Capstone Portfolio

English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

(TESOL)

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Abstract

This portfolio demonstrates my comprehensive understanding of the teaching of English language learners (ELLs). In my Philosophy of Teaching, I elaborate on my beliefs about how to help students thrive in a foreign language classroom and the theoretical framework on which I base my teaching practice. To address the eight standards for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), I include in the portfolio the artifacts that prove my expertise in them. In each of the eight domains-planning, instructing, assessing, identity and context, language proficiency, learning, content, and commitment and professionalism, I show my careful consideration for learners, learning context, curriculum, and assessment. In the concluding part of my portfolio, I reflect on the implications of my graduate study on my future teaching and how I plan to solve the remaining questions about the teaching profession.

Xue Qiao - Capstone Portfolio
Table of Content:

Philosophy of Teaching

Teaching a foreign language means opening up a brand new world to my students where they perceive, understand, and appreciate the ways in which a different language other than their own operates. Through learning English as a foreign language, my students are enabled to use English to communicate in various contexts, with various people, for various purposes, and in culturally appropriate ways. As a teacher, my primary objective is to engage my students in the foreign language learning process and to facilitate the development of them from emergent second language users to proficient second language users.

I believe that language is acquired through language use. From the sociocultural perspective, social interaction enables cognitive and skill development, with language playing an essential role in the internalization of newly learned knowledge (Scott, 2010). I value classroom interaction in the target language which is capable of bridging the gap between what language learners know about a second language and what they can do with the language. Therefore, I adopt the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach and provide plentiful opportunities for learners to participate in meaningful communication where their real-time performance progresses as their communicative competence develops.

I believe that students are not passive receptacles of knowledge. On the contrary, they can be the source of knowledge. The strengths students bring to the context of teaching include culturally relevant knowledge, interests, and areas of confidence. For example, teachers can use "funds of knowledge"-the life skills and competencies of students' families to construct the academic content and promote learning (Moll et al, 1992). Also, teaching to students' interests and areas of confidence can make learning more engaging.

Teaching a foreign language is a cross-cultural endeavor. An awareness of cultural differences is indispensable for teaching learners from diverse language and cultural backgrounds. Culture is one significant aspect of the differences that they bear and what they should take pride in. To develop a culturally responsive curriculum is to create an environment

for teaching and learning where students of diverse backgrounds do not have to struggle to sustain their identities or deemphasize their cultures and languages. In order to obtain this goal, it is necessary to examine how students' cultures and identities may influence their learning and school achievement. The influence of cultural on learning is manifest in communication styles or discourse norms. When teachers are unaware of or misinterpret the discourse norms that culturally different students bring to school, the results may be inaccurate assessment of students' ability, misperception of students' intentions, and monologic teacher script that creates cultural tensions (Corson, 2001; Gutiérrez et al, 1995). More importantly, students' willingness to participate in learning could be dramatically reduced, which leads to school failure. In addition, the incongruence between teaching and learning and the cultures of students interferes with the full realization of their achievement potential (Nieto & Bode, 2012). Therefore, the curriculum needs to incorporate the experiences of culturally diverse students. Instead of silencing students, teachers should facilitate discussions where students from different backgrounds are able to exchange their points of view on certain issues and themes without restrictions on discourse norms. Only when students feel that their cultural values are respected and their horizons are broadened by learning what they can relate to and identify with can they thrive in schools.

I value the use of authentic materials that reflect real-world language use in native contexts. The integration of literature, newspaper, magazines, films, and websites into lessons can address diverse learning styles, stimulate learners' interests, and offer sufficient models of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse features (Brandl, 2007). Because authentic materials usually impose high linguistic and cognitive demands on learners, it really matters that teachers manipulate and modify them so that they are appropriate for classroom use. I believe that language learners are not deficient native speakers and their limited proficiency does not prevent them from comprehending challenging authentic texts. The activation of learners' background knowledge is necessary, because it makes them see what they can achieve with

what they know and thus strengthens their motivation.

To optimize the language learning process requires careful sequencing and design of communicative learning tasks. In order for learners to function in open-ended culminating activities, skills necessary for the application of vocabulary, grammar, and the knowledge about the key content are incrementally built so that learners are adequately prepared. In structured practices, mechanical, meaningful, and communicative drills can all find their place. However, to ensure the cognitive engagement of learners, I devote more time to tasks that allow them to simultaneously attend to meaning and form.

To promote cooperative learning and develop learners' interpersonal communication skills, I use pair and small-group work because it provides extended and supportive opportunities for leaners to manipulate and produce the target language and express a wider range of language functions. Additionally, group work reduces communicative stress and is more likely to lead to negotiation of meaning than is interaction with the teacher (Brandl, 2007). I find the "jigsaw" activity a very fascinating and effective way of organizing student interactions, as it promotes cooperative learning and two-way exchange of information, and more importantly, it holds students accountable for the completion and achievement of the task. To guarantee equal participation and contribution of all group members, I determine that the size of any learner group in my class is no more than six.

In the teaching of a second language, a considerable portion of efforts are devoted to the teaching of vocabulary and grammar. For vocabulary instruction, I provide students with multimedia-based input because it supports both the comprehension process and the retention process (Brandl, 2007). I introduce vocabulary through thematic units so that the mental processes of word associations and sorting which help store words securely in the memory can be facilitated. I believe that the teaching of grammar can never be decontextualized because it emerges with language use. Accordingly, I take a text-based and inquiry-driven approach to grammar teaching to engage students in the exploration and analysis of how

grammar is used to create meanings. For both vocabulary and grammar instruction, I implement discovery learning because it creates a learning situation resembling the one that learners encounter when they enter the country where the target language is widely used.

Although I try to maximize the use of the target language in the classroom, I do not deemphasize the role of leaners' native language. Code-switching is a normal phenomenon among bilingual people and demonstrates dual language proficiency (Scott, 2010). Additionally, learners' home languages and language varieties can serve as a resource and foundation for English learning. Involving students in learning activities that require code-switching could be advantageous. For example, students' experiences in translating between English and their home languages can be applied to help them develop academic writing skills (Martinez et al, 2008). For me, it is acceptable that learners use their native language in my classroom to explain the task to each other, provide feedback, and discuss their understanding or production of language with each other. To promote effective language use and prevent sloppy language mixing, the class and I together determine the code choice for various classroom activities.

Language assessment is an integral part of language learning and teaching. I will continually use various types of language assessment in my classroom to diagnose the needs of my students, determine whether they meet the learning goals, and monitor their progress. The information provided by the results of language assessment helps me reflect on my own teaching and make significant educational decisions on how to best facilitate students' language learning. I will adopt performance assessment, because contrary to standardized tests, performance assessment is capable of genuinely assessing a student's ability of using the target language for communication in tasks imitating real-life contexts. Furthermore, I consider the involvement of students in self-assessment very valuable because it helps students understand criteria of high-quality work and performance more thoroughly and motivates them to meet the criteria (Herrera et al, 2007).

To sum up, I try to diversify learners' experiences with the target language in my classroom by having them interpret, experiment with, and interact in it. From my point of view, a foreign language classroom is where a teacher and his students perceive and appreciate linguistic and cultural differences through the collective exploration of various oral and written texts. Ultimately, students will realize that both English and their native language are of equal value in helping them navigate in this multilingual world.

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Domain 1: Planning

Artifact A: Rebuilding Japan Lesson Plan

I designed the *Rebuilding Japan Lesson Plan* for the course entitled Teaching Second Language Literacy. The lesson occurs in a 45-min 6th grade ESL class where students participate in literature circles to explore and construct meaning from an expository text from *Time for Kids* about Japan's recovery from its devastating earthquake and tsunami in 2011. The primary goals of the lesson include using previously learned reading strategies to comprehend an informational text and identifying the main idea of the text and the supporting details for it.

Lesson planning is of great importance because the success of a lesson largely depends on the effectiveness of the plan. To me, effective plan always have overarching goals and make sure that learners are en route to achieve the goals. This artifact provides an example of how I let the desired learning results and the evidence of learning guide the selection of materials and the design of tasks by using backward design.

Learner

It is critical for teachers to have a thorough understanding about the reading process when planning a lesson focused on developing students' reading skills. As reading comprehension occurs when readers connect the new information presented in the text to their existing knowledge, building students' background knowledge will greatly assist them in constructing meaning from the text. In this artifact, I show a video clip about the worst natural disaster that hit Japan to students before they read the text to give them a clear picture of the severity of it. To better promote text-to-self connections, I will revise the lesson plan to include a group discussion where students share their lived experiences and knowledge of natural disasters. Vocabulary development is another aspect that is equally important for reading comprehension. By taking on the literature role of Vocabulary Enricher, students can demonstrate vocabulary knowledge using both linguistic and nonlinguistic representations. In

light of differentiated instruction with learners with various English language proficiency levels, I allow students to use their native languages to define new vocabulary and provide visual cues so that students in the early production stage could benefit from my instruction.

Learning Context

The plan also demonstrates how I create a learner-centered environment where students take on responsibilities (i.e. assuming different literature circle roles) to assist one another in constructing meaning from the text. Students are engaged in not only cooperative learning where they solve problems together and make contribution to group discussions but learning as a self-actualized endeavor in which they raise their own questions about the text and seek for useful resources including topic-related pictures, videos, and texts in their home languages. Furthermore, the RoundRobin activity is capable of creating a competitive atmosphere among the students because literature circles challenge each other by raising questions regarding the text and respond to the questions within a time limit.

Curriculum

The Tennessee English Language Arts Standards require that 6th grade students use reading comprehension strategies to comprehend informational texts. To become successful language learners, students need to practice using both metacognitive and cognitive strategies. In the *Rebuilding Japan Lesson Plan*, Apart from building the reading comprehension skills of the students by activating their background knowledge, I use the Clarification Chart to help students develop metacognition. By filling out the chart during or after their reading, students monitor and assess their understanding of the text and learn to choose different strategies when comprehension fails.

Assessment

In this teaching plan, formative assessment happens before, during, and after the lesson and informs my instruction in multiple ways. Since it will be the first time for students to participate in literature circles to analyze an expository text, I schedule individual meetings

with them before the lesson to evaluate their readiness to assume their roles and provide

scaffoldings as needed. During the lesson, I observe students' use of English and their

participation in group and pair work to determine whether they are moving towards the

desired goals. Finally, I require the students to present their understanding of key vocabulary

terms in their vocabulary flip books where they write definitions and draw visuals to

represent important words learned.

Domain 2: Instructing

Artifact B: Inquiry Lesson Presentation on Genetic Engineering

This science lesson was created and presented in the course entitled Analysis of Teaching. The most significant feature of this lesson is that students were engaged in various inquiry activities where they investigated the topic of genetic engineering and constructed their understanding of it by raising questions about each other's stance on the issues surrounding genetic engineering. This topic was controversial and open-ended enough to allow alternative possibilities for consideration and discussion among the learners.

Learner

Learning involves both affection and cognition. Thus, successful instructing should connect both thinking and feeling in learners. In *Artifact B*, starting with the question of whether they would prefer genetically modified foods to organic ones-a choice that they usually needed to make in everyday life, I gradually increased the controversy of topics by changing the subject to genetically modified animals. Using the *New York Times* article "*D.I.Y. Biology, on the Wings of the Mockingjay*" which perfectly combined *The Hunger Games*, a popular young adult novel, and the discussion of the cutting-edge technology in genetics, learners' interest was successfully evoked since the term D.I.Y. biology stimulated ambivalent feelings within them. Simultaneously, they were cognitively challenged by the complexity of the issue and starting to investigate into its pros and cons from multiple perspectives.

Learning Context

The *Inquiry Lesson Presentation on Genetic Engineering* demonstrates how I created a supportive learning environment where the diversity and originality of thinking was valued. In various classroom interactions, language functions as the medium for individual thinking and plays a central role in the internalization of knowledge. Through their participation in the whole-class and small group discussions, learners built their knowledge about the content

through dialogues: their sharing, defending, questioning, and modifying of points of views led to a new understanding. Moreover, taking on the roles of a discussion facilitator and a co-participant in inquiry activities allowed me to establish a collaborative community of learners within the classroom.

