CAPSTONE EFL PORTFOLIO

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## Abstract

Effective English language instruction requires in-depth reflection and critical analysis of the instructor's context, priorities, experiences, and plans for the future. In this Teaching Portfolio, I first present my Teaching Philosophy, the vision that I strive to achieve in my classroom. This Teaching Philosophy rests upon three pillars: warm, supportive instruction guided by theories of Culturally Responsive Caring; democratic classroom teaching, informed by my identity as an American as well as my adult students' agency and social roles; and the validation and activation of learners' prior knowledge and language experiences, which can be leveraged for their future learning. In the section that follows, I examine several Artifacts which illustrate my progress toward achieving this vision. The Artifacts are either drawn from my coursework or from my past work as a classroom teacher. All of these Artifacts demonstrate my achievements as a new teacher as well as my shortcomings, and they have prompted me to reflect further about my future role in this profession. In the last section of this Portfolio, I will present my Applications to Practice, in which I discuss the challenges I have experienced thus far and plans to overcome those challenges in the future. I hope this Portfolio will represent my preparedness and eagerness to participate fully in the field of English language education.

Table of Contents

**Philosophy of Teaching**

The first students who called me "Teacher" were a teenaged boy and girl who likely used the word because they didn't know my name. I was twenty years old: small, shifty, and nervous. Yet in their eyes, I was the "Teacher" — and for me "Teacher" conjured a variety of images, from the stooped form of my high school teacher Ms. Mathews, who arguably changed my life; to my skinny, limpid bully of a second grade teacher; to the warm, motherly Li *laoshi* who taught me Chinese; and even Robin Williams in *Dead Poets' Society*. I have known teachers I wanted to please so badly that I wrote upwards of ten drafts to get something just right, and I have known teachers whose classes I attended fifteen minutes late every week just to prove a point. Teachers have this effect on us. So what did it mean for me to be a "Teacher"? Since then I've reflected on this question over and over, and I am just now beginning to answer it. To that end, I here lay down my Teaching Philosophy, which will provide me a compass in the coming years. My Philosophy rests upon three central pillars, informed by research and guided by theory: warm, supportive instruction; democratic classroom teaching; and validation and activation of students' prior knowledge and language experiences.

**Warm, Supportive Instruction**

The basis of my Teaching Philosophy rests on my role as a warm, supportive instructor. Gay (2010) uses the term "culturally responsive caring," hereafter called CRC, in her discussion of warm, supportive instruction. She calls on teachers to show their caring through "warm demanding" by simultaneously holding their students to high standards while supporting them to reach those standards (Gay, p. 57, 2010). For adult English language learners, that high standard could entail a requirement to write college-level analysis, but possible supports would be graphic

organizers to aid the planning process, in-class time for peer review and collaboration, or even one-on-one conferences with a writing instructor or TA. Alongside "warm demanding," warm, supportive instructors validate their students' identities. It's a delicate balance which entails acknowledging the lives that students bring into the classroom, including their home languages and cultures, but also responsibilities at home, hobbies and interests, or visions of self. For me, the easiest part of CRC is cultivating a genuine interest in the cultures and languages of my students. CRC is also an opportunity to model for students open-mindedness and curiosity. I enjoy asking questions and delighting in students' knowledge, from features and words in their home languages, to home culture norms and worldviews, or even the particularly finicky parts of pronunciation. Further, the more I work with adult learners, the more I understand that "validating identities" also requires taking seriously their other commitments, like their family life, their mental health, their jobs. Adult learners are unique in that they have a very short time in which to learn many things, and they often feel chronically behind.

In addition, and perhaps most importantly, Gay's concept of "Culture Therapy" is part of warm, supportive instruction (Gay, p. 71, 2010). For teachers who work with students of diverse backgrounds, the foundation of our philosophy should be in a deep-seated awareness of our privilege. It is not merely the passive recognition of ourselves as individuals in a particular, flawed society, but a conscious, visceral feeling of our unique position to affect communities, places, and times far beyond our own. We must actively work against our biases and assumptions, against our ignorance and confusion. It is an acknowledgement of the first order that the position of "Teacher," especially English language Teacher, is political, that teaching and learning do not happen in a neutral, "safe" zone. We create spaces of inclusion or exclusion; we encourage democracy or demonstrate dictatorship; and we communicate "grand narratives"

about what it means to be English speakers and/or Americans (Priestley, M., 2015). Even further, as English Teachers we reinforce a power dynamic based in imperialism, whether we teach at home or abroad (Philipson, R., 1998). The English language is not only our native tongue; it is treated as a passport to other countries, as a credit card to cash in on a Western vision of success, or as a wall between *us* and *them* (Shin, H., 2011). To be frank, this awareness instills a strong sense of shame in me. But the shame isn't the point. The point is what I do with those feelings, how I turn it into productive action. That's where my Teaching really begins.

## Democratic Classroom Teaching

A warm, supportive instructor in turn creates a democratic classroom environment. My experiences overseas have prompted me to examine and reexamine who I think I am as an American educator. Hence, my concept of democratic classroom teaching is strongly influenced by Van Lier (2004), who posits that teachers should encourage students to take active, citizen-like roles in their classroom community. He discusses the importance of students' developing social selves and identities, which for me, is a powerful reminder that my students already exist in the social world. Adult learners already have numerous high-stakes social roles, including parent, colleague, neighbor, or voter. They read the news, they attend PTA meetings, they contribute their taxes to the government. Why should they pretend once inside my classroom that they are children again, stripped of rights and responsibilities?

One interaction in particular is instructive. After class one day, a student stayed behind to discuss her progress with me. At one point in the conversation, she became frustrated. She said to me, quietly and with a furrow in her brow: "In Egypt I was a doctor. I had work and respect. But here I am nothing." She could not take on the social role that she had enjoyed back home,

one that gave her pride and agency. It was also frustrating to me, who felt ill-equipped to help her in that moment: how could I support her quest for agency in my classroom? Democratic teaching meets language learning here — adult learners study English in the first place because they seek greater, not lesser, participation in our society. They want higher-paying jobs, they want to purchase property, they want to support their children in schools. Yet many adult learners receive an education of beige, compliant, textbook English, and their personal agency is often drastically reduced. Instead, I aim to offer a classroom citizenship to my students, so that they may see themselves as part of a community, with specific roles, responsibilities, — and rights. My students will have opportunities to negotiate with me and with each other. They will make decisions, help set the priorities for their own learning, and choose which strategies and directions work best for them. Most importantly, learners will exercise their agency *in English*, so that when they leave my classroom they can continue to advocate for themselves.

**Validation and Activation of Students' Prior Knowledge and Language Experiences**

Democratic societies only thrive if they can draw upon the strengths of their diverse parts. The democratic classroom is the same. Moll et al.'s (1992) Funds of Knowledge theory persuasively argues that learners not only bring questions and attentiveness to their learning, but also specific resources, ranging from families and friends to previous language experiences, or perhaps skills and knowledge gained through hobbies and work. This is especially true for adult students. For instance, a student once shared his personal experiences as a member of the Bahá'ís minority group in Iran, adding to a discussion around concepts like "discrimination," "prejudice," and "preferential policies."

Further, adult students are already mature language users, though perhaps not mature

English users. They bring pragmatic skills in their first languages, as well as implicit and explicit grammar knowledge and often high-level literacy. For instance, they can apply Contrastive Analysis (Lado, R., 1957), comparing the target language to the first language, mapping sounds, structures, and cadence onto the target language. For one of my Spanish speaking students, this was especially useful for learning vocabulary. She frequently made connections to cognates in Spanish. Occasionally while speaking, she also applied a Spanish word which she thought had similar meanings in English; whether she was correct or incorrect, it provided a basis for discussion. In my classroom, I will validate such complex language practices, like code switching, language brokering, and translanguaging (Daniel, S.M. & Pacheco, M.B., 2016). I will dispel the myth that these are "broken English" or "less than fluent" ways of speaking.

In content areas, too, identifying, activating, and bridging from prior experiences and knowledge to new concepts is essential for learning (Echevarría, J. et al. 2017). Learners can consider and reconsider what they already know, have observed, or have experienced. For example, in a Literature Unit I designed (and will present as Artifact D), we began by discussing the essential elements of stories. Now, what qualifies as a story is vastly different across languages and cultures, so as a starting point for examining the traditional Western view of story, students were encouraged to share how they define "story." In that way, I could make explicit connections to what they already know, or clarify a cultural contrast. Further, Dornyei (2001) writes that use of background knowledge may actually help students to feel *more* motivated, both by validating that their knowledge is useful and productive, and by connecting to their relevant experiences.

These are the essential elements of my teaching philosophy: a warm, supportive instructor who establishes high expectations and aids students to achieve them; democratic

teaching that respects and reinforces students' agency and social roles; and validation and activation of prior knowledge for the uses of further language learning. It's startling how this philosophy has developed since my first day of teaching seven years ago. I doubt that those students were aware of what they started by calling me "Teacher." Looking back, I also highly doubt I was always warm, supportive, democratic, or validating. Yet I am a work in progress; I have not finished with the task yet. In the sections of Artifact Analysis that follow, I will show the fruits of my efforts to do my students justice. These are my steps toward becoming such a teacher who acts in accordance with this Teaching Philosophy. First, I will define my view of the learners, their identity and context, and what I believe learning means for them (Artifacts A and B, TESOL Domain 4 and 6). Then, I will set forth evidence of my efforts to create a supportive learning environment (Artifact C, TESOL Domain 2). I will also discuss my plans for instruction and the content of that instruction (Artifact D and E, TESOL Domain 1 and 7). Following that, I will describe my methods for providing feedback to learners (Artifact F, TESOL Domain 3). Before the end, I will also summarize the challenges I've faced in implementing my vision and consider specific ways to foster my growth as an educator (TESOL Domain 8). I hope this portfolio will demonstrate my commitment to the Philosophy of Teaching I have outlined above, and to the profession overall.

**Artifact Analysis**

**Professional Knowledge Area 1: The Learner**

The first Professional Knowledge Area, The Learner, requires that teachers have a grounded vision of who their learners are and the language learning process. This area can be challenging for teachers of adult English language learners in the United States, who are an extremely heterogeneous group owing to age, background, life experiences, goals, and motivations. However, generally I believe that while adult English language learners are incredibly resilient, mature, and hard-working, they are also pressed for time between many different commitments (i.e. work, school, children). Given all these commitments, it is essential that teachers validate and activate their prior experiences and knowledge for further learning. In addition, adult language learners bring highly developed cognitive resources to the classroom, and they also have social opportunities to practice their learning across different contexts. In the following sections, I will discuss my work toward furthering my understanding of adult learners, their identities and contexts, and the processes by which they learn English.

**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 of how context contributes to identity formation and therefore influences learning. Teachers use this knowledge of identity and settings in planning, instructing, and assessing.*

Just as one of my starting points in teaching is my own personal history, the learners' identity and context is the foundation of their learning. No classroom is an isolated space from

the realities of a learner's life: the average learner comes to the threshold pondering dinner, work

schedules, an argument from that morning, *as well as* their understandings of course content,

their relationship with the instructor and their peers, their goals for long-term learning, and their

insecurities surrounding their abilities. How a teacher engages this multifaceted individual, in a

sea of other multifaceted individuals, is a skill carefully honed. An educator committed to

validating and activating their student's prior knowledge and experience, as I've described in my

Teaching Philosophy, may first don an investigator's cap, so as to mine affordances for their

students' learning.

**Artifact A: The Presence and Potential of Kurdish Community Literacies**

One way an instructor may investigate is through research into Community Literacy

Practices. Literacy practices are defined in Jimenez et al. (2009) as: "[...] the ways in which

people use language and literacy [which] are linked to the creation and maintenance of

connections between distant places, often across national borders" (Jimenez, 2009, p. 17).

Communities literacy materials could be restaurant menus, religious texts from their churches or

mosques, advertisements for local businesses, or even bilingual legal aids. These materials have

affordances for the classroom.

In the spirit of Jimenez et al.'s model, I performed such an exploration of the Nashville

Kurdish population in the spring of 2020, included here as Artifact A: The Presence and

Potential of Kurdish Community Literacies. This study uncovered a vibrant community of

Kurdish refugees and recent arrivals from Iraqi Kurdistan. In addition to their history, I was able

to glean more insight about their Nashville presence, including their center in Elysian Court and

their local businesses. One important site, which I will discuss further below, is the Salahadeen

Center, a community center which provides religious services as well as literacy study of Arabic and the Quran for children and young adults. Such a community would certainly impact the way an adult Kurdish student may interact in the classroom. Kurdish adult students who participate in their community events, stay informed about local news, and value more Kurdish visibility and representation may be more motivated to perform to a high standard in their coursework as well. They may also feel a strong sense of social responsibility and have existing social (or leadership) roles that I could capitalize on in the classroom as part of my incorporation of democratic classroom teaching.

Yet the most exciting part of this study was the discovery of the mural on the side of the Salahadeen Center, a recent addition to the Nashville art scene (2019). It depicts the city of Erbil, in northern Iraq, and it reads from right to left like traditional Kurdish poetry, telling a story. The mural weaves in Arabic script poetry, perhaps well-known in the community. It's a fascinating example of the importance of audience in crafting a text. The mural can also spark discussions of storytelling conventions, intertextuality, allusion, and the differences between visual and text storytelling. Students in the classroom who are not Kurdish may also participate, by envisioning their own storytelling murals and audiences.

An afternoon of wandering Elysian Fields, in combination with some reading, yielded a variety of suggestions for using community literacies productively in a classroom. Not only did I gain a better understanding of a large group of English language learners in this city, but I also identified ways to live out my Teaching Philosophy through activating their prior knowledge and experiences. The community literacies investigation is an excellent example of the ways that learners' identities and contexts not only frame their motivations and goals, but how teachers can incorporate them into instruction.

**TESOL Domain 6: Learning**

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

For the purposes of understanding the processes of adult English language acquisition, I engaged in a focused case study of a particular learner in Artifact B: Second Language Acquisition Case Study of Rosa Dileny. I critically examined her language skills and proposed specific areas where she could see improvement. Not only did the experience illustrate the process of second language acquisition in adults, but it also taught me how to interpret data collected in her language samples and draw instructional recommendations from them. Such a tailored approach also values her existing skills and sees ways to build upon them, in the style of my Teaching Philosophy's commitment to validating and activation of prior knowledge and experiences. For the typical classroom, I could perform similar, if paired back, analyses of students' work, thus informing both my whole-class instruction and specific feedback.

**Artifact B: Second Language Acquisition Case Study of Rosa Dileny**

Rosa, a Honduran Spanish speaker who moved to the U.S. at the age of seventeen, has had very little formal English instruction. Rather, most of her English language experiences have been in the context of work. At the time of my study, Rosa worked for an insurance company that catered to Spanish speakers, though her typical work environment was bilingual. Outside of work, she has an active social life with other Spanish speakers. She also shared hopes of studying English at Nashville State Community College (NSCC) and pursuing a career in nursing.

After collecting speaking and writing samples from Rosa, I analyzed them and drew several conclusions about her language learning journey. Most importantly, the context in which she typically uses English has determined the shape of her language skills. The social and work setting has aided the development of her pragmatic skills immensely, as well as her phonological awareness, by attending to bilingual Spanish-English speakers daily. In our conversation, she proficiently engaged in English conversation, and she responded to questions appropriately, even with humor or irony. Rosa also self-corrected her pronunciation after hearing myself speak. However, without opportunities to experience English in other contexts, Rosa's development as an English user has been limited. She expressed herself well and confidently, but this singular English speaking context has constrained her access to new, varied words; she tends to rely on multi-function words and colloquial terms. This limited vocabulary also limits her sentence construction in turn. For her lifestyle at the time, this proficiency level suited her needs; she worked with bilinguals, where she continued to gain strength in communicative competence and learn new words that suited this specific context. However, weak semantic development and weak grammatical development would severely limit her in her future goals of attending college.

