ESL Capstone Portfolio

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Abstract

The ESL Capstone Portfolio demonstrates my understanding of teaching English as second language during my two-year English Language Learners Program (the ELL Program) at Vanderbilt University. I believe that communicative language teaching should be conveyed in language instructions, with the support of cultural responsiveness and scaffolding strategies. The capstone includes three parts: philosophy of teaching, artifact analysis, and application to practice. In the philosophy of teaching, my ideas about how to teach ELL in a Chinese high school are conceptualized through the current situation and theoretical background. In artifact analysis, several examples are selected from my teaching experiences during my study in the ELL Program, and they are analyzed according to the guidelines of TESOL Domains. In application to practice, instructional application and possible challenges in the future teaching are discussed.

CAPSTONE PORTFOLIO

Contents

Philosophy of Teaching

My teaching philosophy is based on a class with 50 students in a public high school in a Chinese urban area, and this class size is typical in the Chinese public school system. The teaching philosophy tries to accommodate the current facts of ELL students and curriculum in Chinese public high schools, and applied the concepts of communicative teaching, cultural responsiveness and scaffolding. The philosophy believes that communicative competences are important in classroom teaching and assessments, and the communicative instructions should be culturally responsive and comprehensible to learners.

Part 1 Current situation of English teaching in China

In high school, there is a great need for Chinese students to learn English. There are over 39 million students enrolled in senior secondary education in China (Ministry of Education of The People's Republic of China, 2017). Most of them take English as a compulsory course, and the textbooks and curriculum are based on *the National Curriculum* published by the Ministry of Education in China. English classes are scheduled four times a week, and each of them last for 50 minutes. The score in English subject can significantly influence students' performance in the College Entrance Examination, since it takes 150 out of 750 in the exam of most provinces. Therefore, currently, many English classes in China are still focus of test preparation on grammar and vocabulary, which results in students' "communicative incompetence" (Liao, 2004). Also, the assessment of English proficiency is still limited in standardized tests, which does not provide multiple resources to reflect students' background knowledge and language performance

in different contexts. Thus, facing these situations, the concerns on improving students'

communicative competences are addressed in the following analysis.

Part 2 Theoretical background of my teaching philosophy

My curriculum and instruction are based on the theories of communicative language

teaching, cultural responsiveness and scaffolding.

Communicative language teaching can enhance students' understanding on their first and

second language through active interaction with their peers, and translanguaging is an integral

part of communicative language teaching. Windschitl (1999) believes that students are

intellectual autonomies" who can learn from their peers and teach others (p. 752), and frequent

communication with their peers can let students understand each other's cultural background.

Also, as a part of communicative language teaching, translanguaging helps students improve

their language abilities and find their cultural identities when they study another language. In

teaching a second language, translanguaging does not mean translating words literally from one

language to another, but means translations should convey cultural identity in both languages. In

addition, in order to scaffold in-class communication, students' translanguaging experiences

scaffold the class activities. Translanguaging can happen in both academic and non-academic

contexts, which facilitates learners' understanding on language itself (Zapata & Laman, 2016). In

this way, translanguaging can be an interactive process where students can use the knowledge of

their first language to develop their second language (Lewis, Jones & Baker, 2012). Meanwhile,

communication can be developed through students' growing awareness of multiple contexts and

diverse culture (Martínez, Orellana, Pacheco & Carbone, 2008).

Communicative language teaching can be supported by a culturally responsive classroom. *The Culturally Responsive Instruction* means teachers should treat learners not only as students but also as people with independent thoughts, and teachers should respect students' individuality, inspire their potentials, and help them achieve their goals (Gay, 2010). In class, students' self-identity is constructed through both teacher-student and student-student communication, and both types of communication are central to communicative language teaching. Learners' peer interaction through cooperative tasks can inspire learners to make contribution to their class, and therefore "empower" and "affirm" students' cultural identity (De Jong, 2011, p. 197). As for teachers, a culturally responsive classroom is built on effective classroom management (Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003). In addition, cultural responsiveness can set a good foundation for instructional scaffolding in class. In a culturally-responsive classroom, the literacy materials are vital resources for students' in-class language learning, which connect what students have already known to what they newly learn in class (Jiménez & Teague, 2009)

Also, scaffolding takes an important role in my teaching philosophy, which focuses on connection with students' previous learning experience and bridging with students' future learning. As for students' previous learning experience, language assessment can enhance teachers' understanding of students' background in their first language, previous schooling, and cultures at home and in their communities, which further improve cultural responsiveness in teaching (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). As Valdés (1998) states, English should be taught in a "socially and culturally appropriate way" (p. 14), so does in language assessment. In addition to cultural responsiveness by understanding learners' background, teachers can apply

communicative forms in language assessment, especially in assessing oral language competence. As for bridging with students' future learning, language assessment can indicate students' current language proficiency and offer helpful feedback for teachers' instructions. Specifically, language assessment should be constructed with a well-rounded information system, which can be informative about students' background in both first language and second language (Howard & Sugarman, 2007). Therefore, language assessment plays an important part in cultural responsiveness and communicative language teaching.

Therefore, in my teaching philosophy, communicative language teaching should be placed in in-class instructions, and translanguaging is an essential part during teaching. In order to achieve this, teachers should promote cultural responsiveness in planning curriculum, in-class instructions, and language assessment. To strengthen communicative language teaching, language assessment should provide practical feedbacks through multiple resources and systematic evaluation which can indicate students' diverse language experiences.

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Artifact Analysis

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Professional Knowledge Area 1: Learner

This professional knowledge area is about English language learners (ELLs), which emphasizes that learners' identities should be taken into consideration in teaching. Language learning can be built on learners' background knowledge, which can help them transfer language learning strategies from their first language and enhance the awareness of their own cultural identities. Also, this professional knowledge area includes the concept of learning. Teachers

should understand the learning process of language acquisition and scaffold this process with appropriate language learning strategies.