Curriculum

National and state curriculum standards describe the knowledge and skills that students should possess when they reach certain grades. However, the ways that teachers address these standards may not be empowering enough to bring about the best development of learners. Successful lessons can facilitate the transfer of knowledge from the classroom to the real life. In this artifact, the ultimate goal was to train students' abilities of questioning and analyzing issues from multiple perspectives through social interaction. Thus, the coverage of the curriculum was not viewed as an end. Rather, it was the activities based on the curriculum that promoted the development of individual learners and the community. The greatest gain of students from these activities was the ability to view things critically.

Assessment

As for assessment, I based my judgment of whether students met the goals on the conversations between me and the students as well as the conversations among themselves. Through dialogues, I could see that students' understanding of the topic kept advancing as more and more information exchange among them took place. For teachers, it is important to obtain insights about students' level of comprehension and application of knowledge from formative assessment rather than summative assessment, because critical and independent thinking is more likely to happen when learning activities are authentic and motivating.

Domain 3: Assessing

Artifact C: Parts 1 and 3 of Final Analysis Project

The *Final Analysis Project* was carried out for the course entitled Language Assessment of English Language Learners (ELLs). An ELL student in the General English Conversation for Employees and Spouses at Vanderbilt University was observed in order to evaluate her stage of English language acquisition and gather information about her cultural and linguistic background. The Michigan English Test (MET) and the Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM) were used to assess the student's level of English proficiency and results from these two assessments were compared.

Artifact D: Midterm Exam for Language Assessment of English Language Learners (ELLs)

In this artifact, I demonstrated my understanding of language assessment of ELLs. The first question in the midterm exam was concerned with the evaluation of the Bilingual Verbal Ability Test (BVAT). Using the examples from the test and its technical manuals and what I learned from the course readings, I drew conclusions about its test reliability and validity as well as its intended use. The second question required me to decide the oral English language proficiency level of ESA, a newly arriving ELL student, according to a storytelling transcript from her. For this question, I made an instructional plan for ESA based on my analysis of her English proficiency.

Learner

To obtain an adequate understanding of an ELL student, teachers need to adopt multiple assessment tools to measure his/her English language proficiency and explore his/her cultural, linguistic, and educational background. Especially, the insights gained through the exploration of students' experiences, knowledge, and skills help teachers to make appropriate pedagogical adaptations that better meet the educational needs of learners and promote their success in the classroom. The Student Background Survey I designed for the *Final Analysis Project* yielded valuable information regarding her sociocultural background, the conditions

under which the student achieved her current level of English language proficiency, and her experiences of using her native language and English. With this information, I could design meaningful instructional plans that accommodate her needs and tap into the assets she brings to the classroom.

Learning Context

Moving from one's home country to the United States is accompanied by the acculturation process. Various acculturation experiences of individuals can result in assimilation, adaptation, or deculturation. The feelings of isolation and frustration and students' perceptions of their own cultural identities strongly affect their learning. In the *Midterm Exam for Language Assessment of English Language Learners (ELLs)*, given the scenario of ESA, I decided to know more about her biopsychosocial, education, and language history. With the information about these aspects, I could build connections between the instruction and her past learning experiences and cultural identity and help with her acculturation process.

Curriculum

Results from various language assessments can always inform teachers' decisions on the curriculum. They reveal the strengths and weaknesses in leaners' language proficiency so that teachers can tailor their instruction to accommodate to the needs of different learners. In the *Midterm Exam for Language Assessment of English Language Learners (ELLs)*, I developed an instructional plan for ESA that focused on the development of vocabulary and grammar knowledge as well as oral fluency. The identification of her strengths in reading and writing provided a foundation on which I could build her oral language skills. Because the development in different language skills benefits one another, the student could benefit from a curriculum that integrates them.

Assessment

Both standardized language tests and observational assessment can measure learners'

language proficiency. However, no language assessment can offer a whole picture of a learner's linguistic abilities. For example, standardized language tests often fail to assess learners' ability to communicate for social and academic purposes in authentic contexts. In the *Final Analysis Project*, I compared the differences between the MET Speaking Assessment and the SOLOM in test administration and scoring rubric as well as the results from both assessments. Such a comparison made me realize that as teachers we should be aware of the aspects of language proficiency that a certain language assessment cannot tell us about and base our conclusion on multiple samples of learners' language.

Domain 4: Identity and Context

Artifact E: Community Field Work

This artifact shows my understanding about the impact of communities and language heritages on students' identity formation and their learning. The field trip to local immigrant communities in Nashville was a genuinely eye-opening experience for me. I was amazed by the variety of languages used in publicly displayed texts such as posters, newspapers, and food product labels. Being part of the funds of knowledge, transnational literacy—the written language practices by immigrants that extend beyond national borders—represents a great resource for culturally responsive instruction. Therefore, I explored the pedagogical values of transnational literacy in this artifact.

The creation of a socioculturally supportive **environment** is critical for the academic success of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students. Pedagogy, curriculum, and classroom discourse that are based on the western culture can marginalize language minority students and jeopardize their chance of success in schools. Thus, teachers need to take into account the needs, knowledge, experience, culture, and languages of different **learners** when planning, instructing, and assessing in order to make learning experiences significant to them. The classroom is not only the place where learners acquire knowledge and skills but also the place where their identity are formed. In light of identity formation of learners from diverse backgrounds, I consider the integration of transnational and community literacy into the **curriculum** a worthwhile endeavor to better engage them and show respect to their home culture and language. In the *Community Field Work*, I made several suggestions about how to apply examples of community literacy. For example, translation tasks can be conducted to promote the growth of ELL students' literacy skills (e.g., translating and writing) in both their home languages and English.

The integration of transnational and community literacy into the curriculum provides ample opportunities for students to demonstrate knowledge and capabilities that they cannot

demonstrate otherwise. For example, learners with different cultural and language backgrounds to the host culture may be constantly engaged in code-switching such as translating news in an English newspaper into their home language for their parents with limited English proficiency. If teachers only judge the abilities of students from their performance in culturally biased classrooms and tests, they cannot get an accurate picture of what their students are actually capable of. **Assessment** needs to be conducted in various ways and information about learners' knowledge and skills needs to be gathered from multiple sources. Using examples of transnational and community literacy offers another source of assessment and builds a connection between learners' home, community, and schools. For teachers, they should add the role of researchers to themselves so that they can discover more about the cultural and linguistic assets which effectively informs their teaching.

Domain 5: Language Proficiency

I use the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 to analyze my English proficiency level in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. According this criterion, my speaking falls between advanced-low and advanced-mid level. I am able to handle formal and informal conversations over various topics ranging from school, home, and leisure to current events and academic interests. Generally, I can maintain substantial flow and use communicative strategies such as circumlocution and rephrasing. I can produce paragraph-length discourse and use extensive vocabulary in particular areas of specialization and interests. I can convey meanings in my speaking with accuracy and clarity to native speakers, although self-correction for grammar can be noticed sometimes.

My listening skill reaches advanced high level. I am able to understand conventional narrative and descriptive texts and complex factual material. I can usually grasp the major points of argumentative speech in areas of special knowledge (e.g. the field of second language learning and teaching). Additionally, I am able to derive meaning from oral texts about unfamiliar topics.

For reading, my English proficiency achieved the superior level. I am able to understand texts dealing with a variety of topics and in different genres. My command of generic and specialized vocabulary, complex grammatical structures, and knowledge of discourse and the target cultural enable me to explore familiar and unfamiliar subjects. I am able to understand lengthy texts that bear professional or literary nature, but texts with deeply embedded cultural references can pose some challenges to me.

With respect to writing in English, my proficiency level falls between advanced high and superior. I am able to write for formal and informal purposes ranging from emails to friends and professors to abstract academic papers and tailor my language to different audiences. I can use effective organization (e.g., cause and effect, comparison, chronology) to develop explanation and arguments and write extensively about particular topics of interests.

Varied grammatical structures and vocabulary are used in my writing. However, I occasionally demonstrate errors (both grammatical and lexical) and fail to develop arguments that are coherent enough.

Through my process of learning English, I constantly diversify my experiences of using the language to increase my competence in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Coming to the States means immersing myself in an environment where the target language is used in a wide variety of contexts. I converse with native English speakers about topics of culture and interests, discuss critical issues in the field of education with my professors and peers, watch plenty of TV dramas and movies in English, read young adult novels and academic papers, visit various English websites to search for useful information, and write to communicate in everyday life or for academic purposes. I believe that the four language skills are intertwined and especially growth in reading ability can significantly facilitate progress in the other three areas. Through reading, I gain valuable knowledge with respect to grammar, vocabulary, discourse, semantics, pragmatics, and culture. In sum, I consider learning a second language a joyful and rewarding endeavor that requires and is worthy of life-long persistence.

Domain 6: Learning

Artifact F: Case Study of an ELL

In the *Case Study of an ELL*, the language data collected from an immigrant student in Nashville Community College was analyzed to assess her level of proficiency in English. This artifact shows my comprehension about second language acquisition and how I apply this knowledge to facilitate language learning. I used Vygotsky's sociocultural theory as a theoretical framework to explain the student's process of second language acquisition, taking her social interactions in and outside the ESL classroom, level of self-regulation, and motivations into account.

Second language acquisition does not occur at the same rate among **learners** and is affected greatly by factors such as **learning context**. When analyzing learners' second language acquisition process, it is necessary for teachers to examine their cultural and linguistic backgrounds, past educational experiences, motivations, and the learning environments where they get exposure to the target language. Contrary to the cognitive understanding of second language learning, the sociocultural theory views second language learning as a process that involves social interaction, with language mediating cognitive functions of leaners. In the *Case Study of an ELL*, the immigrant student being observed got scaffolded help from social interactions that occurred in various settings ranging from the ESL classroom to places outside the school and with different people-native English speakers and other ELL students. Additionally, self-regulation regarding certain grammatical features detected in her speech proved that she took control of her mental processes.

The dimensions of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics are key elements of language acquisition and proficiency. As language is very interactive and socially dynamic by nature, it is important for teachers to implement informal **assessment** to understand learners' grasp of these interrelated dimensions. In the *Case Study of an ELL*, all of the linguistic data was collected from the interviews I conducted with the student, which

captured her language usage in real social contexts.

The **curriculum** needs to be tailored to the learners' strengths and weaknesses as well as various factors that contribute to their acquisition of the target language. Because all methods to second language teaching have both advantages and drawbacks, I decided to take an eclectic approach which combines different proposals of classroom teaching that would benefit the student's learning by addressing her needs, strengths, weaknesses, and motivation. In order to develop the learner's oral fluency and conversational skills, I planned to provide plenty of opportunities of conversational interaction. More importantly, explicit grammatical instruction and corrective feedback could increase her awareness of the accuracy of forms when she attends to meaning.

Domain 7: Content

Artifact G: Adaptation Lesson Plan

This artifact was designed for a 5th grade science academic literacy class for ELL students. In this lesson that focuses on adaption, an important concept in science, students will learn about different physical and behavioral adaptations of animals and apply literacy skills and strategies to comprehend informational texts. The aim of this lesson is to help the learners acquire the language and the skills necessary for them to communicate and learn in the subject area.

Leaner

All learners have prior knowledge gained from life experiences and schooling. However, when it comes to a particular content topic, some learners may have little or no prior knowledge about it. Additionally, as some words have different meanings when used in everyday life and in content areas, knowing merely what they mean outside the academic settings could lead to misunderstanding of certain concepts. In this lesson about adaptations of animals, I build on ELL students' experiences of adjusting to a new environment and make a contrast between what the word "adaptation" mean in everyday life and in the subject of science in order to clear up their possible misunderstandings about the concept.

