

Capstone ESL Portfolio
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Abstract

This portfolio contains three sections. The first section, statement of teaching philosophy, describes theories and ideas I support for ELL education. It starts with Piaget's Constructivism and Vygostky's Sociocultural Theory. While narrowing down to Zone of Proximal Development and Culturally Responsive Teaching, I will also add my own understanding and demonstrate how these theoretical works forms my teaching philosophy. The second section listed 7 domains in ELL education and their related TESOL standards. Artifacts like course project, academic paper, and practicum experience are used to address my learning of these important education aspects at Peabody College. The last part acts as a summary of this ESL portfolio, which identifies my big takeaways from the two-year program learning.

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Statement of Teaching Philosophy

Introduction: Acquisition and Participation

“What is the reason for coming to U.S.? Why Vanderbilt?” “To learn the best education theories and ideas.” This is the exact answer I gave to the Visa Officer in Shanghai two years ago. However, if time went back to that day, I hope to delete the word “best” from my unprofessional answer.

There is no such a theory called best. “Because no two students have the same needs and no two teachers arrive at their best performance in the same way, theoretical exclusivity and didactic single-mindedness can be trusted to make even the best of educational ideas fail (Sfard, 1998).”

The idea of deleting the word “best” started on the first day of my teaching practicum. I came to class with a four-page long lesson plan, which includes detailed activity sequence, question prompts, and a summary of all knowledge points. Nevertheless, things did not go as what I have prepared for. Prompt were out of students’ background knowledge. Activity stopped frequently because students could not see the meaning behind what they were doing and they could not acquire peer support due to activity types. I wrote on my notes that my choice of teaching theories and ideas were not right, yet I erased this sentence that night right after I read Sfard’s (1998) article on learning metaphors. The theories are still right. It is just not right on the way I used them – persisting in a single teaching mindset without considering context.

I limited my view within the scope of individual learning and enrichment. To me, learning is a process of acquisition. Knowledge, a property owned by teacher, is transmitted to the recipient - students. My individual-centered perspective happens to fit with what Sfard (1998) summarized as an “acquisition metaphor of learning”. This idea focuses teachers on the process

of objectifying knowledge and the channel of knowledge transmission. However, while I was trying to design a language lesson to perfectly match with what I know about learning through this micro perspective, I left many other factors unconsidered out there in the macro scope. The interactions between students' current learning to past experiences, their peers, and the community were missed, which were summarized as a "participation metaphor of learning" (Sfard, 1988). Theories base on this metaphor view learning as "a legitimate peripheral participation", where students practice, communicate, and build learning community with others. Instead of looking at the result of objectifying knowledge, this metaphor focuses on learners' actions, such as constructivist, social-interactionist, and situationist approaches. No matter it is the acquisition metaphor or participation metaphor, its own unique spotlights on learning cannot be replaced by others. Teachers need to balance between these two metaphors for a holistic understanding and evaluation of different education theories, because "too great a devotion to one particular metaphor can lead to theoretical distortions and to undesirable practices" (Sfard, 1988). Based on this, I added two streams of educational theories and ideas as a mixture of both "participation view" and "acquisition view" into my teaching philosophy (Figure 1&2). The following two parts are going to explain these two streams. I'll focus the first one in detail while the second one with several sentences" brief introduction.

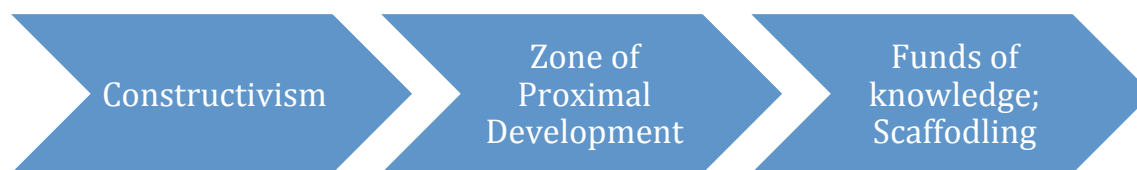


Figure 1



Figure 2

Constructivism

The first stream is the main stream that is set on the ground of Constructivism, which provides me a theoretical guidance on how to structure a language lesson for ELLs (English Language Learners). Piaget (1950), the founder of Constructivism, stated learning as an active and contextualized interaction between experiences and ideas. Learners build, test, and revise their hypotheses about the world based on their experiences. When new experience appears, they use previous hypotheses for a test. If the experience matches with hypotheses, it would be included into the previous knowledge system. If not, revised or new hypotheses will be set up to align with experience. The former is called assimilation, while the later is accommodation.

Built on this general assumption of learning, psychologist Vygotsky (1978) introduced the concept Zone of Proximal Development, which was later developed and enriched by other educators. Vygotsky illustrated one learning pattern of children mastering a new skill or ability by following adults' examples. The examples provided by adults are what described as learning experience in Constructivism. In Zone of Proximal Development, learners come with knowledge and skills storage of what they can do without assistance. Students are able to do independent task that is within the scope of their prior knowledge, which is in accordance with the rationale behind assimilation. Beyond this scope, there are certain learning goals that can be achieved by students under the help from teachers. The assisting role of teachers here is creating and offering new experience that could stimulate revision and building process of new knowledge system.

This stage fits with the idea of accommodation in Constructivism. Excluding from what mentioned above is the area where students are unable to do. Therefore, the ideal learning goal lies in the place between zone of proximal development and the area where learners cannot achieve.

When narrowing down from Constructivism to Zone of Proximal Development, significance of knowing students' prior knowledge and providing them suitable assistance stands out. These two factors are the reasons why I choose Funds of Knowledge (Allen, 2007) and Scaffolding (Sawyer, 2006) as the guiding principles for my lesson design. The funds of knowledge, as part of prior knowledge, are knowledge gained from students' family and cultural background. It brings rich cultural and cognitive resources to build connections between students' previous and new learning experience, which smooth out the elementary step for learners. While using funds of knowledge to move students from the circle of what they have known to what they might be able to know, learners need certain outside assistance. Nevertheless, as students progressively enhance their understanding and mastery of new knowledge, the scaffolding assistance offered by teachers could be accordingly reduced step by step.

Along with the theoretical stream from Constructivism, Zone of Proximal Development, to Funds of Knowledge and Scaffolding, my ideal teaching is to build a bridge between learners' prior and new knowledge by offering various language and cultural experiences. This bridge begins with full teacher-assistance and ends with learners' individual performance.

Sociocultural Theory

The second theoretical stream is what I use to set the key for my language teaching. It all starts with Vygostky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory then goes to Allen's Culturally Responsive

Teaching, which I use as a supplement of the first theoretical stream to expand teacher's attention from content knowledge of ELL class to students' life and background.

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Understanding of TESOL Standards

This section will individually analyze 7 domains of the TESOL standards, from a micro view “planning, instructing, and assessing” to a macro perspective “identity & context, learning, content, commitment & professionalism”. Artifacts from ELL Program would be used to help indicate my understanding of these domains across language teaching and learning.

Domain 1 - Planning

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

Planning, either for a whole learning program, a semester, or just a one-hour class, is one of the most basic steps that an ELL teacher needs to do before going inside the classroom and starting a lesson. Planning involves considering various important factors that would influence students’ learning results. Examples of these factors could be students’ language and culture backgrounds, learning goals and styles, instruction and assessment. This part is going to use one single lesson plan to explain the idea Backward Design I used when preparing for classroom instruction.

The main idea behind Backward Design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) is to start planning from “the ends to the means”. A three-phase framework is offered to guide teachers planning their course design from objectives that they desire to achieve to instructional activities that help reach the goals. Wiggins and McTighe (2005) summarized the three phases as 1) identify desired results, 2) determine acceptable evidence, and 3) plan learning experience and instruction. The first step establishes learning goals for the language course. It acts like a lighthouse, which guides teachers to create an instruction path that goes right towards goals without having excessive detours. In order to assure these objectives can actually be achieved, teachers need to

constantly testing out students' learning result. Thus, they should determine acceptable evidence as indicators to show students' learning progress. Based on the goals and measurement methods, a purposeful lesson plan is then designed.

I used this idea for my lesson design (Artifact 1) for the course Methods and Materials for ESL Education and its related practicum. It is a science lesson on the topic "parts of a plant" designed for ELL learners.

