury, antique, exquisite, gleaming, marvellous, satin (2)Vocabulary for one's mental state in an adverse environment: grief, regret, despair, misery, torment, distress, anguish, remorse	

cultural norms)	(3)Vocabulary for feelings: furious, frenziedly, ecstasy, stupefy, dumbfounded, appalled, bewilderment, agonizing (4)Other Synonyms: *murmur, stammer, falter, utter *insult, humiliate	
Why is this form essential for students to engage with the text and achieve the lesson objectives? **UNPACK:** Form- Persuasive story, Informative text, Narrative writing (see more below). How does this form of writing help students engage in the topic?	Form: Narrative writing Realistic literary fiction	Fictions works better in maintaining students' attention than many other forms, such as historical records and argumentative writing. When reading fictions, students use their imagination to create the scene in their mind. They identify characters' longings and frustrations, guess their motives, predict their actions and check the prediction during the whole story. When students read about a situation or feeling, they can relate to the characters as if they are feeling themselves. Also, fictions satisfy students' curiosity by enabling them to see the world from a new and different perspective. Therefore, students can follow the story and not easily lose interest and get distracted.

How is this/are these form(s) going to be helpful to learners across contexts? **UNPACK:** Form- Persuasive story, Informative text, Narrative writing (see more below). <mark>How might the use of this text apply to different subject areas? For example, if we read a text about deforestation, could this text apply to science, social studies, as well as reading and writing?</mark>	Contexts: Social studies (social class) History (1880s France) Literature (critical realism, symbolism, irony) Reading and writing Psychology (Vanity)	This form can be helpful in a range of contexts. First, this text applies to social studies and history. The description of the life that Mathilde is envious of and her real life reveals the disparity between upper-class and lower-class, which also tells a lot about the historical situation in France. In 1880s, French bourgeois extravagance and dissipation of life and mercenary moral concept affected the whole society. And the pursuit of pleasure and vanity became a bad social ethos. Moreover, the fiction is really helpful in helping students explore concepts in literature. Students will be introduced the form of critical realism that shapes a petty-bourgeois women image, criticizing the vanity and the pursuit of pleasure in capitalist society. There are also literary devices that students can learn in this text, including symbolism and irony. Symbolism is an important writing technique that runs through the story. The necklace represents Mathilde's greed and affectation. She judged herself by what she possessed and believed that others would do the same. And the text deals with irony. Although the necklace looks like a valuable piece of jewelry, is actually an imitation. Mathilde and her husband sacrificed their humble but adequate homes to buy an expensive substitute instead of the cheap original. After learning these forms and techniques, students can understand better next time when they read a critical realism literature and can apply the techniques in their writing. Besides, vanity in psychology could be another interesting topic to be discussed with students.
Which focal vocabulary are you choosing? How are	Before reading: (1)Vocabulary describing the life of upper-class:	Rationale: The story is about a slum lady Mathilde Loisel who covets an extravagant lifestyle

these choices supporting students in building associations across words? How essential are these words for this lesson and text? How are these words relevant and useful across contexts?

UNPACK:

<mark>Which focal vocabulary will you zoom in on? How will you help students to understand word use/meaning in meaningful ways?</mark>

Focal Voca
Insiders have special terms
Elements of Hockey
Puck
Goal/net
Penalty box
Hockey stick
Helmet
Space between a goalie's leg pads

***Hockey Goals are called Pipes. This is because the goal/net is made using steel pipes.

---

delicacy, elegance, graceful, luxury, antique, exquisite, gleaming, marvellous, satin

During reading:
(2)Vocabulary for one's mental state in an adverse environment:
grief, regret, despair, misery, torment, distress, anguish, remorse

(3)Vocabulary for feelings:
furious, frenziedly, ecstasy,
stupefy, dumbfounded, appalled, bewilderment, agonizing

(4)Other Synonyms:
*murmur, stammer, falter, utter
*insult, humiliate

---

that she can't afford. The author provides a large portion of description of the life of upper-class that Mathilde desires, such as their living environment, furniture and ornament. Sorting out these vocabulary helps students grab a picture of the upper-class lifestyle and facilitate their understanding of the story.

Also, WIDA standards pose higher requirements of writing on high school students. Enlarging and diversifying their vocabulary is an important way to enrich their writing. The author uses various words to express similar feelings and mental state. These words are also crucial for understanding the suffering situation of Mathilde. There are also many synonyms in the text. By introducing these vocabularies, I want to encourage students to use different expressions in their writing to avoid redundancy and repetition. And synonyms are easier for students to memorize since they can find connections in these words.

Ways to facilitate understanding:
Before reading, I will introduce the vocabulary describing the life of upper-class to get students familiar with the background and context. During reading, I will empower students to locate these words in the text and assign tasks to look for words that describe mental state and feelings independently or in group. The students will be asked to infer the meaning according to the evidence in the context before searching in dictionaries. And students will also be encouraged to circle as many synonyms as they can.

Complex Text Video (Slides)

Appendix F

Evaluate Students' Language Use in a Content Area

In this paper, I'm going to evaluate a 12th grader Stacy's English reading and writing samples on the Purdue College of Education ELL Portraits website. Stacy was born in the United States and moved to Mexico with her family when she was five years old. She lived in Mexico for eight years before returning to the United States. And she wanted to study in the high school in the United States to attend college here.