Learning Context

An interactive learning environment is created through the implementation of an activity named survivor talk where learners use different hints (i.e., small pieces of paper with key vocabulary and meanings on them) that they each have to help each other comprehend the text. Learners are encouraged to share their academic vocabulary knowledge and questions and to extend their knowledge with the help from more competent peers. In addition, by allowing students to report their questions unsolved within their small groups and leading a class discussion on them, I promote respectful classroom interactions that value individual contributions to the learning of all.

Curriculum

As vocabulary development is critical for reading comprehension in all subject matters and ELL students usually have limited academic vocabulary, explicit vocabulary instruction becomes necessary for them. In this artifact, I use direct instruction to teach students selected words that represent complex concepts that they may not encounter in their everyday experiences. To better support their understanding and retention of academic vocabulary, I include a lot of visual aids.

It is required by Tennessee Science Standards that students identify physical and behavioral adaptations that enable a variety of animals to survive in a particular environment. Therefore, a video and an informational text that introduce the adaptations of koala are included to complement the curriculum. Such inclusion provides a chance for students to apply the knowledge newly learned. Moreover, watching the video helps build students' listening comprehension skills.

Assessment

Both the content and the language need to be assessed during the class and at the conclusion of the class. Key concepts and language demands need to be linked, and a good hold on the newly learned knowledge needs to be verified by the mastery of related language functions and skills. The following performance of students are identified as evidences of learning in this particular lesson: participation in group discussions about the text; being able to answer essential questions; being able to complete the graphic organizer using necessary cognitive strategies (e.g., summarizing and paraphrasing). Also, I will carefully look through students' notes in their science log because it demonstrates what they have taken from the lesson and whether there are urgent problems in their writing.

Domain 8: Commitment and Professionalism

Artifact H: Presentation on Using Pinterest to teach ELLs

This artifact is based on the presentation by my classmates (Wenyang Sun, Ying Tang) and me at the 26th Southeast TESOL Regional Conference. The purpose of this artifact is to share our experience of using Pinterest, a Web 2.0 tool, to facilitate the learning of Chinese students in EFL classrooms. It demonstrates my commitment to providing effective instruction to English language learners by enriching my repertoire of teaching tools.

As a very influential Web 2.0 tool, Pinterest attracts numerous users by allowing them to create and share thematic picture and video collections on virtual pin boards. It provides multimedia-based input which attends to the multiple intelligences of **leaners**. Especially, it facilitates vocabulary development because learners can build connections between words and pictures and thus these words can be more deeply anchored in their memory. Using Pinterest could also bring positive changes to the **learning context**. A learner-centered and knowledge centered learning environment is established when the knowledge and skills of learners are valued and they experience continual improvement through collaboratively working on a pin board related to a discussion topic.

For foreign language teaching, the integration of authentic materials provides considerable benefits. They reflect the authentic use of the target language and link foreign language teaching to the real world. As Pinterest is used by users around the globe and a large amount of its users are native English speakers, English language learners could get greater exposure to the target language than merely reading textbooks. For teachers, the authentic materials offered by Pinterest enable them to enrich the **curriculum** and adopt a creative approach to their teaching.

With respect to **assessment**, Pinterest opens up the possibility of differentiate instruction because students are able to demonstrate the outcomes of their learning in different ways by using it. For example, they can show their vocabulary growth either by identifying the key

words in a text and pinning them on a pin board or grouping words they have learned according to their meanings on a pin board. Furthermore, Pinterest also allows teachers to assess their students' learning before, during, and after a lesson. Therefore, instruction can be better informed.

Professional development is critical for the improvement of teaching quality. The exchange of information between educational professionals and the share of educational resources can benefit both learners and the teaching community. Pinterest can connect English language teaching professionals within the same school and across schools, cities, and nations. For example, older teachers in a school can use Pinterest as a permanent online database to store their teaching materials so that novice teachers can have access to and refer to these materials when they need them. Such collaboration among educators will foster their growth in the professional knowledge of second language teaching and enhance the effectiveness of teaching for diverse learners.

Implications for Future Teaching

The artifacts presented in this portfolio show my competence in each TESOL domain through various coursework that bridge educational theories and practice. I continually broaden my knowledge of foreign language learning and teaching and apply it to the planning and implementation of teaching. I value the knowledge and skills that learners bring with them into the classroom and try to build on these assets in order to motivate and inspire learners. I think it necessary to instill the notion into learners that being a life-long learner of a second language is a joyful and rewarding endeavor. In my future teaching context, I will always try to experiment with the learning theories and teaching methodologies that I studied during my graduate study and reflect on what the students take away from my class and whether I maximize the opportunity that they reach high expectations by fully utilizing their own potentials. Furthermore, I will continue to update myself on the newest research in the field of EFL education and exchange experiences with educators within my own school, in the country, and around the world.

The significant question that I have about my future teaching context is how I will implement communicative language teaching in a highly exam-oriented educational setting. High-stake tests in China have a very strong influence on the curriculum, the teaching methodologies, and the students. EFL teachers tend to teach to the tests and make compromises over the time and effort spent on developing students' ability to use the target language for authentic communicative purposes. Such approach can be very disempowering to students and injure their chance of success in acquiring the four language skills in a balanced way. In my classroom, I will integrate the four language skills by designing authentic tasks and enrich the curriculum with materials that are appealing to the students. I am aware that the time given for the teaching of interesting authentic materials and communicative tasks that elicit language output will be limited, but I believe that it is always critical to keep students' interests in mind and to generate, and more importantly, to maintain

their passion about learning a foreign language.

Appendix A: Rebuilding Japan Lesson Plan

Lesson Plan

Xue Qiao

Lesson Topic: Rebuilding Japan (expository text)
Length of Lesson: 45-min ESL class
Background to Lesson: Students used to participate in literature circle activities to discuss novels. However, this time they will take on literature roles to explore an expository text, which can be different and more challenging. Thus, the students will meet individually with the teacher before class to talk about the work they have done and get some help and advice from the teacher.
Grade: 6

Stage 1-Desired Results

Established Goals

- ✓ 0601.6.1 Use previously learned strategies to comprehend informational texts (e.g., formulate questions before, during, and after reading; visualize, predict, identify the writer's purpose).
- ✓ 0601.6.2 Identify/infer the stated or implied main idea of an informational text and identify the details supporting it.
- ✓ 0601.6.9 Use text features to locate information and make meaning from text (e.g., headings, key words, captions, tables of contents, footnotes, illustrations).

Source: Tennessee English Language Arts Standard

Understandings:	**Essential Questions:**
Students will understand that …	➢ What devastating effects did the earthquake and tsunami in Japan in 2011 bring about?
➢ The 9.0-magnitude earthquake and tsunami in Japan in 2011 caused devastating effects, including nuclear crisis, people's deaths, ruins of homes and business, emotional trauma, etc.	➢ How did Japanese people act and what did people think on the one-year anniversary of the disaster?
➢ Although the process of recovering and rebuilding the affected areas has been exceedingly difficult for Japan, the prime minister has faith in a better future of this country.	➢ How has the process of rebuilding Japan been going?
	➢ Why do you think the prime minister of Japan used the word "reborn" in his speech? Were the damages caused by the disaster only physical damages?

Student will know…	Students will be able to …
➢ Reactions from people in the areas struck by the tsunami and the nation's prime minister on the one-year anniversary of the disaster ➢ The size, location, and effects of the quake and tsunami in Japan in 2011 ➢ The current progress of rebuilding Japan	➢ Use previously learned cognitive strategies, including questioning, summarizing, predicting, and clarifying, to comprehend the expository text ➢ Contribute to small-group and pair discussions

Key Vocabulary: destructive   pledge   magnitude   trigger   devastating   tremor   temblor   radiation

<div align="center">

Stage 2-Assessment Evidence

</div>

Performance Tasks:
- ✓ Take on literature roles, including discussion director, vocabulary enricher, investigator, and illuminator, in a literature circle of four students to help one another construct meaning from the text
- ✓ Discuss about the questions raised by the teacher and their classmates
- ✓ Complete the vocabulary worksheet

<div align="center">

Stage 3-Learning Plan

</div>

Learning Activities:
1. Students will watch the video clip *How the Japan disaster unfolded* (http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/japan/8381127/How-the-Japan-disaster-unfolded.html) at the end of the previous class to build up their background knowledge. Then they will go back home to read the news article *Rebuilding Japan* independently. They will also complete a clarification chart during and/or after their reading and bring to the class for literature circle discussions.

2. Students will take on their literature roles within their literature circles and help each other to understand the text. During their discussion of the text, students should: (1) listen to the Vocabulary Enricher to clarify the meanings of the words he/she selects, ask him/her questions about the words they find confusing, and discuss the meanings of them; (2) talk about the questions raised by the Discussion Director, share their questions and confusion, and select the "best question" (the answer to the "best question" cannot be directly found in the text, and to answer it requires relating the text to the self or the world); (3) listen to the Illustrator to explain his/her illustrations and add new elements to it if needed; (4) listen to the Investigator to talk about what he/she has found about the background information of the text and discuss how his/her findings

help to improve their understanding of the text.

3. Each literature circle will report to the teacher the words they find difficult and confusing. Before the teacher explains those words, students from different literature circles are encouraged to address the vocabulary questions raised by another circle. After the teacher explains the meanings of the confusing words by using visual aids, going back to the text, and making meaningful example sentences, students will work on a vocabulary sheet independently and then discuss the answers in pairs. After the pair discussion, the whole class as a group will look at the worksheet and read out loud the sentences on it.

4. The RoundRobin activity: the Discussion Director from each literature circle will read out the "best question" of their group and pick another circle to answer it. Each circle will have to raise one question and answer one. After all the circles have reported their "best questions", members from the picked circles will have 1-2 minutes (depending on the difficulty of the question) to think about the question posed to them and each quickly contributes one answer out loud within the circle. When the time is up, one representative from each picked circle will summarize their answer in front of the class. After listening to the answer, the circle that raises the question will decide whether it is satisfactory or not and why.

5. Students will discuss the essential questions raised by the teacher in their literature circles. During discussion, the teacher will walk around the tables and provide necessary scaffolding. After discussion, each circle will share their answers with the class.

6. Homework: (1) Include the vocabulary you learned today into your vocabulary flip book; (2) Finish reading the remaining part of the article and continue with your literature role.

Appendix

Material

Rebuilding Japan

The Asian nation continues to recover one year after a destructive earthquake and tsunami

On March 11, at 2:46 p.m., people across the nation of Japan paused for a moment of silence, prayer and reflection. The time marked exactly one year since a 9.0-magnitudeeearthquake rocked the Asian country, triggering a massive tsunami and nuclear crisis. InRikuzentakata, a siren sounded at exactly 2:46 p.m., and a Buddhist priest rang a huge bell at a temple overlooking the damaged town. At the seaside town of Onagawa, people faced the ocean and held hands in silent prayer. In Ishinomaki—the worst-hit town with 3,576 residents lost—survivors lit around 2,000 candles to mourn for the victims. Some used the anniversary as a time for closure. "Until today, I was not able to accept the reality," said Tamiko Oshimizu, who lost relatives in the tsunami. "But today, I'm going to face it and move on."

In the past year, some affected areas have been cleared or rebuilt, but much damage remains. At the national memorial ceremony, in Tokyo, Japan, that marked the one-year anniversary, Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda pledged to rebuild the island nation so it will be "reborn as an even better place."

A Devastating Disaster

The 9.0-magnitude earthquake struck Japan on March 11, 2011. The center of the quake was located about 17 miles beneath the ocean floor, in a spot 80 miles off the eastern coast of the island nation. But the tremors were felt even 230 miles away in Tokyo, Japan's capital. The quake was the most powerfultemblor to hit Japan since officials there began keeping records 140 years ago. Japan lies on the "Ring of Fire"—an area rimming the Pacific Ocean. About 90 percent of the world's earthquakes take place in that region. The 9.0-magnitude quake ranks as the fourth largest quake in the world since 1900, scientists say.

