

Portfolio of Teaching English as a Second Language

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March 2, 2011

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### **Abstract**

This portfolio of teaching English as a second language (ESL) includes two parts. The first part is a thoroughly developed statement of teaching philosophy that is based on field research and theories. The second is a supportive section to demonstrate specific professional knowledge of teaching and learning English as a second language within the TESOL standards. In the statement of teaching philosophy, I discuss my goals, beliefs, and a culturally relevant instructional approach (Ladson-Billings, 1992) that is guided by the sociocultural theoretical framework (Vygotsky, 1978). I use my experience factors, such as my linguistic and cultural backgrounds, to explain choosing the sociocultural theoretical framework and how it influences my understanding of students and their development of the English language. In the section of professional knowledge, I further describe and deconstruct the artifacts from major coursework accounting for my knowledge and ability as an ESL teacher. I explain the relevance of each artifact to its designated domain and the TESOL standards within each domain. I mainly focus on four subcategories: 1) learners and learning, 2) learning environment, 3) curriculum, and 4) assessment. Finally, I construct a critical reflection on the collection of artifacts that I developed, leading to a discussion of the implications and the problems for future practice of teaching.

### **Statement of Teaching Philosophy**

“Treat the intellectual resources, capacities,  
and needs of our children with the full dignity and respect they deserve”

(Dewey, 1896)

The work of John Dewey resonates with me and guides my philosophy of teaching as I approach the work of educating students learning English as a new language. I respect the strengths of our children that they bring into school as they engage in the serious intellectual endeavor of learning a new language. My overarching goal in teaching is to empower students from diverse backgrounds to become intellectual thinkers with linguistic and literary competence in English (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Scott, 2010). As a prospective teacher of English as a second language (ESL), I identify myself as a facilitator to promote the development of English language proficiency and literacy. I am driven to accomplish it by incorporating a variety of texts including multicultural and authentic texts in a supportive classroom environment. I plan to empower students to read and think critically as cultural beings in order to develop an increased understanding of their own cultures with which they identify and other foreign cultures.

I believe that the various influential factors that compose my experience have a positive impact on my professional knowledge and practices as a prospective teacher of ESL. Such factors include my linguistic and cultural background, time abroad in the United States, and work with non-native English students. First, I have firsthand experience of being a student learning a second and a third foreign language, namely English and Korean, in a traditional teacher-centered and a communication-orientated instructional environment respectively. Neither

one of these two languages is dominant in China where I studied. I perceive my learning of foreign languages as a progressive process which composes of the access to authentic texts that are created for native language speakers and communicative interaction with people from that cultural background. It further leads to my cultural awareness of the differences between my culture and others' such as the way of greetings. I also benefited from a supportive, learner-centered environment that involved genuine tasks from real life in the process of language development.

Second, time spent studying abroad in the United States has increased my cultural consciousness. Through face-to-face communication with native English speakers and interaction with cultural artifacts around the community, I have developed a new cultural identity that is located between my own culture and my foreign culture. Scott (2010) states that it helps second language learners to recognize, accept, and eventually appreciate a foreign culture in the process of learning a new language and its culture.

Third, I have adopted a culturally relevant approach (Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1995) to bridge the gap between home-based literacy and school-based literacy through working with students from diverse backgrounds. During my former work, I challenge myself to step out of my comfort zone and meet English language learners as unique individuals in ESL classrooms. To clarify, when students learn the English language that is not used predominantly, it is considered as a foreign language (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). English language learners (ELLs) are those who speak another language other than English in an English speaking environment (Baker, 2001). However, I noticed that limited English language proficiency is one of the factors

that prevent ELLs from accessing grade-level materials in English in the United States (Valenzuela, 1999; Valdes, 1998; Gottlieb, 2006). I want my students to experience a sense of success in language development and academic achievement based upon their efforts in and outside of the classroom, as they gain a critical insight of themselves as unique individuals and of the outside world.

As a result of these experiences, I have chosen the sociocultural theory (SCT) as a guiding theoretical framework (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). This framework helps me to make sense of the process of language development as a socially and culturally situated activity. Furthermore, it helps me to understand and interpret issues related to English language development. The SCT not only looks at individuals but also at the social context with which they interact in the process of their development. The premise of SCT is that “high-order mental functions... are organized and amplified through participation in culturally organized activity” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, p. 200). Wells (2000) states that the intellectual abilities that make people unique are derived from social interaction. Thus, the role of social interaction is inevitably important in human development.

One of the key components of Vygotsky’s theory is his proposal of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). That is, the possibility that the learner is able to achieve more with the assistance of an expert than with only his or her actual development level (Johnson, 2004). One key feature of ZPD concerns the role of language in “the coordination and interpretation of joint activity” (Wells, 2000, 57). Vygotsky’s fundamental theoretical insight is that language serves as a medium of organizing higher mental functions (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007; Johnson, 2004; Pérez

& Torres-Guzmán, 2001). Given the importance of language in social interaction, it is necessary to examine how language is conceptualized in SCT. From the Vygotskian perspective, language is a semiotic tool that has been developed and refined to achieve communication in social life (Ellis, 2008). Language provides a conventional means to facilitate negotiation and construction of meaning in both interpersonal and intrapersonal interaction (Wells, 2000; Johnson, 2004).

Thus, the implication for English language instruction is that language needs to be learned in the context of meaningful social interaction and activities. Grammar is a by-product in the process of communication instead of a complete representation of language (Ellis, 2008). The communicative language approach (Brandl, 2007) proposes that grammar and words are integrated with each other so as to allow speakers “to engage in high-order thinking and to share information” (Scottt, 2010, p.112) rather than simply knowing grammar as rules. Studies show that ZPD validates the role of collaborative activity in classroom instruction to enhance student cognitive development (Ellis, 2008; Johnson, 2004; Wells, 2000). Therefore, in class instruction, it indicates that scaffolded assistance enhances the process of language development of individual students through pair and small group activities. This SCT framework thereby explains my case of learning a new language and its culture through participation in social interaction and activities. The key concept of ZPD explains my previous reflection on how my personal experience as a foreign language learner and my former work with ELLs influence my understanding of teaching ELLs.

In the following sections, I discuss the research of effective approaches to teaching ELLs that I have adopted within the theoretical framework. The research in the field concerning

effective instruction are broad. By adhering to the TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) standards and being informed by the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) standards, I think of my beliefs and teaching practices in the following four sections: culture, curriculum and instruction, communication, and assessment.

### **Culture**

As we live in a linguistically and culturally diverse environment, I will challenge my students to become critical participants as cultural beings in their own communities and beyond. Through the engagement with the English language in all its different representations in both spoken and written forms, I will come to understand my students, to employ culturally relevant teaching practices, and to adopt culturally relevant materials.

