CAPSTONE ELL PORTFOLIO

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# Abstract

This ELL portfolio is formulated to demonstrate my understanding in teaching English Language Learners based on the knowledge I learned from the ELL program and my teaching experience.

The portfolio is consisted of three parts: 1) statement of teaching philosophy, 2) domains and artifacts and 3) reflection on problems and implication for future teaching. In the first part, I synthesized conceptual framework across Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, Gee's socially identities, differentiated instruction and communicative language teaching to demonstrate my philosophy of teaching. In the second part, I demonstrate my understanding of eight domains of TESOL standards, including planning, instructing, assessing, identity and context, language proficiency, learning, content, and commitment and professionalism. I provide artifacts that represent my graduate course work as supportive evidence to illustrate interpretation of the domains addressed. In the third part, I reflect upon the problems I witnessed in my 2-year ELL program learning, illustrate my ideal teaching adaptions I will make in my future classroom and discuss my solution for the challenges I face as a ELL pre-service teacher.

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**Statement of Teaching Philosophy**

For decades, the field of second language teaching has undergone many shifts and trends. Under the great demographic trends occurred in schools and districts, it is significant for educators to taking into account the diverse characteristics and needs that come with English Language Learners. Over the past two years, I've learned amount of theories, standards and approaches to support English Language Leaners' study and future development. My teaching philosophy of second language teaching is specifically centered on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, Gee's socially identities, differentiated instruction and communicative language teaching.

**Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory**

Vygotsky, argued that "every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people and then inside the child (Vygotsky, 1979)". From this perspective, the specific structures and processes revealed by individuals can be traced to their interactions with others. By adopting a sociocultural perspective that highlights the critical role of the social context in cognitive and social development (Vygotsky, 1978), students' cognitive development can be improved through sociocultural interaction.

**Open-minded Education**

I believe that teaching should encourage both students and teachers to construct together. Vygotsky's social constructivism emphasized the empowerment of both teachers and school students in personal and cooperative sense making (Clark & Florio-Ruane, 2001). Unlike the traditional "banking education" system, students are no longer passive and unthinking learners that oppressed by their teachers. Good teaching environment encourage students' own thinking and searching for knowledge

in the process of both teacher-student and student-student dialogues. In student-centered classrooms, curriculums and textbooks are tools that help to nurture students' thoughts and abilities instead of being limitations for their developments. In my future teaching, I also want to build a cooperative learning community in my classroom rather than a competitive aggregation of separate individuals where students oppressed by teachers and curriculums (Clark & Florio-Ruane, 2001).

As Gee stated that people use various styles of languages to enact and depict different identities in different contexts (Gee, 2011). By sharing real emotions and life experience with students, teacher can show students how to scaffold their thoughts and make connections and also activate their prior knowledge in order to use them to contribute to new knowledge learning. In order to contribute to the harmonious relationship between students, teachers can build a community where students are responsible for their own lives in school. Beyond the collaborations that happen during class discussions and project workings, students' relationship can be solidified through social connections.

**Transnational and Community Literacies**

Transnational and community literacies makes it possible for teachers to better understand the life worlds of the students in order to build more meaningful relationships. Through incorporate translational and community literacies into curriculum, teachers can help students to activate their prior knowledge and motivate students into language and content area learning (Jimenez, Smith & Teague, 2009).

School is not only for the students to develop their academic skills, but also the place they are living in. Before students can success and achieve their learning goals, students have to feel safe and familiar in school. Outside the school, students' family environment and background can be quite diverse. But inside the school,

teachers should make sure that every student is equal. Each of them is unique and they can bring different values and recourses into the classroom.

Through what I have learned from my observation experience in local schools, I believe that the trust between schools and families is the keystone for the development of the ELL programs in a certain community. By creating a welcoming school (Allen, 2007), the school can show the parents that it values the differences families bring to the school and their language and culture are recourses to benefit both the schools and families (De Jong, 2011). Through providing school-based family involvement projects (Allen, 2007) to welcome parents get involved into school activities, the distance between the families and teachers shortened. The lack of the support from the community put the students in a cramming system to learn English without considering why these students are here and what the school can do to help them. I believe a tight relationship between the schools, families and communities is reciprocal for all the parties.