The process of planning starts from considering and analyzing students background and prior knowledge. Teaching objects are students from Grade 5 to Grade 8 in a newcomer classroom. As stated in Artifact 1, most students' (total number 18) language development level is on Early Production Stage, some have achieved on the Speech Emergence Stage (Hill & Bojork, 2008). They acquired certain amount of basic vocabularies, but some of them cannot speak in complete and correct sentences. Five students just arrived US within a year, and 2 of them are still experiencing the Silent Period. Right before this lesson, students have learnt a poem called "germination". This offers background information on students' existing knowledge on vocabularies like "seed", "flower", "root" and a basic understanding of the notion "germination". Due to the curriculum requirement, these students would need to plant seeds and make daily observation by themselves at the end of this plant unit. Therefore, in order to make a smooth transfer from a basic understanding of germination to the ability of observing plant growth, I determined my lesson objectives into two categories. The content objectives "recognizing parts of a plant and planting a seed" prepares students the academic knowledge to understand a plant's growth process for later lessons, while the language objective "recognizing related vocabularies and using sentence pattern to show procedures" offers students the necessary language tool for acquiring and expressing information inside their science class. In

light of the idea backward design, relevant class activity and assessment method are determined to monitor the teaching and learning process. For instance, scaffolding sheets and hands-on materials are provided for the purpose of comprehensible input. Thinking map is used for assessing students' understanding.

The strongest advantage I feel about using backward design is how it makes teacher's planning and teaching into a dynamic process. The comparison between acceptable evidence set before lesson plan and assessment result at the end of a lesson functions as an indicator, which offers teacher clues to reflect the strengths and weaknesses of his lesson. Teachers are able to make revision and adaption in following lessons. The dynamic circulation of assessing, checking, and revising based on comparison to desired goals leads me to keep brainstorming new ideas and modifying teaching plans on the right track.

Domain 2 - Instructing

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

My understanding of this standard focuses on the words “supportive”, “purposeful”, and “respectful”. A well-planned and organized instruction should be able to establish a learning environment where learners feel safe, supportive, meaningful, and respected. Based on this TESOL standard, I use “affective filters”, “comprehensible input”, and “cultural responsive teaching” as three elements to construct a learning-friendly environment for my students.

When referring to learning environment, it surely includes the physical one, which takes the seat arrangement and classroom layout into consideration. However, another type of unseen environment also exists and affects students’ learning. Students perceive this learning environment through how they feel. The importance of environment stands out because it could strongly influence ELL students’ affective filter (Krashen, 1989). The higher the affective filter is, the more learning hinders of language acquisition would be brought due to the negative effects from emotional variables. In order to lower the affective filter, teaching instructions should send learner messages that the environment is safe and supportive. For example, the allowance of using L1 in classroom and having student ambassadors for peer assistance could offer ELL learners a sense of safety that both teachers and classmates are there for help.

Besides a supportive environment, purposeful and respectful instruction is also needed. My understanding of a purposeful instruction has two aspects. One refers to the way how teacher designs learning activities on purpose according to relevant learning objectives. The other one refers to giving direct information on why this learning activity is important and necessary to students and making the input comprehensible.

As for the third element “respectful”, I take the culture and language diversity as the most critical thing that ELL learners desire to acquire respects from others. Cultural responsive teaching (Gay, 2010) is the one that I insert into my instruction principles to remind myself having a mindset open to culture diversity, take advantage of it, and apply it to facilitate ELLs’ learning.

In the lesson plan American Holidays (Artifact 2), group discussion and folk tale pamphlets allows ELLs to use their L1 not only as a tool for learning English, but also a major method to express their ideas. The usage of L1 could help ELL learners reduce the negative emotions like anxieties and worries that occur during learning. Group presentation emphasis collaborative learning where every student could bring their own expertise and make contribution. These two strategies mentioned above offer learners chances to present their strengths and a sense of security. Moreover, the “culture connection” activity brings students’ attention and interest to culture diversity, where students distinguish unique thing of their home culture and feel respects to their culture backgrounds. In the mini presentation, students need to compare holidays between American and their home culture. By transferring their understanding of what a holiday means from L1 to L2, the meaning of learning in this lesson becomes explicit to students.

Domain 3 – Assessing

Standard: 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.

To me, assessing ELLs is like an art. Whether the teacher could beautifully get this job done depends on his decision making – when, where, what, and how to assess. Assessment could be done before, during, or after students’ learning process. Teachers could observe and assess either inside or outside class time. What learning content to be selected for assessment and which assessing method to adopt also make differences on classroom teaching and learning.

Based on what I learnt from the book *Instructional Assessment of English Language Learners in K-8 Classroom* (Brantley, 2007), I did an ELL case analysis project in McMurray Middle School for the course Language Assessment of English Language Learners. In this project, I listed a plan on analyzing one ELL students’ current English ability, which includes both background assessment and language assessment. The background assessment consists of formal assessments like student biography card, student interview chart, and sociocultural checklist while it also includes informal assessments as student interview and classroom observation. As for the language assessment, I chose the standardized test IPT (IDEA Proficiency Test) and SOLOM Protocol to measure case student’s language ability across reading, speaking, writing, and listening.

Artifact 3 is an excerpt from the project mentioned above. It is an analyzing section, which reflects whether the assessment plan at case student's school aligns with the requirements of NCLB (No Child Left Behind) policy. The section illustrates my opinion on the strengths and weaknesses of the assessment schedule. The pro-and-con analysis made me realize how important for an ELL teacher to design his own classroom assessment to make up the weaknesses brought by standardized examinations.

Domain 4 – Identity and Context

Standard: 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.

The standard in identity and context domain echoes to the requirements of being a cultural responsive caring teacher (Gay, 2010). The Artifact 4 is a PowerPoint slide from one of my class presentation in the course Foundation for ELL Education. It summarizes the main idea of the article The Power of Culturally Responsive Caring (Gay, 2010). This article illustrates three major points, 1) the characteristics of caring, 2) the causal relationship between teacher expectation and student effects, and 3) how to act out in a cultural responsive caring way.

The foundation of being a culturally responsive caring teacher is to bring the attitude “caring” into action first. Teachers should not limit their interactions with students only in the transmission of knowledge. The scope of caring should be enlarged to students’ life, such as their emotions, economic situation, and personal stories. According to Gay (2010), caring also shows confidence in students with high expectations, which prompts students’ learning efforts and motivations. Except showing expectation, an understanding of various cultures and how culture influences the behaviors and ideas is required as well. Above three are the basic characteristics of being a culturally responsive caring teacher. Thus, student information cards, home visits, community exploration, explicit expectations, and culture connections are techniques that I use frequently to perform out “caring” in accordance with students’ diverse identities and contexts.

Gay also sheds light on setting high expectations for ELL learners. He states that students who are “perceived positively by teachers are advantaged in instructional interactions, those who are viewed negatively are disadvantaged, being exclusive from participation in classroom interactions”. Whether teacher has high expectations would directly affect the quality of learning opportunities offered to ELL students. Gay explains this phenomenon as self-fulfilling prophecy. “If teachers expect students to be high or low achievers, they will act in ways that cause this to happen” (Gay, 2010). Hence when during planning, instructing, and assessing, I give a self-check to see if I set high expectations to motivate students and whether this teacher expectation raises their self-expectation as well.

The third part gives suggestion carrying out culturally responsive caring. It emphasizes the necessity for teachers to have a knowledge base on ELL learners’ ethnic and cultural diversity. Based on the knowledge base, teachers come with a self-awareness that their understandings and expectations would have influence on students’ learning. Yet only possessing knowledge base and self-awareness is not enough. Without dialoguing these ideas out, students are unable to acquire explicitly about teacher expectation. They would not know what and why teachers care about them.

The reason that I match Gay’s article with this TESOL standard is because these two connect with each other. The later posts requirements of caring students’ identity formation and culture background, while the former one offers solutions on how to provide cares in a culturally responsive way.

Domain 5 – Learning

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

The way teacher understands language knowledge and how learning happens will affect the way he chooses to teach. Therefore, I think having a holistic view of various SLA (second language acquisition) theories is necessary. In addition, general learning theories can also be evaluated critically and transferred to language teaching if the theory applies. For example, the Cognitive Information Processing model (Driscoll, 2005) shed lights to language teachers on using various sensory inputs to activate students' enthusiasm and deepen their understandings. Schema Theory (Anderson, 1978), which models learning process as adding new information to existing organization in learner's cognition, enlightens me the importance of making connections (either phonologically or in terms of semantically) when teaching vocabularies.

In order to explain how my understanding of language acquisition process helps me learn about students and design my instruction, I chose Artifact 5, a case analysis paper in course Linguistic and SLA in Classroom, as an example.

In the course project, I collected oral and written samples from the case student and also gathered information through interviews. Based on these data, I analyzed student's current SLA stage via my knowledge of language in aspects of phonology, morphology, syntax, and pragmatics. Analysis results became vital evidence and tools for me to give learning suggestions and design instruction plan for this student. The Artifact 5 in Appendix is excerpt from my final project report. This excerpt uses Hymes's (2009) Communicative Competence Theory to explain why student's productive language skills were poorer than receptive ones in high school and

chooses Vygotsky's (1999) Zone of Proximal Development to explain why his oral language is poorer than literacy skills currently.

