

CAPSTONE ESL Portfolio

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March 1, 2016

Abstract

This ESL Portfolio reflects all I have learned from two-year study in English Language Learners program, Peabody College, Vanderbilt University. I combine academic study during different courses with a variety of practices including fieldtrips, classroom observations, assessment observations and student-teacher experiences, and demonstrate my own interpretation and understanding about teaching English as a second or foreign language.

This ESL Portfolio contains three sections: 1) Philosophy of Teaching, 2) TESOL Standards for ESL/EFL Teachers of Adults, and 3) Bridging Theory and Practice. In **the first section**, I start from Socrates' iconic concern for teaching and analyze its ultimate teaching goal. Then I move to the comparison and contrast of Chomsky's idea and Hymes' idea about linguistics, based on which, I put my focus on theories and methods for the improvement of English language learners. In **the second section**, I interpret and analyze standards for ESL/EFL Teachers of Adults on the account of four aspects: learners and learning, learning environment, curriculum, and assessment. My artifacts play an important role in understanding and deeply considering the implied meaning of these standards. In **the third section**, I recall my artifacts as well as my experiences with real classroom teaching and targeted students in order to connect my study in English Language Learners program to practice. And I make a further discussion about what kind of teacher I am going to become in the future classroom.

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Philosophy of Teaching

Starting From Socrates' Iconic Concern for Teaching

Socrates is not a stranger to me. From history books, I learned that as an Athenian citizen, a great philosopher and instructor, Socrates was sentenced to death for he was considered impious and corrupting the Athenian youth. But how can a person being sentenced to death that time is generally recognized as a great philosopher by the future generations? What exactly is Socrates' real perspective on teaching? I found answers to my questions when I was taking the course Analysis of Teaching course. Nowadays, although it is unquestionable that Socrates is a teacher, the reason why there used to emerge a debate on whether Socrates is a real teacher or not is based on his teaching method—the interrogation, which cannot be mischaracterized and oversimplified as merely “asking questions”. Socrates sticks to the idea that “all I know is that I know nothing”, and “all learning is but recollection” (Plato, 2011a, sec. 81). Based on this idea, starting from asking questions closely connecting to each other, Socrates gradually leads students to realize the contradiction in their answers and finally recall the truth. Therefore, Socrates is described—by himself or others—as a gadfly, a midwife, or a matchmaker as well (Mintz, 2007), who serves as a guide rather than a typical teacher. And Socrates' goal is to turn the soul toward virtue regarded as the origin of truth and reason, (Biesta & Stengel), which corresponds to the famous metaphor of a prisoner shaking of his shackles by himself and welcoming the sunlight outside the dark cave. Because of his day-after-day interrogation, students started thinking deeply about abstract and philosophical issues bringing about large ideological and potential threat to the current government, which, I argue is the crucial reason that Socrates was sentenced to death.

As a result, to make a conclusion of Socrates' teaching method, firstly, which is also the most important, students are the center and the key to the teaching process, based on which, Socrates puts forward a chain of questions starting from concrete, social-related and gradually moving to abstract and philosophical. Next, during the teaching process, I am able to discover very strong interactions between the teacher and students, and students largely benefit from high quality interactions. Furthermore, as a teacher, Socrates never control his students or imposes his will upon students, but rather encourage students to think independently and to have their own point of view through self-refutation, which is also the ultimate goal of education. Thus, I argue that Socratic method has transcended the purpose of teaching as qualification, and emphasized teaching as socialization and subjectification, which means through education, students are part of existing cultures and traditions and form our identity, and become subjects in their own right, and not just objects of the interventions of teachers and others (Biesta & Stengel). In my view, the teaching purpose of Socratic method—socialization and subjectification, is a broad and ideal teaching goal for me to pursue in my future career.

Moving on to Linguistics and Language Acquisition

Bearing the general overview and the ultimate teaching goal of Socratic method in mind, I began to study the linguistic theory that can be used as references for second language acquisition. First of all, I have learned to clarify a pair of antithesis—competence and performance, which leads me to further get an understanding of the American linguist, Chomsky's idea. "Chomsky defines competence as the ideal user's knowledge of the rules of his language, and performance the actual realization of this knowledge in linguistic communication." (Dai & He, 2010, pp. 5) Combining the contribution that Chomsky's linguistic works have made to the development of the field of psychology, I argue that Chomsky's viewpoint on linguistics

lays special emphasis on the inherence of language. It indicates that every person has already gained a set of internalized language knowledge, which has divorced from the practical use of language, and cannot be described. So people are able to judge whether the language grammar is correct or not, and have the ability to comprehend a large amount of meaningful sentences. In conclusion of Chomsky's idea, what linguists should study is the ideal speaker's competence, not his or her performance, which is too haphazard to be studied. "Chomsky looks at language from a psychological point of view and to him; competence is a property of the mind of each individual." (Dai & He, 2010, pp. 5)

Nevertheless, when I take Chomsky's idea into consideration and relate it to my current major, I found that merely referring to the research of abstract language system is not able to fully meet the particular needs of English language learners, because the clarification of the concept of performance offered by Chomsky omits almost everything of sociocultural significance. The focus of attention is upon questions such as which among grammatical sentences are most likely to be produced, easily understood. "The study of such questions is of interest, but the results are results of the psychology of perception, memory, and the like, not of the domain of cultural patterning and social action." (Hymes, 2001, pp. 62) My understanding is that the language competence indicated by Hymes is no longer confined to the abstract competence, but considers about the concrete practice of language, which is the communicative competence. This term can be defined simply as "what a speaker needs to know to communicate appropriately within a particular community." (Troike, 2005, pp. 100) From this point, Hymes extends Chomsky's idea and regards language competence not only as a kind of inherent knowledge or an inner property but also as the appropriate use of knowledge. Moreover, Hymes goes into further specification this idea—a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences, not

only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. “He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner.”

(Hymes, 2001, pp. 60) Since this perspective is closely associated to different occasions to use language and the appropriateness of using language, which accords with the fact that languages originally develop and generate changes through communications, otherwise they will gradually die out, I interpret Hymes’ idea of communicative competence as leading language learners to finally reach the socialization, and it echoes what Socratic method has put forward. Thus, connecting to my major, I argue that English language learners should be involved in a variety of situations to use what they have learned from the teacher, and step by step, become fluent in using the target language when communicating with native speakers.

Focusing on English Language Learner

The issue of how to teach English language learners has been receiving the attention due. “In English-speaking countries with rapidly changing demographics and large numbers of ESL students entering public schools, many challenges face minority-language students, as well as their teachers, parents, and majority-language classmates.” (Duff, 2001, pp. 104) “And English language learners often experience lower teacher expectations, have limited access to educational resources, and have fewer opportunities to learn than their monolingual peers.” (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2010, pp. 48) These factors lead to their difficulties in catching up with native English speakers. For instance, when confronting a new piece of reading material, monolingual students only need to focus on the comprehension of the content. However, for those English language learners, they face two challenges: comprehending the reading material as well as understanding English vocabularies and phrases that serve as the carriers of the reading material, which means they need to spend more time and to put much more effort into learning. What’s more, even

English language learners receive supports during the class, a certain amount of them still do not have adequate opportunities to practice English after school, for their family members' proficiency in English is comparatively low. Therefore, as a future English teacher probably facing students from different cultural, social and linguistic backgrounds, one essential thing I must always remember is that the final goal is to make English language learners catch up with native English speakers as much as they can, and let them communicate with different people in different occasions without language barrier.

When regarding the particular emphasis on communicative competence in Hymes' idea as the teaching goal, and relating to the actual needs of English language learners, I conclude two essential factors that should be taken into consideration when the target students are English language learners: immersing students into a large quantity of comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985), and increase various kinds of sufficient and efficient interactions in the classroom, which will lead to producing meaningful output.

For the first factor, according to my own experience, once I had an opportunity to observe an English class held by ESL to go program aiming at helping refugees. This group of people is very special in the American society, because they have already lost the opportunity to attend regular courses in schools. So according to their special needs, I found teachers of ESL to go program teaching these students by involving them in an English-speaking environment and providing them with enough comprehensible input. For example, students use authentic English reading materials to learn grammars and conversations; they listen to tapes and watch videos in English; the teacher explains grammatical forms and new vocabularies in English. I argue that the strategy is consistent with what I have learned from Krashen's input hypothesis. Input is the essential environmental ingredient. If input is understood, and there is enough of it, the necessary

grammar is automatically provided. The language teacher need not attempt deliberate to teach the next structure along the natural order—“it will be provided in just right quantities and automatically reviewed if the student receives a sufficient amount of comprehensible input.” (Kreshen, 1985, pp. 2) Further, according to Brown (2001), the Natural Approach developed by Tracy Terrell also proved the feasibility of comprehensible input, which “aimed the goal of basic personal communication skills, that is, everyday language situations—conversations, shopping, listening to the radio, and the like.” (pp. 21) Consequently, one of teachers’ responsibilities is provide inputs for students as much as possible in order to help them master English learning and finally integrate into the American society, which achieves the socialization.

Although comprehensible input is the key to teaching English language learners, obviously, only concerning the input is not enough. Since the purpose of learning English is to communicate, I argue that an effective way to let students produce meaningful output is to increase interactions during the class. A key concept related to interaction is based on Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory, which says that interaction not only facilitates language learning but is a causative force in acquisition; further, “all learning is seen as essentially a social process which is grounded in sociocultural settings.” (Troike, 2005, pp. 111) And Vygotsky’s famous discussion closely related to interaction is Zone of Proximal Development—an area of potential development, where the learner can achieve that potential only by discussing with either peers or instructors. Moreover, one way in which others help the learner in language development within the ZPD is through scaffolding (Troike, 2005)—various kinds of instructional methods that improve students’ understanding and ability of independent learning.

Connecting Vygotsky’s idea to practice, I recalled a classroom observation when I took during the previous semester. I have observed an English reading and writing classroom that

contains nearly 25 students in a middle school. During the class, I realized that the teacher divided students into five small groups and successively provided students with opportunities to ask questions and answer higher order questions, which, based on my understanding, promoted the teacher-student interaction and let the teacher get a better understanding of every student's current knowledge as well as language proficiency. Besides, when learning new vocabularies, students are given enough time to work together to find the meaning of each vocabulary by either looking up the dictionary or putting vocabularies back into contexts, and they are very willing to share sentences they made that contains the new word with group members. Students' performance accords with Vygotsky's idea that "scaffolding is not something that happens to a learner as a passive recipient, but happens with a learner as an active participant." (Troike, 2005, pp. 113) Hence, communicative interaction encourages cooperative relationships among students. It gives students an opportunity to work on negotiating meaning (Freeman & Anderson, 2011), which means instead of only accepting teachers' ideas, students will be enlightened by their group members, and finally learn how to think, which coincides with the ultimate goal of education I have learned in Socrates' philosophical idea—students are the master of their learning process, and they can decide which idea they will agree or disagree.

Conclusion

In general, I am enlightened by Socratic method that both arouses students' strong desire to learn things that are unknown to them and leads students to self-refutation, thereby promotes students to ponder long and deeply about social and moral issues. Students, the center and the priority of a teaching process, aim at reaching socialization and subjectification. Next, regarding Socratic method as the broadest and the ultimate teaching goal, through the comparisons and contrasts between Chomsky's idea and Hymes' communicative competence, I figure out that

language teaching should definitely be accompanied by the involvement of different communicative occasions, because language is neither isolation nor an abstract course, but should be implemented in daily life. Further, reducing the scope to the focus on teaching English language learners, I argue that immersing students to comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985) and encouraging effective interactions are two specific elements can be achieved to improve English learning within the scope of communicative competence. When recalling a variety of teaching theories and methods whose focuses are different from each other I have experienced during the previous semesters, I argue that sometimes instead of using only one method, a teacher should demonstrate his or her flexibility in combining different methods together and adjusting his or her original teaching method. Because different students probably have got different needs during English learning, it would be better for the teacher to teach ELLs according to their aptitude and specialty.

TESOL Standards for ESL/EFL Teachers of Adults

Domain: Planning

Standard 1: Teachers plan instruction to promote learning and meet learner goals, and modify plans to assure learner engagement and achievement. (TESOL, 2008)

This standard briefly sets forth that teaching instructions should be changed and further adjusted in order to meet learners' level in English learning. Based on what Echevarria & Vogt & Short (2008) has put forward, "Students in the same class vary in the amount of prior knowledge they possess related to a topic. The teacher makes specific instructional decisions and differentiates instruction for each level."(pp. 55) What's more, as an English teacher whose students are ESL/EFL learners, it is important to keep in mind that accompanied by students' differences in age and in English language proficiency, their needs in language acquisition and their ultimate goals can also be different from each other. For instance, adult learners who are new immigrants to the United States probably learn English for finding a job as soon as possible, and for integrating to the American society. On the other side, for children and adolescents, they need to learn English in order to catch up with their native speaker peers, and further, perform well in academic English and enter the university.

The standard about planning makes me recall the pre-interview and the classroom observation I did during the last semester. My classroom observation is done in **Glenview Elementary School** (See Artifact A). More than 20 second grade ELLs are in the class, and none of them speaks English as their first language. Half of them speak Spanish, and half of them speak Arabic. Before going to classroom observation, I designed questions based on how to plan teaching instructions and design class activities for interviewing the English. For example: How will you engage the students in the learning? How will you differentiate instruction for different

individuals or groups of students in the class? According to the interview, I found that the teacher makes a lot of effort on adjusting instructions in order to match her students. Since these are ELL students, during the class, the teacher leads students to talk a lot about building background knowledge to make sure that students are able to understand the content. Especially, when the curriculum is Americanized, the teacher will provide colorful pictures, play videos, and even bring real things to attract students' attention and to give students a direct impression. Then, when taking students age—second graders into consideration, the teacher keeps her students engaging by dividing a lesson into several short pieces, because comparing with adults, most children are not able to concentrate for a long time. In order not to let students become absent-minded and waste time, the teacher leads a short reading lesson at first, where students get together to learn new vocabularies and expressions. Then students will enjoy self-reading that allows them to read either individually or with a friend. After that, the whole class will come back again and continue doing a short writing lesson. The teacher does modeling for students by writing sentences one by one and reading each sentence aloud. Moreover, with regard to the related assessment, I argue that language objectives and content objectives set by the teacher accord with both the requirements from Common Core State Standards (<http://www.corestandards.org>) and the formal and informal assessments students are going to take in the future. Students are developing their abilities about reading and writing, which are two key parts in the assessment. Therefore, under this circumstance, I argue that this artifact is a typical example about modifying lesson plans to assure learner engagement and achievement, and to be up to assessments.

Domain: Instructing

Standard 2: Teachers create supportive environments that engage all learners in purposeful learning and promote respectful classroom interactions. (TESOL, 2008)

This standard referring to language learning environments makes me think about the affective filter hypothesis by Krashen (1985). According to Krashen's theory, "When the acquirer is unmotivated, lacking in self-confidence or anxious, the affective filter is 'up'" (p. 3). On the contrary, "the filter is lowest when the acquirer is involved in the message that he temporarily 'forgets' he is hearing or reading another language" (p. 4) Based on the affective filter hypothesis, my interpretation to this standard is that the teacher should provide students with a safe learning environment to learn English in which students can voice their opinions, feel confident to practice different elements (reading, writing, listening and speaking), and not need to worry about making mistakes. What's more, increasing interactions between the teacher and students or among peers is also an essential aspect to improve English acquisition.

When combining my classroom observation in **Cole Elementary School** (See Artifact B) with this standard, I can find abundant evidences proving that the teacher creates a supportive environment for students. In general, the classroom is decorated by a variety of pictures, stripes of classroom rules and schedule tables written by students themselves, and students' assignment, which let students feel that they belong to this classroom. Moving to the teaching process, I noticed that the teacher allows students moving around and picking any spots in the room as long as they can stay focusing. What's more, students learn new vocabularies by acting them out instead of sitting still on the chair and copying each word again and again. In my point of view, this creative teaching method involves students into a positive learning environment, and helps students efficiently learn new knowledge.

Next, with regard to classroom interactions, the teacher should be well aware of providing enough time for interactions among students, for interactions play a crucial role in helping students smoothly integrate into the language environment. During my classroom observation, firstly, I am able to frequently find interactions between either the teacher and students or students themselves, which is very helpful for both learners and the learning process. For instance, when the teacher is leading a small group to read books, she has gotten used to noticing and predicting when and where they will need help, so that she can pause and make a check. Students are able to ask any questions related to the reading material, and the teacher will provide in-time interactional feedbacks. Through interactions between the teacher and students, students will quickly grasp the main idea and have a deep thinking about the reading material. Then, I found that students interact with each other during the reading process. In accordance with the reading method given by the teacher, they pick up English vocabularies and phrases they are confused and guess the meaning by putting vocabularies back to the contexts. Students also exchange ideas after finishing reading several pages. They discuss personalities of each character, the development of the story, and even try predicting the plot. What's more, interactions can be found in informal writing assessments as well. The teacher gives students enough time to asking questions about the topic they are going to write. When students use an appropriate word in the descriptive writing, the teacher will encourage them a lot, which heightens students' confidence and willingness to learn. As a result, this artifact demonstrates my understanding of instructing; because the teacher and students develop respectful classroom interactions together. This can be regarded as an essential aspect of classroom environment where students are able to improve their English language acquisition with confidence.

Domain: 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. (TESOL, 2008)

This standard lays emphasis on two key points. Firstly, it suggests that teachers should have a clear awareness that language learning and performance cannot be separate from each other, and the assessment should be correspondingly set in order to match the pace of learning process, based on which, students need to be taught that an assessment is not something that will determine a person’s learning ability, but a way to tell students what kind of knowledge they have already grasped and what they still need to put a lot of effort into. Moreover, teachers will also get a better understanding about students’ level of English language proficiency according to the result of assessments. Hence, English teachers need to focus on analyzing the relation between learning and performance. Further, how to pass on a concise and deep interpretation about the relation to students should also be taken into consideration, for English teachers need connect the interpretation to the design of assessments.

In general, the purpose of our assessment practices is let the English teacher make an objective appraisal of students’ English language proficiency. Students will have an overall understanding about their level of English language according to the performance and the result of assessment practices. Depending on the result, teachers may adjust current teaching methods, aiming at matching students’ current situation in English learning and improving their language

ability. McNamara (2000) has illustrated the fact that “language tests differ with respect to how they are designed, and what they are for. They are typically used for the assessment either of separate components of language knowledge or of receptive understanding.” (pp. 5) And one of the types of fixed response format, which aims at assess separate components of language knowledge is multiple-choice format (McNamara, 2000). From my perspective, although the multiple choice format will remind students of the importance of words and expressions, it may lead to a negative consequence that students probably are not able to reveal their authentic English proficiency. For example, each question in multiple-choice format is separate from context, which means the assessment fails to test students’ ability to comprehend a whole piece of article. Further, the multiple-choice is insufficient to be used in testing students’ productive skills, because students only need to choose the most appropriate answer from other confusions or misunderstandings without practicing their speaking and writing skills in the test. (McNamara, 2000) The negative effect of multiple-choice format proofs from the opposite side that the assessment should tally with what students have learned during the class.