As the first step to acquainting myself with my students, I will conduct a literacy inventory in both first and second languages at the beginning of the semester. Research (Gottlieb, 2006; Herrera, Murry, & Cabral, 2007) supports that getting to know my students as individuals is an important step to engage them with learning (Nieto & Bode, 2008). I can gain an inner perspective on their cultures that are reflected in their socially situated literacy practices. Literacy practices, e.g. reading newspapers to gather information, are purposeful and embedded in broader social goals and cultural life (Barton & Hamilton, 2000). Without bridging the gap between student literacy practices out of the classroom and school-based literacy, it often leads to low school achievement and may cause students to dropout due to a lack of motivation (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto & Bode, 2008). It is the teacher who takes on the responsibility to facilitate ELLs to achieve academically by bridging the gap between students and schools.



Being aware of the gap between students and school, I will adopt a culturally relevant approach (Ladson-Billings, 1992) that builds upon what students bring to school and a funds of knowledge approach (Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti, 2005). By adopting a culturally relevant teaching approach, I can provide an overview of the lesson by using texts that students are familiar with outside of the classroom. I will encourage students to facilitate their learning by using their first language for comprehensive input (Garcia, 2005). Artifacts from students' communities are understandable materials to scaffold school-based literacy. For instance, with a pre-discussed contract of using first language (L1) in my class, students can read relevant texts in their L1 to build up their learning.

In addition, I believe that what second language learners are exposed to inside the classroom should be culturally relevant and cognitively challenging to motivate their learning. I encourage students to think critically and make connections across texts and to their prior knowledge (Probst, 2004). For instance, I can engage students with a discussion about what it means to leave home when we read Sandra Cisneros's (1991) *The House on Mango Street*, a story about an immigrant teenage girl's experience in the United States and her dream of having a house. It can be very powerful for all students. It is especially beneficial for immigrants or refugees from foreign countries to share their own experiences through creating narrative or expository texts. Students can develop a deep connection between the text and their own experiences.

### **Curriculum and Instruction**

I realize that it is essential to create a culturally relevant curriculum to teach ELLs

language and literacy skills through which I can affirm their linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. Multiculturalism is a permeating model that influences the curriculum (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Fox & Short, 2003). With the incorporation of authentic and culturally relevant materials, ELLs can find their own voices among a variety of texts that provide different voices and perspectives (Jiménez & Teague, 2007). With the adaptation of content materials, such as literature, history, and news articles (Harklau, 1999; Duff, 2001; Echevarría, Short, & Vogt, 2004), ELLs improve their language skills and content knowledge with a maximum exposure to the language of English.

I will engage ELLs with meaningful reading materials containing various forms of texts from print to new media at all levels of English language proficiency. For instance, beginning language learners access authentic use of language by reading very short texts like contemporary poems and visual materials like comics (Frey & Fisher, 2008). Moreover, through the meaningful engagement with texts, ELLs not only decode and interpret language in texts, but also are involved in active negotiation of meaning as they understand the world and themselves (Probst, 2004). As literacy practices are associated with different domains of life (Barton & Hamilton, 2000), I plan to tap the diverse cultures of ELLs, especially “teen culture,” into my curriculum and instruction. I adopt the cultural modeling approach (Lee, 2007) to scaffolding students to learn school-based literacy with their cultural and real life literacy practices.

In order to facilitate students’ comprehension in class instruction, I will adopt the SIOP model (Echevarría, Short, & Vogt, 2004) that suggests effective instructional strategies to meet the language demands of ELLs. With integration of language and content objectives, I will teach

ELLs explicit functional language skills, English discourse patterns, social language, and academic language in subject textbooks. I will also adopt non-verbal support, such as visual aids and graphic organizers, to contextualize more abstract concepts and to accommodate listening difficulties (Duff, 2001; Harklau, 1999; Valdes, 1998). I will address the language demands of ELLs and make accommodations to facilitate their language and literacy development instead of using “just good teaching” strategies (de Jong & Harper, 2005). Thus, I not only perceive an individual ELL’s current stage of language development, but also challenge his or her to reach a higher level of development with more linguistically and cognitively demanding tasks.

### **Communication**

In accordance with the goals outlined in the TESOL standards along with the ACTFL standards, I particularly focus on developing meaningful communication in and beyond the classroom. From the social aspect, Valdes (2001) proposes three goals of learning English: to communicate for various purposes, to learn subject content, and to use English in socially and culturally appropriate ways. I will use authentic tasks from real life and organize them into well-sequenced activities to involve ELLs in utilizing their language skills. For beginning learners of English, difficulties in following directions and formulating questions will result in raising the affective filters and creating anxiety and frustration (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Thus, scaffolding through activities is an essential step to increase learner performance.

Furthermore, readers create meaning when they are actively engaged with expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning through interaction with texts and other readers (Brandl, 2008; Probst, 2004). I will structure activities to facilitate reading and comprehension

into three stages: pre-, during-, and after-reading activities. With an open-minded inquiry approach to teaching texts, it helps students to engage with genuine communication with authentic questions. Eventually, it is important to help students recognize how the linguistic skills and content knowledge they are building inside the classroom can help them make sense of the outside world.

Finally, reading and writing always go hand in hand. ELLs can write on various topics and genres such as research papers, autobiographies, and fairy-tales to formulate and defend their own opinions (Harklau, 1999). Given that actual performance of language is subject to be influenced by their affective experience (Lightbown & Spada, 2006) like frustration, I will provide a variety of scaffolding activities to help students to generate ideas in a low-anxiety environment. For instance, I will incorporate some routine classroom activities like individual writing, free-writing, and silent discussion, i.e. to pass around paper with question prompts. (Gilmore, 2006; Jimenez & Teague, 2007). I will provide semi-scripted sentence structures for beginning learners to completely express their ideas and thoughts. Furthermore, graphic organizers and visuals (Duff, 2001; Echevarría, Short, & Vogt, 2004; Harklau, 1999) are another way that can facilitate learners to visualize and organize their internal thoughts. With increased reading and writing, students will be familiar with discourse patterns in print and oral texts in the English language.