Domain 6 – Content

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

Domain 6 emphasizes the content objective in ELL teaching and learning. It states language learning is mostly progressed within communication. The relevant standard requires ELL teacher to view communication as both the method and result of language learning. My understanding of this standard is built on the language education approach Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

Communicative Language Teaching believes people learn the linguistic and social knowledge on how to speak properly in various contexts via communicating with others. In addition, it views communication not only as a learning method but also an ultimate goal. People use linguistic knowledge to utter grammatically correct sentences and use social knowledge to determine when, where, what, and how to say. Hymes (1966) grouped the linguistic and social knowledge together as communicative competence. In order to cultivate this competence, there are four key elements that an ELL teacher should do (Nunan, 1991). First, ELL teachers should be aware that the focus of language class is learning how to communicate in target language. Authentic text and personal experience are crucial learning materials. While authentic text provide students sufficient exposure to high-quality target language, personal experience works as a scaffolding tool to deepen learners' understanding and improve learning efficiency.

Moreover, since the ultimate goal is communication ability in target language, the learning content should expand from the language itself to the method of learning language. Language varies across regions, times, and cultures, whereas the classroom learning chances are so limited for students to learn all of them. Therefore, besides teaching language, teachers also need to offer the learning method so that students could learn no matter how the target language changes. They could pick up necessary language knowledge and communication manners based on the environment they stay in. The final key of CLT is making connections between classroom learning and the activities outside classroom. Communication happens everywhere. The real-world conversation itself is authentic. Thus, making such connection could help learners to realize the meaning of communication and significance of language learning.

According to the standard in Domain 6 and related idea of communicative language teaching approach, I underline conversation practice, real-world application, and learning experience as vital components of my language class. Artifacts 6 and 7 are examples that how I create classroom learning experience with these three focuses.

Artifact 6 and 7 illustrate an overview structure of an English Language Art unit designed for middle school ELLs. This unit focuses on topic persuasion, one of the most practical and important communication skills. There are 7 lessons on total. The first lesson is designed mainly to introduce the unit topic. The usage of Super Bowl Commercials relates students' learning with authentic language sample and real-world experience. It also brings the reason why persuasion is important explicitly to learners. Lesson 2 to lesson 4 shift to oral forms of persuasion. In this part, students need to come out with a rubric about what a good persuasion should be like by their own and use that to evaluate their persuasion speech. The creation of rubric transfers students' attention from language to their learning method. It guides students to monitor, revise, and

reflect their learning process. The last 3 lessons of the unit emphasize persuasive skills on written forms. Learners are required to write a business letter to persuade business partner agree on selling one product collaboratively. This task simulates business activities in a real world and creates a new learning experience. Students learn new words and sentence patterns via practicing persuasion tasks. At the same time, the persuasion task itself is a learning goal of this unit, which prepares students skills on expressing their ideas in a convincing way.

Domain 7 – Commitment and Professionalism

Standard: 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.

While cultivating students a mindset of lifelong learning, I think it is also crucial for teachers themselves to be a lifelong learner. There are too many variables that could occur and create hinders for teaching. ELL students' general learning styles and psychological features may vary from generation to generation. Different students show learning difficulties in different areas. ELL learners from diverse culture background are unique with each other. As an ELL teacher, keeping update with colleagues, experts, and professional communities are necessary for improving classroom problem solving skills and acquiring good teaching ideas. For instance, a brief conversation with colleagues may inspire a creative classroom activity. Latest education research and investigation could bring new pedagogical ideas.

I choose Artifacts 8 and 9 to demonstrate my commitment to be a lifelong learner in ELL teaching filed. Artifact 8 is a reflection I wrote for attending the 2015 TFLTA Conference in Franklin, Tennessee. The Round-Robin Table Talk session I attended provide me a chance to speak out my confusions on language teaching and seek suggestions from other professionals in the field. Discussion on the topic task-based learning in language class brought me a new understanding that task-based learning does not means zero-guided learning. It shifted my focus from merely considering the sufficiency of learning tasks that I assigned to students to the suitability of scaffolding that I offered as learning assistance.

Artifact 9 is a group project reflection written after I received peer feedbacks from my classmates in the course Methods and Materials for ESL Education. The reflection summarizes suggestions that I got for revising my unit lesson plan. Several unit design issues that I confused most were solved with the advice from my peers. Therefore, I believe that the professional tips retrieved horizontally from peers and colleagues are as important as the ones received vertically from teacher community at large.

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Implication

Two years' program learning at Peabody brings me a lot on ELL teaching. This section is going to present big takeaways that I have after program learning. The first part is my understanding of what a good ELL instruction would be like based on theories I learnt from program courses. Second part states my new understanding of one hot topic in ELL teaching and third part illustrate one important resource for ELL teachers that I have never considered before program learning.

Key elements of good ELL instruction

Based on my own understanding of current language teaching theories, I select ones that I think fit with my own teaching philosophy and built a theoretical framework as follow (Figure 3).

As Figure 3 in the following page presents, the framework that describes my idea ELL instruction is built on 6 practical theories/belives. The bottom of the figure represents fundamental principles used when setting the objectives and instruction sequence. I think learning curriculum for my students should not only take full use of their funds of knowledge (Allen, 2007), but also aim at helping students improve language skills on both BICS and CALP (Cummins, 1979). Therefore, classroom activities like informal speaking and formal writing tasks are better to woven together for the training purpose of basic communicative skills and higher order thinking skills. The middle part of this graph explains theoretical supports inside of each ideal lesson. Students Can Do theory (WIDA, 2014) and the idea of Culturally Responsive Teaching dominates my whole lesson's sequence. By using Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development model, I design each lesson to start with what students already know and ends with what students just learned. Then, in alignment with the SIOP Feature on grouping configuration (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2000), the instruction process should be filled with various learning

experience from individual work to whole class activity. This gradually releasing of responsibility to students helps strengthen their center roles in learning.

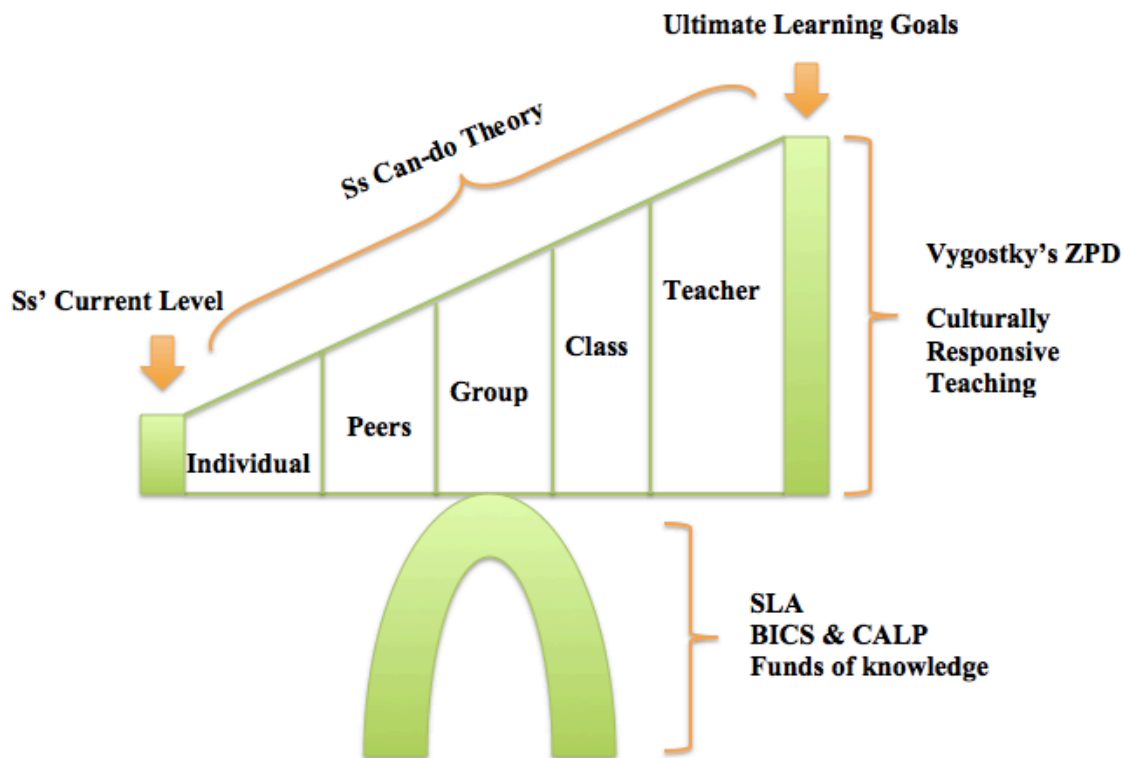


Figure 3

(Vygotsky, 1978; Gay, 2010; WIDA, 2014; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2000; Cummins, 1979; Allen, 2007)

Task-based learning does not means zero-guided learning

Due to the popularity of small-size class and the emphasis on personal characteristics, differential teaching becomes a hot issue between teachers. I realized “task-based learning does not means zero-guided learning” after I finished 40 hours practicum in McMurray Middle School.