Secondly, this standard also reminds teachers that one effective way to help students perform well in assessment is to let students participate in determining the content of assessment. According to Gere & Christenbury & Sassi, “Most students see assessment as something that is done to them, something over which they have no control. For a number of them, assessment is an arbitrary, even capricious, process that is inaccessible and invisible.” (p. 89) In order to remove students’ doubts about assessment, one thing English teachers need to do is to make the assessment concrete and understandable by explaining the terminology used in assessments and the requirement of assessment, which is, according to Gere & Christenbury & Sassi, “making assessment visible.” (p. 89)

When I was observing an assessment of new adult students in English Language Center, I noticed that the teacher who leads the assessment told the students not to feel nervous about the test, since directions of assessment questions are comprehensible and each question are suitable for students to answer. Students introduced themselves at first, and worked in a group to make discussions related to daily lives. What's more, students have got initiative to decide what kind of topic they would like to talk about during the assessment. So I conclude that involving students to determining what will be assessed provides a good opportunity for students to become familiar with the assessment. It will also reduce students' nervousness and hostility towards the form of evaluation. Another example related to my own experience about designing assessments in my **lesson plan**—The Secret Garden, Descriptive Writing and a Story About the Power of the Heart (See Artifact C). I have designed various assessments to observe students' proficiency in descriptive writing and in the ability of comprehending the theme of this book. The assessments cover different aspects of students' language ability: reading, listening, speaking and writing. I try closely bridging every assessment to the content objectives students need to reach during each lesson. Further, in order to avoid single format of questions in assessment, I prepare a variety of types of items including writing a short paragraph of description, finishing word cluster and imaging about the next scene of the novel. Thus, this artifact proves that I understanding assessing as it relates to the learner because questions discussed in the assessment are connected with students' personal experiences. Further, the curriculum students are going to attend is designed according to their performance in the assessment.

Domain: 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. (TESOL, 2008)

Students' background information largely affects their English acquisition. Native languages, students' motivations and ultimate goals will decide whether a certain kind of teaching method is appropriate to them or not. The implication of this standard is similar to a teaching idea mentioned in *A Sociocultural Perspective on Second Language Learner Strategies: Focus on the Impact of Social Context*. According to Jang&Jimenez (2011), teachers should combine their teaching strategies to learners' cultural background, because this is an essential element that will shape students' desires and goals to learn English. Another aspect in this standard that I must pay attention to is the word "community". Communities that students are often involved in can be regarded as a kind of effective fund of knowledge that teachers can take advantage of.

The standard reminds me of my **complete study of a non-native English speaker** (See Artifact D) that I did in linguistics course. My participant used to describe to me a typical English curriculum in her senior high school. Instead of practicing spoken English, teachers put much emphasis on grammar and vocabulary expansion. Teachers often provide students with a long new vocabulary list and ask students to memorize it for dictation. Students also receive learning materials that contain a concise summary of grammar keynotes. I argue that the English class my participant has taken is merely test-oriented, for the only goal that teachers set for students is performing well in the university entrance examination. This kind of learning

environment will probably lead students to feel nervous or disengaged. Further, teachers fail to take students' diversities and backgrounds into consideration, which will largely inhibit English acquisition. Taking my participant as an example, her teachers do not know that as an English learner, my participant is an outgoing and smart girl who has got much enthusiasm in learning English, especially practicing spoken English. Her motivation of English acquisition is not only passing exams but enjoying English literatures, dramas and movies as well. She speaks mandarin, her first language, most of the time on campus. When going back home, she speaks very fluent dialect with her parents and grandparents. My participant has never been abroad, which means that she does not have a chance to be involved in an English-speaking environment for a long time. Nobody in her family knows anything about English learning. Her parents and grandparents speak dialect much better than mandarin. As a result, my participant has to learn English by herself all the time. She has got few chances to talk to native speakers, and never takes any extra English curriculums after school.

From my perspective, if English teachers had known my participant's linguistic background and the community she lives in, they would have provided more specific learning strategies instead of merely using word list and grammar keynotes. For instance, my participant's dialect prevents her from learning correct English pronunciation. She is not able to pronounce fricative interdental and fricative alveolar in a correct way. To give an example, she sometimes unconsciously pronounced /ð/ as /z/, and mixes /θ/ with /s/. Besides, when referring to her community, I found that my participant is also lacking in opportunities to practice spoken English. So according to her current stage and her learning style, I consider that increasing interactions is an efficient way to both rectify pronunciation and improve chances of speaking English. And besides using standardized language tests to assess her language ability, the teacher

should pay more attention to my participant's classroom performance in order to have a comprehensive understanding about her learning condition, especially her productive abilities—speaking and writing.

Thus, the study of a non-native English speaker made me think deeply and carefully about this domain about identity and context as well as what students actually need in English acquisition. It also let me reinterpret this standard: when students are culturally and linguistically diversified, as an English teacher, I need to “know” my students at first, and look for culturally responsive teaching strategies in order to help them make progress.

Domain: Learning

Standard 6: 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. (TESOL, 2008)

In order to help ELLs improve language ability, an English teacher needs to take advantage of his or her comprehension of English language as well as the knowledge of students' distinct learning process; further, the teacher should also have an awareness that students' age is a critical factor that will largely affect their learning processes as well as methods and materials chosen by English teachers. Brown & Abeywickrama (2001) stated in the work *An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy* “the difference between children and adults lies primarily in the contrast between the child's spontaneous, peripheral attention to language forms and the adult's overt, focal awareness of and attention to those forms.” (pp. 87) Besides the attention to language forms, according to the difference in age, students' ability of comprehension and their development of intelligence are different from each other as well. By understanding how

students acquire a new language, the teacher will flexibly apply his or her knowledge of language and support students learning.

Generally speaking, in the first place, adults are more self-disciplined when learning English in class than children are. A large number of children from immigrant families sometimes feel confused about the reason that they need to learn English, since they use their first languages at home and in their communities. On the contrary, most of the adult learners have already set an ultimate goal in English learning, and they have already clarified their tasks in every stage of learning. Adults are usually fully aware of the fact that the purpose of learning English is to use English in communicating with others in different occasions, which will promote their motivation and perseverance in language acquisition. Secondly, while adult are able to pay attention to the lesson for a comparatively long period of time, most children easily distract their attention during the class. For example, it is inappropriate to let children sit in their seats for two hours and listen to a lecture. As a result, in order to attract children's attention, teachers need to use a variety of activities to support their teaching process. During each activity, it will be useful if the teacher is able to bring children's five senses into play. Brown & Abeywickrama (2001) contended in his work "sensory aids here and there help children to internalize concepts. The teacher should remember that nonverbal language is important because children will indeed attend very sensitively to the teacher's facial features, gestures, and touching." (pp. 89) Nevertheless, designing particular activities for children does not mean that adults do not need any class activities. Combining adult learners hands-on experiences and learning habits, teachers also need to provide them with enough opportunities to engage in suitable, high-demanding activities. Then, adult learners boast stronger comprehensive ability than children learners do. They are more able to understand and master abstract concepts such as

grammar rules and syntactic constructions. On the other side, it is not a good idea for teachers to explain abstract concepts to children learners, for their intellectual development has not reached the corresponding level.

In classes where students' age range are different I have observed, adult learners in ELC have high language proficiency. Except some minor mistakes and repetitions over pronunciation and grammar rules when they are practicing speaking English, this group of adult learners basically has few language barriers in both receptive and productive language. What's more, they are highly disciplined and give active cooperation to the instruction. When I turn my eyes on the class where students are five graders and six graders, I find that these children have got enthusiasm for their learning; yet, restricted by their age and language proficiency, they are not able to concentrate on learning for more than 20 minutes.

According to my experience, my target students during the practicum in this semester are a group of 11 year-old ELL children who have never been to school before. As a result, in my first **lesson plan about teaching four seasons in a year** (See Artifact E), in order to fulfill my content objective, I use colorful pictures, videos and models of four seasons and the cause of seasons. These additional materials bring celestial objects close to students, which largely support students' understanding about new concepts and difficult words. What's more, during the class, I invite students to stand up and to act how Earth revolves around the sun, and what characteristics does the Earth have. So students are able to have a direct and deep impression on what they have learned. When referring to language objectives, I take apart my wording from long, complicated sentence to short phrases, simple sentences, and Yes-No questions, which are both convenient for students to understand and increase class interactions. Then, to help students improve their pronunciation and spelling, I lead in reading aloud and ask students to follow each

sentence. When students confront new vocabularies, I will use phonemic hints to remind them of the correct pronunciation. This teaching experience reflects my understanding about teaching and learning domain, because I have the awareness that the students' different learning processes play an important role in the design of class activities and the use of teaching strategies. Through comparisons and contrasts, I have learned about how to draw on my English knowledge to match different needs of target students as well.

Domain: Content

Standard 7: 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. (TESOL, 2008)

From my point of view, this standard considers students' purpose and motivation to learn English. Students' motivation will substantially increase if they become aware that what they have learned can be put into practice in real social or academic situations. Therefore, I argue that the teacher should pass on an idea to students that English is acquired through communicating with different people, and the purpose of learning English is successfully using it in communication, which means communication and English language acquisition complement each other and cannot be separated in teaching process. Further, this standard reminds me of what I have learned about the positive effect of using authentic context in teaching. According to Nassaji & Fotos (2011), "Successful language instruction requires that learners have extensive exposure to communicative language use in authentic contexts." As an English teacher, I should

expose students to authentic contexts as many as possible based on what kind of content areas students hope to learn about.

Thinking back the classroom observations I have done in the course ELL Foundation, I went to a special **“ESL to go” English language acquisition program** (See Artifact F). I found that ESL to go program fits this standard and embodies the meaning of this standard comprehensively. This ESL Mobile School, located in a truck, is in the charge of the Tennessee Foreign Language Institute that was found in 1986. The students served by this mobile school are mainly adult refugee population. Most of them are Burmese, Iraqis and Kurdish (<http://eslto.org/our-story/>). Unlike children who can later receive education from regular schools, adult refugees have already been far beyond the suitable age for schooling. What’s more, these people arrived in the United States with very little or none understanding of English, which directly lead to unemployment and bad living condition in the United States. As time passed, they will probably confront challenges from lack of income and living pressure, and probably become new members of the bottom of American society, which will probably lead to discrimination.

Teachers of ESL to go program clearly understand that these students need to use English for finding jobs and daily communications. As a result, classes in mobile school are mainly divided into two stages, the literacy stage, which teaches basic survival English, and the intermediate stage, which helps students to deal with more complex issues such as getting a driver license or finding a job. (<http://eslto.org/our-story/>) I also found that the textbooks, learning materials, and informal assessments students use are all closely related to the real communicative situations. And the time students spend in practice spoken English occupies a large part of the entire course, because students have an urgent need to communicate with native

English speakers. Moreover, topics students discuss during the class are also relevant to daily lives (e.g. how to cook dish with special flavor; how to deal with issues in daily life). These distinguishing features make me think about the principle of content-based instruction. Freeman & Anderson (2011) said “in competency-based instruction, adults learn language skills by studying vital ‘life-coping’ or ‘survival’ skills, such as filling out job applications or using the telephone” (p. 132), which proves my understanding of this standard. Students are more willing to learn English when they found that English is of great use at present, and they have the ability to manage to implement what they have learning in related communicative situations.

Domain: 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. (TESOL, 2008)

In general, when relating to standard 8, I argue that as an English teacher, what I need to fulfill with regard to “community” is to build connections between the teaching community and the students’ learning community. As far as I know, a teacher is usually involved in two different teaching communities. The first community consists of the teacher himself or herself, colleagues, and the mentor. Within this community, teachers are able to share their previous teaching experiences, and learn teaching ideas and skills from each other. For instance, Spandel (2013) said in the book *Creating Writers, 6 Traits, Process, Workshop, and Literature*, “Talking about students’ writing with colleagues helped me clarify what I valued and also unveiled what really matters in writing and instruction.” (pp. 9) Then, teachers are able to learn a lot from their mentors as well by observing mentors’ class. From gestures, actions, to speeches appropriate for

students' level and explanations of academic words, mentors do modeling that support new English teachers in their future class. The second teaching community, from my perspective, is pertinent to factors outside the school: students' parents and the community where students live. I need to have an understanding about the linguistic and cultural background of my students before designing lessons and choose suitable activities for them. Whether students' parents speak English or not, whether students have got opportunities to practice English in their communities or not play an essential role in the teaching process.

Then, based on two teaching communities, I will go on giving a detailed explanation for the learning community my current students are involved in. In this semester, I work as a student teacher in McMurray Middle School to help 11-year-old children improve their English language ability. According to my class observation, one of the most distinct characteristics of these students is that they come from a variety of countries including Somali, Burundi, Ethiopia, Guatemala and Honduras. So the whole class can be regarded as a multilingual learning community. These students are newcomers to the United States, which means they have started learning for only a short time; and most of them receive 1.0 in their WIDA test. What's more, students are not literate in their first languages. Some students have not even got used to a regular English class, because they have no opportunities to go to school in their old countries. The situation of this class of students in McMurray corresponds to what Echevarria & Vogt & Short (2008) has mentioned, "All English learners in schools today are not alike. They enter U.S. schools with a wide range of language proficiencies. In addition to the limited English proficiency and the native languages among the students, we also find diversity in their educational backgrounds, expectations of schooling, socioeconomic status, age of arrival,

personal experiences while coming to and living in the United States, and parents' education levels and proficiency in English". (pp. 7)

Therefore, I keep thinking about how to bridge the classroom community with what I have learned from and prepared in the teaching community. I have designed my **lesson plan** about teaching an entering level non-fiction book "Hot and Cold" (See Artifact G) based on this consideration. In order to meet the special need of this particular group of students, I argue that it is indispensable to further adjust and modify teaching techniques and skills drawing from other teachers. For example, I used to learn an activity called "Inside-Outside Circle" by which students practice answering a variety kinds of questions. I also used to observe an ELL class where students are answering questions from a story and creating sentences. The purpose of using "Inside-Outside Circle" is appropriate to my students, which is "to promote practice with key content concepts and develop oral language." (Vogt & Echevarria, 2008, pp. 110) However, students in my class have not been able to use Inside-Outside Circle to answer higher order questions, because this demand is far beyond their English language proficiency. As a result, I need to ask students to practice how to create simple sentences or to answer alternative questions by using this activity. During the Inside-Outside Circle, students try making sentences according to new words they have just learned. After several turns, I will let students change their positions from inside-outside circle to a big circle. This time, students need to randomly choose one of classmates and ask him or her to create a complete sentence. As a result, I learned that according to students' variable language proficiency and performance during the class, an English teacher should be ready to modify or change lesson plans and activities in order to smoothly connect our teaching methods to the special learning community.

What's more, a teacher needs to pay attention to bridge the classroom community with students' communities outside of school as well. In my class, students are divided into groups according to their first languages. For example, three students speaking Arabic will be together in a group; three students speaking Spanish will be in another group. Although students need a large quantity of comprehensible input in English, at least they are allowed to have small discussions when confronting new concepts they are not able to understand, which, in my opinion, improve scaffolding among students and make the learning environment more comfortable for students. Besides, for students who have few opportunities to speak English outside school, it is important for the teacher to provide one-on-one teaching, which can be observed in my lesson plan as well: leading in reading, practicing vocabularies and comprehending short stories. The extra help students receive from their teacher is important to them especially when they are going to take standardized assessments. Thus, my experiences in the practicum prove the related domain that an English teacher should promote understanding about students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds and communities they are involved in, based on which, a teacher should systematically analyze different statistics they are able to get from students' performances and participations in order to adapt lesson plans and teaching skills at any time.

Bridging Theory and Practice

What Kind of Teacher I Want to Become in the Future

According to Carrasquillo & Kucer & Abrams (2004), the English language learner population in the United States becomes linguistically heterogeneous, among which, children whose parents are not English proficient account for a marked number of ELL population. These children, who are ESL learners, grow up in their own languages and cultural communities, and probably have got limited chances to make contact with English until they grow up to school age. Then, when taking large numbers of ESL learners into consideration, I argue that besides sharing similar challenges in English acquisition as ESL learners do (they are lacking in opportunities to put English into practice, which, will prevent them from communicating with English as native language peers), ESL learners feel more difficult to understand the purpose of learning English. Taking Chinese ESL learners as an example, most Chinese students start learning English as soon as they enter the elementary school, since English has already been high emphasized in China. English is a mandatory course from elementary school to senior high school and occupies a large part in college entrance examination, one of the most important exams for almost every Chinese student. Under this circumstance, Chinese students have been involved in examination oriented education system and feel perplexed about the goal of learning English, for in their mind, English is only a tool for passing examinations.

My future plan is to teach English literacy to middle school ELLs, whom at this age level, have very good memories and a strong thirst of new knowledge. Instead of only following what teachers have said in the elementary school, middle school students are about to try developing their own learning styles and critical thinking. What's more, students in this grade level often have a growing ability to learn more sophisticated things than before. When considering how to

make myself a qualified middle school English teacher, I will first think back on English teachers that I have met with in my hometown and their performance during the class. Most of them are very much like authoritarians. They are strict, highly responsible, and try their best to teach as much new knowledge as they can in limited class time. From my point of view, students who are trained in this kind of classroom atmosphere are able to develop strong concentration and a self-disciplined attitude towards their English learning, which is a necessary and beneficial learning habit. On the contrary, students rarely have chance to answer higher order questions or have discussions with either partners or group members during the class, which will probably makes students as negative learners, not positive participators.

Then, when I major in English Language Learners program in Peabody, the image of an English teacher has been adjusted. Through a variety of field trips, classroom observations and practicums, I realize that besides putting emphasis on the efficiency of English learning, English teachers really need to “know” each student in their class. Like Carrasquillo & Kucer & Abrams (2004) have mentioned, “upon entering school, English language learners may fall anywhere on a broad continuum of English language proficiency and English literacy development. Their language and literacy vary and can have a significant role and impact on the way these students adjust and succeed in an all-English curriculum.” (pp. 18) As a result, in order to bring out the best in students, I decide to put socialization and subjectification (Biesta & Stengel) in priority in my future class, which aims at integrating students into the big, English-speaking environment and letting them become masters of their own study. Although teaching skills for tests is inevitable, I will emphasize improving students’ ability to use what they learn in class in their daily lives. Correspondingly, the ultimate goal of English acquisition is to let students catch up with their native speaker peers both in academic learning and in communications. A qualified

English teacher pays attention to students' different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, closely follows students' different learning habits and behaviors in the classroom, and notices that students themselves have a strong awareness of their differences. Taking advantages of the diversity among students, the teacher should ingeniously integrate this feature to teaching strategies and class activities.

Challenges and Solutions in Teaching ELL Students

Based on what I have learned, observed and experienced from the ELL program and ELL classes, I have concluded two main particular challenges that an English teacher will probably confront in a real ELL classroom: firstly, how to help students improve basic knowledge of English—grammar and vocabulary; and secondly, how to confirm whether students have a good grasp of knowledge or not besides using regular assessments.

