

Capstone Portfolio

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

(TESOL)

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### **Abstract**

This English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Teaching Portfolio consists of three sections. The first section is my philosophy of teaching statement, in which I reflected on how sociocultural theory influenced my understanding of teaching and learning, and how it would guide me in my future EFL teaching practice. The second section of this portfolio introduced how I understand the EFL teaching standards under the eight TESOL domains. Finally, the third section of my portfolio will present a reflection and how I would continue developing my professionalism throughout my EFL teaching career.

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## Statement of Teaching Philosophy

A veteran English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher once told me an analogy that referred to *teaching as mountaineering*. When a group of mountaineers explore a summit, they usually employ a safety mechanism: the expert and novices tie themselves together by a safety rope and share interdependence as a team in this challenging sport. This analogy inspired me and helped me re-define my understanding of education. I believe that similar to mountaineering, good teachers share the learning responsibility with their students and move forward together in the expedition of education. More importantly, this teaching as mountaineering analogy implies a *sociocultural* concept to understand teaching and learning. This philosophy of teaching statement will present my teaching beliefs and how they have been formed throughout my Master's program here at Peabody College.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The profound influence of Vygotsky's *sociocultural theory* on EFL teaching make it imperative for me to understand it and apply it as the conceptual framework for my future EFL teaching practice. Sociocultural theory has received intense attention and appreciation in the fields of education and psychology studies after its re-discovery in the 1970s (Mahn, 1999). This theory indicated the significant influence of social interaction in the learners' internalization of language and development of cultural awareness (Vygotsky, 1987). Sociocultural theory has brought holistic perspectives to the field of second language acquisition (SLA) based on the original work of Vygotsky and the modern interpretation of the theory (Ohta, 2000). For example,

some interpretation of sociocultural theory proposed that one of the two basic tenets of it is mediation (Sullivan, 2000). Lantolf (2000) also believed that the most important concept of sociocultural theory is “that the human mind is mediated” through a series of tools and labor activity (p. 1). More importantly, sociocultural theory defined an unalienable relation between human and language: “human mental activity is mediated by tools and signs, the foremost tool being language” (Sullivan, 2000, p. 115). These findings of research demonstrated how Vygotsky’s conceptualization of sociocultural theory delved into the acquisition of language and internalization of skills. Although Vygotsky himself only applied sociocultural theory to the learning of children, research has shown that many principles of this theoretical framework, such as the zone of proximal development (ZPD), can be applied to the SLA context (Ohta, 2000).

During my master’s program at the English Language Learners program at Peabody College of Vanderbilt University, I had various opportunities to study and analyze a series of major findings of sociocultural theory applied to teaching English as a second language (ESL) and SLA. In addition, I also had various opportunities to reflect upon my philosophy of teaching and to think about the role of teaching and learning under sociocultural theory. These reflections guided me to orient myself as a pre-service EFL and English literacy teacher in China. More specifically, sociocultural theory provided me a guide to think about two fundamental questions for my future teaching. These questions are: what teaching and learning are and what I should do as a teacher to promote teaching and learning in practice. In the following sections, I will answer the above three questions and present my philosophy of teaching with my understanding and application of the findings of sociocultural theory.

## What Teaching and Learning Are

**Teaching reconsidered.** My learning experience in China and the United States has been providing me with opportunities to make comparisons of the differences of the English teaching contexts. It also made me realize that the general environment of my future teaching has traditionally been teacher-centered. According to sociocultural theory, under the influence of the cultural norms in this learning context, teachers are often viewed as the authority in their classrooms or “agents of conformity in the language of their pupils” (Goodman & Goodman, 1990, p. 242). As suggested by sociocultural theory research, in these types of traditional school settings, “the expert [teacher] may well insist that the novice produce an exact copy of what is offered” (Lantolf, 2000, p. 18). As a result, the outcome of this type of sociocultural development did not promote learning and often caused negative results. In many similar learning environments, teachers view power in the classroom as their property and are unwilling to yield it to students (Cazden, 2001; Gutiérrez, Larson & Kreuter, 1995). In the worst scenarios, schools may even become sources of bias and discrimination due to the lack of understanding of students (Nieto & Bode, 2008).

Although I had been taught in this type of context, I do not subscribe the traditional view that values teachers as curators of knowledge. Instead, I follow sociocultural theory that values learners as “active agent in development” instead of passive receivers of knowledge and skill (Daniels, 2001, p. 15). I wish to teach in a safe and supportive environment where social interactions would promote linguistic and cognitive development. Vygotsky believed that learning happened through the mediation of others in learning activities (as cited in Daniels,

2001). In this ideal teaching context, I hope my students engage as active learners who bring “multiple sources of information including their own previous informal knowledge” to the classroom (Daniels, 2001, p. 72).

**Learning reconsidered.** Research on Second Language Acquisition (SLA) indicates that having students mimic an ideal native speaker would often result in failures in foreign language learning (Scott, 2010). In practice, few second language learners could achieve *native-like* proficiency of their target language (Han, 2012; Scott, 2010). These findings of research suggested that as a foreign language teacher, not only should I set practical goals for my students, but also make the learning goals preeminent to my students’ individual needs. To understand my students’ individual needs, I will use a three-fold informal pre-assessment tool to survey the biopsychosocial history, education history, and language history of my students (Herrera, Cabral & Murry 2013) and design the learning objectives accordingly. For example, if I learn from the results of the pre-instructional survey that my students feel activities such as drill on English pronunciation culturally irrelevant or age-inappropriate, I will not force my students *engage* in activities that I consider authentic; although many teachers believe students’ standard and idiomatic phonology competence in English is important.

Sociocultural theory believed that applying culturally relevant literature in classroom would help students perform better. In addition, it also stated that “respecting and using students’ native language is integral to responsive teaching” (Echevarria & Graves, 2007, p. 123). Accordingly, I will select an inventory of culturally relevant texts as learning materials based on the results of the pre-instructional survey on my students. In addition, it is widely accepted that

students' skills and knowledge from the primary language can be transferred to support their process of secondary language acquisition (Herrera et al, 2013). As a second language learner myself, I understand that students whose first language is not English can use their common underlying proficiency (Herrera et al, 2013) as a common source to development their second language. As I will be teaching English in an EFL setting, I will wholeheartedly embrace the use of students' first language.

In the first part of my philosophy of teaching, I reviewed what I believe are the nature and context of teaching and learning. In this conclusive part, I want to refer back to the mountaineering analogy. Like mountaineering, the success of teaching and learning also relies on the exterior context. In addition, both activities are built upon cooperation and social interaction. Sociocultural theory believed that language as “socially constructed rather than internally intrinsic” (Thorne, 2000, p. 225). In the next part of my philosophy of teaching, I will elaborate on my ideas of how language teaching and learning work with the proper application of sociocultural language learning tools and strategies.

### **How Teaching and Learning Work**

“Language and cognitive processes are viewed dynamically, that is, as always in change” (Rueda, 1990, p. 404). To better promote students' learning that is constantly changing, it is imperative for a teacher to plan and teach lessons effectively. In this section, I will introduce my philosophy of teaching in the domains of planning and instructing with my understanding of sociocultural theory as the framework.



**Planning.** The importance of planning is self-evident: “thoughtful planning leads to effective teaching” (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2000, p. 39). Brandl (2008) defined a lesson plan as a “systematic record of a teacher’s thought about what will be covered during a lesson” (p. 39). In my understanding based on this definition, a teacher needs to allocate time for pre-teaching, learning, reviewing, and assessing activities in a lesson plan. As the teacher organizes various teaching and learning activities, the teacher should constantly link the activities to the aforementioned learning objectives and other requirements from the curricula.

I believe a primary task for me when I design a lesson is to establish and define proper learning goals for the development of language competence and knowledge in other content areas. I will set these learning goals specifically to my students’ language proficiency, sociocultural background, and the curriculum requirement and standards. More importantly, I will also place the learning goals as the overarching factor in both short-term and long-term teaching plans. On the other hand, I will hold a caveat for planning that the teachers should not assume the learning goals for their students, no matter how experienced they are; instead, they should pinpoint the learning goals with the consideration of the learners’ individual needs. To assist making more specific and relevant teaching plans and learning goals, I will use preinstructional assessments to survey students’ biopsychosocio history, education history, and language history (Herrera, Cabral, & Murry, 2013) to further identify the learners’ background and interests prior to making teaching plans.

Brandl (2007) suggested teachers keep an eye on the affective factors that influence learning such as the students’ guard and motivation. Krashen (1982) also stated that “language

learning must take place in an environment where learners are off the defensive and the affective filter is low in order for the input to be noticed and gain access to the learners' thinking" (as cited in Brandl, 2007, p. 173). The suggestion of these studies reminded me monitoring my students' learning conditions and changes my teaching strategies accordingly. Many novice teachers would view detailed lesson plans as *rock to stand on* and follow the agenda strictly (Brandl, 2007). Although I agree that lesson plans are great tools for a teacher to consider the future teaching in advance and keep track of the teaching activities, I would use my lesson plans as a road map to mark my students' progress and where they need to get after a lesson or a unit.