"Building relationships with families means respecting them-their language, values, struggles, insights, culture and family structure"(Allen, 2007). I encourage parents to share their family histories and cultures through home visiting and school open days. I may not be able to learn all my students' native languages, but I will try to learn more about who they are, what they need before I teach them. Through home visiting, I can gather the funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) that the families can provide. These funds of knowledge refer to "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (Moll et al., 1992). Such funds of knowledge can help me as a teacher to understand students' cultures and backgrounds in order to illuminate me to better serve my students. Students may act differently outside the

classroom, the deeper understanding of their lives can help me to make friends with the students and find the proper way to motivate the students. It is also important to encourage parents to walk into the school to see what their children are doing in the school and what we can do together to help the students. In sum, community can help teachers to identify their students and support the schools to better serve the ELL students.

**Differentiated Instruction**

Differentiated instruction focus on modification of instruction for student diversity, student accountability for learning and constructivist learning which allows teachers to give students flexible supports based on what they need (Smith & Throne, 2009).

Under the diverse background of the ELL students in the USA, schools encounter ELLs with astonishing range of interests, levels of prior education and learning styles, not to mention myriad cultural and familial differences I discussed above that shape the students' social identities and learning personalities. Differentiated instruction theory centered on the belief that students learn in many different ways, I learned by providing students with differentiated instructions, teachers can equally support students based on their physical, emotional and intellectual needs instead of treating them all the same. Each student has his/her own interest, prior knowledge and thinking pattern. All these together make it possible for teachers and schools to concern each student as an individual and teach each student based on his own learning profile. What I learned from different instructions is that, even though people assess a school according to its students' average score, as a teacher, I should never treat my students as a whole group. I want to break the traditional ranking system that divide students only based on how much they know

about the textbooks. The organization and presentation of content can profoundly affect students' motivation to learn and their perceived ability to comprehend. I realize that curriculum and content should be redesigned and chosen to combine both students' cultural diversity and curriculum objectives. I will treat them equally by giving them equal supports, not only to help them reach the standard level, but also achieve their own specialties.

**Communicative Language Teaching**

In the CLT, the teacher is assumed to be a facilitator or monitor, rather than simply being the model for correct speech and the one with the primary responsibility of making students produce plenty of error-free sentences. By providing students with rich, meaningful and comprehensible input, teachers select authentic materials that can reflect real-life situations and demands (Brandle, 2008). As Lee and VanPatten (1995a) put it, "The learner must be able to understand most of what the speaker is saying if acquisition is to happen, ... the learner must be able to figure out what the speaker is saying if he is to attach meaning to the speech stream coming at him". In addition to being meaningful and comprehensible, input also needs to be elaborated (Brandle, 2008). This is related to Vygosky's ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development) theory. It is important for teachers to know not only where a student is functioning now and where that child will be tomorrow, but also how best to assist the students in mastering more advanced skills and concepts. Therefore, as a teacher, I would use multi-strategies to provide my students with clear and comprehensible instruction and scaffold their learning process. I would also design meaningful activities that allowing students to relate what they learned to real-life situation. In the meantime, I will make sure each student gets the chance to challenge themselves, in order to maintain learning motivation and support future development.

**Conclusion**

Immigrant and other minority children come from many different backgrounds and bring with them a great variety of experience. They are facing a stressful period of adjustment on entry to unfamiliar school systems where a new language is spoken. Be a better teacher, I have the important responsible to embrace their differences and encourage them to benefit from their multiple ethnic and linguistic identities. Initiative changes in curriculum development, school and classroom environment and community and family outreach have to be implemented by schools and teachers in order to create a welcoming and comfortable environment to fulfill English Language Learners' academic and social development.

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behaviour. *Soviet Psychology, 17(4)*, 3–35.

**Domain 1: Planning**

*Standard1: Teachers plan instruction to promote learning and meet learner goals, and modify plans to assure learner engagement and achievement.*

Planning is an extremely useful tool, which outlines teachers' pedagogical procedure while also covering each lesson's content and objectives. When planning, as an ELL teacher, it is important to integrate standards with students' needs and interests, design activities that can motivate students' learning, assess students' comprehension and make use of students' response for future lesson development.

*Artifact A: Three-Genre Lesson Plan*

The following artifact is a project I finished for the course entitled as Reading and Learning with Print and New Media. I designed this three-genre scaffolding lesson plan for ELL leaners through introducing multimedia technologies into classroom learning. This lesson plan contains three lessons, which focus on teaching ELL students understanding newspaper headlines and learn to conclude articles.