When asked what is task-based learning, my original thought was that task-based learning means students learn new things through doing tasks”. My definition of task-based

learning procedure was “providing a task” and “doing a task”. However, this thought limits my view within the word “task” and forget its following word “based” and “learning”.

In my original understanding, task-based leaning is like a zero-guided learning. It focuses on providing an opportunity to let students be the central role of learning, discover new language knowledge and skills by themselves, and summarize general language rules through doing tasks. This thought changes task-based learning into one kind of unstructured learning without clear goals and method. Nevertheless, this way of understanding task-based learning will confuse students and lost their leaning direction. In fact, task-based learning is a well-structured learning activity. Even though students are the central role, teachers still need to function as a direction guide, problem assistant, and process observer. In a good task-based learning design, the language should provide students clear goals (usually embedded in the task’s driving questions or task goals). Suitable scaffoldings are needed at the beginning to help students come up with thorough understanding of what the task is and blueprints of how to finish the task. Then when actually carrying out the task, teachers need to give students choices and freedom to do the task by their own, but still stay in close distance for offering instant assistance, guidance, and feedback.

Use Community Resources for ELLs

The first stereotype I broke down after I started my learning in ELL Program was my neglect of community resource. I used to think language teaching and learning only happens inside classroom as a separate part from outside society. Thus, when asked to apply Krashen’s (1985) Input Theory, what I did was only using passages with simple words and grammars. However, I now realized this is not the correct way to understand what “comprehensible input” means. Making classroom materials accessible to students doesn’t means reducing their learning

challenges. How can students learn new things if I only provide them materials with simple language they already mastered? New answer to the word “comprehensible” should be making a strong connection between learning process and students’ prior background/knowledge. The abundant transnational literacies (Jimenez, Smith, & League, 2009) around community with information on children’s daily life, living environment, cultural/linguistic backgrounds, and prior knowledge are the correct ways to make teaching accessible, because it helps lower students’ institutional barriers by linking their past learning to the current one (Nieto & Bode, 2008). Additionally, the advantages of using transnational literacies are far more than just helping students better understand the teaching content. It also stimulates children’s learning motivation (Jimenez, Smith, & Teague, 2009) and protects their self-awareness of identity (de Jong, 2011). Students “real-life experiences are legitimized as they become part of the official curriculum” (Allen, 2007), which shows teacher’s great respect to students’ diverse background.

After I finished community exploration trip in the course ELL Foundations, I realized that despite community trip, home visit and parents meeting are also good tools to collect information for culturally relevant teaching. Allen (2007) stated it “foster a relationship of trust with families”, creating the collaboration opportunities between school and family. Family funds of knowledge (Allen, 2007) discovered through this teacher-parent conversation are usually valuable on school communication and course design, especially under the circumstance of school’s cultural and linguistic diversity.

Conclusion

Even though only three parts are listed here, my professional growth as an ELL teacher here at Peabody is far more than this five pages’ summary. Nevertheless, there are still a lot of things for me to learn and practice in order to be an ELL professional who can make

contributions to learners linguistically and culturally, academically and socially. ELL educators should never stop learning.

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WCEPS.

Artifact 1**Lesson Plan: Plant**

Topic: Parts of a plant
Subject: Science

Class time lengths: 60 min
Date: April, 2nd, 2015

Content Objective(s)	Language Objective(s)
1. Students could recognize different parts of a plant and their related functions. 2. Students will be able to plant a seed in their own pots after learning the life circle and “food” of a plant.	1. Students will pronounce and recognize new words related about plants. 2. Students will be able to produce sentence patterns in “First...Then...Next...At last...” to illustrate process and “The plant needs...” to refer to the “food” of a plant.
Key Vocabulary	Materials
Unfamiliar academic words: (Ss neither know orally nor in written forms) Bud, sprout, tap root, fibrous root, branch, trunk, stem Listening/speaking words: (know how to say but can not spell) flower, leaf, water, soil, sunlight, seed, asparagus, celery, lettuce, strawberries, cucumber, corn, pea, carrot, cauliflower, artichoke, broccoli, fruit	PowerPoint, video clips, interactive notebook, scaffolding sheets, plant seeds, dirt, 20 pots, 6 bottles of water, papers & crayons

Analysis of teaching objects:

Teaching objects of this lesson plan are students from Grade 5 to Grade 8 in a newcomer classroom. Most students’ (total number 18) language development level is on Early Production Stage, some have achieved on the Speech Emergence Stage. They acquired certain amount of basic vocabularies, but some of them cannot speak in complete and correct sentences. Five students just arrived US in 01/06, and 2 of them are still experiencing the Silent Period. The general language strength of these students is listening comprehension. They are excellent on getting information through total physical response and teacher’s oral speech. As for content knowledge in science, these students have abundant experience about the Nature stored in their L1, but haven’t been able to connect experience with biology knowledge due to previous interruptive schooling.

Connection between lessons**Last lesson (what have learnt):**

A poem called “Germination” in the language class. Learnt words “seed”, “plant”, “flower”, “leaf”, and “root”.

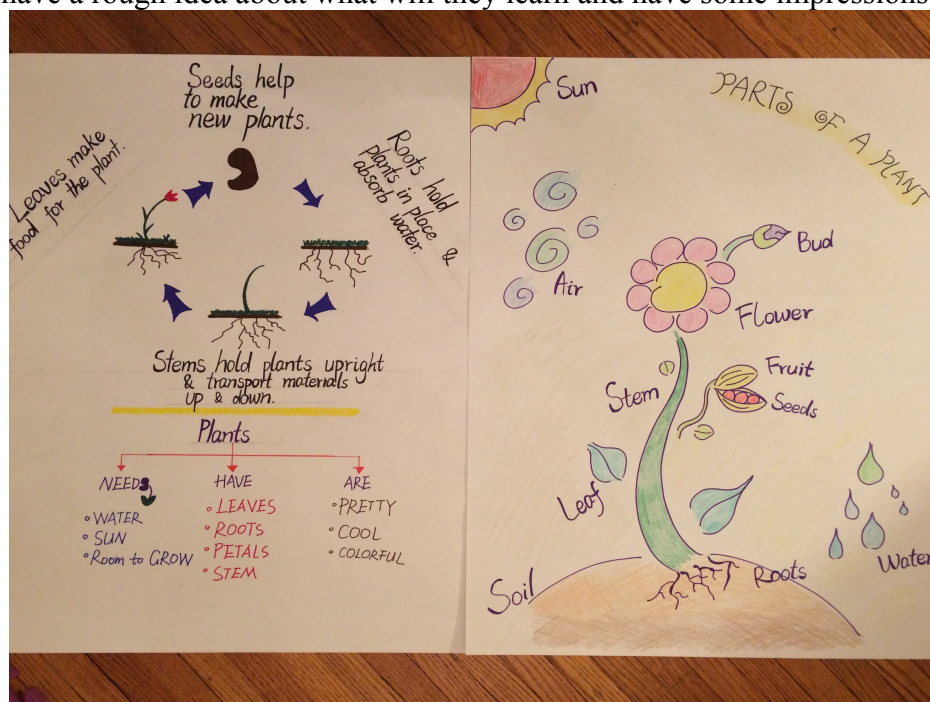
Next lesson (what will learn):

Plant growth observation.

SIOP Features		
Preparation	Scaffolding	Grouping Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Adaptation of content ■ Links to background ■ Links to past learning ■ Strategies incorporated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Modeling ■ Guided practice ■ Independent practice ■ Comprehensible input 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Whole class ■ Small group ■ Partners ■ Independent
Integration of Processes	Application	Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reading ■ Writing ■ Speaking ■ Listening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Hands-on ■ Meaningful ■ Linked to objectives ■ Promotes engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Individual ■ Group ■ Written ■ Oral

Before the lesson:

Paste below 2 posters next to the classroom's word wall 2 days before this new lesson. These posters include key words related with plants and also corresponding pictures. Students could have a rough idea about what will they learn and have some impressions about the vocabularies.