In addition, learning that simulates real-life experience could not happen without the frequent use of technology. Teachers not only need to master instructional techniques, but also the integration of technology in to their curriculum (Pierson, 2001). I believe that skills, including language skills, are best developed with the application of technology that is relevant to the topic. Therefore, I would try to search and utilize relevant sources when I plan a lesson and integrate these sources in the teaching activities.

**Instructing.** I would highlight four key words and use them to discuss my philosophy of teaching: *purposeful, respectful, engage, and supportive*. *First*, in order to make teaching and learning purposeful, I believe that it is imperative for a teacher to make explicit learning goals for each individual learner according to the specific strengths and needs of the learner adjust the instruction accordingly. No matter where I will be teaching, my students may come from families from all walks of lives, thus having various sociocultural backgrounds. Students do not enter my classroom as a blank slate. Instead, they present unique and diverse personal assets as

they bring varied learning needs and interests, intellectual levels of motivation, as well as different prior knowledge that may either help or hinder learning (Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, Norman & Mayer, 2010; Echevarria, et al, 2000). Thus, it is important for me to survey and assess my students' educational background, learning interests, and proficiencies prior to and throughout the teaching and learning process.

*Secondly*, by promoting respectful classroom interactions, the teacher needs to treat the students as responsible stakeholders of their own learning. It is necessary for the teacher to share the voice and power with the students in the making of implementation of learning strategies and activities. Instead of serving as an authority or source of knowledge, the teacher provide a good model of inquiry, explore, and comprehension.

A fundamental element that supports a respectful classroom environment is to understand the students. As a non-native speaker of English, I had experienced the challenge of acquiring a second language that many of my future students will face in their diversified learning environment. Therefore, to address the issue and better promote my students' English language learning, I will utilize *funds of knowledge* in my teaching. Although this conception was created to help teachers be better equipped for teaching language minority students in the United States (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992), funds of knowledge provides practical indication for teaching in general such as building social connection with the student community and appreciating the students' background. This conception stated that despite the socioeconomic status, all households have an abundance of funds of knowledge (Moll, et al, 1992). I can utilize this type of information to gauge my students' background knowledge and enrich their education.

By leveraging funds of knowledge and students' prior knowledge, I believe that I can establish caring and supportive rapport with students and provide more meaningful and culturally relevant education.

*Thirdly*, to create an engaging environment to learners, the teacher utilizes a series of meaningful and culturally relevant teaching activities and encourages students to participate in the activities. I understand that it is not enough only to teach literacy and language-related knowledge to my adult EFL students. Instead, I also need to help my students increase their competence of using English in content EFL classes such as English literature and linguistics. As a result, I believe that teaching content-related knowledge and skill in the form of sheltered instruction can be applicable to my EFL teaching practice. To achieve this teaching objective, it is also important for the teacher to provide necessary scaffold and prompt feedback to the students.

One theoretical tool that I will use to provide engaging activities to the students is the zone of proximal development (ZPD) in sociocultural theory. According to Vygotsky's definition, the ZPD is "the difference between what a person can achieve when acting alone and what the same person can accomplish when acting with support from someone else and/or cultural artifacts" (Lantolf, 2000, p. 17). I will mediate learning and help my students achieve growth by providing consistent scaffold (Clay & Cazden, 1990). By definition, scaffolding is a teaching activity "through which assistance is provided from person to person such that an interlocutor is enabled to do something she or he might not have been able to do otherwise" (Ohta, 2000, p. 52). Therefore, by leaving sufficient opportunity for the students to experience and discover the

learning by themselves, providing authentic and real-world activities that suits the learners' age and language proficiency, the students may fully experience and engage in these activities.

*Finally*, based on the careful design of the learners' individual needs, the negotiated learning goals and strategies, as well as the engaging teaching activities, the overall environment of teaching and learning will be supportive and meaningful. Fink (2003) stated that excellent teaching involves four elements: teacher, student, teaching, and learning. Without effective learning, teaching can by no means be successful. The traditional teaching methods, which saw teachers as conduits that simply infused knowledge to students, should no longer hold the market. Research has shown that this way of teaching is not suitable for teaching nowadays (Bain, 2004). As I stated in my teaching beliefs, teachers should act as facilitators instead of authorities. By helping students scaffolding knowledge in an engaging and supportive environment, teachers share the responsibility of learning with students.

In addition, teaching and learning should never be reduced to the mere memorization of facts and knowledge: It rendered learning meaningless and the memory would easily fade away after the teaching. Instead, I believe teaching and learning should aim at providing effective and significant teaching experience, equipping students with intellectual skills, and help students develop sociocultural skills. Sociocultural research on teaching and learning supported this belief. For example, Lantolf (2000) stated that "as in a teaching situation, novices do not merely copy the experts' capabilities; rather they transform what the experts offer them as they appropriate it" (p. 17). Therefore, I will carefully consider the learners' various learning needs before planning and teaching a lesson.

This philosophy of teaching statement has been presenting how my work and study experience in the United States influenced my thoughts and understanding of teaching and learning. These understandings also helped me review my teaching beliefs and make deeper level understanding on the major literature on teaching and learning.

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## TESOL Standards for EFL Teachers of Adults

The Standards for ESL/EFL Teachers of Adult Learners consist of three core standards: *planning, instructing, and assessing* as well as five additional standards: *identity and context, language proficiency, learning, content, and commitment and professionalism* (TESOL, 2008).

In my future EFL teaching career, I will apply to the standards under the eight domains, use them to identify the quality of my teaching, and achieve professional development accordingly.

Therefore, it is imperative for me to establish a thorough understanding of the eight standards.

According to sociocultural theory, the making of cultural artifacts “may lead to enhanced self-reflection and metacognitive development” (Daniels, 2001, p. 45). During my master’s program at the English Language Learners program at Peabody College of Vanderbilt University, I had various valuable experiences to create relevant artifacts and develop my professional knowledge in teaching and learning. In this section of my EFL Portfolio, I will elaborate on my understandings and interpretations of the TESOL EFL standards in the eight interrelated domains by analyzing a series of teaching and learning artifacts.

### **Domain: Planning**

The first TESOL standard is under the domain of *planning*. It requires that “teachers plan instruction to promote learning and meet learner goals, and modify plans to assure learner engagement and achievement” (TESOL, 2008, para. 1).

The artifact that I will present for the first TESOL domain is a lesson plan for a unit that contains three texts in different genres. It consists of a poem *One Today* by Hispanic poet

Richard Blanco who recited this poem on the 2013 Presidential Inauguration; three episodes excerpted from the award winning fiction *Joy Luck Club* by Chinese American writer Amy Tan, and a ridiculous fake news report from a parody news website *the Onion*.

**Learners and learning.** This artifact is designed for young adult ESL learners to enhance their reading strategies, appreciation of literature, as well as critical thinking to texts (see artifact A). This artifact will present how the desired teaching and learning objectives function in my process of planning lessons and the selection of appropriate resources. Research has shown that students' background knowledge plays a critical role in helping the students comprehend texts (Tonavi, 2000; Schoenbach, Greenleaf, & Murphy, 2012). Therefore, this three-piece lesson plan focuses on how teachers tap on students' prior knowledge to interpret and understand texts to achieve the goals for teaching and learning. Each of the three genres in this unit provides access to students' background knowledge.

To begin with, the poet's identity and background (as the first immigrant and the first Latino to be a U.S. presidential inaugural poet) provide multifold possibilities for non-native English speaking students to utilize their background knowledge and connect themselves with the text. Second, The award-winning novel is about immigration, culture shock, and the affiliation of mothers and daughters. Finally, students have daily access to news reports, which means they may have formed a general understanding of this genre and the specific features of this type of texts. In sum, this unit focuses on the identities of narrators and authors in addition to comprehending and appreciating texts by utilizing students' background knowledge.

**The learning environment.** This artifact presents a learning environment situated as an English language arts unit for adult EFL learners, in which the students will be grouped according to their language proficiency and educational background. Before this unit, the students will have read sufficient literature works in the previous courses. They are also familiar with various narrative types and point of views (such as first-person and third-person omniscient) of texts. The nature of small-group work will also cater for the students' need of communicating and collaborating in a safe and supporting environment.

As stated in the introduction, the unit aims to enhancing students' appreciation and criticism on printed or Internet-based media as well as practice their cognitive and metacognitive strategies such as predicting, re-reading, and monitoring comprehension. To achieve these learning goals, I designed a series of real-world activities which encourage students actively practice their cognitive and metacognitive strategies to comprehend the texts and monitor their reading process. For example, before handing out the full text of *One Today*, I will show my students the first stanza of the poem and ask them to read it. As a pre-reading activity, I will highlight the proper names in the text and ask the students to discuss and predict the information that the poet tries to convey. I will also demonstrate my own reading activity with think-aloud strategy. By doing this, I want to provide a proper modeling and help my students improve their own use of strategies as well as build their connection to the text.