### **Assessment**

With a transparent, culturally relevant pedagogy, the facts of what is taught and how students learn really determine the types of assessments that I can adopt to assess student

learning of a variety of language and literacy skills. When making an assessment schedule, it is important to include authentic classroom-based assessments in addition to local and state mandated standardized assessments (Gottlieb, 2006). I will use tools like performance-based assessment, literacy inventory, self-assessment, anxiety survey, and individual conference to gather information of learners and their development of English language and literacy skills (Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Nieto & Bode, 2008; Brandl, 2008). These assessments will help me to address the affective issues of L2 learners that influence their learning in three areas, i.e. learning styles, communication styles, and language differences (Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Nieto & Bode, 2008). In terms of performance-based assessment, I prefer to use an analytical rubric to assess ELLs' productive language, namely writing and speaking, as it provides a guideline without restraining creativity. It can help students to focus on essential components in a rubric such as content, organization, grammar accuracy, and vocabulary. I will also have a discussion about the system of assessment to help them to develop ownership of their learning. For negative feedback decreases learner confidence in excelling new language skills, I will give corrective feedback by suggesting students to rephrase their sentences to clarify their thoughts rather than correcting every single error (Lightbown & Spada 2006; Brandl, 2008). I will also hold students accountable for class participation in instructional tasks through conducting informal observation and periodical anecdotal notes (Brantley, 2007; Gottlieb, 2006).

When my curriculum and instructional practices are particularly tailored to meet the linguistic, cultural, and academic needs of ELLs, I believe that they will take on more responsibilities for their engagement and performance in class. My ultimate goal is to embrace

the individual uniqueness of each student so as to stimulate their interest and motivation in promoting language skills and literacy skills into the English-speaking world in all its linguistic and cultural diversity.

## **Professional Knowledge**

In order to demonstrate my professional knowledge of teaching English to speakers of other languages (TEOSL), I address my understanding of the seven domains from the TESOL standards for ESL/EFL teachers with supportive artifacts from the ELL teacher preparation program coursework. The seven domains include planning, instructing, assessing, identity and context, learning, content, and commitment and professionalism.

In each domain, I choose one to two representative artifacts that best address the standards of each domain. I introduce each artifact with a brief description in terms of the purpose and the final products. Moreover, I examine the artifacts within the framework of four subcategories, i.e. learners and learning, learning environment, curriculum, and assessment. In the following section, I integrate theories and field research together to elaborate the relevance and effectiveness regarding how the artifacts meet the TESOL standards.

### **Domain 1: Planning**

**Description of Cross-cultural Field Experience.** The cross-cultural field experience creates a perfect framework for prospective teachers of ELLs to integrate community artifacts into the planning stage of classroom instruction. As one of the core requirements for the course that focuses on foundations of teaching linguistically diverse students, the cross-cultural field experience aims to help prospective teachers to gain an understanding of the background and culture of a specific immigrant group in local communities. With regard to the essential components, this project includes reflective essays, unit planning, and a Power Point presentation. First, the three reflections monitored the progress of the field study where we observed the

community, collected artifacts, and conducted interaction with community members. Then, by integrating the artifacts from the local community, we developed three sequential lesson plans as a unit by taking an account of the unique characteristics of ELLs. Finally, we shared via PowerPoint presentations to reflect what we as prospective teachers learned from the cross-cultural experience and implications for future teaching practices.

I chose newly arrived Chinese immigrants as my focal group in a local Chinese community in Nashville, Tennessee. During this project, I spent about nine hours conducting descriptive observation, informal interaction, and one formal interview with some of the community members whose first language was not English.

According to the TESOL standards for ESL or EFL teachers, instruction planning is based on the premise “to promote learning and meet learner goals” with constant modification during the instructional process. By looking at my cross-cultural field experience, I will examine how this project demonstrates my ability of effective planning.

**Learners and learning.** Research (Garcia, 2005; Genesee & Upshur, 2006; Bransford, Brown, & Cooking, 2008) indicates that students learn best when they are able to transfer learning from prior knowledge to new ideas. Because ELLs have a fundamental mastery of knowledge in their first language (L1) through participation in social events, their engagement with community artifacts makes it possible for ELLs to build upon their prior knowledge. In my cross-cultural field experience, my unit plan focused on the topic of “holiday” that every ELL has relevant experience and prior knowledge of. Moreover, the objective of the unit was to help the ELLs to learn a literary concept of symbolism with incorporation of artifacts from their own



holiday conventions.

When I value and respect a student's L1 and culture, I can create a more confident and competent learner. With access to artifacts that ELLs are familiar with, I provide students with an opportunity to compare and contrast conventional holidays of their culture(s) and the western culture, as well as the specific symbols associated with holidays. ELLs can easily identify the symbols connected to certain holidays because holidays have concrete representations such as food and clothing (Nieto & Bode, 2008). Thus, the unit on holiday encouraged ELLs to understand the concepts of symbol and symbolism that widely appear in community artifacts.

**Learning environment.** Utilizing a student's L1 in classroom instruction is an effective way to motivate students in learning. In relation to the connection between a student's L1 and L2 abilities, success in the L1 is the strongest predictor of achievement in the second language (Thomas & Collier, 1997). The use of ELLs' L1 not only validates their culture and identity, but also allows ELLs more flexibility in learning and transferring their prior knowledge.

The culturally relevant approach of Ladson-Billings (1992) plays a central role in my planning stage. Through the cross-cultural field experience, I collected culturally specific resources that I capitalized on learning through the interaction with ELLs and their families. As is shown in my final presentation, taking the Chinese-born ELLs as an example, I adopted community artifacts with which they can associate and identify to effectively deliver the instruction on holiday.

It helps teachers of ELLs to create a welcoming and comfortable learning environment by gaining the parents' points of view on their ways of raising and disciplining their children

(Valdez, 1996; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Oftentimes, what is expected from children at home and in school differs from each other (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Townsend & Fu, 2001). In the cross-cultural field experience, I conducted a formal interview with a Chinese parent to explore her involvement in her child's education in the United States. I concluded that if the parent had communicated with the classroom teacher about the education of her first grade son, the parent could have been actively involved in helping her son's adjustment to his new learning environment: an English-only classroom.

**Curriculum.** Teachers are responsible for matching their expectations to the abilities of their students. In order to do this, a teacher designs an appropriate curriculum in accordance with the knowledge and competencies that the students have (Nieto & Bode, 2008). Wiggins and McTighe (2006) states that teachers use students' prior knowledge and skills to develop concepts and complex processes. Literacy development in L1 enables ELLs to transfer their prior learning by labeling the concept in the new language (Bransford, Brown, Cooking, 2008).

In the design of the unit on holiday, I have adopted the backward planning (Wiggins & McTighe, 2006) to map the big ideas, understanding, and essential questions that are closely interconnected. I encouraged students to bring in holiday artifacts that they could go through the procedure of sorting, translating, and explaining artifacts from their local community (Jiménez, Smith, & Martínez-León, 2003; Jiménez, Smith, & Teague, 2009). I encouraged students to actively explore various holidays with which they were familiar or unfamiliar with. Moreover, the learning objective decides the choice of specific language structure and vocabulary. Through this unit, students not only learned the meaning and nature of holidays as socially situated events,

but also gained an appreciation towards the traditional holidays of others.