Lesson sequence:

Activities	Notes
<p>Introduction & Background knowledge (5min):</p> <p>1. Greeting</p> <p>2. Teacher shows a photo list of different grocery stores (including K&S, one of the grocery shops that most immigrant residents like to go). Ask students to think what plants (vegetables) they or their parents usually buy from grocery shops. Lead students to bring out their own</p>	<p>Practice for pair discussion and individual speaking.</p> <p>Dig into students' background knowledge on</p>

<p>background knowledge on the vocabulary and life experience on the plants that people eat. “Which part of the plant do we eat?” <i>PowerPoint is used in this part.</i></p> <p>3. Based on previous discussion, teacher elicits today’s lesson topic – the parts of a plant. Present today’s learning objectives both orally and in written forms. Tell students what we will do in the following classroom activities.</p>	<p>plants.</p> <p>Give clear lesson objectives. Set students’ learning goal for this class period. Let students be aware of and also monitor their own learning process.</p>
<p>Watch & Learn (25min):</p> <p>1. Play this video clip (7min, cartoon flash): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xO8hrqDuMmY</p> <p>While playing this video clip, T pauses the video at appropriate time when there are some key words and sentences showing on the screen. Also pauses when it is necessary for the teacher to make further explanation about the content. This video contains introduction on parts of a plant, the function of each part, and what “food” the plant needs in order to grow.</p> <p>Students are required to take notes while watching, and fill the blanks in the scaffolding sheets based on the clues shown in the video.</p> <p>2. Let groups discuss, share what they learn from the video, and then show what answer they choose to write on the scaffolding sheets. Teacher summarizes, and list key information in a big thinking map.</p>	<p>Video clip helps to increase the lesson’s multiple modalities. The cartoon could strongly attract Ss’ attention.</p> <p>Combine listening, reading, and writing together in this task. Push students to listen in details and find the key information, which are important learning skills in academic settings.</p> <p>Modeling how to use a thinking map could benefit on training students to think in a logical way.</p>
<p>Plant your seed (20min):</p> <p>1. Teacher explains the purpose of the following task: In order to further observing and learning the functions and structures of plants in the following weeks, each student is going to cultivate their own plants.</p>	<p>Transition from previous learning section into next experience activity.</p>

<p>2. Before the activity, teacher shows a short video sample on YouTube (2 min): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pB4ASdELBbQ&feature=youtu.be</p> <p>This is a recording video done by students from other biology class. It is a time lapse of mung bean's germination process, which only took about 3 days.</p> <p>3. Class discussion: the steps of planting seed. <i>L1 is allowed in this discussion section. Students are also encouraged to use "First...Next...Then...At last..." and "The plants need..." patterns.</i> Students could get the answer by referring to the 2 posters pasted before this class. Then, teacher hands out pots, seeds, water, and dirt to students. They work individually to plant the seed and write their wishes on small cards.</p>	<p>Use this video clip as an example to show students their task requirements. Also, students could get a chance to see the growth of a seed in a clear and fast way.</p> <p>Hands-on activities to consolidate students' understanding. And use this activity to make close connections between different lessons in this unit.</p>
<p>Wrap-up (5min): Use pictures and thinking maps in the PowerPoint to summarize lesson content with students.</p>	
<p>Special part (5 min): This is the teacher's last lesson in her practicum, and also five 8th graders in this newcomer classroom are going to high school next year. So teacher makes a photo flash on <i>Prezi</i> about the study and life in Vanderbilt. This will be shown to students at the end of the class to express teacher's confidence and hope on these kids' future graduation from high school and college.</p>	<p>Culturally responsive teaching.</p>

Artifact 2:**Lesson Plan: Holidays****Topic:** Holidays (introduction part of a new unit) **Class Time Length:** 70 min**Subject:** Reading**Target Audience:** 5-7th Grade ELLs

Content Objective(s)	Language Objective(s)
1. SWBAT summarize major American holidays in a timeline. 2. SWBAT compare holidays between American culture and their own culture in a form of poster presentation.	1. SWBAT acquire a passage's main idea by using one skimming strategy – reading through subheadings and each paragraph's first sentence. 2. SWBAT write short sentences/paragraphs to compare similarities and differences of two different things.
Key Vocabulary	Materials
Symbol, historic, celebrate, decorate, borrow from, parade, independence, religious	Computer, song “ <i>Shake It Off</i> ”, paper copies of articles, poster board, color pencils, sticky notes

SIOP Features					
Preparation		Scaffolding		Grouping Options	
■	Adaptation of content	■	Modeling	■	Whole class
■	Links to background	■	Guided practice	■	Small group
■	Links to past learning	■	Independent practice	■	Partners
■	Strategies incorporated	■	Comprehensible input	■	Independent
Integration of Processes		Application		Assessment	
■	Reading	■	Hands-on	■	Individual
■	Writing	■	Meaningful	■	Group
■	Speaking	■	Linked to objectives	■	Written
■	Listening	■	Promotes engagement	■	Oral

Lesson Sequence:

Activities	Notes
<p>Introductory Activity:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regular Class Greeting 2. “Lazy Reading” (10 min): <p>Setting: T divides the class into 4 groups (each group 4-5 students). Different groups have different group tables. There is one paper copy of the passage “Holidays in America” (Appendix A) on each group table.</p> <p>Procedure: T plays <i>Shake It Off</i> as the background music. Ss need to walk around their group table in a circle. They can dance, talk, or do whatever they want except reading the passage. Once the music stops, Ss need to come back to the table and read one subheading and one first sentence of a paragraph. They do not need to read the rest of the paragraph.</p> <p>The music will stop several times until Ss finish reading all subheadings and 1st sentences of each paragraph.</p> <p>Task: Based on what they read, Ss are asked to summarize all holidays introduced from the passage in a timeline. Ss consider the question “Can you get the main idea of this article by just reading its subheadings and each paragraph’s first sentences”.</p>	<p>The “Lazy Reading” activity helps to attraction Ss’ attention, raise their interests, and prepare them for class both physically and emotionally. Meanwhile, it still functions as a beginning activity to introduce the topic and content of this class.</p>
<p>Try Out Activity (10min):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. T hands out other similar articles, which introduce holidays in different cultures. Ss skim the article by applying the strategy they used in the introductory activity to see if it still works. Ss work in pairs to finish the holiday timelines or other types of thinking maps to summarize each article. 2. T guides group discussion by bringing up the following questions: What are the pros and cons of this strategy? Can it work in every situation? Is there any limitation? What type of article (structures, features, styles?) can we apply this strategy to? 	<p>Use various articles to bring different cultures to the class.</p> <p>The group discussion aims at letting Ss themselves reflect the application of this strategy instead of presenting it directly to Ss.</p>
<p>Detailed Reading (15 min):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ss read in details with the questions as follow: Which of these holidays have you celebrated in your home? Tell about a holiday from your country that people do not celebrate in the U.S. 	<p>Some of the questions here help prepare Ss with the next activity Culture Connection.</p>

<p>What do all the holidays in December have in common? Name a famous person from the reading and say why the person is famous. What day is the national birthday of America?</p> <p>2. While reading, Ss circle out difficult/new vocabularies and look them up in dictionary. T assists with comprehension when necessary.</p>	
<p>Culture Connection (30 min):</p> <p>1. T groups Ss based on their culture backgrounds. Each group pick 1 or 2 holidays from their own culture, compare these holidays with American holidays, and present the comparisons on a poster. They can either write or draw on the poster.</p> <p>2. Hang on each group's poster around the classroom. Invite Ss for a "Gallary Walk" and encourage group members to do a mini presentation on the main content of their posters.</p>	<p>Integrate all four language skills here (speaking, listening, writing, reading).</p> <p>Making connections between Ss' native culture and American culture.</p>
<p>Exit Ticket (5 min):</p> <p>Let S reflect what he has learnt in today's class and write it on a sticky note. If Ss learnt from a person's class discussion, they can put the sticky notes on their classmates' arms or forehead. If they learnt from the articles, put sticky notes near the related paragraphs. If they learnt from group posters, stick the notes on the poster boards.</p>	<p>Visualize Ss' learning results.</p>
<p>Parents Involvement (after class):</p> <p>Ss ask parents about one folk tale/story related with one of their traditional culture's holiday. Then Ss work with parents to write the story down in a pamphlet (by using either English, pictures, L1, or a mixture of them) and bring it back to school. Exchange the story pamphlet with classmates and read others' stories.</p>	<p>Engage parents into Ss' literacy development.</p>

Appendix A: Reading passage

Holidays in America

Every month of the year has something special to celebrate in the U.S. Throughout the years, the U.S. Congress has passed laws declaring special days as official observances known as federal holidays. Each federal holiday represents a day when federal employees and many other workers have a paid day off from their jobs. There are some holidays we celebrate that are not federal holidays but are very popular holidays to celebrate.

January

The first day of January is New Year's Day. This federal holiday celebrates the beginning of each New Year. People in the U.S. sometimes spend this day watching college football games and parades. On the third Monday in January, we celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday as a federal holiday. Martin Luther King, Jr. worked to change laws so that all people in the U.S. would be treated fairly. He worked for change in the 1950s and 60s when many states had laws separating black and white people. Martin Luther King taught people to use peaceful demonstrations to change laws, instead of violence. Many laws were changed because of his work. Many people worked with him in the hope that the U.S. could be a fair country for all people.

In January or February many people in the U.S. celebrate the Chinese New Year. The Chinese New Year falls between January 10th and February 19th. The date changes because it is from a calendar based on the moon, not the sun. On this day, many families clean their homes of all the "old" and get ready for the New Year. They wear new clothes and share delicious food. They give each other red envelopes with money for good luck in the coming year. They also light firecrackers to chase away bad luck.

