# ELL Capstone Portfolio

Dongxin Li

Vanderbilt University, Peabody College

February 2018

## Abstract

This portfolio has demonstrated my expertise and knowledge as a future teacher to English Language Learners. There are three main parts in this portfolio, they are respectively: 1) my teaching philosophy, 2) professional knowledge and 3) application to practice.

In the first part, I first present the social background of my future students and the social environment in which they will study. Then, I explained the theoretical framework of my teaching philosophy to provide a theoretical foundation for my future teaching practice. The theoretical framework of my teaching philosophy mainly consists of socio-cultural theories, Translanguaging theory, and Backward design.

In the second part, I demonstrated my professional knowledge in teaching English as a foreign language by providing my understandings of eight domains of the TESOL standards. In each domain, I used one or two related artifacts to support my analysis regarding learners and learning, the learning environment, the curriculum and the assessment.

The last part is about how I will apply my teaching philosophy to practice regarding understanding my students' backgrounds, creating a learner-friendly environment, designing curriculum and conducting the assessment.

At last, I also shared my thoughts on how to keep professionalism and to make improvement in the long run.

# Table of Contents

**Part I. Philosophy of Teaching ..... 1**

**Part II. Professional Knowledge ..... 8**

Domain 1: Planning ..... 8

Domain 2: Instructing ..... 10

Domain 3: Assessing ..... 12

Domain 4: Identity and Context ..... 15

Domain 5: Language Proficiency ..... 18

Domain 6: Learning ..... 20

Domain 7: Content ..... 23

Domain 8: Commitment and Professionalism ..... 25

**Part III. Application to Practice ..... 31**

**Appendix A ..... 37**

**Appendix B (Attached Separately) ..... 42**

**Appendix C (Attached Separately) ..... 42**

**Appendix D (Attached Separately) ..... 42**

**Appendix E (Attached Separately) ..... 42**

**Appendix F (Attached Separately) ..... 42**

**Appendix G ..... 42**

**Appendix H (Attached Separately) ..... 53**

## Part I. Philosophy of Teaching

Before I started my graduate studies at Vanderbilt University, my thoughts of teaching were mainly built upon my teaching experience during internships at undergraduate school. After nearly two years' studying in Peabody College, my attitude and interest toward teaching and language education have been greatly changed by academic coursework I've been taking and professional experience I've gained from educational research and practicum. In this part, I will demonstrate the theoretical framework of my teaching philosophy, which was mainly informed by socio-cultural theories, Translaguaging theory, and Backward design. To display a more concrete picture of my language teaching, I will also elaborate how I would apply these theories to my future practice. As students and teachers are two dominant parties in teaching activities, it is necessary to clarify my target students and the social and linguistic environment in which they would learn English as a foreign language.

### Students and Social Environment

Among so many ‘Aha’ moments I’ve encountered during my graduate studies in ELL program, one of which impressed me most was once I read a research paper on the use of translation between learner's native language and English to assist them learning second language literacy. The reason why this research surprised me was that I've never considered the use of translation as an innovative strategy or a teaching method that need particular research to gain more recognition from people because it is one of the most often used teaching methods in English classes in China. What made this moment ‘Aha' to me was that I didn't adequately realize that different social environments and learning goals could lead to different emphases on using various teaching methods, even students in different societies are doing the same thing,

which is learning English. Therefore, it is important to identify characteristics of my target students before I start explaining my teaching philosophy.

English learners have been referred to by using different terms according to different research. In the U.S., the Department of Education has used the term Culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) to define students from communities where English is not the primary language of communication. This term can best represent students speaking a variety of languages and come from diverse social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. However, among CLD students, differences also existed between English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL). One of the most common differences between ESL and EFL for English teachers is that ESL is teaching English in countries where English is the official language while EFL is teaching English in countries where neither people don't speak English as their native language, nor English is used in daily communication. Students in ESL classrooms often speak different first languages, and the main purpose for them of learning English is seeking integration to the society. However, students in an EFL classroom share the same native language and culture and learning English is often a requirement of school. Another term raised by Gregory (1996) is Emergent Bilinguals, which referred to 'children who are the first generation in their family to receive formal schooling in the new country, who do not speak the language of the host country at home and who are consequently at the early stages of second language learning' (p. 8). Regarding my future students, they will be Chinese students whose families live in China and speak Chinese as their first language (L1) for communication. According to definitions of different terms above, my future students belong to CLD students. At the same time, they also learn English as a foreign language rather than a second language, and their learning environment is more consistent with EFL, which is not English-dominated but

Chinese-dominated. As for the social environment, China is currently under a rapid social development including its economy, technology, and cultural diversities. My students are both enjoying the convenience brought by economic, technological development and facing challenges of higher demands of people who can speak more than one language due to globalization.

**Theoretical Framework**

My teaching philosophy is informed by four theories including Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural theory, Translanguaging theory, Backward Design and the studies of *New Literacies.* Along with my understandings of these theories, I will also provide specific practices used in my future career of teaching.

My teaching philosophy is overarched by **socio-cultural theories** including **Vygotsky's socio-cultural** perspective of learning and **Gee's socio-cultural** approaches to literacy development. From a socio-cultural perspective, people learn from social interactions, and these interactions play a critical role in developing cognitive abilities (Vygotsky, 1986). Language acquisition could be achieved more naturally through communicative interactions, and the importance of external support from language professionals could be greatly revealed by the theory of **Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**. The ZPD theory states that the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving could be narrowed under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978). In other words, a teacher can play a role as a person who can help students to achieve higher level performance both socially and academically. This theory has made the importance and meaning of being a language teacher clear to me. As Vygotsky's theory explains learning in a more general way,

James Paul Gee's socio-cultural theory gives me a more specific perspective of how literacy development relates to social interactions. Gee contends that 'meaning is primarily the result of social interactions, negotiations, contestations and agreements among people and it is inherently variable and social' (Gee, 2015, p24). Informed by his theory, I treat literacy more of a variety of different sociocultural practices than mental ability. Furthermore, literacy is also tied up with socialization, enculturation, and development in social and cultural groups (Gee, 2015, p45).

***Translanguaging***

Another theory that has significant influence on my philosophy of teaching is the Translanguaging theory. When I first encountered the term 'translanguaging' in an academic paper, certain pedagogical strategies mentioned in the paper recalled my memory of how English teachers in China using both Chinese (L1) and English (L2) to teach a new language to students. Take me, for example; I started learning English when I was a 3rd Grade elementary school student. Since English teachers in my school were also second language learners, it was natural for them to give language instruction both in Chinese (L1) and in English (L2). Based on my educational experience in China, it seems that bilingual instructions adopted by English teachers in China bear a certain resemblance to translanguaging pedagogical strategies. It is the resemblance between the two that not only arouses my interest in translanguaging theory but also causes me to think of questions such as "What are the similarities and differences between English teaching instruction used in China and translanguaging pedagogies?" "If I am an ELL/EFL teacher, what I could do to introduce tranlanguaging theory to the internal educational system to support Chinese students' second language literacy?" "Are these translanguaging pedagogical strategies effectively used in the US would equally effective in teaching Chinese

students? If not, what kind of modification do we need to make based on students' characteristics and educational standards?" etc.

From a linguistic perspective, translaguaging is "the deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named languages" (Otheguy, García, Reid, 2015, p281). From a pedagogical perspective, translanguaging is "an approach to bilingualism that is centered not on languages as has often been the case, but on the practices of bilinguals that are readily observable" (García, 2009, p45). I have summarized the implications of this theory from three perspectives. First, translanguaging is an approach to make use of languages of bi/multilingual by considering they possess one linguistic repertoire instead of several different autonomous language systems (Kasula,2016; García, 2009). Second, translanguaging also provides multilingual speakers with support in affirming language identities by "creating a social space bringing together different dimensions of their personal history, experience, and environment, their attitude, belief, and ideology, their cognitive and physical capacity into one coordinated and meaningful performance" (Wei, 2010, p1223). Last but not least, translanguaging theory has profound social justice implications for the education of bilingual students (García, 2016).

***Backward Design***

The Backward Design theory also inspires me by emphasizing the importance of figuring out the learning results and pointing out how to make instructions informed by learning results (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Based on this theory, I would figure out my goal of teaching beforehand and try to design activities that can lead students to achieve the goal. It is also important to select appropriate materials that highly consistent with the goal of teaching. In this way, students can reach the goal step by step without wasting time on unnecessary tasks.

**Summary**

Overall, my teaching philosophy is guided by socio-cultural theories and influenced by Translangauging theory and Backward Design theory at the same time. It is important for me to keep in mind the ultimate goal of learning a language can use and communicate. Specific applications of my philosophy will be demonstrated in the third part of this portfolio.

## References

García, O. (2009). *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective*. Malden, MA, and Oxford: Wiley/Blackwell.Kasula, A. J. (2016). Olowalu Review: Developing identity through translanguaging in a multilingual literary magazine. *Appl. Linguist. J., 18(2),* pp. 109-118.

Otheguy, Ricardo, Ofelia García and Wallis Reid (2015). Clarifying translanguaging and deconstructing named languages: A perspective from linguistics. *Applied Linguistics Review 6 (3)*, 281-307.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in Society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1986). *Thought and language.* (A. Kozulin, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Wei, L. (2010). Moment analysis and translanguaging space: Discursive construction of identities by multilingual Chinese youth in Britain. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43(5), 1222-1235.

Wiggins, G.P. & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by design.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

## Part II. Professional Knowledge

In this part, I will demonstrate my understandings of eight domains of TESOL standards by providing different artifacts as supportive evidence. The eight domains include planning, instructing, assessing, identity and context, language proficiency, learning, content, as well as commitment and professionalism. Within each domain, I will first explain my interpretation of the standard. Then I will briefly describe the artifact I will use along with its relevance to the domain.