**Assessment.** As stated by Wells (2000), the “curriculum is a means, not an end” (p. 60). Assessment drives constant modification of curriculum in the processes of planning and instructing. I developed a formative assessment to evaluate student understanding of the content. Written samples provide evidence to evaluate learners’ language development in addition to oral language assessment. Meanwhile, I planned to conduct in-class observation that was necessary to monitor active participation in class tasks.

Furthermore, the set of lesson plans addressed the Tennessee state standards for sixth grade ELLs. It not only helped ELLs to acquire relevant vocabulary and language structures through creating productive language, but also facilitated their understanding of literary concepts. I taught students about making inferences based on real world knowledge and information stated in the texts (Jiménez, Smith, & Teague, 2009). I encouraged students to demonstrate their understanding of holiday through providing detailed information on holiday through creating their own writing.

## **Domain 2: Instructing**

**Description of Curriculum Project on English Literacy for ELLs.** Prospective teachers of ELLs in the course of bilingual and ESL curriculum development and instruction demonstrate their professional knowledge in the curriculum project. With an emphasis on the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model, pre-service teachers integrate professional knowledge from a variety of aspects including English language instruction practice, curriculum material selection and development, and ESL literacy and content knowledge instruction. As a

joint project with ELL practicum, I developed five interrelated lesson plans in the content area of English language development (ELD) for a group of sixth grade ELLs who have little L1 literacy or English language skills. Before teaching in the class of my practicum placement, I partially demonstrated these lesson plans during the course and conducted modification with feedback from the teacher educator and fellow classmates.

In relation to the TESOL standards of instructing, my curriculum project aims to serve a group of ELLs who have unique demands of English language and content areas. The curriculum provides with purposeful learning in a safe and supportive environment. I will elaborate on the curriculum project of the stage of instructing.

**Learners and learning.** ELLs acquire English as their L2 at a different rate depending on a variety of factors that affect their learning (Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Gottlieb, 2006). The group of ELLs that I taught at the International Newcomers' Academy (INA) in Nashville, Tennessee had limited English language proficiency and literacy skills in their L1 due to a lack of previous education. The students were placed in a one-year ESL program where they could learn both the English language and content knowledge.

Classroom instruction needs to meet student ages and levels of English language proficiency (Echevarría, Short, & Vogt, 2004). Taking into account their new arrivals in the United States, everything in their new environment is new knowledge. To build up their survival language skills in the first year is an overarching goal that guides my curriculum and instruction. I engaged students with appropriate ESL materials to learn pronunciation, vocabulary, and language functions of the English language. It lays a foundation for further learning of

productive (speaking and writing) and receptive (reading and listening) language skills.

**Learning Environment.** In order to promote social and academic integration of ELLs, especially those newly arrived students, it is essential for teachers to create a welcoming and supportive learning environment at the very beginning (Coehlo, 1994). Newly arrived ELLs need to adjust to a new social and educational system that may function differently from the place(s) where they come from. For instance, teacher expectations of student performance can be contrasting between Western and Asian education systems. Teachers can facilitate positive adjustment of ELLs provided with classroom routines and meaningful instruction (Coehlo, 1994). Due to a lack of formal schooling, the ELLs at INA particularly need an inviting and inclusive learning environment where they familiarize themselves with rules and expectations of schooling in the United States. I employed a series of classroom routine activities such as greeting the students. It helped me to let the ELLs feel welcomed at the beginning of each lesson. In addition, I started each lesson with journaling on topics from content areas that served the purpose of concentrating the students to class.

**Curriculum.** The curriculum project has a positive impact on my adoption of the SIOP model (Echevarría, Short, & Vogt, 2004) to guide my classroom instruction. The goal of the SIOP model is to provide comprehensible and accessible instruction to ELLs. The SIOP model provides me with useful resources about how to organize the materials into lesson plans that are geared towards ELLs. My curriculum integrates English language support alongside content area instruction in order to facilitate their access to grade-level content knowledge.

With regard to survival language skills for ELLs, it is important to help them to learn

words that help to label whatever that they encounter in real life in English. Students need abundant texts and meaningful activities to improve their language skills. I developed a lesson plan on fruit that ELLs could associate with real life experience.

Moreover, effective instructional strategies are not “just good teaching” (de Jong & Harper; 2005) because it depends on whether or not the teacher makes accommodations for ELLs. As is stated in my rationale of the curriculum, I adopt a variety of teaching strategies that are specific for ELLs, such as the inclusion of L1, visual aids, graphic organizers, body language, and so forth.

**Assessment.** I incorporated Tennessee ELL Standards for grade K-2 into my lesson plans because the students read at either grade one or two according to their initial assessment. I included both a formative and a summative assessment in each lesson plan. For instance, the ELLs could write sentences incorporating nouns from each lesson to express their own ideas. Moreover, I could monitor how well they have learned through their oral and written work. Through informal assessment, I could obtain instant information from students regarding their comprehension. Given information from oral and written evidence, I was able to identify their difficulties for later planning and instructing. Thus, I could modify the lesson plan from moment to moment during class instruction.

### **Domain 3: Assessment**

**Description of the Final Analysis Project for Assessment of ELLs.** The final analysis project for assessment of ELLs is well designed for pre-service teachers of ELLs to work with a focal ELL regarding how to utilize various assessment tools including standardized tests and

classroom-based assessment. In addition, prospective teachers demonstrate an understanding of federal and state laws regarding ELLs education by identifying whether the language needs of ELLs are met within federal and state regulations. Moreover, prospective teachers use both standardized tests and performance-based assessment to identify the focal learner's language proficiency.

Tying to the TESOL standards of assessment, this assessment project helps me to collect and interpret information about the process of English language development. Next, I discuss how I use a variety of assessment tools to modify instruction and facilitate student intellectual and linguistic learning.

**Learners and Learning.** As standardized tests rarely take into account the nature of second language acquisition (SLA), it is important for placement decision makers to consider the characteristics of SLA and variables of individuals, i.e. age, prior educational experiences, and first language literacy, when they assess English language proficiency level (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). The focal ELL in my assessment project was a twelve-year-old refugee who newly arrived in the United States. The student neither received adequate education in his L1 nor English language instruction due to his refugee background.