**Curriculum.** The curriculum of this unit draws lesson from the sheltered instruction, which is the teaching approach for "teaching content to English Language Learners in strategic ways that make the subject matter concepts comprehensible while promoting the students'

English language development” (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2000, p. 1). I understand that it is not enough only to teach literacy and language-related knowledge to my adult EFL students. Instead, I also need to help my students increase their competence of using English in content EFL classes such as English literature and linguistics. As a result, I believe that teaching content-related knowledge and skill in the form of sheltered instruction can be applicable to my EFL teaching practice.

In addition, based on the language proficiency and educational history of my students, I borrowed some of the grade level 11 and 12 standards from the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to plan the learning objectives such as “analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem, evaluating how each version interprets the source text” and “determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone” (CCSS.ELA-Literacy, n.d.).

One content objective of this lesson plan is that students identify the voice and person behind the text. In a real-life reading activity, students need to ask themselves questions such as who the author of the text is, what is being said, and what is contained in the implicit discourse. These critical thinking and strategies are also foci of this artifact. In the literacy unit, I designed a theme to identify and understand the authors and narrators of texts. Students are expected to apply different strategies to decode and comprehend the texts, as well as construct and interpret meaning of the texts by their own understanding and background knowledge. For example, as I planned in the previous section of this unit, I will start the lesson by providing visual aids and asking my students to make predictions on the text based on their background knowledge as a

pre-reading activity. Due to the parody nature of the text, while I guided my students reading the text, I will constantly remind them of higher-order thinking questions such as who might have written this article and why, as well as what evidence makes them believe in the information or find it suspicious.

**Assessment.** McTighe and Wiggins (2004) stated that “designers [of lessons] must begin to think about assessment before deciding what and how they will teach” (p. 19). I agree that the aim of assessments is to show teachers the evidence that students have achieved the learning goal or the desired results. The assessments in this artifact consist of both summative and formative tests.

As a proof of the effectiveness of teaching and learning, students will make meaningful connections of the text with other texts they read, the world, and themselves. They will also form their own understanding of the texts and critically think about the texts. However, this internalization of language use, content knowledge, and strategies are difficult to assess with formative tests. As a result, I will majorly apply formative assessments throughout and after the teaching process. For example, I will assess my students’ use of English language with student oral language observation matrix (SOLOM) while I listen to the discussion of a group of students over the text they read. Thus, I can observe and assess my target students’ language competence in grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary in a natural way. In addition, I will count on students’ learning products such as their finishing of graphic organizers or written reflections to assess their learning.

**Domain: Instructing**

The second TESOL standard is under the instructing domain. It states that “teachers create supportive environments that engage all learners in purposeful learning and promote respectful classroom interactions” (TESOL, 2008, para. 2).

The artifacts that I will present in the instructing domain were created with my tutoring experience as a reading specialist. In spring 2013, I worked with a fifth-grade student on a weekly basis at the reading clinic of a middle school. Each tutoring session lasted approximately thirty to forty minutes. For each tutoring session, I designed a lesson plan according to the progress and goal and wrote a reflection on the tutoring after each session. This set of artifacts consist of 1) my lesson plans, 2) the tutoring reflections, and 3) a final synthesis of tutoring in the form of an official tutoring report submitted to the Principal of the middle school.

Although the age group of the student and the settings of teaching do not exactly match the TESOL standards for teaching adult learners, I believe these series of artifacts are relevant and sufficient to demonstrate my knowledge in the domain of *instructing* because ELLs and native English speaking students often have the strengths and needs in common. In addition, the application of tutoring strategies, activities, and materials can be adapted to an EFL setting for my future teaching.

**Learners and learning.** The student I worked with was a fifth-grader in an urban-setting middle school in Nashville, Tennessee. The school referred the student to its reading clinic in the fall semester of 2012 because standardized assessments suggested that the student read at a relatively low reading level. The grade-five student had a grade equivalent 3.7 on Standardized

Testing and Reporting (tested on January, 2013) and level 14 / basic on Discovery Education Assessment (tested on November 2012). Therefore the school hoped the reading clinic might push her over the top.

On our first meeting, I gave the student a pre-instructional survey on the student's educational background, interests, and reading preference. I also met with the student's English Language Arts teacher for several times to gain an understanding on the literacy strengths and needs of the student. Taking the factors that I learned from the survey and discussions, such as the student's test results, reading habits, and her expectation of the tutoring, into consideration, the student and I together listed five objectives of the tutoring. They are 1) read at her grade level, 2) increase her vocabulary, 3) apply multiple reading strategies such as recalling and summarizing texts, and 4) increase metacognitive strategies such as the rate of self-correction (see tutoring report in artifact). Throughout the tutoring, I design, implement, and reflect on my teaching in accordance to the five goals and modify my instructional approaches and materials accordingly.

**The learning environment.** In order not to give the student the feeling that going to the reading *clinic* is a remedy or punishment, I tried to make the learning environment relaxing and supportive by letting the student to decide which book or game she wanted to read or play during the tutoring sessions. In this empowering and supporting learning environment, the student's will and preference of reading was taken care of. For example, the student and I design the tutoring objectives as a teaching and learning contract. In the pre-teaching survey, the student expressed that she wished she could read at her own pace during the tutoring. Therefore, instead of making



*fluency* as one of our general teaching objectives, we agreed to concentrate on *comprehension*, instead of the indicators of fluency such as speed, accuracy, and prosody. In addition, I strived for making the activities engaging such that the student could practice her reading skills, cognitive abilities, as well as persistence and stamina. For example, before letting the student decide which book to pick, I would model the process of previewing a book and provide scaffold on how to apply reading strategies such as visualizing, predicting, and making connections.

The sociocultural theories of learning believed that play is an important mediation of language learning (Sullivan, 2000; Goodman & Goodman, 1990). McNamee (2000) also stated that one of the two conditions “necessary for change in a ZPD” is the “the capacity for play” (p. 288). During the tutoring sessions, the student and I would also played some vocabulary learning games as an expansion to the regular learning activities. It turned out that these games, although infrequent, served as a means to make the learning environment more engaging as well as provide a way to help the student extend her vocabulary and enhance her phonological and morphological competence.

**Curriculum.** The main goal of the tutoring is to help the student emulate her grade level. Therefore, the curriculum is in accordance with the grade five CCSS ELA standards for reading. To achieve this learning goal, in each tutoring session, the activities included a review of vocabulary and a three-minute rereading of the text from the previous session, a twenty-minute reading practice, and post-reading assessments. In order to help the student better apply reading strategies such as predicting, visualizing, and summarizing the text, I majorly used two reading procedures Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DR-TA) and ReQuest (Readence & Tierney,

2004; Díaz-Rico, & Weed, 2005) in most of the tutoring sessions. I also applied reading aloud and silent reading as complements to the reading activities.

By applying the DR-TA and ReQuest procedure, I usually started the tutoring sessions with an introductory activity to raise the student's interest such as giving a context or background of the reading. I also realize that students need to understand how proficient readers actively engage themselves in the process of reading. As a result, while we read together, I would model questioning to the text, helped her relate the text to her past experiences, and increase her awareness to self-correct. After reading a section of the book, I always tried to improve the student's skills such as unaided retelling and summarizing.

**Assessment.** This artifact will also present the assessments that I used during the tutoring sessions. At the end of each session, we usually had a post-reading activity such as summary writing, oral retelling, or reciprocal questioning to test the student's comprehension of the reading. These activities worked as exit slips before finishing the tutoring; thus, they were a part of the summative assessment that indicated the level of comprehension and the effective of my instruction. Due to the restrictions on time and the limited access to assessment materials, the post-reading assessments were majorly taken in the form of story-retelling and written summary to test student's text-based understanding. However, observing the reading activities also provided information for formative assessments. For example, while the student was reading aloud, I also took down the student's reading miscues and self-correction. In the reflection of the day's tutoring, I would use these records to analyze the student's progress and plan the teaching in the next week.

**Domain: Assessing**

The third TESOL standard is under the domain of assessing. It requires that teachers: recognize the importance of and are able to gather and interpret information about learning and performance to promote the continuous intellectual and linguistic development of each learner. Teachers use knowledge of student performance to make decisions about planning and instruction “on the spot” and for the future. Teachers involve learners in determining what will be assessed and provide constructive feedback to learners, based on assessments of their learning (TESOL, 2008, para. 3).

I included a part of an analysis project on an adult ELL student as the artifact in the TESOL domain of assessing. In spring 2014, I co-taught an ESL course General English for Spouses (GES) with my mentor teacher and another student teacher at the English Language Center at Vanderbilt University. The course is a tuition-free English course for the spouses and partners of Vanderbilt students and employees. The courses targeted at serving non-native speakers of English with proficiency levels ranging from low to intermediate (General English for Spouses/Partners, n. d.).

**Learners and learning.** Among the 12 students in the GES course, I chose an adult ELL student to work with my analysis project. In addition to observing and analyzing the student’s initial placement assessment for the GES course, I applied a series of informal oral assessments to understand the student’s sociocultural background and used oral language observation protocols to further evaluate the level of student’s language proficiency. Details of the learner’s education and language history will be introduced in a latter section of this artifact.

