

Domain: Language proficiency

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

As an English teacher from non-native English speaker background, I need to keep learning to improve my English proficiency in different domains. It would definitely take me a long time to attain the native-speaker proficiency, but as an English teacher, I need to keep brushing up my comprehensive English skills and deepen my cultural understanding, to enhance my language skills as well my future instruction skills.

I would like to use **Artifact E1**, **Artifact E2** and **Artifact E3** to demonstrate my understandings of this domain. **Artifact F1** and **F2** are two recordings of my communications with my English learner in a restaurant in English. The recording is originally used for my “Educational Linguistics” class I took in 2013 fall semester. I recorded my conversations with her in restaurant to assess her English communication skills, also demonstrate my English skills. **Artifact E3** would be my TOEFL score report to demonstrate my English reading, speaking, listening and writing skills.

1) **Learner and learning:** As an English learner myself, I could totally relate to my learner as how she learn English via the conventional grammar and translation approach in her own country, where English is a mandatory subject and is used only in the school setting. I understand her struggles and frustrations when she found that years of English learning turn out to be very inadequate in her academic studies as well as social skills in America. I am strong in listening and reading, but relatively weaker in speaking and writing

skills as you can see from my TOEFL score report. But that's the test I took before coming to the USA in 2012. My speaking skills was the weakest at that time, but now my speaking skills has improved a lot by studying in America for almost 2 years.

I came to Vanderbilt to pursue my master degree in education in 2013, and since then I still keep improving my English skills and cultural knowledge by immersing myself in both academic and social settings, for instance, keep reading the academic articles, writing course papers and doing class presentations, in the mean time, I also watch English news and TV shows, hanging out with American friends to parties and bars. As you can hear from the recording that I am proficient in social English skills, I know how to order food at American restaurants, how to initiate the conversation with my learner to push her for more oral output. I also could capitalize on my bilingual skills to negotiate meanings and dispel the misconceptions. I am very confident that my English skills would be adequate for my future English instruction.

2) **The learning environment:** As I elaborated before in other domain, the ideal English learning environment would be daily exposure to the authentic learning environment and meaningful language use with native-speaker. However, it is not feasible for every English learner to have the authentic language-learning environment. Like me, I grew up in China and did not learn English until I was 12 years old. English is taught as one of the required courses in old grammar and translation way at school. My family members and the people in my community don't speak English. I barely have the opportunities to practice my speaking and listening

skills till I was a College undergrad majoring in English. However, my English learning during my undergrad study in China was pretty much the same old traditional teacher-centered instruction and lots of drilling.

I cherish this opportunity of studying at Vanderbilt, as I mentions in other domains, for my future Chinese undergrad students, I will create a semi-authentic learning environment by maximizing the use of English in the class, and provide them lots of authentic and interesting learning materials, to engage and motivate their language learning. Besides, I will help students form a good habit of language learning outside the classroom, also serve as external resource for students and their community to learn English more effectively. For learners of low proficiency, I will provide them with more comprehensible input and scaffoldings. While for the intermediate and advanced learners, I will create the more authentic and meaningful learning contexts, in which students could construct meaning on their own most of time, meanwhile, provide some task that may be a bit over students' language ability, to further their motivation and language growth as the I+1 input theory states. While the overall learning environment should be friendly, relaxed and tolerating, to lower students affective level for better language learning.

3) **Curriculum:** I chose the important courses “ teaching second language literacy “ and “ Foundations for ELL Education” at Vanderbilt to keep learning more about the principles and rationale on how to design the appropriate curriculum to cater to my learner's specific learning needs. For my learner, I consciously selected the bilingual materials that she could relate to and have more to talk about. This would actually lower her affective level and engage more about

her background knowledge. Besides that, I consciously select the topic that of her interest and make her elaborate more on her oral production, for instance, her education experience and favorite food. During our conversations, I rarely point out that our meetings and conversations were for research purpose, instead, my learner and me became close friend over the course of my study. Our communication became casual and cordial, which was the natural reflection of both her and my English proficiency. Therefore, in my future instruction, I will try to build good relationship with my students, so that the data I collect from them would be close to their real language proficiency. Building good relationship with my future students would make me know my students better, and could make the accommodation on my instruction to cater to her language proficiency and learning needs.

4) **Assessment:** I did not assess my learner in paper test directly; instead, I assessed her English speaking and listening skills via the interview questions and conversations. Also I recorded her oral production during our conversations, and analyzed her oral English by referring to the TOFEL oral English test rubric. As for her written English, I analyzed her writing samples, which are the papers she wrote for her class. In my future classroom assessment, I will get to know my students' language proficiency and learning needs first, revised the assessment questions that are too hard for them. Since if the questions are way too hard for the learners, it will neither test students real language ability, nor would it inform my future instruction. What's worse, it may incur the traumatic experience for students that they may lose the interest and confidence to

learn English, which is totally against the intended purpose of language assessment. Therefore, it is very crucial to make the adjustment to assess students' language proficiency. Meanwhile, I will take the standardized assessment, like TOFEL and GRE to keep track of my English proficiency.