### Domain 1: Planning

***Standard 1:*** *Teachers plan instruction to promote learning and meet learner goals, and modify plans to assure learner engagement and achievement.*

From my perspective, planning is a comprehensive process more than merely writing lesson plans. By saying it is comprehensive, planning starts with setting appropriate content and language objectives. Based on these objectives, teachers need to determine what kind of teaching materials and strategies to use in class. Design of learning environment and different activities should be taken into consideration as well. It is also important to keep the plan flexible to certain modification to adapt to the real teaching practice.

**Artifact A**: The artifact I will use in this domain is one of the assignments for the course *Teaching Second Language Literacy*. It is a lesson plan for an English writing class targeted at Grade 8 Chinese students. The class starts with the topic of keeping pets at home and aims at introducing students what is argumentative writing as well as main important components of this writing genre. Resources of the teaching materials used in this lesson are also presented in Appendix A.

**Relevance to Domain**: When I started to write this lesson plan, the first thing I thought about was to identify characteristics of my **learners**. In this lesson plan, my learners are Grade 8 Chinese students whose first language is Mandarin Chinese, and they've received formal English language class during their previous educational experience. Inspired by the Backward design theory, which contends that 'the best design of curriculum derives backward from the learnings sought' (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p14), I first identify **learning** goals in this artifact to guide my teaching and students' **learning** results. By attending this writing class, my students are expected to know a new genre of writing, which is the argumentative writing. They will also be able to identify critical elements in writing an argument, such as the thesis statement, evidence, and process of warranting. They are also expected to use specific terms and vocabulary while making an argument.

To provide students a cooperative and highly-motivated **learning environment**, the class involves different activities to engage students in brainstorming and group discussions. The introductory activity elicits the discussion with a familiar topic, which is keeping pets at home. Students are supposed to share their own experience about taking care of a pet, and they are also given a scenario in which two kids have disagreements on keeping a pet dog at home. I will assign different group students with different characters to simulate the negotiation between two kids in this scenario. Also, I also try to create a multi-media **environment** to keep students motivated in a different form of literacy. For example, I use PowerPoint to display critical knowledge points and use video in the **curriculum** to introduce argumentative writing instead of keeping talking by myself.

While designing the **curriculum**, I considered to involve my students' prior knowledge in their first language and terms they learned in Chinese writing class. Therefore, I included

translating activity in this lesson, which reflects my belief in Translanguaging theory within my teaching philosophy. Moreover, this kind of instruction can help building up students' recognition of their mother language as a useful linguistics resource (Martínez, 2013). At the same time, I incorporated different kinds of formative **assessment** to monitor and check students' understanding during the learning process. For example, I would observe all students' discussions to check their understandings and thoughts regarding specific topics. Also, questioning is one of the assessments that enjoys very high frequency in my classroom. Also, these are peer-review and peer-assessment during students' discussion. At the end of the class, we also review all terms learned in this class and made a self-reflection. All these assessments help us to make sure we are on the right track to achieve our learning goals.

**Domain 2: Instructing**

***Standard 2:*** *Teachers create supportive environments that engage all learners in purposeful learning and promote respectful classroom interactions.*

About the domain of instructing, teachers should try to create a learning environment with low anxiety and high motivation, and the different culture is being respected in the classroom. Additionally, effective instruction is not only about to what extent students can acquire all stuff covered in class. It also related to teaching-learning strategies to assist students independent learning. I believe it is more important to teach them how to fish rather than giving them fish directly.

**Artifact B**: The artifact I chose to use is the final project (see Appendix B, attached separately) for the course *Psychological Foundations of Education*. The project is a manual for Grade 8 English teachers to use in Chinese middle school. It is an application of Translanguaging theory to English teaching in China. Through using this manual, teachers will not only have a clear

overview of Translanguaging theory but also know how to apply this theory to modify their teaching strategies. Besides, I also analyzed how instructional practices suggested in this manual reflecting different principles within educational psychology field. This manual will also guide my future teaching to my students who are going to learn English as a foreign language.

**Relevance to the domain**: This artifact also targeted to Chinese middle school students. As we differentiate EFL with ESL in the previous text, those **learners** are learning English in an environment which does not use English as the official language. Therefore, their learning process happens mostly at school rather than in other social settings like communication with parents and peers. I chose Translanguaging theory in this project was because the translation was a traditional and popular teaching method in English classes in China. In other words, students in China are always **learning** English from translation. With consideration of this tradition, it is necessary for teachers to get to know a systematic and research-based theory to support their standing and modify their teaching methods at the same time.

In this manual, I presented two sample lesson plans to display specific instructions incorporating Translanguaging theory. As García (2017) said in her book that one of the major objectives of using Translanguaging pedagogy is to support students' socio-emotional development, teachers need to create a supportive **learning environment** to enhance both students' physical and mental development. According to Krashen's (1985) affective filter hypothesis, some 'affective variables' play a facilitative role in second language acquisition, and this variable could include but not limited to anxiety, self-confidence, and motivation. To ensure students' high motivation and lower their anxiety, I tried to use topics that are easy for learners to pick up a conversation. For example, the topic in the first sample lesson plan is the celebration of

new year in different countries. Students with different cultural backgrounds can describe their own culture and traditions to celebrate this important festival.

Apart from directly showing instructions used in two lesson plans, the manual also explains psychological foundations of **curriculum** design. Psychological terms that have been touched upon include *assimilation, accommodation, productive thinking, misconceptions*, etc. Teachers can not only see what kind of instructions being used in lesson plans but also understand principles behind each step of instructing.

In the two sample lesson plans, we can see some **assessment** methods that are similar to those mentioned in the previous domain of *planning,* including questioning, group discussions, peer-reviews, etc. However, it is equally important for teachers to do self-**assessment** while designing instructions. The reflection part of this manual is a good example of teacher's assessment of their teaching, with which teachers can figure out theoretical foundations of their instruction and make specific modifications to their teaching practice.

**Domain 3: Assessing**

***Standard 3:*** *Teachers recognize the importance of and can 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.*

Assessment is a critical component of effective learning since it can provide teachers with timely feedback of students' understandings and comprehension of knowledge. When we

are doing language assessment, those informal assessments are as important as formal ones, and we need to keep in mind what formal standardized tests can tell us as well as, more significantly, what they cannot (Herrera, Cabral & Murry, 2012). Furthermore, the selection of assessment used in and out of class need to consider students' prior experience. Teachers also need to keep the assessment as objective as possible to get authentic feedback, and the design of assessment should take students' different cultural backgrounds into consideration. Ideally, teachers can make modifications to their instructions based on the results of the assessment, which will help to achieve learning goals more efficiently.

**Artifact C**: The artifact I chose is the final case study (see Appendix C, attached separately) for the course *Educational Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition*. The participant I selected for this case study was a senior student studying at a university in China at that time. In this final report, I first introduced basic information of my participant including his characteristics, cognitive and linguistic background. Then, I analyzed the learner's oral and written language abilities regarding phonology, semantics, grammar (morphology and syntax), and pragmatics. Based on analyses from these four perspectives, I did an overall assessment of my participant's current state of second language acquisition and identified linguistic, cognitive and socio-cultural factors influencing his acquisition of English. Meanwhile, my learner's advantages and disadvantages would also be identified, according to which I would give specific suggestions to improve his learning process. The report also included a self-reflection part for me to assess my progress in learning by doing this case study along with its future implications for my career development.

**Relevance to the domain**: Before teachers decide to use what kind of instruction to learners, it is important to do an overall pre-instruction assessment to know more about **learner**s'

characteristics, cognitive and linguistic background. The **learner** in my case study was a senior student in China who has learned English for about 18 years. His **learning** most happen in English classes at schools as English is a compulsory subject in Chinese educational system. His learning experience was mostly teacher-oriented and test-focused, and he was not confident with his communicative competence in his self-evaluation. The **learning environment** in which he learned English was Chinese-dominated, which means he didn't have many opportunities to apply English language except for doing his homework for school. When it came my participant's English **curriculum** in college, he described his teacher's teaching as kept reading from the textbook and PowerPoint. With little instruction of oral English, their **curriculum** was dominated by reading and writing instructions.

The **assessment** of my learner's oral and written language proficiency was separated into four parts including phonology, semantics, grammar, and pragmatics. I used different matrix and calculating tools to evaluate his language proficiency. For instance, I used the Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM) to respectively grade his oral language competence regarding comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. The Mean Length of Utterance (MLU), which is a countable measure of linguistic productivity, was also calculated to do the morphological analysis. Finally, I used the Language Acquisition Chart to give a comprehensive result of my participant's overall English abilities. Based on the overall assessment result, I gave recommendations for my learner to further develop his learning process and help him to better understand his advantages and disadvantages, which is more important than the assessment itself. At last, I also made a self-reflection to review what I have learned from this case study and what I can improve in my instruction in the future. In particular, I found formative and authentic assessments are rather helpful to provide teachers with more

comprehensive information about students' learning and improvement than standardized tests so that teachers can make accommodations to their instruction. When I was doing this case study, I used assessing tools such as student interview, observational protocol (SOLOM), and statistical analysis (MLU). The results of these informal assessments have greatly supplemented my analysis of my participant's English Language Proficiency (ELP). Therefore, I will try to combine informal assessment with the standardized test to support my future instruction.

**Domain 4: Identity and Context**

***Standard 4:*** *Teachers understand the importance of who learners are and how their communities, heritage, 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.*

To understand the influence of communities to students' learning, teachers should not only respect their traditional culture but also should try to utilize their funds of knowledge and community literacies at the same time. Students identities are significantly determined by the social context in which they get along with people like their parents and peers. Moreover, with the development of technology, teachers need to pay attention to students' different identities on various social media and online platform.