TESOL Domain 4: Identity and Context

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

From my perspective, this standard focuses on students' identity and how identity can support learners' English learning. First, teachers should understand students' identity information when designing courses. The identity information can include information from learners' themselves (such as personal interests, individualities, and motivations), and information from external settings (such as families, neighborhood, and previous schooling). Also, identity information can be part of students' funds of knowledge, which should be taken into consideration in teaching.

The concept of this domain can be reflected in my teaching philosophy as well. In my teaching philosophy, I believe that cultural responsiveness should be applied to classroom teaching. When students learn a new language, students' "linguistic history and ideology" can help teachers to understand their influence of L1 on their second language acquisition (Zapata & Laman, 2016, p. 372). When students are encouraged to share their background knowledge to the class, students can feel more supportive and increase their self-esteem in an inclusive classroom (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992).

Artifact A

The paper *Investigating Schools* shares some ideas about how to introduce culturally responsive approaches to EL teaching in classrooms. This paper is based on a class observation of EL teaching in Croft Middle School, where the teacher (Ms. Iris) uses multicultural literacies to enhance EL students' reading skills and use appropriate classroom management strategies to enhance inclusiveness in class. This paper includes three parts: "the introduction of the school setting" "strengths and limitations in the instructions" "recommendations for instructional improvement".

Artifact A is helpful to get a better understanding about how teachers can affirm learners' identities by reading multilingual literacies and preventing potential discriminations against students of minority communities. These contents can clearly reflect the importance of students' identity and supportive contexts for identity formation in the requirement of TESOL Domain 4. Meanwhile, it also relates to my teaching philosophy about culturally responsiveness in class.

As for introducing multicultural literacies, I introduced how she selected books from the perspectives of students' communities and gave students opportunities to design their own journals and how she designed embedded reading through these materials. For example, she let students choose their favorite books from their local library, and discuss some chapters with her students. These ideas inspired me to connect "community—student—classroom activities" in literacy instructions in my future teaching, because multicultural literacies can help students embrace cultural diversity by showing different perspectives and therefore facilitate students critical thinking in reading and writing (Skerrett, 2015).

As for preventing potential discrimination in class, I mentioned an incident: one student cursed against a peer with offensive words in a reading discussion, and Ms. Iris dealt with the situation immediately in front of other students. In this section, I quoted the teacher's statement against discrimination in her class: "Each of you (students) are equal in my class, and never say words discriminative to your classmates and their communities!" This statement demonstrated Ms. Iris's attitude towards promoting inclusiveness in class, which can be related to one important concept in cultural responsiveness theory in language teaching: students should be cared as people, and teacher should concern not only students' academic achievement but also their "personal morality and social actions" (Gay, 2010, p. 48). This can also relate to my teaching philosophy that students' self-identity should be respected during teaching.

TESOL Domain 6: Learning

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

This TESOL Domain emphasizes that teachers should have knowledge about the language acquisition process and choose instruction that is appropriate to students' learning setting and their language proficiency level. Language learning can be facilitated when learners can experience how language functions in interactions through different contexts (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurrell, 1995).

This Domain is also connected to my teaching philosophy which focuses on language learning process through interactions and translanguaging. When teachers instruct on one

thematic content, students' language learning can be facilitated through multimodal activities that share similar content but practice different language competences (Pacheco & Smith, 2015). In order to improve students' English proficiency in literacy skills, teachers can combine with communicative language teaching (CLT) with form-embedded literacy activities in class, so that students can practice literacy skills through multimodal activities and receive multiple inputs from related contents. Additionally, second language acquisition is related to students' L1 development. Therefore, translanguaging strategies can be applied to classroom teaching, so that students can transfer their language learning strategy of L1 to their L2 acquisition.

Artifact B

The Lesson "My Name Is Jorge" was offered by me to a class of 7th grade EL students in McMurray Middle School. This ELA lesson applied CLT and translanguaging to instructions and group activities, where students should use their knowledge of L1 (Spanish) to understand the content of the poem "My Name Is Jorge" (Appendix 1) in their during-reading activity. Also, in post-reading group activities, students would use translanguaging skills to find out the cognates in Spanish and English, and shared these cognates to the class. Therefore, Artifact B can demonstrate how language learning occurs in students' meaningful interactions through their knowledge of L1.

In during-reading activity, students discussed these three questions about the poem: "Why does Mrs. Roberts ask Jorge to call her "Mrs. Roberts" rather than "teacher?" "Why does Mrs. Roberts say 'Teacher' sounds like 'T-shirt'?" "If you are Jorge, how do you feel when you are called by 'George'? Why?" These questions included content-related details and also encouraged

learners to think about real-life experience as a bilingual learner. In discussions, students practiced their discourse competence in listening and speaking while at the same time read closely to the textual content. In accordance with WIDA Principles (2019), "Multilingual learners use and develop language through activities which intentionally integrate multiple modalities, including oral, written, visual and kinesthetic modes of communication." Therefore, multimodal activities facilitate students' engagement in language learning.

In post-reading activity, students were able to use their knowledge of Spanish (L1) to find out the cognates in both Spanish and English, and use a "Poem Board" to introduce these cognates to their non-Spanish-speaking teacher. Additionally, this "Poem Board" was employed as a visual aid to scaffold students' communication, and it was embedded with forms to make comparison and contrast (see Appendix 2). The "Poem Board" uses color-coding to indicate comparison and contrast in two languages, and students actively participated in discussing contextual meanings of the words. Discovering the conceptual distinctions is an important part of critical thinking in language learning (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). I believe that this aligns with my teaching philosophy, because this activity combined both communicative language teaching and translanguaging skills to facilitate students' language learning and scaffold students' lexical and discourse competence at the same time.