The student who worked with me in the analysis project was a Japanese housewife whose husband was a graduate student at Vanderbilt. She came to the United States in fall 2013 with her husband and two children. The student started learning English in middle school and had a few English courses in her four-year university in Japan. The initial placement test at the Vanderbilt English Language Center suggested that the language proficiency level of the student is *low intermediate*. In addition, the two informal assessments on the student's oral language with the student oral language observation matrix (SOLOM) rated her comprehension at level 3, fluency at level 2, vocabulary at level 2, pronunciation at level 3, and grammar at level 2.

**The learning environment.** As I co-taught the GES course, I realized that the small size of the class and the familiarity of the students jointly created a supportive and comfortable learning environment. As stated in the previous section, the twelve students were all spouses of Vanderbilt students or employees. Many of the students came from same countries or had spouses in the same schools. They knew each other well outside the classroom and some of them also attended other ESL courses together. These specific contexts of the course created a desirable learning environment for the students to develop their overall English language competence and communicative language skills in their daily lives.

These aspects and the nature of the class made it convenient for me to assess different students' oral language competence as they engage in small group discussions or paired activities. Research proposed that assessments applied with authentic situation to elicit students' performance could "genuinely reflects language competence" (Herrera et al, 2013, p. 160). Since the students usually had ample time to practice using sentence structures or word phrases in the

communicative, real-world setting, it guaranteed that my assessments objectively mirrored the students' English proficiency.

In addition, after working with the students in this supportive and relaxing environment for three weeks, I managed to build rapport with them. As a result, many of the students expressed an interest to work with me in the analysis project, which also gave me opportunities to better understand the education and language background of the students. The assessing tools and findings will be introduced in the assessment session of the analysis of artifact.

**Curriculum.** The instructional goal of the GES program was to help students improve their communicative language competence especially oral language proficiency. As a result, the program focused on developing oral language skills in English. Through the course, students will be able to to make conversation in a various social contexts and discuss common topics such as family and friends, healthcare, and travel. In each class, students will have ample time to participate in small group discussion or activities in pairs. The textbook used in this course was the level three of a set of standards-based ESL series for adult-education ESL textbooks. The level of textbook suited the English language proficiency of the students (*beginning to low intermediate* levels). The course also provided explanation of American cultures and scaffolds in English grammar and learning strategies.

**Assessment.** Competent teachers do not simply rely on assessments. As Herrera et al (2013) stated, "any time we seek to assess language, we must understand not only what our tests can tell us but also, more significantly, what they cannot" (p. 142). The intricate nature of language use makes it difficult to measure students' language proficiency once-for-all. Therefore,

I applied multiple genetic language assessments on the learner to get assessment results that can more accurately reflect her language proficiency. For example, I assessed the student with SOLOM when the student was engaging in an oral project at the initial placement test of the course. In an interview of the student's education and language history, I also audio-recorded the student's speech under the student's consent. After the interview, I used SOLOM to evaluate her language proficiency again. I believe that the multiple applications of the same assessing tool on the same student increased the reliability of the assessment. As a result, these assessments helped me arrive at a fair and objective evaluation of the student's language competence.

Close reviews of the student's performance with the SOLOM suggested that she could understand *most* of my questions and comments with *slower* than normal speed and *repetitions*. Her speeches were *hesitant*, and she sometimes stayed silent or slurred with an ambiguous response. The student *often* used incorrect or unidiomatic words. Her pronunciation during the interviews required *concentration* on what is being said in order to comprehend. In addition, the learner *frequently* made grammar errors, although these errors did not severely influence the expression of the meaning.

In addition, research suggested that teachers needed to critically analyze and reflect on the assessments and uses the information drawn from the assessment to guide future instructions (Herrera et al, 2013). From the information that learned from the series oral assessments, I realized that in the student's home culture, women are not supposed to tell strangers their first name. In addition, Japanese women who hold the traditional culture are also reluctant to shake hands with others. As in the student's case, she felt embarrassed and nervous when meeting with

parents in her daughter's preschool because of their request of her first name or shaking hands. Having gained knowledge about the values and customs in the student's home culture, I now realize that the student's seemingly lack of competence and her hesitation in communication should not be ascribed to her low language proficiency. Instead, factors other than in English language competence such as the level of acculturation and difference in customs were playing an important role in her overall language performance. Therefore, I took these factors into consideration and used the information I learned from the informal assessments to guide my teaching and interaction with the student and other students who have the same home culture. I also realized the influence of gender difference when teaching adult ELLs, whenever possible, I will try to work with a female co-instructor or co-assessor when I teach or test a female student who comes from a traditional or reserved culture.

**Domain: Identity and Context**

The fourth TESOL domain under identity and context requires teachers understand the learners and the importance of the learning context. More specifically, it calls on that:

Teachers understand the importance of who learners are and how their communities, heritages and goals shape learning and expectations of learning. Teachers recognize the importance how context contributes to identity formation and therefore influences learning. Teachers use this knowledge of identity and settings in planning, instructing, and assessing" (TESOL, 2008, para. 4).

The artifact (see artifact F) under the domain of identity and context was created as a course project of *Foundations for Teaching English Language Learners* in my master's program. This artifact presents a comprehensive investigation and research project on culturally and linguistically diverse students' community literacy, relevant laws and regulations, as well as schools' learning contexts.

In this artifact, I started by introducing my investigatory visits to a culturally-and-ethnically-diverse community in Nashville Tennessee. During the visits, I obtained several pieces of transnational literacies for "activities that span national boundaries" (Jiménez, Smith and Teague, 2009, p.17) in the form of printed literatures and digital photographs. Then this artifact continues with a research of a series of political and legal events that have influenced educational policies of language minority (LM) students in the United States. Finally, it showcases a research in a local high school based on the school's socioeconomic, demographic, and linguistic dynamics. The final part also revealed the school's efforts and challenges to accommodate the English Language Learners (ELLs) under its specific context of teaching and learning.

**Learners and learning.** The high school that I visited enrolled students of over 42 nationalities who spoke 27 different languages. Among the 1250 grade 9-12 students, 35.5% were Hispanic, 30.4% African American, 26.8% Caucasian and 7.0% Asian. More than 20% of the student population in the school was ELLs. During the field trips, I observed a beginner-intermediate English language development (ELD) class. About twenty teenage ELLs from grade nine to grade twelve were pulled-out to take this ELD class for half a block everyday. Students of Latino, Egyptian, and Somalia origins consisted of the majority of the class. The



students' language proficiencies were also diverse, ranging from pre-functional to intermediate. These facts and statistics helped me realize the fast demographic changes in American schools. These series of field trips also reminded the importance of taking CLD student' diverse identity in planning, instructing, and assessing my teaching.

**The learning environment.** The high school I visited during the field trips was located at a quiet neighborhood of an ethnically diverse area in southeast Nashville, Tennessee. Like many urban-setting schools in the United States, it had witnessed fast demographic changes since the 1980s. Back to the time when the school was established, it was a predominately white and middle-class school. Now the school had become the most diverse high school in the State of Tennessee (C. Wilson, personal communication, October 19, 2012).

With such a diverse population of students, the school supported the ELL students in many aspects. For example, the hallways were decorated with national flags and students' hand-drawn world maps. Multilingual signs and labels were also displayed on doors and walls. In the ELD classroom I observed, posters of vocabularies and sentences in English, Spanish and Arabic were taped on the classroom walls. Although the program was English-only, the teacher encouraged the use of students' native languages to assist one another with classroom work. The teacher would ask a Latino student to explain to a classmate in Spanish what the whole class was doing. The ELL students also used their first languages to converse informally. These snapshots indicated that the school provided a supportive learning environment for ELL students.

**Curriculum.** During the visits, I observed two teaching activities. One of them was an independent reading of a story on the textbook and the other one was a grammar drill of prefixes.

Based on my observation, the teaching method was tailored to the English proficiency of the students; the instruction emphasized students' comprehension of reading; and the language of instruction was modified and comprehensible. The curricula of these two classes took the students' identity and language proficiency into consideration. Thus, observing these classes helped me understand why and how to adjust the curriculum in my future teaching,

The textbook used in the reading class was Level-C of *Longman Keystone*, which was designated for ELLs in pull-out programs. As the curriculum of the course introduced, the textbooks were "designed for students whose academic achievement is two or more years below grade level" and it aims to help ELLs "be better prepared to transition to mainstream coursework across the curriculum" (Pearson, 2012). The story used in that class had an *880L* in Lexile Measure, which was of the same reading difficulty as that of the first *Harry Potter* book. The students seemed to understand the text well. They responded correctly to questions were related to the main idea as well as details of the story.