**Artifact D**: The first artifact I chose was an analysis of community literacies during our practicum (see Appendix D, attached separately). In this artifact, I chose Casa Azafrán, which is a local collective community center including nine non-profit residential partners, as a typical example to present how community literacies have been used to help immigrants and English

language learners to deal with language and social problems they encountered in America. Some pedagogical implications were also provided in this artifact for teachers' references.

**Artifact E**: The second artifact I chose was a paper regarding my experience of investigating a local ELL class designed for adults in Belmont United Methodist Church (see Appendix E, attached separately). Students attending this class were all immigrants from different countries. Although they might have different learning goals, all of them want to improve their English to pursue a better life in America. This artifact has shown how students with different cultural backgrounds brought their identities to the class and what kind of instructions the instructor used to help them adapt to the American culture and maintain their own culture at the same time.

**Relevance to the domain**: **Learners** mentioned in these two artifacts are mostly immigrants in America. Casa Azafrán is a community center aiming at providing opportunities and assistance for Latinos in Nashville, Tennessee. They offer different services for Latino families to help them solve social problems like seeking a job, finding a place to live, attending schools, etc. They also provide ESL classes for children who speak Spanish as their first language on weekends. In ESL classes in Belmont United Methodist Church, all **learners** are adult immigrants from different countries including China, Japan, Korea, Afghanistan, Peru, Turkey, Italy, Iran, etc. Women account for approximately 75% of the number of students in the class, while men merely hold about 25%. Most students are **learning** English for better adaption to life in America. For example, in my interviews with two Japanese women, both of them come to Nashville because their husbands are working here. A Chinese woman also tells me that she plans to apply for a doctoral degree, but her TOEFL score is unsatisfactory, which pushed her to take extra English classes. Therefore, for the majority of students in this program, bilingualism achieved by these students tend to be referred to circumstantial bilingualism rather than elective

bilingualism in that learning English is not a choice but a necessity for survival and entering the mainstream American society (De Jong, 2011, P29).

To create an **environment** with openness and transparency, the interior of Casa Azafrán was intentionally arranged. For example, all office rooms have glass walls and doors instead of non-transparent ones, so people can see all employees at any time when they are working. The decorations in the center also added some cultural flavors, which would be cultural responsive for kids. To serve people speaking different languages, nearly all signs or instructions are printed and written in both English and Spanish. As for the **learning environment** in Belmont Church, the teacher tried to create a classroom with low anxiety. For example, the teacher would always play some classical music before class, and snacks and free coffee are also available for all students. This kind of design aligned with Krashen's (1982) **affective filter** hypothesis. Among different affective variables, students' anxiety plays an important role in determining the effectiveness of learning.

The **curriculum** in Artifact E was dominated by communicative language teaching, which means that oral communication was put in the priority in class. Besides, the teacher also included grammar, literature and American civilization in his class. The teacher not only made use of paper handouts containing articles and practices used in class but also leveraged videos to assist students to have deeper understanding and comprehension of a specific chapter of a masterpiece. To make students feel relaxed, he might ask a student to lead others in some setting-up exercises during the break. Another important part of the class was group discussions led by some Native American volunteers. Everyone at the same table would share or present a specific article or news they found interesting to other group members and discussed concerning topics as well.

The ESL classes in Belmont church have greatly validated students' cultural experience in classroom practices and created spaces for diver students' voices (De Jong, 2011, p 184) particularly by organizing group discussions and peer reviews. According to Norton's (1995) research, immigrant women play different roles at the same time. In the International English program, the amount of female students is larger than males, and they are learning English for different motivation as well. Some women are playing roles of wives and trying to adapt to new life here. Some women are mothers of children, and they want to help their children live a better life. There are also female students who are going to pursue further education. Different motivations they have, but their ultimate goals are, to some extent alike, to achieve better English language proficiency.

We do see some formative **assessment** in Artifact E like group discussions and peer reviews. However, I think the instructor should conduct more assessment regarding students' cultural backgrounds and identity information to guide his instruction. Although those assessments could be time-consuming, they would play a more meaningful role in knowing adult learners than comparatively young learners.

**Domain 5: Language Proficiency**

***Standard 5:*** *Teachers demonstrate proficiency in social, business/workplace and academic English. Proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing means that a teacher is functionally equivalent to a native speaker with some higher education.*

Teachers of English language learners should become advanced learners before they are becoming qualified teachers. In other words, ELL teachers must possess high-level language proficiency regarding speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. In this part, I will share my

experience of learning English to demonstrate the qualifications that enable me to be a qualified English teacher.

I started to learn English since I was six years old. I remembered my mother brought me to an educational institution to audit an English demo class, and I made the decision to start learning English at that institution after the class. At the same time, I also attended English classes at my elementary school. One of the most useful things I learned from that institution was the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), which greatly enhanced my phonological development and acquisition of vocabulary.

My high school is one of the best foreign language schools in China, which is specialized in foreign language learning and teaching. Apart from contents required by the Ministry of Education, we also had an extra series of textbooks, which provided me with more authentic reading materials. Therefore, I've gained a solid foundation in vocabulary from high school education.

In college, I chose Business English as my major in which I took various courses regarding English language learning, such as *Comprehensive Reading, Listening, Debating, Academic Writing, Linguistics*, etc. By taking these courses, my overall English proficiency has been improved a lot. During my studies in college, I passed the TEM4 and TEM8 tests, which are tests specifically designed for major English students in China. I also got a total score of 107 for my TOEFL test with 29, 28, 23, 27 respectively for the reading, listening, speaking and writing sections.

My distinguished performance in my undergraduate studies led me to the Masters of Education program in English Language Learners at Vanderbilt University. My time studying at

Peabody College of Education and Human Development has been one of the best experiences of my life. I have been engaging in coursework leading to an in-depth understanding of second language acquisition. Additionally, I learned how to design cultural-responsive learning environments and activities that support literacy learning among multilingual individuals. I have been equipped with pedagogical and conceptual tools needed to implement instruction through required practicums in partnering schools and community organizations. My participation in different research projects has greatly strengthened my research abilities regarding data collection, analysis, and critical thinking skills.

With all previous educational and practical experience, I will keep learning new teaching strategies and methods to diversify my teaching style in the future.

**Domain 6: Learning**

***Standard 6:*** *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.*

Teachers were once language learners before they are qualified to be teachers. Therefore, teachers' knowledge of language learning is critical first-hand experience which could help them to have a better understanding of their future students' learning processes. Teachers should utilize their knowledge and experience of learning to inform their instruction in the classroom.

**Artifact F:** The artifact I chose was an analysis paper on learning a new literacy (see Appendix F, attached separately). I chose this artifact because it recorded how I as an English language learner learning a new language out of the classroom by myself. This experience gave me more

insights regarding what kind of instruction could be effective in class and what kind of difficulties my learners may encounter while they are learning by themselves.

In this artifact, I chose to learn Spanish as a new literacy by using an online learning platform, which contains all-in-one resources to help language learners improve and understand a new language as they listen, read, write and speak in the target language. I first demonstrated my learning processes in details. Then I analyzed my learning processes from a socio-cultural perspective to present the theoretical foundations of my learning.

**Relevance to the domain:** Based on my self-learning experience, the online platform I used is suitable for those **learners** who are self-disciplined and possess certain knowledge of any languages that use the alphabetic system. This kind of preparation would make it easier for learners to start learning. Regarding my previous language learning experience, besides English, I've also learned French for three semesters at my undergraduate school, which assisted me to learn Spanish as well.

My **learning** process started with learning how to use the platform. The platform introduced a 5-step learning path to guide learners. The five steps respectively included *Ready?, Learn it!, Practice it!, Use it!*, and *Got it?*. This 5-step learning path could also be used in the classroom as teachers can first prepare students for learning by using introductory activities of preparing materials with students. Then, it comes to the learning process in which teachers will use direct and indirect instruction. After that, teachers should give students opportunities to apply what they've learned to practice. While students can use the knowledge they learned, it is necessary for teachers to assess their acquisition.

The **learning environment** was internet- and technology-based. Obviously, technology and Internet was the biggest ‘sponsor' of my progress in this self-study as the platform I used is online and full of digital media. The word ‘sponsor' here, as Brandt defined, means "any agents, local or distant, concrete or abstract, who enable, support, teach, and model, as well as recruit, regulate, suppress, or withhold, literacy- and gain advantage by it in some way" (Brandt, 2001, p19).

The **curriculum** and interactive activities included in the 5-step path of learning integrated different literacy skills and the development of each skill dependent on other skills. Therefore, the learning process followed a positive circle starting from learning to practice, to use, to assess and then back to learning again. To encourage learners to continue their studies, the curriculum design involved ‘supervised sandbox' that students could explore several times in their **assessment** parts until they found the tight way (Gee, 2007). The sandbox that Gee mentioned in the video game provided learners with a safe place in the real game that protected the learners from quick defeat (Gee, 2007). From my perspective, the design of a sandbox is a transitional stage before the learner getting into totally independent learning and playing, and it also gives learners encouragement and confidence.

During my **learning** experience, cultural learning was engaged in various formats including reading texts, pictures and maps, and videos. As language learning can never be separated from culture embedded in it, by involving cultural elements, this platform offered information of Spanish speaking countries such as the geographical distribution, demographic information, festivals and customs of celebrations, etc. If this platform is used in classroom teaching at schools, these **cultural involvements** could give students a deep understanding of cultural and linguistic flexibility in our globalized world (Paris & Alim, 2014). In my learning

experience, I made use of my previous knowledge in French and English in learning some grammars and understanding word meanings. For youth only with **prior knowledge** in English, the bilingual instruction in this platform would also engage their previous knowledge and promote cultural exchange, which can be regarded as a typical reflection of **cultural sustaining pedagogy** in literacy teaching (Lee & Walsh, 2017).