February

February 14th is Saint Valentine's Day. Saint Valentine's Day began in Europe and has been celebrated for hundreds of years. In the U.S. today, we remember friends and sweethearts with cards called valentines, flowers, chocolates or small gifts. We celebrate Presidents' Day on the 3rd Monday of February as a federal holiday commemorating the birthdays of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. We call George Washington "the father of our country" because he was the American general in the Revolutionary War who led us to victory against England. He was elected our first president. Abraham Lincoln was our 16th president. He kept our country together during the Civil War when the Southern states wanted to form a separate country. Lincoln freed the slaves with the Emancipation Proclamation.

March

March 17th is St. Patrick's Day. This holiday comes from Ireland. People wear 3-leaf shamrocks because St. Patrick used them to explain the Christian Trinity. Many people celebrate this holiday by wearing shamrocks or green clothing in honor of St. Patrick. Some people even drink green beer!

April

Holidays in the spring are celebrations of the rebirth of life. Passover is a Jewish holiday celebrated between March 13th and April 11th. Easter is a Christian holiday that is celebrated on a Sunday between March 22nd and April 25th. Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the U.S., people attend religious services and family gatherings like picnics. They hide

colored eggs for children to find. Many children wake up to baskets filled with candy that the "Easter Bunny" has left for them.

May

Mother's Day is observed in the United States in honor of mothers on the second Sunday in May. Julia Ward Howe wrote a Mother's Day proclamation in 1870. She wanted to have an international day when all mothers of the world would stand up and speak for peace, so their sons would not have to die in war. In 1907, Anna Jarvis proposed a day to remember all mothers. Today, Mother's Day is a holiday to remember mothers with cards, flowers and presents.

Many people in the U.S. celebrate "el cinco de mayo". This means the 5th of May in Spanish. This holiday celebrates a battle won by Mexicans against the French. In some areas of the U.S., there are parades on this day. Many people eat Mexican food and listen to Mexican Music.

The last Monday in May is Memorial Day. Since 1868, this federal holiday has honored the Union Civil War soldiers who died. Now, we remember all soldiers who died for this country. People decorate soldiers' graves. Many people also decorate the graves of their families.

June

Flag Day on June 14th is the anniversary of the adoption of the American flag in 1777. It is not a federal holiday, although many people display flags outside their homes and in their communities. The third Sunday in June is Father's Day in the United States. Father's Day was first observed in 1910 in Spokane, Washington. This is a day when people remember their fathers with presents and cards. People celebrate with family gatherings, picnics and sports activities.

July

The Fourth of July is a very important holiday in the U.S. We celebrate the signing of the Declaration of Independence by representatives of the thirteen American Colonies. On July 4, 1776, John Hancock, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, well-known patriots, declared the independence of the thirteen American colonies from Great Britain. This holiday is considered the 'birthday of the United States of America.' It is the greatest non-religious holiday on the U.S. We celebrate this day with fireworks and parades.

August

During the month of August there are no major holidays to celebrate. Many families go on vacation or have picnics or go to the beach. August 26th is a day that is recognized and celebrated as Equality Day by individuals or groups because of the adoption of the 19th amendment to the Constitution in 1920. This amendment granted women the right to vote.

September

September has one federal holiday, Labor Day. It honors all working people in the U.S. and Canada. It began with a New York City parade in 1882 and is now celebrated on the first Monday in September. National Grandparents Day, which honors grandparents and the love they show to their children's children, is celebrated the first Sunday after Labor Day.

October

The 2nd Monday of October is Columbus Day, celebrating the historic trip of Christopher Columbus to the Americas in 1492. Because Columbus was Italian, this federal holiday is especially important to Italian-Americans but may not be celebrated in all states. October 31st is Halloween. During the 19th century, immigrants to the United States brought Halloween customs. These customs have changed over the years. Children in costumes go from house to

house saying "trick or treat." The treat usually given is candy and tricks are rarely done. A common symbol of Halloween is the jack-o-lantern, which is carved out of a pumpkin.

November

November 11th is Veterans Day. This federal holiday honors the soldiers who fought in World War I and those who fought for the U.S. in all wars. We celebrate by displaying the American flag from our homes, having parades and decorating graves with flowers and flags. Thanksgiving Day is the 4th Thursday in November and a federal holiday. On this day we remember how the Indians helped the Pilgrims by teaching them how to farm and hunt. On this day, we give thanks for food, our country, and our families.

December

In December we celebrate holidays of light and hope in the dark winter. There is an eight-day Jewish holiday known as Chanukah during which candles are lit on each day. December 12th is the holiday of the Virgin of Guadalupe, who appeared to a poor Indian in Mexico among winter flowers.

December 25th is Christmas, celebrating the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. Many people decorate their houses with Christmas trees and lights and give presents to family members. Children hang stockings for Santa Claus (St. Nicholas) to fill with gifts. Christmas is a federal holiday. The African-American holiday of Kwanzaa is the last week of December. Candles are lit to represent the virtues of the African-American people.

As you can see, we have much to celebrate in the U.S. Many holidays are uniquely our own and many have been borrowed from other countries. We are a country of many cultures and many holidays!

Artifact 3

2.2 Relationship between the assessments and NCLB

Overall, these tests satisfy all the major requirements presented in NCLB policy. The student has a language proficiency test for placement, keeps taking these assessments annually, and has assessments for both language and academic content.

First of all, the federal education department requires that students should have Home Language Survey at enrollment and a “language assessment with 30 days of school beginning” for placement (Pray, 2015). Because of this, Tennessee education department demands that all ELL students should be assessed by W-RAP in their enrollment process. Kevin was identified as Limited English Speaking in the initial language tests and then was placed in Ms. M’s class for an ELL pull-out program. Kevin’s Home Language Survey and test result helped Ms. M a lot on knowing basic information of this student’s background. She used this test result to place Kevin in the blue team of her class, which is a small learning group consists of low language performance students.

In addition, the Title I Part A (NCLB) also states that both annual English proficiency tests and academic tests are needed for Limited English Speaking students. As for the academic assessment, it should include subjects in reading, language arts, mathematics, and science (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). The assessments chosen by local and state education department meet this requirement. The WIDA ACCESS Kevin takes every year is used for measuring his English proficiency and language development. By comparing this test score in different years, Ms. M is able to tell whether her students are making progress in English learning. As for the TCAP assessment, it tests students’ academic knowledge in writing, social studies, reading, language art, mathematics, and science. The discrepancy indicated by the test scores in ACCESS and TCAP assist Ms. M to decide how much scaffolding she might need to use for classroom instruction.

According to the above points, the assessments Kevin takes align with what NCLB mainly requires and they help teachers have a more holistic understanding of their students. However, this does not mean that the arrangement of assessments is perfect. It still has some big drawbacks. Section 3 is going to explain what the short comings of these assessments required by NCLB.

2.3 Comments

By combining writer's own opinion and her discussion with Kevin's teacher, Ms. M, this part will state three weaknesses. These weaknesses do not oppose the major principles behind NCLB, but the way how state and local department carry out these principles.

Firstly, it is good to assess students' school performance through both language (ACCESS) and academic content aspects (TCAP). However, even though these tests claim that they could be used for all ELLs, they are not suitable for newcomers whose English abilities are nearly zero. For example, the ACCESS is useful to determine whether a person's English proficiency is limited, intermediate, or advanced. Yet it cannot distinguish in details about students' performance between zero proficiency and initial beginners. In Kevin's first three months in school, he could not speak any English words and sentences. He was unable to recognize different words' spelling from reading paragraphs and did not understanding the questions in other subjects like math and social studies. Therefore, based on Kevin's scores in standardized tests, he made no progress because his performance in tests stayed the same. Nevertheless, Kevin did learn something. It is just because things Kevin learnt from school are taken granted for things students should already know. Thus, neither ACCESS nor TCAP assess what Kevin have learnt and progressed. Ms. M had to use her own formative assessments to show that Kevin did perform well and make progress at school. Appendix A and B are used by Ms. M to assess her newcomer students' alphabet knowledge and basic concepts and skills in reading. She also downloaded Star Words and FAST Math Curricular to test Kevin's vocabulary and math level. Different than the standardized assessment, these small classroom tests showed that Kevin learnt a lot of new knowledge at school. Hence, if state wants to fully realize "no child left behind" and monitor everyone's learning status, it is better to develop a new subtest under ACCESS for those newcomers (initial English level) so that the score will not deny a child's all hard works and truly reflect his progress.

Secondly, from a personal view, Kevin and his classmates are having too many assessments. Usually one test takes a full day for school to administer and students to take. Students lose a lot of school learning time. Some of the tests Kevin take are repeated with each other in terms of content, so the unnecessary assessment parts are wasting students' time and energy. For instance, both the Benchmark and TCAP aim at examining students' academic knowledge in different subjects. Why not combine these two together so that it saves students' time on test taking while also provided educators the data they want for analyze?