Therefore, to meet that goal, Rosa's future instruction should expose her to the language of the college setting and provide opportunities for her to use it. Activities could include a similar setup to a classroom that Caruso (2018) observed in Portugal. In this setting, students read text in one language, discussed it in another, and then completed essays and presentations in a third; the result was that they deepened their understanding of all three languages as well as the content. It was unclear to me what her proficiency was in Spanish, whether she could use higher-level academic Spanish to help her with her future goals (Goodwin, A. P., & Jiménez, R., 2015). To that end, I recommended as the first step in any individualized plan for Rosa to assess

her Spanish language proficiency. Once the instructor has an understanding of her Spanish

proficiency, Rosa can use her languages dynamically. She could read text in English or Spanish,

then develop her academic speaking skills by discussing the content in her other language.

Content-specific reading and writing tasks could be included, along with explicit grammar

instruction for these English-language materials and attention to features of genre. In addition,

Rosa should develop her semantic skills by studying the Latin and Greek roots of academic

vocabulary, which would also reinforce her Spanish semantic skills. This reading skill could be

especially useful for a learner interested in medicine.

I learned through developing Rosa's case study that language learning, especially adult

language learning, is not a neat, linear process, and it is largely dependent upon the contexts a

learner has exposure and practice in. For Rosa, there were English-language contexts in which

she functioned to quite a high level, but other contexts to which she would have been barred, i.e.

the college classroom. As an instructor interested in access to higher education, and committed to

a vision that validates and activates learners' prior experiences, special attention to not only their

aspirations but also existing skills is vital.

**Professional Knowledge Area 2: The Learning Contexts**

The second Professional Knowledge Area, the Learning Contexts, could include many different interrelated spaces, including the classroom itself, the student's *schemata* (Echevarría, J. et al., 2017), or even the nation-state and digital age. However, just as important as these physical spaces in which teaching and learning occurs, instructors also have a hand in designing the routines and practices of the classroom, as well as establishing the expectations. These routines, practices, and expectations can communicate a message of safety and play, encouraging learners to take risks and make mistakes, which is essential for their learning.

**TESOL Domain 2: Instructing**

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

One of my major priorities in warm, supportive instruction is that I communicate that the classroom is a place of safety, where learners can take risks, negotiate meaning, and receive feedback. I may communicate this message in a variety of ways. As I'll discuss below, I've first taken the step of creating a predictable routine for my class time. Other ways to support learners in this environment could be choosing learning materials that reflect learners' experiences, sufficient wait time, and small, low-stakes assignments to allow learners to try out new concepts without fearing for their grades. In this way, I hope to embody warm, supportive instruction, combining high expectations with such specific supports in the classroom environment. I worked to craft this environment in a lesson plan utilizing the SIOP method, here offered as Artifact C: The SIOP Literature Lesson Plan (Echevarría, J. et al., 2017).

16

**Artifact C: Literature Unit SIOP Lesson Plan**

This Lesson Plan was written as part of a pilot Literature Unit for an existing community college ESOL program (English for Speakers of Other Languages). This program is for a large, diverse group of community college students who must complete English language coursework prior to being admitted to their chosen majors of study. This Lesson Plan is the first lesson in the Literature Unit that I created for the most advanced reading course (discussed below as Artifact D) which aimed to prepare students for deeper discussions of literature later in their coursework. The Literature Unit was written and implemented in a real classroom last year, with my own adult students.

As part of the supportive environment, in my course that year I established a clear, predictable routine for our Zoom sessions. This lesson sequence balances work with familiar and new concepts: familiar (Quick Write), new (Introduction of Literary Terms), familiar (Paired Practice with a text they've already read), new (Introduction to good literary discussion norms), familiar (Final discussion questions). By sandwiching new and old chunks like this, I hope to consistently refer back to the learners' prior knowledge as we move forward into new territory (Echevarría, J. et al., 2017). The final activity, particularly discussion question #1, then requires them to use all of their new and familiar knowledge to fully engage. While a routine can become formulaic or even boring over the course of a semester, I weighed that risk against the possibility of chaos in a Zoom class wherein students weren't sure how to prepare for class. With a predictable routine, learners could focus more on the content and collaborate with peers. I also announced the agenda for the day at the top of the class and opened the door for questions about that agenda.

I made a few more key choices to support students to reach high expectations. First, to reflect and validate my students' experiences, I chose "Blue-Sky Home" for its themes of family, language, identity, and for its bicultural characters  (Papademetriou, L., 2018). In fact, all of the stories I chose include narrators navigating a bicultural world, one in which the (dominant) school culture does not match the home culture in numerous ways. These characters experienced the isolation and confusion of navigating these two worlds, yet they also found ways to remain true to their own visions of themselves. My students seemed to appreciate the choice of texts: on the day that we read "Sweet, Difficult Sounds," in which Nothuluka faces the immense anxiety of reciting an English poem in front of her class, several students shared how connected they felt to her fears (Desta, I.M., 2019). By choosing texts that validated their experiences, learners had support to more meaningfully and immediately engage in the text.

Second, throughout my structured lessons, I provided wait time so that students could formulate their thoughts. I admit, this is a challenging step to take for instructors, for whom classroom silence can not only feel awkward, but unproductive. However, silence in such a case is not always a bad thing; it can indicate that students are carefully considering the task at hand. Further, second language learners often require the additional processing time as they engage in the process of language acquisition (Carrasquillo, p. 38, 2004). Something as seemingly small as patience in this regard goes a long way in building a safe classroom environment.

Finally, while I held them to the high standard of flexibly using the new literary terms in discussion, I also supported them in their practice by offering consistent, low-stakes opportunities to practice with peers and sentence stems. During their small group work, I joined their Zoom rooms and quietly listened, gently guiding them when it seemed that they veered off track. The Zoom groups also being smaller, some students felt safer asking questions in front of

only one classmate instead of the whole group. Later in the semester, I learned that Zoom had an additional feature which allowed students to choose their own groups. That way, they could work with peers with whom they had developed more camaraderie, and I believe this feature also emboldened them further to take risks.

Although this Lesson Plan, and the Literature Unit (Artifact D) was, on the whole, very challenging for my students, the classroom environment was instrumental in helping them to meet high expectations. I framed the space as safe enough to ask questions and make mistakes, and then reinforced that message through a predictable routine, wait time, low-stakes opportunities to practice. These steps were all essential: the departure from reading scientific articles earlier in the semester, combined with the pace and the requirement to read independently, meant that in class we had to be efficient and alert. Without such a foundation, my other supports may not have been sufficient.

**Professional Knowledge Area 3: The Curriculum**

Curriculum becomes quite fascinating once teachers have primed themselves with knowledge of their learners and created an appropriate environment for learning. Curriculum design requires establishing clear learning goals, then working backward, structuring tasks and independent work around meeting those goals (Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J., 2005). To first establish learning goals, instructors conduct Needs Analysis (Nation, I., & Macalister, J., 2010). Needs Analysis yields answers for the essential questions: What do learners need to do? What language do they need to accomplish these tasks? What resources do learners already have that could be leveraged for their learning? Following Needs Analysis, I can begin planning, choosing appropriate learning objectives and the language that best represents them, as well as sequencing the lessons appropriately.

**TESOL Domain 1: Planning**

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

Prior planning is only one-half of the work of curriculum design (Hammond, J., & Gibbons, P., 2005). Just as important is flexibility, to be prepared to modify plans in the moment. Admittedly, this is not my greatest strength; as a busy teacher, it is tempting to overplan each lesson, tightening the coils so that we can't change course, marching along through the weeks with the intention of an army. However, there are inevitably days when a lesson simply doesn't pan out as I'd hoped: the students are bored with the reading assignment, my questions don't engage them, or they simply have another class assignment on their minds. In such a case, it can

be helpful to recall the guidance of my Teaching Philosophy and its focus on democratic

classroom teaching, and especially of the students' roles within the classroom. If the careful

planning has gone awry, can the students take up the reins somehow? Can a teacher shift more

agency toward them, to steer the lesson back on track? Below, I hope to show evidence of both

my careful planning, as well as explain such moments when I had to take a step back and be

flexible.

**Artifact D: Literature Unit Curriculum**

     The Literature Unit was designed to fill a gap in the current curriculum at the community

college, as most of the reading curriculum focused on scientific text. My planning took on

several steps. First, Needs Analysis for this unit consisted of discussions with colleagues,

including experienced reading teachers as well as instructors of the literature classes that my Unit

was aimed to prepare the students for. A recurring theme in our discussions was a lack of

familiarity with traditional literary analysis; students seemed unable to move beyond simple

retelling of plot in their discussions. I also utilized a tool called *Read Theory*[1] to gauge the

average reading level of my adult students. In addition, to preserve my students' agency in the

process, I distributed a survey amongst my students prior to planning, querying what they wanted

to learn about literature and what kinds of things they enjoyed reading. After, I made very

specific plans for the curriculum, like any well-meaning instructor. I chose key literary terms for

the unit carefully, planning a progression of new language so that by the end of the unit students

could describe the key features of a narrative, including its characters and plot development, and

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[1]*Read Theory* is an online, independent reading and reading comprehension tool. In essence, students sign up for an account, take a diagnostic test, and the system matches them with a reading or grade "level." After that, students read a variety of texts, mostly narrative, and take comprehension quizzes to assess their progress. At the time of planning the unit, most students in my class were in the range of upper elementary to middle school grade reading levels.

begin to explain how writers develop point of view, and why, and what lessons a story might teach. The language of narrative began with more concrete, descriptive terms (character, setting) and moved toward more abstract ideas over time (theme). I also carefully planned low-stakes tasks centered on the use of this language, acting as rehearsals for the final Summative Assessment (Artifact F, below).

However, the Literature Unit underwent several revisions. First, I originally designed it in the spring, several months prior to teaching this version, and for a different group of students. That unit, which did not have the same level of Needs Analysis, would not have succeeded with the students I ultimately piloted the unit with. In addition, during the teaching of this iteration of the Unit, I still had to make certain adjustments. One of the more interesting challenges I met was from the first week as well (Artifact C). I asked students to begin the class by pondering this question: "What are the essential parts of a story?" I expected answers like "people," "places," "action," "heroes;" in short, for my students to populate their stories with *things*. Yet I was returned with answers like "thesis," "details," and "examples." These were all terms that my students had spent the semester learning in relation to scientific and analytical writing. They had not sensed yet a shift in the type of text we were studying and misunderstood my directions as asking them to recite terms they'd heard me use before. Confused and, I'll admit, disappointed, I explained that we were reading a different kind of text for this unit; the following week, instead of doing a warm-up, I began class by lecturing for a few minutes on the differences between narrative and expository text. It was not my first choice to do so, but after that, the students seemed to follow my lead with more understanding.

Despite these early setbacks, the students remained engaged over the course of the unit and their engagement even required me to change my plans at times. One of the more interesting

moments in the class came in the last week of the Literature Unit. That week, I had asked them to read their most challenging narrative yet, "Daughter of Invention" (Alvarez, J., 1991). Several students came to class bursting with questions about "what happened," or "why did this character do this thing," and "what was it *about*, Teacher!" Faced with this mixture of confusion and eagerness, I discarded my initial plan for the Warm-Up and paired them up instead. For the first ten minutes of class, students worked together to identify three key elements of the story: the main characters, the setting, and the conflict. By focusing on these three elements, the students were able to boil the story down to its most basic, and important, parts; I found that despite their initial reservations, the students were able to work together to accomplish the tasks, and hence, come away with renewed understanding of the story (Vygotsky, 1978, cited in Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). Not only did students take the initiative to voice their concerns, but they also formed partnerships and worked together to clarify misunderstandings: a powerful example of learners fulfilling their social roles and responsibilities in the democratic classroom. My initial plan for the day could not compete with that.

In the future, I'm sure I will continue making revisions to this unit, either its individual lessons and activities, or perhaps the larger goals through a deeper Needs Analysis. I want to allow more time for moments like the above example, time for students to initiate the conversation, which would better fulfill the vision for democratic classroom teaching in my Teaching Philosophy. Yet in just this first attempt at planning and executing the unit, I've learned that developing curriculum is not entirely up to careful planning, because the classroom space does not solely belong to me — it is a shared space, and together we make it safe, or productive, or interesting.

**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 course 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.*

Delving once more into a specific lesson from the Literature Unit (Artifact D), I hope to show how I've framed the study of literature as dialogue. In this context, "genuine communicative purposes" refers to the language and context of the classroom, which can aid students to discuss content (Nagy, W. & Townsend, D., 2012). In this case, the content is literature. While I understand that few (if any) of my students may go on to study literature in the long-term, the discussion skills practiced in the Literature Unit would be a part of their college experiences regardless. More important was that learners had opportunities to practice experiencing new language and then incorporating this language flexibly into their own production, speaking and writing. This is an essential part of full participation in content courses later in their major studies. Below, I explain how I arranged the content to suit this goal.

**Artifact E: Literature Unit Plot Lesson Plan**

Artifact E is the lesson plan for the second week of the Literature Unit, the day we carefully dissected plot. Prior to class, students had several exposures to the language of plot through my directions on the Brightspace page, a short introduction video, the homework

assignment (which was to complete a plot diagram), and access to the reflective questions for group discussion. It is essential that learners have opportunities to experience the target language in various contexts, in this case, through reading, listening, and reflecting prior to class (Nation, I., & Macalister, J., p. 74, 2010). Thus, they could more actively produce the terms once they came to class. Once in class, I reinforced this exposure through a short introduction to the familiar plot diagram. Then I conducted a Think Aloud and applied the plot diagram to the short story "Blue-Sky Home" from the previous week (Papademetriou, L., 2018). This modeling step not only showed students how I thought about plot and narrative events, but it gave me another opportunity to expose them to the appropriate academic language. I carefully used the key literary terms in my modeling process, repeating them and their meanings several times.

After these exposures, students then had an opportunity to use the language themselves in a genuine communicative context: the literature discussion. Students paired up with a peer and revised their homework plot diagrams for the new short story. This task required them to compare their updated understandings of the content, and they also had to incorporate the plot key terms into their speaking to communicate with their partners. In addition, through taking notes, they incorporated the key terms into their writing as well. Students explained their thinking and used text evidence to support their claims, critical reading and discussion skills that work across content areas.

Unfortunately, the paired work did not conform to one particular feature of literature discussion in this instance: debate. I had envisioned a spirited discussion wherein students would disagree about the most important moment in the story, when everything changed for the main character; however, I found much more sedate chatter. Students seemed more interested in being "correct" or "finding the answer" than in having an open-ended discussion. Perhaps this is owing

to my choice of short story or perhaps to the design of the task. In the future, I will include more refined opportunities for learners to practice their discussion skills in the communicative context of disagreement and defending their ideas, so that when faced with similar situations in the future they can participate more fully.

However, despite this setback, time for paired work and discussion became the most important part of the literature lesson each week as we progressed, since it gave students opportunities to discuss content with peers. These discussions required several authentic classroom skills: to think, form questions and hypotheses, and assert claims with evidence. They negotiated meaning with peers by asking clarifying questions, rephrasing, and sometimes even drawing pictures.

**Professional Knowledge Area 4: Assessment**

Assessment is a professional knowledge area that makes students and — at least *this* teacher — very, very nervous. Although I myself no longer take extended, high-stakes exams, I am still very much immersed in a world where observations and data are incredibly important. I've also never been a very good test taker. Yet, we cannot do away with assessments, much as I or my students might wish it so. So when I consider what assessment can mean in a language classroom, I try to see the possibilities. Whether formative or summative, my hope is that my assessments are consistent and useful, that they provide productive feedback, clear directions, and observable limitations. Most important, I aim to craft assessments that are both *manageable and empowering* (Brown, D.H. & Abeywickrama, P.,  2016).