In lesson planning, concrete content objectives that identify what students should know are guidance towards teaching and learning process. It is helpful for teachers to plan a lesson start with considering standards and curriculum. In my three-genre lesson plan, each lesson contains clear content and language objectives. While carefully planning and delivering content objectives, I also incorporate lesson activities to support ELL students' language development. Among these three lessons, students are provided the chance to apply their grammar knowledge. Through their classroom performance, I can assess students' language proficiency and find out each learner's advantages.

Planning of lessons before class benefits students since I can take into account of each learner's educational background, cultural difference, interest and learning

style. In this lesson plan, I chose familiar topics of newspapers that can scaffold learners' thoughts. Students from different culture background our have their own traditional food and these learners can bring their differences together to share with each other.  This lesson plan demonstrates how I adapt instructions to support ELL students, for example, in lesson2 I chose a news video to let students experience real native news. After exposing students with both paper and video news, learners work in groups to brainstorm and share ideas. Through the use of supporting instructions, group working, topics that interest learners, I create a cooperative learning environment that encourage students to speak out their thoughts, motivate each other and make development without stressful feelings.

My lesson plans are records of what have been taught in each class, which allow me to improve and make further plans after each class. Considering students' performance in the first lesson, I will revise my following days lesson plans based on students learning process and learning styles. What's more, the records of what have been taught are valuable resources to help me make assessment measures such as in-class quizzes and exams. For example, in this lesson plan, I make use of first lesson's homework to build students' background knowledge and check their learning in order to support their further development. A well-planed lesson contributes to a dynamic classroom environment to keep students on track. However, carefully designed plans may also contain flaws. As a teacher, sometimes it is also important to be flexible in the classroom relying on students' reflection and teaching experience to do the right thing when unexpected circumstance occurs.

**Domain 2: Instructing**

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

Artifact B: Chinese New Year Lesson Plan

I designed Chinese New Year Lesson Plan while I was taking the Second Language Literacy course after learning the notion of backward design. Starting with the goal of letting learners leverage their existing knowledge and abilities of cultural festivals to become literate in second-language literacy, I designed both language and content learning instructions to support my teaching process. Through exposing students to some of the historical, mythological and cultural practice of China by learning about China's most widely celebrated festivals, Chinese New Year, this lesson allows students to understand some of China's cultural practices by relate the festival into their own lives. This lesson allows students to make connection to own life experience of celebrating cultural festivals, which can show the value of their individual differences in order to motivate their learning process.

Talking about instructing, teachers shift from different roles in creating a supportive and communicative environment. For example, in this lesson plan, instead of being a presenter to introduce new content, I started the class with an activity to activate students' prior knowledge about festivals in order to make sure the input of this lesson is comprehensible to all of my students. During the class, I also designed several student-centered activities to let students make use of what they learned. But before letting learners do their own work, I work as a facilitator to set up learners into small groups and model each learner by giving differentiated instructions.

As an ELL teacher, it is important for me to know my learners individual differences. Based on their cultural background differences, I pair students into

different groups to make sure students can support each other. I encourage my learners to use their first language to support each other considering this is a lesson designed for grade three learners. The interactions between students contribute to making the meaningful input more comprehensible in their learning process. Considering to students' needs and advantages, I give differentiated instructions according to their language proficiency. This also helps me to assess each learner effectively.

Even though I use simple and comprehensible language to drill input, the content of this lesson is never watered down. This Chinese New Year lesson plan goes well with developing meaningful and challenging curriculum. It is meant to challenge the learners and help them understand the concepts that I present in class.

Furthermore, students have opportunities to demonstrate their understanding in multiple assessment forms, including festival comparison sheet, group discussion and a letter to parents. These activities provide students opportunities to make use of the new content they learn and combine speaking, listening, reading and writing abilities together to present a holistic picture of their linguistic and academic ability. By introducing students into various types of assessments, I provide a less stressful environment to let students present their understanding of content and encourage classroom engagement. Such formative assessments also work as great reflections to benefit my future instruction towards individual learners.

**Domain 3: Assessing**

*Standard 3: 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.*

As ELL teachers, it is important to utilize different forms of assessments to inform learners explicitly about instructions to eliminate assessment bias. The identification of ELLs' language and academic needs has great effects on learners' future development. Home language preferences, educational background, English proficiency level and academic content knowledge should all be considered as vital aspects in a proper assessment.