Thirdly, some of the tests required by state and local department are not closely related with Common Core Standards and WIDA Standards. They also do not provide enough information on what students need to achieve in order to be successful in these assessments. The Benchmark and EXPLORE could be strong evidence to demonstrate. Ms. M feels very confused on these two tests. These tests' content are not exactly based on Common Core standards, and they does not give any instructions for teachers on how to meet the tests' requirement. Thus, Ms. M has no idea on how to prepare her students for the assessment. What assessed is not connected with what taught in class. For the test designing office and state education department, the school's teaching efficiency would be higher and teachers' teaching goal would be clearer if detailed assessment information could be provided to them, such as what knowledge should students learn to take the tests and how to interpret students' test scores for revising future instruction.

Overall, the state and local education department arrange standardized assessment properly under the requirement of NCLB. Yet in order to maximize the teaching results, the test content, assessment schedule, and test instruction for teachers should be revised. Maybe the NCLB policy could be added more detailed requirements on these three dimensions so that state and local government are easy to follow.

Artifact 4

Geneva Gay (2010), Ch. 3
Culturally responsive teaching

The Power of Culturally Responsive Caring

Xiaoxia Wang & Can Zhang

Discussion: What's caring?

- What do you think a caring teacher would be like?
- Do you have an experience related with having or being a caring teacher?

What's caring?

- "that caring is a *value*, an *ethic*, and a moral imperative that moves "self-determination into *social responsibility* and uses knowledge and strategic thinking to decide how to act in the *best interests of others*. Caring binds individuals to their society, to their communities, and to each other" (Webb et al., pp. 33-34). "

Main content

- caring *for* instead of *about* the personal well-being and academic success of ethnically diverse students
- *caring about* conveys feelings of concern for one's state of being
- *caring for* is active engagement in doing something to positively affect it. (like teacher attitudes, expectations, and behaviors)

CONTENT

- Caring characteristics:
- Expectations & effects
- Moving toward culturally responsive caring

CHARACTERIZING CARING

- Caring Is Attending to Person and Performance
- Caring Is Action-Provoking
- Caring Prompts Effort and Achievement
- Caring Is Multidimensional Responsiveness

Characterizing caring

- **Child-oriented “warm-demanders”:**
- Demanding & facilitative
- Supportive & accessible
- Personal & professional

Activity

- Vida said, “I believe in collaborative teaching and successful learning for all students. This course is designed to ensure these. We are going to work hard; we are going to have fun doing it; and we are going to do it together. I am very good at what I do, and since you are going to be working in partnership with me, you are going to be good, too. In fact, as my students, you have no choice but to be good. “

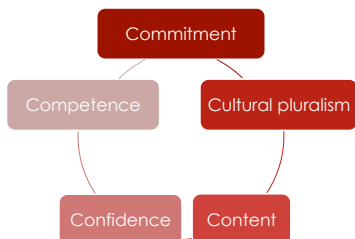
Activity

- “Of course you can. Now, tell me what I need to do to help you out. Do I need to review the instructions or go over the content again? Do you and I need to spend some time one-on-one together? Do you need to work with another student in class? Or do I need to let the coach know that you are spending so much time with athletics that it’s interfering with you completing your social studies assignments? “

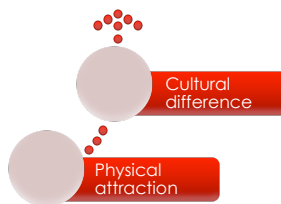
Activity

Imagine your ELL students are refusing writing assignments for the reason that their English is poor and writing for them is difficult. How would you response to encourage them, show your high expectation and also make strict demands?

Competent in cultural responsiveness: 5C Sullivan (1974)



Expectations & effects



Expectation & effects

- teacher expectations significantly influence the *quality of learning opportunities* provided to students.
- *self-fulfilling prophecy* effect: If teachers expect students to be high or low achievers, they will act in ways that cause this to happen
- teacher expectations about students are affected by factors that have no basis in fact and may *persist* even in the face of *contrary evidence*.
- teachers' *expectations* and sense of *professional efficacy* are interrelated.

Pygmalion in the Classroom

Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968)

- Randomly pick Ss & mark as "higher IQ"
- T has higher expectations
- Ss achieve better in reading

How to be a culturally responsive caring T?

- acquiring a *knowledge base* about *ethnic and cultural diversity in education*
- *Self-awareness* of culture diversity and how this influence teaching and learning
- *Dialoguing* about culture diversity

Discussion

Can you think of one detailed thing you would do in future classroom teaching to show your care towards cultural diverse students?

Thank you

Artifact 5

Analysis with SLA theories & past experience

Based on Mike's current language performance and past English learning experience, researcher chooses Hymes's (2009) Communicative Competence Theory to explain why his productive language skills were poorer than receptive ones in high school and uses Vygotsky's (1999) Zone of Proximal Development to explain why Mike's oral language is poorer than literacy skills currently.

As described in Part 1 and Part 2, Mike's English teacher designed lessons by using traditional instruction related with Grammar Translation and Behaviorism. Both the content of classroom teaching and after-school assignment were emphasizing on Chomsky's linguistic competence instead of Hymes's communicative competence (Hymes, 1967; Hymes, 2009). Therefore, under the influence of class instruction, Mike gained systematic knowledge on linguistic. He had a lot of chances to practice and use this knowledge. The broad vocabulary and deep mastery of syntax contributed largely to help him understanding the main idea of input information he received from reading and listening. Although the traditional instruction improved Mike's linguistic competence and helped him significantly in College Entrance Examination, it failed to cultivate other types on language competences, which are not included in Chomsky's theoretical framework. The communicative competence theoretical framework (Hymes, 2009; Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980) exams the flaws of traditional instruction Mike received in high school from a holistic view. None of the sociolinguistic competence, strategic competence, and discourse competence was incorporated in Mike's English class. These competences are significant on helping students establish strategies on organizing language output. Therefore, while Mike overuses his monitor on producing and comprehending grammatically correct sentences, he neglects the appropriate use of words, communication

strategies, and the importance of discourse coherence. Language output became difficult to him, and the discrepancy between his receptive language and productive language then appeared.

However, Mike's learning experience in college was very differently from his high school. This led a big change in his English level. Most learning activities in Mike's high school were teacher-centered. Students were viewed as passive recipients. Yet in his college, professors encouraged student-centered learning and required students to learn by reading, asking, and answering on their own. By looking at this through the lens of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1999), the self-learning style is beneficial for Mike's improvements on literacy but does not have too much help on his oral language. Reasons are as followed. On the one hand, Mike has already accumulated a big storage of linguistic knowledge in his high school and he keeps expending this type of knowledge in college. By using this knowledge and his independent thinking skills, it would not be too difficult for Mike to comprehend and analyze the meaning of reading passages. Yet on the other hand, Mike's poor performance on producing and recognizing English sounds, being unfamiliar with English culture, and lacking learning strategies and communication skills of oral language (the traditional instruction in his high school did not provide students with enough chances to practice their listening and speaking) hinder him making progress orally. Based on the zone of proximal development, students cannot achieve some potential development on next level unless they receive assistance from teachers or peers (Vygotsky, 1999). In Mike's case, progress on speaking and listening is the exact potential development he cannot finish alone without others' help. This is because the knowledge and learning methods he acquired from high school are successful in his literacy learning but not fitful for his oral development. Thus, extra assistance is required.

Overall, even though Mike currently shows unbalanced performance between his oral language and literacy, researcher still believes he has huge potential on language improvement. Above all, his well-developed self-learning ability and thorough mastery of linguistic knowledge will still help him advance his literacy. Meanwhile, his low affective filter and strong awareness of common underlying proficiency between Chinese and English (as mentioned in Part 1 & 2), indicates once his learning methods and class instructions changed, he had great possibility of promoting his oral language level. The following Part 4 will suggest relevant instruction plans to help Mike in his future language learning.

Artifact 6**Unit Overview****Unit Title:** Persuasion**Main Content:** Persuasive skills in English speaking and writing**Number of lessons:** 7**Time Length / Lesson:** 90 min**Students:** 12 6-Graders (half mainstream students, half ELL students, from diverse backgrounds)**Unit Structure:**

Section	1	2			3		
Lesson	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Focus	Introduction	Speaking			Writing		

Unit Obejectives:

Based on the revised Taxonomy Model (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) on learning objectives.