**TESOL Domain: 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.*

Once again, my time in high school with Ms. Mathews proves instructive. Even when I received essays streaked with red question marks and bright, loud NO's, the experience was more positive than negative, because I came away thinking, "Yes, I have a clearer idea now." Her feedback met me where I was and built on it. It also helped Ms. Mathews foster a closer relationship to each

student, tailoring her regular feedback to their level and needs. That is how I would like my students to see assessment: as regular, valuable, individualized feedback that they can use to meet their own specific goals. Perhaps just as importantly, Ms. Mathews designed a *variety* of regular assessments with which to measure our progress. In the Literature Unit which I designed above, I included such formative assessments as in-class discussions, Quick Writes, and mini reading comprehension quizzes. In combination with these formative Assessments, I created a Literature Unit Final Assessment (Artifact F) to provide feedback to the students and evaluate the effectiveness of my curriculum.

**Artifact F: Literature Unit Final Assessment**

This Literature Unit Final Assessment was crafted to assess students' progress in the analysis of narrative. It required them to read independently, reflect upon their reading, and incorporate the key literary terms for themselves in writing. To support learners in their achievement of this assignment, I designed the Literature Unit so that the formative assessments, like the Quick Writes and in-class discussions, would practice the analysis that was required for this final assessment. For instance, this Final Assessment requires that learners identify the main characters, setting, and conflict in their independent reading story; we practiced that skill particularly in the first week (Artifact C). Learners were also required to identify the specific steps in the story's plot, using the language of the plot diagram. Above, I showed how learners were guided to practice this analysis in class through revising their practice plot diagrams with a partner (Artifact E).

Included in the pages of Artifact F is an Overview, a Checklist, and a Grading Rubric. I provided all of these materials to students several weeks prior to the due date, so that they could

strategically plan their time and make progress. First, the Overview gave a brief description about the assignment. After a student asked for additional support, I also created the Checklist, which distilled all the key terms and questions from the Unit and put them in one place. I advised students to use this Checklist as they read their story to take notes and organize their thoughts. Finally, the Grading Rubric described the specific requirements of the assignment and provided guidelines for my evaluations and feedback. I included this document for my students so that they could plan their writing for the particular requirements of the assessment.

Evaluating the Final Assessment entailed reading each students' writing twice with the accompaniment of the Grading Rubric. My first priority was that the students used the key literary terms correctly in their discussion of the stories, as this was the major learning goal in the Unit. Although I did use a standard assessment in the form of the Grading Rubric, each student received additional individual written feedback in the margins of their paper and at the bottom of the Grading rubric; here, I included my estimation of their writing and analysis strengths as well as additional questions I considered as I read. For some students I also indicated areas in their writing that could be made clearer through the inclusion of additional details. In this way, I evaluated students according to the Grading Rubric for the purposes of the class, but I also provided commentary to aid their further learning that did not conform strictly to the demands of the Rubric. Later, when I completed two readings of each submission, I then uploaded the copy with my notes to the class page so that they could access the feedback.

As Artifact F was a summative assessment, and a semester-end summative assessment at that, I am unable to say how students used the feedback. However, I take encouragement from the outcomes of their Final Exam, on which students performed overall quite well. I also observed students' immense progress through their formative assessments, peer discussions and

homework. Had I not seen such progress in class, I would have been prepared to modify the

Final Assessment. Perhaps in the future, I will engage my learners more democratically in the

process of designing this assessment; we could openly discuss the requirements and possible

adjustments. Next time, I would also like to include a self-assessment. I employed

self-assessments in other units in the course but not the Literature Unit, asking learners to reflect

upon what they knew about language and content prior to the unit, what they felt they had

learned in the course of the unit, and what questions still remained. I believe self-assessment

would have provided valuable data for me to understand my curriculum design and its washback,

prompting me to make necessary revisions for the future. In addition, Self-Assessments can

encourage learners to self-monitor their progress and even serve as a study tool.

**Applications to Practice: Implications and Future Considerations**

**TESOL Domain 8: Commitment and Professionalism**

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


I hope the Artifact Analyses presented here have shown my growth as an educator. In that process, I have endeavored to understand first the learners who come into my classroom and also the experience of acquiring a second language from a linguistics perspective (Artifact A and B). This first step of deeply understanding the context is essential for an instructor who aims to be culturally responsive, warm, and supportive. Further, in that capacity, I have practiced the delicate art of balancing high expectations with supports to meet those expectations, one of the most challenging aspects of English language teaching (Artifact C). One of the important supports I try to create in my classroom is an environment that is not only safe for taking risks and negotiating meaning, but also democratic and social, bringing to bear adult language learners' maturity and eagerness to participate. Further, in honoring the social roles that my adult students fulfill, I have aimed to craft instruction and curriculum that holds them to the rigor of a college environment, yet grants space for them to exercise agency, initiating conversations and directing the course of class time to their pressing questions (Artifact D). I have also conducted Needs Analysis, deepening my understanding of my students to craft curriculum and choosing reading assignments that I believed would validate their lived experiences as well as increase motivation to learn. Through assessments, I have gathered important data about students'

progress, crafting a variety of authentic formative and summative assessments to make ongoing decisions about my instruction (Artifact E). By refusing to rely on a single assessment, and in fact using differing forms of assessment to gauge their progress, I attempted to fulfill my vision of warm, supportive teaching that values students' whole selves and recognizes that no single assessment could capture the entirety of an individual's abilities.

However, I recognize that I still have much room to grow and that if I intend to continue in this profession it is essential to make a specific plan to foster that growth. Although my Teaching Philosophy outlined three pillars — warm, supportive instruction, democratic classroom teaching, and validating and activating prior language and experiences — I admit that my instruction has certainly fallen short of achieving all three of these goals. Warm, supportive instruction has commanded most of my attention; crafting a classroom space wherein students would willingly speak up and make mistakes was my major goal here at the beginning of my career. However, I also admit that maintaining the energy, patience, and charisma of a warm, supportive instructor does not come easily or naturally to me. Outside of whole-class instruction, I will add, navigating difficult conversations with students is a reality of the profession, whether we are discussing grades, attendance, or other logistical matters. Learning how to work with a student as a team, tackling a problem together, rather than maintaining an awkward or adversarial relationship is one of my ongoing goals in fulfilling this part of my Teaching Philosophy.

Democratic classroom teaching, although it is of such personal significance to me, remained the most elusive vision to fulfill so far. As a learner, I feel that my own learning experiences (especially as a Chinese learner) were not democratic at all. Then as a teacher, the curriculum I worked with previously was largely pre-made and pre-planned, with rather strict

guidelines for me to follow; it left little room for me or my students to exercise much agency. I found it tricky to graft together the department's ideas with my own and my students'. The curriculum was also written to tackle discrete skills of language learning (grammar, writing, reading, etc.) with little integration or consideration of the larger context of 21st century America. Ergo, the course did not lend itself well to discussions of society which might have encouraged my students to think more critically beyond their own communities. An additional challenge was the online teaching environment in which I worked, which was new to me. The Zoom classroom, with a single host and no physical space in which students can mill around and chat, lent itself somewhat more to instructor-led activities and discussions.

Validating and activating prior language and experiences was also challenging, for similar reasons. With the set curriculum and materials handed to me, I did not have opportunities to use, say, Community Literacies, with my own students. Although I attempted to build on learners' prior experiences and knowledge, and I did welcome commentary drawn from their own lives, it was not as deeply ingrained into the curriculum as I would have liked. Perhaps most egregiously, I taught in an English-only program; that is, learners were not permitted to use their home language in class, for any purpose. I was expected[2] to stop students from using their first language during in-class discussion and activities. While I did not specify at any time during my classes that English was the only acceptable medium, I do not believe I managed to demonstrate consistently that multilingualism is a valuable asset to their learning. I also struggled to find ways to leverage a multilingual space, in which the majority of my students did not share a home language in the first place.

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[2] I willingly own that I did not stop learners from using their first languages, and I was not reprimanded.

Reflection is only the prelude to action. Moving forward, I have a few specific ways I intend to improve upon my instruction and work toward fulfilling my Teaching Philosophy. First, in becoming a warm, supportive instructor, I will aim for a two-pronged approach. First, I must look after myself, fight exhaustion and burnout, so that I can maintain my level of emotional, social, and academic support for students. To that end, I will foster relationships with professionals in and out of my school, creating a network of support resources, mentorship, and advocates. Inside my school, of course, colleagues will be able to help me craft my curriculum and instruction in ways that meet the school's expectations. Yet I should also maintain my network outside of the school, not only for professional reasons, but because too much focus inward could become navel-gazing; I should see where sister institutions may be making progress and trying out new ideas. The second prong in my approach would be to develop better initial assessment strategies, namely to be able to evaluate with more precision my learners' incoming proficiencies and in which areas. Namely, I wish to continue and finetune my learning from building Rosa's case study (Artifact A). So far, I have found myself in classrooms with learners of many different proficiency levels, with very specific needs not only for support but also for more challenge. Working for the continued progress of all learners, not only those who require additional support, is one area I would like to improve.

In the area of democratic classroom teaching, I also have a few specific ideas. As I specified above, I would like to include the students' interests, reading preferences, and priorities more fully in a future revision of the Literature Unit (Artifact D). I will also take students' agency more into account in the new curriculum I design. In addition, I am interested in testing out a design for group work, in which learners each have specific roles in their discussions, projects, or long-term collaboration; over time, learners can change roles so that every student

has an opportunity to try out and rehearse the task. For instance, roles could include a note taker, who must distill the important elements of the discussion; a presenter, who must present the group's ideas and/or perspective on the discussion; and an initiator, who must begin the conversation and keep the group on task. This strategy could aid learners to take more responsibility to their community as well as help them to gain experience in specific classroom communicative tasks.

For the third pillar of my Teaching Philosophy, activating and validating background knowledge and prior experience, I should develop my skills in two areas. First, learning to leverage multilingualism in ways that still position it as an asset but may not violate school policy. Utilizing community literacies, for instance, but requiring that discussions of these materials occur in English, may be one solution. Explicitly teaching and discussing code switching and using translation activities may be another, so that learners may see that these skills can be honed, improved upon, and employed in certain situations for valid purposes, rather than merely because they "do not know enough" English. This tactic may be an option in another revision of the Literature Unit (Artifact D), through choosing readings that utilize code switching for purposes of speaking to specific audiences, for aesthetic reasons, or for promoting interest in the second language.

The process of planning, drafting, and completing this Teaching Portfolio has led me to critically consider my teaching practices. In some areas, I see where I have shifted priorities or discarded some entirely, and in other areas, I see where certain elements have endured: my respect for and admiration of English language learners and their experiences, my skepticism of the gatekeeping to full participation in our society, and my desire to effect positive change. To guide these aims, I have crafted a Teaching Philosophy built on warm, supportive instruction,

democratic classroom teaching, and validating and activating my learners' prior experiences; I have also shown the ways I have tried and fallen short of this vision, but also my ongoing plans to try, try again. I hope that this Portfolio will serve to demonstrate my preparedness and commitment to the field, to my own professional development, and to my learners above all.

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**Appendix**

**Artifact A: The Presence and Potential of Kurdish Community Literacies**

This investigation was completed as part of a larger project in the course EDUC 6520,

Foundations of Teaching English Language Learners.

*Introduction and Theoretical Framework*

The Kurdish community of Nashville, which first began arriving in the late 1970s, is one

of the city's biggest surprises. At first glance, Nashville's palette appears decidedly

monochromatic and Country/Western, but a deeper dive into the neighborhoods and especially

schools of the New South reveals quite a different story. Any given Metro Nashville Public

School (MNPS) classroom will include Culturally and Linguistically Diverse students (CLD),

such as second or third generation immigrants, refugees, or Students with Interrupted Formal

education (SIFE). Amidst this immense diversity, an educator can feel at a loss for

understandings of their students' identities, i.e. what language(s) they speak at home, what

religion they practice, and what experiences of school they might have had prior to entering their

classroom. Moreover, such teachers may be ill-equipped to meet their students' learning needs

without this key information. The best way to begin to address the elephant in the room is to

investigate the students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds and prior experiences. For

Nashville, one of the most prominent CLD student groups is students of Kurdish heritage.

The major inspiration for this research comes from the model provided by Jimenez et al.

(2009). The authors of this study journeyed into their students' communities to learn more about

their community literacy practices, defined here as "[...] the ways in which people use language

and literacy [which] are linked to the creation and maintenance of connections between distant

places, often across national borders" (Jimenez, 2009, p. 17). That is, after taking a careful look, we can find how students use language not only to engage with their immediate surroundings in Nashville, but how they maintain connections to their heritage languages and cultures. These practices can then, in turn, become productive material for classroom activities and content.

Moll et al. (1992) was one of the first to claim that students and their communities have their own "funds of knowledge" which can become useful in a classroom setting. In Moll's landmark study, the researchers conducted interviews with families of school-age children to uncover what resources they have that could contribute intellectually to their child's education; they were able to use examples such as farming and candy making in the classroom to discuss economics and science, respectively. Further, Moll et al. argue that making connections between the classroom and the communities in which students live is not only helpful, but vital to their learning (Moll et al., 1992, p. 134). Drawing upon a student's existing *schemata*, or world-knowledge, to bridge to new understandings is one of the cornerstones of learning and development (Echevarria, J., Vogt, M., & Short, D., 2016, p. 72).

For Gay (2010) and De Jong (2011), Culturally Responsive Caring is also at play. Gay writes that Culturally Responsive Caring aims to see students as whole humans, encapsulating every element of their character and potential, including their cultural identities. Teachers need a "knowledge base about ethnic and cultural diversity in education" and must engage in consistent self-analysis about their biases and expectations for CLD students (Gay, 2010, p. 69-70). De Jong, along the same lines, claims that teachers send students messages about what is valid in a school setting and what is not; for CLD students, especially those who are also English Language Learners (ELL), what is "valid" in school tends to be English only, to the exclusion of their home languages and identities. In both cases, Gay and De Jong claim that teachers are powerful

actors in their students' development, and that they are tasked with special roles through caring and advocating. To the point, teachers are responsible for conducting research that allows them to understand their students better.



*Introduction to the Kurdish Community of Nashville*

The Kurdish people of Nashville are unique, being the largest ethnic group in the world without a nation to call its own. The ancestral Kurdish homelands range from eastern Turkey to Iran, northern Iraq up to parts of Syria. Each area of these homelands has variations on culture and language, but the Iraqi Kurdistan region is the most autonomous and has an education system separate from the mainstream. These Kurdish comprise the majority of the Kurdish presence in Nashville, and they speak Sorani dialect of Kurdish, which utilizes Arabic script for writing.

Immigration to Nashville began in the late 1970s, after the failed revolution in Iraq, which was supported by both Iran and the United States. These Kurdish people tended to be from lower socioeconomic classes in Iraq and included people within the Kurdish military, the Peshmerga. Catholic Charities was the first to resettle the Kurdish in Nashville at this time. Immigration picked up again in the early 1990s, with the largest group of Kurdish people to immigrate to Nashville as a direct result of Saddam Hussein's reign of genocide. But the wave of the late 1990s was markedly different from the previous arrivals, as these were people with ties

to international agencies. These ties in turn led to them being targeted by the government in Iraq.