Another specific thing that needs to consider is since this platform is computer- and Internet-based, so learners without access to technology may not be able to use this kind of learning tools. Hence, it is also worth thinking how to help these learners out if they are not familiar with technologies. I will also keep this questions in mind and try to find different ways to help learners with the different socio-economic background.

**Domain 7: Content**

***Standard 7:*** *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 courses is the language that learners need 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.*

**Vygotsky's (1986) sociocultural** view of learning points out that learning happens through social interactions, which play important role in the development of people's cognitive ability. Language courses should make their contents available for students to achieve their communicative purposes in and out of the classroom.

**Artifact G:** The artifact I chose was the first lesson plan assignment for the course Teaching Second Language Literacy (see Appendix G). This lesson plan is a typical example of cultural-responsive pedagogy by involving both Chines and American cultures of celebrating the new year and using English to introduce other festivals. I not only want my learners being able to understand those readings I used in this lesson plan but also want to develop their abilities to transmit their own culture in a foreign language.

**Relevance to the domain:** The target learners in this lesson plan are Chinese adult **learners**. Without the requirements of taking school tests, most adult learners in China are learning English to improve their communicative competence. Therefore, this lesson is not test-oriented, from which I can take advantage of to include more contents outside the textbook. Their **learning** goals include content objectives and language objectives as well. Students are expected to have an overview of important festivals in American culture and can summarize differences between the Christmas and the Chinese Spring Festival. As for the language objectives, students would acquire new vocabulary and extract information from the article and relate it to their own experiences. Most important, they can utilize connectives to do a comparison by themselves both in oral and written the language.

This lesson aims to provide students with a cooperative **learning environment** to try to use more English to communicative with each other. While it is important to understanding meanings of the text, it is even more important to learn how to express their own culture in English. According to my own experience and observation when I'm studying abroad, it is not uncommon for people from countries other than America encounter the dilemma that they couldn't find the right or appropriate words to introduce other their own culture. People often feel embarrassed in this kind of situation. However, in a classroom full of English language

learners, students can communicate with each other to share their opinion opinions and make an improvement.

The **curriculum** begins with questions to elicit group discussion. The question makes use of students' prior knowledge and their own experience. Group discussion is the main tool I will use in this lesson to keep track of my students' understandings. I also keep asking questions to gain feedback from my students. Besides, translation activity has also been included in the **curriculum** design. There is no formal assessment in this lesson, but I keep using informal **assessment**. For example, the final review card could help me to assess to what extent students are acquiring language ad content knowledge. I also want to improve my **curriculum** by adding scenario simulation, so that my students could have a clearer view of the real situations in life.

Also, it is also important for teachers to keep the content of class flexible rather than fixed. In other words, preparing for a plan B is sometimes necessary to deal with any emergent situations that may affect the original lesson plan.

**Domain 8: Commitment and Professionalism**

***Standard 8:*** *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.*

To be a life-long learner is one of the commitments in my life. The professionalism of being a teacher should not stop with successfully getting a certain degree or certificate. As we gain more teaching experience in our future career, these experience will lead us to deeper and

more comprehensive understanding of language education. Besides, our teaching methods should also adapt to the community in which we are working to keep perfecting our teaching practice.

**Artifact H:** The artifact I chose was an inquiry project for the course *Literacy Development* (see Appendix H, attached separately). In this project, I demonstrated my understanding of the application of translation method in language teaching based on different research I read during my graduate studies. Different researchers' attitudes toward the translation method were in dramatic contrast with each other, while some had negative attitudes of its application, there were still some people think it is necessary to keep it in the classroom. This project first gave an overview of translation as a teaching method in the classroom. Then, I argued the necessity of using translation method in EFL classroom. At last, I also introduced a new design of translation method—Pedagogical Translation Method as a potential improvement of my professionalism.

**Relevance to the domain:** One of the most important things that I learned during my graduate studies was to identify the characteristics of different **learners** before teaching them. In this project, identifying the differences between ESL and EFL was the priority. Because ESL learners and EFL learners are learning English in different social context, people would have different answers to the question that if translation method should be used or not. To be more specific, ESL learners are learning English in an English-dominated **environment** while EFL learners are learning in non-English speaking countries with different **learning** purposes.

Translation method as a traditional teaching strategy has been a controversial topic regarding language teaching in different countries. A brief overview of different opinions on this issue was presented in this artifact to demonstrate the theoretical foundation of my project. However, with the development of society and technology, teachers should take new perspectives in considering whether to use traditional teaching method like translation method.

In this project, I introduced a new way of making use of translation method to design **curriculum.** This new design was put forward by Leonardi (2009), who also pointed out that translation is a naturally occurring cognitive activity that cannot be stopped or avoided and it seems to be quite normal to rely on translation when faced with foreign words and expressions. My design of curriculum followed Leonardi's Pedagogical Translation Framework (Leonardi, 2011, p 23):

***Pre-Translation Activities:***

- Brainstorming
- Vocabulary preview
- Anticipation guides

***Translation Activities:***

- Reading activities
- Speaking and Listening
- Writing
- Literal translation
- Summary translation
- Parallel texts
- Re-translation
- Grammar explanation
- Vocabulary builder and facilitator
- Cultural mediation and intercultural competence development

***Post-Translation Activities:***

- Written or oral translation commentary
- Written or oral summary of the Source Text (ST)
- Written composition of Source Text (ST)-related topics

As the framework showed, the whole class would be divided into three part which is respectively pre-translation activities, translation activities, and post-translation activities. The pre-translation activities aimed to interest students and were also pre-**assessment** of students' English level. The post-translation activities combined reading with writing and also **assessed** students acquisition of knowledge.

Teachers' understandings of teaching itself should be flexible as their professionalism increasing along with their teaching experience. These new understandings would help us to modify our instruction and curriculum so that to better serve our students.

## References

Brandt, D. (2001), *Literacy in American Lives*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

De Jong, E. J. (2011). *Foundations for Multilingualism in Education*. Philadelphia: Caslon Publishing.

García, O. and K. Seltzer (2017). Translanguaging Stance. In: Ofelia García (ed.). *The Translanguaging Classroom.* Philadelphia, PA: Carson.

Gee, J. (2007). Learning about learning from a video game: Rise of Nations. *Good Video Games and Good Learning (pp.45-66)*. New York: Peter Lang.

Herrera, S. G., Cabral, R. M., & Murry, K. G. (2012). *Assessment accommodations for classroom teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse students (2nd ed.)*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. Addison-Wesley Longman Ltd.

Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition.*

Lee, J., & Walsh, D. (2017). Socially Just, Culturally sustaining pedagogy for diver immigrant youth: possibilities, challenges, and directions. In D. Paris & H. S. Alim (Eds.). *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies: Teaching a d Learning for Justice in a Changing World (pp191-206)*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Leonardi, V. (2009). Teaching Business English through Translation. *Journal of Language & Translation [online]*, 10(1), 139–153.

Leonardi, V. (2011). Pedagogical Translation as a naturally-occurring cognitive and linguistic activity in foreign language learning. *Annali Online di Lettere-Ferrara*, Vol. 1-2, 17-28.

Martínez, R.A. (2013). Reading the world in *Spanglish*: Hybrid language practices and

ideological contestation in a sixth-grade English language arts classroom. *Linguistics and Education*, 24(3), 276–288.

Norton, Peirce, B.N. (1995). Social identity, investment, and language learning. *TESOL Quarterly,* 29, 9-31

Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (2014). What are we seeking to sustain through culturally sustaining pedagogy? A loving critique forward. *Harvard Educational Review*, 84(1), 85-100.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1986). *Thought and language.* (A. Kozulin, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J. (2005). Chapter 1 Backward Design. *Understanding by design* (expanded 2nd ed., pp. 13-34). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

## Part III. Application to Practice

Real teaching never happens solely with just keeping those research-based theories mentioned previously in mind. Even when teachers try to apply theories they know into practice, there could be a gap between expectations and real practice due to different contexts and social environment. My two-year graduate study at Vanderbilt University has not only informed my teaching philosophy by providing me accesses to different theories but also gave me the opportunity to apply theories to practice in doing a practicum. Based on my previous acquisition of professional knowledge and teaching experience, this part will focus on the envision of my future teaching practice from five perspectives, which include how to understand students' backgrounds, how to create a learning-friendly environment, how to design effective curriculum to achieve learning goals, how to use assessment to inform instruction, and how to keep being professional and improving my teaching in the long run.

### How to Understand Students' Backgrounds

Guided by **Vygotsky's sociocultural theory**, I believe that successful teaching relies on a comprehensive understanding of students' background knowledge in social and cultural aspects. To know students' socio-cultural background, I would first make use of their **funds of knowledge**, which refers to knowledge and skills they accumulate from families and communities (Moll et al., 1992). Another important form of socio-cultural input that students are gaining from the community is their community literacies, which are helpful in language teaching by building productive relationships with students (Jeménez, Smith & Teague, 2009). Knowing these socio-cultural backgrounds of my students would help me to fill in the gap between what do they know and what will they learn so that I will be able to design appropriate activities to activate their prior knowledge and related experience.

By referring to students' background knowledge, students' **schema** of comprehension and learning are closely related to them. According to the schema theory, a student's schema, which is the organized knowledge of the world, provides much of the basis for comprehending, learning and remembering the ideas in texts (Anderson, 2004). Therefore, by understanding students' background knowledge, I will be able to know what possible schemas my students may possess so that I can utilize in my instruction.

**How to Create a Learning-friendly Environment**

Regarding creating a learning environment, there are two main objectives I would like to achieve, which includes being cultural-responsive and refreshing.