1. Reading Assessment

Two assessments are used to evaluate Stacy's reading ability, Running Records (reading aloud) and short answer tasks, which lead to a focus on two types of reading performance: perceptive and interactive reading. Running Records check readers' perceptive performance since the assessors attend to the components of larger stretches of discourse: letters, words and punctuation, which are usually involved in perceptive reading tasks to know if the students can read or not. Running Records capture what readers said and did while reading continuous text. And the teacher can review what happened using the records taken during the reading to assess how well the reader is pulling together letters and sounds that he or she already knows about. (Clay, 1993) Short answer task is a popular alternative to multiple choice. It is advantageous in its face validity of offering students a chance to construct their own answers and by the washback effect of potential follow-up discussion. (Brown, 2018) Short answer task involves the process of interact with the text and negotiate meaning, therefore it is more about evaluating students' interactive performance.

In the reading samples, Stacy read two texts: *A Long Way to Go-Minorities and the Media* and *U.S. Government-Our Democracy*. Stacy first read the passage aloud and then answer questions for each text. I took Running Records (Appendix 1) when Stacy was reading and calculate her accuracy and self-corrections.

For accuracy, she scored 96.9% for the first text and 99.3% for the second, indicating that these texts are easy and appropriate for Stacy to read independently. The errors in reading include *"society (social-ty)", "as (a)", "women (woman)", "educational (education)"* and *"which (such)"*. Based on her pronunciations (shown in the brackets) of these words, I analyze that she could have pronounce these words correctly. The error of *"as (a)"* and *"which (such)"* could be a result of a slip of the tongue when reading fast, since she pronounced them correctly when reading another sentence. The wrong pronunciation of *"society (social-ty)", "women (woman)",* and *"educational (education)"* indicates that Stacy at least knows another form of each word, and she made the mistake either because she didn't see the words clearly or she was not familiar with the variation of the word.

She made two and three self-corrections in the two texts and has corrected all the errors, including *"fascination(fascinating)", "on(in)", "initially(ini-tion-al)", "direct(directly)",* and *"feared(feature)"*. There are also times when Stacy say the beginning sounds first and followed with the correct word, such as *"responsible(response)", "legislative(legislate)",* and *"constitution(con)"*. These self-corrections of errors and beginning sounds are possibly because of fast reading. And it is worth noticing that the errors and self-corrections didn't influence her flow of reading.

Overall, Stacy can read fluently with appropriate rate, reasonable accuracy, and suitable expressions including pitch, tone, volume, emphasis, pause and rhythm. (International Literacy Association, 2018)

Besides the fluency of reading, students' understanding of the meaning conveyed in the text also weighs heavily with reading assessment. And in Stacy's case she was evaluated by answering 9 questions in total after reading, 4 questions for the first text and 5 questions for the second. These questions examine the readers' understanding of both the main idea and text details and include both questions that have correct answers and open-ended questions. To assess her reading comprehension, I use the Benchmark Rubric for Text Reading Levels (Appendix 2), which also includes the assessment of oral reading that has been covered above. To avoid repetition, I will exclude the rationale for grading oral reading (fix-up strategies and fluency) in this rubric. There are three factors to consider when assessing comprehension: story structure/retelling, connections and inference/text interpretation. The score ranges from 1-4 for each factor and I graded Stacy 3 in story structure/retelling and 4 for the remaining two factors. My rationales are stated below:

First, story structure/retelling refers to students' demonstration of an understanding of the "gist" of the passage in a simple summary of the text. Stacy shows a good understanding of the story when answering these questions:

"What is the problem this passage is addressing?"

"What is the author's main point?"

"What is this passage about?"

Stacy' answers include almost all important components that should be shown in the correct understanding of the first passage. However, she didn't get the main idea of the second text. The correct answer for the third question shown above is "The 17th Amendment of the US Constitution" but Stacy basically only retold the introduction of House of Representatives and the Senate shown at the beginning of the story and failed to grab the main point. It might be the lack of enough background knowledge in politics that lead to an obstacle in understanding the text. Therefore, I graded her 3 considering she has shown a good understanding of the first passage and may need some instructional support when reading a content-specific text.

Second, connections require students to use background knowledge to connect personal experience and knowledge to text. There are two open-ended questions that examine Stacy's ability to connect to the texts:

"Do you agree with the author?"

"Which way do you think is better?"

Stacy has made meaningful connections by quoting her background knowledge about the discrimination against some ethnic groups like Muslim to show her agreement to the author and further proposed that we need to change that. For the second question, she used the current president election to support her idea that popular vote would be better since *"we get to choose who we think is better"*. Based on the above analysis, I gave her full marks in this aspect.

Third, inference/text interpretation checks whether students are able to make predictions, draw conclusions and interpret text. Questions for evaluation include:

"According to the passage, what does the mass media have a fascination with?"

"What was the Amendment that made that change?"

"What specifically did the 17th Amendment do?"

"How did it work before the 17th Amendment?"

Stacy's answers for these questions are correct while concise. Although she looked back to the text when answering the latter three questions for the second text, which again indicate that she was not familiar with the content area (politics) covered in this reading, she arrived at the correct answer. This shows that she scrutinized the details and interpret the text with accuracy, for which I scored her 4 out of 4.