To deal with the first challenge, I need to argue that grammar and vocabulary are two essential components in English learning. According to Weaver (1996), “the study of grammar will help people become better users of the language, that is, more effective as listeners and speakers, and especially as readers and writers” (p. 8), which provides an explicit answer to the question: why it is important for students to learn grammar. And I think that grammar is even more crucial and necessary to ELL students than to native speakers, because ELL students need grammar as tools to analyze the structure of sentences, the purpose of which is both learning language itself and understanding the content carried by the language. Likewise, vocabulary acquisition shares the same importance as grammar does. Language minority students in the United States have got large difficulties in acquiring English vocabularies that are expected for middle and secondary school level. “It is easy to think that since many students are limited in their English vocabulary, they will struggle with reading in general.” (Herrera & Perez &

Escamilla, pp. 109) As a result, the issue of how to teach English vocabularies in an effective way and how to make sure that students are able to appropriately use vocabularies should receive more attention. Furthermore, it is worth considering why vocabulary acquisition is such an intractable challenge for so many second-language learners. (Snow & Kim, 2007)

Therefore, in order to help students get a better understanding of English grammar; one idea I learned from Weaver (1996) is teaching grammar in context. Instead of using sentences that are irrelevant to each other and asking students to finish a lot of grammar multiple choices, I agree that the teacher should “promote the acquisition and use of grammatical constructions through reading” (p. 26). And authentic reading materials will offer students an overall view of how grammatical points are correctly and appropriately used in articles. Another idea lays emphasis on involving grammar teaching to communication. According to the audio-lingual method mentioned by Freeman & Anderson (2011), “grammatical points are taught through examples and drills” (p. 43). By using grammatical points in creating dialogues and interacting with teachers and peers, students will have a direct and deep understanding about the practical use of grammar as well as become proficient in speaking part, which especially ELL students are lacking in.

Then, when referring to vocabulary acquisition, I argue that an English teacher should let students know both the meaning of a word, how to correctly and appropriately use the word, and the origin of the word. According to Kieffer & Lesaux (2010), a teacher should teach a limited number of high-utility words directly by using morphology teaching. The assistance of morphology, the study of shape, is a workable way. In linguistics, morphology is the study of the structure of words as combinations of smaller units of meaning within words: morphemes. (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2010) One of the biggest advantages of using morphology teaching is that

words under this strategy become well regulated, not scattered. For example, if I am going to teach the word “history”, I am able to help students expand their vocabularies by adding suffixes, “historic”, “historical”, “historically”, and prefixes, “prehistoric”. By taking this strategy, students are able to learn words in a logical way. And they can discover the inner relations among words. More importantly, since my target students are ELLs, I will let them become aware that not only the words but also morphemes have got meanings. For instance, “pre-” means “before, prior to, earlier”, and “-al” indicates a certain adjective, and “-ly” indicates a certain adverb. Further, teachers should certainly teach useful and frequent prefixes and roots as well (Kieffer & Lesaux, 2010), because it will be more possible for students to put into practice. Therefore, by using morphology strategy to teach high-utility words, students will not just “memorize” vocabularies, but dig into and finally “understand” vocabularies. And it is beneficial for middle school ELL students to come into contact with learning vocabularies through morphemes.

Moving to the second challenge that is related to how to make sure that students have truly understood and been able to utilize knowledge of English, I think that one way I am going to implement in my future English classroom is providing interactional and in-time feedback during and after teaching process. Although regular assessments are necessary for students, I argue that providing meaningful feedbacks based on assessments and learning process can be considered as an important assistance for teacher-student interactions. The teacher leads students to make self-evaluation on their participation in class and performance in every assessment, which will improve students’ ability of independent thinking and learning.

When looking back at lesson plans and mini-lessons I designed and led during different courses, I found that although I put much emphasis on students’ talk and peer interactions, I had

very few time to make conclusion of the lesson. Neither do I leave enough opportunities for students to either ask higher order questions about the content and language learning, or for myself to give feedbacks. These practice experiences remind me that feedback should be considered as one of the key links in teaching principles, for it tells students what knowledge they have already grasped and what they still need to put a lot of effort into. Moreover, teachers will get a better understanding about students' level of English language proficiency by observing students' reaction to feedbacks. Particularly, providing interactional feedback does good to students' grammar learning. Nassaji & Fotos (2011) have mentioned that interactional feedback is used to let learners pay attention to grammatical points in communicative contexts. And according to Nassaji (2007a), interactional feedback has got several types. In general, there are two categories of feedbacks that can be identified: reformulations and elicitations.

Comparing these two categories, I interpret that reformulation are feedbacks that directly point out students errors and make corrections; while elicitation is inclined to enlighten students' ability of self-correction. And whether these two categories of interactional feedbacks are effective and helpful or not depends on students' level of English proficiency. In my view, elicitation is more demanding than reformulation because students need to go over their prior knowledge, combine it with what they currently learn, and finally lead to self-correction. As a result, elicitation is appropriate for students who have already laid a solid foundation in English learning. On the contrary, for students who are still in either the emerging level or the developing level, it is better to use reformulation that can explicitly tell students where they need to make corrections and improvements. Therefore, in my future class, I will provide feedbacks to my students depending on their different English proficiency levels and their learning styles.

Important Takeaways from my Time at Vanderbilt in Terms of ELL Education

The first important takeaway I have given further thought to is the development of English language itself and the role students' first languages plays in English acquisition. As a future English teacher whose students are on their way to improve English proficiency as their second or foreign language, it is my responsibility to have a better understanding about English in order to map out corresponding teaching methods that can easily pass on knowledge to students and can be easily accepted by students. The course, Perspectives on English Language, leads me to the origin, the development, the integration and the diversity of English. According to Baugh & Cable (2012), the development and changes in English language cannot be separated from three great periods of European immigration: "from the settlement of Jamestown in 1607 to the end of colonial times; from the expansion of colonies to south and old northwest territory; and the period since Civil war." (pp 351, pp 352). The continuous influx of people into the United States brings a mixture of different languages. Through long-term integration, American English has gradually absorbed vocabularies and expressions from other languages such as French, Italian, Dutch and German. Mutually, some languages, especially oriental languages such as Chinese and Japanese that used to have few similarities with English also gradually absorb large numbers of loan words of English origin. For example, the Japanese word テーブル , which means "table", shares a very similar pronunciation (teburu) with the English word "table".

Based on what I have learned from the history of the development of American English, I argue that American English has experienced a continuously changing process. Therefore, I think that an English teacher can regard the study of English language as a initial breakthrough when teaching ELL students. In my future class, I am going to ask students to try looking for common points between English and their first languages, because in my opinion, these common points

will become bridges connecting ELL students to English in linguistics, culture and psychology. Students will realize that English is not a totally irrelevant, new language to them, but shares countless ties with their first languages.

The relation between students' first languages and English reminds me that students can benefit a lot from this relation to a large extent if they are aware of flexibly using it in English acquisition. To take Latino ELLs as a typical example, "one way to support the transfer of phonics between English and Spanish is to use a bilingual English/Spanish alphabet chart." (pp. 78) According to Herrera & Perez & Escamilla (2015), English letters and phonemes that share the same pronunciations and writing characters as students' native language, Spanish, are clearly listed on the two sides of an English/Spanish alphabet chart in order to help students find similarities between those elements. I argue that by making this kind of connections, students will feel easier when identifying phonetic elements, further, English vocabularies, and gain much confidence in learning English.

Further, I argue that the positive effect of first languages does not just limit in improving students' pronunciation. According to Herrera & Cabral & Murry (2013), "first language is a purposeful component of academic instruction" (pp. 132), which means that students' knowledge from their first language will serve as supporters that will be very helpful in learning English. This idea matches up Cummins' (1992) Dual Iceberg Representation of Bilingual Proficiency—"the interdependence or common underlying proficiency principle implies that experience with either language can promote development of the province underlying both languages, given adequate motivation and exposure to both either in school or in the wider environment." (pp. 83) It is not difficult to come to the conclusion that an ELL who has already mastered a certain word in his or her first language only needs to learn the "skin" or the "label"

of the word in English; while students who have no idea about this word in first language must have to start from learning its concept as well as the meaning in English before internalizing the new word. By underscoring students' different levels of first language proficiency, English teachers are able to design more targeted and tailored lesson plans in order to meet students' needs. Hopefully, in order to implement Cummins' idea, I will encourage students to make translations between their first language and English while learning English as a second language. Goodwin & Jimenez (2015) said, "Translating highlights strengths of bilingualism and requires students to do close reading as they move back and forth between and evolving translation and the text." (pp. 2) I argue that translating not only helps students comprehend English articles, but also works as a supporter that will help students discover details and inner meanings of the article.

The next important takeaway is related to how to find more support for students when learning English besides the help of teachers. As far as I know, English acquisition is a long-term and continuous process; during which, the time students spend in class is not enough. Therefore, if teachers are able to frequently communicate with parents and involve them into the learning process, students will benefit much more comparing with learning English only by themselves. As Delgado-Gaitan (1991) has mentioned, parental involvement activities that are held in a southern California school district with a large number of Latino students achieve remarkable success. By keeping close ties with school, parents get to know their children's current learning condition, and have an awareness of cooperating with English teachers.

Parents are children's first teachers, and they are able to play an important role in ELL students learning process if they have strong willingness to do so. Admittedly, English teachers should be responsible for their students' academic performance, however, students spend more

time after school in their communities and with their parents, which means parents will largely affect students' motivation and attitude of learning English. Delgado-Gaitan (1991) has mainly divided parental involvement into two categories: conventional involvement and nonconventional involvement. In general, conventional involvements contain teacher-parents conferences and school councils that are familiar with parents and students. Recalling my personal experiences, when I was in elementary school, a teacher usually held two teacher-parents conferences every semester. During each conference, the teacher would make a report on students' school records and concrete plans for the next period of learning. The rate of attendance is usually high; and parents have strong enthusiasm to know more about their children's performance in English class. However, teacher-parents conference does not provide enough time for interacting, neither do parents have opportunities to ask particular questions. In order to make up the deficiency revealing in teacher-parents conference, non-conventional involvements such as preschool program and migrant program achieve the purpose to differentiate parents based on students distinct needs. Moreover, during these programs, parents are able to choose topics they would like to discuss. After discussion, parents have got more chances to consult teachers and directors about questions and doubts related to students' English acquisition. (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991) Enlightened by these kind of activities, I argue that parents should not be eliminated from learning process. On the contrary, as an English teacher, it is my job to integrate parents with English acquisition and include them as an essential element of teaching plans, which leads to a positive result that parents and teachers are supplementary to each other, and both of them will do good to ELL students.

The last but not the least, I began to rethink about what my identity is in a classroom. To help students make great progress in English acquisition, and apply what they have learned to

practice, I argue that a teacher's identity in a classroom is more than only "a teacher". From my perspective, a teacher should first become an observer. In the future, my students are probably from many different cultural backgrounds and speaking different first languages. What's more, their English proficiency can also be different from each other. A teacher needs to closely follow his or her students' performance and actions in class. For instance, according to Igoa (1995), some immigrant students may be in a silent stage when they first experience a different learning environment. "In the silent stage, immigrant children may appear to be retiring, moody, fearful, even terrified. Yet their silence is not an indication that they are unwilling to socialize or cooperate." (pp. 38) A teacher as well as an observer should read and understand students' mood and the elements that influence students' mood in time, help students remove their negative moods and doubts, and involve them into English learning. Besides, students every action during a class usually reflects their learning attitude, a teacher should pay attention to these actions and think about corresponding measures. Then, a teacher is also a good listener. I agree with Denton's (2007) idea that "listening tells us how to communicate most effectively with students, and it gains us entry into the students' world so we can influence their learning." (pp. 72) Usually, during a teacher-student interaction, it is so easy for the teacher to occupy most of the time talking to students and offering a variety of suggestions to students. However, if students are able to express themselves, the teacher will probably find that students have got their own unique ideas towards learning beyond expectation. Just as Denton (2007) has mentioned, "listening lets us know the child" (pp. 72) and "listening helps students become better communicators", (pp. 76) which means, the more students talk, the more they reveal themselves. When teachers leave time to take notice of students' words, students will feel that they are respected by teachers; thus, take English learning and the attitude towards learning seriously.

Conclusion

During the two-year study in English Language Learners program in Peabody, I start from the study of language—linguistics, analyzing the features of English pronunciation, morphology and syntax. Next, I tried probing into the essence of this program— getting to know ELL students. Meanwhile, based on analyzing teaching strategies, I began to regard English learning process in a theoretical way; while courses related to reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary help me go into full detail and further specification of different aspects of teaching English. When recalling all of my courses, field trips and observations, I found that in short, what I have learned in this program teaches me to regard them as the main priority and think more and more about them. It is appropriate to use Kohl's (2014) Topsy-Turvies as the conclusion of my study in ELL program. "Topsy-turvies are illustrations that when turned 180 degrees display two completely different images. The concept of topsy-turviness provides a powerful metaphor that helps teachers transform their way of looking at themselves in the classroom." (pp. 150) The metaphor of Topsy-turvies reminds me of putting myself in students' position; considering their situations and their difficulties when learning English, and utilizing every possible resource that will do good to the development of their English acquisition. I argue that the essence of Topsy-turvy is that "how you think you are speaking and how students interpret your language are not always the same". (pp. 150) As a result, a teacher should continuously adjust his or her teaching strategies and methods in order to meet different needs of students and think what is on their minds. Based on teachers' help and encouragement, ELL students will maximize their potential, and finally achieve their ultimate goals in English acquisition.

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Appendix

Artifact A: Analysis of Teaching

In this paper, firstly, I am going to respectively analyze two iconic concepts that impact my understanding as a teacher most. Next, I will give an introduction about the preparation I have made for the observation, the class I have observed and the teacher I have interviewed. Then I will relate the observation to three dimensions I have learned during the class. The final part of my paper will be what a teacher I hope to become in the future based on my findings in both the observation and in iconic concepts.

Freire and His Two Views of Teaching

Freire's view of teaching consists mainly two parts: the critique of banking education, and the advocating of problem-posing education. Freire clearly mentions that the banking education stimulates the contradiction between teachers and students. As far as I understand, the concept of "banking" regards students as accounts for depositing knowledge, which is the same as what Freire says, "students are depositories and the teacher is the depositor". (P. Freire) During a class where banking education is implemented, knowledge is like a gift from teacher to the students. And the teacher controls the whole class, while the students have no choice but listen and accept knowledge from the teacher.

On the other side, the problem-posing method, largely different from the banking education, will not force students to memorize what the teacher recounts during the class. What's more, it treats students as the subjects but not objects as teacher's property. Students have the rights to participate in communication with the teacher, and are able to freely express their ideas. The most important thing is that students are "increasingly posed with problems relating to themselves in the world and with the world." (P. Freire) And they will feel challengeable when

trying to solve these problems, which will lead to new challenges and students' willingness to find the answers. So I argue that the problem-posing method, to a large extent, motivates students to continuously explore new knowledge by themselves, not by the pressure from the teacher.

Freire's view of teaching impacts my understanding about teacher-student relation. From Freire, I learned that he never advocates that the teacher should remain in a higher position than students' do, which means that the teacher as an authoritarian can rarely be considered as an effective teacher-student relationship, because in this relation, the teacher control the whole class for the most of time, and students are merely followers but not participants or investigators. Then, Freire's iconic conception is more close to "the teacher as emancipator", whose aim is to liberate students' restricted thoughts. I argue that Freire hopes to invoke students' own intelligence, and let them feel free to participate in class dialogues. His teaching view thinks highly of automatic learning rather than indoctrination. What's more, he focuses on the integration of teacher and students in class, and wants to turn students from negative listeners to active participators, and his purpose is to reach subjectification.

Noddings and Her View of Caring

Another iconic concept that influences my understanding as a teacher is Noddings. When referring to Noddings, the key word in her educational view is definitely "caring". Yet one feature that distinguishes Noddings' educational view from others' is that Noddings regards caring not as a feeling but as a kind of relation between teachers and students.

From the reading material, I learned that Noddings' view started from her thought experiment based on "a philosophical tool employed by both Plato and Socrates" (Biesta & Stengel). The thought experiment gives a clear explanation of her definition of caring, which

means that the view of caring is not only emerged from her family position as a mother, but her job as a middle school teacher. In other words, the “caring” contains dual positions from a female’s perspective. How does a mother treat her ten children with different characters? How does a teacher help her students who are certainly different from each other? These two questions lead to one of the core values of Noddings’ educational view: Noddings regards each child and each student as an individual rather than as a whole. Just like what she has mentioned, “neither mother nor teacher relate in the same way to each and every child in every circumstance in accord with rules.” (Biesta & Stengel)

Another important feature of Noddings’ view is that, different from general understanding about caring, she thinks that caring is both relational and continuous. As the author has said, “the continuity of relation and response between carer and cared for is also the defining feature of caring.” (Biesta & Stengel) There is a common understanding that caring is only what teacher does to students. However, according to Noddings, the relation of caring will not come into existence if students do not respond to teachers’ caring. This is quite different from what we have discussed about the “teaching relation”. If taking the videos about the teachers I watched during the class into consideration, I found that the caring is unilateral rather than with responses. One of the multiplicities of teaching relations mentions that a teacher as a carer can be considered someone who takes not only students’ academic level but also their lives into consideration. A carer teaches students both what to learn and how to learn, and then paves a path for students which will lead them to the success. This, however, has got a very apparent difference from Noddings’ educational view: It is the relation between the two, carer and cared for, the mutual recognition of caring that is definitive. (Biesta & Stengel)

I conclude that Noddings' educational view is somewhat female-oriented, for her ideas are based on both her life experiences as a mother and teaching experiences. What's more, according to my understanding, I think Noddings' view also regard students as subjects rather than objects, which is the same as Freire's, because her view of "caring" has got high demands on students who need to response the teachers' caring. I can only make a prediction that the relational caring means that students should at least develop their own method of learning in order to correspond to the teacher's caring.

Preparations for Classroom Observation

In this course, not only do I learn iconic concepts in teaching, which are theories, but also have got opportunities to observe whether these concepts can be put into practice in a certain classroom. Before I started my observation, I read "Classroom Observation in Teaching Practice". It reminds me of some ideas which I did not take into consideration when designing my protocols.

One thing I have learned is that it is better and more suitable for an observer to focus on only one or two aspects when observing a class. I still remember the invisible gorilla test we have done during the class. I paid full attention to how many times players passed the ball, and gave the correct answer, but I unconsciously missed the passing gorilla, which should have been very easy for me to observe. When I relate this test to classroom observation, I find that once I enter a classroom as an observer, there must be so many elements that will draw my limited attention. Usually, it is unable for an observer to take everything into consideration. Just like what the article has mentioned, "Normally you should focus on only one or two aspects of the lesson. You may suggest aspects of the class you would like to learn more about." Otherwise, the

observer will not manage to make any intensive studies of a class, because there are too many distractions.

Another thing that needs attention is that it is the observer's responsibility to list a procedure description during the class. Based on the article, "Field notes can provide a summary of lesson as a whole, or can be time-based." I argue that the class procedure will help the observer notice more elaborate things happening during the class. It will also become an assistant for the observer to prepare post interviews. For me, I plan to try a brief time-based procedure, where I will write down the time when class begins, intervals between each activities, and even the duration of silence. These notes will let me know whether the teacher has planned the class in an appropriate way, whether the teaching is efficient or not, and whether students have taken advantage of class time.