First, I'd like to create a cultural-responsive learning environment, which not only reflects cultures in English speaking countries but also involves students' own culture. From my point of view, the **cultural-responsive pedagogy** should first include how to create a cultural-responsive environment for my learners. Specifically, I would like to teach my students English in various socio-cultural context, such as different greeting customs, different traditions of celebrating same festivals, and different dining manners, etc. Furthermore, it is also important to enable my students to express their own culture in a foreign language, which is an aspect of teaching usually ignored by a lot of English teachers in China. Also, students' affective variables would be positively influenced by familiar information included in teachers' instructions. In other words, it would be easier to keep students motivated by involving what students already know into curriculum instead of teaching entirely new things.

Refreshing is not a common word used to describe a learning environment. I chose this word here because I want to provide my learners with a learning place which is not only interesting but also can innovatively give them different ideas about learning a foreign language.

When I was a student at the school, I was always attracted by different ways of thinking while using different languages. Therefore, I also want my students to have the feeling that their minds are refreshed and renovated after each class, and this goal could be achieved in a better way by sharing opinions with peers.

**How to Design Effective Curriculum**

The overarching theory that will guide my design of curriculum is the **Backward Design** theory. According to the theory, identifying learners' desired learning results should be the first step. Then, acceptable evidence including various teaching materials and texts should be determined based on desired results (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). It is important for teachers to set general big learning goals and make the big goal achievable by setting a certain number of content and language objectives. While planning instructions, I usually like to involve technology into my classroom. While I did my summer internship in an International school in China, all students had accesses to laptops and smartphones. Some teachers still consider technology and electronic devices as a distraction from learning. However, as we can't stop the development of technology, it is wiser to actively make use of it instead of being its slaves. Moreover, students are also more willing to accept the multimodal teaching, which may include videos, various visual cues, Internet and even games.

As the traditional grammar-translation method has been widely used in China for so many years, I, to some extent, recognize the necessity of using translation between students' L1 and L2. Because the **Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP)** between L1 and L2 does help learners to transfer their metalinguistic knowledge in their first language to learn a foreign language (Cummins, 1984). My teaching practice will be greatly informed by **Translanguaging Theory** while using translation in my instruction. Compare to traditional grammar-translation

method; I would use translation to help my learners acquire more accurate and deeper understandings of texts (Goodwin & Jiménez, 2016). At the same time, I need to avoid direct literal translation and try to build up connections between my students' L1 and L2.

**How to Use Assessment to Inform Instruction**

The educational system in China is typically exam-oriented since I was a student at schools before my college. Although the Ministry of Education kept making reformation regarding standardized test and selecting standards for students, it's hard to see through changes at one night. Therefore, my future career would face the challenge of the dilemma between our educational system and my teaching philosophy. My students are also facing whether to focus more on standardized tests or improvement of overall abilities.

One thing led to previously mentioned dilemmas would be lack of informal assessment in our educational system. We have too many numeric assessments, which use numbers to give students scores and rank them based on these scores. Performance assessments usually lack necessary attention from both school administrators and teachers. As it is unavoidable to spend a lot of time dealing with standardized tests, I would try to use different assessment tools to evaluate my students' language proficiency from different perspectives, especially assessing their speaking and listening skills, which are comparatively underestimated by textbooks assigned by the government. What's more, it is also necessary to teach students how to objectively interpret their scores on standardized tests and performance in other assessment, so that students can gain a comprehensive self-evaluation and self-recognition.

**How to Keep Professionalism and Make Improvement in Teaching**

Although I've demonstrated my professionalism in last part, I still feel teachers need to keep moving forward as we are accumulating more and more teaching experience. As

researchers are continuously researching different aspects of language teaching and learning, I would keep myself updated by paying attention to the related research project and what kind of results they've made through academic research. Moreover, I will also try to use traditional methods in innovative ways to make constant improvement. Communication between old teachers and young teachers are necessary for me to gain more valuable experience and, at the same time, convey them what I learned in the U.S. to ultimately improve language education in China.

## References

Anderson, R. C. (2004). Role of the reader's schema in comprehension, learning, and memory. In R. Ruddell & N. J. Unrau (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading (5th ed., pp. 594-606).* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Cummins, J. (1984). *Bilingualism and special education: Issues in assessment and pedagogy*. San Diego, CA: College-Hill.

Goodwin, A., & Jiménez, R. (2016). TRANSLATE. New strategic approaches for English Learners. *Reading Teacher, 69(6),* 621-625.

Jeménez, R. T., Smith, P. H., & Teague, B. L. (2009). Transnational and community literacies for teachers. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy 53(1),* 16-26.

Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory Into Practice*, 31(2), 132-141.

Wiggins, G.P. & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by design*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

# Appendix A

Lesson Plan # 3

| Topic:<br><br>Can I have a pet? (Introduction of argumentative writing) | Class:<br><br>Writing class for Grade 8 Chinese students | Date:<br><br>April 10, 2017 |
|---|---|---|
| Content Objectives:<br><br>--SWBAT express their own opinions from different perspectives<br><br>--SWBAT understand what is argumentative writing<br><br>--SWBAT identify thesis statement, evidence and process of warranting | Language Objectives:<br><br>-- SWBAT acquire new terms and vocabularies<br><br>-- SWBAT make their own complete arguments and defend their own opinions with evidence or examples.<br><br>-- SWBAT make refutation with evidence and examples | |
| Key Vocabulary:<br><br>Argument, persuade, thesis statement, warrant, refute | Materials (including supplementary and adapted):<br><br>- White board and markers in different color<br><br>- Introduction Video (Argumentative writing: Definition, Format & Examples)<br><br>- PowerPoint<br><br>- Handout | |
| Introductory Activity (Explain, convince, demonstrate to students why this material, skill, activity is worth learning. Make a connection to students' experience. Includes building background. Should be only 3-5 minutes)<br><br>1. Ask students do they like pets? Do they have pets at home?<br><br>2. Set up a situation (with pictures presented on the PowerPoint): Amanda likes dogs very much and she really wants to keep a puppy dog at home, but her little brother Sam doesn't want to keep a pet at home. If you are Amanda (or Sam), what would you say to persuade your parents why it is good to (or not to) keep a pet dog at home? (Separate students to two big groups. All girls will represent Amanda, and all boys will represent Sam.) | | |

| Time: | What steps, procedures, and components of your objectives do you need to identify or explicitly teach? (Analysis) |
|---|---|
| 10min | 1. Ask two groups of students to share their opinions by turn and write them separately on the white board. List all reasons they came up with in the discussion. (5min)<br><br>Then ask each group to discuss again and pick up three strongest reasons to persuade Amanda's/Sam's parents. (5min) |
| 4min | 2. Divide students into 6 groups: each group will be assigned to defend one of the six reasons listed on the white board with more details (evidence) and specific examples. Then ask each group to write them on the white board below the reason that they support. |
| 10min | 3. Discuss with the whole class to figure out whether the evidence and examples provided are appropriate and effective enough to persuade others. |
| 10min | 4. Then introduce argumentative writing: Instead of saying, people also write articles to persuade audience, and to write a good argumentative essay you have to know the format of it. Watch the video with students (6min). Then ask students the definition and format of argumentative writing according to the video (based on the video content but use their own words, praise and encourage students when they accurately catch some important key words). |
| 6min | 5. Remind students their knowledge of argumentative writing in Chinese. Ask them what are the three components of argumentative writing in Chinese, then give them corresponding translation in English.<br><br>e.g.: 论点---- Thesis statement<br><br>论据---- Evidence<br><br>论证---- Warrant<br><br>Ask students try to explain each component in English, make modifications if necessary. |
| 20min | 6. Read the article on the handout and brainstorm the thesis statement, evidence and warrant in this passage. Discuss in two-three people and write them down. Then ask students to share their results. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 6min | 7. Ask students to make refutation to this article and make their own argument. Just let them list their thesis statements (at least three sentences), and share with other group members. |
| 15min | 8. Summary: review all definitions and terms learned in this class (prompt questions). Make a competition. |
| 6min | 9. Finally, ask what do they feel difficult/easy about argumentative writing.<br>Leave Homework: Complete their refutation to the electric car article to a persuasive argumentative essay. |

**LESSON SEQUENCE/PRACTICE/APPLICATION:**

***(Meaningful activities, interaction, strategies, practice/application, feedback)***

**1. Select a topic that easy to arouse their interests (pet), and offer students with a specific situation to make them feel they are actually helping someone out.**

**2. Use both big group discussion and small group discussion so they can study cooperatively and obtain some new ideas from other group members.**

**3. Make use of their prior knowledge in Chinese argumentative writing and use translation to help students understand the meaning of academic terms (translanguaging pedagogy).**

**4. Use multimedia (video, PPT, projector etc.).**

What special challenges will ELL students face with this material? (idiomatic expressions, cultural expectations, unfamiliar background knowledge)

1. They may not be able to use appropriate academic language and transitional words in their writing.

2. They also need further instruction on language use and selection of words in writing this kind of article.

*Teaching materials and resources used in this lesson plan:*

Video:http://study.com/academy/lesson/argumentative-essay-definition-format-examples.html

*Handout:*

**Why Electric Cars are The Future**

The world is changing quickly, and what looked like a science-fiction fantasy is gradually becoming our current reality. It seems that progress spreads to all spheres of humanity's life, but one of the most amazing breakthroughs has been achieved in energy recently. About two decades

ago, it appeared there was no effective alternative to the conventional fossil fuels such as gasoline and oil, but it turned out that there is a better, cleaner, and more effective substitute to them: electricity. Although electric engines are not so widespread, more and more people consider changing their gasoline-fueled vehicles to electric cars. And this choice is more than reasonable.

The maintenance cost of electric cars is lower than the one of those fueled by conventional gasoline. Fuel prices heavily depend on the political and military situation in countries providing oil; even if we do not take it into consideration, one year of driving a gasoline car would cost you about $2,100 (given that you drive about 15,000 miles per year, spend one gallon of gas for each 25 miles traveled, and buy gasoline at $3.50 per gallon). At the same time, driving an electric car would cost you only $475 per year. Along with the fuel costs, conventional cars require regular technical inspections, transmission repairs, and so on (EVgo). By all means, electric cars are a much cheaper alternative for those who want to save money.