↑	Higher order thinking skills	
	Creat	SWBAT design and present advertisements, give persuasive speeches, and write persuasive pieces.
	Evaluate	SWBAT use a rubric to assess speeches and writing pieces.
	Analyze	SWBAT analyze effective elements in a persuasive writing piece.
	Apply	SWBAT use a graphic organizer to summarize main points for their writing tasks and apply word choosing skills.
	Understand	SWBAT interpret and discuss information materials presented in class, recognize evidence for a claim.
	Remember	SWBAT define “persuasion” by their own words.
Lower order thinking skills		

Artifact 7

Unit Structure			
	Introduction(1)	Speaking(3)	Writing(3)
	➤ Definition	➤ Persuasive Speech	➤ Persuasive Writing
		➤ Evidence ➤ Use Rubrics	➤ Graphic Organizer ➤ Elements in PW
7 Lessons			
Unit Structure			
	Introduction(1st)	Speaking(2nd)	Writing(5th)
Review & Intro	➤ Warm-up Dance (Topic lead-in)	➤ Videos and Discussion	➤ Business Letter Activity
Input	➤ Super Bowl Commercial ➤ Definision Summary	➤ "The Lorax" and Intro to Rubric	➤ PW Techniques Exploration
Output	➤ Ads Design	➤ Mini Public Speaking	➤ Persuasive Letters
Wrap-up & Self-assessment	➤ pros & cons of your own ads	➤ Persuasive Rubrics	➤ Peer Evaluation

Artifact 8**Reflection on TFLTA Conference**

The 48th Annual TFLTA Conference focuses on the topic “Connect and Communicate”. As the Conference Note states, it “discovers new ways to make connections with the world around us, communicate in authentic contexts, and demonstrate leadership in this global society”. There are one session of Chinese teaching and two related Round Robin Table Discussions, which align with the conference’s major topic. Through these three sessions’ lectures and discussions, I acquired some new thoughts about Chinese teaching.

Task-based learning does not means zero-guided learning

The first session’s lecture name is “Differential Teaching and Learning: Task-based Language Teaching and Assessment”. Due to the popularity of small-size class and the emphasis on personal characteristics, differential teaching becomes a hot issue between teachers. This sessions discusses how new technology has help to make differentiated teaching possible and introduce one approach in “differentiated learning, task-based language teaching”. Among all these various things under the major topic discussed in that session, I found the idea that “task-based learning does not means zero-guided learning” very interesting and thought provoking.

When the presenter asked audience what is task-based learning, most teachers gave answers like “task-based learning means students learn new things through doing tasks”, including me. Most of us audience define the sequence of task-based learning as merely “providing a task” and “doing a task”. However, most of us limits our view within the word “task” and forget its following word “based” and “learning”.

My original thought was that task-based leaning is like a zero-guided learning. It focuses on providing an opportunity to let students be the central role of learning, discover new language

knowledge and skills by themselves, and summarizes general language rules through doing tasks. This thought changes task-based learning into one kind of unstructured learning without clear goals and method. Nevertheless, this way of understanding task-based learning will confuse students and lost their leaning direction. In fact, task-based learning is a very well-structured and learning activity. Even though students are the central role, teachers still need to function as a direction guide, problem assistant, and process observer. In a good task-based learning design, the language should provide students clear goals (usually embedded in the task's driving questions or task goals). Suitable scaffoldings are needed at the beginning to help students come up with thorough understanding of what the task is and blueprints of how to finish the task. Then when actually carrying out the task, teachers need to give students choices and freedom to do the task by their own, but still stay in close distance for offering instant assistance, guidance, and feedback.

Communicating with meaning

Except correcting the audience's limited understanding of task-based learning, the 1st Chinese session also led a discussion on what a good and practical communication should be like inside a language classroom. Most teachers agree the answer should be communication with meanings instead of communication with grammars or vocabularies. Especially when in doing speaking practices, teacher should encourage students express out their ideas with the end of giving clear message (meaning) to their audience instead of considering whether the sentence is in correct grammars or fancy vocabularies. Therefore, the goal "communication" could also be used as a standard to measure students' language performance. For example, when expressing their comments on a passage, some students might say "this is a very concise paper", while some might say "this paper is short but clear in meaning". The two ways of expression uses different

words but provide listeners similar meanings. Therefore, when in evaluation, these two types of students all achieved the goal “communicate with meaning”. In this case, as classroom teachers, we might need to notice that students provide the 1st type’s expression have wide vocabularies than the latter one. However, the latter students might have deeper understanding and better application of one certain language skills than the former students, using simple words to replace difficult ones under similar sentence meanings. Students said “short and clear” might don’t know the word “concise”, but they figured out the way to express their ideas by using simple words that they have already known. Thus, the goal of communication is still achieved. When evaluating and commenting, teachers should realize this language skill/strategy used by students, because this kind of indirect method also has great significance on helping language learners achieve their communication goals even when they have obvious language limitations.

The following Round Robin Table discussions also discussed how to engage students instead of only attracting students in language communication tasks. Even though the individual topics varied a lot with each other, they still could connect with each other through a general perspective by referring back to the main topic “Connect and Communicate”. In addition to the two points mentioned above, I acquired many other new ideas related with hot issues in current language teaching classrooms. Hopefully these newly acquired ideas could have a chance to be transferred into real actions into my future language class.

Artifact 9**Reflection**

The final presentation rubrics give us lots of insights. Based on peer suggestions and group discussion, we made three major changes in our curriculum project.

The first change is adding explicit unit objective through out the whole teaching process. Even though detailed language and content objectives were stated at the beginning of each lesson, they are still too distinct for students to grasp a holistic view of the unit. In order to let students have a well awareness on how they make progress from current level to expected level, we decide to list the unit's overarching goals. By presenting the unit goals directly to students and using them through all seven lessons, we think it would assist students on monitoring their own learning process and making personalized study plan.

Except the unit objectives, we also take advice to make instruction more explicit. Students would be overwhelmed by new concepts without proper explicit instruction. One problem in our previous lesson was the lack of explicit instruction of key vocabularies and content knowledge. Too often, it makes the lessons too packed that students will be overwhelmed. Therefore, we make two major changes. First, we now mainly focus on two things to teach – the organization and attention to audience. Second, we now add some mini-lessons to introduce the concept and practice through different activities. For example, the OREO is a visual mini-lesson that teaches the knowledge of the structure in persuasion. We also add a mini-lesson to introduce the concept of audience.

Our second change focuses on making the curriculum design more culturally responsive and age-appropriate. Instead of having Super Bowl commercials, Lessons 1, 2, and 3 altered the activity so that commercials from other countries and World Cup commercials would be shown instead. This was a suggestion made by our peers in order to make our lessons more culturally

responsive. We wanted to comply with this suggestion as it relates back to our rationale statement about building on prior knowledge and being culturally responsive in our teaching. In this way, we also avoided comprehension difficulties that would occur if ELL students were unfamiliar with the concept of the Super Bowl. I (Beth) have personally seen how the lack of background knowledge of the Super Bowl can become a learning barrier based on the limitations in one of my own lessons given this semester in an ELL classroom. We decided to not repeat this mistake in this unit. This was an easy change to our lessons as we had not chosen specific commercials and the content was not relevant as long as they were advertising a product that was age-appropriate to 6th grade.

In the 2nd lesson, the part about “The Lorax” was eliminated. There were concerns revealed in our feedback that this was not age-appropriate or culturally relevant material. Although we believe it still is age-appropriate, we did not have enough time allocated in this unit to really delve into the concepts (environmental issues) that would have made this age-appropriate for middle school students. It would have also been a stretch to insist that this was culturally relevant material, even for mainstream students, considering how dated the video is. Instead of continuing with this project, we replaced the video and graphic organizer with fundamentals that our group felt were missing from our unit when it came to persuasion. The OREO activity fills that gap. The OREO activity not only introduces the art of persuasion in a format that is easily understandable and connects well to the rubric and graphic organizer that students will be using throughout the unit, it also presents the information in a fun and engaging way. The use of actual OREO cookies helps tactile learners grasp the concept of layering different information into a specific order to be more effective in presentation. The OREOS

mini-lesson on structure also becomes a hook as the cookies serve as a fun, yet culturally familiar connection.

Furthermore, in our third change, we listen to several group's ideas to make the lessons flow more naturally and constitute them as one unit. This is also why we add overarching unit goals at the beginning of the unit. Apart from the unit objectives, we also make several changes in the unit's structure. Instead of dividing speaking and writing activities as two separate sections, we now incorporate speaking activities as scaffolding for the writing project. Thus, the final project is to write a persuasive letter; at the same time, students are given chances to practice different skills through speaking and then move on to the writing part. We spend more time using the same topic to practice in speaking and writing, but change the audience. Plus, we use the same graphic organizer of persuasive planning in both activities. As for the rubric, we were not very sure about how to connecting to the speaking and writing rubric. But now we only use the persuasive speech to assess if students' knowledge of the structure in persuasion, so the speaking rubric only focuses on if the speech contains opinions and reasons; meanwhile, students can have the authority in creating a checklist themselves as the writing rubric. This ensures that students are not overwhelmed by too many new strategies and skills. To connect speaking and writing actually solves the dilemma of time limits that we concerned previously.

These changes made our unit instruct more closely related with the theoretical framework we designed at the very beginning. Culturally responsive and age-appropriate materials make the lesson friendly to both mainstream students and also ELL learners. In the meanwhile, explicit unit goals and instruction glue the 7 lessons together as an organic whole. There are also other small revisions we made to improve the curriculum quality. We didn't list all the modifications

here because of length limit, yet details on what have been changed could be traced by reading the italic in the right column of each lesson plan.