The earthquake set off a tsunami with waves three stories high. Entire cities were swept away. The disaster killed more than 19,000 people. Tens of thousands of homes and businesses were ruined. Adding to the devastation, damage at Japan's Fukushimi Daiichi power plant caused some radiation to leak out. Radiation is energy that can be harmful at high levels. People fled their homes to avoid exposure.

(to be continued)

Source: http://www.timeforkids.com/news/rebuilding-japan/32631

Role Sheets

(adapted from the sample role sheets in Harvey Daniels' book *Literature Circles –Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom)*

DISCUSSION DIRECTOR

Name:

Your Responsibilities:

Your job is to develop a list of questions that your group might want to discuss about today's reading. Don't worry about the small details: your task is to help people talk over the big ideas in the reading and share reactions. Usually the best discussion questions come from your own thoughts, feelings, and concerns as you read, which you can list below, during or after your reading. Or you may use some of the general questions below to develop topics for your group.

My Questions for Today:

1.

2.

3.

4.

Sample Questions:

What was going through your mind while you read this?

Did this article remind you of any real-life experiences?

Which part of the text drew your attention or surprised you?

What questions do you have about the text?

What are the one or two most important ideas?

Has this text changed your opinion about something?

INVESTIGATOR

Name:

Your Responsibilities:

Your job is to dig up some background information on the topic related to your reading. For today's reading, you might want to include: a map that shows the areas affected by the earthquake and tsunami, pictures that show changes of the affected areas, texts that help your group members learn more about the disaster, video clips (you might retell what you saw in the video clips to your group members), etc.

VOCABULARY ENRICHER

Name:

Your Responsibilities:

Your job is to be on the lookout for a few especially important words-new, interesting, important, puzzling-words that members of the group need to notice and understand. Jot down their definition either from the text or from a dictionary or other source. If you want to use your home language or draw a picture to explain the meaning of a word, don't hesitate to do so. Use any way that helps yourself and your group members understand and remember the words!

ILLUSTRATOR

Name:

Your Responsibilities:

Your job is to draw some kind of picture related to the reading. It can be a sketch, cartoon, poster, diagram, or flow chart. You can draw a picture of something that's discussed specifically in your reading, or something that the reading reminded you of, or a picture that conveys any idea or feeling you got from the reading. Have fun!

Clarification Chart

Text	Question/Confusion	Strategy	Clarification

Steps for clarifying: Ignore? Keep reading to see if it gets clear? Reread what is unclear or the section before the unclear part? Connect to what you already know or have read? Get outside help?

Vocabulary Worksheet

Match the words with their meanings:

destructive	a small earthquake
trigger	causing a lot of damage and destruction
devastating	the size of an earthquake
pledge	an earthquake
magnitude	causing great damage, harm, or injury
temblor	powerful and very dangerous rays
radiation	to make sth happen suddenly
tremor	to formally promise to give or do sth

Fill in the Blanks:

1. Somehow we never felt the earth _____ which shook the island during the morning!

2. High levels of _____ can damage cells.

3. Modern weapons have _____ power.

4. Nuts can _____ a violent allergic reaction.

5. The _____ of the earthquake in Japan was astonishing.

6. The national leaders _____ to reduce the number of hungry people.

7. Oil spills are having a _____ effect on coral reefs in the ocean.

Appendix B: Inquiry Lesson Presentation on Genetic Engineering
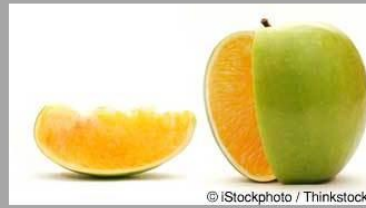
Investigating Genetically Modified Organisms
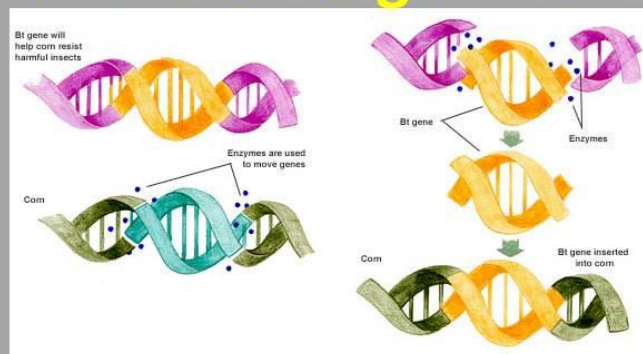
Learning Objectives

- Define genetically engineered organisms
- Explore the benefits and risks of research on genetically modified organisms
- Discuss whether to permit or restrict research into genetically modified organisms

Genetically Modified Foods

Genetically Modified Foods

Advantages:

- Pest resistance
- Disease resistance
- Cold tolerance
- Drought tolerance/salinity tolerance
- Nutrition
- Pharmaceuticals

pest resistance, herbicide tolerance, disease resistance, cold tolerance, drought tolerance/salinity tolerance, nutrition, pharmaceuticals

But…
Can these advantages motivate customers to buy genetically modified foods?
Can these advantages persuade environmentalists to support genetically modified foods?

Voice from the opposite site can always call the idea of genetically modified foods into doubt…

Genetically Modified Animals
The Hunger Games Scenario

1) Take a poll
2) Read the article
3) What facts have you discovered about genetically modified animals and the research on them?

Should we support research into genetically modified animals?

Within your discussion group:

Two people take on the "for" side while the other two take on the "against" side. Both sides should raise questions about the arguments provided by each other.

Appendix C: Parts 1 and 3 of Final Analysis Project

Part 1 Description of the English Language Learner

The subject of this study is a 28-year-old female (I will name her Sally) from Japan whose native language is Japanese. Sally has been in the United States for six months. The reason why she came to the United States is that she needed to take care of her husband who is currently a Vanderbilt Law School student and will study at the university for one year. Before coming to the United States, Sally obtained her bachelor's degree in domestic laws in a university in Japan and had been working in the legal department in a company for several years. The higher education that Sally received suggests that she has a very high level of literacy in her native language.

According to the information collected from the Student Background Survey (see Appendix), Sally has been studying English for 10 years-from middle school to university. The EFL education she received focused on the teaching of reading, writing, and grammar. Limited effort was made to promote students' listening and speaking skills, the areas which Sally has been struggling with and always wants to improve. She perceives her own English proficiency in speaking and listening as intermediate-low and reading and writing as intermediate-mid. However, Sally holds a positive attitude towards learning English: she enjoys watching and TV shows in English, reading English magazines, and talking with native English speakers.

The setting where Sally currently receives ESL service is General English Conversation, a tuition-free course taught by a language teaching specialist from the English Language

Center and offered to Vanderbilt employees and VU community spouses/partners who are non-native Speakers of English. The 11-week course lasts two hours per week and focuses on improving students' listening and speaking skills in English in the workplace and at home. The students in Sally's class are from Korea, China, Turkey, and Ukraine, and their levels of oral language proficiency in English vary, ranging from Level 1 to Level 4 according to the Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM). During the first class, a Needs Analysis survey was conducted with the students in order for the instructor to find out their learning needs and plan for lessons accordingly. According to the Needs Analysis, Sally wants to focus on her accuracy and fluency when speaking and phrases used in speaking in different situations during the course. As a house wife, she needs the language used for basic interpersonal communication in daily life, including going to the grocery store, ordering food in a restaurant, speaking with the landlord/apartment manager, talking in class and to native English speakers, etc. Unfortunately, being a house wife also means that Sally has limited opportunities to communicate with native English speakers frequently outside the classroom. However, she is a highly motivated learner and very determined to improve her speaking and listening skills.

Part 3 Stage of Language Acquisition

One Standardized Assessment and an observational protocol were used to measure

Sally's English language proficiency. The Michigan English Test, an international

examination for adults and adolescents which assesses general English language proficiency

in social, educational, and workplace contexts, was used as the standardized assessment to

test Sally's listening and reading skills as well as language usage (grammar and vocabulary).

The Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM) was used as the observational

protocol to assess Sally's oral language performance in an everyday conversation. In this part,

results from the two assessments will be interpreted and compared to determine which type of

assessment is likely to yield a more accurate picture of Sally's English language proficiency.

Psychometric Property of the MET

According to the MET 2012 Report (2013), the MET emphasizes the ability of

examinees to effectively communicate in English. This paper-and-pencil test includes 135

choice questions in two sections: Section I (Listening, 45 min) and Section II (Reading and

Grammar, 90 min). These questions assess the ability of examinees to comprehend

conversations and a variety of written texts in social, educational, and workplace contexts.

The MET Speaking Test is optional and taken before the other sections of the MET. It takes

about ten minutes to complete and includes five tasks which assess the test taker's ability to

produce comprehensible speech in response to a number of different topics.

A reliability figure of 0.80 and above is acceptable for high-stakes tests such as the MET.

In the MET 2012 Report (2013), the reliability and standard error of measurement (SEM) for

the two MET sections in each monthly administration from February to December are presented. The reliability figures in both sections are consistently above 0.90, which proves excellent consistency of measurement. The SEM estimates as a proportion of the 80-point scale are very small, ranging from 1.69 to 3.16. This suggests high precision of the measurement and the scores obtained.

The MET measures a range of proficiency levels on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) from A2 to C1. The MET scaled scores for Section I and II correspond to these CEFR levels and the correspondences are developed from standard setting research conducted by Cambridge Michigan Language Assessments (CaLMA, 2013). Thus, the descriptors of the CEFR scales serve as the specification of the skills covered in the MET and confirm content validity of the test. From my experience of using the test, face validity of it is manifest.

Interpretation of the Results from the MET

Table 1

Results of the MET Sample Test A

Section	Number of Items	Raw Score	Likely CEFR Level
I: Listening	60 total	45	B2
II: Grammar and Reading	75 total	56	B2

Table 1 presents Sally's scores of the MET Sample Test A and her likely Common European Framework level of general English language proficiency. According to the MET Sample Test Instructions (2012), an examinee can add up all of his/her correct answers for

Section I and Section II as the section scores. If the Section I score falls between 40 and 50,

the examinee is likely to receive a scaled score that corresponds to CEFR level B2. If the

Section II score falls between 55 and 67, the examinee is likely to receive a scaled score that

corresponds to CEFR level B2. As Sally scored 45 and 56 respectively for Sections I and II,

her English language proficiency probably reaches CEFR level B2. The description for this

level is as follows (CaMLA, 2013).

> **Listening** Can understand recordings in standard dialect likely to be encountered in
>
> social, professional, or academic life and identify speaker viewpoints and attitudes as
>
> well as the information content. Can follow the essentials of lectures, talks, and reports
>
> and other forms of academic/professional presentation that are propositionally and
>
> linguistically complex.

> **Reading** Can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of
>
> reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources
>
> selectively. Can understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems
>
> in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints.

The Speaking Prompt Sample for the MET Speaking Test was used to assess Sally's oral

language. She was rated on her answers to all the five tasks of the test using the MET

Speaking Scoring Rubric (see Table 2), which describes test performance at five levels of

ability (0-4) in three scoring criteria: task completion, language resources, and

intelligibility/delivery.