Positive washback of different forms of assessments can serve as great implications for teacher to redesign curriculum and promote connections between standards and instruction. Assessments that occur throughout a lesson present learners' understanding and applying of content concepts. Towards the end of the lesson, learners' progress is assessed to see whether learners are ready to move on and make predictions on students' further performance.

*Artifact C: SOLOM*

The artifact I present here is an oral English pre-assessment we did in Jan. 29th to determine the placement of these adult students in Vanderbilt ELC center. The assessment we choose is Student Oral Language Observation Matrix: SOLOM. These adult-students are spouses of international students' or scholars. They came to the USA with little English background and their prior educational background varies.

We used self-introduction, task-based conversation and self-evaluation, these three parts of prompts to facilitate students' oral speaking. Learners' comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar abilities were assessed during this observation. The SOLOM assessment enlightened me a deeper understanding towards communicative language assessments. For example, during the assessment, I noticed that beginner English level students talked so little that makes it really difficult for testers to assess their truly oral language proficiency. The lacking of enough data of the test taker may lead to bias in the results. In the future, I will create a familiar assessment environment to let the test-takers feel less stressful. I want to use examiners that are familiar to the examinees and assessment environment similar to their daily learning environment.  I will also provide practice tests for the learners and teach them test taking skills in order to reduce bias aroused by cultural and linguistic differences.

While I was assessing the students, I found that the learners' pronunciation varies diversely. It is inevitable for second language leaners to speak English with certain accents. The information complied from the SOLOM assessment informed me to take into account each learners' unique characteristics. I will strive to create a learning environment in which English can be learned through a communicative way with the supports of students' first languages.

I value the benefits of self-assessments, in which learners can rate their own performance, their language use, their learning behavior and the achievement of their learning goals. By involving students into the assessment process, students can be aware of their own advantages and connect standards and classroom instructions into their learning.

The ultimate goal of assessments is to help students make further development. The feedback of each assessment can be rich resources for teachers in reforming curriculum and for learners in building constructive achievement. I believe that learners should take continuous assessments throughout learning periods to ensure they are making improvement and getting the supports they need.

**Domain 4: Identity and Context**

*Standard 4: Teachers understand the importance of who learners are and how their communities, heritages and goals shape learning and expectations of learning. Teachers recognize the importance how context contributes to identity formation and therefore influences learning. Teachers use this knowledge of identity and settings in planning, instructing, and assessing.*

Artifact D: Kurdish Community Literacy in Nashville

I finished this community literacy work after my fieldtrips to local Nashville Kurdish community for a course named as English Language Learners Foundation. Through two days observation, I acknowledged the huge cultural and linguistic differences between Kurdish and American students daily life. I get a more thorough understanding about the importance of knowing learners' diverse background context and who they are. I recognized that ELL teachers' mission is far beyond simply teaching ELL students English as a language. Teachers should collaborate schools, families and communities together to contribute to the fully intellectual developments of these ELL students.

Artifact E: PPT—How Can We Support ELL Students Institutionally

I made this presentation to present my idea of how can ELL teachers support ELL learners after my practicum in Tusculum Elementary School and Nashville Community College. While Tusculum Elementary School provides school-based family involvement projects, such as Coffee & Culture and Kindergarten CD Night, to welcome parents get involved into school activities, the community also provides translators to bridge the distance between the families and teachers. By creating a welcoming school, the school can show the parents that it values the differences families bring to the school and their language and culture are recourses to benefit

both the schools and families. I also observed how Nashville Community College fails to provide ELL students chances to share their life experience, value their native cultures and integrate their differences to adapt their lives in America. The lack of the support from the community makes Nashville Community College simply put the students in a cramming system to learn English without considering why these students are here and what the school can do to help them. I want to broaden my students' learning environment to include families and communities, and letting them go beyond learning in classroom.

It is important to remember that English language learners in many different ways, and there is not one specific learning style that will benefit all ELL students. Cultural differences can be a source of misunderstanding for teachers and their ELL students. Each culture expresses itself in both verbal and non-verbal forms of communication. As educators, I want to learn about English language learners' cultures and incorporate this knowledge in the curriculum setting so that they can learn about and understand each other better. Reshaping the curriculum and classroom climate based on learners' diverse needs so that I can empower my learners. Curriculum should also be related to learners' daily life.  While introducing new content, I want to build and activate learners' background knowledge to connecting instruction to what learners know and then discussing how that knowledge applies to the topic at hand.