My Understanding About the Teacher Based on Three Dimensions

My classroom observation is done in Glenview Elementary School. I have interviewed Miss Heather Dunham, a young teacher who teaches reading and writing in a grade two ELL class. There are nearly 20 students in her class, and none of them speaks English as their first language. Half of them speak Spanish, and half of them speak Arabic. Through 80-minute reading and writing course observation, I found that students enjoy learning very much. Comparing with sitting in chairs, following the instruction, and reading every new words again and again, apparently, students prefer learning words in an active way. I argue that the teacher really knows her students at this age level, because she carefully designed a set of activities for students. Being involved in activities, students are constantly absorbing knowledge without being absent-minded. For the writing course, the most obvious teaching strategy I have observed is that the teacher taught writing by modeling. She told her story to students at first, allowed

students to ask any questions, and then she wrote on the write board sentence by sentence. I think it is a feasible way, because students can have a strong and direct impression on what to write and how to write. What's more, they also feel that they attend every step of the writing process.

After the observation, I collected and analyzed my data as well as field notes, which led me to the conclusion based on three teaching dimensions. Firstly, I argued that the teaching purpose that the teacher mainly focused on is qualification, which is about the content and language objectives and the transmission of content and language. During the two interviews, she mentioned several times about the goal of learning vocabularies and writing, which is letting students academically catch up with their native speaker peers. What's more, the ultimate goal of teaching is helping students do well during the coming important test in third grade, which is a big challenge to students. However, from the pre interview, the teacher told me: "It feels like teaching for the test. Nobody wants to teach for test." I noticed that the teacher herself is actually struggling in the teaching purposes. Hopefully, students are able to use what they have learned in practice, in their daily lives, or in their communities. However, both the teacher and the students are restricted by the test.

Next, the teacher puts much emphasis on students' cultural backgrounds, and notices that students have a strong awareness of the difference of their mother tongues. Taking advantages of students' first language, the teacher ingeniously integrates this feature to class activities, which I think can be regarded as socialization. But this kind of socialization cannot be considered as teaching purpose, but one of the teaching methods. In other word, the teacher uses socialization as a tool in order to reach the teaching purpose, qualification. This is a new discovery to me, because I used to think that qualification, socialization and subjectification go forward one by one. However, in this ELL class, socialization unexpectedly turns from teaching purpose to

teaching method.

Moreover, although qualification occupies most of the teaching goals in this ELL class, I still find some evidences supporting teaching as subjectification. I noticed that there are plenty of time for students to do self-learning. Some of them choose reading in pairs or in groups, some use computer to learn a short story, while the rest do guided reading with the teacher. So in conclusion, students are not always under the control of their teacher. What's more, I learned from the interview that students are not forced to learn, but very willing to learn. And I argue that it is the teacher who enlightens students' willingness to learn, which can be considered as subjectification, because students are learning for themselves, not for pleasing their teacher or their parents.

When considering the teaching intent, I think that definitely, the teacher regards her students as subjects rather than objects. She focuses on helping students do well in each learning step as well. I also noticed that although students are at a very young age, it is students themselves, not the teacher, to decide what kind of books they want to read. And the teacher mentioned in the interview: "It is good to see much creativity in kids' writing." Thus, I give the conclusion that what the teacher has done during the class can be considered as education rather than indoctrination, for indoctrination is a process of teaching the knowledge while restricting students' opportunity to make choice and ask questions, which I did not observed in this ELL class. What's more, this class, which is surrounded by relaxed learning atmosphere, generally matches Freire's problem-solving education where students are positive participators.

Last but not the least, I argue that the teacher-student relation is teacher as a carer. Although my presume is that qualification is closely related to teacher as an authoritarian, and the teacher will push students to learn as much as possible, I am proved to be wrong, because the teacher is

not an authoritarian but a very good carer. She knows every one of her students very much and encourages them a lot. Feeling the teacher's caring, these students also reply to the teacher by performing well in each activity, which is correspondent to Noddings' idea, caring has constructed a firm relation between the teacher and the students. Additionally, I make a prediction that the teacher-student relation will gradually develop from dominant "teacher as a carer" to a mixture of teacher as a carer and as an emancipator. I remembered the teacher said: "Let students decide what they want to learn, what language they want to use when telling a story about their culture." So students are encouraged to make their choices. And I argue that the reason I did not observed enough evidences of emancipator is because this relation is limited by students' age. Since they are only in grade two, and emancipator is more demanding and in a high level, so there is still a long way to go before reaching teacher as an emancipator.

What Kind of Teacher I Want to Become in the Future

When finishing the classroom observation, I examine myself and think about what kind of teacher I want to become. I started learning English as soon as I entered the elementary school. At that time, English has already been highly emphasized, especially in big cities in China. It has become a mandatory course, and occupies a large part in college entrance examination, one of the most important exams for almost every Chinese student. As a result, under this circumstance, I have been involved in examination oriented education system, because the teaching purpose in my country is to let students perform well during the exams and finally enter a national key university, which can be totally regarded as qualification dominant. What's more, most of the English teachers are just authoritarians. They are very strict, and try their best to teach as many new things as they can in limited class time. Students rarely have chance to ask questions during the class, and what they need to do is finish dozens of test papers filled with reading

comprehension, multiple choices and blank filling. I am not blaming teaching as qualification and teacher as authoritarian in my country, because the large population in China and the dearth of educational recourses causes this examination oriented education system. In order to stand out from tens of thousands of peers, the only thing students can do is to learn more and perform better in tests. I am not able to change the examination oriented tendency, however, what I can do is to let more students have the awareness that learning English is for themselves, not only for passing tests.

My future plan is to become an English teacher in Shanghai, China, and my target age level is grade 5 to grade 7 students, whom at this age level have strong creative ability, a very good memory, and a thirst of new knowledge. In one word, they are at the peak of their learning process. After learning iconic concepts and finishing classroom observation, I decide to put socialization and subjectification in priority in my future class. Although teaching skills for tests is inevitable, I will emphasize improving students' ability to use what they learn in class to their daily lives. Nowadays, the English speaking population in Shanghai, which is my hometown, is rapidly increasing. If students can use English in communicating with people from English speaking countries, they will soon understand the importance of English learning: English is not only a tool to enter a key college, but a good way to connect Chinese people to the world. What's more, my ultimate goal is to help students become their own master in English learning.

As for the teaching intent and teacher-students relation, I strongly argue that students should be regarded as subjects rather than objects. Like what Freire has mentioned in his view, "the teacher is no longer merely the one who teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach." (P. Freire) I believe that positive interactions between teacher and students will stimulate students' learning enthusiasm, for

teaching benefits teachers as well as students. What's more, I hope myself to be a carer as well as an emancipator in the future. Although Noddings thinks that the caring relation does not stand up if students do not reply teacher's caring, I hold the idea that it is the teacher's responsibility to care about each student in the class no matter they reply or not. I am also going to help students focus on what they want to learn by recommending books or other materials which match their interests, for students learn best when they find what they love to learn.

In conclusion, when I go back to China, I will certainly face the strong pressure from test oriented education system. But I still prepare myself to be a carer as well as an emancipator whose teaching purpose in socialization and objectification, because students need to know that learning does not equal to perform well in tests, but benefit their thoughts, future, and lives.

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Artifact B: Philosophy of Teaching Statement**Layout of the Paper**

In this paper, I am going to describe the current situation of immigrants and ELLs, and the law that have many effects on those immigrants. Next, after making a comparison between American and Chinese teaching method of English learning, I will give my definition about the

culturally responsive pedagogy. Then, I will have a discussion about what will happen during a class where there are students from different cultural backgrounds and reach the conclusion part of this paper.

The Current Situation of Immigrants and ELLs Through My Observation

The experiences in K&S world supermarket reminded me of American immigrants' current situation. Many immigrant customers prefer communicating with each other in their mother tongues rather than in English. So I found that although immigrants have already come and lived in the United States, it is still not difficult to identify them from the mainstream society, because their mother tongues and their habits still occupy most of their daily lives, which can be proved in what Garcia has mentioned in "Who are the Emergent Bilinguals", "the less frequent of using English leads to the rise level of linguistic segregation in the United States". (Garcia, 2010)

Next, aiming at the identity of English language learners, the ESL to go program closely meets students' needs, and provides a variety of convenience from the proceeded teaching materials, flexible timetables, and learning keynotes. For instance, the teacher emphasizes practicing spoken English in particular, which students need to frequently use in communication for survival. Since teachers from this program understand the fact that "adults' greater experience and knowledge of the world helps make the input they hear and read more comprehensible" (Krashen, 1985), so their teaching methods correspond to these special students.

Similarly, in the Cole Elementary School, during the English reading course, students get together only when some demanding reading materials needs to be explained in detail by teachers. Otherwise students are given plenty of time in autonomous learning. Not only are they able to choose what they like to read, but they can also self arrange reading time. Besides,

students have the opportunity to fully express their ideas, which reduces their fear of making mistakes. Just like what Krashen has mentioned in his input hypothesis, “the affective filter is down when the acquirers is not concerned with the possibility of failure in language acquisition.” (Krashen, 1985)

The Law That Influences ELLs

It is not difficult to find out evidences in American educational laws and regulations that support what I have observed during the investigations, especially the third field trip to elementary school. From the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to the re-authorization of BEA in 1994, laws and regulations put more and more emphasis on eliminating discriminations and searching for a better way to stimulate students’ English learning features based on various cultural backgrounds. It is also understandable that the No Child Left Behind, which was passed under President George W. Bush administration, leads to a large extent of controversial discussions and different opinions. “Shifting away from a bilingual approach to an English-only approach, NCLB has instituted an unfair and punitive testing regime that has been particularly hard on ELLs.” (De Jong, 2009) NCLB has been criticized, because it is less concerned about the diversity of students, and overstates the sameness in education. Thus, I found that, for those immigrants and ELLs, although they have to get used to living in a new country, they are receiving more and more reasonable ways of English learning, and more equitable treatments related to the field of education.

A comparison between English language teaching method in America and in China

Although embracing the same goal in English language education, which is helping students reach a high level of English proficiency, the teaching method between China and America is very different from each other from many aspects. Most importantly, American teaching method

thinks highly of individuality, while unity is always put in the priority in Chinese teaching method.

I learned that becoming a progressivist in teaching English is highly recommended among teachers. These teachers try to remember every student's name, to know their interests and cultural backgrounds in order to use in English teaching, for "every culture has subtle signs by which people evaluate what they say and do." (Igoa, 1995). Besides, involving parents to teaching instruction is also an important method, just as what Delgado Gaitan has mentioned, "schools have the responsibility to communicate to parents about their rights and maintain continual dialogue with families." (Delgado Gaitan, 1991). With the help of different cultures and parents' involvement, teacher can truly "know" students, and look for special ways to help students improve English learning. In general, I conclude that American teaching method emphasizes much on the diversity of students, which is also the core value of American culture and education.

On the other side, Chinese teaching method highly focuses on "unity". According to my personal experiences, once Chinese kids enter the school, they have the same identity as "student". They are asked to get used to the teaching method, and try best to catch up learning process and their classmates. The class discipline is also very strict. Students usually read English textbooks together in a loud and orderly voice; they take dictations at the beginning of class together, finish the same exercises, and check answers on class together. Teachers are not only serve as "teachers", but also student's parents at school. So I conclude that in China, students are regarded as a unity and under a set of comprehensive and strict instructions drawn up by schools.

Definition of culturally responsive pedagogy and description of an English class

Based on my findings in American and Chinese teaching methods, I came up with several questions. How to absorb what is good from different teaching methods, and create a new one? How to appropriately use this method in a class? How to try my best to help students? These questions lead me to my own definition of a culturally responsive pedagogy. A culturally responsive pedagogy is a set of student centered educational instructions that help students improve English according to their cultural background with the prerequisite that students have already reached a comparatively high English level.

From my perspective, although emphasizing on students' individuality is essential, whether the American teaching method can be fully implemented is based on one prerequisite: Students should reach a certain extent of English proficiency. As an English teacher, I understand that many students refuse to memorize "boring" things such as grammars. However, these knowledges are like solid foundations in learning English. So at the beginning, I will probably be more inclined to a strict teaching method, which sets rules in order to help students make large progress in short time.

When students reach a higher English level, it is the right time to gradually turn to American teaching method. I am going to integrate students' cultures in class to let them respect every culture by encouraging students to do presentations, write short stories, and read books about their customs and old countries. In order to reduce, even to eliminate discrimination in class, I will divide students into several groups; encourage students to collaborate with group members, and to close the gap. It is also a good choice to improve class interactions between teacher and students, and between students themselves, for "interaction is the fundamental fact of classroom pedagogy" (Allwright, 1984). Thus, students are able to exchange ideas and learn from each other, and the class will gradually move to student-centered. But all these activities

require, at least, passable English proficiency.

Conclusion: what makes me different from those who are not ELL professionals

Just like what Igoa has said, “A child who does not speak the language of the host country may experience varying degrees of culture shock, particularly if he or she is not well received” (Igoa, 1995). During the ELL foundation courses, the most frequent topic I have discussed with my classmates is “how to get to ‘know’ your students”. I reach the answer that “knowing” my students means understanding what students need most during a certain period of time, placing myself in students’ position to consider about their difficulties in learning English, and using every feasible educational resources to help students make improvement. Recalling what I have learned, these three characteristics are essential to an ELL professional, which can also be considered as the core in truly “knowing” students who are from diversified cultural backgrounds.

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Artifact C: Unit Plan-The Secret Garden, Descriptive Writing and a Story about the Power of the Heart, Assessment Paragraph

In this unit plan about the Secret Garden, I have designed various assessments to observe students' proficiency in descriptive writing and in the ability of comprehending the theme of this book. The assessments cover different aspects of students' language ability: reading, listening, speaking and writing. My central focus of assessment will be writing part, because from my point of view, descriptive writing is an important writing aspect students need to master when they are in secondary school. Further, another reason I lay emphasis in descriptive writing is that I hope my students will have an awareness that writing comes from daily life. As long as students master writing skills and carefully observe things around them, they will find out that they have got a lot of source materials to describe. Besides, the author of the Secret garden, France Hodgson Burnett, used descriptive writing in many scenes. As a result, students will have a deep understanding about descriptive writing by combing this book to a variety of relevant assessments.

Pre-Assessment

My pre-assessment will be asking students to write a 250-word short description in 25 minutes about a place you remember very clearly in your childhood. Except that the writing should be a descriptive writing, students are not going to comply with any extra conditions.

I use this activity as my pre-assessment because firstly, I hope to see students' proficiency

in descriptive writing before we start learning this unit. Through this assessment, I will probably know students' current writing level, and get to know students' writing style. For example: student A is able to write fluent sentences; but he/she is still struggling in choosing appropriate words, for there are so many repeated words in the description. Or student B has some difficulty in organizing the writing, for the beginning part or the ending part in his/her writing is not clearly enough. From my perspective, pre-assessment will show how much prior knowledge of descriptive writing students have already learned and what kind of strategies in writing they have mastered. What's more, through this descriptive writing, I am able to observe more about how close "the writing seems to come to what it is trying to do" (Gere & Christenbury & Sassi, p. 47). Some of the students may have the awareness of using a certain writing skill, but they have little idea about how to put them into real writing. Therefore, as a teacher, I need to modify my lesson plans based on students' performance in pre-assessment. Secondly, the time limit I have set for this descriptive writing is 25 minutes. The reason I set a time limit for students is because I hope students will get used to standardized assessment in which they must "draft without preparation and reflection, and edit without real revision." (Gere & Christenbury & Sassi, p. 10).

Formative Assessment

When considering the formative assessment, I plan to let students finish two Word Clusters, which is also the assignment for Day 8. I choose word cluster as my formative assessment for several reasons. Firstly, according to Gere & Christenbury & Sassi (2005), formative assessment "occurs during writing process and it provides feedback that can be used in further writing." (p. 90) In my teaching process, Day 8 is in the middle of this unit plan, and students are again exploring word choices. The learning of words is very important to writing acquisition and joins previous lessons and the following lessons together, for the next two writing skills students will

learn are creating dialogues and digging into inner voices, which moves from words to sentences.

Secondly, by using word cluster, I am able to observe whether students are able to correctly identify nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs or not. The judgment of part of speech of words will influence the use of words in students' descriptive writing. For example, the word "orderly" is a tricky word when considering its part of speech, because it contains "-ly", which is a feature of adverb; but "orderly" is an adjective. If students put words such as "orderly" into a wrong category, they will probably use it in a wrong way.

Thirdly, the word cluster can also embody students' own understanding of what "good words" are. For instance, if a student fills his or her word cluster by words such as "whisper", this student should realize why the author use "whisper" instead of "talk in a low voice".

Summative/Culminating Assessment

When moving to summative assessment, I plan to let my students write the next scene for this book, using descriptive writing to show how a child has become strong-willed and felt "the power of the heart". Different from the pre-assessment, "the next scene" writing should be done during the class. As Gere & Christenbury & Sassi (2005) has mentioned in *Writing on Demand*, "insufficient time is the enemy of good writing, forcing students to draft without preparation and reflection and to edit without real revision." (p. 10) I argue that students need to get used to writing in a time limit, and it is the teacher's responsibility to improve students' ability in time-limit writing.

Next, I add requirements to this assessment. Students should use writing strategies they have learned during the whole unit, for instance, creating dialogues, writing inner voice, using correct transitions, using rhetorical devices etc. Thus, I am able to observe whether students have really mastered these strategies.

Moreover, writing “the next scene” can also assess students’ comprehension to the theme of this book. When analyzing characters and creating scenes, students need to consider throughout the whole book in order to make their descriptive writings both exquisite and logical.

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Artifact D: Complete Case Study of a Non-Native English Speaker

My participant, Alice (her English name), is now in her fourth year as an undergraduate in a university located close to her hometown in southeast of China. She has already celebrated her 22nd birthday. And she has been an English language learner for about 9 years since she was a junior high school student. Alice is an outgoing and smart girl who is always willing to get along with her classmates and friends, and always ready to answer questions from professors. She is also curious and interested in learning new things under the guidance of professors.

Alice chooses English Language and Literature as her major in the university, because she has got great enthusiasm in learning English, especially oral English. Her favorite course in the university is interpretation. And she is skilled in intensive reading course. With professors’ help, she strictly follows the rules of an academic writing in English, and makes much progress.

Alice speaks mandarin, her first language, most of the time on campus; she speaks both English and mandarin when taking an English course. When going back home, she speaks very fluent dialect, talking about daily routines with her parents and grandparents. However,

she never uses dialect except at home for fear that her dialect would be regarded as unfashionable, because in her opinion, speaking dialect outside is both outdated and shameful. Alice has never been abroad, which means that she does not have a chance to be involved in an English-speaking environment for a long time. Nobody in her family knows anything about English learning. Her parents and grandparents even speak dialect much better than mandarin. As a result, Alice has to learn English by herself all the time. She has got few chances to talk to native speakers, and she never takes any extra English curriculums after school.