Therefore, in the professional knowledge area about learners, I believe that teachers should understand the importance of learners' identities and apply learners' L1 literacy materials to instructions. Also, teachers should support learners' funds of knowledge to scaffold their second language learning. Additionally, cultural responsiveness should be considered in the classroom

instructions. Furthermore, teachers should know about how learners acquire their second

language in and out of class, and introduce their knowledge of L1 to facilitate their second

language development. Thus, supporting learners is important to build a respectful learning

context.

Professional Knowledge Area 2: The Learning Contexts

This professional knowledge area is about learning contexts for English language learners,

which requires teachers to promote a supportive and respectful classroom for language learning.

Both teachers and learners are important parts of a supportive language-learning context. In

addition to learners' knowledge and identities, a supportive and respectful classroom can be

promoted by interactive instructions.

TESOL Domain 2: Instructing

Teachers create supportive environments that engage all learners in purposeful learning and

promote respectful classroom interactions.

This domain focuses on teachers' responsibility on creating a supportive and respectful

context for language learning. In a supportive context, teachers should care about students'

cultural identities in instructions. As for a respectful classroom, teachers should encourage

students to communicate with their peers and instructors not only politely but also unbiasedly. To

promote a supportive and respectful classroom, disciplines should be emphasized and practiced

in classroom management, and teachers should act as a role-model to facilitate respectful

interactions in class.

This domain also relates to my teaching philosophy. In my teaching philosophy, teachers should promote a context which can strengthen students' awareness of respecting each other through interactions. For example, in my teaching philosophy, respectful interactions are encouraged by sharing their opinions in group activities. Also, a supportive context can not only facilitate the communication between students, but also help teachers receive feedbacks from students (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2018).

Artifact A

During my practicum in McMurray Middle School, I observed how teachers promoted a supportive environment for ELL students in language learning and assessed the educational context of the classroom by *Sociocultural Environment: Educator Views of Student, Family, and Community Assets* (Herrera, Cabral, & Murry, 2012; see Appendix 3). Based on my assessment, I found that teachers supported students' diverse language and cultural backgrounds, and multilingual students worked well with each other through collaborative classroom activities.

Artifact A is used to assess how teachers promote a supportive learning context for learners. The assessment of the educational context includes four components: culture, language, academics, families, and community. As for classroom teaching, culture, academics and language were specifically emphasized. In the classroom of my practicum, teachers can meet the criteria of culture by advocating diverse cultural patterns in both content and language teaching, which facilitate the interactions between teachers and students from diverse backgrounds. For example, many teachers would rotate their students' grouping weekly, so that students can have chances to talk with students in different groups. In some reading classes, every week one student in each

table can pick a book from their home or school library to introduce to the peers in their table. As

for academics, teachers can design tasks in consideration of different group configurations,

which can encourage students to share their opinions with peers from different cultural

backgrounds. Grouping bilingual students carefully can promote the integration of the classroom,

and help learners to support each other's cognitive, sociocultural and linguistic development (De

Jong, 2011). For instance, I found that some students were very welling to help their peers in the

table to figure out the answers in reading questions by explaining in their first and second

languages and using real-life experiences. This peer-scaffolding strategy can help learners work

supportively with each other and improve their understanding in both languages. In terms of

language, teachers in the classroom should support the student-student interaction with

appropriate instructional strategies, and improve students' participation in collaborative work

(Zwier & Crawford, 2011). These two perspectives were also aligned with my teaching

philosophy.

First, as for culture, I found that teachers created a supportive classroom environment by

promoting the "4C Norms (Communication, Collaboration, Creativity, and Critical-thinking)" in

daily disciplines. When my mentor assigned a task for students in-class, she and her students

would read these norms together, and she guided students to work with each other and share their

own opinions with their peers. For example, in "Communication", students would read: "I can

discuss my ideas. I can listen to others. I can evaluate what I think and hear." In "Collaboration",

students would follow this guidance: "I can work in a team. I can be flexible. I can be a follower

or a leader." In this way, students were reminded to support each other's learning in collaborative

work. During the observation, I found that my mentor promoted these norms in her instructions. Her actions reflected what I can apply to my future classrooms. This relates to my teaching philosophy that the teacher should apply classroom management strategies to facilitate students' collaborative work and create a platform for students to talk respectfully with each other in class.

Second, as for academics, I noticed that teachers can support students' peer-scaffolding in class, which can improve students' engagement in class when they had to deal with difficult tasks. This is also reflected in my teaching philosophy. It is important that teachers hold high expectations for students' academic achievement but meanwhile they provide platforms to scaffold students to achieve their goals. In this way, cooperative learning offers opportunities for students to learn from their peers when they solve in-class tasks, while students can learn how to be respectful participants in conversation.

Third, as for language, I found that a supportive classroom environment can be advocated by introducing students' first language to both language and content learning. By using translanguaging instructions, teachers used many examples from students first language to make explicit explanations, and they encouraged students to explain new concepts in their first language to their peers who still did not clearly understand the ideas. In this way, students can not only become aware that applying knowledge of first language can be valued as a learning strategy, but also respect each other's contribution in collaborative tasks.

Therefore, teachers can promote a supportive classroom for language learning by enforcing classroom management and enhancing collaboration among students. Promoting a supportive learning context also relates to the former professional knowledge area about learners, because it

emphasizes learners' role in developing a culturally-responsive learning context. Specifically, teachers can promote a supportive and inclusive culture by enforcing disciplines to guide students' behaviors appropriately in class, so that students can raise the awareness of self-regulation and learn how to respect each other's culture. Moreover, in a supportive context, teachers can focus on creating lessons that are appropriate to learners' English proficiency levels, so that learners can willingly communicate and collaborate with their peers.

Professional Knowledge Area 3: Curriculum

This professional area includes two domains: planning and the teaching content. As for planning, teachers should consider both content and language objectives when designing a lesson. Also, teachers need to enhance learners' engagement and hold an appropriate expectation of their academic success in learning. As for content, teachers should design and adjust teaching contents for communicative purposes, so that learners can use multiple language skills to discuss the content.