To sum up, according to the rubric (Appendix 2), Stacy got 14 out of 15 in reading comprehension and received 19 out of 20 in total when taking oral reading into account. This recognizes her satisfying reading performance and affirms her as a successful reader of the given texts.

2. Writing Assessment

Following the completion of the reading assessment, I started to assess Stacy's writing ability. There are three writing samples of Stacy shown on the website. And the topics are *"When I Grow Up", "Nap vs. Work"* and *"If I Were a Teacher for a Day..."*. I used 6-Trait Scoring Rubrics (Appendix 3) as the tool for assessment. It is a set of rubrics that specify how to assess the quality of student writing and tailor instruction to students' needs. The following analysis of Stacy's writing ability will focus on the six traits including voice, word choice, sentence fluency, ideas, organization, and conventions. The score range for each trait is 1-6.

In view of voice, I graded Stacy 6 because she *"speaks directly to the reader in a way that is individual, compelling ang engaging"*. Her writing makes reader to think about and react to her point of view. She is good at using questions to engage readers. For example, in the writing "*When I grow up*", she wrote at the end, "*In considering my possibly amazing future, how could I leave school?"* In this way readers can think about her question and feel that she is firm and strong-willed.

For word choice, Stacy can receive 6 as her words *"convey the intended message in a precise, interesting, and natural way"*. The words she uses are specific and accurate without leading to misunderstanding. And her language is natural and effective.

Considering sentence fluency, I scored her 6 since her writing *"has an easy flow, rhythm and cadence."* Her sentences are complete, readable and are well built with strong and varied structures. A long sentence in the second writing wrote, *"When I finished I had to go pick up my brother again and by the time I finished everything, it was already 8 so I decided not to do my homework and take bath to relax and go to sleep."* This is an example that she was able to convey clear and correct message in such a long sentence and keep the fluency of the sentence.

With regard to ideas, I give the marks of 5 on the grounds that her ideas in this piece are well marked by detail and information. She has relevant and quality details to give important information. In these writings she gave reasons and explanations to support why she would not take a nap, and why she will know about students' thoughts. This concentration to details should be affirmed. But I deducted one point as I believe that more details can be added to enrich her writing instead of using only one or two

sentences for simple explanation.

She could score 6 in organization given that the organization of her writing *"enhances and showcases the central idea or theme"* and her presentation of information *"is compelling and moves reader through the text"*. She reached the main idea step by step in the third writing from talking about what she will do as a teacher and then analyze the reasons behind, which made the writing well-structured and organized.

In consideration of conventions, she was graded 6 because she *"demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions and uses conventions effectively to enhance readability"*. Overall, she has shown a good understanding and utilization of academic writing conventions with generally accurate spelling and punctuation, correct grammar and good organizational structures as she is aware of dividing her writing into paragraphs in all three compositions.

In summary, Stacy scored 35 out of 36 in total, indicating that she has a strong writing ability, can engage reader, use appropriate words, write complete and readable sentences, present clear ideas, showcase smooth organization and demonstrate a good grasp of standard writing conventions.

3. **Instructional Recommendations**

Based on the analysis of Stacy's language use in the areas of reading and writing, Stacy has done well in English reading and writing at her current grade level. But she can also challenge herself with tasks of greater difficulties to make further progress. I have developed some instructional recommendations for Stacy and for the teacher to

carry out effective classroom instruction.

First, in order to improve reading, Stacy and the teacher can focus more on the enhancement of comprehension of a text in a content-specific area that Stacy is not familiar with. Students can benefit from their background knowledge when reading a text covering a topic that they already know well. They can utilize such knowledge in comprehension without struggling to unpack the structure of reading, which leads to a decrease in the reliability of reading assessment. In contrast, when students have less opportunities to recall what they have known and need to unveil the story using reading strategies, the test results will be more valid and reliable.

Next, tactics to improve Stacy's writing include but not limited to teachers' ask for elaborations to elicit more details in writing and compare her writing with examples of excellent writing before telling the strengths and weaknesses of her writing. The former method stresses teachers' role in increasing Stacy's awareness of adding details that contribute to better completeness of writing and make her writing more vivid. The latter way to improve writing should be done by Stacy herself. By comparing her writing with a perfect writing example and specify the assets and lacks in her writing, she can recognize what she has done well and keep it as an advantage as well as identify room for improvement and pay attention to what she need to enhance in future writing tasks.

Appendix 1

Wright, W. E. (2015). *Foundations for Teaching English Language Learners: Research, Theory, Policy, and Practice* (2nd ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Caslon Publishing.

Running Record

Student name: Stacy
Grade level: 12

Book title: A Long Way to Go: Minorities and the Media
Author: Carlos Cortés

	Errors	Self-corrections

The answer is obvious—the mass media. The entertainment

fascinating / SC
media have a fascination with Latino gangs. The news media   SC

also like to show them often. At the same time, the entertainment

media rarely show other Latino characters. And the news media

rarely show other Hispanic topics, except for such "problem"

issues as immigration and language. The result has been a

Latino Public image—better yet, a stereotype—in which gangs

are an important part.