On campus, Alice usually practices spoken English with her classmates before midterm and final oral examinations. They use English to make long dialogues, and choose topics to prepare 2-minute short speeches. During rest of the time, she learns English through every week assignments, English novels, and English dramas. She sometimes imitates the speaking manners of characters in order to improve her tone and pronunciation in English. Besides, she keeps a small notebook to collect new words and phrases when reading English novels.

Alice used to describe to me a typical English lesson in her senior high school. She told me that instead of spoken English, teachers put much emphasis on grammar and vocabulary expansion. They are firstly asked to preview the text and new words, and the teacher will ask students some questions about the text. After that, the teacher will show them the word's meaning and usage, and sometimes ask students to do some exercises, like using these new words to fill in the blanks or making some sentences according to given situations. Then, every student received a piece of teaching material that contained a concise summary of grammar keynote. So the rest time of a class would be divided into two parts: learning an article from textbook, and one grammar keynote from teaching material. The reason why

teachers in China care so much about grammar and vocabulary is that these two parts take over a large proportion in the English exam of college entrance examination. Additionally, according to teachers in China, the precondition of learning English well is to use grammar smoothly and to gain new words as many as students can. As a result, a lot of Chinese students, including Alice, have got a large amount of vocabulary and a rigid understanding about grammar, but fail to practice spoken English before entering the university.

In her opinion, Alice used to think that studying English is just for college entrance examination. But after entering the university, she gradually found interest in learning English. She hopes to know more about literatures and customs of English speaking countries. Besides, talking with native speakers, in her view, is full of excitement. Since she is now a senior student in the university, Alice is busy preparing graduation thesis about English literature. She has got much interest in this topic, and wants to express her own unique perspective on it. She also notices that her English learning and her performance in each English course will largely influence her job application in the future, because after graduation, Alice wants to become a member of a foreign funding enterprise. The career is closely related to English, and puts much weight on spoken English.

Analysis of Use of Phonetics and Phonology

To test my participant's use of phonetics and phonology in English, firstly, I chose a short paragraph from VOA special English, the making of a nation program. This paragraph contains several words that are not frequently used in daily communication, such as names of nations and famous people. Then I provided a set of pictures for her to do narrative telling. The purpose for choosing both a paragraph and a set of pictures is that I hope to collect a complete data of my participant's pronunciation when she is reading something and telling a

story.

My participant did a very good job in dealing with tones of voice when reading the paragraph and doing narrative telling. Her stress accent in each word was totally right, and she tried her best to avoid a flat and plain tone. Her pronunciation of most of the words was correct, and her reading speed was neither too fast nor too slow, which was very easy for listeners to catch what she had read about. What's more, she had no trouble in distinguishing pairs of voiceless and voiced consonants such as /p/ and /b/, /k/ and /g/, /t/ and /d/. And the pronunciation of nasals /m/, /n/, and /ŋ/ was also very well.

Her good performance was closely related to the course she took in the university. My participant told me that she took the English pronunciation course once a week. The teacher brought recordings of famous English speeches to class and let students imitate and read after the speeches in order to improve pronunciation. The teacher also asked students to find a partner. During every course, there would be 10 to 15 minutes for free practice. My participant and her partner practiced in turns what they had just learned from teacher. When a student was reading a passage or pronunciation consonants and vowels, the other's job was to listen carefully and pointed out partner's errors. In her view, comparing with her pronunciation in senior high school, my participant really made a large improvement.

However, when I listened to the recording, I also found several shortcomings in the pronunciation. Firstly, I noticed that my participant was not able to pronounce fricative interdental and fricative alveolar in a correct way. For example, she sometimes unconsciously pronounced /ð/ as /z/, and mixes /θ/ with /s/. As a result, when she tried speaking the word "theory" and "the", most of the time she would pronounce like "seory" and "ze". The reason that my participant Alice could not correctly pronounce /ð/ and /θ/ was that in mandarin

Chinese, there was no consonant like /ð/ and /θ/, and the closest pronunciation to which was /z/ and /s/. Many Chinese English language learners, including my participant, felt uneasy when they were forced to place their tongues between teeth in order to pronounce these two consonants. So they found a more comfortable way to replace /ð/ and /θ/.

Another error of pronunciation she made in the recording was that my participant was used to eliminating the consonant /r/. For instance, she eliminated /r/ from the word “world”. Therefore, “world” sounded like “wold” in her recording. Besides, my participant added very strong /ə/s in some words whose ending were bilabial stops. She put unnecessary /ə/s at the end of the words like “Europe”/ˈjʊərəp(ə)/ and “explode”/ɪkˈsplod(ə)/. Although the /r/ was very common in mandarin, my participant used a kind of southern dialect, Ningbo dialect, which contained almost no /r/. (Ningbo is a vice provincial city in Zhejiang province, southeast of China.) It is not difficult to explain why she feels difficult in pronouncing the consonant /r/ in words and sentences. The most apparent feature of pronounce of Ningbo dialect was stiff. So a common saying about Ningbo dialect could be paraphrased like “There is no difference when Ningbo people are talking or quarreling”. According to the research, the reason that Ningbo dialect is very stiff is because it contains no retroflex consonant, preserves the checked tone /-p̌/, /-ť/, /-ǩ/ that existed in ancient Chinese, and has very strong fluctuation in tones and intonations. Since my participant spoke very good local dialect at home from childhood, the dialect strongly effected her pronunciation in English. Although she has no trouble to pronounce /p/ that is located at the beginning of a word, she feels more difficult to deal with /p/, when the /p/ is at the end of a word, because she pretended the voiceless bilabial /p/ as one of the checked tones /-p̌/.

Additionally, I noticed that my participant made these errors in phonology more

frequently in doing narrative telling than in reading a paragraph, because she had very little time to consider pronunciation in narrative telling. Since narrative telling was a more demanding job than reading a paragraph, my participant put a large amount of time in organizing the whole layout of the story, the choice of correct words and the use of each sentence. As a result, the correct way of pronunciation was often ignored, which proved that my participant has not grasped a skilled way of pronunciation in English yet.

Analysis of Use of Morphology

I mainly prepared two materials for my participant. The “Frog Where Are You” is a longer story, and another set of six pictures I found in “Vater und Sohn”, drawn by E.O.Plauen, is comparatively shorter. I asked my participant to make preparations and to describe the shorter one by typing on the computer. Then I asked her to write down the whole story of the longer one on a piece of paper. I considered that whether assisted by computer or not would have a large impact on the performance of my participant.

Through two different samples, I found that my participant has got a strong awareness in choosing vocabularies. Different from the sample I had read about during the linguistic course, my participant did not frequently repeat simple conjunctions and determiners like “the”, “then”, “and”. Instead, she is able to use both bound and free morpheme without many errors. For example, she can easily use words like “noiseless” (noise+less), “dishonest” (dis+honest), and “unfortunately” (un+fortunate+ly) without spending a long time wondering what kind of prefixes or suffixes should be plus on the free morphemes. But she also has got a habit of choosing words that are seldom used in English speaking and writing, like “noiselessly” and “terrifically”. Whether her habit will have a positive effect on her English learning or not needs more data to prove. What’s more, she even has a consciousness of

alternating simple and complex words in one narrative telling and writing. She tries to avoid using too many “I”s or personal pronouns in the beginning of each sentence, from which I argued that my participant has realized the diversity of using words.

On the other hand, since I have got the writing sample of both typing version and handwriting version, I noticed that my participant made several mistakes in spelling, which is not a problem if she typed her writing on the computer. A typical example is that she sometimes forgets to plus a double “d” in words like “suddenly” (sudenly). Since the computer will automatically correct the spelling mistakes, my participant uses the same word without any mistakes in her typing version. I believe that she should have no trouble in spelling these words. Because using computer will truly degrade the spelling ability of an English language learner, my participant becomes unclear in the spelling of “suddenly”. Besides, it seems that she wrongly uses uppercases, which will also be corrected by computer. For instance, in the story “Frog where are you”, she used “Puppy” instead of “puppy” in the whole writing version. I guess she mistook the word “puppy” as the name of a dog. Through these two negative examples, I found that to some extent, using computer too often would, to a certain extent, weaken the mind and the memory.

Finally, some errors are special to narrative telling, but can hardly be found in writing version. My participant is able to do well in unifying tenses in the whole writing version. She used very strict form of past tense, because she used to recite hundreds of irregular past tense of verbs when she was in the junior high school. She totally understands how to use “-ed”s, and will never mingle past tense with other forms of tense. However, my participant failed to pay attention to tenses when she was telling the same story. It is very common for her to use past tense in the first sentence, and then move to present tense. For example, she said: “Then

he **broke** the mirror accidentally. The boy **is** very scared immediately.” I asked my participant whether she noticed errors in tense she had made. Then I received the answer that my participant had no idea what kind of tense she used when she was doing narrative telling. She even did not care about the use of tense, for she was struggling what she had to say in the next sentence, and how to express her idea clearly. So my suggestion is that my participant does gain complete understanding of tense in English. Yet, lacking in practice leads her to errors in speaking part. As a result, she needs more frequent practices, and should particularly emphasize on the correct use of tense in speaking.

Analysis of Use of Syntax

Up to now, my participant has done three narrative writings in all: two of them are narrative writings that has mentioned before; the other one is e-mail writing. I let my participant to read an ordinary e-mail at first, and then asked her to write a reply according to what she has just read. Besides, she also has done story telling. Through different samples, I analyzed her writing habits, using of syntax, and the ability of organizing sentences and the whole passage in both written and oral English.

In all of the samples, my participant managed to use the words that served as symbols of sequence and connection in sentences. For example, she wrote: “He shouted towards the hole: ‘Frog! Frog! Are you there?’ But an ugly mouse came out instead. So Tony turned to a tree hole.” I can see that my participant is just right to use “then”, “so”, “but”, and “finally”, in order to give the reader clear signs of what she is going to write in the next part. My participant realized that connection words play an important roll in English writing, which can sort the order as well as the logic of sentences. Since I have asked her to tell me about her writing in first language in senior high school, I made the conclusion that her clear

understanding of connection words in English is due to frequent L1 writing.

Writing in schools in China is different from that in the United States. Each passage has got a set form in advance. According to my participant's and my experiences, students need to strictly follow the form. A brief beginning should be put forward at first, and followed by a clear opinion sentence at the end of the first paragraph. The second part usually contains three to four detailed reasons in order to support the writer's opinion. And the logic among each reason should be clear enough to let readers understand. The last part is conclusion, which can either paraphrase the opinion or write deeper thoughts with limited words. This is the way in which my participant did Chinese writing during senior high school. Since she had to make her writing correspond to teacher's demands, my participant developed a strong sense of using connection words in writing, and brought this habit to English writing. Additionally, I found that the use of connection words is slightly more in oral part than in written part, which can be explained by the fact that my participant needs time to organize sentences. So she used connection words to leave much time for her in order to prepare the next sentence.

Next, my participant is also good at using complicated subordinate clauses in writings. In her two narrative writing samples, I can easily find clauses with no grammar errors in them, like "After clearing away the entire mirror, he began to draw his father's picture on the white wall" and "They surprisingly found that the frog was together with his whole family." Therefore, she completely understands the rules of subordinate clauses and put these rules into practice, because she used to do much training on subordinate clauses in an English class.

In a typical English class in China, learning subordinate clauses is regarded as one of

the most important parts of English learning, for whether a student can use complicated sentences in writing and speaking or not is largely dependent on whether he or she is able to understand a variety of subordinate clauses. My participant used to spend a long period of time in dealing with attributive clauses, and she tried to memorize every rule. For example, she remembered clearly that the relative pronouns, “which” and “that”, are used to replace antecedents that are nouns and pronouns. For example, “A prosperity which/that had never been expected before appeared in this small town.” Through everyday training, my participant firmly understands the knowledge of subordinate clauses, and can easily put them into writing samples. In oral sample, however, my participant spoke several incomplete subordinate sentences. Sometimes, she repeated the subordinate part twice, and forgot to go on with the main clauses. My understanding to this phenomenon is that it is easier for English language learners to write a subordinate clause correctly than to speak it, because writers are able to revise and seek for a better way of expression. But they have got very little time considering the integrity of a complicated sentence when they are doing narrative telling.

Additionally, a special error, which is not recognized by the writer, appears in my participant’s narrative writing. When she wrote down every sentence, she has no awareness of considering whether they are ambiguous or not. For instance, in narrative writing of “Frog where are you”, my participant wrote: “Tony and his dog Puppy were looking at their little, cute frog. Tony’s father brought it back as a gift for *his* birthday.” In the sentence, I found a typical example of ambiguity. The word “his” will cause confusion in readers. “His” can be understood as either “Tony’s” or “Tony’s father’s”, although with the help of the context, I am able to get the real meaning of this sentence.

To answer the question why my participant did not realize that the sentence is

ambiguous, I argue that before considering the ambiguity of a sentence, she needs to think about the language (English) she used in writing at first. “If students can learn content material in their native language while simultaneously learning English, they will transfer their content learning from their native language to their second language-English.”

(Rodolph Troike, 1981) To native speakers, they do not have to worry about whether they understand English or not, the only thing they need to do is to understand the content material. However, to many ELLs, not only do they have to consider the content, but they must understand the language at first as well. Similarly, before considering the content and the ambiguity of narrative writing, my participant takes into account whether each sentence is grammatically correct or not at first. As a result, she is unable to recognize the ambiguous sentence, which is comparatively demanding for an ELL to think over.

Analysis of Use of Semantics and Pragmatics

From the view of context, I try making analysis based on the use of semantics and pragmatics in my participant’s writing and speaking English. Whether my participant did will in the use of semantics and pragmatics, or followed the Grice’s maxims or not in the use of pragmatics can be evaluated from her email writing, dialogues between my participant and me, and her narrative writings and telling.

“Lexical semantics deals with the meanings of words and other lexical expressions, including the meaning relationships among them. In addition to lexical expressions, phrasal expressions carry meaning. Compositional semantics is concerned with phrasal meanings and how phrasal meanings are assembled.” (Language Files 6.1, pp.241, 2011) In accordance with the definition of lexical and compositional semantics, I scanned the samples, and found that my participant gains the ability of using words appropriately in the context. For example,

in narrative writing “Frog, where are you”, she used the phrase “flee away” to describe the frog, and “lean on the window” to describe the action of the boy.

Yet, I noticed a special error that contained in another narrative writing. Although my participant is skilled in choosing correct words and phrases, she did not pay much attention to the collocation of sentence pattern, which can be regarded as a slip in compositional semantics. In the narrative writing, her original idea was to write the sentence “He was too happy, and he forgot everything.” In order to write the sentence in a concise way, she chose to use the sentence pattern “too...to...” But her final sentence became “He was too happy to forget everything”, which was completely opposite to the meaning of her original idea.

Aiming at her error, I argued that some expressions in English are really tricky to English language learners. Although Chinese students put much time in memorizing sentence expressions, they still have got much difficulty, because some patterns of sentences are not existed in Chinese. Besides the “too...to...” expression, sentence patterns, such as, “Not until...” are also quite challenging to Chinese students, because Chinese students seldom use inverted sentences to express their ideas.

For pragmatics, “Grice argued that in order to prevent meaningless discourse, there are a number of conversational rules, or maxims, that regulate conversation and enforce compliance with the Cooperative Principle.” (Language Files 7.2, pp.275, 2011) In the narrative telling and in our short dialogues, I noticed that my participant closely followed the Grice’s maxims, although she has probably never heard about them. Her every word and sentence stuck to the topic and encircled the theme of the picture. She made a good and detailed description about the picture in a clear sequence without too many redundant expressions, which fit the demand of the maxim of quantity and the maxim of quality. Here is

a short part of our following dialogue focusing on the narrative telling she has just done:

INV: So what will happen next?

LEC: The father is angry.

LEC: He will beat the boy.

LEC: Or perhaps, he thought his son's idea is good.

LEC: Maybe he thinks his son very smart, just too naughty.

INV: What do you think of the boy?

LEC: A clever and cre [//] creative boy.

INV: Yes. And a good painter, right?

LEC: Yeah! Who else can draw father picture like his!

From the dialogue between my participant and me, I noticed that she completely understood what I have asked her, and gave me several reasonable and appropriate replies, which proved that the utterances were all felicitous.

Yet, a deficiency of the maxim of relation can be found in the email writing. I asked my participant to write an email to excuse herself from a birthday party invitation from one of her friends. In the email, my participant explained the reason that she could not take part in the birthday party because she needed to visit her grandpa. I argued that she wrote too much about the situation of her grandpa. Since the main idea of this email is asking for a leave from friend's birthday party, what my participant should do is telling her friend that she will not be able to come. It is appropriate to add some sentences to explain the reason, but not too many. "The maxim of relevance has a central role in maintaining the organization of conversation by preventing random topic shifts. And people are expected to make contributions that pertain to the subject of the conversation." (Language Files 7.2, pp.277, 2011) For example,

she wrote that "...and bring my grandpa some of his favorite fruits." Towards my participant's email writing, I argued that her original intention was trying to explain the reason as detailed as possible. But this sentence is still considered as disobeying the maxim of relevance, for my participant came too meticulous about what she is going to do next, which is irrelevant to the main idea of this email.

My participant's current stage of second language acquisition

Based on the data I have collected and what I have observed, it is obvious that a gap exists between different parts of my participant's English acquisition. Because of her previous English learning experiences, it will not be accurate enough to analysis my participant's current stage if I normally divide her second language acquisition into the input and the output of language. As a result, according to her general performance in interviews and her writings for the whole semester, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL), and the Tennessee English Proficiency Levels, Alice's written English has already reached the level of advanced, and she is now on her way to the next level: proficient. On the other side, her spoken English is still struggling in the level of intermediate, and it seems that making progress in speaking part is not so smoothly as that in other parts of English learning.

In the field of linguistic complexity, Alice has got few troubles in recognizing and using correct grammatical structures in her written works. Like what ACTFL has displaced, as an acquirer in advanced level, Alice is able to "narrate and describe in the major time of past, present, and future, using paraphrasing and elaboration to provide clarity." (ACTFL) Her narrative writings embody a high stage of the development of grammatical morphemes (Lightbrown & Spada, 2013). And she has managed to do well in using plural forms and different tenses. For example, in the sentence "After clearing away the entire mirror, he began to

draw his father's picture on the white wall within the area where the mirror was", the expression "after clearing away" tells me the previous action of a person, and "began to draw" shows the next step that a person is going to do. And the "-ed" form tells me that all things happened in the past. What's more, the whole sentence complies with the correct clause form, which means that my participant has got a consolidate understanding about grammar structure and the uses of subordinate clauses.

However, during the interview, I unexpectedly found that my participant made a certain amount of errors in wrongly using the tense. She unconsciously mixed both the present and the past in one context. For example, in the transcript interview line 143, "I remember once we did interpretation from Chinese to English about a dialogue from a Chinese ancient drama. People speak too fast. I could not remember." There is a large gap between her writing and her performance in interview in the area of using tense. Moreover, I also found that my participant couldn't proficiently use diversified sentence structures in her speaking part. A typical example can be found in the transcript interview, line 15. When my participant was expressing the reason why she likes group work, she only used simplex sentence pattern "I can..." Besides, in the sentence "I mean...the team is very...I can make more friends", she is not able to organize a complete sentence to express her meaning. According to the ACTFL levels, my participant is able to "recombine learned material in order to express personal meaning", and some of errors made in speaking part can hardly be found in her narrative writings, I conclude that she is in the intermediate level of speaking.