These Kurdish arrivals were also highly educated and brought immense talent and political

acumen to the Kurdish already settled in Nashville. It was after the arrival of this group that the

community built its first mosque. We can also arguably identify a fifth wave of immigration of

Kurdish refugees to Nashville since the outbreak of the Syrian civil war (2011). Many of these

Kurdish fought against ISIS as part of the Peshmerga as well, providing translation services for

the U.S. military. These Kurdish too tend to be highly educated and skilled.

Today, the Kurdish of Nashville gather in a particular location along the "International Corridor": Elysian Court, near the intersection of Harding Place and Nolensville Road. This area of Nashville, in the southeast quadrant,



has long been home to immigrants and refugees from all over the world, including Sudanese,

Egyptian, and Burmese people. The Kurdish themselves have established a strong presence in

the Elysian Court shopping center through visible signs denoting Kurdish-owned businesses.

In addition, the Kurdish as one of the largest refugee groups in the city (around 15,000 strong) have entered the arena of community activism and become a vocal force in news and politics. The Tennessee Kurdish Community Council focuses local community energies toward cultural events and spreading awareness about domestic and international Kurdish affairs. Their website and Facebook page are quite active. Their top three goals for Vision and Mission are: "[to] promote life and welfare of the Kurdish towards positive integration into mainstream America;" "[to] engage the Kurdish community in American civic responsibilities;" and "[to] preserve the cultural heritage of the Kurdish people" (tnkcc.org). There is undoubtedly an outward-looking element to this online presence, however, as the website and the Facebook page contain almost no Arabic-script Kurdish. In some likelihood, the makers of these sites hope that outsiders to their community will read and learn something about them. The Kurdish have also joined the Mayor's New Americans Advisory Council (MNAAC), which includes prominent members of many immigrant communities in the city. Created in 2009, the purpose of the Council is to meet and share issues relevant to their communities with the city government. The current Kurdish representative is Nawzad Hawrami, manager of the Salahadeen Center (discussed in more detail under "Implications for Teaching").

The Nashville Kurdish community has also been the subject of several studies in recent years, including the Nashville Public Television (NPT) documentary series *Next Door Neighbors* and in the independent documentary *More Than the Mountains*. Most recently, however, the Kurdish have become a player in federal and local politics. As anti-Muslim rhetoric in the media reaches a fever pitch, some Kurdish people voice their trepidation: "Though Nashville has long been a welcoming home to Kurdish, several members of the community reported a noticeable difference across the Davidson County line, especially for those Kurdish women who both

practice Islam and choose to wear a hijab" (Sawyer, 2017). Further, in fall 2019, with the Trump decision to pull troops out of Syria, attention has once again turned toward the Kurdish community in Nashville, as many local publications turned to hear their thoughts on the topic. In "Nashville Kurds: 'What Did We Do to Deserve This?'", members of the community discussed feelings of betrayal by the United States government (Elliot, 2019).

In education, Nawzad Hawrami of the Salahadeen Center pushed for the creation of a Kurdish language course to be offered in MNPS schools. In January 2019, the request was approved, although without a budget attached to it; by August of that year, the implementation of the classes had failed. However, Hawrami remains optimistic, vowing to promote the classes by visiting schools (Torres, 2019). Still, although MNPS does not currently offer Kurdish language courses in schools, the district has partnered with Nashville Community Education to offer language courses for teachers at Wright Middle School and Antioch Middle School. The spring 2020 classes include Kurdish and Arabic for Educators for the purpose of "prepar[ing] [teachers] to communicate with students and families" (Nashville Community Education). These classes are not exactly what Hawrami had hoped for, but it is a step in the right direction, demonstrating that the district takes the Kurdish population and their needs seriously.

*Implications for Teaching*



Aside from bearing in mind the outside forces that may act upon Kurdish students' lives, research in the Kurdish community in Nashville yields excellent implications for teaching. The Kurdish language

itself offers resources that teachers could engage in classrooms for discussing features of English, perhaps through contrastive analysis. As mentioned briefly, Kurdish itself does not have its own specific script, so depending on the nation-state a Kurd may come from, a student's version of Kurdish could use Arabic script, Latin script, or even the Cyrillic alphabet. However, in all cases, Kurdish uses diacritic marks to distinguish itself from, say, the Arabic of the Quran. Nashville Kurdish, being mostly from northern Iraq, speak Sorani Kurdish, a dialect that also uses Arabic script. A better understanding of the relationship between Kurdish and Arabic script could be a helpful avenue for teachers to explore. Are there opportunities to use cognates? To notice differing conjugation rules? To explore sentence structure more generally? Can we discuss morphology by comparing the Kurdish use of diacritic marks to change meaning with prefixes and suffixes in English?

Teachers (or students) could bring in signs from local Kurdish businesses like the ones pictured above and ask students to analyze the translations. How accurate is the English word "salon" in this context? What about "international"? Are there cognates for English words in these signs? How can we decode the Kurdish word "international" differently than the English word "international"? Students in the class who may not be of Kurdish heritage could also create signs in their first languages as well, then engage in the conversation in a similar way.

In addition, the community itself offers a vivid resource for teaching in the form of the mural on the side of the Salahadeen Center, completed in the summer of 2019 to great fanfare. The Center itself already stands as an institution of learning for Muslims in the area, as it offers courses in Arabic for Quran reading, as well as courses in Muslim doctrine and the role of the imam. Observations of the Center and its courses could afford opportunities to reexamine student-teacher (or learner-imam) relationships and interactions. We can beg the question, are

there practices at work here that might be helpful if I have a large number of Kurdish students (or perhaps Muslim more generally) in my class? What kinds of activities does the imam do with young readers of the Quran? How does he reinforce their readings of Arabic? In "Learning from Abdalla," a young Arabic-speaking child receives reading instruction in Arabic akin to the variety he might have encountered in his home country; after several weeks of engaging both his first language and English through these methods, he showed great gains in comprehension and fluency (Palmer, 2007). For Kurdish students in Nashville, there could be similar affordances.



The mural on the outside, however, could be the most accessible representation of community literacy and the most adaptable for different ages. The mural itself depicts the city of Erbil, in northern Iraq; many families in Nashville recognize it or remember it themselves (Sinner, 2019). The mural, which like traditional Kurdish poetry is read from right to left, tells a story. An outsider may

not be able to access the story, but a teacher with Kurdish students could ask them to tell the story in a targeted way -- perhaps retelling orally for fluency, or writing using specific narrative techniques, or even engaging in translanguaging, as they decipher the poetry painted into the wall.
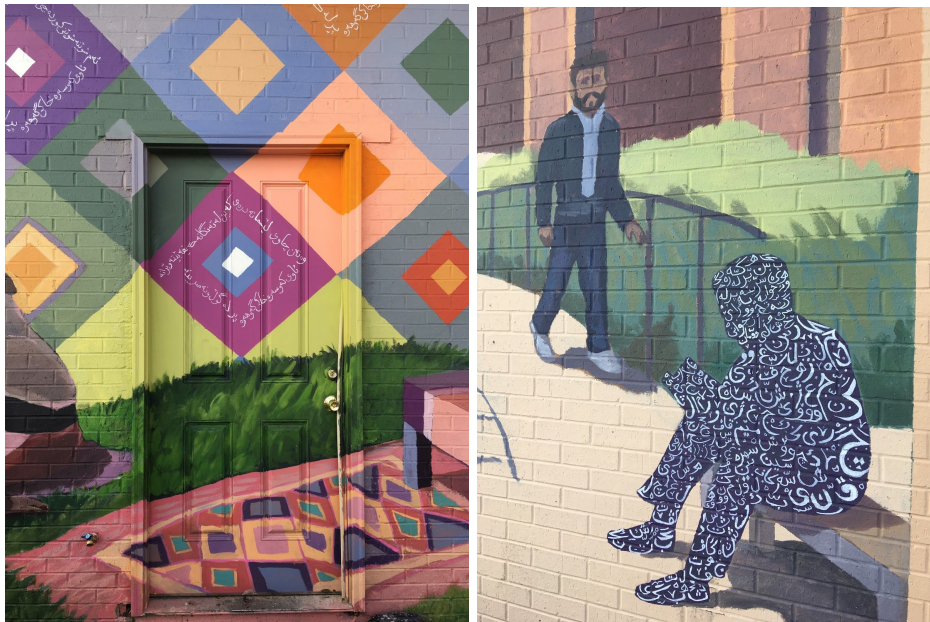


For slightly older students in a reading or language arts class, the mural could be the illustration of a complex abstract concept like intertextuality or allusion. Teachers could prompt the students with questions like, "Where did this poetry come from? Why did they choose it for this mural?" In this way, students could engage in discussion about the interconnectedness of texts, but also of text to the community. Students could also engage in activities around storytelling and narrative more generally, analyzing how visual and text storytelling differ, and what each form offers that the other does not. Critical thinking could include an essential question: Why is this mural significant for the community? What if your community (thinking about non-Kurdish students in the room as well) had a mural like this one?

In sum, the mural stands as one of the highlights of the Elysian Court community and could certainly be leveraged in productive ways with Kurdish students. Yet a new teacher to Nashville may never have known about these opportunities without going out into the community to find literacy practices themselves. Although walking around an unfamiliar neighborhood, where people do not speak your language or look like you, can bring out uncomfortable feelings of Otherness, Jimenez et al. remind us that "these feelings of belonging, legitimacy, and membership are major issues for all students but especially for students from immigrant families" (Jimenez et al., 2009, p. 24). That is, even this type of discomfort, short-lived, can be productive for bringing an educator closer to her students.

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**Artifact B: Second Language Acquisition Case Study of Rosa Dileny**

This investigation was completed as part of a larger project in the course EDUC 6530,

Educational Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition.

*Part : Introduction to the Learner*

The participant in this study, Rosa Dileny, is my former student from the year(s)

2015-2016, when I worked with the Nashville International Center for Empowerment (NICE) in

their afterschool program for refugee youth at Glencliff High School. This was Rosa's first year

of high school in the United States education system; prior to 2015, she lived in Honduras and

was educated solely in Spanish amongst Spanish speakers. During the course of our

conversations, she revealed to me that I was her first English teacher, as her high school program

did not emphasize English skills, but rather required her and her classmates to work on

computerized credit recovery for the purpose of graduating. Therefore, she has never studied

English formally; the majority of her English knowledge has come through informal settings,

like afterschool programs and work. She relies mainly on pragmatic awareness, especially in

speaking, to communicate and rarely writes in English at all. Rosa graduated from Glencliff High

School in the spring of 2017 at the age of twenty, the year after I left Nashville to pursue

teaching abroad. Currently, Rosa works in an insurance company that caters to Spanish speakers,

but her colleagues include several bilinguals who move fluidly between English and Spanish;

this group includes native English speakers as well as native Spanish speakers. This daily

interaction with bilinguals has aided most of her language development. In addition, Rosa told

me during our discussion that she hopes to enroll in an English class at Nashville State

Community College (NSCC) and later pursue a career in nursing.

The samples used in this case study include text messages and a conversation which occurred on a week night over dinner. We began, naturally, with catching-up between a former student and teacher, before transitioning into the recorded audio interview. Our previous relationship and rapport likely helped make her feel more comfortable in this situation; I reminded her that her skills are not being judged, and that my main goal in asking for her participation is to help advise her English development. Rosa is possibly also motivated by a desire to show as much as possible how much she's grown as an English speaker since we last saw each other.

However, before delving into these samples, it proved helpful to me to learn more about Spanish and especially Honduran Spanish, in order to understand areas where language transfer might occur. Lado's (1957) Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis predicts that certain features of an individual's first language or culture can appear in the language they are learning (as cited in Phillips Galloway, 2019). In Rosa's case, it can manifest as specific gestures, pronunciation, or cognates. Although this theory cannot account for 100% of all the errors that a learner might make, it can offer researchers and teachers insight into the possibilities. Honduran Spanish, which is a diverse set of dialects across the country, differs from textbook Spanish in a number of important ways. It is marked by slang and native jargon, perhaps pointing to a general cultural preference for informal settings; Honduran Spanish also has an accent quirk wherein speakers tend to drop the [s] in certain words, resulting in a sound like the [h] in English. Perhaps just as strikingly, Hondurans conjugate "you" as *vos*, instead of the more formal *tu* that many students of Spanish language learn from textbooks.

Bearing these aspects as well as her educational background in mind, I would predict that Rosa has high communicative competence in informal settings where she can utilize gesture, eye

contact, and situational context to help her construct meaning. However, I would also add that Rosa could be more motivated or interested in colloquial English slang not only for its usefulness but also because of a cultural predisposition toward informality. The study as it proceeds below benefits from samples that represent this strength in her language development; however, it suffers a severe limitation in that it does not contain a written sample where Rosa applies more formal language skills, perhaps in the context of school or work. As Rosa's daily life does not require much writing, I wager that her writing skills are likely underdeveloped and feature similar words and syntax to her spoken samples. Yet at present I cannot say for sure.

*Part 2: Analysis of the Learner's Language Abilities*

This second section of my case study on Rosa Dileny will outline, in brief, specific aspects of her language abilities. I intend to begin with her weakest area, semantics, and build to her area of greatest strength, which is pragmatics. I also find that, semantics being her weakest area of development, it plays a very large role in the development of her other areas of linguistic practice, especially grammar. To that end, this study proceeds as follows: semantics, phonology, grammar, and pragmatics.

*Semantics*

Semantics essentially refers to the size and features of Rosa's vocabulary. Yule (2017) states that "in semantic analysis, there is always an attempt to focus on what the words conventionally mean, rather than on what an individual speaker might think they mean, or want them to mean, on a particular occasion" (Yule, 2017, p. 243). That is to say, when analysing Rosa's samples for semantics, I am looking for correct use of words in their conventional sense. In this way, Rosa performs quite well; the words that she is familiar with likely come from

television, books, or daily life conversation, so she has heard them in their conventional context many times over before she produces them. In our conversations, there are sparse examples of using phrases awkwardly or incorrectly, and when she does produce words incorrectly, they stand out. For instance, in a text message (likely) meant to show her excitement to see me, she wrote: "we will look at each other today" (line 53). I imagine that her intent was to say, "We will see each other today!" However, she mistook "see" and "look at" as having the same semantic function.

That said, Rosa's vocabulary is very limited. She relies heavily on multi-function words like "just," (lines 3, 4, 5, 9, 11, 35, 67, 70) "got," (lines 3, 34, 80) or especially "have." In her interview, she often used statements like: "They have the class" (line 3) "we have a lot of student" (line 10) and "I have some friends who speak English"  (line 20). Rosa's ability to use this word in a variety of contexts shows that she has mastered its multiple meanings, which reveals a high degree of semantic awareness. However, the overuse of "have" in place of other verbs influences her development in other areas, specifically morphology. It reduces her sentence constructions to be more simple, following the pattern, I + (don't) + have + _____.

In addition, she has access mainly to the colloquial, spoken English variety as well as industry-specific terms from her work in insurance. She tends to use words that would not be found in an English language text book, but would be heard in regular conversations with native speakers. For instance, she uses contractions correctly, spontaneously, and generously; she also uses "Girl!" as a friendly greeting (line 51). At times she uses the phrase "Do you know…" as a way into a conversation about a new topic (line 25). This gives her immense ability to communicate with people in daily life, despite her misgivings about pronunciation.

As semantics -- in the sense of vocabulary building and not in misunderstanding the words she uses -- Rosa has a long way to go. Her current corpus of language, essentially conversational English, serves her moderately well, but if she wants to continue her education, move up in her current company, or change industries, she will need more language input with specific, targeted vocabulary.

*Phonology*

Phonology, referring to the sound patterns of a language,  is notoriously challenging for adult learners of a second language, with many never achieving native-like production. Although I have reservations about the goal of native-like production, Nair et al. make an excellent point that pronunciation itself can determine real-life consequences, like career prospects (Nair et al., 2017, p. 27-8). For Rosa, a young woman aiming to someday attend college and become a nurse, phonology could represent a significant obstacle.