**Assessment.** Herrera et al stated that "the goal of assessment is to determine what and how the student learns in order to inform instruction" (2013, p. 119). It is important for teachers to organize assessments well and utilize the information drawn from the assessments to modify future instructions. During my observations, I did not have to chance to observe any formal or summative assessment. However, during the reading activities, the teacher used various informal and formative assessments to check students' learning progress. For example, the teacher would use both *display* questions and *open* questions about the text such as, "What did the mother suggest for the daughter to learn English?" and "Give me a word to describe the mother's

characteristic.” The teacher also asked the students to finish their graphic organizers after reading the text. These graphic tools were later collected to assess the students’ comprehension of the text.

### **Domain: Language Proficiency**

The fifth TESOL standard requires “teachers demonstrate proficiency in social, business/workplace and academic English. Proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing means that a teacher is functionally equivalent to a native speaker with some higher education” (TESOL, 2008, para. 5).

I believe that to be considered a competent ESL instructor, it is mandatory for a non-native English speaker to demonstrate adequate proficiency in both oral and written English in various language domains such as academic, professional, and social domain. Therefore, I will self-assess my language proficiency by reviewing my English language learning experience in each of the language domains.

Prior to entering the master’s program at Peabody College, I earned my Bachelor’s of Arts degree in English Language and Literature in a nationally recognized university in China. My undergraduate program had been training my English skills in a variety of academic and practical English-language-related fields such as linguistics, literature criticism, translation, and interpersonal communication. The four years of study has proven itself a solid foundation for my study for my current master’s program at Vanderbilt University.

In addition, the life and study in the United States provided my opportunities to more rigorously improve my English and professional skills in a variety of academic, social, and professional contexts. The supports from the learning and communicating with the faculty members in the academic department and other graduate students also became an important source for me to constantly improve my English language skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

During my stay in the United States, I also keep participating in a series of volunteer and other extracurricular activities. These activities include teaching an adult ESL course at the family resource center of a local elementary school for eight months and tutoring a few grade-level and adult students in both classroom and private settings.

I was also employed by the Department of Leadership, Policy, and Organizations at Peabody College as an English-Chinese interpreter to the department's Educational Leadership Learning Exchange (ELLE) Program. During the program, I provided English-Chinese two-way consecutive interpretation for the local elementary and secondary school principals and their Chinese counterparts. I believe that these series of English teaching and using experiences can show my proficiency in social, academic, and professional English domains required for an EFL teacher.

### **Domain: Learning**

The sixth TESOL standard states that “teachers draw on their knowledge of language and adult language learning to understand the processes by which learners acquire a new language in

and out of classroom settings. They use this knowledge to support adult language learning” (TESOL, 2008, para. 6).

As an EFL teacher, it is important for me to understand adult learners’ second language acquisition (SLA) process. The artifact I will use in the learning domain is a case study of an adult second language (L2) learner of English. In this case study, I made several interviews with the learner and obtained a writing sample from her. By conducting the interviews and communicating with the learner, I learned the L2 learner’s sociocultural background and educational history. Through analyzing the oral and written language produced by the learner, I was able to evaluate her level of second language acquisition (SLA). I also recommended English learning strategy according to major SLA frameworks.

**Learners and learning.** The learner whom I worked with (see artifact G) was originally from Thailand, where English is not an official language. Before coming to the U.S., the learner had learned English as a foreign language (EFL) for ten years. The learner had a strong motivation of learning English. Before she was enrolled in a master of business administration (MBA) program in the United States, the learner spent time and effort on preparing the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) to be admitted in her program. After earning her MBA degree and interning for a year in the United States, the learner returned to Thailand and started working in a national bank.

Selinker (1972) believed that interlanguage, an intermediate state between a learner’s L1 and L2, showed both evolving success and errors of L2. The learner’s language performance during the case study presented both strengths and mistakes with her L2. I will introduce the

learner's stage of language development and her learning goals in the assessment and curriculum of the analysis of this artifact.

**The learning environment.** Before starting her MBA program in the United States, the learner studied and used English in an EFL setting because English is not an official language in her home country. Neither of her parents spoke English at home. Her English courses in Thailand focused on receptive language skills by training reading and listening comprehension skills. Although the learner had been learning English for ten years in this EFL learning environment, she seldom had chance to develop her expressive language skills (speaking and writing) in English and communicative language abilities in her home country.

In the United States, the learner took every possible chance to develop her English language proficiency and experience life with the exposure to an authentic learning environment. The learner recalled that her oral language and writing skills in English drastically improved within the first two years in her stay in the country. Like all graduate international students, she improved academic and professional English by reading textbooks and journal articles, participating in classroom discussion and case studies, and giving presentations. Although she faced hardships and experienced initial difficulties and discomfort in the English-only environment, she felt her language learning environment in the United States challenging yet supportive. She also greatly enhanced her interpersonal communication skills in the communicative language learning environment in the United States.

**Curriculum.** As I learned from the interview on the learner, her learning goals did not include promoting her English proficiency to emulate a highly educated native speaker. Now that

the learner has left the United States and worked in Thailand, she was not expected to speak and write in flawless English, although her job in a bank required a high level of English proficiency. Given the learner's objective of English use and the difficulty of *absolute* mastery of a second language, we worked together and set her learning goals to produce more *intelligible*, *grammatical* and *stylistic* discourses in both written and spoken forms. However, since the learner had been in a career and had no intention to learn English in a formal classroom setting, it depended on her personal will and availability of time in her independent English learning to further improve her language proficiency.

To achieve the above three goals (more intelligible, grammatical and stylistic), the learner and I agreed to a) practice pronunciations especially those did not exist in her L1, b) focus on grammar in her speech, and c) write more concise and brief sentences. We believed that she did not need intense grammar exercise since she mastered the English grammars well. However, she might need to monitor her speech and reduce grammatical errors in both verbal and written communication. Finally, she could further improve her writing skills with her authentic language-using environment as she worked.

**Assessment.** During the assessing part of the case study, I listened to the record of the interviews and take notes on the pronunciation and fluency or the learner's oral language performance. I also transcribed the audio-records and closely examined the grammar and speech patterns. Later, I applied these materials derived from the informal assessment to a SLA rubric to assess the learner's current level of English. The SLA rubric was modified by a faculty member at Department of Teaching and Learning, Peabody College (L. Pray, personal

communication, Fall 2012). According to the standards on the SLA rubric, the learner possessed a series of strengths and competence in her English language proficiency. For example, she comprehended my questions and prompts well and her spoken English was highly intelligible. In addition, her pronunciation was near standard and her oral expressions were fluent. She also used many professional and less frequent vocabularies in her oral and written language such as *synergy* and *OEM*. Her grammar was good except for some sporadic errors. Finally, the learner applied organized and complex sentences in her writing sample: her paragraphs contained various syntactic types, such as complex-coordinate sentences, subordinate and relative clauses. Based on the performance in the series of informal assessments the learner's current English proficiency was *advanced*.

**Domain: Content**

The seventh TESOL standard is under the domain of content. It requires that: teachers understand that language learning is most likely to occur when learners are trying to use the language for genuine communicative purposes. Teachers understand that the content of the language course is the language that learners need in order to listen, to talk about, to read and write about a subject matter or content area. Teachers design their lessons to help learners acquire the language they need to successfully communicate in the subject or content areas they want/need to learn about (TESOL, 2008, para. 7).



The artifact I used in this TESOL domain is the lesson plan of an ESL class on obesity that I taught at the family resource center of a local elementary school (see artifact H). The class focused on the content knowledge of healthcare and the language and vocabulary used in the content area.

**Learners and learning.** The students of the class were parents of ELL students enrolled in the elementary school. As indicated from the initial language assessment of the family resource center, the language proficiencies of these adult English learners varied from low to high intermediate. Arabic and Spanish were their more frequently used first languages. The educational and vocational backgrounds of the students were also diverse: some of the students finished high school, while some of them received bachelor's degrees in their home country.

Research indicated that CLD or ELL students need to apply their *common underlying proficiency* between their first language and second language to “make language and knowledge transfers from their primary language (L1) to the instructional language (L2)”(Herrera et al, 2013, p. 130). Therefore, to achieve the content objectives and the language objectives of this class such as developing knowledge of obesity and nutrition and becoming able to use proper English to discuss topics in health-related questions, I need to make the students use their prior knowledge and expertise in this specific content area to promote their learning. In addition, it was difficult to cater for the diverse learning strengths and needs of the students. Taking these factors in consideration, when I taught this class, I asked a student with higher English language proficiency who also worked as a pharmacist in her home country to peer-assist her classmates in both English and Arabic.

**The learning environment.** Having worked with the majority of the students for more than four months, I had gained knowledge in the linguistic and sociocultural background of the students. In this class, I wanted to utilize this knowledge to create a mutually supportive learning environment. There were nine students in the classroom when I taught this class. The nine students worked in three small groups in the majority of classroom activities. The rule I applied when I was designing the class was to guarantee each group would have at least one student who was either more proficient in the content knowledge or in the English language level. I hoped that this grouping would help my students receive more scaffold from the assistance of their peers to better develop their language skills and content knowledge. Before the students started reading the news article about the trend of obesity in the United States as a small group activity, I asked the students to either read aloud to the rest of the students or in chorus. The students paused to help each other when someone met a new vocabulary for several times. During the reading, they also applied metacognitive strategies together such as making comprehension checks.