Field studies indicate that adolescent second language learners learn L2 at a faster rate than younger learners provided with learning strategies and self-motivation (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). In the case of the focal student, he was merely able to recognize half of the twenty-six letters of the alphabet at the beginning of his placement. After about four months, the learner was able to recognize 156 side words out of 220. Moreover, the student participated actively in class

instruction. For instance, he oftentimes volunteered answers and repeated the teacher's oral production in private speech.

**Learning Environment.** For ELLs in the United States, students are encouraged to study the English language of input alongside content knowledge rather than creating a submersion type of learning environment where students are expected to learn subject matters with no L1 support (Corson, 2001). The one-year ESL program at INA aims to serve refugees and other ELLs with very limited L1 literacy and little English knowledge. This special program helps such ELLs to acquire sufficient English language proficiency and content knowledge before they start to attend regular ESL class in local communities. According to my research of the program, it serves to meet the learner's language and academic needs within the federal and state requirement.

**Curriculum and instruction.** Despite the pressure for teachers and students to perform under the national and state requirements (Pierce, 2006), teachers need to have a significant understanding of the challenges of the educational policies and testing. Teachers can provide ELLs with beneficial instruction to facilitate their language development and content area achievement. When I implemented my lesson plans from the curriculum project, I consulted the state standards for ELLs in terms of English language development and grade-level content areas. I engaged the students with task-based activities and meaningful instruction that promote the development of English language and literacy.

Furthermore, Genesee and Upshur (1996) state that teachers can structure prearranged activities to observe the targeted language skills after they identify their goals of observation. It



makes it possible for the teacher to evaluate the targeted oral language skills and make decisions for further instruction. I worked with the students in small group instruction to examine how well each student improved from instruction. To check their pronunciation, I had the students take turns reading aloud words from flashcards. Moreover, constructive feedback to students based on their assessment promotes their learning of L2. Such instructional strategies include reading aloud, modeling and chunking sentence patterns, and sounding out multi-syllable words.

**Assessment.** Standardized language assessment only measures one or two aspects of language skills (Gottlieb, 2006). In order to make decisions of effective instruction, it is necessary to obtain reliable and descriptive information from authentic assessment. For instance, the IPT-oral test only discloses the level of the learner's oral proficiency rather than including his listening ability. There has to be a supplemental assessment to provide reliable and validate information about the language development. Moreover, it takes months for teachers and students to obtain test results from TCAP (Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program). Appropriate accommodations (Gottlieb, 2006) are essential for ELLs to take academic achievement tests. As is discussed in my assessment project, the whole class where the focal student studied received sufficient extension while they took state mandated test, TCAP.

Furthermore, alternate assessment of academic achievement can be used to meet the needs of ELLs' academic achievement, especially for ELLs at beginning levels (Gottlieb, 2006). Gottlieb (2006) recommends multiple measures, including classroom-based evidence of ELLs' performance. During my in-class observation, I developed protocols to collect and organize student data. I also conducted a spelling inventory (Bear, Helman, Templeton, Invernizzi, &

Johnston, 2007) and a running records assessment to collect information about the learner's English language ability. I collected writing samples, portfolios, and grades of the focal student to provide diverse evidences when I assessed his English language proficiency.

#### **Domain 4: Identity and context**

In the domain of identity and context, I use the cross-cultural field experience that has been stated in the first domain of planning. Looking at the cross-cultural field experience from a different viewpoint, I elaborate its relevance to the standards of identity and context. I believe that my understanding of how the learning environment shapes ELLs' identity formation permeates all of the instruction stages including planning, instructing, and assessing. It is indicated in the TESOL standards that understanding learners, and their communities and cultures is of significant importance.

**Learners and learning.** It is clear that the way ELLs learn and accomplish school achievement is inevitably related to their cultures in terms of learning styles, communication styles, and language differences (Nieto & Bode, 2008). The cross-cultural field experience provides an opportunity for me as a prospective teacher of ELLs to develop a critical understanding towards the relationship between learning and culture. Gutierrez, Larson, and Kreuter (1995) state that teachers see the potential of each student to achieve academically instead of judging them with the frame of what makes a "good" student. From my formal interview of Chinese parents and students, I realize the importance of teacher's affirming attitudes toward students' unique characteristics and classroom behaviors. For instance, Chinese-born students are not expected to interrupt when adults talk at home. Chinese immigrant

parents highly value their children's academic success in school.

**Learning Environment.** The cross-cultural field experience has helped me to gain insight in the relationship between culture and language as a medium in teaching and learning the English language and academic knowledge. The reason why I chose the group of Chinese immigrants with whom I share the same cultural origin was to develop a critical perspective of the Chinese background and cultural practices. Being involved in the cross-cultural field experience, I became more aware of my beliefs, values, and assumptions that I did not consider critically before in spite of the fact that I was immersed in my own culture. Thus, I will be more aware of the role of culture that plays in a classroom setting. As I share the Chinese linguistic and cultural background with ELLs from similar backgrounds, I can become a role model and even a cultural broker as a teacher of ELLs.

**Curriculum.** The culturally relevant approach (Ladson-Billings, 1992; Gay, 2002) to teaching ELLs makes it clear that curriculum materials have to be relevant to learners because the learning context influences their identity formation. Allen (1994) states that what is important when selecting reading materials for ELLs is to take into account the ELLs' cultural backgrounds and to make use of their L1 when possible. The cross-cultural project highlights not only my awareness of culture, but also my use of real world literacy in classroom instruction.

Teaching strategies need to be culturally sensitive so as to actively involve students in learning (Echevarría, Short, & Vogt, 2004). It is necessary for teachers to hold a positive attitude when Chinese students are less active in participation in a free discussion (Duff, 2001). To create more opportunities, teachers can adopt activities such as silent discussion and small group

discussion (Duff, 2001; Gilmore, 2006). These activities create a less threatening environment for ELLs to use L2.

**Assessment.** It is important for teachers of ELLs to conduct pre-screening before making decisions on placement of language programs (Gottlieb, 2006). Pre-screening provides student information regarding country of origin, previous education, first language, years and reasons in the United States, family members, and their education. As is consistent with my thoughts in the previous domain of planning, my cross-cultural field experience includes a background investigation of a specific immigrant group and its community. I interacted with community members where I particularly probed questions related to their perspectives on education and literacy practices in L1. Through obtaining basic background information, I can gain a general cultural and linguistic impression of the student and his or her family.