First, both the news and the entertainment media "teach"

social-ly   a
the public about minorities and other groups in society, such as   E

woman
women and the elderly. Second, mass media have a powerful   E

education   in ISC
educational impact on people who have little or no direct contact   E   SC

with the groups being shown. This example is important for minority

and the other ethnic groups.

Words read correctly 127 ÷ 131 total words = 96.9%   95%+ = (Easy)
                                                        90%– 94% = Instructional
   Self-corrections: 2   Less than 90% = Frustration

Running Record

Student name: Stacy
Grade Level: 12

Book title: United States Government – Our Democracy
Author: McGraw-Hill Education

	Errors	Self-corrections
responce/✓ The legislature is responsible for passing laws and is divided into two houses:		Beginning Sound (BS)
The House of Representatives and the Senate. The House is the voice of the		
people, directly elected by popular vote; representation in the House is based		
on each state's population. By contrast, the Senate has the same number of		
Initional/SC representatives from each state. Initially, senators were elected by state		SC
such legislatures, but in 1913 the Seventeenth Amendment was ratified, which	E	
directly/SC called for the direct election of senators by popular vote. While the		SC
Seventeenth Amendment increased the power of the people, some have		
argued that it also increased the power of the federal government at the		
legislate/✓ expense of the states. The Founders knew that the legislative branch would		BS
feature/SC be very important, but they also feared that it might abuse its power;		SC
therefore, they gave Congress limited and expressed powers, or powers		
Con/✓ directly stated in the Constitution.		BS

Words read correctly **146** ÷ **147** total words = **99.3**% 95%⁺ = (Easy)
Self-corrections: **3** 90%– 94% = Instructional
Less than 90% = Frustration

Appendix 2

Benchmarking Rubric for Text Reading Levels
Rapid City Area Schools

This rubric is to be used as a general guide to assessing a student's basic comprehension. Engage the student in conversation about the text and use prompts to elicit responses.

1. **Fix-Up Strategies**: Students display an awareness of their own reading process. The oral reading includes self-corrections and problem-solving attempts.

④	3	2	1
Articulates/uses more than one strategy for solving problems.	Solves problems at the word, sentence, and meaning level.	Some problem-solving, mostly at the word level. Few self-corrections.	Little or no awareness of reading processes. No self-corrections.

2. **Fluency**: Students demonstrate automaticity in oral reading by using effective phrasing, appropriate expression, and an efficient pace.

④	3	2	1
Well phrased, smooth and expressive oral reading. Attends to punctuation and sentence structure.	Appropriate phrasing, effective self-corrections that maintain the flow of reading. Expression gives evidence of text interpretation.	Occasionally choppy, frequent and disruptive pauses, occasional expression, moderately slow.	Word by word reading, inaccurate breaks, monotone expression, labored pace.

3. **Story Structure/Retelling**: Students demonstrate an understanding of the "gist" of the passage by using story structure (characters, setting, problem/solution, details) in a simple summary of the text. Teacher prompt might include, "In your own words, tell me about what you just read."

4	③	2	1
Captures key themes, articulates relationships between elements that influence overall meaning.	Uses story elements (characters, setting, plot, etc…) in an organized, accurate retelling.	Retelling reveals beginning awareness of sequence and plot.	Random response

4. **Connections**: Students use background knowledge (schema, mental Velcro) to connect personal experience and knowledge to text.

    The student's language may include: "Reminds me...One time I... T-S, T-T, T-W".

④	3	2	1
Meaningful response that enhances understanding and extends beyond student's life and text.	Meaningful response demonstrating a clear connection between text and student knowledge.	Response in which connections are not clearly related to text or are superficial.	No response or response that is disconnected to the text.
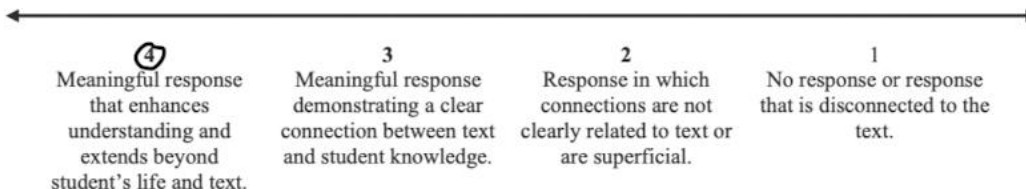
5. **Inference or Text Interpretation**: Students are able to make predictions, draw conclusions, and interpret text.

    The student's language may include: " I predict...I think...That means…"

④	3	2	1
Can explain predictions, conclusions, or interpretations based on the text and personal background.	Can draw conclusions or predict and explain using evidence from the text.	Makes predictions or draws conclusions that are unsupported or unrelated to the text.	No response or inference

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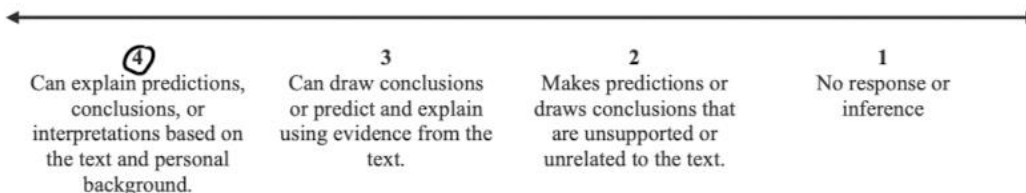
Scoring: Record the score (1-4) for each aspect of the text reading.