The huge differences between learners' native language and English can be a great obstacle for their academic study. However, English proficiency and state standards can be limitations in reflecting these learners' learning progress.  I will adapt various types of assessments, which can fulfill students' needs and reflect their progress.  I will provide information about the general format and test-taking skills to

help my students be prepared before being assessed to lower their anxiety so that the

assessments can demonstrate their true achievements.

**Domain 5: Language Proficiency**

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

My understanding of language proficiency of a teacher lies both on the teacher's own quality and the ability to provide quality teaching. A qualified teacher should have great grammatical knowledge including knowledge of vocabulary, syntax and phonology, clear enunciation, textual knowledge, functional knowledge and socio-linguistic knowledge. On a higher level, qualified teachers should be able to use such knowledge to design their own teaching pedagogy, which encompasses classroom environment, curriculum setting, cultural and linguistic diversity of students and other factors to facilitate English Language Leaners' language development.

*Artifact F: Data Analysis of a Non-native English Language Learner*

During my two years learning in Peabody ELL program, I experienced various chances to observe classroom teaching in local public schools and I also have one-year experience working as a teaching assistant to teach adults English Language Learners in Belmont Church ESL Center. Such experience provides me opportunities to reflect on my own advantages and disadvantages as an ELL teacher.

Having learned English systematically as a second language for more than 10 years, as a non-native English speaker, I have a sounder grasp of English grammar and more sensitive towards misunderstanding between teachers and learners caused by structural features of English than native English speakers who learn English unconsciously through childhood acquisition. The Artifact F is part of my Linguistics course project. Through several interviews with a non-native English speaker whose

first language is also Chinese, I analyzed the data I collected from the speaker to evaluate her level of English proficiency. Sharing the same first language makes it much easier for me to understand her English usage and the mistakes she made tend to be "reasonable" for me since I can recognize the errors caused by the different features between English and Chinese. My experience of learning English as a second language enables me to be a learning model to teach language learning strategies through comparing linguistic and metalinguistic knowledge of different languages. In my future teaching, I want to design a comfortable learning environment in which learners can develop metacognitive strategies to use their first language to support their second language learning. I want to share my personal experience as an English language leaner to make emotional and academic connections with my learners to modeling them how to transfer linguistic knowledge in L1 to L2.

It is also important for me as a teacher to anticipate difficulties and obstacles that my students will encounter with in their language learning process. My experience in learning English provides me the necessary insights into curriculum setting, lesson preparation and delivery. I want to select cultural relevant literature as part of the curriculum to expose my leaners with familiar topic to activate their prior knowledge and motivate them to be active language learners. Through scaffolding and contextualizing, gradually my learners will develop their own strategies of language learning.

Having students reflect on their learning is an essential part in their language learning since it provides an opportunity for students to look back to what they learned before and gradually build on the knowledge and strategies they know. In my future class, I want to involve in observational assessments to observe how my

students support each other through group working. Then letting students make use of peer and teacher feedbacks to direct their future development.

# Domain 6: Learning

*Standard 6: Teachers draw on their knowledge of language and adult language learning to understand the processes by which leaners acquire a new language in and out of classroom settings. They use this knowledge to support adult language learning.*

Artifact G: Case Study of a Non-native English Speaker

This case study was developed throughout the semester of my Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition course. During that period of time, I collected oral and written data from a non-native English speaker through several interviews and observations. Through the analyzing of the data I collected, I assessed the learner's current English proficiency and determined her stage of English language acquisition. After considering her linguistic, cognitive and socio-cultural features, I designed a specific instructional plan that meets her personal strengths and needs to support her future language development.

In order to understand my non-native speaker's SLA process, it is important to take into account the influence of her first language. In my case study, I learned that my learner started to learn English in her 3rd grade, which indicates that she began to learn English after years of monolingual experience. Her native language, Chinese, has great influence towards her English acquisition.

While analyzing my learner's data, I realized that some of her phonetic and syntax mistakes are due to the language differences between her native language Chinese and English. I believe that it is important for teachers to introduce language differences into curriculum to let learners be aware of differences and learn strategies to conquer such subconscious mistakes.