### **Domain 5: Learning**

**Description of Case Study of a Non-native Speaker of English.** The case study of a non-native speaker (NNS) of English is from the course that focuses on the application of linguistics to the teaching and learning of English as a second language (ESL). It requires prospective teachers of ESL to apply educational linguistic knowledge of the English language as a system and fundamental theories of second language acquisition. The core component of the NNS case study is to develop a description and a comprehensive evaluation of the development of the subject's oral and written language skills in terms of language areas, i.e. phonetics/phonology (the sound system), morphology (the forms of words), syntax (the order and sequence of words), and semantic and pragmatics (the meaning and function of language).

My subject in the case study was a Chinese-speaking college graduate who received about five years of English language instruction in the secondary school. I spent one hour every week with my subject for a three-month period to collect data of her receptive and productive language skills. I discussed the strengths and patterns of errors of the learner's English language proficiency with supportive evidence such as excerpts and snippets from transcription. I reached an evaluation of the learner's current stage of language proficiency. Finally, I utilized a SLA theoretical framework to explain the factors that influenced the learner's English language development. In the next section, I discuss how this case study manifests my professional knowledge in learning the English language.

**Learners and learning.** Lightbown and Spada (2006) state that individual ELLs are different in their levels of English language proficiency due to a variety of factors including identity, age, prior study of English, L1 literacy, and access to native speakers. Other influential factors are learner characteristics such as motivation, learning style, learning aptitude, and personality (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). In the introductory section of my case study, I outlined the background information of my subject with regard to her L1 and prior learning of English. In addition, I highlighted how the introversive personality of my subject influenced her unbalanced development of productive and receptive language skills. For instance, my subject was capable of reading written texts, particularly expository texts, while she struggled with comprehending utterances of native English speakers.

Garcia (2005) and Tse (2001) make it clear that ELLs and their families are aware that the mastery of English is their predominant theme of their school experience and social life in the

United States. I realized that the motivation of my subject in learning English depended on her social activities such as entertainment and participation in religious events. My subject was actively involved in learning English script from religious texts so as to pursue her religious purpose.

An ELL's previous education and L1 literacy play a fundamental role in the development of the English language and literacy skills (Garcia, 2005; Thomas & Collier, 1997). As a college graduate, the subject was well educated in her L1. In addition, the subject developed a personalized learning style and learning strategies to cope with cognitively challenging tasks. In the analysis of oral and written samples, the subject outlined main ideas and details in her L1 before she composed a well-organized essay in English. Moreover, the subject demonstrated a strong ability to use her L1 to translate her thoughts into English expressions with lexical and syntactic knowledge.

**Learning environment.** Research (Brandl, 2008; Lightbown & Spada, 2006) shows that the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach highly values the principle of a rich input of L2 in second language development. To be specific, a rich input of L2 (Brandl, 2008) has a great impact on the development of the English language when ELLs are exposed to comprehensible input through authentic materials and the teacher's use of the English language. For those who learn English as a foreign language, the teacher's use of the target language is one of the main resources that they can practice and improve their language skills. However, in the case study, I stated that my subject studied English in an environment that adopted an audio-lingual method (ALM) in her home country. Few authentic materials or opportunities for

interaction with native speakers were available in classroom instruction. Thus, my subject evaluated her English language proficiency as “poor since she had never spoken English in early years” (NNS case study, p 3) before her arrival in the United States.

I used the interaction hypothesis theoretical framework (Lightbown & Spada, 2006) to explain the subject’s experience of learning English as a foreign language. The interaction hypothesis states that L2 learners learn better when they have opportunities to “interact with other speakers, working together to reach mutual comprehension” (p. 43). The subject did not have many opportunities to be involved in conversational interactions with her peers or native speakers despite her comprehensible input in her L1. If teachers of ELLs provide more opportunities for learners to use their L2 in a non-threatening classroom, learners can be confident to communicate and negotiate meanings in task-based activities.

**Curriculum and instruction.** The goal of the curriculum for English as a second language is to enable ELLs to access all forms of representations in the English language. Garcia (2005) states that linguistic, cognitive, and social development are closely interrelated. The language ability to talk on self-referential topics is not sufficient to establish meaningful conversations with native speakers of English outside of the classroom (Scott, 2010, Brandl, 2008). Furthermore, grammar and words are integrated with each other so as to allow speakers “to engage in high-order thinking and to share information” (Scott, 2010). Grammar is viewed as a dynamic and energetic system rather than a static body of knowledge. Traditional grammar-centered approaches to teaching English are no longer enough to meet the language needs of today’s ELLs. These approaches are inadequate for developing a sense of

multiculturalism. In particular, authentic texts and real-life tasks engage ELLs in a meaningful context to practice their language skills. ELLs can not only learn language skills but also the cultural connotations in authentic texts of both printed and digitalized forms that are created for native speakers of English. This explains the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and the instructional strategies from which my subject learned the English language.

Bilingual English teachers who are native Chinese make it possible for Chinese EFL students to build upon their L1 literacy. However, with an overemphasis on grammar and forms of language, it results in the subject's unbalanced development of her English language skills. That is, the subject struggled with the negotiation of meanings in oral or written language even though she possessed an abundant knowledge of grammar rules and lexicon of English.

**Assessment.** Despite the fact that ELLs learn English as a second language at a different rate, according to field studies in SLA, there are general predictable stages that most learners pass through (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). As shown in my case study, the subject demonstrated a proficient command of using references to the past, possessive determiners, negation, and questioning in her written and oral language. On the other hand, the subject had difficulties in using past tense appropriately in accordance with context. The subject rarely used relative clauses in collected language samples. It turns out to be crucially essential for teachers of ELLs to possess the educational linguistic knowledge (Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Díaz-Rico, & Weed, 2002; Jiménez & Teague, 2007) so as to understand the cause-effect relationship of the learner's errors and identify effective remedies. As I reflected on my experience of conducting the case study, teachers of ELLs can find effective solutions to learner errors by identifying the



patterns of error in different language areas such as morphology and syntax. By identifying error patterns, I can provide effective corrective feedback. For instance, if the learner struggles with conjunctions in sentences, I can use explicit instruction to clarify the learner's confusion.

Knowing that the process of learning a second language is not static (Lightbown & Spada, 2006), I can assess the stage of language proficiency without being retrained by my expectation of ELLs from their English language proficiency. It is important for teachers of ELLs to realize that language learning is a progressive rather than a linear process.

#### **Domain 6: Content**

**Description of the Novel Planning Project for Scaffolded Reading.** This novel planning project requires prospective teachers of reading in secondary schools to read and plan a novel-length, fictional text. Working in a group of three, prospective teachers develop a rationale to explain the big goals of teaching certain texts. Individually, each pre-service teacher takes on a task to develop two sequential lessons and a formative assessment that scaffold learners' learning of a foundational literary concept such as theme, character, and symbolism. Prospective teachers need to attend to scaffolding ELLs in the process of planning in terms of their linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds and needs of language development. Provided with a multicultural text, our project includes a rationale of the unit, a pre-reading lesson, and three lesson plans that cover three literary concepts.