Table 2

MET Speaking Scoring Rubric

Level	Task Completion	Language Resources	Intelligibility/delivery
0	Little too no response is produced or the response is not at all relevant to the task.	Insufficient language resources to produce any meaningful response.	Response is not comprehensible even to a sympathetic listener.
1	Response may be somewhat relevant to the task but is often very short and simple. Has difficulty completing the task.	Communicates in simple or short sentences. Makes basic grammar and word choice errors. Vocabulary range is very limited.	Pauses, false starts, and reformulations are frequent. Response contains many hesitations. Speech requires listener effort.
2	Response is generally relevant and some detail is provided to address most aspects of the task. May have some difficulty completing the task.	Simple sentence patterns are generally controlled. Speech may contain noticeable errors but the mistakes tend not to interfere with intended meaning. Uses some relevant vocabulary to respond to the task.	Response is sometimes hesitant and there are pauses or reformulations as the speaker searches for words or ideas. Speech is generally clear and understandable but listener effort may be required in some stretches.
3	Response is directly relevant to the task. Response completes the task and provides general details but not original or extensive supporting detail.	Can produce some complex structures but not with consistent control. Response does not contain mistakes that cause misunderstanding. Uses vocabulary that is directly appropriate to the task.	Some hesitation in speech but no long pauses. Speech is generally clear and understandable with only a few individual words being unclear.
4	Response is directly relevant to the task. Response fully completes the	Speaker demonstrates use of complex sentences and this language is usually controlled. Overall, errors	Delivery is usually smooth with little hesitation. Speech is clear and easy to understand.

	task and provides extensive supporting detail.	are infrequent and not distracting. Response contains a broad range of vocabulary that is appropriate to the task	

Table 3

Sally's Scores for the MET Speaking Test

Task	Task Completion	Language Resources	Intelligibility/delivery
1 Describe the picture (60 seconds)	2	3	2
2 Tell about a personal experience about a topic related to the picture (60 seconds)	2	2	2
3 Give a personal opinion about a topic related to the picture (60 seconds)	3	2	2
4 Explain the advantages and disadvantages related to a situation (90 seconds)	3	2	2
5 Give an opinion about a topic and try to convince the examiner (90 seconds)	2	2	2

Table 3 presents Sally's scores for the MET Speaking Test. These scores suggest that

Sally was capable of completing the tasks. However, her response was not very elaborate

because she sometimes failed to provide sufficient supporting details or produce extensive

discourse. The ideas expressed were logically connected, but when Sally described the

picture in Task 1, there was a lack of coherence in her description. The variety in the syntactic

structures that she used and her vocabulary range were limited. Syntactic and word choice

errors as well as hesitation and lack of fluency were noticeable in her speech. Additionally,

inaccurate pronunciation made her oral output unintelligible occasionally.

Interpretation of the Results from the SOLOM

The SOLOM provides a five-point scale for five domains in a student's oral language performance: listening comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, grammar, and pronunciation. Table 4 shows Sally's scores on the five-point scale and her overall level of oral language proficiency. During the assessment, the conversation centered on the personal life experiences of the student. Sally was able to understand what was said at a slower than normal speed. However, her speech was often disrupted by her search for the correct manner of expression, and conversation was often restricted by her inadequate vocabulary. Her pronunciation was basically intelligible but required concentration of the listener. For grammar, frequent errors were noticeable and obscured meaning occasionally.

Table 4

Sally's Scores for the SOLOM

Comprehension	Fluency	Vocabulary	Pronunciation	Grammar	Overall Level
3	2.5	2.5	3	3	3

Comparison of the Results from the Two Assessments

The MET Speaking Test and the SOLOM yield similar results about the student's oral language proficiency. Both the MET Speaking Scoring Rubric and the SOLOM measure the domains of vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and pronunciation and rate the student's command of oral language on a five-level scale for each of these domains. The differences between the two speaking assessments reside in the following aspects: (1) the MET Speaking Test is timed while the SOLOM is not; (2) listening comprehension in conversational interaction is

measured in the SOLOM, while it is not rated in the MET Speaking Test since listening has

its separate section in the MET; (3) the MET Speaking Test measures the examinee's ability

to effectively complete a task and to produce coherent discourse (i.e. the ability to elaborate

and provide relevant supporting detail) while the SOLOM does not. Considering the

similarity and differences in the two assessments, both assessments offer an accurate picture

of Sally's oral language proficiency, and the results from both can complement each other.

After doing such a comparison, I decided that Sally's oral English language proficiency

level is intermediate-low. By contrast, Sally's listening and reading skills are relatively high,

probably reaching CEFR level B2 according to her scores in the MET sample test. However,

due to the lack of writing samples from the student, her writing ability cannot be measured in

this study.

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Appendix

Student Background Survey

Student's Name _____   Country of Origin _____

Native Language _____   Age _____

How long have you been in the United States? _____

What brought you to the United States?_____

What is the highest level of education you have completed? _____

How would you describe your current English level? Circle the levels you think you are at.

Speaking / Listening	Advanced	Intermediate-High	Intermediate-Mid	Intermediate-Low	Beginner
Reading	Advanced	Intermediate-High	Intermediate-Mid	Intermediate-Low	Beginner
Writing	Advanced	Intermediate-High	Intermediate-Mid	Intermediate-Low	Beginner

How long have you been learning English? _____

Have you ever learned a subject or course that is taught in English?

What do you enjoy about learning English?

What are the areas you are struggling with when you are learning English?

Could you describe the English education you received in your home country? How English is taught in your country based on your experience?

Appendix D: Midterm Exam for Language Assessment of English Language Learners

(ELLs)

Question 1 – You have been asked to participate on a committee that analyzes assessments of English language proficiency that your district is considering adopting. The district intends to use the assessment to measure ELL students' L_1 AND English language ability within an <u>academic setting</u>. Your assigned task for the committee is to analyze the Bilingual Verbal Ability Test (BVAT) (available at the Peabody library course reserves under Pray/ELL Program) and evaluate it in terms of both its validity and its reliability for this intended use. Support your conclusions with the following:

      1) Examples from the assessment,
      2) Examples from the assessment's technical/administration manual,
      3) Citations from course readings, and
      4) <u>One independent source of information</u>. (3 page limit)

Question 2 – You are a 4th grade teacher and have a student (bilingual Spanish/English) in your class named ESA who is <u>very quiet and reserved</u> during class discussions. She is new to the district and has not taken the ELDA but her TELPA score (taken upon enrollment to the district 6 months ago) places her at a <u>Level 4</u> according to the TN levels of English language proficiency. You know that the TELPA scores are weighted heavily upon <u>reading and writing</u> ability, so you have questions regarding your student's oral language ability. In order to <u>fully understand ESA's oral language ability</u>, you have recorded and transcribed her tell a story based upon a wordless picture book, Frog, Where are you? (see attached transcript). Please do the following:

1) Describe what you know of <u>the intake process at MNPS</u>.

2) Determine what more you will need to know about this students English language proficiency.

3) Describe the records you will use to assess ESA's English oral language proficiency.

4) Please come to a conclusion regarding her level of English oral language proficiency according to the Tennessee levels of English language proficiency. Support your conclusions with a copy of the protocol (i.e. rubric) you will use to measure her ELP.

 5) Discuss possible instructional decisions you would recommend based upon this sample. (3 page limit (not including attachments)

Question 1

The Bilingual Verbal Ability Test (BVAT) is a standardized and individually administered assessment for measuring bilingual verbal ability and the combination of cognitive/academic language abilities possessed by bilingual individuals. It contains three tests: Picture Vocabulary, Oral Vocabulary, and Verbal Analogies. The BVAT has an advantage over English-only assessment because it can determine whether students have the conceptual knowledge assessed by certain items in either English or their first language (Munoz-Sandoval et al, 1998). For example, in Picture Vocabulary for the ELP and BVA cluster, the items "sphinx", "igloo", and "panning gold" can measure students' grasp of academic language in both languages. Such an equitable assessment of bilingual students' verbal ability is very helpful because teachers can plan for optimal levels of support and academic challenge by measuring the skills and knowledge students have in their native language (Herrera et al, 2007).

To improve validity of standardized test for English language learners, bias with regard to linguistic or cultural influences on the items and modifications or accommodations for ELLs should be taken into account through the test development process (Gottlieb, 2006). In Picture Vocabulary, I discovered some culturally biased items, such as "igloo" and "panning gold". Moreover, in Oral Vocabulary, although some items are translatable from English to Chinese, finding the synonyms for these words (e.g. car and lunar) is hard.

The BVAT Comprehensive Manual (1998) reports that the calculation of reliability statistics for each age level from age 5 to age 80 and older is based on the data from subjects at that level in the norming sample of monolingual English speakers. The test reliabilities which were calculated by the split-half procedure are generally in the high .80s for the tests and in the mid .90s for the clusters (Munoz-Sandoval et al, 1998). The alternate-form procedure was also used to estimate test reliability. 542 bilingual subjects who varied in language dominance were administered the standard BVAT procedure (English first, followed by Spanish retesting of the items missed, and vice

versa) for two forms of the test. The median BVA reliability across the 12 grade levels is .84 (Munoz-Sandoval et al, 1998).

Content, concurrent, predictive, and construct validity of the BVAT are also reported in the BVAT Comprehensive Manual (1998). Content validity of the BVAT was examined by investigating the types of items and the requirements for performance demanded by each test (i.e., receptive and expressive language skills). The complexity of verbal ability skills required by each test varies, ranging from less complex verbal processing to more complex verbal analogical reasoning (Munoz-Sandoval et al, 1998). The use of cluster concept contributes to the content validity of the BVAT by ensuring a broad sampling of abilities what are aligned with the criterion behavior. Additionally, the degree to which the various translations are comparable and the extent to which items cannot be appropriately translated from English to another language also relate to the content validity of the BVAT across languages. The translation and deletion of items in each language was based on the consensus of professional translators and review from field testers (Munoz-Sandoval et al, 1998).

Concurrent validity studies were conducted with students across grade levels ranging from kindergarten to a secondary school. The criterion measures are measures of verbal ability drawn from prominent language proficiency and cognitive ability scales, such as Language Assessment Scales (LAS) and the IDEA Oral Language Test I-English (IDEA) (Munoz-Sandoval et al, 1998). Trend towards high correlations between the BVAT English Language Proficiency (ELP) cluster and some measures of verbal ability is demonstrated in some studies. However, unexpected sample selection processes deflate the resultant correlations in others (Munoz-Sandoval et al, 1998). As for predictive validity, across grade levels from grade 1 to college, the median correlations between the BVAT ELP cluster and five broad achievement measures in Woodcock-Johnson-Revised Test of Achievement (WJ-R)-reading, mathematics, writing, content knowledge, and total achievement range from .65 to .85 (Munoz-Sandoval et al, 1998). Furthermore, an increase in correlations with progress through school reflects

the growing importance of verbal ability for academic success (Munoz-Sandoval et al, 1998).

The test review by Charles W. Stansfield, president of Second Language Testing, in the Mental Measurements Yearbook states some cautions about the use of the BVAT. First, it is important to not extend the BVAT beyond its intended use. Second, more reliability and validity studies that draw from the bilingual population are expected. Third, the BVAT is not truly a measure of language proficiency in any language. Personally, I think one of the greatest drawbacks of the BVAT is that it only measures part of a student's cognitive/academic language. Thus, the limit of content may not be beneficial for long-term instructional planning.

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Question 2

1)Federal law requires that all students whose first language is not English assessed for English language proficiency. When non-English speaker parents and their kids come to the ELD center, parents need to fill in the Home Language Survey which is available in a number of languages other than English. The students will be assessed using the TELPA to determine whether they qualify for the EL program. The newcomer program lasts 1 year. After ELL students exit from this program, they will go to their zoned schools.

2) To develop an adequate understanding of ESA, I need more information regarding her biopsychosocial, education, and language history. The biopsychosocial history involves many critical factors that powerfully influence student academic success, including health, physical and mental readiness for instruction, self-concept, self-esteem, social and cultural identity, and student motivation (Herrera et al, 2007). As a teacher of a newly arriving student, I need to know the assets brought by the student that I can build on. A student's prior education history will give me an idea about the conditions in which student achievement occurred and his/her existing knowledge and skills. Additionally, language history will gather important information about a student's prior language acquisition experiences, first language skills, and language use patterns (Herrera et al, 2007). With all this information, I will be able to see what the cause for ESA's quietness and reservedness during class discussions is: Is it because of her limited oral English proficiency or her personalities? Does she lack the discussion skills demanded in the mainstream classroom? Does her previous schooling experience emphasize authority that she is not comfortable with expressing her own opinions? Apart from the results from TELPA, to get a multidimensional look at ESA's English language proficiency, I need to observe how she uses English within varied academic and social contexts.