Using the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) chart for measuring proficiency, Rosa falls along the spectrum of "Beginning" (2) and "Developing" (3). She makes a few errors that "may impede communication, but retain much of its meaning," like English learners of the "Developing" category; however, most of her English speaking production is short sentences or phrases, which falls under "Beginning." She is also more capable of receiving and performing the oral tasks listed under "Beginning," especially commands, directions, or questions. The majority of our interview consisted of me prompting her with questions about her experiences learning English, which she usually answered with clarity and confidence. On the other hand, Rosa admitted that she understands more than she can say, or that her receptive skills outmatch her productive skills. When asked during the interview to tell a narrative, she struggled to produce several sentences in a row without follow-up questions to prompt her, but she showed

understanding of other speakers' multi-sentence utterances, like stories or explanations

(discussed in further detail under *Pragmatics*, see Maxim of Manner).

However, Rosa has several strengths which overall outweigh the weaknesses in her

phonology. Most importantly, she has mastered the stress and intonation patterns of English,[3]

perhaps with the exceptions of words over three (3) syllables, which she tends to stutter over. I

believe that listening to bilingual Spanish-English speakers has helped her to understand how the

prosody of each language differs; as Rosa is not currently a student, the majority of her English

learning comes from watching television and speaking to other people.

Rosa also demonstrates strong understanding of other "unwritten" rules of English

phonology, which could only have been learned through daily conversation. For example, she

uses the [ɾ] sound instead of the [t] sound in the word "li**tt**le" [**ˈlɪɾl**] most of the time, she also

forms a "hard R" in words like "**r**ead**er**" [**ˈridər**] (emphasis mine). She distinguishes clearly

between the [v] and [b] sounds, which also tend to sound the same to native Spanish speakers.

She shows phonological awareness as well, joking about the name of a restaurant where she used

to work, called Fogatas [**fo.ˈɣa.tas**]: "The American people call it Fo**j**atas!" [**(fo) (ja) tiˑz**]. I

have noticed with other L2 English speakers that it is easier for them to notice differences

between the L1 and L2 when they hear Americans say L1 words with "American accents," or

American transfer. These experiences with her customers, as well as her current working

relationships with colleagues, have left Rosa with a strong repository of native English speaker

sounds she can distinguish and access readily most of the time.

Rosa also has a few specific areas where she can further develop and refine her

pronunciation of English. Vowels seem to be tricky for her; she transfers many vowels from

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[3] Of course, in conversation she tends to use shorter sentences and phrases, so if offered a reading test or a longer speaking task, this might change.

Spanish directly, especially swapping the [**u**] for [**ʊ**] (as in "reg**u**lar"). She transfers the Spanish

[j] as well, which caused the small miscommunication below.

> Jennifer: So, what books did you read [in high school]? Where did you find them?
> Rosa: Um, I read *Twilight*.
> Jennifer: Really! In English?
> Rosa: Yes! And I read... do you know that, *It* [produced **iˑt**], the movie?
> Jennifer: *It*? I don't think so.
> Rosa: The clown.
> Jennifer: Oh, *It* [**ɪt**]! (lines 22-28)

First, Rosa pronounced the [**waɪ**] in *Twilight* [**twaɪ ˌlaɪt**] correctly (which seems like it would

be a more difficult word to produce), but then produced a Spanish [**iˑt**] for *It*. Initially, I thought

she was saying "eat." Immediately after hearing me produce the word, Rosa corrected her own

pronunciation at the end of the sample when she said, "it is." So, although Rosa initially

produced the word incorrectly, she is highly attuned to the differences between Spanish and

English sounds and is prepared to immediately imitate.

Another sound which can be challenging for English learners is the [**θ**] sound, like when

Rosa begins the interview, telling me about first learning English, and she says: "I **th**ink so with

you." During the interview, she alternately between using the English [**θ**] correctly and simply

using the [**t**] sound ("I **t**ink so wi**t** you"). The confusion seems to change depending on where the

[**θ**] occurs in the word. For instance, she always produces "they" correctly and sometimes

produces "the" correctly, but the ending [**θ**] is more challenging.

Rosa's phonological development raises a few theoretical questions about L2 acquisition.

Although the concept of the "critical period" has been reduced to a "sensitive period," Rosa's

rapid development demonstrates that adult learners of an L2 can acquire many key elements of

L2 phonology very rapidly (Abello-Contesse, 2009). Even since she was my student four years

ago, Rosa's ability to communicate and to imitate English sounds has increased. Perhaps this is

at least in part to the close relationship between Spanish and English, like the Perceptual

Assimilation Model (PAM) predicts: Rosa typically either assimilates an English sound to

Spanish or, most of the time, she perceives it as a non-native sound and seeks to imitate it, as in

the sample above (Best, C.T., 1995, cited in Phillips Galloway, 2019). It will be interesting to see

in the next few months how her development proceeds; will she continue to acquire phonological

accuracy at the same rate? Or even faster?

*Grammar*

Grammatically, we can analyze Rosa's abilities using morphology and syntax, with

respect as well to speaking and writing habits. Now, again, one of the major limitations of this

study is the lack of a formal writing sample with which to compare; however, I have chosen to

take samples from her text messages for the purposes of this analysis. To that end, by taking one

hundred words from our interview and from scattered messages,  I calculate her Mean Length of

Utterance (MLU) to be 1.09 in both contexts (Brown, R., cited in Phillips Galloway, 2019). That

is, her use of complex morphemes via conjugations and nominalization is very low; part of the

reason for this could be that my samples are drawn from casual contexts, where even native

speakers do not display very complex morphology. However, I also argue that it points to the

fact that her primary English skill is speaking. One example is her common use of contractions

in both speaking and writing; she has mastered without error how to contract verb phrases like "I

will" and "Does not" into "I'll" (line 53) and "Doesn't" (line 48). I wager that this is because she

has been exposed to these spoken phrases very often through informal settings with native

speakers of English.

Syntactically, she shows similar simplicity in speaking and writing. One consistent error she struggles with is conjugation, although it is a feature of both English and Spanish. For the most part, she speaks entirely in present tense:

> "Well, when I **got** to Glencliff, I just… we **have** just… um, the class on the computer. So, we don't **have**, like, time to... have a conversation together. So, we just, um, **learn** when we [inaudible] with you. So that's a little complicated. Because just have the class just on the computer. So they don't **help** so much [emphasis mine]" (lines 3-6).

In the example above, Rosa conjugates "got" correctly in the first line, but after she reverts back to present tense. This is likely because "I got" is a common spoken collocation in English. However, without the tools to conjugate other verbs, she remains in present tense.

However, aside from Rosa's mastery of contractions from her experiences speaking, she has also mastered other aspects of syntax. One area is articles (a, an, and the), which tend to be tricky for English language learners. In both speaking and writing contexts, she made zero errors matching the correct article to the word. At times, she overused the article "the," but most of the time she used the articles correctly. In writing, she successfully uses complete sentences, even in text messages, which tend to be short and direct; she even produces relatively complex sentences like, "I'm sorry, I have a cousin with me and she's working and I have to pick her up because she doesn't have a car" (lines 95-96). Occasionally, she makes a fragment error when using the word "because," perhaps because she is not aware of its function as part of a dependent clause. For instance, she writes, "Where do you live? Because I live in Antioch" (line 98).

Her morphological and syntactical performance are quite similar to each other. As she is not a student and has little experience writing essays in English, I would predict that her more formal writing samples would also be marked by present-tense conjugations, contractions, and

the occasional fragment. I would also predict frequent use of colloquial phrases, as she picks up quickly on spoken word collocations. An excellent example is her use of "Girl!" as a greeting, a habit she picked up from me when I was her teacher (line 99). She also uses phrases like, "That was the thing," "gonna," and "for real," all terms that do not suit formal writing but communicate very well in informal settings.

*Pragmatics*

As her greatest strength, Rosa has a great deal of pragmatic competence for daily life conversation. Since her time in high school, she has worked with both Spanish and English speakers and has sought opportunities to improve her language skills. Through this, she proficiently engages in turn taking in English conversation, and about how to respond to questions concisely, appropriately, and politely. Rosa can also respond with humor, even irony, in conversation as well, indicating a remarkable degree of understanding of pragmatics. For example, when I asked her about TV shows she watches to help practice her English listening skills:

> Jennifer: [...] Do you ever watch, um, *Pawn Stars*?
> Rosa: Yeah! I love. [giggles]
> Jennifer: It's so good [Rosa laughs] They bring in these weird objects.
> Rosa: Did you know… the … the … old man, he pass away. I think so.
> Jennifer: Oh, I didn't know.
> Rosa: Um… like three months ago. I think so, I think was in April.
> Jennifer: That's so sad.
> Rosa: Yes, it's so sad.
> Jennifer: Are they still making episodes?
> Rosa: Mhm.
> Jennifer: Without him?
> Rosa: Yeah, they have um… I think so, one episode when they showed the history about him and everything… it's really sad.
> Jennifer: Did you cry?
> Rosa: No, but [giggles]
> Jennifer: But close. [both laugh] (lines 36-52)

We can see above that Rosa understands the humor in the idea of crying about a tribute episode on the television show *Pawn Stars*. She also reads well my tone of voice and my amusement when we discuss the shows together. In addition, she often uses filler sounds like "mmm," or "yes," while the other speaker is talking as a way of showing that she is listening and/or understands their words; perhaps this is a transfer habit from Spanish language conversations, but it is appropriate in English as well.

When taking into account Grice's Maxims for pragmatics, Rosa succeeds in many respects, and the areas in which she struggles can likely be boiled down to semantic weakness. Setting aside the Maxim of Quality (as I must assume that she is telling the truth, and I must also assume that she assumes I'm telling the truth), we can look at Relevance, Quantity, and Manner (Lieberman, 2014). As to Relevance, Rosa occasionally doesn't answer the question posed in the interview, but it is most likely because she is still thinking about the previous question and wants to get her expression just right. For example:

> Jennifer: [...] So… number one, what do you think is the biggest difference between Spanish and English?
> Rosa: Well, if you know Spanish, it is really hard for you to learn. It was the same for me to English.
> Jennifer: What was so hard?
> Rosa: Well the principle is the grammatic. It was totally different to Spanish.
> Jennifer: The grammar.
> Rosa: Yeah. And the…
> Jennifer: Can you give me an example?
> Rosa: Or the pronunciation. [...] It was really hard, too. I think this is the more hard part. The [slows] pronunciation, exactly. Yeah, I think so that one too.
> Jennifer: Is there, like, a word that you struggle to say all the time?
> Rosa: [giggles] Yes, exactly. (lines 52-64)

Further, regarding the Maxim of Quantity, Rosa struggles to provide enough information to make certain topics clear; for instance, when we discussed her personal history and family, I had

to ask many follow-up questions to get a clearer picture of her life in Honduras and her transition

to Nashville. We can see this happening here:

> Jennifer: Like, how, how did you come to Nashville? Why did you come to Nashville?
> Rosa: Well, because, um… My mom, um, moved, um before I came, so I come in with her. And it's just get, okay, this is my life, so we're gonna live here, and. Yeah.
> Jennifer: What about your dad?
> Rosa: Well, my dad, uh, he lives in Honduras. Like, he has I think two month here. I visited him, um, last month ago. Yeah. But, um, we don't live with him, um, so we just visit him and that's it.
> Jennifer: So, why did your mom come to Nashville?
> Rosa: Huh?
> Jennifer: Why did your mom come to Nashville?
> Rosa: Oh, because he—she—marry here.
> Jennifer: Oh, so she married an American?
> Rosa: A-huh, yeah.
> Jennifer: So when we met, you were living with your mom and her second husband? [...] What did you think of him?
> Rosa: Oh, it was good, but [giggles] I don't have any problem with him. (lines 65-79)

As we can see, she does not quite meet the right threshold for "enough" information to tell. She

understands how filler words like "um" and "ah" function in English to help her hold the

speaking floor while she considers her answers; however, these pauses are perhaps too numerous

for easy daily conversation.

For the Maxim of Manner, Rosa speaks comfortably about certain aspects of daily life

(her boyfriend, her vacation plans, what she wants to do about college), but these topics still

remain at a fairly general level and do not delve into much specificity. Perhaps again this is a

vocabulary issue; she simply does not have the language to speak further or deeper. This came to

the fore especially in the narrative task, in which I asked her to tell me a story from her summer.

I will admit that perhaps this was not the best method to elicit the conversation, but my goal was

to choose a task that she was capable of performing due to intimacy with the topic, and I wanted

her to enjoy telling the story. However, Rosa has likely never been asked to tell a story in

English before, and so does not know what English language storytelling conventions are, for

instance, using transitional words between actions to describe how something happened. Instead

she wandered all over many different "events" from her summer instead of discussing a single

"event." For example:

> "Well, what kinda things I like to this summer…. Well my fiance loves, uh, got
> trip to Harley Davidson, because he has a motorcycle. So, um we go to, um, closest
> place, like Dollywood and we go to Knoxville on motorcycle. Um, we go to Louisiana on
> motorcycle [...] We love to travel. [unclear] So, we're planning go to the beach too before
> summer is done." (lines 80-83)

As we can see, in this short sample she named three different "events" from her summer but did

not linger on one particular event, telling me about their experiences there, like what they ate or

what they saw. Even with follow-up questions, she was unable to speak with greater depth about

the topic at hand.

So, although Rosa's greatest linguistic strength is Pragmatics, she still struggles with

certain language features that would allow her to speak longer and with more detail. However, I

do not see this as a pragmatic weakness; rather, her weaknesses in other areas, especially

semantic and grammatical, limit her already well-developed pragmatic awareness. Rosa likely

understood in the moment that she was not meeting the right requirement of information, but she

could not negotiate her way through it.

Another point to note, in reviewing samples and notes for the purposes of this study, is

that I do not have video samples. Had I obtained video samples, I might be able to better analyse

her pragmatic strengths, as communicated through gesture, eye contact, body language, and other

features. I understand that American, English-speaking peoples have a different set of

conventions around personal space and body language than people from other places, like

Honduras. Perhaps had I access to video samples, I could have noted areas where Rosa

assimilated certain American gestural features, an often unnoticed strength when mastered, but a true barrier to communication when it is not.

*Part 3: Global Language Ability*

Returning again to the WIDA chart for language proficiency, I stand behind my assertion that Rosa falls within the range of "Beginning" to "Developing," with caveats. One advantage of using the WIDA chart to consider Rosa's abilities is that its emphasis seems to be on communication. The different levels correspond to communicative competence, from the ability to understand and respond to basic commands, questions, or statements all the way to the ability to write with linguistic complexity. However, the chart itself is scarce in details, as it does not contain statements with respect to specific linguistic aspects, like pragmatics or grammar. The chart also does not take into account a specific learner's personal goals for learning English, what kind of language they might need to master in order to succeed. It is my conviction that these goals should inform the assessment of the learner's proficiency as well as instructional recommendations for her further growth.

In general, Rosa's samples demonstrate excellent pragmatic skills which is coupled with weak semantic development. For her lifestyle now, this spectrum suits her needs; she works with bilinguals, where she continues to gain strength in communicative competence and learn new words that suit this specific context. However, weak semantic development and weak grammatical development will severely limit her in her future goals of attending college. Her future instruction should contain activities and strategies that leverage her current abilities to make herself understood as well as assess her more formal, academic abilities in Spanish.