When I go on analyzing her performance through the field of vocabulary usage, I notice that my participant can consciously use affixes and roots, such as "-less", "re-", in order to make more complicated vocabularies. Besides, I also pay much attention on her use of possessive

determiners. In her narrative writings and the e-mail writing, I can hardly find any errors about possessive determiners, which shows that her fluent use of possessive determiners has already reached the fourth stage mentioned by Lightbrown and Spada, “error-free use of ‘his’ and ‘her’ in all contexts including natural gender and body parts”. (Lightbrown & Spada, 2013)

On the contrary, my participant made more errors on vocabulary usage in interviews than in writing parts. According to the interview transcript, one of her most obvious shortcomings is that she is not able to smoothly speak out some vocabularies that she wanted to use during the conversation. Moreover, she has got difficulties in using standard expression of some phrases as well. For instance, in transcript line 152, my participant said “It’s...it’s about...a look from asce...asce...I forgot this word.” Actually, she was describing her graduation thesis to me, and she wanted to say the word “asceticism”. But she failed to say the word in a correct way, because the word “asceticism” is not a commonly used word to her. And in transcript line 11, “I can talk...speak to national...national English...er...national English speaker”, my participant mistakenly said “national English speaker” instead of “native speaker”, which proved that she is still not familiar with this phrase, at least in speaking part.

Then, considering about her performance in language control, I found that my participant has done a good job related to question formation. She has got very few obstacles in creating general questions and special interrogative sentences. According to the stages of questions, my participant has been beyond the stage 5, and has made progress to stage 6. She is now able to handle most of “the complex questions and embedded questions.” (Lightbrown & Spada, 2013) Besides, her ability of using negation form in sentences is also maintaining in a comparatively proficient level, stage 4. As an English acquirer, she is no longer struggling whether she puts the auxiliary verb “do” in the right place and right form in negation. Remarkably, using negation

form is the only part where I can find very little difference between her spoken and written English.

In conclusion, after analyzing both the writing samples and oral samples, I found that my participant's ability of written English is much better than her ability of oral English from several aspects. Although both writing and speaking are related to the output of English, my participant practiced a lot in writing in classes since she started learning English. However, not until entering the university did she begin to receive regular and standard oral English practice, which can explain that she has got more difficulties in oral English.

An SLA theoretical framework that informs my analysis

Although it is widely known that Chinese students are all involved in very rigid instructions when learning English, one feature that differs my participant from other English learners from China is that she never let herself be limited and bounded in rigid instructions, which means that my participant boasts a very strong ability of self-learning. So after scanning theoretical frameworks about second language acquisition, I found that at first, my participant's acquisition of English is corresponding to communicative competence, because the communicative competence by Hymes is the only one among four theories that emphasizes on the importance of grammar learning. But the difference is that "communicative competence describes the ability not only to apply the rules of grammar correctly but to use utterances appropriately." (Kitao, 1993) The theory of communicative competence cannot be considered as a fully implemented theory in English classes in China, because "students learning an foreign language usually do so within the context of their own native culture, often have little opportunity to interact with members of the language community who speak the foreign language natively." (Troike, 2008)

However, my participant's English acquisition is more related to some elements brought

forward in the Input Hypothesis than in communicative competence. In five hypotheses which support the input hypothesis, I noticed that my participant has memorized a large number of vocabularies not only during classes, but also by self-collecting after classes. She told me that she has been used to taking notes about new words and phrases when watching English dramas and reading English novels. As Krashen has mentioned in the theory, “our ability to produce utterances in another language comes from our acquired competence, from our subconscious knowledge.” (Krashen, 1985) Before starting standard oral English courses in the university, my participant has already made plenty of preparations that we call them “subconscious knowledge”. Under the strict rules in learning English during senior high school, the vocabularies and sentence expressions have been stored in her mind, and she is able to use them when producing utterances. Her performance in English learning is also related to what Krashen has said, “Human acquire language by receiving comprehensible input.” (Krashen, 1985) What “comprehensible input” means is equal to enough preparations in English.

Another thing needs emphasizing is that in the interview, my participant told me several ways that help her learning English. When she confronted new phrases and expressions in reading materials, she would not look up the dictionary immediately. Instead, she preferred guessing their rough meanings according to the context at first, and then went on reading. She also told me that since Japanese is her second foreign language, sometimes she even manages to relate Japanese words to English words, which helps her memorize English vocabularies, for there is a large amount of words in Japanese coming from English. Her style in learning English embodies the hypothesis that “we are able to understand language with the help of context, which includes extra-linguistic information, our knowledge of the world, and previously acquired linguistic competence.” (Krashen, 1985)

Moreover, I also recognize that my participant's English acquisition has some relation with the hypothesis of the affective filter. According to the theory, "the affective filter is a mental block that prevents acquirers from fully utilizing the comprehensible input they receive for language acquisition." (Krashen, 1985) Based on my understanding towards this hypothesis, the affective filter will be up when acquirers feel that they will make mistakes in language acquisition in class; while the affective filter will be shut when acquirers are involved in a relaxed learning atmosphere with no nervousness. My participant mentioned in the interview that when she learned English during senior high school. She said that although the teacher encouraged students to raise hands and answer questions, her classmates were too shy to speak in front of a large number people. What's more, because of the atmosphere where her classmates afraid of making mistakes, my participant, who hoped to be very active in class, seldom raised her hands to answer questions. In considering the hypothesis, "the affective filter will occur when the acquirer is unmotivated, lacking in self-confidence, or anxious" (Krashen, 1985), I found that my participant is very easy to be affected by people who learn English together. Her performance is closely related to the language environment, because when she entered the university, she became more willing to speak in class, for her classmates also hope to answer questions, to do presentations in front of audiences. In this circumstance, the affective filter becomes lower.

Develop a specific instructional plan for my participant

According to my participant Alice's current English acquisition stage, I am going to develop an instructional plan for her in order to make a comprehensive improvement of her language ability. From my perspective, her ability of writing has not reached a proficient level yet, and the place where my participant really needs improving is speaking part. I will make the

instructional plan that is appropriate to my participant's English learning style.

In the part of pronunciation, my participant is not able to correctly pronounce some of consonants such as /θ/ and /ð/; and she used to add unnecessary syllables which mistaken the /p/ and /t/ into /pə/ and /tə/. Since my participant's pronunciation is strongly affected by her dialect, sometimes she thinks that her dialect is an obstacle for her to develop English pronunciation. As a result, she refuses to speak dialect on campus; for fear that her English will be teased as "dialect English". On the other side, my participant also told me that she is willing to speak English very much. In the interview transcript line 32 to 34, she said that she enjoys the 20-minute talk with an Australian girl. She also thinks that it is very proud to talk with a native English speaker. When considering her performance in using vocabularies both in writing and in speaking, I find that my participant has got a large quantity of vocabulary. However, there still exists a gap between vocabularies that she has already known and those she can fluently put into practice in daily communication and in writing. As a result, the goal of my instructional plan should be narrowing the gap between these two parts of "vocabularies".

According to her current stage and her learning style, I consider that my instruction for her pronunciation and the increase of "available" vocabulary will be largely dependent on interactions that have been mentioned in the sociocultural theory. As far as I have learned, scaffolding is one of the ways that can implement the interaction between teacher and students, and between students themselves. The author has said in the theory, "Scaffolding can be seen as one feature of a more general characteristic of dialogic discourse—what Van Lier (1992) has called 'contingency.'" (Ellis, 2008) And I also learned that "scaffolding is a verbal guidance which an expert provides to help a learner perform any specific task, or the verbal collaboration of peers to perform a task which would be too difficult for any one of them individually."

(Troike, 2008) Since the sociocultural theory emphasizes involving learners into a big second language learning environment, because “language is socially constructed” (Vygotsky, Halliday), I will encourage my participant to ask for regular meeting time with her foreign teachers of oral courses. Because it seems that my participant has very few chances to study in English speaking countries in the near future, so at least, talking with native speakers will create and imitate a language environment for her to learn English. As a result, she is able to learn standard pronunciation and to turn those “known” vocabularies into “available” vocabularies through communication. What’s more, one of the learning features of my participant is that although she is willing to learn English, especially to practice oral English, when she found that nobody in her class would like to raise hands and answer questions, she will also refuse to speak English in front of her classmates. Based on her feature, I think that it is good for her to create an English learning group and to meet with some English learners who also want to practice spoken English with her. Since “scaffolding is not something that happens to a learner as a passive recipient, but happens with a learner as an active participant” (Troike, 2008), a group of students who get together to learn English will lead to a very positive result, which is appropriate to my participant. With the same goal, these students can practice English together in order to correct wrong pronunciation and to communicate with each other without concerning about whether the learning atmosphere is relaxed or not.

For the improvement of my participant’s overall English ability, I am inclined to choose communicative competence as the foundation of my instructional plan. “Communicative competence describes the ability not only to apply the rules of grammar correctly but to use utterances appropriately.” (Kitao, 1993) Since my participant has got a very solid basic knowledge about the use of tense, possessive determiners and subordinate clauses in English, an

advanced writing course is available to her. The writing course should mainly focus on getting rid of Chinglish expression rather than limit in solving grammatical problem. So I will recommend my participant to write reflective journals and short stories instead of guided writings. What's more, based on what she has learned in the university, my participant can also improve English abilities through translating articles and literatures from Chinese to English, which is a very direct way to let her realize the difference between Chinese and English.

Additionally, as communicative competence theory has put forward, "Students need to learn what should and should not be said and used in a given situation. In fact, a person who knew what could conceivably be said in a language but had no idea of what should and should not be said would be a 'social monster'" (Kitao, 1993), it is necessary for my participant to take part in a speaking course held by a teacher from English speaking country in a seminar form. During the seminar, the teacher will lead students to practice native English, and organize pair dialogues or group discussions. I also recommend impromptu speeches at the beginning or at the end of each course, which could help students review what they have learned and put it into practical use.

I argue that my participant is able to learn English much better when she is involved in a group of active students rather than learning by herself. What's more, she looks forward to learning English outside the regular textbooks and teaching syllabus as well. In conclusion, as Ellis has mentioned, "It is important to recognize from the outset that the paradigm does not seek to explain how learners acquire the cultural values of the L2, but rather how knowledge of an L2 is internalized through experiences of a sociocultural nature." (Ellis, 2008) With the combination of sociocultural theory and communicative competence, my participant will make progress and reach the level of "language internalization".

Critical reflection on what I have learned from this project

The case study of a non-native speaker has lasted for a whole semester. And this is the first time I have tried collecting data and statistics, and comprehensively analyzing a particular English language learner. In general, I have benefited a lot from this project.

To begin with, this project provided me a good opportunity to access to a variety of linguistic theories. Taking theories related to the project as a good example, “the cognitive approach emphasizes the strengths the learner brings to the task of learning a second language. Learners are not empty vessels waiting to be filled in, but instead come with considerable knowledge of the world” (Cummins, 1992). This theory told me that it is not sensible to use crammer pedagogy when teaching English language learners, which let me reflect on the educational system I used to be involved in when I was in my hometown as well. Sociocultural linguistics serves as another example: “Teaching must be matched to students level of development” (Vygotsky, Halliday), which reminds me of the fact that students must be put in the first place when an instructional plan is designed. Otherwise, demands that are too high for students to reach will in the end impair students’ interest in learning English. It is this project that let me read and think about these linguistic theories. Through using theories in the project, I also learned how to let theories support my opinions in paper. And I understand that a paper without enough evidences from experts cannot be considered as supportive and reasonable.

I have learned from this project that the best way to turn abstract knowledge into concrete use is to make practical analysis on a certain person in a certain circumstance. When I was a senior student, it was the first time I took the linguistic course. Although I have read almost every required material, it took a long time for me to truly understand them because what contained in books is too theoretical. When I came to take the linguistic courses and began the case study of a non-native speaker, I found that when related to practical use, the abstract

theories gradually became easy to understand. For example, I used to feel very confused about the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) brought forward by Vygotsky. But when I combine the ZPD to scaffolding and try to connect Vygotsky's idea to my case study, I understand the meaning of "ZPD is an area of potential development, where the learner can achieve that potential only with assistance (Troike, 2008). So the experience of case study arise my enthusiasm of exploring more linguistic theories.

Implications this learning will have for my future work with ELLs

In this part, I am going to express my ideas and implications that what I have learned during the case study will have an influence on my future work with ELLs. When I was in my hometown, almost every English learner is Chinese, so I used to regard students in a class as a unity. But this case study reminds me that it is better to regard every student as an individual. ELLs may have got different cultural and language backgrounds. Even students are from similar cultural background (like Chinese students), their different dialects, educational resources, and learning styles will largely differ them from each other. My participant, Alice is a good example. Her Ningbo dialect strongly affects her pronunciation of English. Nobody in her family understands, even learns English. Not until entering the university did she started her first regular oral English courses. These elements make her a special individual in English learning. According to her characteristics, I analyzed different aspects of her language ability from phonology, morphology to semantics and pragmatics. Although it is a bit difficult to do such elaborate analysis for every one of my students, the case study provides me with an awareness of knowing how students' L1 backgrounds influence their L2 acquisition. Just like what I have read in Cazden, "In classrooms with bilingual students, teachers can welcome their knowledge of languages other than English as a resource for the whole class in understanding complex

concepts in the curriculum” (Cazden, 2001), it is essential for teacher to understand at least, some basic knowledge about students’ L1.

Moreover, according to my participant, I found that interaction could be considered as the key to improve English. My participant used to be lacking in practicing spoken English before entering the university. However, since she is very willing to talking in class, both with group members and with foreign teachers, she gradually gets rid of the so-called “mute English”, which means students only know how to answer questions during English exams but never turn written English into spoken English. In my future class, I will put much emphasis on practicing spoken English, for according to the Sociocultural Theory, “interaction not only facilitates language learning but is a causative force in acquisition.” (Troike, 2008)

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Appendix:

1. Material for Analyzing Phonetics and Phonology:

Beardsley, Frank (2010), American History: US adopts Neutrality as World War One Begins in Europe. From

http://www.51voa.com/VOA_Special_English/American-History-Series-The-United-States-Neutrality-World-War-One-39274.html

(Screenshot)

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BOB DOUGHTY: Welcome to THE MAKING OF A hNATION – American history in VOA Special English.

In nineteen fourteen, Europe exploded into the First World War. It was a war no nation really wanted. But no nation seemed able to stop it.

The assassination of Austria's Archduke Franz Ferdinand in the city of Sarajevo was the spark that set off the explosion.

This week in our series, Harry Monroe and Kay Gallant tell about the war and how it affected the United States under President Woodrow Wilson.



Photo: loc.gov
British forces in action during World War One

HARRY MONROE: The Austrian Archduke was murdered by Serbian nationalists. They opposed Austrian control of their homeland. After the assassination, Austria declared war on Serbia. One of Serbia's allies was Russia. Russia agreed to help Serbia in any war against Austria.

Austria had allies, too. The most important was Germany. Germany wanted Russia to stay out of the war. When Russia refused, Germany declared war on Russia. Then Germany declared war on Russia's close ally, France. Britain entered the war a few days later when Germany violated the neutrality of Belgium.



KAY GALLANT: One nation after another entered the conflict to protect its friends or to honor its treaties. Within a week, most of Europe was at war.

On one side were the Central Powers: Germany and Austria-Hungary. On the other side were the Triple Entente Allies: France, Britain, and Russia. Many other nations took sides. Bulgaria and Turkey joined the Central Powers. Italy, Romania, Portugal, and Greece joined the Allies.

2. Narrative Writing (Typing Version):

A naughty boy was playing baseball in the room. He was too happy to forget everything. Then he broke up the mirror on the wall by accident. He was surrounded by scare immediately. Staring at the broken mirror, he thought and thought. Suddenly, a perfect idea appeared in his mind. He started to do it right away. He used the baseball bat to break up the rest part of the mirror. After clearing away the entire mirror, he began to draw his father' s picture on the white wall within the area where the mirror was. He drew a bow tie on his father' s neck. After he finished his work, his father came to look in the mirror to wear his tie. It seemed that everything is ok. Unfortunately, his father found that in the mirror the man was wearing a bow tie but not a tie. The boy realized that he discovered his secret. Then he walks away noiselessly.

3. Email writing:

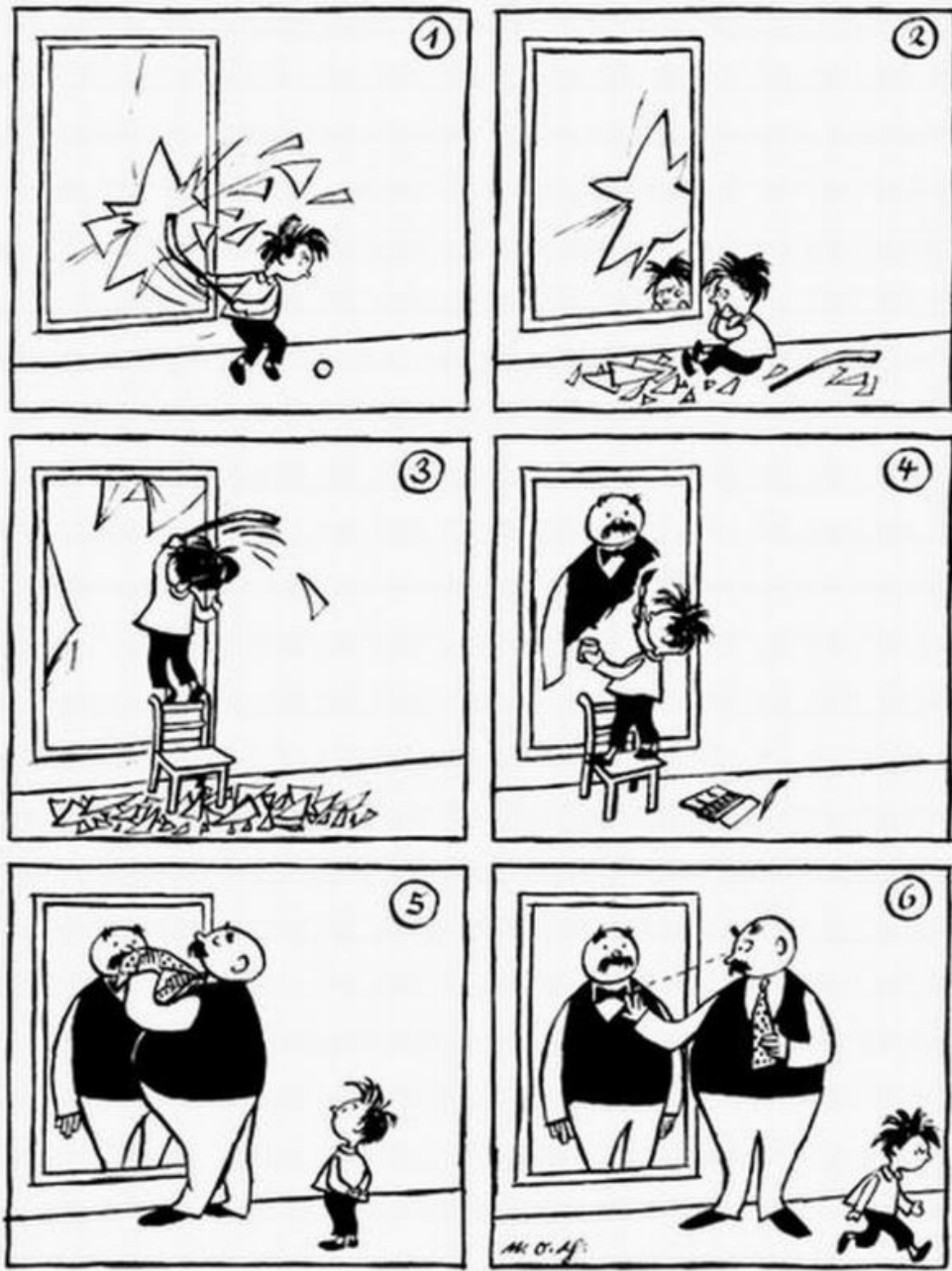
Dear Kathy,

Thank you for inviting me. I really want to take part in your party. Unfortunately, my grandpa has been ill for a long time. Since I have no time to see him, he is missing me so much. I have to visit him on next Wednesday and bring my grandpa some of his favorite fruits. I am so sorry to tell you this. I hope that you can understand my difficulties. I will prepare a nice gift to you. Thank you again. Maybe we can have lunch together afterwards and I'm eager to share your happiness.