TESOL Domain 1: Planning

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

This TESOL domain emphasizes on teaching plans, which includes instructions and adaptions in practice. As for instructional decisions, when teachers design their lessons, they need to consider students' current language proficiency level and their learning objectives in content and language learning, and find the gap between what learners can do without aids and what they can achieve with instructions (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005). As for adaptions in

teaching, based on students' reaction in class, teachers should pay attention to lesson delivery and the language they use in explication.

This TESOL domain is also connected to my teaching philosophy. In my teaching philosophy, the lesson design should follow the National Curriculum in China, which assigns language and content objectives for each grade level. Therefore, teachers should make sure that these in-class instructions should follow the objectives according to their specific grade levels. In addition to the National Curriculum, teachers should also consider students' current conditions, especially students' current English proficiency level. In consideration of students' performance in class and their feedback in tasks, teachers should adjust their lesson plans in real classroom teaching, in order to scaffold students' language learning and help them achieve their goals.

Artifact A

During the practicum in McMurray Middle School, I used SIOP Model to prepare my classes, and modified my lesson plans in consideration of students' learning objectives and English proficiency level. The SIOP Model includes standards, content objectives, language objectives, and instructional procedures (Echevarría, Vogt & Short, 2018). When I designed a lesson, SIOP Model also requested me to think about these features: lesson preparation, scaffolding, grouping options, integration of processes, application, and assessment. In this way, SIOP Model provided me a framework to create and modify my lesson plan, by which I can carefully consider the teaching requirements of WIDA Standards and students' current English proficiency level.

Therefore, the application of SIOP Model to my lesson plan is a good example of how I practice my teaching philosophy in a real classroom. The lesson plan of *Lost in Time* was adapted from the SIOP Model. This lesson plan was designed for an ELL small group reading instruction, which can show the ideas in the TESOL Domain 1 and my teaching philosophy.

In the first column, both content and language objectives were explicitly listed, and each of the objectives had two sub-goals. Also, students' first language and their English proficiency level (WIDA Level K—N) were showed in the beginning. Such information gave an initial guidance of planning instructional procedures. For example, when I selected story books, I needed to check out whether the book was readable for students—too easy or too hard. This column in my lesson can reflect my teaching philosophy about planning which mentions that teachers' lesson preparation should follow the standards in the Chinese National Curriculum and meet students' current language proficiency level. Also, this preparational design related to the TESOL Domain 1, which requires instructional plan should achieve specific learning goals.

In the second column, the teaching procedures were clearly elaborated by three steps: pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading. In this lesson plan, all these steps can be modified in accordance with learners' performance in class. The clear teaching procedures show scaffolding strategies in my teaching philosophy. In my teaching philosophy, the instructions of scaffolding aim to help learners achieve their academic goals independently, instead of following teachers' rules step-by-step. Additionally, the lesson delivery can be modified by teachers during the class. For example, during the in-class practice, I found that although I had explained the content about "The Lost City of Incas" explicitly, students still felt hard to summarize the information of the

text individually. Then, based on their response, I slowed the pace, added more explanations with

the pictures in the book, and directed students to use color-coding to match the information with

the pictures. By making the concept visible, teachers can support students to comprehend the

content to help learners achieve the academic objectives (Daniel, Martin-Beltrán, Peercy &

Silverman, 2016). After these modifications, students increased their participation and finally

finished the task. Although these instructions were unexpected in the lesson plan, the

modifications in the lesson delivery provided more concrete scaffolding strategies which helped

students better understood the text and therefore successfully achieved their objectives in this

class. In lesson delivery, appropriate pacing and student-friendly explanations can enhance the

clarity of the instructions, so that increase the class efficiency and students' engagement

(Echevarría, Vogt & Short, 2018). These adaptions also related to the TESOL Domain 1, which

believes that teachers' lesson plans should correspond to learners' need, promote their

involvement and realize their achievement in language development.

     Therefore, based on the SIOP Model, I can create a clear framework of my lesson plan and

make it flexible for lesson delivery. This is aligned with my teaching philosophy, which

emphasizes the significance of the National Curriculum and students' response on my lesson

plan. Also, it relates to the requirement of the TESOL Domain on planning, which emphasizes

that instructions and modifications of a lesson plan should promote learners' engagement and

achievement in language learning.

TESOL Domain 7: Content

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

This TESOL Domain emphasizes that the teaching content should be served for real communicative purposes. In authentic communication, learners need to use listening, speaking, reading, and writing to make meaningful interactions with others, so teachers should select multimodal literacy materials in class. In addition, the teaching materials should not only develop learners' language proficiency, but also cover multidisciplinary content.

This TESOL Domain also relates to my teaching philosophy. In my teaching philosophy, I emphasize that English teaching should be focused on communicative purposes, which means the development of both literacy and oral language competences. Classroom language instruction should work as "teaching through language" and "teaching about language" (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005). Thus, the instructional content should include knowledge in different subjects, which can help students to communicate in a specific disciplinary context.

Artifact B

During my classroom observation, I watched how a science teacher teach 7th grade ELL students to understand the concept of food chain by morphological knowledge and group

discussions. I took many notes about the instructional procedures and students' engagement;

then, I shared these thoughts with my classmates in *Methods and Materials of ELL Education*

Class. In the beginning, the teacher told students how to categorize three kinds of animals—

herbivore, carnivore, and omnivore, by using pictures of animals in different categories and

telling students the meaning of prefixes ("herb-" as "things related to plants", "carn-" as "carnal"

which means "things related to meat", and "omni" as "all") and the suffix ("-vore" as "eating").

Then, the teacher assigned a group task of drawing a food chain, and she provided a worksheet

for students which contained prompts and sentence stems for students to make discussions about

their food chains. Therefore, in the activity, students can make meaningful discussions about the

science content, and meanwhile practice their communicative skills in the collaborative task.