Getting to know my learner's prior language learning experience and learning habits helps me to make institutional plans to support my learner's future

development. Through my interview with my leaner, she told me that she learned English through translation. Even though she thought she know the "Chinese" meaning of a English word, she found it is difficult for her understand the word while putting it in different contexts, not even to say to use it actively. A lot of English language learners face the difficulty of applying the huge amount receptive knowledge into real life circumstances. The quality and quantity of input influence students' SLA progress. Teachers should design curriculums focus on real-life situation and provide students an interactive learning environment to let learners make use of the vocabularies they learn. This case study of a learner shows that I understand learning environment because I learned the importance of a classroom that values students' prior knowledge. In my class, I want to develop a comfortable learning environment for my students that allowing them build on their prior knowledge.

For ESL students, all-purpose communicative assessment is more helpful in giving practical feedback about learners' real language level. It is also important to make concern of students' cultural features in designing a communicative assessment to avoid bias between testers and test-takers. By asking students why they make such answers allowing students to interpret their understanding towards assessments. Simply marking answers as incorrect can never let us know how to benefit our students' development. We need to know our students' thoughts and understanding towards different kind of assessments. Even though the evaluation of communicative assessment is subjective, I believe the progress that students make is what really matters.

# Domain 7: Content

*Standard 7: Teachers understand that language learning is most likely to occur when learners are trying to use language for genuine communicative purposes. Teachers understand that the content of the language courser is the language that learners need in order to listen, to talk about, to read and write about a subject matter or content area. Teachers design their lessons to help learners acquire the language they need to successfully communicate in the subject or content areas they want/need to learn about.*

Artifact H: Tutoring Plan & Reflection

This artifact is one of the tutoring plan and reflections I designed during my practicum in Bailey Middle School through the semester while I was taking Reading and Learning with Print and New Media course. During my practicum, I gave one-on-one instructions to a struggling reader named Reese. In the artifact, it contains the "ME" Page and two pictures. These are the activities I used to get to know my learner and introduce myself during our first meeting. Through such activities, I build a good relationship with my learner and create a less-stressful environment to make him feel comfortable.

Each week I designed a lesson plan to set a goal for each lesson and I wrote a reflection after the tutoring to check my learner's progress and adjust future tutoring plans. I also set a semester goal for my learner and explain to him explicitly about our long-term goal. For example, in the artifact I listed semester goal, today's goal and activities for each lesson. I immerse my learner with context and check his comprehension to develop his vocabulary and language skills. I play videos that relate to the book my learner read to help him make assumption and reference before reading.

In order to create a communicative learning environment, I combine my learner's interests into the curriculum setting. Considering my learner is a struggling reader, it is hard for him to make connections between reading material and his prior knowledge. I designed activities and questions to activate his prior knowledge and make connections to encourage his using of schema. I found the most helpful way to motivate him is to expose him to read materials attached to his personal interest. For example, during our tutoring period, whenever I talk about basketball, Reese had a lot to say. He even began to chat with me about his schools' basketball team. By setting curriculum according to learners' interests, I create a positive learning environment where learners feel safe and comfortable. Such familiar content and context give learners motivations to engage themselves in active learning.

The assessment for this tutoring focused more on the progress that the learner make through each week's instruction. Multiple classroom observations such as comprehension sheet, vocabulary bookmark, self-reflection questions and vocabulary predictions are designed for the students as communicative assessments to maintain learners' motivation and engagement.

## Domain 8: Commitment and Professionalism

*Standard 8: Teachers continue to grow in their understanding of the relationship of second language teaching and learning to the community of English language teaching professionals, the broader teaching community, and communities at large, and use these understandings to inform and change themselves and these communities.*

Artifact I: TFLTA Conference Reflection

I attended the 2014 Tennessee Foreign Language Teachers' Association conference in Nashville in last fall. I observed a Chinese exhibition called Distance and Online Education with Great Wall Chinese. Through this presentation, I was attracted by the multimedia teaching methods that introduced by the exhibitor. I learned multimedia technologies that teachers can use to help learners effectively learn after class. This reflection demonstrates my commitment to improve my future instruction towards ELLs under multimedia supports.

Besides multimedia teaching methods provided by the website, teachers personalize each learner's learning instructions and assessment materials based on learners' needs and language levels. I think this strategy can greatly contribute to students' language development. Beyond giving in-class differentiated instructions, teachers can excite students' potential through individualized assessments. Leaners feel comfortable to assess themselves according to their own level. In this way, all the students get the chance to go through standard learning requirements without losing the chance to challenge themselves based on their learning progress.