3) The transcript of ESA's storytelling based upon the wordless picture book *Frog,*

Where are you? offers information regarding her oral fluency, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary knowledge. Frequent retracing and self-correction in her speech indicates her limited oral fluency, but there are not many unfilled pauses. Unintelligible words or speech sometimes appear. For grammar, ESA demonstrates a good grasp of past tense verbs. She uses simple sentence structures most of the time, and there are a lot of run-on sentences in her speech. With respect to vocabulary, use of inappropriate words and phrases (e.g. ramp, lift, ocean, in the sky) is detected in ESA's speech, but she can basically use correct verbs to describe the actions of the characters. Her storytelling covers most of the events in the story, but ideas are not expressed in a well-organized and coherent manner.

4) I used the Expressive Communication Rubric to measure the student's English oral language proficiency. Such a rubric assesses the aspects of message effectiveness, language structure, vocabulary, and pronunciation. My rating of ESA's performance in storytelling based on this rubric is as follows:

Message effectiveness: Level 3-Able to understand most but not all of message

Language Structure: Level 2- Noticeable errors but student able to convey aspects of the message

Vocabulary: Level 2-Relies on a limited range of vocabulary to communicate

Pronunciation: Level 3-Speech is generally understandable to familiar and unfamiliar listeners

Through the evaluation of ESA's oral language proficiency, the student's weaknesses in language structure and vocabulary can be easily discovered. According to the Tennessee English Proficiency Levels, students who reach Level 3-Intermediate can communicate orally with some hesitation but have difficulty using academic vocabulary. Also, their speech is basic and contains frequent errors. Therefore, I come to the conclusion that ESA's level of English oral language proficiency is Level 3-Intermediate according to the Tennessee levels of English language proficiency.

5) As the student reaches level 4 according to her performance in the TELPA, I decide that I can build on her relatively high proficiency in reading and writing. I can promote the development of vocabulary and give explicit grammar instruction by asking her to pay attention to the new words and sentence structures that she encounters in reading. Also, I can teach story grammar by using narrative texts and asking the student to retell a story. As the student shows hesitation and reformulation in her speech, I will model fluent reading in class and provide writing exercises for her as preparation before speaking. For assessment, I would use observational protocols such as the SOLOM and the BICS and CALP to assess ESA's English oral language skills on a continual basis.

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Expressive Communication Rubric

Student Name: _____ESA_____

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Message effectiveness	Unable to understand intent/meaning.	Difficult to understand.	Able to understand most but not all of message. ✖	Message is easily understood.
Language structure	Multiple errors with word order and grammar.	Noticeable errors but student able to convey aspects of the message. ✖	Uses mostly correct structures with some errors.	Use of language structures is similar to that of a native speaker.
Vocabulary	Incorrect word choices and/or limited vocabulary hinder social and academic communication.	Relies on a limited range of vocabulary to communicate. ✖	Vocabulary is not usually conspicuous but is rarely specific or elaborate.	Varied types of words, including idioms, are used with facility.
Pronunciation	Speech is often unintelligible.	Speech is understandable with careful listening and known context.	Speech is generally understandable to familiar and unfamiliar listeners. ✖	Speech pronunciation is similar to that of a native speaker.

Appendix E: Community Field Work

Community Literacy

"Transnational literacies" refers to "the written language practices of people who are involved in activities that span national boundaries" (Jimenez et al, 2009). The use of transnational literacies can be best observed in immigrant communities. This article will describe the immigrant community we visited in Nashville and discuss the importance of community literacy for teachers and possible ways of using it in instructional practices.

Description of the Community

Over the recent decade, Tennessee had a fast immigrant growth. Because of its relatively low cost of living and the availability of entry-level jobs, Nashville has become one of the popular cities in which refugees choose to resettle (Swarns, 2003). Residing in southeast Nashville, the neighborhood near Nolensville Road is characterized by the immigrant communities living there. According to the community demographic information provided by Glencliff, a high school in this neighborhood, Hispanics represent the greatest majority of the immigrant population there.

In order to collect examples of community literacy in this area, we visited several international supermarkets which supply necessities to the immigrant communities and are closely bound up with their daily life. By taking pictures of food product labels, shop signs, posters, newspapers, and advertising handouts, we gathered a rich assortment of texts written in a wide range of languages other than English, which include Arabic, Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Thai, Vietnamese, French, and Russian. This language diversity demonstrated by those public displayed texts to a great extent reveals the diversity of immigrant population living in the community. Also, it comes to our notice that Spanish is the most frequently used language among them.

The Importance of Community Literacy for Teachers

Although the educators in the United States have been undertaking reforms intended for reversing the pattern of school failure among language minority students, schooling practices have continued to marginalize students from "dominated" societal groups. Pedagogy, curriculum, and instruction reflect the monolithic classroom culture in which the unique culture carried by each individual learner is neglected, and thus cultural tensions between students and teachers are created. However, the sociocultural context of schooling is one of the significant factors that determine the academic success of language minority students, that is, whether the student is in a socioculturally supportive environment can considerably influence students' achievement in school (Thomas & Collier, 1996; Thomas & Collier, 2004).

To integrate community literacy into the curriculum is an effective way of showing respect for the language and the culture of the students. As an important source of funds of knowledge, community literacy offers a panorama of the life worlds of the students. By familiarizing themselves with the social, cultural, political, and economic realities of different cultural groups revealed by community literacy, teachers can establish a harmonious relationship with students. Another benefit that community literacy provides for teachers is that the inclusion of it can make learning in class more engaging, since students are willing to discuss things in their communities that they are familiar with and tell about the uniqueness of their home cultures.

The Integration of Community Literacy into Instructional Activities

The ways of integrating community literacy into instruction activities depend on the student population in a classroom. If the language minority students in one classroom come from the same

cultural and linguistic background, the translation of texts written in their home language into English

can be employed. If the minority student population in one classroom is culturally and linguistically

diverse, using community literacy to generate a discussion on cultural diversity would be more

practical and appropriate.

During our visit to the immigrant community near Nolensville Pike, we came across a lot of

posters and handouts written solely in Spanish or in both Spanish and English (see Figure 1 for

example). Inspired by what I have seen, I suggest to ELL teachers that students work cooperatively to

translate the monolingual texts on posters or handouts into English and redesign the patterns of the

original materials for the inclusion of English texts. This group activity can not only develop students'

translating and writing skills, but also stimulate their creativity and interest. Jimenez et al (2009) point

out that translation tasks require the negotiation of the linguistic and pragmatic choices essential for

producing the most accurate translation. Therefore, my next suggestion for designing translation tasks

would be that teachers group native English speakers and ELL students together and ask them to

mutually evaluate the translation work and give some useful advice for correction to one another.

Figure 1 T-Mobile Advertisement　　　　Figure 2 Cantonese Suki Sauce　　　　Figure 3 Soccer Fest Notice

Setting up discussions among students from a variety of backgrounds opens up opportunities for

them to learn about each other. I will use a specific example of community literacy to illustrate how to initiate such kind of discussions. Figure 2 shows a bottle of Thai-style Cantonese suki sauce whose label displays written texts in Chinese, Thai, and English. Suki is the abbreviation for sukiyaki, a word from Japanese referring to a dish in which fresh meat, seafood and vegetables are cooked in a simmering pot of broth. Interestingly, it also has its counterparts in both China (which is widely known as hot pot) and Thailand. These facts can actually inspire ELL teachers to design a cooperative learning activity by using this product label in which students from Chinese, Japanese and Thai cultural backgrounds are grouped together to have a discussion about the similarities and the differences in their food traditions. In this way, students gain opportunities to learn more about one another. Particularly, the discussion of similarities across a variety of cultures could diminish the social distance between culturally diverse students and create a welcoming classroom environment.

An instructional recommendation for using community literacy that would fit the classroom setting with culturally and linguistically diverse students is for teachers to invite people in the communities who have particular talents into the classroom. For example, Figure 3 is a notice of a soccer fest in Nashville in which an ex-soccer player from the Brazilian national team was going to join. If possible, a teacher can try contacting the organizers of this event to send an invitation or take his/her students to the fest. While the ex-soccer player is displaying his talents and talk about his past experience, students from the same linguistic background as him can play the role of interpreters for their teachers and the rest of the students by using English to explain what the guest is doing or saying. In this way, communication and speaking skills of the students will be improved.

Reflection on the Community Visit

What I have learned from our visit to the local immigrant community is that the role of teachers

could be extended to researchers. To explore the community in which the students live can really

enrich teachers' understanding of their backgrounds and provide an inspiration for creating a

culturally responsive learning environment. However, one of the major objections to incorporating

community literacy into traditional curriculum is that to identify community literacy and make lesson

plans accordingly requires extra time and work (Jimenez, 2009). Although we took numerous pictures

during our visit which lasted two hours, our knowledge about this immigrant community was far from

comprehensive. In addition, I clearly perceived that people in the community seemed to feel

uncomfortable and awkward when seeing outside strangers taking pictures of those publicly displayed

texts. This psychological distance not only reflects the estrangement between the "dominant" group

and the "dominated" group in the society, but also it indicates the lack of connection between a school

and the community it serves. Only through the accumulation of constant effort by school teachers can

this connection be established and the community participation in improving instructional materials

made possible.

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Appendix F: Case Study of an ELL

Case Study of a Non-native English Speaker

For this case study, linguistic data of a non-native speaker of English is collected and

analyzed for the purpose of determining his/her language abilities. Learner language is

described in terms of phonetics, morphology, syntax, and semantics/pragmatics. A theoretical

framework will be used to explain the learner's current stage of second language acquisition,

and a suitable instructional plan will be developed.

Description of the English Language Learner

The subject of this study is a 31 year-old female (I will name her Shakira) from Iraq

whose first language is Arabic. After her husband became a citizen of the United States in

2008, Shakira came to live in Nashville in 2009. Before coming to the United States, she

received a bachelor's degree in education in her own country and had been a teacher teaching

the Arabic language and Islamic culture to high school students for three years. She learned

some English while she was studying at university in Iraq, but the level of her English

language proficiency was very low. She complained about the low-wage job she took due to

her inability to speak English when she first arrived in the States. Right now she is studying

Conversation II and Grammar II at Nashville State Community College and hopes to become

an ESL teacher for children in an Islamic school in Charlotte after acquiring the necessary

English language skills her job requires.

During my conversations with Shakira, I found that she was very friendly and outspoken

and showed confidence when she spoke English. She took a positive attitude towards

American culture. When asked about the difference between her home culture and American culture, she said that life in the States is much easier than in her own country where the infrastructure and the welfare system need improvement urgently. Moreover, Shakira was impressed by the great educational opportunities offered in the States and the fact that age is not a serious problem for receiving the education one desires. She liked the grammar lesson she took at Nashville State Community College because of the similarities between the grammatical rules of Arabic and those of English.

Phonetic/phonological Analysis of Learner Language

After closely examining Shakira's oral performance, several discoveries were made regarding phonetics and phonology. First, Shakira's pronunciation of the aspired bilabial /p/ is not stable. She can pronounce the /p/ sound in words such as "pass," "park," and "pain" correctly, but in other cases she tends to pronounce /p/ as /b/. For example, "pardon" is pronounced as /bardən/, "package" as /bækɪdʒ/, and "apartment" as /abartmənt/.

Second, when pronouncing the alveolar stops-/t/ and /d/ at the end of words which are not followed by another word starting with /t/, Shakira usually changes /t/ or /d/ into /ts/. The evidence is shown as follows:

(1) phonetic transcription: du yu go tu ðə bɛts aftə mɪdnɛɪts

   English orthography: Do you go to the bed after midnight?

(2) phonetic transcription: wi ar dɪfərənts

   English orthography: We are different.

(3) phonetic transcription: bʌts ɪn mæ kʌntrɪ nɔts vɛrɪ gud

English orthography: but in my country, not very good.

Third, when /t/ is used inter-vocalically, Shakira changes it into /l/ sound. For instance, "little" is pronounced as /lɪləl/, "bottle" as /bɔləl/ and "water" as /wɔlɚ/. Fourth, she always trills /r/ in English words. For example, she pronounces "country" as /kʌnt<trl>i/, "sorry" as /sɔ<trl>i/, and "salary" as /sælə<trl>i/. Also, it can be noticed that the lax vowel /ɪ/ in these words becomes the tense vowel /i/. Fifth, when /v/ appears inter-vocalically, Shakira tends to pronounce it as /f/. For example, "service" is pronounced as /sərfəs/ and "supervisor" as /syupɚfayzɚ/.