**Learners and Learning.** Studies show that it takes four to seven years for ELLs to develop proficient English language skills (Collier & Thomas, 1997). Teachers can introduce ELLs to cognitively and linguistically challenging tasks when they decode, interpret, and

negotiate meaning in the process of reading (Valdes, 1998). Thus, students develop their English language proficiency and content knowledge simultaneously when they are engaged with active reading. In the context of a reading class, I view ELLs as resourceful learners who bring in prior knowledge and L1 literacy. The text itself remains meaningless without the involvement of reader responses (Probst, 2004). Readers create meaning through interaction between readers and texts, and also among readers.

Moreover, students practice their linguistic skills in four aspects (i.e., reading, writing, speaking, and listening) and communication strategies when they negotiate meaning with others in oral and written activities. Though ELLs learn to read and write in English at the beginning, they gradually become competent English speakers engaging with the process of reading and writing to learn what they are interested. The novel project aims to promote ELLs' English language proficiency without costing their learning of content knowledge.

**Learning Environment.** ELLs can build up authentic and meaningful communication while they read and discuss questions regarding texts. Somers (1999) contends that with teacher's facilitation to pave their way into discussion along with approachable texts, student-centered discussion will happen. On the other hand, affective filters such as anxiety and stage fright can impede ELLs' academic performance and participation in class (Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Brandl, 2008). With well-structured questioning and language support, ELLs can involve in meaningful communication either in their L1 or L2 depending on their English language proficiency. I can further help students to develop memberships in class as a community when they become active participants in learning. In the set of lesson plans, I put

emphasis on scaffolding and collaboration with ELLs so as to engage them in meaningful reading. Scaffolding and constant facilitation in this project makes the novel accessible to ELLs by lowering their anxiety.

**Curriculum and Instruction.** I am especially interested in adopting the culturally relevant approach (Ladson-Billings, 1992) to teaching language through reading literary texts. Studies show that choices of literary texts enrich ESL curriculum materials to promote the development of language skills (Allen, 1994; Duff, 2001). In the novel planning project, we chose the multicultural text, *The House on Mango Street*, by Sandra Cisneros (1991), to teach literary concepts. I believe that many ELLs who left their homes and live an unstable life can resonate with the main character's dream of owning a house. Given that literature can incite dialogue among students about significant issues in cultures (Probst, 2004), the learning objective of the three lesson plans is to stimulate ELLs to make sense of their life experiences and develop critical reflections upon that. In the lesson on symbolism, by utilizing either English or L1, ELLs can further discuss their understandings of home.

**Assessment.** Teachers of ELLs can monitor the progress of language development through classroom-based assessment (Gottlieb, 2006). In the introductory lesson, students are assessed when they make presentations on the results of their interviews with female community members to investigate what it means to be a female in their culture(s). Thus, I can assess both language skills and student understanding of the objective of the lesson through their oral and written product. In addition, each lesson plan includes a summative assessment along with informal assessment. Formal assessments can provide informative language samples for teachers to

modify and adjust instruction constantly. Finally, students can create their own comic books or poems to share in class after they study the whole novel of *The House on Mango Street*.

### **Domain 7: Commitment and Professionalism**

**Description of Cultural Narrative and Literacy Narrative.** The cultural narrative provides segue for prospective teachers of ELLs to perceive the way in which language and culture interact to form learners' identities. A learner's identity further influences his or her learning the English language and academic achievement. Through engagement with critical reflection, teachers of ELLs examine how their culture and language have an impact on the formation of their own beliefs, values, and pre-existing assumptions. In this piece of writing, I conducted self-examination of the transformation of my cultural awareness in different stages of my own life. Moreover, I also reflected on my contact with a new language and with people who speak that language. I compared and contrasted my own culture with those of others.

The literacy narrative serves a role to explore the social nature of literacy practices. The assignment serves as a means for prospective teachers of ELLs to examine their own personal experiences in light of theories about language and learning. I reflected on how the role of my linguistic, cultural, ethnic, and economic background influenced my literacy practices. My literacy narrative focuses on the formation of my cultural identity through my participation in both English and Chinese literacy practices. I further examine how and why my literacy practices are embedded in my social activities from a social perspective. Looking at the TESOL standards for commitment and professionalism, I deepen my understanding of teaching and learning principles of ESL through self-examination in terms of language and culture in broader teaching

community and communities at large.

**Learners and Learning.** I continue to grow in my understanding of the relationship of the learner and learning in light of culture and language. In my cultural narrative, I described and reflected on the process of the formation of my cultural identity. Looking upon my initial frustration and further adjustment to my life in a different culture, I am reassured of my belief of paying respect for learner differences in terms of learning style, communication styles, and language differences as stated in the fifth domain of learning. Meanwhile, writers of literacy narratives describe and explain how literacy plays a role in the participation in a specific community, and how literacy position people in a certain way. I composed a chronological narrative to examine how my bilingual literacy practices have developed and evolved throughout the time. Looking upon my literacy practices with both English and Chinese, it helps me to understand why it is extremely important for educators of ELLs to introduce culturally relevant materials for students who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Therefore, it is inevitable that literacy practices are interwoven in social and cultural activities in our lives.

**Learning Environment.** Through writing autobiographic narratives in terms of cultural and racial awareness, it helps me to be aware of my beliefs, values, and pre-existing assumptions as a cultural and racial being. By sharing such autobiographies with a focus on culture and literacy practices with other prospective teachers and course instructors, it helps me to move beyond my personal beliefs and challenge preexisting assumptions in regards to the relationship of language and culture. I improve my professional knowledge in the community of English language teachers and the broader teaching community.

I can have my students write their own cultural narrative essays in either English or their L1 to reflect upon how their cultural backgrounds shape their ways of learning and academic achievement. As stated in the fourth of domain of identify and context, I can thus create a culturally relevant learning environment to contribute to their identify formation. I can initiate teacher-student relationship and pay respect for their culture(s) in order to make the classroom more a welcoming and integrated learning community.

**Curriculum and Instruction.** As indicated in the notion of the funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) every student brings his or her unique experience from their real lives into learning. From that, I can have ELLs write their literacy practices from a social perspective. Literacy narrative is in cohesion with my adoption of the culturally relevant approach to teaching content knowledge in the sixth domain. I can continue to enrich my pool of culturally relevant materials and instructional strategies when I obtain new information regarding literacy practices from ELLs.