1. Fix-Up Strategies   4
2. Fluency   4
3. Story Structure/Retelling   3
4. Connections   4
5. Inference or Text Interpretation   4

          Total   19

Scoring Guide:	
Successful	14-20 points
Proceed to a Lower Performance passage	13 and below

Appendix 3

6-Trait Scoring Rubric

VOICE

6 The writer speaks directly to the reader in a way that is individual, compelling and engaging. The writer "aches with caring," yet is aware and respectful of the audience and the purpose for writing.
A. The reader feels a strong interaction with the writer, sensing the person behind the words.
B. The writer takes a risk by revealing who they are and what they think.
C. The tone and voice give flavor and texture to the message and are appropriate for the purpose and audience.
D. Narrative writing seems honest, personal and written from the heart. Expository or persuasive writing reflects a strong commitment to the topic by showing why the reader needs to now this and why they should care.
E. This piece screams to be read aloud, shared, and talked about. The writing makes you think about and react to the author's point of view.

5 A sincere attempt has been made to address the purpose and audience for the writing in an interesting way. It skips a beat here and there, however.
A. It's a strong attempt although the best moments fade in and out.
B. Moments of insight make this piece come alive.
C. The writer pays attention to which tone is best used on this piece. It's not totally consistent but leans in the right direction.
D. Narrative writing has many moments when the writer feels connected.
E. Expository or persuasive writing leaves the reader with a sense of why the writer chose these ideas.

4 The writer seems sincere, but not fully engaged or involved. The result is pleasant or even personable, but not compelling.
A. The writing communicates in an earnest, pleasing manner.
B. Only one or two moments here or there surprise, delight, or move the reader.
C. The writer seems aware of an audience but weighs ideas carefully and discards personal insights in favor of safe generalities.
D. Narrative writing seems sincere, but not passionate; expository or persuasive writing lacks consistent engagement with the topic to build credibility.
E. The writer's willingness to share his/her point of view may emerge strongly in some places, but is often obscured behind vague generalities.

3 It would be hard to point to a unique moment or two, although the reader is trying desperately to "hear" the writer.
A. The writer keeps the reader a safe distance away. Hope of connecting is all that keeps the reader going.
B. No special moments stand out. It's all pretty much the same.
C. It's more important for this writer to hide and be safe than to try and connect.
D. Narrative writing tells only what it must. No care is shown to help the writer feel anything.
E. The reader has to wonder if the writer cares one way or the other about that topic. (Expository or persuasive.)
F. A glimmer of voice is all that is found here and that's a generous reading.

2 The voice in the piece relies on the readers good faith to hear or feel anything in phrases such as "I like it" or "It was fun."
A. The writing sits on the surface and does not reach out past the most stereotyped of voices.
B. The writing is humdrum and "risk-free."
C. The writer does not acknowledge the needs of the reader to understand any point of view in the piece.
D. Narrative writing is just an outline and does not have any detail to engage the reader.
E. As an expository or persuasive piece it lacks any conviction or authority to distinguish it from a mere list of facts.
F. So many chances and yet the writer misses every opportunity to engage the reader.

1 The writer seems indifferent, uninvolved, or distanced from the topic and/or the audience. As a result, the paper reflects more than one of the following problems:
A. The writer speaks in a kind of monotone that flattens all potential highs or lows of the message.
B. The lack of voice begins to lull the reader to sleep.
C. The writer is not concerned with the audience, or the writer's style is a complete mismatch for the intended reader.
D. The writing is lifeless or mechanical; depending on the topic, it may be overly technical or jargonistic.
E. Narrative? Expository? Who can tell?
F. No point of view is reflected in the writing.

VOICE

WORD CHOICE

6 Words convey the intended message in a precise, interesting, and natural way. The words are powerful and engaging.
A. Words are specific and accurate; it is easy to understand just what the writer means.
B. The words and phrases create pictures and linger in your mind.
C. The language is natural and never overdone; both words and phrases are individual and effective.
D. Striking words and phrases often catch the reader's eye and linger in the reader's mind. (You can recall a handful as you reflect on the paper.)
E. Lively verbs energize the writing. Precise nouns and modifiers add depth and specificity.
F. Precision is obvious. The writer has taken care to put just the right word or phrase in just the right spot.

5 Attempts are made to reach for better and more precise words although not as often as possible.
A. Words are correct and in many cases they are "just right."
B. It's easy to understand what the writer is communicating. Several "mind pictures" are present.
C. As the writer tries new words and phrases, they are usually more right than wrong.
D. The verbs are more active but still may need a little attention here and there.
E. There's care and attention paid to selecting the best words to fit the piece. It's moved past the "just functional stage."
F. The words and phrases are working really well.

4 The language is functional, even if it lacks much energy. It is easy to figure out the writer's meaning on a general level.
A. Words are adequate and correct in a general sense; they simply lack much flair and originality.
B. Familiar words and phrases communicate, but rarely capture the reader's imagination. Still, the paper may have one or two fine moments.
C. Attempts at colorful language show a willingness to stretch and grow, but sometimes it goes too far (thesaurus overload!).
D. The writing is marked by passive verbs, everyday nouns and adjectives, and lack of interesting adverbs.
E. The words are only occasionally refined; it's more often, "the first thing that popped into my mind."
E. The words and phrases are functional – with only a moment or two of sparkle.