Despite the above-mentioned deficits in her pronunciation, a large part of the words are articulated in a correct manner. When more attention is paid to Shakira's speech, it can be discovered that she is inclined to insert schwa into her between two words in a sentence, which may indicate that she is searching for the next word to say during speech. See the following examples:

(4) phonetic transcription: bʌ tu yur hʌsbənd ay θɪ ŋk its nɔtə: dɪfɪkəlt

English orthography: But to your husband, I think it's not difficult.

(5) phonetic transcription: ðæ told mi yu dont d<trl> ɪŋkə: ə lo ɔf wɔlɚ

English orthography: They told me you don't drink a lot of water.

Morphological/Morphophonological Analysis of Learner Language

From the data I have obtained, Shakira is conscious of the plural forms of irregular nouns and the morphological rule of adding the plural suffix –*s* to regular countable nouns. She can produce such plural nouns as "books," "kids," "years," "women," and "children". However,

she makes some mistakes sometimes:

(1) We just have two *hour* in the day or four *hour* in all the day

(2) I teach two *lesson*.

(3) a lot of *tree*

As for the forms of verbs, Shakira never uses the third person singular suffix and she produces such sentences as "he live here," "he have driver license," and "he go out and say", in which the verbs are not inflected for person. When it comes to verb tenses, the correct past tense verbs Shakira produces reveal that she is clear about the rule that regular verbs are made past tense by adding the suffix *–ed*. What is significant about her acquisition of the verb tense is that no overgeneralization of the *–ed* rule has been detected. In other words, Shakira can form past tense verbs with irregular inflections correctly. Those accurate examples include "became," "took," "went," and "told". However, Shakira frequently uses the simple present in her oral English, even when she narrates things that happen in the past. Therefore, a mixture of the past tense and the present tense could be found in her sentences where only the past tense should be used. Here are some examples:

(4) After that, he applied for the citizen, he take the exam for the citizen. And he passed. After that he wait four years to do the swear thing for the citizen.

(5) I am crying the first day. I thought I am a teacher in my country. And someone told me to go to your home?

(6) But he have um…, he has, um…, he have a citizen now. He became a citizen. So he became a citizen. When he came to my country, we get married.

Syntactic Analysis of Learner Language

Basically, Shakira does well in producing simple sentences. She is also good at using the coordinating conjunction "but" and subordinating conjunctions such as "if," "when," and "because" (See sentence (1)-(4) for example).

(1) If you want to study to be a teacher in Arabic or in English, or in geography, or in history, you don't need to take math. But if you want to be math teacher, you must study math.

(2) When you have English language, you can work with us.

(3) After that, when I finish my study, I get my bachelor's degree.

(4) I think when I finish this class I can be a teacher, because already I have bachelor's in education.

The use of prepositions is a challenge for Shakira. She sometimes uses the wrong prepositions or deletes the preposition that should appear in a sentence (See sentence (5)-(8) for example).

(5) I teach according *on* the books *from* Muslim.

(6) I want to work a teacher *to* early childhood education.

(7) He lived here fifteen years.

(8) I wake in 5 o'clock.

Shakira rarely uses relative clauses. Her problem with relative clauses lies in her use of relative pronouns. She tends to use other pronouns such as "he" or "they" to substitute for "who" (see sentence (9) and (10)). The only correct example I find is in the thank note she

wrote to me (see sentence (11)).

(9) She's the student they want to be a doctor.

(10) It's very difficult, not for the people who have a bachelor's or he have a high school.

(11) I am with *may heat* (my heart) I *would to* thank you for the time I spent with you in earning new things.

Shakira also makes syntactic errors in regard to negation, adverbs and adjectives. She can use "not" correctly with "be" and auxiliary verbs such as "do" and "can", but the negative form of "must" she uses is wrong (see (12)). In addition, Shakira puts adjectives in the positions of adverbs (See (13) and (14)).

(12) We must don't do the bad thing.

(13) I want to learning to speak English good.

(14) I need him to speak two language, Arabic perfect and English perfect.

Semantic/Pragmatic Analysis of Learner Language

Many of the sentences produced by Shakira are semantically and pragmatically sound. They comply with Grice's Maxims of quality, quantity and manner. However, Shakira has problems when dealing with pronouns. Sometimes the referent of a pronoun cannot be found in the context. Thus, ambiguity is created and the Maxims of manner are violated. For example, in sentence (1), the pronoun "him" may refer to a Christian student whom Shakira used to teach, but it is not clarified in the context.

(1)   When we teach this lesson, we ask other people. We have Christian people. I ask

        him you want to be in this class, we have Islamic lesson, yes or no, can I go out,

OK, you can.

(2)   I: What makes you feel hard when you're learning English?

Shakira: Math. I scare math, because I hate the math in my country. the same thing.

I: Do you also take math here?

Shakira: I don't take math yet, but I want to take it. I don't like it, because in my country,

if you want to study to be a teacher in Arabic or in English, or in geography, or in history,

you don't need to take math. But if you want to be math teacher, or something for

chemical like that, you must study math. I take the easy way. I don't like the math. I take

the Arabic teacher.

Occasionally, Grice's maxims of manner and relevance are also violated by Shakira. (2)

demonstrates an episode of my conversation with her. When asked about her English

language learning, Shakira talked about math, which is not relevant to the question at all.

Also, her subsequent utterance is not orderly or cohesive, because there is no causal relation

between her dislike of math and the requirement for teachers in her home country.

Assessment of the Learner's Stage of Second Language Acquisition

Shakira's listening and speaking competence may be in the transition from L2 to level 3,

because she can understand simple questions and short sentences without any requirement of

repetition most of the time and use restricted vocabulary, the "-ing" form of verbs, copula and

the plural form of nouns. She is also capable of giving simple explanations and describing

things.

Shakira's writing competence may have only reached level 2, because many errors are

contained in the thank note she wrote to me, including invented spelling and incomplete and redundant syntactical structures. However, more linguistic data, especially more writing samples, need to be obtained in order for us to draw a more accurate conclusion of Shakira's stage of second language literacy. Due to the limited data collected for this case study, it is difficult to diagnose the fundamental causes of some of her errors. For example, "I feel like homeless" is a wrong sentence Shakira made and there could be more than one explanation for her error depending on whether she wanted to express the meaning of "I feel homeless" or "I feel like a homeless person". Moreover, since Shakira hardly used questions in her conversation with me, it is not certain about whether subject-auxiliary inversion and "Wh-" movement are used correctly by her.

The SLA Theoretical Framework for Explanation

The theoretical framework chosen for the analysis of the learner's stage of second language acquisition is Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (SCT). Contrary to the information processing paradigm in which interaction is viewed as a cognitive issue rather than a social issue, Vygotsky claims that socialcultural contexts lay the foundation for the development of higher mental functions. According to SCT, learning creates the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which refers to "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Johnson, 2004, p. 109). Studies on the application of the concept of ZPD to second language acquisition have discovered that (1) collective scaffolding created by participants with the same level of

second or foreign language proficiency can lead to the construction of the participants' own L2 knowledge, and (2) too much other-regulation may interfere with the learner's transition to the self-regulation stage and the prolonged reliance on other-regulation may cause fossilization, and (3) the assistance, namely corrective feedback, needs to be graduated and contingent in order to be effective (Johnson, 2004).

Shakira's social interactions take place in various settings ranging from the ESL classroom to places outside the school, such as supermarkets, hospitals, and the work place, and with different people, including native English speakers and other English language learners. The conversation class that Shakira took could offer plenty of opportunities for oral practices among English Language Learners. Therefore, Shakira could be provided with scaffolded help from other classmates who had the same level of English language proficiency as she. To examine whether collective scaffolding promoted Shakira's acquisition of certain linguistic features in English, we need to analyze her social interactions with another learner of the same proficiency level and try to identify the features of scaffolded help in them, which are (1) "recruiting interest in the task", (2) "simplifying the task", (3) "maintaining pursuit of the goal", (4) "marking critical features and discrepancies between what has been produced and the ideal solution", (5) "controlling frustration during problem solving", and (6) "demonstrating an idealized version of the act to be performed" (Johnson, 2004, p. 130).

Aljaafrech and Lantolf's five-level scale that captures the transition from the interpersonal to the intrapersonal plane can be used to measure Shakira's level of potential development

regarding the past tense formation in English. Based on my observation, Shakira was able to notice and correct most of her errors in forming the past tense of irregular verbs without any intervention. For example, she started her sentences by saying "I go" and "when the party's finished", and then she immediately corrected the verbs in those sentences by saying "went to the university" and "was finished" although I did not provide any assistance. Therefore, Shakira's self-regulation with respect to the past tense of some irregular verbs may reach level 5 of Aljaafrech and Lantolf's scale. However, when it comes to forming the past tense for regular verbs, she was not capable of noticing or correcting her errors by herself although she was actually aware of the rule that the suffix *-ed* should be added to regular verbs to form their past tense. This fact indicates the discrepancy between her language performance and her knowledge of the target language. Therefore, I am concerned about whether she had noticed these errors in her spoken language and the reasons why she made no corrections. More investigations need to be carried out to decide whether Shakira is concerned about the correctness of language forms or whether she considers conversational interactions as solely meaning-based activities and how explicit the necessary intervention (corrective feedback) should be in order for her to notice and correct her errors related to the past tense of regular verbs.

Another part of sociocultural theory, activity theory, claims that it is the motives rather than the realization of one activity that distinguishes it from the other (Johnson, 2004). In all learning situations, motives stand for the driving force that will affect the basic orientation and the total outcome of the learning process. Studies concerning the application of activity theory

in the field of SLA reveal that social background and personal histories direct the orientation of effective and ineffective learners which influences their attitude towards classroom learning of a second language (Johnson, 2004). Shakira wants to become an ESL teacher for Islamic children, and she is fully aware that English is a prerequisite for her career pursuit. Therefore, her motive for learning English is very strong. Her attitudes towards English language learning can be different from those who want to use English solely for daily communication or for content-area study. Additionally, Shakira's previous experience of pursuing a degree in education and being an Islamic language teacher can make her pay more attention to the pedagogy and instructional activities adopted by her English teachers at Nashville State Community College.

Instructional Plan for Shakira

Shakira's strength as a second language learner lies in her high motivation to master English and her extroverted personality, while her weakness lies in her lack of focus on form. To design a suitable instructional plan for Shakira, both of her strengths and weaknesses as well as her needs need to be taken into account. Therefore, an instructional plan that combines three proposals of classroom teaching-"Let's talk," "Get it right in the end," and "Just listen ... and read" is likely to help her to succeed in learning English.

"Let's talk" can help learners to achieve fluency and conversation skills in a second language by providing opportunities for them to engage in conversational interactions (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Since Shakira is willing to participate in conversations with people, this approach will considerably benefit her. However, because its focus is on meaning

rather than form, "Let's talk" is not helpful for the learners' development of more accurate and sophisticated language. If no explicit form-focused instruction is provided, the learners are probably unable to notice their errors in language forms that do not cause communication breakdown (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Therefore, to guide Shakira's attention towards language forms, the proposal of "Get it right in the end" should also be adopted. This approach emphasizes form-focused instruction, or corrective feedback, which allows learners to notice certain features of the target language, but it doesn't undermine the role of genuine interaction (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). To engage Shakira in more collaborative interactions in which she and her classmates can help each other to reflect on language forms by providing corrective feedback will be conducive, but before doing so, Shakira and her classmates should be taught metacognitive strategies, such as predicting, monitoring, and evaluating, so that they can better correct each other implicitly or explicitly.