**Assessment.** In the previous domains of TESOL standards, I have discussed various assessment tools to assess ELLs concerning their English language proficiency and literacy. The assessment tools facilitate classroom instruction through gathering important information of ELLs to increase my understanding of ELLs as individual learners and unique cultural beings. I can apply assessment tools in the cycle of planning, instructing, assessing, and modifying instructional practices (Gottlieb, 2006). Moreover, the framework to compose a cultural narrative or a literacy narrative is another essential assessment tool for me to continue to update information of ELLs in new classroom settings. An alternative form of such narrative essays

concerning culture and home-based literacy practices is to conduct a comprehensive survey with provided choices. When I conduct these assessments with other teachers of ELLs, we can gather a more data to expand our understanding of our students from diverse backgrounds. Thus, I can continue to grow in my teaching practices in the community of English language teaching professionals.

### **Final Reflection**

The relationship of teaching and learning the English language is complex. I state my ultimate goal as a teacher of ESL in my statement of teaching philosophy at the beginning of the ELL portfolio. I state my ideal teaching practices with a connection to field research and studies. In the section of professional knowledge, I undergo a thorough discussion of the seven domains in the TESOL standards with supportive artifacts from my ELL teacher preparation program to demonstrate my professional knowledge. Through the examination of how the artifacts address each essential stage of the process of teaching and learning, I feel confident of my skills to become a teacher of ELLs. By comparing the analysis of my artifacts from coursework with my goal of teaching, I identify problems that I need to solve in order to continue to grow in my teaching practices. In this section, I will discuss the implications and questions for my teaching practices in terms of culture, curriculum, communication, and assessment.

First, I have employed the SCT framework as I continuously develop my understanding of SLA within the social context. I consistently adopt a culturally relevant approach and a funds of knowledge approach to guide my teaching practices. Thus, I develop a positive attitude of ELLs with regard to their culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. A couple of artifacts have played significant roles in my attaining this belief. They are the cross-cultural field experience, the case study of a NNS, and my autobiographies in terms of culture and literacy practices. As is evident in these artifacts, instead of denying or ignoring their home-based literacy and prior knowledge that students bring into the classroom, I plan to integrate culturally relevant materials into the curriculum and instruction. I can thereby effectively facilitate students' learning of the



English language and literacy through transferring their already learned knowledge to build up new ideas.

What I need to improve is my culturally relevant approach with an increased knowledge of languages and cultures from different immigrant communities. ELLs are students from diverse backgrounds that teachers may or may not be familiar with. Although I have developed a profound understanding of ELLs from the Chinese cultural and linguistic background through my achievement of the artifacts, I perceive the need to implement the cross-cultural field experience in other immigrant communities dependent on new classroom settings. At the planning stage, it helps me to prepare by conducting an online research of country-specific information of the students' first languages, home countries, and cultural conventions. Moreover, students are good resources of which teacher can always take advantage. For instance, I can have a student guide a field visit to the community where his or her family live.

Second, a culturally relevant curriculum is essential to engage ELLs with active learning of English language skills and literacy. For ELLs, authentic texts are those created for native-English speakers from real life in a variety of forms in English. In addition, ELLs improve language skills through reading multicultural texts that provide both insider perspectives and connections to the real world. I bridge my practices and theories of curriculum and instruction through the cross-cultural experience and the curriculum project. I constructed practical lesson plans to meet the demands of language and to provide grade-level content knowledge.

What I can do better in curriculum and instruction is to create a variety of activities with community literacy to teach ELLs at all levels of English language development. As suggested

by Jiménez, Smith, & Teague (2009), I can encourage ELLs to participate in creative activities such as creating bulletin boards, interviewing a community member, analyzing their artifacts, and creating their own artifacts. I can create more opportunities for beginning and intermediate learners to practice self-generated writing and speaking besides reading aloud and writing with helper sentences. For ELLs who need more waiting time to generate ideas, I will allocate sufficient time for these ELLs to express their ideas through writing and drawing. In terms of instruction, I plan to adjust my instructional procedures at any given moment in class. During my instruction, I can clarify my instruction if the student shows difficulties or hesitation to participate in activities.

Third, the ZPD of the SCT framework shows the importance of social interaction in enhancing learning from an actual level of performance to a more proficient level with effective assistance. When engaging ELLs with meaningful communication, they utilize their language skills and cognitive abilities by decoding, interpreting, and negotiating meaning with texts or other speakers. In a classroom setting, scaffolding and collaboration with the teacher or peer classmates have a great impact on ELLs' learning of the English language and content knowledge. I successfully integrate scaffolding into my novel planning project building upon a multicultural text for ELLs. In my curriculum project, the SIOP model helps me to teach content area and language skills together. I am able to combine my knowledge of the English language as a system and instructional strategies for ELLs in my teaching.

What I still need to learn is a way to provide effective instruction to facilitate ELLs to excel their language skills in and outside of the classroom. Explicit instruction and feedback on

language functions is necessary to increase learner confidence to use a new language. Given the diversity of ELLs, it is not enough to be familiar with a learner from a Chinese background in the NNS case study. I need to increase my understanding of specific learner characteristics and patterns of errors of various speakers. Therefore, with the framework of the case study, I can focus on different ELLs from another linguistic and cultural background as well as at different ages in the future.

Fourth, as I reflected upon the assessment project, it helped me to be aware of the importance to identify the language needs of ELLs through effective assessment such as pre-screening. It is important to assure that ELLs are placed in an adequate language program to satisfy the needs of their English language development and to promote content knowledge. Oftentimes, state-mandated assessment influence curriculum materials in classroom teaching. Standardized tests tend to ignore the nature of second language learning as a progressive process. They rarely provide instant feedback for teachers to improve classroom instruction. It is essential to develop curriculum that address the needs of language and content areas.

I need to improve my ability to evaluate the effectiveness of standardized tests in terms of validity and reliability. It is important for teachers to know how effective assessment tools can reflect ELLs' language proficiency. Otherwise, instruction will fall in the control of standardized tests. I realize the deficiency of standardized test and further value authentic assessment to monitor the progress of the student learning the English language and content areas. I want my students to have their voice to determine what and how to assess their learning. Thus, students will be more motivated in their learning both language and content knowledge.

Finally, as a prospective teacher of ELLs, my learning of professional knowledge and teaching practices in a teaching community has benefited from field theoretical readings, essential course projects, experienced teacher educators, and interaction with fellow classmates. My learning has reached out to local communities, local ELLs and their families, and ESL classroom instruction instead of stopping at field research and studies of teaching and learning. The collection of my artifacts serves as a tool to connect theories to my beliefs and goal as an ESL teacher in the real world.

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