Introducing technology into language study shorten the distance between teacher and learners. For each class, teachers invite all the learners into a chat group where they can share daily vocabularies and real life language experience with each

other. In the chat group, learners encourage each other and create a daily language exposure environment which allowing them to correct errors.

The teacher believes that language learning is culture learning. She gives students key words about a certain Chinese culture topic and let the students to do researches on Google and YouTube by themselves. In my future teaching, I will encourage my students to Google information by themselves. ELL should not only focus on academic language study. Immersing learners with diverse content and context provide sufficient input that allowing them to become independent self-learners.

Artifact J: Observation and Interview Analysis Project

I wrote this paper to analyze what is good teaching through classroom observation and interview happens in Sylvan Park Elementary School, combined with lenses I have learned in the Analysis of Teaching course. Through our observations and interviews, I got the chance to learn more about how the special features of this school effects teaching context, curriculum setting and discourses in the classroom.

From the observation, I learned that Sylvan Park is a project-based learning school that pays extra attention to good conversational skills, appropriate dialogues and applying what students learn into practice. For the curriculum setting, besides normal classes, students get the chance to host seminars and brainstorm ideas to value each learner's voice. I agree with the teacher that learners' individual differences should be valued and developed through differentiated instructions. I will never treat my students as a whole group. Each student has his own interest, prior knowledge and thinking pattern. I concern each student as an individual and teach each student based on his own learning profile. Leaners should not become passive learners oppressed by their teachers. I believe that a cooperative environment encourages students' thinking

and searching for knowledge through both teacher-student and student-student dialogues.

In the future, I will continue my trips to schools to observe and gain professional experiences. This analysis project demonstrates my commitment of learn from expert educators to adapt curriculum and instruction to create a student-centered learning environment that can fulfill my learners' needs.

## Reflection on Problems and Implications for Future Teaching

Looking back to my two years' study in Peabody College ELL program, I am confident to say I am ready to become a qualified pre-service ELL teacher. During my two years study, the professional ELL teaching courses I took provides me with theoretical and pedagogical foundations. My experience of fieldtrips to local communities allowing me to put myself into my students' positions to think about the difficulties and struggling they face as English Language Learners who spend their new life in a strange country while learning a language unfamiliar to them. Holding the special features of my targeting students in mind, I went into local public schools to observe how teachers and schools can do inside and outside of the school to support ELLs. Through my observation to several local public schools and ESL centers, I realized that there is no one-fit-all model that can serve all ELLs. Each school and district has their own strength and limitations in providing supports to ELLs. In order to reach the same ultimate goal, it is importance for schools, teachers, parents and communities to work together in building a safe and comfortable learning environment for ELLs. My experience of teaching adult ELLs gives me insight of the importance of building good relationships with my students emotionally and academically. By getting to know my students, teacher can select meaningful teaching materials and give efficient instructions to motivate students' learning process. In this section, I will reflect on what I've learned from our program in Peabody and introduce my implications for future classroom teaching as a pre-service teacher. I will also discuss about the challenges I face in teaching ELLs and seeking for solutions for my future career development.

**My Ideal Classroom Teaching**

In the classroom setting, clear and regular classroom routines contribute to the efficiency and accuracy of ELLs' learning. English Language Learners come from diverse education background. Teachers cannot assume that students know the routines of the school and classroom. Instead I believe it is better for the teacher to set regular routines with students together to find out which type of learning procedure best suit the students. In this way, I can create a comfortable and safe learning environment where students can focus on their learning. I want minimize the frustration and inconvenience that can brought by the unfamiliar environment. I wish my students to enjoy themselves through every transitional and procedural moments of their school day and make use of the resources they can get.