Safety is another reason why electric cars are more preferable. There were several incidents when Tesla Model S electric cars flared up. This motivated Tesla Motors to research the situation with car fires in general, and it turned out that there are about 150,000 car fires per year only in the United States. “Since the Model S went into production last year, there have been more than a quarter million gasoline car fires in the United States alone, resulting in over 400 deaths and approximately 1,200 serious injuries,” Tesla Motors management informs. “There are now substantially more than the 19,000 Model S vehicles on the road that were reported in our Q3 shareholder letter for an average of one fire per at least 6,333 cars, compared to the rate for gasoline vehicles of one fire per 1,350 cars” (The Long Tail Pipe). So, according to the statistics, electric cars are safer—at least in terms of flaring up.

Electric cars are also known to be more efficient in terms of converting energy: on average, electric cars use about 60% of power of the electrical energy to make the wheels spin, compared to 17%–21% of energy stored in gasoline converted to power at the wheels. This is important not just in terms of efficiency, but also environmental protection, because the more effective use of energy means less resource taken from the nature; besides, electric cars emit no greenhouse gases. Power plants that produce electricity may pollute the air, but only those working on fossil fuels; nuclear power plants, hydro, solar, and wind power plants produce no pollution at all. So, the more people choose to drive electric cars, the less damage will be dealt to the environment (fueleconomy.gov).

As it can be seen, electric cars are in many ways more preferable than conventional gasoline vehicles. The costs of fueling and maintaining an electric car are much lower compared to those of regular cars; electric cars are safer in terms of being prone to flaring up—according to the statistics, many more car fires occur with gasoline vehicles than with electric cars. And finally, electric cars are more environmentally friendly, meaning that not only people, but also our whole planet benefits from them. Thus, it is advisable that as many people as possible choose to change their vehicles to electric cars.

| Thesis statement | Evidence | Warrant |
|---|---|---|
| 1.<br>2.<br>3.<br>4.<br>5.<br>(Add more if necessary) | | |

**Appendix B (Attached Separately)**

**Appendix C (Attached Separately)**

**Appendix D (Attached Separately)**

**Appendix E (Attached Separately)**

**Appendix F (Attached Separately)**

## Appendix G

<table>
<tr><td><u>Topic:</u><br><br>How do you celebrate new year?</td><td><u>Class:</u><br><br>Reading class for 8th grade students</td><td><u>Total time:</u></td></tr>
<tr><td><u>Content Objectives:</u><br><br>--SWBAT have an overview of main festivals in American and China.<br><br>--SWBAT summarize differences and similarities between Christmas and Chinese Spring Festival.<br><br>--SWBAT understand the underlying cultural backgrounds behind Christmas and Spring Festival.</td><td colspan="2"><u>Language Objectives:</u><br><br>-- SWBAT acquire new vocabularies including names of different festivals and corresponding customs.<br><br>-- SWBAT extract information from article and relate it to self-experience<br><br>-- SWBAT utilize contrastive connectives to do comparison</td></tr>
<tr><td><u>Key Vocabulary:</u><br><br>Festivals;<br><br>Customs;<br><br>Differences;<br><br>Culture.</td><td colspan="2"><u>Materials (including supplementary and adapted):</u><br><br>-Article: The Comparison Between Chinese and American Festivals [17], [11], [12]<br><br>-Form: Christmas VS. Chinese New Year [17], [30], [11]</td></tr>
</table>

**Introductory Activity**:

Ask students what do they know about ways or festivals to celebrate new year's coming in different places around the world, and ask them to exchange their knowledge and experience in groups (3-4 people in each group). Then students share their opinions with the whole class. [8], [9], [26], [29], [30]

| **Time:** | **Teaching procedures:** |
|---|---|
| 3min | 1. Ask students to list names and dates of main festivals in China and America (based on the assigned article), and help students figure out English names of specific festivals.[5], [9],[28] |
| 4min for discussion; 3min for sharing | 2. In small groups of 3 or four, ask students to list 3 most important key words/phrases regarding Chinese Spring Festival and Christmas respectively, then sharing reasons with the whole class. [25], [26], [7] |
| 7min | 3. List differences and similarities between Spring festivals and Christmas mentioned in the assigned article on the white board including their origins, customs, and foods. Encourage students to use their own words instead of using sentences in the article. I will help them when they encounter strange words in expressions. [24], [5], [3], [18] |
| 4min | 4. Connecting with students' self-experience, how much of their experience are the same as what the article said, and on what aspects their experience are different from content regarding Spring festival in the reading.[1], [2], [3], [8], [9], [14] |
| 3min | 5. Summarizing key vocabulary of expressing customs of different festivals. [24], [25] |
| 5min | 6. Ask students discuss in group what kind of cultural factors behind these differences and similarities, they can utilize information from the article, but new ideas based on self-experience are encouraged. [28], [3], [7], [20], [21] |
| 4min | 7. Teach students frequently used contrastive connectives with example sentences. [16] |
| 6min | 8. Based on information in the form and summarized above, ask student use contrastive connectives to write sentences of comparing differences between Christmas and Spring Festival, then ask students share their sentences, require them to compare from different perspectives. [3], [10], [12], [13], [20] |

| | |
|---|---|
| 4min | 9. Review vocabulary and new expressions they have learned in class about different festivals, especially the translation of proper nouns. [10], [2], [1] |
| 2min | 10. Give each student a blank card, ask them to write down what new ideas they have learned regarding our own festivals and western festivals like Christmas, and what questions they still have. [14], [4] |

(Note: SWBAT is the abbreviation of 'Student Will Be Able To…')

## Teaching Materials for the lesson plan

**1) Reading Material:**

CSCanada
**Cross-Cultural Communication**
Vol. 12, No. 12, 2016, pp. 61-65
**DOI:**10.3968/9108

ISSN 1712-8358[Print]
ISSN 1923-6700[Online]
www.cscanada.net
www.cscanada.org

# The Comparison Between Chinese and American Festivals

WEN Minlin[a],*

[a]School of Foreign Languages, China West Normal University, Nanchong, China.
*Corresponding author.

Received 15 September 2016; accepted 5 November 2016
Published online 26 December 2016

## Abstract
Every country has its own traditional festivals, celebrated by all kinds of activities. In China, the most important festival is the Spring Festival, while in America, the most important festival is Christmas. Festival differences exist between China and America. With time elapsing, festival culture changes gradually and some new cultural phenomenon occurs.

**Key words:** Festival; Custom; Difference; Culture

Wen, M. L. (2016). The Comparison Between Chinese and American Festivals. *Cross-Cultural Communication, 12*(12), 61-65. Available from: http//www.cscanada.net/index.php/ccc/article/view/9108
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/9108

## INTRODUCTION

Festival—an occasion when people come together to enjoy themselves, especially to mark a special religious event—is a happy time for all of the people. It was not only the window to show social life of every nation, every country, but also the conclusion and extension of politics, economy, culture and religion of every nation, every country. In festivals, people can have a good rest to relax themselves from the tired working days, no work, no study; taste delicious food; take part in different activities; make a short journey; visit relatives and friends; go shopping; enjoy themselves, enjoy life, and do whatever they want to do. Festival, indeed, is a charming and exciting time.

## 1. MAIN FESTIVALS IN CHINA AND AMERICA

There are so many various festivals celebrated in every minority ethnic group in every country, also lots of festivals celebrated by the whole world together, like New Year's Day, International Labor Day.

In China, the main festivals are as follows. The most important festival is Spring Festival, the Chinese New Year in the lunar calendar on January 1st. Besides, some traditional festivals are still attached great importance to nowadays. For example, Tomb-sweeping Day, offering sacrifices to ancestors and sweeping the grave, around April 5th; Dragon Boat Festival, May 5th in lunar calendar, commemorating the famous patriotic poet Qu Yuan in ancient times of China; Chinese Valentine's Day, July 7th in lunar calendar, coming from the old legend of the cowboy and the weaving girl; Mid-autumn Day, a festival for reunion on August 15th in lunar calendar; Double Nine festival, celebrating by the senior citizens on September 9th in lunar calendar.

In America, there are also a lot of festivals. Saint Valentine's Day, a festival especially for lovers on February 14th; Good Friday, the day before Easter that Jesus was in distress; Easter, March 12th, commemorating Christ's death and his return to life by Christians; April 1st, All Fool's Day, cracking a joke with each other; Mother's Day, the second Sunday on May and Father's Day, the third Sunday on June, expressing the respect to parents; Halloween, October 31st, the eve of All Saints' Day; Thanksgiving Day, the fourth Thursday on November, a holiday to pray and to thank the god; Christmas Day, the most important festival in America, celebrating the birth of Christ on December 25th.



Copyright © Canadian Academy of Oriental and Occidental Culture

## 2. THE MAIN FESTIVAL IN CHINA AND AMERICA

There are so many differences between Chinese and American festivals, from the origins, ways of celebration, customs to food. Here will cite the example of the most important festival in both China and America.

### 2.1 Spring Festival

#### 2.1.1 The Origin of Spring Festival

Far and away, the most important traditional holiday in China is Spring Festival, also known as the Chinese New Year, starts at the beginning of spring. It occurs somewhere between January 30 and February 20. Each Chinese year is represented by a repeated cycle of 12 animals, the rat, ox, tiger, hare, dragon, snake, horse, ram, monkey, rooster, dog and pig.

The origin of Chinese New Year is too old to be traced. It is said that a monster beast named Nian, ferocious and terrible, swallowed up people and animals on the New Year's Eve, people all scared of him and run away to the remote mountains to avoid him.