Artifact B can be used to analyze how teachers combine content knowledge and

communicative language skills in a class activity. Although it was a science class, the teacher

used language strategies to support students' understanding in the content. In addition, students'

communicative language skills were developed by the collaborative task in the science class.

This combination corresponds to the requirement of this TESOL Domain and it relates to what I

believe in my teaching philosophy.

First, the explication about academic concepts can be achieved by language instruction and

visual aids. In this class, I found that when the teacher explained the meaning of different

morphemes, she matched these morphemes with the animals of their categories and invited some

students to link this connection on the board. In this way, the distinctions between different

animals can be visualized through their appearance in the images and morphological meanings in

their categories. At school, except for language class, many ELLs' academic struggles are caused

by the difficulties in the understanding of the language in specific content areas. However,

identifying information in multidisciplinary contexts is the first step for ELs to read textbooks,

follow teachers' instructions and finish standardized tests. Therefore, a clear explanation of

academic items has a significant impact on ELL's academic success, and an explicit instruction

on language itself can help them to make meaningful interactions about the content.

Also, the multimodal task was about the content area and served for communicative

purposes in class. In the notes, I wrote that "the students' interactions in class were authentic and

happened spontaneously, and students may find they cannot finish the task without enough

communication", because the food chain task was complex for students to work as individual

and it covered the language skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Also, the peer-led

discussions about the science content can help learners to "acknowledge and build upon" what

their peers say and encourage learners to revisit the ideas of the content and their peers, so that

facilitate productive interactions in class (Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991, p. 264). Thus, the

collaborative work and frequent communications can encourage them finish their task efficiently.

This instructional strategy can relate to my teaching philosophy, which states that

multidisciplinary contents can create a platform for students to facilitate their authentic

communication. In this process, both content knowledge and language skills can be further

developed.

Therefore, with appropriate instructions, teachers can facilitate learning of language and

other disciplinary contents. The professional knowledge area of curriculum interacts with

learners and learning context, too. As for learners, the knowledge of language can help them better understand the multidisciplinary concepts, while the knowledge of contents can facilitate learners' communication through the multimodal task and peer collaboration. As for learning context, a supportive classroom environment can serve as an inclusive platform for learners' communication; in return, a well-designed curriculum helps to construct a supportive context with language and content knowledge. Furthermore, a well-developed curriculum can show a helpful direction for learners' language assessment by school observation and tests.

Professional Knowledge Area 4: Assessment

This professional knowledge area is about the assessment of ELLs' language performance. It is important to conduct ongoing assessment of learners' intellectual and language development. As for teachers, they need to interpret the information from the assessment and make appropriate instructional decisions which may impact learners in the short or long term. Moreover, based on the information from the assessment, teachers need to provide feedback supportive to learners' language learning in the future.

TESOL Domain 3: Assessing

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

This standard emphasizes the teacher's responsibility on assessing learners' language performance. First, the language assessment should be continued, and the information of the assessment should be gathered from multiple perspectives so that teachers can have a whole-rounded understanding of a learners' language development. Second, the results of the language assessment can influence teachers' instructional decisions, which may have a low or high stake on learners' academic success in the future. Third, teachers need to let learners know the content of the assessment, and provide helpful feedbacks to learners according to their performance in the assessment.

This relates to my teaching philosophy about language assessment. In my teaching philosophy, teachers should make continuous assessment of their learners by concrete rubrics and standardized tests. Also, teachers should make cautious decisions on how to assess their learners and how to apply the results of the assessment to the real classroom teaching. Additionally, teachers need to offer learners feedback that can help them make progress in language learning.

Artifact A

The Analysis Project is a good example about how the information of a language assessment was collected and interpreted, and how the results of the assessment can influence the instructional decisions and feedbacks for learners. *The Analysis Project* is a language assessment project on a 7th grade English learner, and it has four parts: 1) Cultural and linguistic background, and the educational context; 2) Oral language assessment and standardized test; 3) Content area assessment; 4) Instructional recommendations and assessment plan. Through the analysis of these four parts, I can have a full-rounded understanding of students' background and language

performances in different settings; additionally, the instructional suggestions and the impacts of

the assessment are provided according to the interpretation of the data. Therefore, *The Analysis*

Project can reflect on the idea of this TESOL Domain and my teaching philosophy about

language assessment.

In the first part of the project, the assessment of learners' cultural and linguistic background

and the educational context gave me the information about how the learner used English in and

out of school. Specifically, the assessment of learners' cultural and linguistic background was

assessed by the three surveys: *Oral Language Use Survey* (Gottlieb & Hamayan, in press),

Literacy Survey for English Language Learners (Gottlieb, 2016), and *Self-Assessment of*

Communication Strategies in Oral Language (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). These three

assessments were all measured by the student himself, which reflected that the student used both

his first language (Spanish) and English at school and in his neighborhood, and the student felt

very confident in speaking both languages. On the other hand, the assessment of the educational

context gave me the information about how a culturally responsive teaching context support the

learner's language learning at school and in the community. This assessment was measured by

the *Sociocultural Environment: Educator Views of Student, Family, and Community Assets*

*(*Herrera, Cabral, & Murry, 2012), which indicated that the students' school and the community

really support multilingualism and cultural diversity.

In the second part of the project, the student's oral language proficiency was assessed and

the results of his standardized test was analyzed. The student's oral language proficiency was

assessed by my self-design rubric adapted from Blouwolff's *TALK Rubric* (2015), which

emphasized on four criterions: T— "Target language use," A—"Accuracy on specific structures," L—"Listening and responding appropriately to peers," and K—"Kindness in being an equal and inclusive conversation partner." This assessment provided the information that the student had an intermediate-high level of English speaking in daily settings, but his speaking proficiency was lower in an academic setting. This result was consistent on his performance in the speaking part of the WIDA ACCESS test. His performance in WIDA ACCESS test was analyzed as his performance in a standardized test, which showed that the student had an intermediate-high level overall, but he needed more support in complex texts. The purposes of choosing these two assessments was to help me understand students' real performance in daily and academic contexts and collect more information for further instructional recommendations.