*Part 4: Instructional Recommendations*

At the end of our first interview, I asked Rosa to tell me what areas of language she thinks she needs help with. My reason for asking this question is because I hoped to gauge her understanding of her language needs, the "holes" or "gaps" in her proficiency. Her main answers included pronunciation and grammar, both of which would certainly help, but these categories of course do not cover all the development that would help her to attend school and work in higher-paying environments. These answers signal to me that she does not quite know what else is there to language learning, such as register or academic language. It is unclear to me what her proficiency is in Spanish, that is, whether she could use higher-level academic Spanish to help her with her future goals. To that end, I believe the first step in any individualized plan for Rosa would be to give her a Spanish-language exam, testing her abilities to read, write, and discuss abstract topics in her first language; with such information at hand, her teachers could leverage these skills toward her further English development.

Then, moving backward from her greatest strengths to her greatest weakness, I can make a few recommendations for Rosa's further language study.

*Pragmatics*

Rosa's pragmatic development in English has come already a long way from when I first met her as a teenager: she understands and responds appropriately to the context, she effuses delight in speaking in English, and she does not hesitate to ask for clarification or to check comprehension from her listener. That said, she certainly has areas that call for improvement, especially in moving beyond conversational English.

To develop her pragmatic competence further, I would recommend assigning different communicative tasks and discussing the specific ways we might interact in these contexts, with

asides asking her about comparisons in Honduran culture, to further deepen her understanding of content as well as her metalinguistic awareness of both languages. The tasks should be based around the workplace and / or the classroom; for instance, she could learn how to ask for help from a professor or advocate for changing a grade, as well as learn how to present a project proposal or other type of presentation that works in and out of school. Writing tasks can be included as well. She could compare an email to a client with writing a text message to a friend making plans. Another could be the task of presenting a project or proposal in a meeting, in contrast to telling a narrative story about her weekend. The goal is to demonstrate that there are specific codes of appropriateness, registers, that suit different contexts and to enable her to function in these differing spaces.

<p style="text-align:center">*Grammar*</p>

For Rosa's further grammatical development, the focus should be on grammar that will help her academically. Her abilities to communicate out of school, with friends, coworkers, and other peers is already very high; however, she will struggle in a traditional classroom with the skills she has now. The goal is that she could begin to read more complex texts and compose them. For that, I recommend two things: explicit grammar instruction and *written* communicative tasks across contexts, with special attention to adding to her repertoire of possible and appropriate structures. Explicit grammar instruction should include connections to similar or contrastive grammatical structures in Spanish.

Following an explicit lesson, I would recommend reading across contexts. For instance, she could read a short story that demonstrates how to properly use transitional phrases to explain how an event happened, then she can read an essay on a historical event, then an essay making an argument, etc. In each case, she could identify a target grammatical structure (i.e. transitional

phrases and when to use them). Discussion could include how they function slightly differently and compare how to perform these tasks in Spanish. After reading it in various contexts, she could then try to produce them herself via communicative tasks, which pair nicely with pragmatic development outlined above.

*Phonology*

For moving forward phonologically, my major suggestion for Rosa would be to begin mapping the sounds she hears to the written forms of the words, perhaps simply by writing down new words as she hears them or asking for spelling clarification. She clearly already has a large listening vocabulary, which is apparent in the way she perceives the differences in conversation very quickly and accurately, but in order for her to continue developing this accuracy, she needs to make connections between the sounds and the letters. This will help her not only to read better and acquire more vocabulary by making connections between different word spellings, but it could also help her to correct a tendency she has to drop the last letter (sound) in a word. For example, in the word "just" she entirely leaves out the -t (line 35). She also adds sounds on occasion as well: instead of telling me she "reads" a lot, she told me she "reader" a lot (line 18). Mapping the sounds to the letters might also help her clarify how to say the longer words.

An interesting classroom activity could be another Spanish-English comparison. As I mentioned above, Rosa easily identified when Americans mispronounced a Spanish word; perhaps if pressed, she could try to explain *how* the sound is different and even ways to produce it. If she is explicitly asked to "teach" a sound, she can bring her sharp ears and high phonological awareness to bear on her English learning, for the mutual benefit of everyone in the room. Perhaps each student in the class could choose a word that they often hear Americans mispronounce, or pronounce with a thick accent; they could present, formally, the ways that the

word should be produced. This presentation could combine phonology with grammar (as new structures will likely be necessary to explain things fully) and pragmatics, as they tackle a new communicative task.

*Semantics*

Rosa already has a strong grasp on the "survival English" words that help her in daily life, now she requires vocabulary that will allow her to connect even deeper to her context. As implied above, the area for Rosa I believe would be most helpful for her semantic development would be learning language for academic settings, perhaps tailored for the college classroom and her chosen field of nursing. A helpful perspective for learning academic language could be Nagy's concept of "words as tools" (Nagy & Townsend, 2012). As I have outlined in the previous recommendations, and as Nagy prescribes, Rosa should have access to specific language across contexts, perhaps being able to read, discuss, and use the words in a given lesson. Explicit vocabulary teaching is helpful, as Nagy argues, but it must be coupled with other activities.

For the teaching step, my own academic language development was bolstered by learning Latin and Greek roots, to show the relationship between the etymology of the words and how they are used in English, and I predict that for Rosa, as Spanish is also related to Greco-Roman roots, these relationships could be enlightening. Triangulating the relationships between root words, English, and Spanish could create stronger connections between the language itself and its meaning. If a teacher has already assessed Rosa's Spanish academic language abilities, as I recommended, using root words could also support her abilities to communicate in Spanish (Uccelli & Phillips Galloway, 2017).

70

Activities for working across contexts could include a similar setup to a classroom that Caruso (2018) observed in Portugal. In this setting, students read text in one language, discussed it in another, and then completed essays and presentations in a third; the result was that they deepened their understanding of all three languages as well as the content. I would recommend a similar programme for Rosa. She could read academic texts in Spanish and then discuss it in English, add complementary English terms for ones she has just read in Spanish. She could also engage in the reverse, reading in English and then discussing in Spanish.

An additional, hands-on activity could be a sorting activity, which would vividly illustrate the differences on semantic contexts. She could receive a pool of vocabulary with slightly different nuances, for instance "shine" versus "emit." In essence, these words have the same meaning, but they are used in different contexts. "Shine" is more casual, colloquial, the variety of words that we use in pop songs, whereas "emit" is more scientific, used to describe something like photons. Lizzo would sing, "I shine" and not "I emit." With this group of sorts on cards, Rosa could sort them into categories based on context. Perhaps one category would be general, like school versus home; another could be more specific to academia, like science versus literature. I encourage her instructor to allow Rosa to make guesses about why these words belong to certain categories and then discuss it openly, trying to make examples of word use.

*Part 5: Critical Reflection*

Researching and preparing this case study on Rosa Dileny has been a fruitful experience for me, as I have little background in linguistics. Isolating specific aspects of language development, such as morphology, proved very challenging for me, but it forced me to think in depth and detail, not only about areas that required improvement, but also about ways to target

those aspects. I also purposefully chose Rosa because her first language and my second language (Chinese) are extremely different; therefore, I would have to learn about typical and / or likely errors that a first language Spanish speaker might produce. I plan to become a teacher of adult ELL's after graduation, so Rosa stands in as an example of a student I might potentially encounter, and I appreciate the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of her language background, development, and what her concerns are likely to be. Ultimately, perhaps the most helpful part of this case study was designing instructional recommendations, since I began assembling a "teacher toolbox" that I can use in my future work in classrooms.  A few of these activities that I have outlined resemble strategies of translanguaging, and considering that my future adult students already bring a wealth of language experience into the classroom, I hope to be able to continue to develop strategies of this kind.

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**Artifact C: Literature Unit SIOP Lesson Plan**

This Literature Unit Lesson Plan was first drafted in the course EDUC 6540, Methods and

Materials for Educating English Language Learners, and then subsequently revised for

implementation in a real classroom. It is the first lesson in the four-week unit, with 1.5 hours

each week.

| Learning objectives |
| --- |
| - Produce the key literary terms in discussion of literature with peers<br>- Use text evidence to support the identification of key literary terms in narrative<br>- Use text evidence to discuss a reflection question with peers in small group<br>- Use personal experiences to reflect on a work of literature |

| Before class, students will... |
| --- |
| - Read "Blue-Sky Home," by Lisa Papademetriou<br>- Complete comprehension-checking questions through the online class page<br>- Read and reflect on the discussion questions to be used in class:<br>    - In the story, Phoebe considers herself American while her grandfather views her as Greek. What text evidence do you see in the story for this conflict?<br>    - What contributes to how someone views themselves? Has the way you view yourself ever conflicted with how others view you? |

| Activity | Tools | Interaction | Learning Objectives |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Welcome, agenda, learning objectives (5 mins) | PPT | T-S | Practice receptive comprehension of language of school - terms like "agenda," "learning objective," "Warm-up," "discussion," and "Quick Write;" part of building routine |
| Warm-up / Quick Write (5-8 minutes)<br><br>What are the essential | PPT<br><br>Jamboard<br>Notebooks | Individual | Activate prior knowledge of narrative - does not have to be the exact target term as long as the concept is familiar |

| | | | |
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| parts of a story?<br>- Share out<br>- Special focus on the word 'essential' | Padlet | | Produce language that approximates, describes, or circumlocutes the target literary terms |
| Introduce literary terms (10 minutes) | PPT | T-S | Key terms:<br>- Narrator<br>- Character<br>- Dialogue<br>- Setting<br>- Plot<br>- Conflict |
| Paired practice: students find examples of the target literary elements in the narrative (10 minutes)<br>- Could jigsaw the terms to save time and focus efforts (for a large class)<br>- Follow with whole-class share out (5-10 mins)<br>- Debrief introduces the term 'text evidence' | PDF copies of the story | S-S | Use text evidence to Identify examples of key literary terms<br><br>Optional sentence stems for share-out:<br>- I think one example of ____ is on page ___ / in line ____<br>- On page ___ / In line ___ I found ___<br>- Do you think ___ Is an example of ____? |
| Introduce good literary discussion norms (5 minutes)<br>- Respectful<br>- Use text evidence<br>- Ask questions | PPT<br><br>If time allows, students can brainstorm a few ideas first and share out | | |
| Small group discussion (15 minutes) | PDF copies of the story | S-S | Use text evidence to support an interpretation of the story |

| | | | |
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| - Assign roles to students in their groups<br><br>In the story, Phoebe considers herself American while her grandfather views her as Greek.<br>- What evidence do you see in the text for this conflict?<br><br>What contributes to how someone views themselves? Has the way you view yourself ever conflicted with how others view you? | | | Use personal experience to reflect on the narrative<br><br>Optional sentence stems:<br>- On page ____ / in line _____ Phoebe disagrees with her Grandfather about _____<br>- I think Phoebe shows that she thinks she is American on page _____ / in line _____<br>- But her Grandfather shows he thinks she is Greek on page ____ / in line _____ by saying _____. |
| Final Round up (5 minutes)<br>- Summarize the class concepts<br>- Explain homework and plans for next session<br>- Take Qs | PPT | | |

| After class, students will... |
|---|
| - Read "Sweet, Difficult Sounds," by I.M. Desta<br>- Complete comprehension-checking questions through the online class page<br>- Watch a short (5 mins.) Youtube video about plot<br>- Submit a plot diagram practice using the story "Sweet, Difficult Sounds"<br>- Read and reflect on the discussion questions to be used in class: |

> - In the story, Nothuluka faces many fears and challenges and eventually learns an important lesson. What fears and challenges did you see? What lesson do you think she learned?
> - How can language be both a help and a barrier to connecting with others?

## Rationale

The main theoretical basis for this lesson plan is from the SIOP text, which teaches the importance of explicitly integrating content and language goals for English language learners. I have attempted to make content and language objectives interrelated and foundational; that is, I chose literary terms that I felt would be most productive for students to know once they leave my class and study literature in the following semester. I have left out terms like "metaphor" and "foreshadowing" because, while very important, they do not do the most heavy lifting. Instead, throughout this lesson and the following ones, my overarching content goal is to teach students how to talk about literature in classroom settings, here introduced through "text evidence." The overarching language goals are related: namely, to provide students with the right "language" (i.e. literary terms) to describe what they read. Such foundational terms as "character," "setting," and "plot" can be applied outside of classroom settings, of course; afterwards learners can discuss their favorite films, TV shows, and other forms of story in daily conversation with the full use of these terms.

This lesson plan also draws upon several other theories and approaches of language teaching. For instance, it aims to align with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as explored in Brown by encouraging students to talk about the content (literature) in meaningful ways, and not merely to memorize literary terms (Brown, H.D. 2001). Further, by using a Quick Write at the beginning of class about the "essential" elements of stories, the teacher can draw out the students' prior knowledge and not act as the sole holder of knowledge. I purposefully

designed this Quick Write to investigate and activate their prior knowledge — of course, I do not expect students to necessarily know the term "plot" or "conflict," as these are highly specific literary terms, but if they can use circumlocution, synonyms, or similar terms I will be satisfied. We can use this language production to bridge to the new labels for these familiar concepts, and more importantly, to what they read in the short story for homework.

Brown also suggests that students should "use language productively and in unrehearsed contents," so to that end I have designed space for students to discuss the text and to connect it back to their own lives. These questions have been provided to me, however, I do feel that they can be considered "higher order thinking" questions, to refer back to the SIOP text. The first question requires students to analyze small details in the text, such as the character's facial expressions, dialogue, and thoughts to connect to a theory of a particular story. This is certainly a step beyond summarizing the main actions in a text or restating what they read. The second question pushes students to describe how identities are both individual and group-oriented, as well as use their own life experiences.

This lesson is more or less sequenced as: familiar (Quick Write), new (Introduction of Literary Terms), familiar (Paired Practice with a text they've already read), new (Introduction to good literary discussion norms), familiar (Final discussion questions). By sandwiching new and old chunks like this, I hope to consistently refer back to the learners' background knowledge as we move forward into new territory. The final activity, particularly discussion question #1, requires them to use all of their new and familiar knowledge to fully engage. I have provided sentence stems to aid students who may struggle with how to frame their thoughts, and/or to keep students on track, using the literary terms as well as text evidence. In combination with

their pre-class work, Quick Write, and paired work, I feel confident that after this lesson students

will be able to accomplish the learning objectives.

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Lesson Plan Slides

## Today's Agenda

- QUICK WRITE
- INTRODUCE LITERATURE WORDS
- WORK WITH PARTNERS: FIND EXAMPLES
- SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION
- ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT LITERATURE UNIT PROJECT

## Our Learning Goals Today

**#1**

Speak out the key literature words for our lesson through practice and examples

**#2**

Use text evidence to find examples of the key literature words in our short story

**#3**

Use the short story to reflect on its deeper meaning

**QUICK WRITE**

What are the <u>essential</u> parts of a story?

*Please share in the chat box!

# Key Literature Words
**(Literary Terms)**

- Narrator - who TELLS the story
- Character - who is IN the story
- Dialogue - characters' spoken words
- Setting - WHERE the story happens
- Conflict - what is the PROBLEM in the story?
- Plot*
- Point of View*
- Theme*

# Narrator: WHO tells the story?

| | |
|---|---|
| **IS THE NARRATOR ALSO A PERSON IN THE STORY?** | **IS THE NARRATOR OUTSIDE OF THE STORY?** |
| **WHAT PRONOUNS DO YOU SEE?** He, she, they, it, I, we, you | **NARRATOR IS NOT ALWAYS THE WRITER!** |

# Character: Who is IN the story?

**Who are the important people?**

Main characters
Side characters

Protagonist
Antagonist
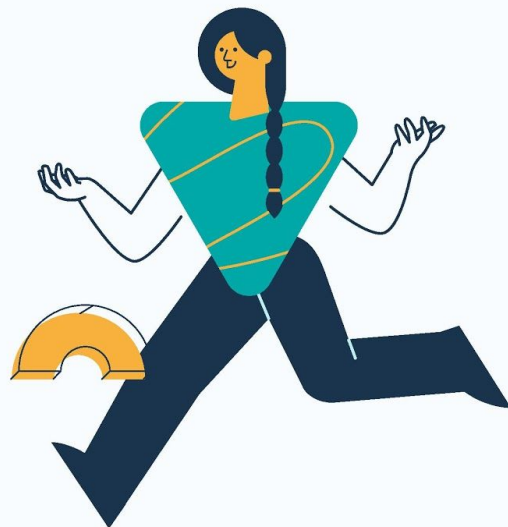
# Dialogue: What do the characters SAY?