For Shakira, I would like to apply the reading part of "Just listen ... and read". As Lightbown and Spada (2006) mentioned, simplified readers can facilitate the vocabulary development of learners and offer interesting and age-appropriate content simultaneously. Since Shakira hopes to become an ESL teacher in the future, it is necessary for her to read some materials that will provide her with engaging and insightful knowledge about American culture. Additionally, it will be more beneficial if exercises concerning certain linguistic points and vocabulary are given after she finishes her reading.

Implications for Future Teaching

What I learned from this project is that conversational interactions with a second language learner reveal not only the learner's current stage of second language acquisition but also the learner's characteristics, including sociocultural background, motivation, and personality. Teachers should direct more attention to their interactions with students inside and outside the classroom and try to use SLA theoretical frameworks to interpret the problems that they have discovered. Such exploration will assist them in developing an instructional plan tailored to the students' needs.

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Appendix G: Adaptation Lesson Plan

Lesson Plan

Xue Qiao

Lesson Topic: Adaptation (expository text)   **Length of Lesson:** 45-min Science Academic Literacy Class   **Background to Lesson:** This lesson fits into the science unit of evolution and is aimed to develop students' academic literacy in the subject. The students already learned about how genetic information is transmitted from parents to offspring, which could serve as the base of this lesson.   **Grade: 5**

Stage 1-Desired Results

Established Goals
- ✓ SPI 0507.5.1 Identify physical and behavioral adaptations that enable animals such as, amphibians, reptiles, birds, fish, and mammals to survive in a particular environment.

Source: Tennessee Science Standards
- ✓ GLE 0501.6.1 Apply appropriate skills and strategies to comprehend informational texts (e.g., pre-reading strategies, comprehension strategies, graphic organizers, questioning text)
- ✓ 3 0501.6.6 Determine the main idea and supporting details from text.
- ✓ 3 0501.6.10 Summarize information presented in text.

Source: Tennessee English Language Arts Standards

Understandings:	Essential Questions:
Students will understand that … ➢ An adaptation is a mutation, or genetic change, that is inherited by an organism and helps it survive in its environment. ➢ A structural adaptation is the way an organism physically develops that is passed down from one generation to the next. ➢ A behavioral adaptation is the way an organism acts that is passed down from one generation to the next. ➢ Changes in habitats can lead to the development of adaptations.	➢ What is adaptation? ➢ Can you give some examples of structural and behavioral adaptations? ➢ Can you use some examples to explain why adaptations are important to animals and plants? ➢ What effects can industrial pollution cause in the environment?

Student will know...	Students will be able to ...
➢ the adaptations of different species	➢ Use previously learned cognitive strategies, including questioning, summarizing, and clarifying, to comprehend the expository text ➢ Work cooperatively to comprehend the text

Key Vocabulary: adaptation   structural/behavioral adaptation   mutation   genetic   inherit species   succulent   migration   exaptation   vestigial   habitat   Industrial Revolution thrive   sooty   air pollution

Stage 2-Assessment Evidence

Performance Tasks:
✓ Participate in group discussions and help group members to comprehend the text
✓ Answer the questions raised by the teacher and their classmates
✓ Complete the graphic organizer by using cognitive strategies of summarizing, clarifying, and paraphrasing
✓ Take notes of the key ideas they learn in their science log

Stage 3-Learning Plan

Learning Activities:

1. pre-reading activity: present the poem "Adaptation" (see Appendix) on the overhead projector, let the students read it and think about the following questions by relating to their own life experiences: 1) What does "adaption" mean? 2) In what situations do you need to adapt? 3) Have you ever learned how to adapt? How did you react when you moved to a new place to live, when you entered a new school, or when any long-term change, anything unexpected happened? After students share their own life stories, the teacher introduces the concept of animal adaptation and emphasizes that different from their experiences of adaptation, this kind of change is genetic and permanent.

2. Students read the introduction and the first part of the article *Adaptation* silently and independently, sitting in their small discussion group of four. Before they read, the teacher places a "survival hints" box, which is filled with small pieces of paper with important vocabulary on them to help students "survive" (i.e. to understand) the text, at the center of each group table. Students each will pick up several pieces of hints and start reading. During their reading, they will write down their questions about the text on the margin and highlight the words that they think important for the understanding of the text and that they don't know.

3. "Survivor Talk": since each student has only several hints in his/her hands, which might not be enough for them to "survive" the text, they need help from other group members. Students will share their questions within their small groups first. If they have any questions regarding certain words, the ones with the hints to solve the questions should share them. After their discussion, each group will report their remaining questions in front

of the class, and the teacher will write them down on the board.

4. The teacher reads aloud the text to the students, which models fluent reading and gives students the chance of going back to the text again. After reading, the teacher will encourage students to answer the questions raised by their classmates and clarify the key concepts and vocabulary in the text.

5. Students will work in pairs to fill out the graphic organizer (see Appendix) using the facts from the text. This requires them to clarify, summarize, and paraphrase the key ideas. After they finish the graphic organizer, the class will look at it together.

6. The teacher shows the picture of the English peppered moths on the overhead projector and asks students: which of these two peppered moths is more likely to survive? The cream-colored one? Or the darker-colored one? Why do you think so? Let the students continue to read the second part of the article, explore how a change in the habitat can influence adaptation, and do the "survivor talk" again.

7. Exploring the adaptations of the koala: in this activity, students will watch a video clip of koalas climbing trees and feeding on eucalyptus leaves (http://www.arkive.org/koala/phascolarctos-cinereus/video-06b.html). Then, they will imagine themselves as koalas and try to think about the "how-I-do-what-I-do" questions: 1) Which part of my body can help me climb the trees so I can avoid predators on the ground? 2) Which part of my body can protect me from cold and hot temperatures? 3) Eucalyptus leaves are poisonous. How do I digest them? Students will share their own guesses about these questions within their groups. After their discussion, their will read the first paragraph of the article *The Koala* to find the answers to part of the above questions.

8. Homework: 1) continue to read the article *The Koala* and categorize the koala's adaptations based on their understanding of structural and behavioral adaptations; 2) take down the key concepts they have learned today in their science logs.

Appendix

Poem for pre-reading activities:

Adaptation

Things make a change?
I gotta' adapt,
If I wanna' survive,
I gotta' react...
When candy runs out,
Things are quite sad,
I'll adapt to eat pizza,
That's not really bad...
When TV breaks down,
I'll feel pretty lame,
I'll search through the mall,
For video games!
When soda is gone,
What will I drink?
Chocolate shakes can be good,
That's what I think...
When things make a change,
I gotta' adapt,
If I want to survive,
I gotta' react...

(retrieved from http://sciencepoems.net/sciencepoems/adaptation.aspx)

Reading Materials
Adaptation

An adaptation is a mutation, or genetic change, that helps an organism, such as a plant or animal, survive in its environment. Due to the helpful nature of the mutation, it is passed down from one generation to the next. As more and more organisms inherit the mutation, the mutation becomes a typical part of the species. The mutation has become an adaptation.

Structural and Behavioral Adaptations

An adaptation can be structural, meaning it is a physical part of the organism. An adaptation can also be behavioral, affecting the way an organism acts.

An example of a structural adaptation is the way some plants have adapted to life in the desert. Deserts are dry, hot places. Plants called succulents have adapted to this climate by storing water in their thick stems and leaves.

Animal migration is an example of a behavioral adaptation. Grey whales migrate thousands of miles every year as they swim from the cold Arctic Ocean to the warm waters off the coast of Mexico. Grey whale calves are born in the warm water, and then travel in groups called pods to the nutrient-rich waters of the Arctic.

Some adaptations are called exaptations. An exaptation is an adaptation developed for one purpose, but used for another. Feathers were probably adaptations for keeping the animal warm that were later used for flight, making feathers an exaptation for flying.

Some adaptations, on the other hand, become useless. These adaptations are vestigial: remaining but functionless. Whales and dolphins have vestigial leg bones, the remains of an adaptation (legs) that their ancestors used to walk.

Habitat

Adaptations usually develop in response to a change in the organism's habitat.

A famous example of an animal adapting to a change in its environment is the English peppered moth. Prior to the 19th century, the most common type of this moth was cream-colored with darker spots. Few peppered moths displayed a mutation of being grey or black.

As the Industrial Revolution changed the environment, the appearance of the peppered moth changed. The darker-colored moths, which were rare, began to thrive in the urban atmosphere. Their sooty color blended in with the trees stained by industrial pollution. Birds couldn't see the dark moths, so they ate the cream-colored moths instead. The cream-colored moths began to make a comeback after the United Kingdom passed laws that limited air pollution.

(retrieved from http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/encyclopedia/adaptation/?ar_a=4&ar_r=1#page=1)

Appendix H: Presentation on Using Pinterest to teach ELLs

Use *Pinterest* in large EFL Classrooms

Presented by Wenyang Sun, Xue Qiao & Ying Tang
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What is Pinterest?

site: http://pinterest.com/

Keywords	Advantages	Drawbacks
• a virtual pinboard • collaborative website • creation, organize and share • visuals (pictures, videos, etc.)	• open resource • immediate update • online archive • group collaboration	• invitation request • possible addiction • inappropriate postings • copyright risks • blocked in some countries

Rationale

1. Digital Literacy

   a. Experience Web 2.0 (collaboration; consumers)
      (Handsfield, Dean, & Cielocha, 2009);

   b. Differentiated Instruction (multiple approaches; different need)
      (Tomlinson, 2003)

2. Learner-centered and Community-centered environment (Bransford, 2000)

   a. the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs of learners are valued;

   b. people learn from each other and continually attempt to improve

3. Vocabulary Input Enhancement

   a. Dual Coding Theory (remember images better than words)
      (Underwood, 1989, p.19);

   b. Spatial Contiguity (better memory when pictures and words are together)
      (Mayer, 2001, p. 189)

Eight Effective Ways to Use Pinterest in Large EFL Classrooms

Prior to Class	In Class	After Class	Professional Development
Collect Students' Prior Knowledge	Pinterest as a Blackboard	Track students' learning	Teacher collaboration
Preview of the Lesson	Display group discussion result	Review of the Lesson	An international platform
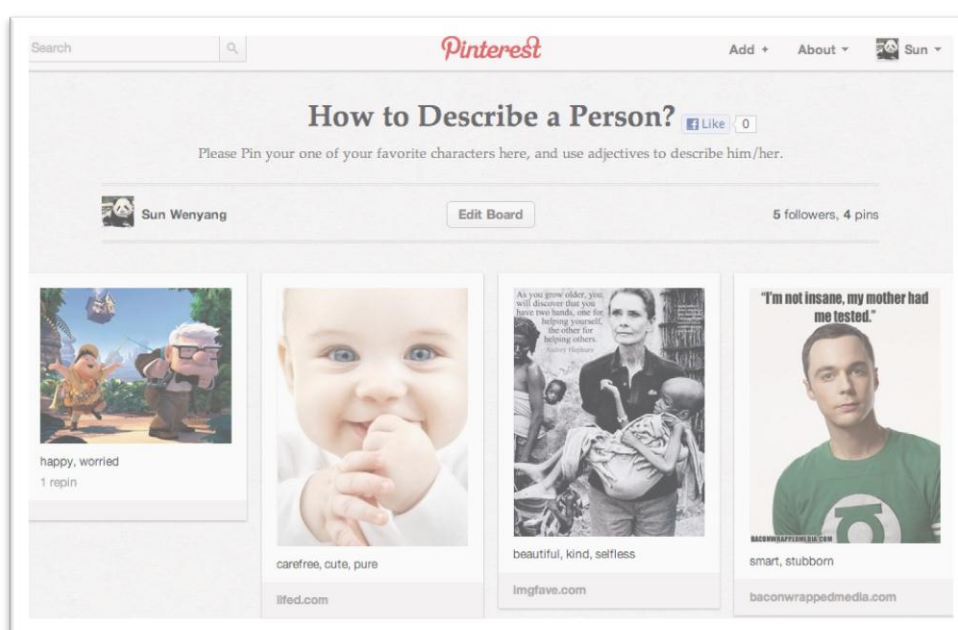
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