The third part of the project was the assessment of one content area, which included two sections: one reading assessment and one writing assessment. The reading assessment was measured by "Running Record", which showed that the student can understand most of the textual information although he mispronounced some words. However, when asked about summarization and the use rhetorical devices, the student did not offer a complete answer. The student's writing was assessed by *Six-Trait Scoring Rubric* which evaluated one passage of the student's daily writing. The results of the writing showed that the student had many creative ideas and knew how to organize information in a reasonable order. However, the passage was of low informational density and the vocabularies were most from a daily speaking context. In general, the results of the two assessments were consistent with his performance in oral speaking assessment and the standardized test, which helped me better understand that the student may

need more instructions in academic language. Also, the two rubrics helped me interpret students reading and writing performance by specific criterions, and gave me more clues on how to improve the learner's reading and writing in complex texts.

The fourth part of the project was about instructional recommendations based on the information collected from the assessments in the former three parts. As the assessments shows, the student had difficulties in reading complex texts. Thus, the first instructional recommendation was to provide more English literacy materials for the student. Also, the teacher was recommended to have more interactions with him to talk about his reading experience, which can improve learners' higher-order thinking and metacognitive awareness in reading (Hull & Moje, 2012). The second instructional recommendation was that writing assignment can be attached to the student's reading assignment, which can give students a framework of how to decode sentences and how to use complex syntactical structures in writing (Wong-Fillmore & Fillmore, 2012). The third suggestion was to introduce English literacy materials from students' community, which can use students' funds of knowledge to scaffold students' reading proficiency. Therefore, these instructional suggestions were provided based on my interpretations of the assessments, which followed the requirement of the TESOL Domain about assessing students' language proficiency. Also, this reflects how I practiced my teaching philosophy about understanding students' language development through the interpretation of the assessment and provided feedbacks to their performance.

However, there are still some limitations in this artifact. First, the rubric of my oral language assessment is self-designed, so there is no enough data to show the validity and reliability of the

assessment currently. Second, since the limitation of the data, it is still not clear the relation

between my self-design assessment and standardized tests (WIDA ACCESS in my project).

Third, it is still difficult to trace students' progress in reading after class, because it highly

depends on the student' self-regulation, and this reading assignment may be disturbed by other

coursework. Fourth, it is still unclear about students' further progress, because I did not go back

to reassess students' English proficiency after I finished my practicum.

Therefore, the professional knowledge area about assessing learners' language proficiency

required teachers to collect the multiple information, interpret them appropriately with specific

rubrics, and provide useful feedback for learners. Assessment is also connected with other

professional knowledge areas. As for learners, assessment provides feedback for them to know

about their own language performance. As for learning context, assessment can help teachers

measure the inclusiveness of the school and classroom contexts. As for curriculum, assessment

can show a clear guideline for instructional developments. Furthermore, assessment is related to

my expectation in teaching philosophy which encourages teachers to provides practical feedback

for learners' language development.

<p align="center">**Application to Practice: Implication and Future Considerations**</p>

TESOL Domain 8: Commitment and Professionalism

Teachers continue to grow in their understanding of the relationship of second language

teaching and learning to the community of English language teaching professionals, the broader

teaching community, and communities at large, and use these understandings to inform and

change themselves and these communities.

In this section, I will reflect on what I have learned for professional development while teaching English as a second language, and talk about the challenges I may face in the future.

The implication on my teaching

This TESOL Domain encourages teachers to reflect on what they have learned in teaching and think about how to apply theory to real classroom practice. Both strengths and limitations are discussed in this section.

There are some strengths in multiple domains. First, I believe that cultural responsiveness is important in language teaching, and I encourage learners to use their background knowledge in learning, which can be affirmative to their cultural identities. For example, in my practicum, I used students' funds of knowledge (L1) to introduce the poem content in the beginning of the lesson, which not only facilitated their understanding about a Spanish poem, but also encouraged them to be aware of their cultural identities in learning. Similar instructions can also be applied to English teaching settings in China. For instance, teachers can introduce Chinese sentences to students and instruct them to do collaborative translation to English. In this way, students can have a deeper understanding of both languages.

Second, I think language learning can happen in interactive communication, so I encourage students to engage in collaborative work where peer interaction frequently happens. For instance, when I taught the poem "My Name Is Jorge", I applied instructions of communicative language teaching (CLT) in students' group work and encouraged learners to work together to finish their poem boards. During the activity, learners actively participated in the discussion and achieved their language and content objectives in the end of the class. This lesson showed me that teachers

should create more chances for learners to produce language, and group activities can provide a good platform for active peer-communication. In Chinese high schools, communicative language teaching can also be applied to collaborative tasks. For example, teachers can assign students to design their group projects in class monthly where the content is related to the unit of the curriculum. Therefore, students' communication can be facilitated in class and at the same time enhance their development in content areas.

Third, I believe that teachers should carefully plan their lessons and select appropriate teaching content. As for lesson plans, teachers should design a clear framework with clear teaching objectives and procedures. Specifically, the teaching objectives should be divided into language and content objectives, which can take the curriculum and learners' current English proficiency level into consideration. The instructional procedures should be designed to scaffold students' learning step-by-step and meanwhile can be flexible for teachers' lesson delivery. For example, in my practicum, I adopted SIOP Model in my lesson plan, which clearly listed both language and content objectives and reflected on the scaffolding process in the teaching procedure. Also, SIOP Model can be flexibly embedded into English-teaching settings in China, so that teachers can have a clear framework to design, practice, and reflect on their lesson plans.