3 The language is interpretable but without any energy. A little interpretation is needed to understand some parts.
A. Words are mostly adequate but add no flavor to the piece.
B. Simple words are all that are attempted and they may be so general they distract from the meaning. The verbs lack any pizzazz.
C. Few attempts are made at colorful or figurative language and even those work only at a limited level.
D. Although most of the parts of speech can be identified in the sentence, some misuse is confusing to the reader.
E. The words feel like rote response and reflect a lack of craftsmanship.
F. The reader gets meaning from the words in only the most general way.

2 So many places are flawed that meaning is often impaired. Wrong words are used and the reader cannot see any connection to the idea being shared.
A. Language is so vague (e.g., It was a fun time, She was neat, It was nice, We did lots of stuff) that only a limited message comes through.
B. Even simple words are used incorrectly. The verbs if present are flat.
C. No attempts are made to use figurative or colorful language.
D. Limited vocabulary and/or frequent misuse of parts of speech impair understanding.
E. Jargon or clichés distract or mislead. Persistent redundancy distracts the reader.
F. If you work very hard you can get a general understanding of what the piece is about – but it's not easy.

1 The writer struggles with a limited vocabulary, searching for words to convey meaning. The writing reflects more than one of these problems:
A. The language often makes no sense.
B. "Blah, blah, blah" is all that the reader reads and hears.
C. Words are used incorrectly, making the message secondary to the misfires with the words.
D. The lack of vocabulary and the misuse of parts of speech keep the reader from understanding.
E. Repetition of words and phrases/misuse of words and phrases litter the piece.
F. Problems with language leave the reader wondering what the writer is trying to say. The words just do not work in this piece.

WORD CHOICE

SENTENCE FLUENCY

6 The writing has an easy flow, rhythm and cadence. Sentences are well built, with strong and varied structure that invites expressive oral reading.
A. Sentences are constructed in a way that underscores and enhances the meaning.
B. Sentences vary in length as well as structure. Fragments, if used, add style. Dialogue, if present, sounds natural.
C. Purposeful and varied sentence beginnings add variety and energy.
D. The use of creative and appropriate connectives between sentences and thoughts show how each relates to and builds upon the one before it.
E. The writing has cadence; the writer has thought about the sound of the words as well as the meaning. The first time you read it aloud is a breeze.

5 Much of this piece has a sense of rhythm and flow, but some parts still need work. Technically the sentences are correctly structured.
A. Some of the sentences are phrased so carefully that the reader gets totally caught up in them; others remain a bit sterile.
B. Correct construction is present in the sentences and variety in type is present. Few examples of risk-taking are present such as dialogue or fragments.
C. Attention has been paid to different sentence beginnings. Just a bit more attention here and the piece becomes musical.
D. Connectives are present but not completely refined.
E. You can read this piece aloud quite easily with only a moment or two of problems.

4 The text hums along with a steady beat, but tends to be more pleasant or businesslike than musical, more mechanical than fluid.
A. Although sentences may not seem artfully crafted or musical, they get the job done in a routine fashion.
B. Sentences are usually constructed correctly; they hang together, they are sound.
C. Sentence beginnings are not ALL alike; some variety is attempted.
D. The reader sometimes has to hunt for clues (e.g., connecting words and phrases like however, therefore, naturally, after a while, on the other hand, to be specific, for example, next, first of all, later, but as it turned out, although, etc.) that show how sentences interrelate.
E. Parts of the text invite expressive oral reading; others may be stiff, awkward, choppy, or gangly.

3 Technically correct sentences tend to create a sing-song pattern or lull the reader to sleep. Nothing in the sentences creates a sense of fluidity.
A. Sentences are generally correct although a few may be lacking some key ingredients.
B. You can read through the editing problems in this piece and see where the sentences logically begin and end.
C. There is a reliance on patterned sentence beginnings, however, a few sentences break out.
D. Only a very few and very simple connectives lead the reader from sentence to sentence.
E. You can read this aloud – after a few tries.

2 Even some of the easier sentences have structural problems which cause the reader to stop and figure out what is being said and how.
A. The phrasing does not sound natural because of problems in structure as well as placement of words.
B. To make the sentences correct and flow many would have to be reconstructed.
C. Many sentences begin the same way and may follow the same patterns (e.g., subject-verb-object) in a monotonous pattern.
D. Connectives, though present, are often misused or lead the reader in the wrong direction.
E. The text does not invite expressive oral reading.

1 The reader has to practice quite a bit in order to give this paper a fair interpretive reading. The writing reflects more than one of the following problems:
A. Sentences are choppy, incomplete, rambling or awkward; they need work.
B. There is little to no "sentence sense" present. Even if this piece was flawlessly edited, the sentences would not hang together.
C. So many sentences are incomplete that it is hard to judge the quality of the beginnings.
D. Endless connectives (and, and so, but then, because, and then, etc.) or a complete lack of connectives create a massive jumble of language.
E. The text is so flawed that it cannot be read aloud without the writer's help.