**Curriculum.** The culturally relevant text used for this class is an article on health. It was selected from a monthly newspaper (*Elizabeth Claire's Easy English News*) designed for beginning ESL students in the U.S. The story was to the students. To achieve the content objectives and language objectives of the class, I used K-W-L and ReQuest as the main teaching strategies in the class. I started the main teaching activities by introducing and explaining the key vocabularies of the class. These key vocabularies included obesity, obese, and epidemic, etc. In another warming up activity, I reminded the students the three steps of K-W-L: accessing what I

know, determining what I want to learn, and recalling what I learnt as a result of reading to students. In the step *K* as the pre-reading activity, I wrote the word *overweight* on the whiteboard and asked the students to brainstorm whatever they knew about the term. Then the students brainstormed and generated categories of ideas of the content topic. After that I recorded my students' responses and uses these responses for further discussion. In addition, I was also able to know what they wanted to know more about the topic as the *W* part.

After the series of preparations, I continued the reading activity with the ReQuest strategy. Although we have been using ReQuest several times before this class, I asked a student to volunteer a modeling of ReQuest with me to ensure all students get the process clearly. Teacher and the student read the selected part of the text in turn (one sentence at a time). By using the ReQuest strategy, I modeled good questioning behavior by think-aloud and assessed the students' understanding of the text simultaneously (see artifact H for more details in how the ReQuest strategy was applied).

**Assessment.** The assessments of the class consisted two parts: a formative part and a summative part. While the students engaged in the activities such as reading and thinking-aloud with ReQuest, I was able to listen to and take notes on their speeches and language. By evaluating if a student was able to discuss the topic and share the idea with the other students in the small group, I could assess if the student achieved part of the language objectives of the class. I was also able to provide feedbacks on the student's performance with English grammar and pronunciation. In addition, as the students discussed and compared their summaries within the small group, their summaries also served as both a summative and a formative assessment for the

students to check if they were able to understand and respond to the higher order question of the class such as *Why are obesity and overweight dangerous? Or How to cure the problem?*

On the other hand, I also designed a project for the students that could be used for the summative assessment of the class. To finish the project, each student was asked to cut and collect at least three nutrition facts labels. Then they could glue or tape the labels on a letter-sized paper and count how many servings an adult can have if any of the nutrients does not exceed the recommended daily intake. Students also wrote on the paper which the food they thought was the healthiest among the three. In the next class, students will debrief their findings to their group members and the whole class.

### **Domain: Commitment and Professionalism**

The final TESOL standard is under the domain of commitment and professionalism of EFL teachers. It requires

teachers continue to grow in their understanding of the relationship of second language teaching and learning to the community of English language teaching professionals, the broader teaching community, and communities at large, and use these understandings to inform and change themselves and these communities (TESOL, 2008, para. 8).

As an EFL practitioner, it is imperative for me to enhance my professionalism by learning from other teachers in the language teaching community. During my study at my current program, I participated in a series of professional development activities with various communities of language teachers, such as the Tennessee Teachers of Speakers of Other

Languages (TNTESOL) and Tennessee Foreign Language Teaching Association (TFLTA). In addition, I also spent time in observing and learning from ESL courses in different contexts. In the TESOL domain of commitment and professionalism, I will use a set of artifacts to demonstrate my commitment and professionalism of teaching English as a foreign language (see artifact I). These artifacts are three classroom observation reports of post-secondary adult ESL classes that I observed in fall, 2013. In each observation, I took notes on other teachers' integration of the four skills and variety of activities and small group work. As a result of these observations, I learned from the English teaching community and understood English language teaching better.

**Learners and learning.** The learners and types of learning in the ESL programs were diverse. One of the institutes that I observed is a three-year community college. The students in the class were international students or immigrants. Some of the students took the ESL class to fulfill their program of study in the community college, while other students took it only as a means to development their English language proficiency. The other institute that I observed is a private research university. The students of the English Academic Proficiency program were international graduate students or visiting scholars. They all had passed standardized English tests before they came to the United States. However, some students in the second institute were suggested by their advisors to take the English course because of their initial language difficulty.

The students at the different institutes also had diverse English language proficiencies. For example, some students in the intermediate English language proficiency program at the community college had been living in the U.S. for years and had good command of language and

cognitive skills; whereas some other students needed extra support from the instructor on grammar and sentence structure.

**The learning environment.** The three adult English classes in higher education setting had different environments. The first class enrolled about 30 students, while the second and third class had twelve and four students respectively. All three teachers were native speakers of English who had been practicing EFL teaching for a long time.

The observations helped me realized the importance of using English language teaching strategies to improve the learning environment. For example, the teacher in the first classroom applied total physical response (TPR) to make her materials more comprehensible and accessible for the students. The teacher would explain the nuances of English verbs and verb phrases such as sit / sit down / sit up with physical demonstrations of these action verbs. The use of TPR also made the learning environment more engaging as the students more actively responded to the teacher's questions and participated in other teaching activities.

In addition, observing different classes of various learning environments helped me understand the teachers' and students' roles. I have seldom learned or taught English in very small size settings. One class that I observed only enrolled four students. During the class, all students had ample opportunities to answer questions and discuss in the target language. The small scale of the class made it possible for the teacher to teach with intensive uses of Socratic questions. For example, when comparing the summary to the abstract of an article, the teacher raised strings of questions such as "do you often read research papers?" "What is the first part you read in a research paper?" "What is usually in an abstract?" "How do you choose what is

important?” etc. During the observations and the following analyses, I learned more about the use of various teaching strategies according to the different course settings and learning environments.

**Curriculum.** The three programs held different curriculum concentrations. The first class was to help students increase their English literacy and skill in post-secondary settings, whereas the second and third courses focused on students’ oral and written English academic proficiency. The differences in the use of materials and activities aligned with the programs’ curricula. For example, the second course used a textbook on higher education oral English speaking. The materials and activities were culturally relevant to the students’ life and study in the U.S. For example, the interview activity in the class offered the students chances to use their prior knowledge of higher education in their home countries and compare it to their current academic programs. The fourteen students worked in seven pairs to practice their interviewing skill in academic settings. The interview questions mainly concerned about educational differences in the US and students’ countries of origin. Sample questions included whether college teachers dress differently, whether the course load differs, and how students interact differently in class. Through the course, the students could reflect on the difference of education systems and better adjust themselves to the American campus.

**Assessment.** In all three programs, the students were assessed and placed according to the result of the pre-instructional assessments. During the observations, I learned that all three programs applied adapted versions of the Michigan English Test, where the students’ listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills in English were tested. In addition to the formal,

standardized tests, the programs also applied different formative assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning. For example, the assessment of the first class is done in the form of a real-world project. The students in the class were to read descriptions of sixteen different career pathways exempted from [www.usa.gov](http://www.usa.gov) and write a reading journal on the pathway that might fit them best. The teacher would assess students' use of written language and understanding of content for both formative and summative test purposes.



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## Reflection

The set of artifacts that I created during my current master of education program has been serving as the bridge between the professional training I received and the real-world tasks and challenges on which I am about to face. Many pre-service or novice teachers have experienced the disparity of what they learned from their educational program and the situations in their classrooms in real life. Therefore, to face this challenge, I need to consistently improve my professionalism in teaching after finishing my current teacher-training program. In addition, I also need to rigorously practice my knowledge and skills of teaching and learning to better internalize them.

As I mentioned at the beginning of my philosophy of teaching statement, a central step of teaching for teachers is to “tie” themselves with their students. I know it is not enough to only remember students’ names and faces. Instead, as a future EFL teacher in China, I will care about and try every possible way to understand and build meaningful rapport with my students. To make this tie with students, I believe that I should bear in mind the three practices by knowing: 1) who my students are, 2) in which environment they have lived, and 3) what types of prior knowledge they bring into classroom with them.

English language learners, no matter where they come from, present diverse and dynamic personal assets. They enter schools with a wide range of language proficiencies in both English and their native languages and of content area knowledge. Therefore, I understand that it is not enough only to teach literacy and language-related knowledge to my adult EFL students. Instead, I also need to help my students increase their competence of using English in content EFL

classes such as English literature and linguistics. As a result, I believe that teaching content-related knowledge and skill in the form of sheltered instruction can be applicable to my EFL teaching practice.

To achieve this goal, I will value my students as active participants and stakeholders in their own learning. Although China is a relatively homogenous country in terms of ethnicity and religion, its society still consists of different sociocultural classes. Thus, I will continue trying my best to understand my students and their funds of knowledge, and adjust my teaching form, manner, and discourse so that my teaching will work in accordance with their learning goals and needs.

However, English is not official language in China. Before the conceptualization of communicative language teaching will prevail in my future teaching context, the students might have limited opportunities to learn English with sufficient language use and practice. Therefore, I would encourage the use of my students' first language to better promote their language learning process, such as comparing and contrasting the similar sentence structures of Chinese and English comprehend and learn the English syntax. I believe my students, as bilingual speakers, would actively use their own great language-learning reservoirs within the common underlying proficiency between their first language and second language.