**USUALLY LOOKS LIKE THIS:**

Maria Alexandra said, "You never loved me, did you?" Her eyes were wild.

Her husband stared hard at her. *Maybe a little*, he thought, at first. "No," he finally replied. "Our marriage was a mistake."

# Setting: WHERE and WHEN does the story happen?



## TIME

Do characters live in the past, present, or future?



## PLACE

What country or city do the characters live in?
Is it a real place in the world, or not?

## Conflict: What is the PROBLEM in the story?

**THERE ARE MANY KINDS OF CONFLICT**

- Character v. character
- Character v. self
- Character v. nature
- Character v. supernatural (God, devils, etc.)
- Character v. technology
- Character v. society



## Practice

**LET'S FIND EXAMPLES IN OUR SHORT STORY**

Work together with your partner to find examples of our new literature words from our short story, "Blue-Sky Home." Use words, phrases, and sentences from the story to show us what you see.

# Discussion in a College Class

How do we discuss our ideas properly?
What should we do?

# When discussing, please remember...

Your partner or group is here to help you think. Be kind, respectful, and supportive. Turn your camera on if you can, use your microphone to talk, and be friendly.

Ask questions. You can ask your partners to explain what they think or why, give examples, or just clarify what they mean if you don't understand.

Use the text to help you. The text is the most important tool we have for discussions; use examples to show your thinking.

Take notes. Discussion in college is the biggest part of learning because you explore new ideas together. Pay attention and be able to retell what your group said in the discussion.

**What <u>contributes</u> to how someone views themselves?**

**Has the way you view yourself every conflicted with how others view you?**

# Summary of class

**TODAY WE...**

**01** Learned Key Literature Words:
- Narrator
- Character
- Dialogue
- Setting
- Conflict

**02** Used these literature words to talk about the short story "Blue-Sky Home"

**03** Reflected on how the story connects to our own lives through discussion with classmates

# Before you leave today...

What questions do you have about the Literature Unit Project?

CAPSTONE EFL PORTFOLIO

**Artifact D: Literature Unit Curriculum**

This Literature Unit Curriculum was first drafted in the course EDUC 6560, Methods of

Teaching English as a Foreign Language, and then subsequently revised for implementation in a

real classroom.

| Learning objectives |
| --- |
| - Identify examples of literary devices in the literature we read in class<br>- Use text evidence to support an interpretation about the stories<br>- Use their personal experiences to reflect on a work of literature |

| Materials |
| --- |
| - Readings taken from CommonLit.org<br>- Youtube videos for traditional plot, Point of View, and theme<br>- Powerpoint Slides<br>- Zoom<br>- Blank plot diagram for Week 2 homework assignment<br>- Description of Final Summative Assessment and Grading Rubric |

|  | Reading | Learning Objectives | Key Activities | Homework |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Day 1** | "Blue-Sky Home," Lisa Papademetriou<br><br>5th grade<br>Lexile: 450<br>35 paragraphs<br><br>A girl struggles to get her Grandfather to see her as | Use text evidence to support their identification of key literary terms<br>- Narrator<br>- Character<br>- Dialogue<br>- Setting<br>- Plot<br>- Conflict | Warm-up: What are the essential parts of a story?<br><br>Introduce key terms & concept of text evidence<br><br>Gallery walk: Identifying examples in the story | Read: "Sweet, Difficult Sounds," by I.M. Desta + comprehension Qs<br><br>Preview key ideas about plot (video)<br><br>Complete a plot diagram for "Sweet, Difficult Sounds" |

88

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| | American. | Use text evidence to discuss a reflection question with peers in small group<br><br>Use their personal experiences to reflect on a work of literature<br><br>Produce the key literary terms through discussions and comprehension-checking questions | Introduce good literary discussion norms<br><br>Discussion:<br><br>In the story, Phoebe considers herself American while her grandfather views her as Greek. What evidence do you see in the text for this conflict?<br><br>What contributes to how someone views themselves? Has the way you view yourself ever conflicted with how others view you? | Reflection / Discussion Q:<br><br>In the story, Nothuluka faces many fears and challenges and eventually learns an important lesson. What fears and challenges did you see? What lesson do you think she learned? - use text evidence!<br><br>How can language be both a help and barrier to helping us connect with others? |
| **Day 2** | "Sweet, Difficult Sounds," by I.M. Desta<br><br>6th grade<br>Lexile: 790<br>85 paragraphs<br><br>A young immigrant girl struggles to fit in at her new school. | Plot key terms:<br>- Exposition<br>- Rising action<br>- Climax<br>- Falling action<br>- Resolution<br><br>Use text evidence to support their identification of steps in plot development<br><br>Use text evidence to discuss a reflection question with peers in small group | Revised warm-up: clarify the differences between narrative text and expository text<br><br>Introduce plot, use comprehension checking questions to draw on memory of reading<br><br>Model the plot diagram using a | Read: "Sol Painting," by Meg Medina + comprehension checking Qs<br><br>Preview key ideas about point of view (video)<br><br>Reflection / Discussion Q:<br><br>In the story, why is Merci mad at her dad? Was she right |

| | | Use text evidence to support an interpretation of the plot and especially its climax | Think Aloud & "Blue-Sky Home"<br><br>Discussion: What is the climax of this story? | to be mad at him? Why or why not?<br><br>If we changed the point of view in the story, how would the story change? - Focus on Roli and Dad |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Day 3** | "Sol Painting," by Meg Medina<br><br>7th grade<br>Lexile: 710<br>135 paragraphs<br><br>A young girl is faced with new realizations about her world. | Identify the point of view in a narrative<br><br>Use text evidence to explain / describe a character's point of view<br><br>Explore how point of view is limited by discussing what happens when you change the point of view in a story | Warm-up:<br>What do you think is the conflict in this story? Where do you see it?<br><br>Introduce POV with special attention to the language markers (I, you, he/she/they)<br><br>Discussion:<br>In the story, why is Merci mad at her dad? Was she right to be mad at him? Why or why not?<br><br>If we changed the point of view in the story, how would the story change? - Focus on Roli and Dad | Read: "Daughter of Invention" + comprehension Qs<br><br>Preview Theme (video)<br><br>Reflection / Discussion Q for exploring theme:<br><br>What did the characters learn? How did they grow and change? Why did characters act the way they acted? What's different at the end of the story? What do you remember after the story is over? |
| **Day 4** | "Daughter of Invention," by Julia Alvarez - | Form a theory about the theme of the short story and use text | Revised warm-up: Work together with a peer to identify | Summative Assessment |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | edited from the CommonLit copy<br><br>A young girl and her mother work together to write a speech for an event at school, but her father has objections. | evidence to support that theory<br><br>Use guiding questions to describe the theme of a short story | the setting, characters, and conflict<br><br>(Re-)introduce theme using the guiding questions from the video<br><br>Paired discussion of the story, using guiding questions for theme<br><br>End-of-class quick write: Using an optional sentence stem, try to article your theory of the story's theme. Give one reason why. | |

**Artifact E: Literature Unit Plot Lesson Plan**

This Literature Unit Lesson Plan was first drafted in the course EDUC 6560, Methods of

Teaching English as a Foreign Language, and then subsequently revised for implementation in a

real classroom. It is the second lesson in the four-week unit, with 1.5 hours each week.

| Learning Objectives |
|---|
| - Use target language and text evidence to support their identification of step in plot development<br>- Use text evidence to discuss a reflection question with peers in small group<br>- Use text evidence to support an interpretation of the plot and especially its climax |

| Before class, students will... |
|---|
| - Read "Sweet, Difficult Sounds," by I.M. Desta<br>- Complete comprehension-checking questions through the online class page (Brightspace)<br>- Watch a short (5 mins.) Youtube video about plot<br>- Submit a plot diagram practice using the story "Sweet, Difficult Sounds"<br>- Read and reflect on the discussion questions to be used in class:<br>    - In the story, Nothuluka faces many fears and challenges and eventually learns an important lesson. What fears and challenges did you see? What lesson do you think she learned?<br>    - How can language be both a help and a barrier to connecting with others? |

| Activity | Tools | Interaction | Learning Objectives |
|---|---|---|---|
| Welcome, agenda, learning objectives (5 minutes) | PPT | T-S | Practice receptive comprehension of language of school - terms like "agenda," "learning objective," "Warm-up," "discussion," and "Quick Write" |
| Warm-up / Quick Write (5-8 minutes)<br><br>Review: Identify example | PPT | Individual | Review & produce  key terms from the previous class<br><br>Use text evidence to identify |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| of the following from our short story<br>- Character<br>- Setting<br>- Conflict<br><br>REVISED WARM-UP: Quick clarification on the differences between expository text and narrative text | | | examples of the key terms<br><br>REVISED GOAL: Clarify the context of the unit's reading |
| Introduce plot & plot diagram steps (5-10 minutes)<br><br>Include a model Think Aloud - apply the story from the previous week to the plot diagram | PPT | T-S | Review content from homework video<br><br>Receptively comprehend the key term "plot," and its diagram<br><br>Describe the plot of a short story by using the target vocabulary |
| Paired revision of homework plot diagram + Discussion<br><br>Focus: What is the climax of this short story?<br>- Anticipate some disagreement here<br>- Emphasize there is no one correct answer<br>- Students must use text evidence to support their idea<br>- Follow with whole-group share out of ideas - maybe have students report on what their partners said instead of themselves | N/A | S-S | Use text evidence to support an interpretation of the short story through the lens of "plot" and "climax"<br><br>Produce the target vocabulary of "plot" and "climax"<br><br>Optional sentence stems:<br>- I think the climax is ___ because ___<br>- On page ___ / In line ___ the text says ___. I think that means ___. |
| Small group discussion | PDF copies of | S-S | Use text evidence to support an |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| In the story, Nothuluka faces many fears and challenges and eventually learns an important lesson. What fears and challenges did you see? What lesson do you think she learned?<br> - Use text evidence<br><br>How can language be both a help and barrier to helping us connect with others? | the story<br><br>Possible use of a collaborative tool like Padlet or Google docs | | interpretation of the story<br><br>Use personal experience to reflect on a work of literature<br><br>Optional sentence stems:<br> - On page __ / in line ___ Nothuluka faces ____ challenge because ____.<br> - On page ___ / in line ___ Nothuluka is afraid of ____.<br> - I can see on page ___ / in line ___ Nothuluka is learning _____.<br> - Language is a help because ____.<br> - However, language is also a barrier because ____.<br> - I think language is MORE / LESS of a help / barrier because ____. |
| Final Round up (5 mins)<br> - Summarize the class concepts<br> - Explain homework and plans for next literature session<br> - Take Qs | PPT | T-S | |

---

| After class, students will... |
|---|
| - Read "Sol Painting," by Meg Medina<br> - Complete comprehension-checking questions through the online class page<br> - Watch a short Youtube video about Point of View<br> - Read and reflect on the discussion questions to be used in class:<br>  - In the story, why is Merci mad at her dad? Was she right to be mad at him? Why or why not?<br>  - If we changed the point of view in the story, how would the story change? - Focus on Roli and Dad |

Lesson Plan Slides



**LITERATURE DAY 2**

# "SWEET, DIFFICULT SOUNDS"

October 27, 2020

## Our Learning Goals

**TODAY WE WILL...**

- Use the language of plot to describe the action and events in "Sweet, Difficult Sounds"
- Form an opinion about the story's climax and defend it to our partners and/or class

**Today's Agenda**

- EXPOSITORY TEXT VS. NARRATIVE TEXT
- INTRODUCTION TO PLOT AND PLOT DIAGRAMS
- DEVELOP YOUR PLOT DIAGRAM
- OPEN DISCUSSION



**Different texts have different purposes and structures.**

Text messages?          Blog posts?
News?                   Research?
Stories?                Poetry?

## EXPOSITORY TEXT

- Explains some idea or phenomenon
- Important elements:
    - thesis
    - main ideas
    - supporting details
- Educates readers about something
- Examples from our Making Connections textbook

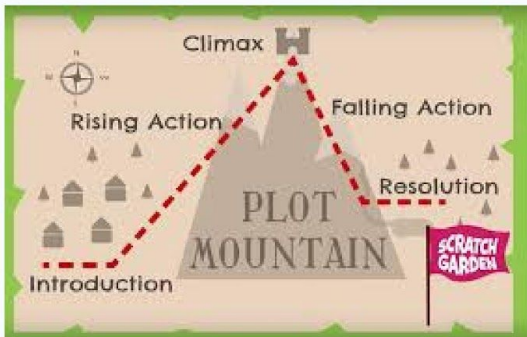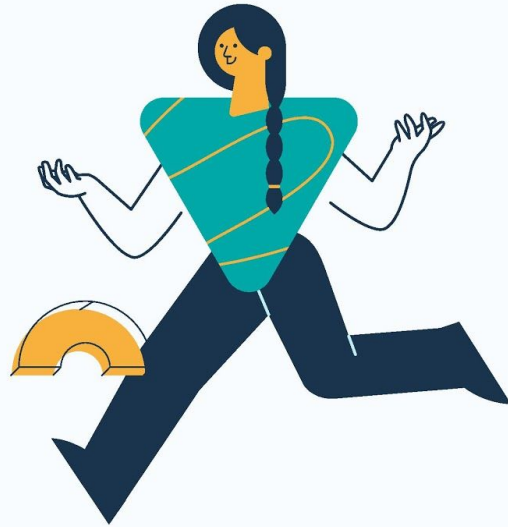## NARRATIVE TEXT

- Tells a story
- Important elements:
    - narrator
    - setting
    - characters
    - dialogue
    - plot
    - and more!
- Entertains readers and/or uses a story to get readers to think about some idea more deeply
- Examples from our Literature Unit

97

# Plot:

### Events & Action in a Story
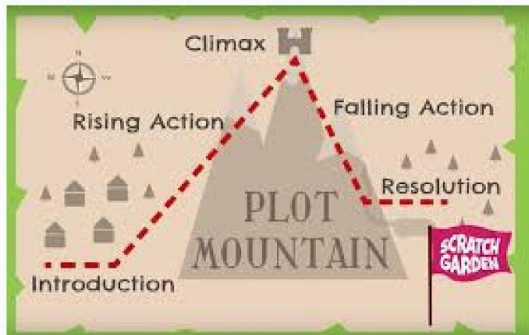
Why do we need to know about plot?
How does plot help us understand the story?
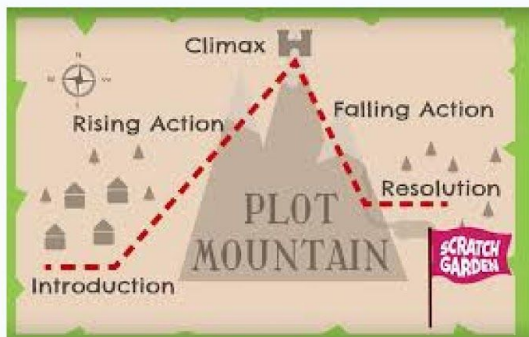
## Plot

**WHAT HAPPENS IN A STORY?**

We can look more closely at the plot of a story to understand how one event leads to another. We can also watch how characters experience the events, then grow and change through their experiences.
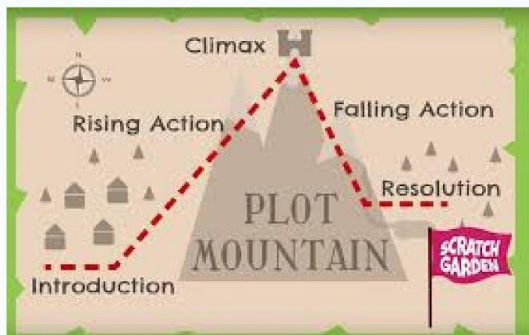
# Plot

**INTRODUCTION / EXPOSITION**

- Explains the setting and who the main characters are in the story
- Learn the important basic information about the story
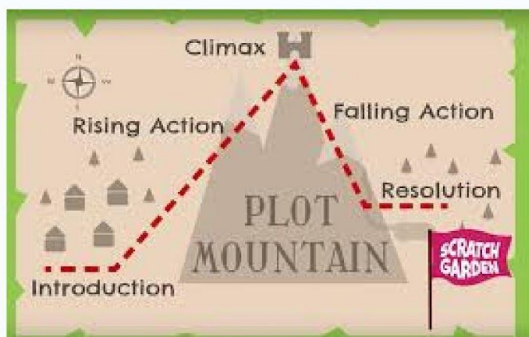


# Plot

**RISING ACTION**

- The main character begins to encounter new experiences
- Meet more characters
- Begin to learn about the major conflict
- Still unsure where the story is going and what it all means

# Plot

**CLIMAX**

- Most tense, exciting moment in the story
- Turning point - the characters change forever
- Characters usually make a big, important decision that defines who they are
- Most people disagree about what moment is the climax!!