In the curriculum setting, grade appropriate contents are addressed to my students to balance their development in English proficiency and academic learning. Lower level in English language proficiency never means that students are lower in academic development. As a qualified ELL teacher, I will keep the content at students' level and provide extra supports to make sure they can use English as a tool to learn other subjects. I will select culturally relevant teaching materials to activate and build my students' schema to help them transfer their L1 knowledge into English content learning. I will also strive to promote cross-culture awareness through meaningful activities by providing classroom experiences that mirror leaners' world. For example, when I teach my students English from multi-cultural background in Belmont ESL center, I encourage them to share their cultural traditions and thoughts. I particularly like to organize debates. Through debating, my students can bridge cultural distance and confirm understanding by using schema and experience. In my classroom, I will treat my students equally by giving them equal supports, not only to help them reach

the standard level, but also achieve their own specialties. My students' individual differences are valued and developed through differentiated instructions. I will never treat my students as a whole group. Each student has his own interest, prior knowledge and thinking pattern. I concern each student as an individual and teach each student based on his own learning profile. For example, during my observation in Sylvan Park Elementary School, the teacher divided students into three level groups and gave students differentiated instructions based on their need. She also allowed students to challenge themselves by assigning extra works to more effective students.

As an effective ELL teacher, I will set a positive teaching environment to adjust the needs of my culturally and linguistically diverse students. Through pairing students, newly arrived students can get help from their peers to integrate into the life in school without feeling stressful. I value dynamic learning in groups. In pairs, small and large groups, students can learn from each other, get the chance to express their thoughts and show their advantages. I believe in this way I can create a cooperative environment encourages students' thinking and searching for knowledge through both teacher-student and student-student dialogues. Furthermore, I will gradually give students responsibilities according to their strength and advantages. Beyond the collaborations that happen during class discussions and project workings, I build a harmonious community for my students to learn through social connections. I assign my students with positions to help each other and be responsible for their own studying and social lives in school. For example, I like the idea of "student commodore". I think through teaching and helping other students, students get the chance to think deeper and learn to present what they know to others.

I consider parents are great resources to reinforce learners' study outside the classroom. I want to encourage parents in get involved in students' learning process. I will invite parents to go into school and discuss with them how can teachers and families work together to support students. Many ELL parents are desperate to participate in their children's education, but a lot of them failed due to their limited educational background. As a teacher I can set parents meetings to gather these parents who are new to the country without English background together. This workshop can better implemented if the school or the community can provide me a translator. Through parents meeting, I can let the parents know what is going on with their children in school by informing them their children's performance and semester academic achievements. They can also update my knowledge about their family. For example, things happen in family can greatly effect my students' learning attitude in school. Through the acknowledgement of the children's current family issues, I can better help the students to adjust themselves. I can also suggest parents certain ways to reinforce my work and help the boy go through difficulties. What's more, the distance between families may lead to misunderstandings and discriminations. By designing a program that invites families to host cultural nights, I can help to contribute a harmonious community for both the students and the parents. While students experiencing the cultural trips guided by the "professionals", parents also get the chance to know each other and share their methods to teach their children.

**Challenges in Future Teaching**

In the above, I've discussed what I value in my classroom. However, teaching English to ELLs is challenging. An effective ELL teacher should be able to forecast the challenges and find solutions to solve the problems and constantly adapt to students' needs.

Based on my own experience of being a student, I realized that sometimes students are overly dependent on their teachers. Students automatically look to the teachers asking for correct answers instead of trying themselves. If the teacher obliges them with the answer each time, it can become a detrimental problem. I focus on giving positive encouragement to my students to seek for answer by themselves and though group working. I think it is crucial for teachers to find proper ways to provide students effective feedback. Bad feedback results in positive attitude, which make students fear to try by themselves, while good feedback can encourage students to conquer the difficulties and dig deeper into what they learn.

When teaching English topics that ELLs are not familiar with, the lesson may not go to where the teachers plan it to be. To some extent, this can be a good thing since it can reflects truly what the students know and what they are willing to participate. It can be a productive experience as long as ELLs are participating and conversing in English. However, if the lesson strays too far off topic, it is important for teachers to correct the problem and lead the students. I believe the reason why sometimes students go off topics is because teachers depend too much on the assumptions they made when they were designing the class. Due to the diverse cultural backgrounds, students may think far more beyond a teacher can imagine. I consider it is really important for teachers to gather information from students, reflections and assessment results to revise their lesson plans in order to fulfill students' needs constantly.

**Conclusion**

As a future ELL teacher, it is crucial for me to combine ELLs' special features and needs into my teaching process. For these immigrants who come to America, learning English is not simply to learn a language as a tool, but also to accept a new

identity in an unfamiliar world. I want to be an effective ELL teacher, who can integrate academic and social instructions together to motivate my students and support them to find their lives in the USA. With this in mind, in the future I will continue to build professional development and learn from fellow teachers and experts to seek for more effective strategies and techniques to better serve my students.