Finally, in regard to my EFL teaching practice, I have a vision to achieve: I hope my students can become global citizens by learning a foreign language. With the advent the Internet, foreign languages become ubiquitous. People become speakers of another language even before they are aware of it. Under such a circumstance, students naturally become members of the

global community and are exposed to different languages and cultures. As an ESL teacher, I will help my students develop language proficiency as well as form an appreciation of the cultures embedded in these languages so that they can better prepare themselves to become competent citizens in the global community.

## Appendices

### **Appendix A: Three-Genre Lesson Plans**

#### Rationale and Teaching Context:

Students, despite their language proficiency, are inundated by a plethora of texts today. Many of these texts can be misleading, such as advertisement, spam, and even newspaper stories. In addition, with the current access to the Internet, everybody has the voice and can “publish” texts. Therefore, as readers, people are often trapped by manipulation of words that misleads their prior knowledge. It is important to discover the voice and person behind the text: Who is the author of the text, who they are, what is being said and what is not? These critical thinking abilities and strategies should also become foci of literacy education in schools. Therefore, this unit, whose theme is *understanding authors and narrators*, employs three genres of texts: a poem, three stories excerpted from an award winning fiction, and a fake news report.

Research has shown that students’ different background knowledge will help them comprehend texts. Therefore, teachers should tap students’ prior knowledge to interpret and understand poems to achieve the goals for teaching and learning. Each of the three genres in this unit provides access to students’ background knowledge: 1) The poet’s special identity (as the first immigrant and the first Latino to be a U.S. presidential inaugural poet) and the content and language of the poem provide multifold possibilities for ELLs to utilize their background knowledge and connect themselves with the text. 2) The award-winning novel, whose chapter is excerpted as an exemplar text of literature in the Common Core State Standards, is about immigration, culture shock, and the affiliation of mothers and daughters. 3) Many students have daily access to news reports, which means they may have formed a general understanding of this genre. In sum, this unit focuses on the identities of narrators and authors in addition to comprehending and appreciating texts by utilizing students’ background knowledge.

Notably, the news article used in this unit is a parody which was treated as a serious one by the media. This text seems ridiculous, thus not proper for a high school setting. However, if schools and literacy teachers shun this ubiquitous and misleading genre of texts (such as ads and spam), students will not be prepared to tackle with similar texts in the real society.

This unit is designed to be taught in grade-11 English Language Development Reading classes. Students have previously learned literature works with various narrative types (such as third-personal, third-personal omniscient, and first-personal).

**Section One**

**UNIT NAME:** Who Is the Storyteller? – Understanding Authors and Narrators

**ESTIMATED TIME:** 75 minutes

**GRADE/SUBJECT:** Grade 11; ELD Reading

**ORGANIZATION OF STUDENT LEARNING:**

<b>OBJECTIVES:</b>	<b>STANDARD:</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>
Students use different strategies to decode and comprehend the given poem, as well as construct and interpret meaning of the poem by their own understanding and background knowledge.	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.7 Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text.	<input type="checkbox"/> Formative <input type="checkbox"/> Summative
Students can make meaningful connections of the text with other poems they read, the world, and themselves.	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.	<input type="checkbox"/> Formative <input type="checkbox"/> Summative
		<input type="checkbox"/> Formative <input type="checkbox"/> Summative
		<input type="checkbox"/> Formative <input type="checkbox"/> Summative

**“I CAN” STATEMENTS:**

- I can imagine what the poem presents.
- I can compare and contrast the scenario where Richard and I deliver the poem in different occasions.
- I can make connections of the poem and my life.
- I can understand the symbols used in the poem

- I can have my own interpretation of who the poet is and why he wrote this poem and delivered in the presidential inauguration.

### LEADING QUESTIONS:

- Why do so many names and places appear in the poem?
- Why does the poet mention “I have a dream?”
- Can you infer what do the father and mother in the poem do?
- Why does the poet use so many different languages of greetings (“hello, shalom, buon giorno, howdy, namaste, or buenos días”)?

### MATERIALS AND RESOURCES:

- Online video of the 2013 Presidential Inauguration in which the poet addressed the poem <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1mDrk8AC4G4>
- Copies of transcript of the poem

#### Transcript

One Today by Richard Blanco

One sun rose on us today, kindled over our shores,  
peeking over the Smokies, greeting the faces  
of the Great Lakes, spreading a simple truth  
across the Great Plains, then charging across  
the Rockies.  
One light, waking up rooftops, under each  
one, a story  
told by our silent gestures moving behind  
windows.



My face, your face, millions of faces in morning’s mirrors,  
each one yawning to life, crescendoing into our day:  
pencil-yellow school buses, the rhythm of traffic lights,  
fruit stands: apples, limes, and oranges arrayed like rainbows  
begging our praise. Silver trucks heavy with oil or paper -- bricks or milk, teeming over highways  
alongside us,  
on our way to clean tables, read ledgers, or save lives -- to teach geometry, or ring up groceries as my  
mother did  
for twenty years, so I could write this poem.

All of us as vital as the one light we move through,  
the same light on blackboards with lessons for the day:  
equations to solve, history to question, or atoms imagined,  
the “I have a dream” we keep dreaming,  
or the impossible vocabulary of sorrow that won’t explain  
the empty desks of twenty children marked absent  
today, and forever. Many prayers, but one light  
breathing color into stained glass windows,



life into the faces of bronze statues, warmth  
onto the steps of our museums and park benches  
as mothers watch children slide into the day.

One ground. Our ground, rooting us to every stalk  
of corn, every head of wheat sown by sweat  
and hands, hands gleaning coal or planting windmills  
in deserts and hilltops that keep us warm, hands  
digging trenches, routing pipes and cables, hands  
as worn as my father's cutting sugarcane  
so my brother and I could have books and shoes.

The dust of farms and deserts, cities and plains  
mingled by one wind -- our breath. Breathe. Hear it  
through the day's gorgeous din of honking cabs,  
buses launching down avenues, the symphony  
of footsteps, guitars, and screeching subways,  
the unexpected song bird on your clothes line.

Hear: squeaky playground swings, trains whistling,  
or whispers across cafe tables, Hear: the doors we open  
for each other all day, saying: hello, shalom,  
buon giorno, howdy, namaste, or buenos días  
in the language my mother taught me -- in every language  
spoken into one wind carrying our lives  
without prejudice, as these words break from my lips.

One sky: since the Appalachians and Sierras claimed  
their majesty, and the Mississippi and Colorado worked  
their way to the sea. Thank the work of our hands:  
weaving steel into bridges, finishing one more report  
for the boss on time, stitching another wound  
or uniform, the first brush stroke on a portrait,  
or the last floor on the Freedom Tower  
jutting into a sky that yields to our resilience.

One sky, toward which we sometimes lift our eyes  
tired from work: some days guessing at the weather  
of our lives, some days giving thanks for a love  
that loves you back, sometimes praising a mother  
who knew how to give, or forgiving a father  
who couldn't give what you wanted.

We head home: through the gloss of rain or weight  
of snow, or the plum blush of dusk, but always -- home,  
always under one sky, our sky. And always one moon  
like a silent drum tapping on every rooftop  
and every window, of one country -- all of us --  
facing the stars  
hope -- a new constellation

waiting for us to map it,  
waiting for us to name it -- together

**INSTRUCTION:**

- Teacher shows students the first stanza of the poem on the projector and reads it to students. (pre-reading activity)  
One sun rose on us today, kindled over our shores,  
peeking over the Smokies, greeting the faces  
of the Great Lakes, spreading a simple truth  
across the Great Plains, then charging across the Rockies.  
One light, waking up rooftops, under each one, a story  
told by our silent gestures moving behind windows.
- Teacher highlights the proper names in the first stanza and asks students where these geographic features are located and who have been to these places. If students have travelled to any of these places (the Smokies, for example), their experience can help build connections to the text. (pre-reading activity)
- Teacher plays the video clip of Richard delivering the poem on the 2013 Presidential Inauguration (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1mDrk8AC4G4>) on the projector (not playing the full length of speech). Then teacher asks students who have seen the ceremony on TV. Students' background knowledge of the inauguration will again function to build personal connection to the poem.
- Teacher introduces the poet Richard Blanco. If students have similar socioeconomic backgrounds to Richard, the common identity (being an immigrant or Latino) will provide extra empathy for students to better understand the text.
- Teacher hands out full-length copies of the poem and introduces key vocabularies. Teacher hands out worksheet on which the key vocabularies are marked and annotated with tiers and student-friendly definitions.
- Students do small-group reading. Each student in the small group reads a stanza in turn. Teacher will monitor how well the students are doing and answer questions of students while they are reading the poem.
- After reading, teacher will ask students to discuss in pairs the imaginary appeared in their minds when they were reading and how they would link those images to the printed text. This activity helps students practice cognitive reading skills such as visualizing and making connections.
- Teacher asks students to volunteer their visuals and the process to make connections. If students hesitant or are not sure about the process, teacher will make a personal example. This process will also utilize students' prior knowledge in reading strategies.
- Students volunteer how they appreciate and interpret the poem. Students are encouraged to discuss different ideas they have and argue for / against their ideas.