One year, when people in peach blossom village were busy in escaping, an old man came to beg. No one had the mood to care for the elder, only an old woman gave him some food. The old man said to her: "If you let me stay at your home, I can drive the monster Nian out." The old woman stared at the old man carefully, who had white hair and ruddy complexion, hale and hearty, not like a common man, but she still persuaded him to leave. The old man remained unmoved. Finally, the old woman escaped alone.

In the midnight, Nian burst into the peach blossom village, he found the atmosphere seemed different from the other years. On the east of the village, red paper put on the gate of the old woman's house, candles lighted the whole house bright. Nian shouted and threw himself on this house, but the crackling from the house made him a shudder and stop him going ahead. At this time, the old man with red clothes opened the door, laughed heartily. Nian was frightened and fled in panic. Originally, Nian was most afraid of the color red, the fire and the sound of crackling.

On the New Year's Day, villagers came back, they were very surprised that everywhere was so clam. The old woman realized what had happened suddenly and told them. People crowded into the woman's house, found the things that the old man used to subdue Nian and knew the way to drive out Nian. The custom of putting on Red Spring Festival couplets and burning fireworks to scare away Nian continues today and the term "guonian", which may mean "survive the Nian" becomes "celebrate the year" today.

#### 2.1.2 The Simple Introduction of Spring Festival

To the ordinary people, the Spring Festival actually begins on the eve of the lunar New Year's Day and ends on the fifteenth day of the first month of the lunar calendar, celebrated nationwide. The 15$^{th}$ of the first month, which is normally called the Lantern Festival, means the official end of the Spring Festival, celebrated at night with lantern displays and children carrying lanterns in a parade.

In the morning of the New Year's Day, the younger generations pay New Year calls to their senior generation, and get lucky red envelopes with money inside from the elders. The rest of the first day is spent visiting relatives, friends and neighbors.

The second day of the New Year is the day to pray to the God and the ancestors, and people are extra kind to dogs on this day. So it is also believed that the second day is the birthday for all dogs.

The third and fourth days are for the sons-in-law to pay respect to their parents-in-law.

The fifth day is called Po Woo. It is a day to honor the God of Wealth. People believed that under the protection of this God, they can have a well-fed life. On this day, Chinese families are all staying at home. It is said that bad luck will follow people when they go out.

Now that welcomes the God of Wealth on the fifth day, the sixth day is the day to kick the poor devil out.

The seventh day is a time for farmers to show off their produce. These farmers make a drink from seven types of vegetables to celebrate this occasion. This day is also considered the birthday of all human beings.

#### 2.1.3 The Customs of Spring Festival

Around the Spring Festival, many customs are formed during the past thousand of years. For the development of society and the improvement of science and technology, some customs with superstition have weakened, but some are still followed from generation to generation.

The custom of sweeping the dust means the thorough cleaning at the end of one year, starts on the 23$^{rd}$ day of the 12$^{th}$ lunar month and ends on the eve of the Chinese New Year. When Spring Festival is coming, the Chinese people completely clean the indoors and outdoors of their homes as well as their clothes, bedclothes and all their utensils. In Yao and Shun period of ancient China, this custom has already existed. It is believed that the cleaning sweeps away bad luck and makes the house ready for good luck to enter.

Another custom is to put up the Spring Festival couplets on both sides of the front gates. It also called for the antithetical couplets, coming from the peach wood charms. The peach wood decorated people's gates first was carved deity figures against evils and ghosts. Because of complicated and troublesome, later on, people began to write some auspicious words or drew charms on two pieces of paper and put them on their gates instead of it. During the Five Dynasties, people have already started to write antithetical couplets as their peach wood charms. This custom was popular in Ming Dynasty. Not only the city but also the countryside, every Chinese family

Copyright © Canadian Academy of Oriental and Occidental Culture

WEN Minlin (2016).
*Cross-Cultural Communication, 12*(12), 61-65

carefully chooses the Red Spring Festival couplets putting on their gates in Chinese New Year. At the same time, some families put the Chinese character "fu" on the gates or walls. "Fu" means happiness and good fortune, expresses looking forward to a happy life. A lot of people put the character "fu" upside down, for in Chinese the "reversed fu" is homophonic with "fu comes", both being pronounced as "fudaole".

In addition, one of the most important customs in Spring Festival is all night on New Year's Eve, which called "shousui". In ancient times, after eating the family reunion dinner, the whole family was sitting together, lighting the candles or oil lamps, chatting around the stove, waiting for the moment to bid farewell to the outgoing year and staying up all night. It symbolizes to expel all the illness and pestilence and expects the good fortune in the new year. Nowadays, people are still accustomed to stay up late to welcome the New Year.

#### 2.1.4 Food in Spring Festival

There are a lot of special foods people eat during Spring Festival.

Niangao, a sticky sweet glutinous rice pudding, eat in Spring Festival, because as a homophone, niangao means "higher and higher, one year after another."

Jiaozi, which are dumplings boiled in water. On the eve of Chinese New Year, the whole family is sitting around the table, making dumplings. People think "jiaozi" symbolizes family reunion, besides, the shape of the dumpling is like gold ingot from ancient China, so people eat them and wish for money and treasure.

Tangyuan, stuffed dumplings made of glutinous rice flour served in soup. People eat it in the Lantern Festival, because it means reunion and happiness of the whole family and all the luck.

Besides, in Spring Festival, dishes such as chicken, fish and bean curd cannot be excluded, for in Chinese, their pronunciations, respectively "ji", "yu" and "doufu", mean auspiciousness, abundance and richness.

#### 2.1.5 Superstition in Spring Festival

There are many ancient superstitions during the Spring Festival, some are still practiced today. For example, People can not use knife and scissor in the Chinese New Year, otherwise, they will break off the road for gaining money, even die without sons. Next, people are banned to sweep the floor and pour water, which will sweep their fortune away. Besides, breaking the cups and bowls is also a taboo during the New Year, it is believed that this will make people bankrupt. If people do this careless, they should say "peace all year round" to change the portentous into the propitious. Also some believe it is bad luck to wash hair on this day, for people would wash away the good luck in the New Year. In addition, it is believed that if people cry on this day, they will cry all through the year, therefore, children are indulged by their parents on New Year's Day.

Most of these taboos lift a ban on the fifth day of the New Year. After that day, people can use knife and scissor, tip rubbish and so on.

### 2.2 Christmas

#### 2.2.1 The Origin of Christmas

Christmas Day, on December 25th, is the most important holiday in America, as well as the Spring Festival in China. It is the day to celebrate the birth of Christ Jesus by Christians.

According to the Bible, God decided to allow his only son, Jesus Christ, to be born to a human mother and live on earth so that people could understand God better and learn to love God and each other more. "Christmas", meaning "celebration of Christ", honors the time when Jesus was born to a young Jewish woman in Mary.

Mary was engaged to be married to Joseph, a carpenter, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child. Joseph was an honest man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, so he had in mind to divorce her in secret. However, when he was considering this thing, an angel of lord appeared in his dream and said:

> Don't hesitate, take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

The exact date of the birth of Jesus is not clearly, but finally, in the year 354 A.D., church leaders chose December 25th as his birthday.

#### 2.2.2 The Customs of Christmas

From December 24th to January 6th in the next year is Christmas. During Christmas holiday, Christians celebrate it grandly. It originally is the holiday only for Christians, but because people attach unusual importance to it, later on, it becomes the holiday for all the common people. There are many customs in Christmas.

First, Christmas tree is the necessity of Christmas, made of pine tree, decorated by all kinds of toys, presents, multicolored balls, gorgeous bulbs, and at the top of the Christmas tree, there is a bright star. This custom maybe originate from Germany in 16th century. The German thought taking the branch of pine tree to their home can protect them from the hurt of Azrael, the god of death. In the 19th century, it spreads over the whole Europe and America. Now nearly two thirds of the American families will decorate Christmas tree during Christmas.

Another important element in Christmas is Santa Claus. In the 4th century, in the area of Asia Minor, the Bishop Nichola was kind, generous, and famous for sending gifts to the poor in the evening. The east addressed him St. Nichola respectfully in the 6th century. Because the legend about St. Nichola from the folk always connected with children and presents, from now on, the image of Santa Claus became the kind old man who sent presents to children especially in Christmas Day.



Copyright © Canadian Academy of Oriental and Occidental Culture

In the 18th century, through the literature and painting, an old man with red clothes and red trousers, white eyebrow and white beard, a benignant look and a short and fat figure became the typical image of Santa Claus. People all believed that Santa Claus will come into their house from the chimney, and put the presents into the socks of their children on Christmas Eve.

The Christmas meal is just like the family reunion dinner in Chinese New Year. The main course is poultry, like chicken, beef, duck, and turkey. All kinds of desserts are the most characteristic food of Christmas meal, they are usually fruit biscuits, puddings, pies and ice-cream. Christmas Eve is the night for reunion, people always sit together, taste the delicious food and chat freely.

And everyone will prepare Christmas gifts. The first Christmas gifts were sent to Jesus who was just born by three saints. Nowadays, it is popular to send presents to family members and friends. Every family prepares plenty of gifts before the Christmas. Not only the children, but the adults can receive many Christmas gifts, children always can get more. Friends and colleagues usually send Christmas cards with blessing words to each other.

## 3. THE COMPARISON BETWEEN CHINESE AND AMERICAN FESTIVALS

### 3.1 Differences

There are many festival differences between China and America.

First, the typical characteristic of the traditional Chinese festivals is the strong secular nature, namely non-religious. It advocates the harmony and balance between the God and the human beings, focus on humanism. Besides, the traditional Chinese festivals are named according to the climate and other natural phenomena of a season, and each has their own specific custom activities, such as Spring Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, Mid-autumn Festival and so on. But in America, most of the festivals, like Christmas, Easter, are strongly linked with the religion. In fact, holiday itself has the meaning "holy day" in English. It is thus clear that the American people have their spiritual sustenance in their belief to the God. Festivals in America are god-oriented in essence.