SENTENCE FLUENCY

6-Trait Scoring Rubric

6-Trait Scoring Rubric

IDEAS

6 This paper is extremely clear or focused. Relevant anecdotes and details enrich the central theme.
A. The topic is narrow and manageable.
B. Relevant, telling, quality details give the reader important information that goes beyond the obvious or predictable.
C. Accurate, precise details are present to support the main ideas; appropriate use of resources provides strong, accurate, credible support.
D. The writer seems to be writing from knowledge or experience; the ideas are fresh and original.
E. The reader's questions are anticipated and answered.
F. The writing makes connections and shares insights and understanding of life, and a knack for picking out what is significant.

5 The ideas/content in this piece are well marked by detail and information.
A. The topic is focused but still could use additional narrowing.
B. More than half the time the details and support are clear and relevant. Other details are general but stay with the topic.
C. Credible details are present which support the main idea/theme.
D. Some new ways of thinking about this topic are presented.
E. The writer is clearly aware of questions the reader may have and attempts to answer them.
F. A clear theme has been developed from the topic.

4 The writer has defined the topic, although the development is basic or general.
A. The topic is fairly broad; however, it is clear where the writer is headed.
B. Support is attempted, but does not go far enough yet in flushing out the key issues or story line.
C. Ideas are reasonably clear, though they may not be detailed, personalized, accurate, or expanded enough to show in-depth understanding or a strong sense of purpose.
D. A few examples of "showing" are present, but the writer relies on general examples.
E. The reader is left with a few questions but is generally clear about the content.
F. The writer stays on the topic and begins to develop a theme.

3 The reader can understand the main ideas although they may be broad or simplistic.
A. The topic is becoming clear, however because it is so broad or lacks specific focus, the reader often must infer for the overall message.
B. Support is sporadic.
C. A general sense of the idea is present though not enhanced by significant details.
D. A heavy reliance on "telling", not "showing" examples.
E. The reader is left with many questions due to lack of specific information.
F. The writer has not yet focused the topic past the obvious.

2 No one main idea stands out yet, although possibilities are emerging.
A. The paper hints at topics, but does not settle on one yet.
B. Support is incidental or confusing.
C. Several possible ideas may be present which could become central themes/ideas on different pieces of writing.
D. The writer makes statements without specifics to back them up.
E. The reader has so many questions because of the lack of specific information. It is hard to "fill in the blanks."
F. Glimmers of the writer's topic or main point show up occasionally.

1 As yet, the paper has no clear sense of purpose or central theme. To extract meaning from the text, the reader must make inferences based on sketchy or missing details. The writing reflects more than one of these problems:
A. The writer is still in search of a topic, brainstorming, or has not yet decided what the main idea of the piece will be.
B. Information is limited or unclear or the length is not adequate for development.
C. The idea is a simple restatement of the topic or an answer to the question with little or no attention to detail.
D. The writer has not begun to define the topic in a meaningful, personal way.
E. Everything seems as important as everything else; the reader has a hard time sifting out what is important.
F. The text may be repetitious, or may read like a collection of disconnected, random thoughts with no discernible point.

IDEAS

ORGANIZATION

6 The organization enhances and showcases the central idea or theme. The order, structure, or presentation of information is compelling and moves the reader through the text.
A. An inviting introduction draws the reader in; a satisfying conclusion leaves the reader with a sense of closure and resolution.
B. Thoughtful transitions clearly show how ideas connect.
C. Details seem to fit where they're placed; sequencing is logical and effective.
D. Pacing is well controlled; the writer knows when to slow down and elaborate and when to pick up the pace and move on.
E. The title, if desired, is original and captures the central theme of the piece.
F. Organization flows so smoothly the reader hardly thinks about it; the choice of structure matches the purpose and audience.

5 The organization is smooth with only a few small bumps here and there.
A. The writer goes farther than the obvious beginning and conclusion, but needs to step up one more notch.
B. The transitions are logical but may lack originality.
C. Sequencing makes sense and moves a step beyond the most obvious structure.
D. Though the pacing is under control, there are still places the writer needs to highlight or move through more quickly.
E. The title (if required) settles for a key idea rather than capturing a deeper theme.
F. The organization generally works satisfactorily if not yet so smooth to escape obvious detection.

4 The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader through the text without too much confusion.
A. The paper has a recognizable introduction and conclusion. The introduction may not relate a strong sense of anticipation; the conclusion may not tie up all loose ends.
B. Transitions often work well; at other times, connections between ideas are fuzzy.
C. Sequencing shows some logic, but not under control enough that it consistently supports the ideas. In fact, sometimes it is so predictable and rehearsed that the structure takes attention away from the content.
D. Pacing is fairly well controlled, though the writer sometimes lunges ahead too quickly or spends too much time on details that do not matter.
E. A title (if desired) is present, although it may be uninspired or an obvious restatement of the prompt or topic.
F. The organization sometimes supports the main point or story line; at other times, the reader feels an urge to slip in a transition or move things around.

3 The organization is somewhat problematic and slows the reader's ability to engage in the text.
A. Either the intro or conclusion or both are clichés or just leave you wanting a lot more.
B. Transitions, when present, are repetitive or misleading.
C. The structure has taken over so completely it dominates the ideas. The sequencing is painfully obvious.
D. The writer lets one part of the piece dominate and loses control over the pacing.
E. There is just a passing glimmer of how the title (if desired) was selected for this piece.
F. The organization of the piece begins to distract from the content.