Yours,

Alice

4. Related Picture of Narrative Writing:



5. Narrative Writing (Handwriting):

Page Date

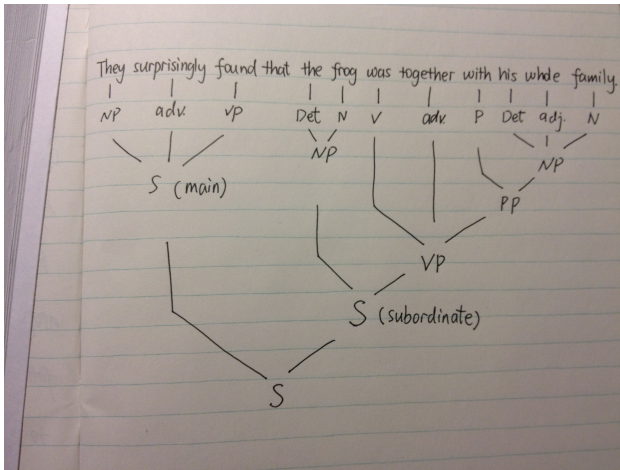
It was a peaceful night. Tony and his dog Puppy was looking at their little, cute frog. Tony's father brought it back as a gift for his birthday. He was ~~very~~ very happy and put it in a glass jar. But unfortunately Tony forgot to close the jar and the frog fled away while Tony and Puppy was sleeping. When they woke up they searched all over the room but nothing ~~appeared~~ emerged. Puppy even put his ~~head~~ head into the jar and smelled it, but he fell down and broke the jar while they were leaning on the window and ~~searching the frog in the garden.~~ ^{seeing} if the frog was in the garden. Tony was unhappy for the jar was broken, but he was also worried about his dog.

Tony and ~~the~~ Puppy finally decided to go to the forest to find the frog. They shouted, "Frog! Frog! Where are you! Come back!" But they received no reply. Suddenly Tony ~~for~~ found a hole on the ground and he thought his frog might hide here. He shouted toward the hole, "Frog! Frog! Are you there?" But an ugly nice came out instead. So Tony turned to a tree hole but only scared by a big owl and fell down from the tree. At the same time Puppy destroyed a hive and the angry bees attacked Puppy! How poor they are!

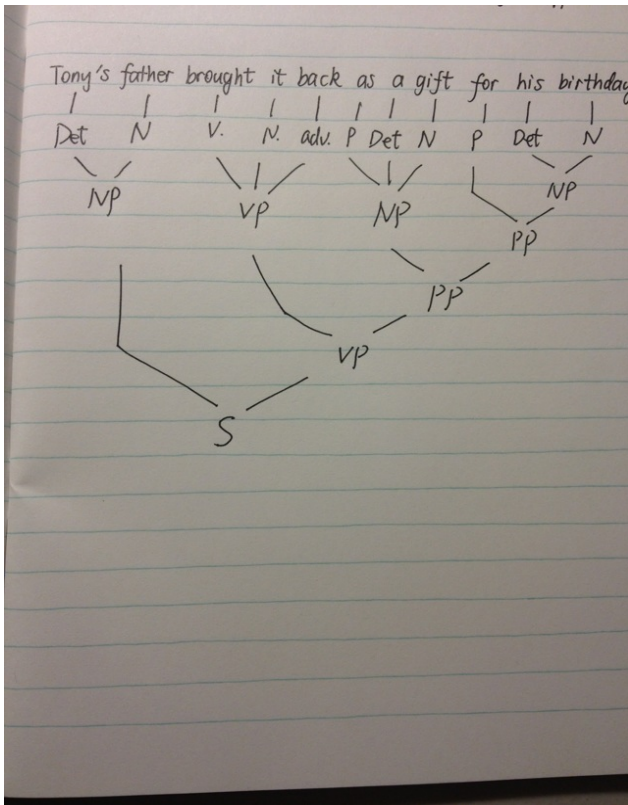
The owl and those bees finally went away. Tony climbed on a big stone and lean on some brunches, looking for the frog. But suddenly the "brunches" lifted up and they were actually a deer's horn! The deer heard Tony's shout ~~and~~, brought him to a small pool and threw him into the ~~to~~ water. Tony and Puppy were all wet but they still thanked the deer ~~at~~ a lot because they suddenly heard a "Quack!" behind a log.

Tony and ~~the~~ Puppy quietly ~~appro~~ approached the log. They surprisingly found that the frog was together with his ~~to~~ whole family! At last they said goodbye to the warm frog family and went back home with a child of that frog.

6. Structure Analysis of Syntax:



The grammatically correct sentence



The ambiguous sentence

7. Narrative telling

Transcript

1. Participants: LRC (participant), Zheyi Chen (investigator)
2. Birthdate of LRC: 01/14/1992
3. Sex of LRC: Female
4. Date of Sample: 09/15/2014
5. First Language of LRC: mandarin Chinese

6. INV: Would you please look at these six pictures and then tell me the whole story?
7. LEC: No time preparation?
8. INV: No.
9. LEC: The teacher gives us at least ten minutes for preparation.
10. INV: Have a try then.
11. LEC: Hmm...OK. Let me have a look.
12. INV: Thank you. Here you are.

- (After a few seconds)
13. LEC: A boy was playing in the room.
14. LEC: He was too happy to forgot [//] forget everything.
15. LEC: Then the mirror broken [//] then he broke the mirror on the wall accidentally.
16. LEC: He is in scare immediately.
17. LEC: Stared [//] Staring at the broken mirror, he thought and thought, in front of the mirror.
18. LEC: Suddenly a perfect idea appear in his mind.
19. LEC: He started to [//] doing it right away.

20. LEC: He used the baseball bat to break rest of mirror.
21. LEC: Err...an ice stick?
22. LEC: A thing for ho [//] hockey?
23. LEC: Anyway...He cleared away all the mirror.
24. LEC: He begins to draw his father's [//] the picture of his father on the white wall where [//] in the place the mirror was.
25. LEC: He drew a tie [//] a bow tie on his father's neck.
26. LEC: After he finish his work, father came to look the mirror [//] to wear his tie.
27. LEC: It seemed that everything OK.
20. LEC: Unfortunately his father found that the man was in the mirror [//] the man in the mirror was wearing a bow tie, but not a tie.
21. LEC: The boy realizes that his father discover the [//] his secret.
22. LEC: Then he walked away no noice [//] noiceless.
23. INV: So what will happen next?
24. LEC: The father is angry.
25. LEC: He will beat the boy.
26. LEC: Or he thought his son's idea is good.
27. LEC: Maybe he thinks his son very smart, just too naughty.
28. INV: Yeah, it is really a cute idea.
29. LEC: Hmm...
30. INV: What do you think of the boy?
31. LEC: Clever and cre [//] creative boy.
32. INV: Yes. And a good painter, right?

33. LEC: Yeah! Who else can draw father' picture like his!
34. INV: Ok. Well then, thanks very much for your help.
35. LEC: You are welcome.

8. Interview Transcript

(Background: One evening, I was skypeing with Alice, interviewing her about the study life on campus.)

1. Participants: LRC (participant), Zheyi Chen (investigator)
2. Birthdate of LRC: 01/14/1992
3. Sex of LRC: Female
4. Date of Sample: 10/15/2014
5. First Language of LRC: mandarin Chinese
6. INV: So, as far as I know, you are majoring in English language and literature.
7. LRC: Yes.
8. INV: Do you like learning English?
9. LRC: Of course! Er...Otherwise I would not choose English as my major. You know... And I like learning spoken English particularly.
10. INV: Would you please explain in detail? Why do you like practicing spoken English?
11. LRC: Because...it's interesting. (Laughing) Because I can talk...speak to national...national English...er...national English speaker.
12. INV: You mean native speakers?
13. LRC: Yes!

14. INV: OK, I would like to ask you something about your English learning in the university. If you have a chance to make a choice, would you prefer studying individually or working with classmates or group members?

15. LRC: Er...work with gre...group members. Because it's...it *can* make me feel more relaxed and interesting. I *can* learn from group members. And we *can* work together. I mean...the team is very...I can make more friends! We *can* change ideas, get new ideas.

16. INV: Have you ever done any presentations in English?

17. LRC: Yes. Our teacher...our university teacher will ask...ask us to...er...make some presentations during the class.

18. INV: What kind of presentations?

19. LRC: Er...er...we have a foreign teacher. He asked us to make a ppt in the class. And...er...and it's a ppt about sales.

20. INV: Sales?

21. LRC: Yes. Do you know?

22. INV: Maybe you can explain it to me.

23. LRC: We choose the business English course. And then he asked us to make a presentation about sales. And to intro...introduce our com...company. And in that class, we do a lot of samples and so on. It's very interesting.

24. INV: How many students are in one group for presentation?

25. LRC: Er...three or four.

26. INV: Ok, so what did you do in your group? What was your work?

27. LRC: We will do...we will do all the things together.

28. INV: You mean you made ppt together and you analyzed the samples together?
29. LEC: Yes.
30. INV: And we will introduce our ppt totally in English during the class.
31. LEC: Great. Let's move to the next question. Have you ever talked to any native speakers before?
32. INV: I have..er...ever met a Australia girl. And I talked with her for twenty minutes.
33. LEC: That's great.
34. INV: The experience is wonderful and very excited. And it make me like English more and more, because when I talked with a foreigner, but others can't, it makes me very proud. (Laughing)
35. LEC: Brilliant! Now, I want to ask you something about the main difference in English lessons in the university and in the middle school. So, when did you start learning English?
36. INV: Our...our university teacher will ask us to do presentations and reports. She will give us more...more choi...more opportunities to express ourselves. But in middle school and high school, the teacher will talk much.
37. LEC: You mean the teacher talked too much in class.
38. INV: Yes. She will...she...asked us to do a lot of exercises, and recorrect the answers, and told us "this is wrong", or "this is a set...a set...this is a fixed match!"
39. LEC: Fixed match. Hmm...
40. INV: Yep. Just like a set of phrise...phri...phrase.

41. LEC: Well I see. Would you please describe a typical English class in your middle school?

42. INV: In the beginning, the teacher will ask us to take out a paper to *write words*.

43. LEC: Write the words?

44. INV: *Write the words without seeing the book.*

45. LEC: You mean “dictation”?

46. INV: Yes, yes, dictation. Then the teacher will ask us to read the book.

Then she will ask us some questions. But nobody will answer!

47. LEC: Why? Why wouldn't anybody answer her questions?

48. INV: Because...most of my classmates are very shy! (Laughing)

49. LEC: Oh, you don't want to express your ideas in front of classmates.

50. INV: Yes. Although sometimes I know the answer, I want to answer the question, if nobody raises hands, I will not answer the question. And then, teacher will answer the questions by herself.

51. LEC: Sounds ridiculous.

52. INV: And then she will tell us the difficult words, and she will tell us the difficult...phra...phrase. Then she will tell us the idea of the text.

53. LEC: All right. And how do you learn the vocabularies?

54. INV: The teacher just write...wrote the new words on the blackboard. She will ask...she asked us to read after her. Read many times, very often. We will write down the words again and again.

55. LEC: Copy the words?

56. INV: Yes, copy.
57. LEC: After you read and copy the words, what did you do next?
58. INV: Sometimes, we have to repeatedly read the text.
59. LEC: Fine. And then what happened?
60. INV: Er...nothing will happen...
61. LEC: So the class was over.
62. INV: Yes.
63. LEC: Do you have got written assignment?
64. INV: What?
65. LEC: Written assignment. Homework?
66. INV: Oh, yes. Some exercises related to our texts.
67. LEC: Any extra?
68. INV: Maybe read the text again and again.
69. LEC: Will you listen to the tape?
70. INV: No.
71. LEC: Ok. The courses in the university are definitely different from those in high school.
72. INV: Of course.
73. LEC: What will you do during an English class?
74. INV: We can play mobile phones! (Laughing)
75. LEC: You play mobile phones in class? What have you learned?
76. INV: I am just joking! Haha...
77. LEC: Ok, so what have you learned during the class?

78. INV: Our university teachers will ask us to write papers. They pay less attention on the vocabulary. And the teacher will ask us to read the book and then write a reflective journal about the book.

79. LEC: You will write some feedback after reading the books.

80. INV: Sometimes.

81. LEC: I see. By the way, do you like watching English movies, dramas and novels?

82. INV: Very much! We watched some English films during a class. We often do these things, because we have a class named...named... This is a class about “watch and listen and speak”. And in this class, we will often watch a lot of movies and to in...in...in...imitate English tongues, and to do ppts after watching the movie.

83. LEC: Would you please tell me what kinds of movies do you like best, according to your course?

84. INV: I forgot their English names.

85. LEC: It's all right. You can tell me their Chinese names.

86. INV: Sǐ wáng shī shè

87. LEC: Dead Poet Society. I also saw this movie before.

88. INV: Oh, right! Dead Poet Society. I like it very much. The movie is very touching. We also learn English pronunciation, and expression from the movie. Besides the Dead Poet Society, I see the movie Mona Lisa Smile as well.

89. LEC: Prefect! Both of these movies are about good teachers.

90. INV: Yes. I like these teachers very much.

91. LEC: Good. Let's move to the next question. And...do you also read

English novels?

92. INV: Sometimes, because I don't have much time.

93. LEC: Ok, so, what will you do if you confront a word you have never seen before?

94. INV: Er...I will ignore it.

95. LEC: Ignore it?

96. INV: Yes. And after reading all the novel, I will go back and look up it in the dictionary.

97. LEC: So, when you are reading, you just make a guess?

98. INV: Yes, and I read a kind of novels with both Chinese and English.

Chinese on the left side, English on the right side.

99. LEC: It seems very convenient for you to look up new words.

100. INV: Yes. It's very convenient.

101. LEC: Good. Now, I have got another question. Since you used to take the university entrance examination in China, what do you think of the English examination?

102. INV: I think it is difficult for some students, because they are not gifted in language. But it is also necessary, because of the globalization.

103. LEC: You think the examination is necessary because of globalization?

104. LEC: So what is the relation between English examination and globalization?

105. INV: Because...because of the globalization, then more and more people can speak English. So I think we also should...er...we also should...try to speak English. So...so...

106. LEC: So you think English language examination is necessary.
107. INV: Yes.
108. LEC: Good idea.
109. INV: (Laughing)
110. LEC: And I still want to ask you about...Have you ever learned a second foreign language?
111. INV: Er...yes. My second language...second foreign language is Japan...Japanese.
112. LEC: Do you think learning Japanese is difficult?
113. INV: Yes. I compare Japanese and English.
114. LEC: Which one do you think is more difficult? And how do you learn Japanese?
115. INV: Er...I think that some Japanese words is come from English. And then I can remember the Japanese words...according to the English words.
116. LEC: For example?
117. INV: Let me think. Oh...such as “ケーキ”(keki). It is from English words “cake”.
118. LEC: Is learning Japanese more difficult or easier than learning English?
119. INV: I think...I think Japanese is more difficult.
120. LEC: But Japanese is very close to Chinese. Why do you think it is more difficult?
121. INV: Because I think er...the grammar in Japanese is very different from us. And I learn English for a long time, so English is easier.

122. LEC: I see. And I have got another question for you. Which courses do you like best in the university?

123. INV: ...Foreign teacher's class.

124. LEC: Are there any other core courses that you like?

125. INV: I think...I also like translation course very much. Sometimes it is very interesting. But sometimes it is a bit boring. Because if we have read someone's work...work about translation is very interesting, we will think this class is interesting.

126. LEC: So will you do some exercises for translation by yourself?

127. INV: Yes. And I have tried to translate *luò tuó xiáng zǐ* (a Chinese novel)

128. LEC: The Rickshaw Boy

129. INV: Yes, the Rickshaw Boy.

130. LEC: What kind of difficulties have you confronted when doing translation?

131. INV: Some very difficult words...er...I can't translate it into English.

132. LEC: You mean you cannot find the accurate word that is equivalent to the Chinese expression.

133. INV: Yes. And sometimes the...sometimes I have to...to...to translate one sentence into many many sentences.

134. LEC: Oh, you mean you transfer one Chinese sentence into a lot of English sentences.

135. INV: That's right. In Chinese, I can use a lot of verb in one sentence, but English can't.

136. LEC: Verbs with original form cannot stay in one sentence.

137. INV: Yes.

138. LEC: What kind of translation do you like best? Literature translation, business translation or others?

139. INV: Maybe literature translation.

140. LEC: Good. So have you got some interpretation classes?

141. INV: Yes. I like interpretation course very much. But I think it is more difficult. Because we have to...we have to listen to the record and then we have to translate it immediately. And sometimes I can't write down the words. And...and then I can't understand the full sentence and I can't translate it.

142. LEC: You mean you do not have time to take notes. So you cannot translate it.

143. INV: Yes. And I remember once we did interpretation from Chinese to English about a dialogue from a Chinese ancient drama. People speak too fast. I could not remember.

144. LEC: There must be a lot of ancient words and old sayings.

145. INV: Sure. It's very difficult. And when we translate it to English, and we found that all the beautiful sentences become very strange. But I still like the course, because it is interesting.

146. LEC: Great! And let's move to the last question, ok?

147. INV: Ok.

148. LEC: It is about you career in the future. What do you want to do after graduation?

149. INV: My...now I want to work in a foreign business company very much.

But I also want to be a English teacher, teach primary school children, because I like kids.

150. LEC: OK. Since you are a senior student, you must be very busy preparing you undergraduate thesis. Would you please tell me the title of your thesis?

151. INV: It's...it's about...a look from asce...asce...I forgot this word. It is called zōng jiào jìn yù zhǔ yì.

152. LEC: Religious asceticism?

153. INV: Yes, yes, I read the book the scarlet letter and the thorn birds. I will analyze people's love under religious asceticism from these two books.