Next, every festival has some particular celebrations and some taboos. The specific food culture is characteristic of Chinese traditional festivals, like tangyuan in the Lantern Festival, zongzi in Dragon Boat Festival and moon cake in Mid-autumn Day, while in America, presents, greeting cards and entertainments are characteristics of American Festivals. Therefore, the Chinese traditional festivals are most within the limits of family and center on food, just like the Lantern Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, which with obvious collective recreation, people are always join the activities with family members together but not in individual. All this indicates that Chinese take family reunion seriously. But festivals in America are most within the limits of community, and weaken the family colors. For example, the large-scale festival parade, this reveals Americans pay more attention to individual.

Finally, China is a large agricultural country, the traditional festivals reflect the agricultural life style. In production, ancestors conclude many regulars about the season replacement and the weather change, so many Chinese festivals are the record to these regulars, like the Spring Festival, Tomb-sweeping Day. Besides, these festivals embody people's desire to harvest, and these festival customs embody the characteristic of agricultural life. However, in America, festivals have fewer links with agriculture. Because of a country of immigration, festivals in America reflect the peculiarity of immigration like Thanksgiving Day.

### 3.2 Similarities

Though there are many differences between Chinese and American festivals, similarities also exist.

First, all these festivals appear according to the development of the culture, religion, and society of their own country. China is an agricultural country from the ancient time. People focus on the influence of the climate to the crops. During the farming, they conclude the 24 solar terms, and on this foundation, formed the system of traditional Chinese festival. In America, people lay stress on Christianity, so most of the festivals are related to religion, like Valentine's Day, Easter, Thanksgiving Day and so on. Thus it can be seen, all these festivals strongly connect with their own culture, religion and society.

Second, all these festivals pursue peace and harmony, seek love and embody the humanism. For example, nowadays, Spring Festival and Christmas Day all emphasize on reunion and happiness. In these days, people always would like to visit relatives and friends, enjoy delicious food. Besides, people who are outside are hurriedly to come back to share the beautiful time with their family members. Humanism is strengthened day by day.

## 4. THE BLEND OF FESTIVAL CULTURE BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES

As times going by, festival culture changes gradually. In China, it is with distinctive traditional color, and spreads humanism all over the place, meanwhile, traditional festival mixes with modernization together. In America, the festival culture is the combination between religion and modernization. Besides, the religious color is weakened by degrees and the humanism is strengthened.

Nowadays, both in China and America, the business air of festivals become strongly. In China, three things must

Copyright © Canadian Academy of Oriental and Occidental Culture

be done better by every family at least before the Spring Festival. First, do Spring Festival shopping, second, brush off dust, third, buy new clothes. For these reasons, many people are hardworking and thrifty in daily time. Catching this psychology of the common people, businessmen all hoped that they can earn lots of money during the festival. So Spring Festival becomes the best sale chance.

Also, in America, business gradually reduces the religious meaning of Christmas. From November, commercial activities have already begun. At the shop gate, staff member dresses up as Santa Claus, waving his hands to people with a big smile. When close to Christmas, all the shops prolong their business hours and all the people are crazy for shopping. Merchants catch this golden opportunity and make their turnover increase doubled and redoubled.

With the policy of reform and opening, China develops quickly. In the 21st century, the national power of China strengthens day by day. In China, most people, especially the young generation, would like to celebrate the western festivals, such as Valentine's Day, Halloween, Christmas Day and so on. Someone even said that, Christmas is so hot in China that maybe one day it can have equal shares with the Spring Festival. This is the result of the interchange and fusing between the Chinese culture and Western culture. People worry about that some Chinese are keen on western festivals that they forget how to celebrate their own traditional festivals. In fact, celebrating western holidays is only for expressing emotion to family members, friends and lovers. All Chinese still remember the origin and customs of their own festivals.

Similarly, the Chinese culture has already spread all over the world. Every year, through the satellites, many foreigners appreciate the Spring Festival Party, and in the USA, during the Chinese New Year, Americans celebrate the Spring Festival with the Chinese together in Chinese city.

The blend of festival culture makes people know more about the other country, understand each other better and keep the world peace and prosperity.

## REFERENCES

Chen, M. Y. (2004). A brief analysis of the foreign festivals in China's modern festival system. *Journal of Lincang Education College,* (02).

Deng, T. (2013). The comparison between Chinese and Western festival culture. *Educational Circles,* (8), 122-122.

He, S. J., & Ji, G. X. (2006). *Chinese festivals*. China Children Press.

Song, Z. L., & Li, L. L. (2006). *The traditional Chinese festivals*. World Publishing Corporation.

Wang, X. J., & Xiao, W. H. (2005). Comparison on the traditional festival in China and the United States. *Southeast Asian Studies,* (02).

Yang, G. P. (2002). A comparison between "the spring festival" and Christmas. *Journal of Hunan metallurgical Professional Technology College,* (04).

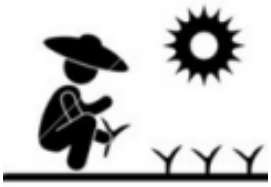
Zhang, B. L. (1997). The comparison between Chinese and American festivals. *Journal of Luoyang University,* (03).

Zhu, Z. Y. (2005) *Festivals in the West*. Shanghai People's Publishing House.



Copyright © Canadian Academy of Oriental and Occidental Culture

**2) Handout:**

| **DIFFERENCES** | **CHRISTMAS** | **CHINESE NEW YEAR** |
|---|---|---|
| DATES | Christmas is always on December 25th, the date never changes | Chinese New Year's date changes every year. It is celebrated on the first new moon of the lunar calendar, always between January 21st and February 20th. |
| ORIGIN  | Christmas is a religious holiday linked to the Catholic religion. Christmas celebrates Jesus Christ's birth. | Chinese New Year has pagan roots; it is linked to the rural life.<br>According to Chinese mythology, the origin of the Spring Festival dates back to an ancient legend that tells of a monster named Nian (年) who once a year used to go to the villages to eat livestock and children. This terrible monster was being banished by using red-color objects and loud noises, which frightened him. For this reason, in China it is usual to greet the arrival of the new year with fireworks and the use of the color red. |

| DIFFERENCES | CHRISTMAS | CHINESE NEW YEAR |
|---|---|---|
| TRADITIONAL RITES | Christmas is a Catholic holiday, so the typical rite is to attend the Christmas Holy Mass, usually at midnight December 24 or 25 in the morning to celebrate with the community the birth of Jesus Christ. | The Chinese New Year is welcomed with lion and dragon dances, made by martial artists and acrobats, who wear a great costume with the features of lions and dragons and dancing in a parade through the streets of the city, surrounded by the sounds of drums and dishes. Traditionally this dance is used to push away evil spirits and propitiate luck and prosperity for the new year. |
| HOLIDAY DURATION | Christmas holiday season usually lasts two weeks, from December 24th until January 6th, the Epiphany. Not every day is a public holiday, except for schools, but it is a time for celebration. | Chinese New Year season also lasts two weeks. The celebration begins on Chinese New Year's eve and it ends 15 days later, with the traditional Lantern Festival ( 元宵节 yuanxiao jie). For the Lantern festival children hold parades with red lanterns of various shapes to celebrate the arrival of the first full moon and this is the end of the Chinese New Year Season. |
| FAMILY HOLIDAY | Christmas is traditionally a family celebration, a time when you meet the extended family, with grandparents, uncles, cousins to celebrate all together. | Chinese New Year is the most important family celebration in China. The days before this festival are frantic, lots of people are traveling, because everyone wants to reach his/her family on time to celebrate together. |

| DIFFERENCES | CHRISTMAS | CHINESE NEW YEAR |
|---|---|---|
| FOOD | Once the family has gathered, the best way to celebrate Christmas is by eating and drinking together. Each region has its own dishes, but everyone celebrates spending hours around a table, eating the typical dishes of the festivities. Typical Christmas food include turkey, nuts, sweets and cakes. In general all the reunions with friends and family are always related to food and drinks. | Chinese New Year is also celebrated around the table eating together the traditional foods of the feast. Certain foods are typical of Chinese New Year for their symbolic meaning often linked to their name or their appearance. Fish for example is a dish that cannot lack during this celebration. This is because the word fish (鱼 yú) has the same sound of the word abundance (余 yú), so eating fish brings fortune and prosperity to the new year.<br>Another typical dish of this festival is dumplings (饺子; jiaozi) filled with meat and vegetables. Their shape remind people of the ancient Chinese coins and therefore represent wealth and prosperity. |
| GAMES | Once done eating the typical way of spending time together during the holidays is playing games as bingo or cards. | People in China are also used to spend time together playing games. One of the typical games is majiang, a Chinese game that could be compared to our chess. |
| PRESENTS | Christmas is also the time for gift exchange. Children wait anxious for Santa Claus to bring them presents and adults exchange different kinds of gifts, often food or drink or sometimes even money, especially among close relatives. | Gift exchange is also typical in Chinese New Year. The most popular gift is a red envelope (紅包; Hongbao) with money inside. The red envelope is usually given to children and the elderly. Adults generally exchange gifts as fruit baskets, sweets, alcohol, tea etc. |

| DIFFERENCES | CHRISTMAS | CHINESE NEW YEAR |
|---|---|---|
| DECORATIONS AND COLORS | Christmas is the season to decorate the streets of the city, the shops and homes with lights and Christmas trees. The typical colors of Christmas are red and gold. | Chinese streets, shops and homes are decorated as well during the Spring Festival. The typical decorations are made out of red paper cut out and nodes with red thread. The typical colors of this festival are red and gold. |

## Appendix H (Attached Separately)