# Plot

**FALLING ACTION**

- Actions after the climax
- Leads to the resolution of the conflict
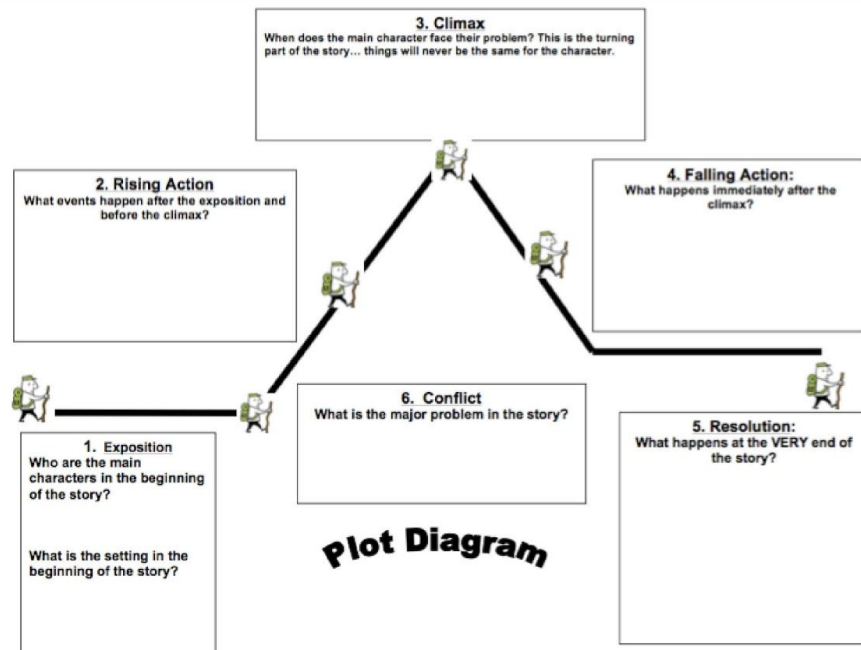- Character carries out their decision and faces the results
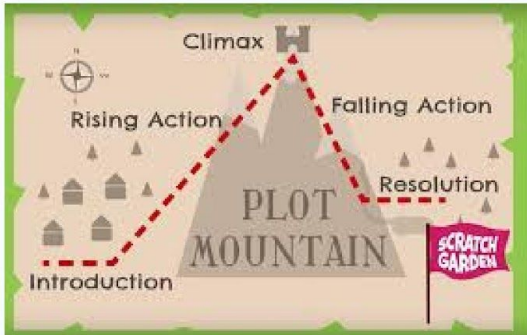
## Plot

**RESOLUTION**

- The conflict comes to an end
- Characters usually show that they learned something, grew in some way, or changed

## Using a Plot Diagram:

## "Blue-Sky Home"

**Your turn!**

**Use the Plot Diagram for "Sweet, Difficult Sounds"**

# 1 Develop Your Plot Diagram

Look at your homework plot diagram by yourself first. Do you still agree with your ideas from the weekend?

#2 Check with a Partner

Check your plot diagram with your partner. Do you have the same ideas about the plot? Where do you see differences? Why do you see differences?

#3 What is the climax of the story?

Climax is usually the part of the story that people disagree about. What do you and your partner think? Why do you think that part of the story is the climax?

# Defending Our Ideas

Do you disagree with someone else about the story? Here are a few ways you can defend your ideas to your partner and to our class:

- I think the climax of the story is _____ because _____.
- The climax means the part of the story that is the most exciting, or a turning point. I think this part is the most exciting moment because _____. I think it is a turning point because _____.
- I see what you mean, but I think _____.
- On page _____, in paragraph _____, the story says _____. I think that means _____.

## Open Discussion for "Sweet, Difficult Sounds"

- In the story, Nothuluka faces many fears and challenges and eventually learns an important lesson. What fears and challenges do you see? What lesson do you think she learned?
- How can language be both a help and a barrier to helping us connect with others?

## Final Notes

- The plot diagram we used today is very traditional; stories can look very different sometimes. But usually we can find a climax and a resolution!
- Remember as you read for your Story Review to take notes on the plot, but do not tell me every single thing that happens. I want you to apply your knowledge of plot to the story! So use the words "rising action," "climax," and "resolution" to explain the plot.
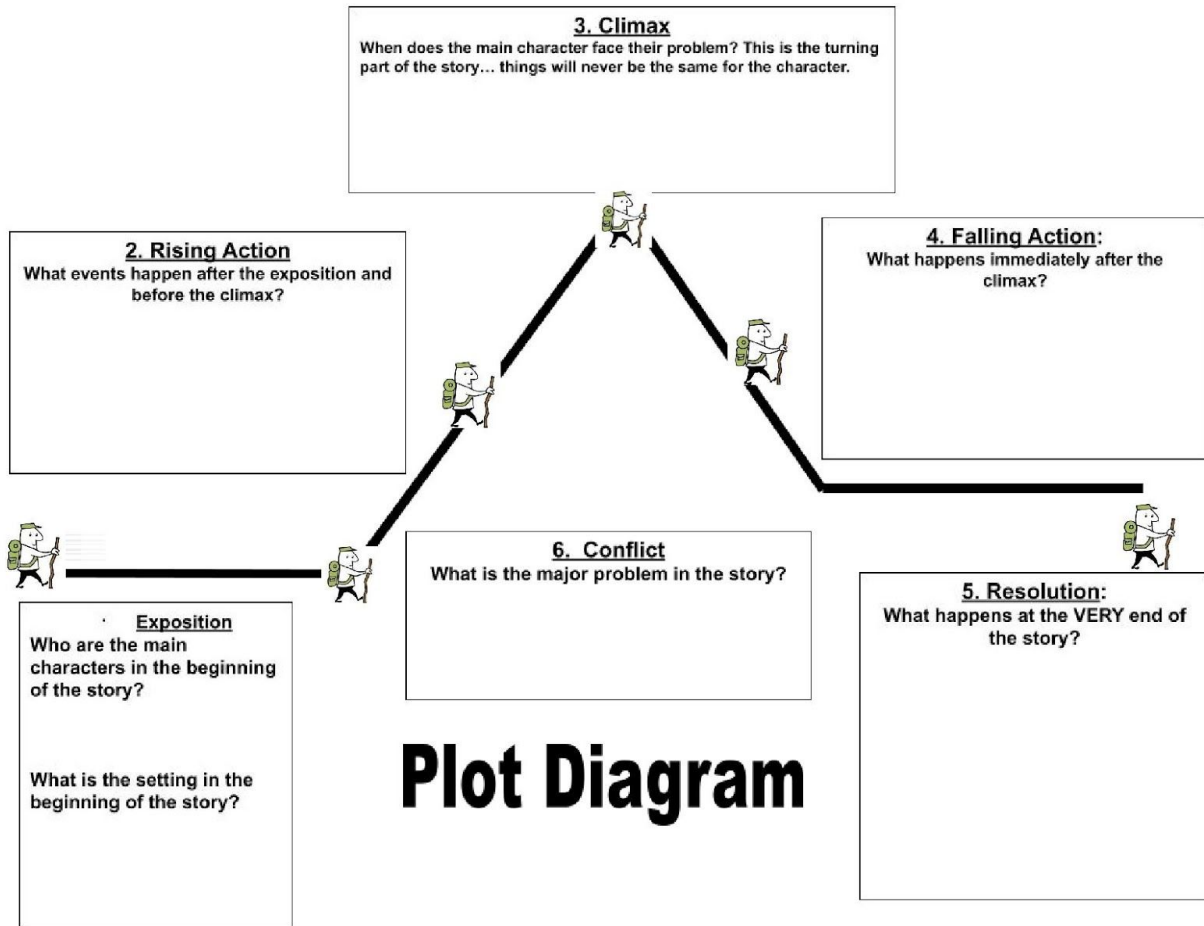
## Before you leave...

In the chat box, send me a private message and answer this question:

What questions do you still have about the literature words we've discussed so far? (Narrator, character, setting, dialogue, conflict, and plot.)

Plot Diagram for Homework

### 3. Climax
When does the main character face their problem? This is the turning part of the story... things will never be the same for the character.

### 2. Rising Action
What events happen after the exposition and before the climax?

### 4. Falling Action:
What happens immediately after the climax?

### 6. Conflict
What is the major problem in the story?

### Exposition
Who are the main characters in the beginning of the story?

What is the setting in the beginning of the story?

### 5. Resolution:
What happens at the VERY end of the story?

## Plot Diagram

**Artifact F: Literature Unit Final Assessment**

This Literature Unit Lesson Plan was first drafted in the course EDUC 6560, Methods of

Teaching English as a Foreign Language, and then subsequently revised for implementation in a

real classroom. It is the second lesson in the four-week unit, with 1.5 hours each week.

DIRECTIONS:

To apply your knowledge of literature, at the end of the semester you will write a Story Review.
A Story Review summarizes the important information about the narrative, describes what the
writer does and does not like about the story, and finally recommends that the reader should or
should not read it themselves. For our class, you will write this review and submit it online
before class on Tuesday, December 1. This Story Review will replace a Literature Unit test, and
hence it will count as a test grade.

In your Story Review, please include the following information and use these key literary terms:
  ● Who is the narrator of the story?
  ● Who are the important characters?
  ● What is the setting?
  ● Describe the plot and the major conflict
  ● Discuss key themes

You will work on this Story Review 100% outside of class. Our class discussions will help you
practice using the literary terms for writing, but we will not have time to work on it in class.

In our class page, under Week 9, I have added a PDF copy of the short story collection called
*Flying Lessons and Other Stories*. We will use one of these stories in class, called "Sol
Painting." You can choose any other story from this collection to read and complete your story
review.

**Graphic Organizer for Story Review**

You may use this chart to help you think and answer all the parts of the Story Review. It is entirely <u>optional</u> and just here to help you think; <u>you do not need to turn it in</u>. The second page shows you how to include your examples from the story in your own writing.

Story title:
Story author:
Story page numbers:

| Story Review Task | My Notes / Ideas / Feelings | Examples from the Story to support my ideas (page numbers, paragraphs, direct quotations) |
|---|---|---|
| Story Elements | Narrator:<br><br>Important characters:<br><br>Setting: | |
| Plot Summary | Exposition:<br><br>Rising Action:<br><br>Climax (What is the most exciting/ important part of the story? Why do I think it's exciting or important?)<br><br>Falling Action:<br><br>Resolution (What does the character learn? How do they solve their problem?): | |
| Theme | What do the characters learn? | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | How do they grow and change?<br><br>Why did the characters act the way they acted?<br><br>What's different at the end of the story?<br><br>What do I remember after the story is over? | |
| Likes and Dislikes | Likes:<br><br>Reasons why I like it:<br><br>Dislikes:<br><br>Reasons why I don't like it: | |

Other ideas that seem important about this story:

Name:

A #:

Date:

**Reading 4 Literature Unit Final Project Rubric**

I will use this page to grade your writing for the Story Review. Please read and review the requirements carefully. Total points possible: 25 points

|  | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Story Elements<br><br>(5 points possible.) | The writer identifies ALL the important elements of the story, uses the key literary terms, and adds important details or examples to show their thinking. | The writer identifies most (but not all) of the important elements of the story and uses the key literary terms. The writer uses some details or examples to show their thinking. | The writer identifies some (but not all) of the important elements of the story and uses the key literary terms. The writer uses some details or examples to show their thinking. | The writer identifies 1-2 of the important elements of the story and uses the key literary terms. However, the writer did not add details or examples to show their thinking. | The writer does not identify the story's important elements or does not use the key literary terms. |
| Plot Summary<br><br>(5 points possible.) | Summary of the plot is clear and detailed, and the writer uses the steps of the plot diagram to explain. | The writer summarizes most (but not all) of the important parts of the story's plot, and the steps of the plot diagram to explain. | The writer summarizes some (but not all) of the important parts of the story's plot, and uses the steps of the plot diagram to explain. | The writer's summary of the story's plot is unclear or leaves out important information, resulting in the reader not having a clear understanding of the story. | The writer does not summarize the story's plot or important information. The reader is left with many questions about the story's action. |

| Theme (5 points possible.) | The writer explains what they believe the theme of the story is, and gives reasons and examples from the text about why they think that. | The writer explains what they believe the theme of the story is, and they give some reasons and examples from the text. However, the reader still has questions about their beliefs. | The writer explains what they believe the theme of the story is, but either reasons for their thinking or examples from the text are missing. | The writer explains what they believe the theme of the story is, but they do not give reasons for their belief or examples from the text to show their thinking. | The writer does not describe the story's theme or they do not use the word "theme" in their explanation. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Likes and Dislikes (5 points possible.) | The writer explains clearly what they liked and disliked about the story, with reasons and examples from the text. Then they recommend for the reader to read or not to read it. | The writer explains what they liked and disliked about the story, and they give both reasons and examples from the text. However, they do not recommend for the reader to read or not to read it. | The writer explains what they liked or disliked about the story, and they give either reasons for their thinking OR examples from the text, but not both. | The writer explains what they liked or disliked about the story, but they do not explain their reasons or give examples from the text. | The writer does not describe what they like or do not like about the story, or they describe it very simply, so the reader does not understand the writer's feelings about the story. |
| Writing Quality (5 points possible.) | Writing quality is high for the level of this class. May contain some | The writing contains some mistakes (i.e. grammar or spelling), but | The writing contains several mistakes (i.e. grammar or spelling) but | The writing contains many mistakes, and some of the mistakes impede | The writing is poor quality or incomprehensible for |

| | grammar or spelling mistakes but must be understandable to the reader. | they do not impede the understanding of the reader. | they do not impede understanding for the reader. | the understanding of the reader. | the level of this course (i.e. many grammar or spelling mistakes, unclear sentence structure). The reader frequently does not understand the writer's meaning. |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

Total Score: ___ / 25