2 The organization of the piece needs a great deal of work to be effective. Only moments here and there give the writer a clue about what's going on.
A. The lead and/or conclusions are ineffective to guide the readers.
B. A little bit of help is offered to get from one idea to the next but not often enough to keep the reader from being confused.
C. So little useful structure is present, it's hard to get a picture of how the piece fits together as a whole.
D. Pacing feels awkward; the writer slows to a crawl when the reader wants to get on with it, and vice versa.
E. A title (if desired) doesn't match the content.
F. The organization is often problematic and frustrates the reader as they struggle with the ideas.

1 The writing lacks a clear sense of direction. Ideas, details, or events seem strung together in a loose or random fashion; there is no identifiable internal structure. The writing reflects more than one of these problems.
A. There is no real lead to set up what follows, no real conclusion to wrap things up.
B. Connections between ideas are confusing or not even present.
C. Sequencing needs lots and lots of work to make sense.
D. There is little sense of pacing being considered yet.
E. No title is present (if requested).
F. Problems with organization make it hard (almost impossible) for the reader to get a grip on the main point or story line.

ORGANIZATION

CONVENTIONS

6 The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions (e.g., spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, usage, paragraphing) and uses conventions effectively to enhance readability. Errors tend to be so few that just minor touch-ups would get this piece ready to publish.
A. Spelling is generally correct, even on more difficult words.
B. The punctuation is accurate, even creative, and guides the reader through the text.
C. A thorough understanding and consistent application of capitalization skills are present.
D. Paragraphing tends to be sound and reinforces the organizational structure.
E. Grammar and usage are correct and contribute to clarity and style.
F. The writer may manipulate conventions for stylistic effect – and it works! The piece is very close to being ready to publish

Grades 7 & up only. The writing is sufficiently complex to allow the writer to show skill in using a wide range of conventions. For younger writers, the writing shows control over those conventions that are gradelevel appropriate.

5 The writer stretches and tries more complex tasks in conventions; however, makes a few mistakes along the way.
A. Everyday words are consistently handled well but more difficult words are spotty.
B. Punctuation shows strength and enhances the readability in all but a few cases.
C. The punctuation is usually correct and takes a few risks.
D. Solid paragraphing skills are present although there may be a few adjustments needed on more complex pieces.
E. The grammar and usage is correct.
F. Just a few things here and there need to be edited before this piece is ready to publish.

4 The writer shows reasonable control over a limited range of standard writing conventions. Conventions are sometimes handled well and enhance readability; at other times, errors are distracting and impair readability.
A. Spelling is usually correct or reasonably phonetic on common words, but more difficult words are problematic.
B. End punctuation is usually correct; internal punctuation (commas, apostrophes, semicolons, dashes, colons, parentheses) is sometimes missing/wrong.
C. Most words are capitalized correctly; control over more sophisticated capitalization skills may be spotty.
D. Paragraphing is attempted but may run together or begin in the wrong places.
E. Problems with grammar or usage are not serious enough to distort meaning but may not be correct or accurately applied all of the time.
F. Moderate (a little of this, a little of that) editing would be required to polish the text for publication.

3 The writer stumbles in conventions even on simple tasks and almost always on anything trickier.
A. Although the reader can understand, even simpler words are not always correct.
B. Punctuation is spotty and inconsistent.
C. Proper nouns and the beginning of sentences are capitalized correctly; other words are random and don't show understanding of capitalization rules.
D. The piece may start off with a paragraph or two, but then the rest is one big glob of sentences.
E. There are serious grammar and usage problems scattered throughout the text.
F. Enough editing would have to be done to this piece that a student writer may need help to find it all.

2 Many errors of a variety of types are scattered throughout the text.
A. The spelling is phonetic, many errors are present.
B. Except for the simplest of punctuation (periods, question marks), the other punctuation is usually wrong or missing.
C. Only the easiest rules of capitalization show awareness of correct use.
D. Paragraphing skills are irregular and inconsistent.
E. A heavy reliance on conversational oral language affects the grammar in an inappropriate way for this piece.
F. There's quite a bit to be done here to edit the piece for publication.

1 Errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, usage and grammar and/or paragraphing repeatedly distract the reader and make the text difficult to read. The writing reflects more than one of these problems.
A. Spelling errors are frequent, even on common words.
B. Punctuation (including terminal punctuation) is often missing or incorrect.
C. Capitalization is random.
D. Paragraphing is missing, irregular, or so frequent (every sentence) that it has no relationship to the organizational structure of the text.
E. Errors in grammar or usage are very noticeable, frequent, and affect meaning.
F. The reader must read once to decode, then again for meaning. Extensive editing (virtually every line) would be required to polish the text for publication.

CONVENTIONS

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2. Brown, H. D. (2018). Language assessment: Principles and classroom practices (3rd ed.). Pearson Education.

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4. International Literacy Association. (2018). Reading fluently does not mean reading fast [Literacy leadership brief]. Newark, DE: Author

5. Wright, W. E. (2015). Foundations for Teaching English Language Learners: Research, Theory, Policy, and Practice (2nd ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Caslon Publishing.