Fourth, when assessing students' second language proficiency, I think teachers should collect multiple information, appropriately interpret them with well-defined criterions, and provide objective feedback to learners. The resource of information can include learners' first language background, language usage in communities and schooling, and the use of second language in different settings. Practically, based on the findings through these assessments,

teachers can provide instructional suggestions to their learners. For example, when I worked on

The Analysis Project, I applied three parts to assess one of my student's English proficiency,

which covered the student's cultural background and schooling experience. The project also

included the assessment of printed literacy and oral language. In the end of the project, based on

the results of the assessments, I provided practical instructional recommendations to the learner.

As for its implication for English teaching in China, in addition to the prevalent standardized

tests, teachers can apply formative assessment for the learners monthly, which can include

learners' English performance in non-academic settings, so that teachers can have a more

specific understanding on leaners' English proficiency.

However, limitations still exist in different areas. First, when I worked with ELLs of low

English proficiency, more patience was needed during communication. Second, in order to

support a culturally responsive learning context, the whole-rounded assessment can be time-

consuming and inefficient when it was applied to a larger group of students. This might further

affect the quality of feedback to improve students' language performance. Third, more

collaboration with the professional community should be encouraged in lesson planning,

teaching, and assessment. The current teaching experiences did not involve enough collaboration

of the teacher community to support my further professional development, such as peer-

observation and peer-evaluation.

The challenges in the future teaching

Still, there are some challenges I have to face in my future teaching.

First, although I can understand the significance of cultural responsiveness during teaching, it is still difficult to care about every individual student's cultural identity, especially in the face of a large student body in China. Culturally responsive teaching encourages teachers to have more interactions with their students about their learning experience and to visit students' communities to see their life after school. However, in a class of 50 students, it will be hard for me as a teacher to have so many chances to work with them individually and take cautious consideration on each student's cultural identity.

The second challenge is also related to large student body, which may reduce students' chances to have peer communication. In a large class, it is hard for teachers to find a balanced grouping strategy where students of different English proficiency levels can scaffold each other through collaboration. Also, a potential challenge can emerge in classroom management, which may further influence class efficiency.

The third challenge is about the application of summative and formative assessment. Currently, in many English classes in China, standardized tests, which are mostly summative assessments, still take a dominant role in assessing students' English proficiency. However, formative assessment is still in need, which can show well-rounded elements of students' English proficiency in various contexts other than standardized tests. Therefore, these questions can be raised: how to design a formative assessment for a class with a large student body, and how to set a practical rubric to analyze students' performance in formative assessment and provide practical instructional suggestions for their learning.

The fourth challenge is about the collaboration of the teacher community at school. In many Chinese schools, teachers are busy working on their own classes and do not have enough time to do research for instructional development (Barkhuizen, 2009). Therefore, in the teacher community, more "peer-to-peer assessment" and self-evaluation are needed to evaluate teachers' performance, so that instructions can be improved "collaboratively" and "systematically" (Cravens & Wang, 2017, p. 318).

In conclusion, through this reflection, both implications and challenges in teaching can be found, which will encourage me to keep thinking about how to become a better English teacher in the future.

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Appendix 1
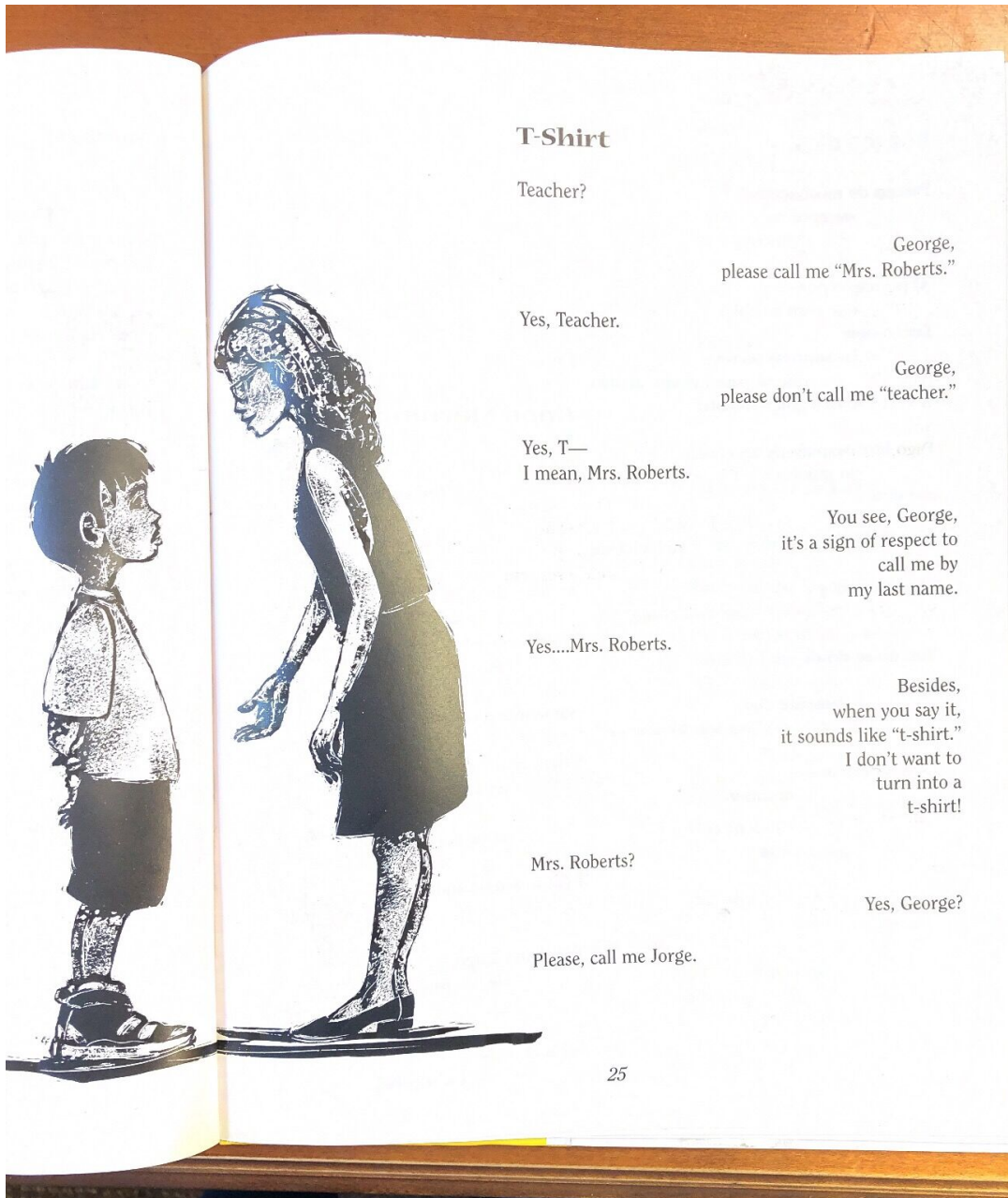
T-Shirt