154. INV: I like the scarlet letter very much. A woman who has husband and she...she fell in love with a godfather. She is pregnant and give birth to a daughter.

155. LEC: I see. How is the process of your thesis?

156. INV: I wrote one third of them. I have some difficulty, because I am not very familiar with Christian. And I have many difficulty in express myself.

157. LEC: Good. Thanks a lot! That's the end.

158. INV: You are welcome.

Artifact E: Lesson Plan-Four Seasons of a Year

Lesson Title:

Why do we have four seasons in a year?

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.3

Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.3

Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).

Content Objective:

1. SWBAT orally provide an explicit explanation about the cause of four seasons by using not more than four complete sentences.
2. SWBAT distinguish the different characteristics of four seasons in a year both orally and in their written practice sheet.

Language Objective:

1. SWBAT identify one pair of synonym in the text (autumn & fall) and two pairs of antonyms in the text (warm & cool, hot & cold).
2. SWBAT orally explain why they like a particular season best by using the sentence structure “I like _____ best, because _____” that indicates the reason.

Theme:

Why do we have four seasons in a year?

Our Earth revolves around the sun. It takes 365 days to for Earth to go around the sun once.

Part of the year, the Earth tilts toward the sun. Part of the year, the Earth tilts away from the sun.

So we have four seasons: winter, spring, summer, and autumn.

Materials needed:

The Story: Four Seasons in a Year; sight words; model of the sun and the earth; pictures of four seasons; practice sheet.

Other preparation required:

Stage & Time	Purpose	Interactional Focus	Procedures
9:30-9:35	Build on prior knowledge—review the name of four seasons and the ordinal numbers.	Whole class activity; teacher-students interaction	<p>At the beginning, the teacher will lead the whole class to read sight words: four seasons.</p> <p>After reading, the teacher asks questions such as “How many seasons do we have?” “Which season are we in?” “Which season is the second season in a year?”</p> <p>These questions will help students recall four seasons’ name that they practiced before, and help them review the ordinal numbers (first, second, third, fourth...) they learned during the previous lessons about the planets. Then, the teacher will begin the lesson by saying “We know there are four seasons in a year. But do you know why there are four seasons?” in order to arouse students’ interest to the topic.</p>

9:35-9:50	Connect the prior knowledge to the new lesson—learn the content and the language.	Scaffolding; questions and answers	<p>The teacher starts to explain the cause of four seasons from the relation between the Earth and the sun. By using the astronomical model, students will have a direct impression on how the Earth keeps moving around the sun. The teacher leads students into the new word “revolve”.</p> <p>Next, the teacher tells students that the Earth “tilts” either toward the sun or away from the sun by using the model and acting out the new word “tilt”. After finishing teaching two key words, the teacher will mainly ask alternative questions such as “Does the Earth revolve around the sun or stay still?” to provide opportunities for students to practice new words and to consolidate new knowledge.</p>

			<p>Then, the teacher will give the conclusion: Sometimes the Earth tilts towards the sun. Sometimes the Earth tilts away from the sun. That's why we have got four seasons.</p>
9:50-10:10	Continue developing the lesson—recognize different characteristics of the four seasons.	Teacher-students interaction; Student-student interaction (group discussion)	<p>The teacher will lead students to read the story as well as observe pictures of four seasons. Next, the teacher repeatedly read sentences that contain three pairs of special words: “autumn & fall”, “warm & cool”, “hot & cold” to call students’ attention. The teacher uses gestures and simple sentences to explain the meanings of synonym and antonym without explicitly saying the exact word “synonym” and “antonym”. (For example: autumn and fall, different sounds, different spelling, same meaning.) Students learn pairs of words by acting out these</p>

			<p>words. (For example, they learn “cold” by pretending to tremble and to wear a lot of clothes.)</p> <p>Then, the teacher is going to ask a higher order question: “Which season do you like best? Why?” This question is for students to discuss in small groups. After discussion, students are invited to answer the question one by one. Students need to use the sentence structure “I like _____ best, because _____” to provide a complete sentence indicating the reason.</p>
10:10-10:20	Conclude the lesson—finish practice sheet.	Individual work; group work; teacher-students interaction (modeling)	The teacher will ask one student to pass out the practice sheet. Students are going to choose the correct word to describe each season. Students should first work independently. If they cannot, they are allowed to discuss in small

			<p>groups as well.</p> <p>Five minutes later, the teacher will put the practice sheet under the projector in order to do modeling for student. The teacher will mainly use “thinking aloud” strategy to help students choose the correct words and finish the practice sheet.</p>
10:20-10:30	Small group instruction –Extra help for students who are left behind.	Teacher-students interaction	<p>There are three new students attending the class this week whose English proficiency is behind the average level of the class. They are together with partners who speak the same first languages, so they are able to get help during the lesson.</p> <p>After the lesson, the teacher will spend 10 minutes with new students, guiding them to read the story we have just learned. The teacher will explain new words for the three students again, while the</p>

			rest of students prepare for other practice.
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Reference:

Common Core State Standards. (n.d.). Retrieved February 26, 2016, from

<http://www.corestandards.org>

Artifact F: Interviewing and Experience, ESL to Go Program

On October 7th, together with my classmates, I visited a special school for English Language Learners (ELLs). Surprisingly, the so-called “school” is actually a truck located in a parking lot. It is an English classroom that can move to every place where people need help in learning English. Along with my group members, I interviewed the principal of this mobile school and observed a class for English learners. After exploration, I collected written materials, listened to the record, and looked up extra information in order to have a deep understanding about both the mobile school and the students it serves.

Description of the School and Students

The Mobile school, located in a truck, is in the charge of the Tennessee Foreign Language Institute that was found in 1986. Besides teaching languages such as English, Spanish, and Japanese, the institute also provides students with interpretation service. The brand new idea of “truck classroom” started from May 2013, and it now has got 185 students, which accounts for more than half of all students in the help of institute. The students served by this mobile school are mainly adult refugee population. Most of them are Burmese, Iraqis and Kurdish.

Unlike children who can later receive education from regular schools, adult refugees have already been far beyond the suitable age for schooling. What's more, these people arrived in the United States with very little or none understanding of English, which directly lead to unemployment and bad living condition in the United States. As time passed, they will definitely confront challenges from lack of income and living pressure, and probably become new members of the bottom of American society, which will probably lead to discrimination, because unfortunately, "classifications based on race, ethnicity, gender, social class and other physical or social differences are omnipresent." (Sonia Nieto & Patty Bode, 2008) The resettlement agencies gave names of these refugees to the institute, which is helpful for the institute to find them and help these refugees register courses in mobile school. Besides this formal way, some refugee students also begin their English lessons by walking directly into the truck. They bring their friends to the mobile school, increasing its popularity. Considering adversities of refugee students, the mobile school does not charge for any tuition from them, neither do students need to pay for textbooks and learning materials. Additionally, the mobile school contains necessary educational equipment from desk and chairs to computer and projector. The good teaching condition offers students a comfortable and free atmosphere to learn English.

Interview a Key Player at the School

The key player my group members and I interviewed on that day is the principal of this mobile school. She has got much enthusiasm to teach English to the refugees.

From her perspective, the most important thing to know for a person who wants to teach English learners is how to prepare a good lesson that exactly meets the special needs of those students. According to what the principal have mentioned, teachers who are involved in ESL to go program are graduates from TESOL training program. These teachers usually have group

work in order to set a framework about what to teach at first. Their teaching style is based on what they called, three “P”s, presentation, practice and production, aiming at helping students to use what they have learned from class in communities. So, I interpreted the principal’s answer as how to find a best way to serve students. Because of the specialty of students, “teachers must understand the relationship between students’ cultural backgrounds and learning”, which is critical in preparing an appropriate lesson. (Victoria J. Risko & Doris Walker-Dalhouse, 2012)

The principal also frankly told us what kind of unique challenges the school has got. In the first place, the ESL to go is a brand new program. Through the exact words from the principal, “It is both a challenge and a good opportunity to me”, on one side, there is no previous model for teachers to take as an object of reference, which is a real challenge. They need to concern about and take part in all kinds of works such as what textbook they are going to use, where to settle down the students, etc. Yet, without previous model means that the teachers are able to create a new model by themselves. What’s more, the new model will probably become a nice and typical precedent for successors to follow, which can also be considered as a good opportunity. Next, when refugees find a job, they will not come to learn English anymore. So another challenge for ESL to go is how to keep these students staying in this program until they learn certain language ability in English. I argue that the principal hopes that the ESL to go can become a sustainable program for their students. And she is now working hard to let students gain more awareness on the importance in learning English. Moreover, since students learn English on a truck, the condition of the truck can also lead to extra problems. Whether the air-conditioner works properly, and whether the heavy traffic will affect teaching time or not play an important role in ESL to go program. As a result, from what I have learned during the interview, I conclude that the aim of this program is to offer as much help as it can to help students integrate into American

society.

My Insight and New Question about the Program

I would like to express some of my ideas about what I have learned from the interview. Firstly, I found that although the teacher did not know quite specific about the background information about her four Burma students, after giving an example of how to make chocolate cookies, which is a typical American dessert, she still encouraged students to describe the food in Burma style when they were learning cooking direction. Additionally, “their special background can be used in class as rich funds of knowledge for teaching”. (Luis C. Moll & Cathy Amanti & Deborah Neff & Norma Gonzalez, 1992) Because these students are adult refugees from Burma, they must have already developed their own life styles. The class will arouse students’ interest if they are able to share their daily life, food, personal experience etc. in learning English.

Besides what I have discovered from the ESL to go program, I also have got several questions. I would like to know at first whether this program still puts attention to students who have left the English class. Since “preparing ELLs to successfully participant in the mainstream society” (De Jong, 2009) is the aim of ESL to go, it is better for the program to continue focusing on the situation of students who “graduated”. Do they work and live well after learning English? What kind of new problems in communication do they meet? From my perspective, a program without considering students’ future development cannot be regarded perfect. And “the long-term achievement of ELLs who went through a specialized program” (De Jong, 2009) is a large project for the principal and teachers to deal with.

Experiences in ESL to go classroom

At the beginning of the class, students should review the knowledge they have learned last time: irregular past participles. In order to help students memorize past participles, the teacher

used a lot of examples of verbs and simply asked students to speak out their past participles. She also asked them to make sentences that contain the related past participles to make sure whether students can truly understand and use these verbs or not. From my perspective, the dialogues between the teacher and four students was a good example of how to use scaffolding in a class. Desks and Chairs were arranged closely as a group. So four Burma students are able to work in a small group; sometimes they also work in pairs, which is a good way for them to cooperate and learn from each other. The teacher served as a guide, who “commonly provided learners with talks that the learners can then use to express concepts which were beyond their independent means.” (Troike, 2008) It is true that the teacher kept talking for the most of the time. And it seemed that the teacher over controlled the whole class, which was a taboo of class discussion. However, since students were not able to lead long time discussions by their current English abilities, I regard the control as currently appropriate. She not only helped students reach the correct answer, but also increased students’ motivation of communicating with each other. With interaction, students are able to get twice the result with half the effort, because interaction is an essential way to transfer what students have learned in textbooks to practical use.

Then, students began learning “food, ingredient, and cooking direction”, which was the main topic of that day. The teacher passed several steps of cooking direction to students and asked them to put these directions in the right order. In the process, the students learned sequence words such as “first”, “next”, “then”, and “finally”. I regarded new words and sentences about food and ingredient as substantive words that can be used in a particular context, while the sequence words as function words that are very practical in different communications. So it is an appropriate idea to combine the teaching of these two kinds of knowledge into one lesson. I also found the similar way of teaching in another fieldtrip to Cole Elementary School. During a class,

the teacher asked grade three students to discuss questions related to a story about Martin·Luther·King. Meanwhile, students also made sentences in turns like “Martin·Luther·King won the Nobel Price, *because* he made a large contribution” in order to practice the logical relation between sentences. Thus, I learned that an ELL teacher should not only deliver topic related knowledge to students, but also consider what kind of knowledge students will use outside the class. I think it is a very smart way to make skills of communication accessible to students, no matter to children or to adults.

How to teach English as a second language

The most apparent way, in which English was being taught in the ESL to go class, from my perspective, was repetition. Students spent a comparatively long time in recognizing irregular past participles; what’s more, when the teacher was teaching new words, she would ask students to review and to repeat them from time to time. For instance, a new word, “avocado” was shown on the screen when students were learning “food”. The teacher helped students read after her for several times before moving on to the next new word. But it did not mean that they have already “passed” the word “avocado”. The teacher often “went back” and found the word “avocado” for students to make a revision in time. I argued that obviously, making timely revision during a class is not a very efficient way, because it will occupy time for students to learn new things. Yet, repetition is very effective, because it can help students consolidate what they have learned.

What’s more, the ESL to go program provides students with different medias that can help them make progress in English learning. During the class, students frequently learned new words and expressions from textbooks. What’s more, colorful pictures were projected on the white board to give students a direct image of a new word. Students also learned dialogues from tape recorders. I regard that using different medias will comprehensively improve students’ English

ability. Through my observation, I found that the best English language ability these Burma students gain is listening, for they are able to give correct reactions when teacher mentioned something in English. The ability of reading comes to the second place. They have comparatively few obstacles in reading some simple dialogues and recognizing cards with new English words, but they cannot read very fluently. On the contrary, speaking part, the “output” of language, is the most challenging part for them to make progress in. When teacher ask them to make sentences or to answer questions, most of the time, these Burma students do not manage to speak complete sentences. According to this situation, I argue that the development of English language ability is closely related to these students’ daily life. Since these four students are certainly and autonomously involved in environment of English, they must hear and see tens of thousands of words and sentences in English everyday. Therefore, the ability of listening and reading develop the fastest. However, as Burmese have their own language community, most of the time, they must be more willing to communicate with each other in their mother language than in English. As a result, the ability of speaking develops slowly. Thus, the use of different media did correspond to the development of English abilities in each aspect, and transfer basic knowledge into vivid expressions to let students accept more smoothly.

Conclusion

In general, although the ESL to go program is new and still in its initial stage, I regard it has already been, on the whole, appropriate and successful. Refugees from Burma, Iraq and Kurdish are a group of people who could have been easily ignored by educational system. But the ESL to go program noticed and answered their help in learning English. Different from children ELLs who are much able to learn, adults have more difficulties to conquer. According to what the principal has mentioned, at first, adults are comparatively weak in memorizing new

knowledge and have got less time in learning English. Secondly, they are sometimes embarrassed to speak out, and they perform much less active in classroom than children do, for they realized that their identity is both an adult and a student. Nevertheless, adults have got better understanding than children. They have got much more straightforward purpose in learning English than children do, because they must prepare themselves in integrating into the society as soon as possible. Moreover, “their greater experience and knowledge of the world helps make the input they hear and read more comprehensible.” (Krashen, 1985) Since the special community ESL to go program face to is adult refugees, teaching style, timetable, learning materials, etc. should also be shifted in order to be appropriate to adults. Meanwhile, both the principal and the teachers try to let their special students embrace English learning, to make a path in the field of teaching English, and to arouse the social attention to vulnerable groups in the United States. I conclude that it is the reason above why this program can be considered as creative and special.

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Artifact G: Lesson Plan: Reading course—Hot and Cold

Friday, February 26, 2016

60 minutes

Background and Rationale

Students in my class have finished learning about four seasons in a year. Firstly, students learned about the cause of seasons. They are able to identify two main new words related to the theme—revolve and tilt. Secondly, students also finished learning the name of four seasons and the characteristics of each season. They read the practice sheet prepared by the teacher and finished doing related exercises. Further, students have recognized two pairs of antonyms in this lesson—warm and cool, hot and cold. For the next less, students are going to specifically learn one of the antonyms—hot and cold.

The goal of this lesson is to let students read the whole book without any language barriers. Students also need to make a short summary after finishing this book. What's more, students would be able to recognize single words from the book and to put these words into correct order to make meaningful sentences. Based on this, a more challenging will be helping students gain awareness that each word has its special function in the sentence.

Standards Addressed

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.3

Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.3

Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).

Lesson Goals & Objectives

SWBAT independently read the whole book without reminds from either the teacher or their classmates.

SWBAT orally draw a conclusion about what the book mainly talks about.

SWBAT recognize single words taken from the book.

SWBAT make up sentences by using single words taken from the book.

Content of the Book:

Hot and Cold

Things can be hot or cold. A place can be hot. A place can be cold. Food can be hot. Food can be cold. People can be hot. People can be cold. Things can be hot or cold.

Procedures and Timeline

Introducing the topic:

(5 minutes)

The teacher begins this reading lesson by asking questions related to the previous lesson about four seasons in a year. The teacher asks, “What do we learn about the seasons?” “How many seasons are there in a year?” “How do you feel in summer?” “Do you need to wear jackets

in winter?” These questions aim at helping students recall what they have learned. What’s more, the teacher will also use question as transitions to the following lesson.

Whole class activity:

(10 minutes)

The teacher asks students to open the book and tell them today’s topic is about hot and cold. Next, students will read the book twice. The first time, the teacher provides guided reading sentence by sentence. Students need to follow the teacher to read the whole book together. For the second time, the teacher will also provide guided reading sentence by sentence. However this time, instead of asking students to read together, the teacher will let students voluntarily raise hands if they are able to independently repeat a particular sentence.

Small group activity (a group of 4 students):

(15 minutes)

The teacher begins to teach every sentence in the book by using visual aids. For instance, when the teacher talks about “A place can be hot”, the teacher will go online and find photos such as a desert, telling students that a desert is a hot place. Then students are going to have group discussions about what kind of places can be hot besides a desert. In general, four students sit in one group. Some of them are from the same old countries. The teacher will encourage them to think about the weather in their old countries is hot or cold, which aims at relating new knowledge to students’ cultural backgrounds. After that, the teacher will distribute word cards to every student. When the teacher says one word, students need to hold the correct word card in their hand and raise it up.

Whole group activity: Inside and outside circle

(15 minutes)

According to the rule of this activity, “the class is divided into two groups; half the class forms a circle looking out (the inside circle), and the other half stands in front of someone in the inner circle (the outside circle). (Vogt & Echevarria, 2008) The teacher will successively provide two tasks related to today’s topic: Using the word “hot” or “cold” to make a sentence. Do you like hot food or cold food? Tell your partner one hot food or one cold food you like. After several turns, students change their positions from inside-outside circle to a big circle. This time, students need to randomly choose one of classmates and ask him or her to create a complete sentence by use the word “hot” or “cold”.

Individual work: Providing help for students who are left behind

(15 minutes)

Three new students enter this class this week. Their English language proficiency is only in the entering level. In order to help them catch up their peers, the teacher will ask them to come to a small reading group. While other students are finishing their practice sheet, three new students follow the teacher to read the book again. The teacher will show them pictures such as a hot place or a cold place in order to let them have a strong and direct impression on the new words.

Materials and Resources

The Book: Hot and Cold;

Word Cards;

Pictures;

Practice sheet.

Reference

Vogt, M., & Echevarria, J. 2008. 99 Ideas and Activities for Teaching English Learners with The SIOP Model. Pearson.