Teacher?

George,
please call me "Mrs. Roberts."

Yes, Teacher.

George,
please don't call me "teacher."

Yes, T—
I mean, Mrs. Roberts.

You see, George,
it's a sign of respect to
call me by
my last name.

Yes....Mrs. Roberts.

Besides,
when you say it,
it sounds like "t-shirt."
I don't want to
turn into a
t-shirt!

Mrs. Roberts?

Yes, George?

Please, call me Jorge.

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Appendix 2

Example in Spanish

Poem Board (1)

In English, "exit" is **similarly** pronounced as "éxito".

However, in Spanish, it does not mean "a place to go out".

Instead, it means "success".

Poem Board (2)

In English, "estate" is **similarly** pronounced as "estado".

However, in Spanish, it does not mean "house selling".

Instead, it means "a country".

Appendix 3

Table 4.3 Sociocultural Environment: Educator Views of Student, Family, and Community Assets

Component		Level of Performance		
	Meets Criteria	Basic Needs	Improvement	Unsatisfactory
Culture	The student's culture is respected and valued as a source of knowledge and experiences that advance learning and enhance the cultural climate of the school. Issues and behaviors related to acculturation processes are identified and mediated with sensitivity and knowledge of research-based approaches that are appropriate for the CLD student/family/community involved.	The student's culture is respected and valued on principle. General implications and stages of acculturation are understood as influencing student learning and behavior. Recognizes but is unable to comfortably mediate cultural misperceptions and conflicts between families and self or other staff.	Behaviors that arise from cultural differences or acculturation are viewed as interfering with student achievement and long-range success. Instructional strategies and interventions emphasize acculturation to the dominant culture.	The CLD student's culture is viewed as a negative influence on the student and school. Cultural considerations are rejected as irrelevant to the development of appropriate instructional practices and intervention
Language	Supports L1 use at home and school. Understands, models, and is able to explain the rationale for L1 and sheltered instructional strategies. Is knowledgeable about language acquisition phenomena, including language loss and implications of language support, or lack thereof, on student achievement.	Supports L1 use at home. Understands basic language acquisition stages and time lines. Can explain the benefits of sheltered instruction. Considers CLD student's language as potentially affecting behavior and/or achievement.	Regards continued use of home language as an obstacle to English acquisition and school success. Is supportive of, but cannot describe or model, instructional strategies that benefit CLD students.	Regards the student's home language as a deficit to be overcome. Is unsupportive of ongoing adaptations and instructional modifications for CLD students.
Academics	Is able to articulate the relationship between L1 and L2 learning and analyze classroom tasks in terms of prerequisite language, academic, or social experiences.]Makes specific recommendations regarding instructional modifications and assessment of CLD student progress.	Understands the impact of language and acculturation on CLD student academic progress. Identifies general instructional strategies that benefit CLD students.	Provides strategies to meet the academic needs of general students performing below grade level but does not understand or provide strategies particular to the needs of CLD students.	Considers the academic difficulties of CLD students to be either environmental or innate and therefore is resistant to long-range change regardless of interventions.
Families	Exemplifies a respect for CLD families that is evident through greetings, verbal and nonverbal communication, and overall accessibility. Advocates for programs, events, and activities that engage families. Demonstrates an understanding of, and respect for, culturally different family dynamics. Respectfully mediates cultural issues and behaviors that conflict with a student's positive school participation.	Expresses respect and value for CLD families. Encourages CLD family involvement but has little direct contact with parents beyond those required by policy or events. Recognizes when cultural issues affect school–family communications but does not initiate or engage in actions to address potential conflicts or concerns.	Feels that truly interested families are already involved. Communication with CLD families is limited to required procedural or behavioral matters.	Regards CLD families as unsupportive of education. Is opposed to initiatives or incentives to increase CLD family involvement. Avoids communicating with CLD families.

more w/open house

volunteer

kind of in-between value family— school connection, but somehow not enough

(continued)

Table 4.3 (Continued)

Component		Level of Performance		
	Meets Criteria	Basic Needs	Improvement	Unsatisfactory
Community	Is knowledgeable about, and communicates with, community resources that can provide or assist CLD students and families. Regards community resources as potential assets and partners in the educational, linguistic, and social–emotional learning of CLD students. Involves members of the local neighborhood and CLD community in schoolwide events and celebrations.	Is knowledgeable about and appreciates, but does not personally communicate with, community resources that can provide or assist CLD students and families. Recognizes selected organizations (e.g., religious, fraternal) as valuable to the positive overall development of CLD students.	Provides CLD students/families with referrals only to school-based professionals such as social workers, nurses, and counselors. Does not communicate with community or seek additional resources for meeting the essential and/or enrichment needs of CLD students and families.	Speaks in generalities about community support but feels resources and influences in the student's community conflict with school ideals of what "is best" for the student. Is unable or unwilling to provide resources or contacts appropriate to the needs of CLD students and families.

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