**CLOSURE:**

- Students will have the performance task as a formative assessment to demonstrate the

effective of the overall learning process.

**Section Two**

**UNIT NAME:** Who Is the Storyteller? – Understanding Authors and Narrators

**ESTIMATED TIME:** 300 minutes

**GRADE/SUBJECT:** Grade 11/ ELD Reading

**ORGANIZATION OF STUDENT LEARNING:**

<b>OBJECTIVES:</b>	<b>STANDARD:</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>
<p>Students meet the grade-level reading requirements.</p> <p>Students will read the text with various comprehension strategies.</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.5.3a Use combined knowledge of all letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns, and morphology (e.g., roots and affixes) to read accurately unfamiliar multisyllabic words in context and out of context.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.5.4a Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Formative <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Summative</p>
<p>Students will form their own understanding of the text and critically think about others' critiques.</p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Formative <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Summative</p> <p>Students will write a reflection of the section about the plot, organization, and their interpretation of the story.</p>

**“I CAN” STATEMENTS:**

- I can tell the difference of the storyteller and the author of the story.
- I can define the types of narrators (first person, third person, third person omniscient) in different texts
- I can use various strategies to comprehend reading and organize knowledge.
- I can use my background knowledge to familiarize myself with the text.
- I can apply monitor the effectiveness of strategies I use and adjust my reading.
- I can build meaningful connections between myself, the text, and the world.
- I can have my own interpretation of the story.

**LEADING QUESTIONS:**

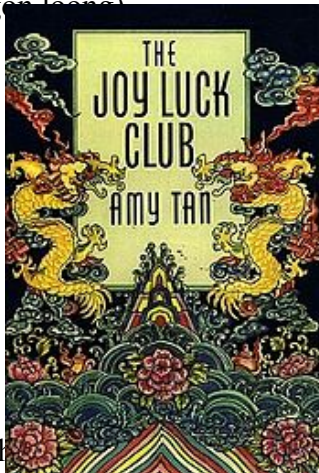
- How did the parable infer the generation gap between the mother and the daughter?
- Why did the social group of dining and playing mahjong get the name "The Joy Luck Club?"
- Why the main characters in each chapter were all women?
- How much do you think of the story is real?

**MATERIALS AND RESOURCES:**

- Copies of three stories excerpted from Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*: Jing-Mei Woo: The Joy Luck Club, Waverly Jong: Rules of the Game, and Jing-Mei Woo: Two Kinds
- Online podcast video of Interview of Amy Tan by the National Endowment for the Arts <https://itunes.apple.com/itunes-u/nea-big-read-author-documentaries/id398907327?mt=10#ls=1>
- Graphic Organizers for students:  
[http://go.hrw.com/resources/go\\_mk/la/latm/LITRES13.PDF](http://go.hrw.com/resources/go_mk/la/latm/LITRES13.PDF)  
[http://go.hrw.com/resources/go\\_mk/la/latm/LITRES20.PDF](http://go.hrw.com/resources/go_mk/la/latm/LITRES20.PDF)
- Materials of critiques of the novel taken from book reviews, criticisms, customer reviews on online shopping websites ([http://www.amazon.com/The-Joy-Luck-Club-Amy/product-reviews/0143038095/ref=dp\\_top\\_cm\\_cr\\_acr\\_txt?ie=UTF8&showViewpoints=1](http://www.amazon.com/The-Joy-Luck-Club-Amy/product-reviews/0143038095/ref=dp_top_cm_cr_acr_txt?ie=UTF8&showViewpoints=1))

**INSTRUCTION:****DAY 1 HOOK AND INTRODUCTION TO THE NOVEL**

- Teacher shows the class the cover of the novel and asks students of what the title, name of the author, and the illustration reminds them (for example, the surname Tan, the cloud pattern, and the Chinese dragon looms)



- Teacher introduces the author and the background of the book to students.
- Students brainstorm what they know about Chinese culture and Chinese-American literature
- Students watch selected part of the interview of Amy Tan <https://itunes.apple.com/itunes-u/nea-big-read-author-documentaries/id398907327?mt=10#ls=1> as a trailer. Then students discuss and predict what the book is about.

- Teacher hands out word worksheets that list specific words and ideas in the chapters that might cause obscurity, such as mah jong (a very popular game of four with domino-like tiles), Popo (grandma) and the Kuomintang (the ruling political party of China from 1928-1949). If there will be Chinese or Taiwanese students in the class, they can help as assistants to introduce these new concepts. Teacher can use these phrase and concepts as hook-ups to encourage students to utilize their background knowledge and build personal connections to the fiction.
- Teacher asks students to read the table of contents of the novel. Students discuss the special organization of the novel: four anecdotes in each one of the four sections.
- Student read the four one-page parables: Feathers from a Thousand Li Away, the Twenty-six Malignant Gates, American Translation, and Queen Mother of the Western Skies. After that, students discuss in small groups the symbolism represented in the parable (the swan, feather, and Coca-Cola, etc.). Then students will present their understandings of the parables and the symbolism they applied to the whole class. Based on students' discussion, the teacher asks them how the parables infer the generation gap and problems of communication between the mothers and the daughters.
- Teacher wraps up and assigns homework to 1) review the word sheet and important ideas mentioned by Amy Tan and the parables, and 2) read Chapter One: Jing-Mei Woo: The Joy Luck Club, and Chapter Five: Waverly Jong: Rules of the Game.

## **DAY 2 PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND THE USE OF NARRATORS**

- Teacher draws a relation map of the four pairs of mothers and daughters on the white board (Suyuan Woo and Jing-mei Woo, An-mei Hsu and Rose Hsu Jordan, Lindo Jong and Waverly Jong, Ying-ying St. Clair and Lena St. Clair). Then teacher asks the class to define their characters with quote from or summary of Chapter One and write these features under names of the characters.
- Teacher shows the table of contents again to the students. Since students will have known the characters, they may find and discuss the organization of the novel in a deeper level. Teacher may provide possible prompts such as: Why the titles of sixteen stories contain only women's names? Why section one and section four tell the mothers' stories (An-Mei, Lindo, and Ying-ying), while the theme in section two and three's is the daughters (Jing-mei, Waverly, Lena, and Rose)? After discussing in small groups, students will also present their findings and understanding of the organization to the class.
- Teacher hands out the Graphic Organizer [http://go.hrw.com/resources/go\\_mk/la/latm/LITRES13.PDF](http://go.hrw.com/resources/go_mk/la/latm/LITRES13.PDF) Students will summarize Waverly and Lindo's contradicting wills and find their reasons to support the ideas of the mother and the daughter. This activity will help students better locate and select useful information in the text to understand higher-order thinking questions.
- Teacher asks students the following question to illicit the highlight topic of the unit: Who is the heroine / protagonist of the novel. Based on the narrative of the first chapter and frequency of the appearance of names on the table of contents, students may think that Jing-Mei Woo is the single heroine in the series of stories. At the same time, many other students may argue that in chapter five, Waverly Jong was the protagonist. Students' different ideas will lead to the introduction of different first-personal narrators employed in the novel.
- Students brainstorm the idea of narrator / storyteller with a K-W-L chart. Possible myths of narrators that students might put in the K blank include: the author of a book is

automatically the storyteller or the story is always the main characters. Teacher will clarify again the difference. The. Students may also receive scaffold to learn how the different points-of-view in a novel depict the same character differently. For example, the opinions on Ying-ying of Suyuan, Lena, and Ying-ying herself differ greatly. In another case, if students understand how Jing-mei, Waverly, and Lindo think about Waverly and her chess prodigy, they may better understand the nuanced, rivaling friendship of Jing-mei and Waverly.

- Teacher summarizes the lesson with students and answers students' questions about the plot, setting, narration, or anything related to the topic.
- The homework is to review the introduction of narrators and read Chapter Eight Jing-Mei Woo: Two Kinds

### **DAY 3 CLASHES IN IDENTITY AND PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS**

- Teacher reviews with the students the course content of the previous two classes.
- Teacher hands out the second graphic organizer [http://go.hrw.com/resources/go\\_mk/la/latm/LITRES20.PDF](http://go.hrw.com/resources/go_mk/la/latm/LITRES20.PDF). Students work on the organizer to list Jing-mei and her mother's different expectation of future and their rationales. Then the class will discuss the source of their disputes. Students are encouraged to use their own experiences if they have similar contradictions of the future or choice of career with their parents.
- With the dispute and arguments listed on the graphic organizer, students work in small groups to generate a synopsis of Chapter Eight. This activity will help students' working with summarizing and story-retelling.
- Based on their reading of Chapter Eight, students discuss the themes and issues that arise in this chapter such as: conflict (mother-daughter), and problem of identity. One exemplary question is: The parents of the author Amy Tan wished she could be a full-time neurosurgeon and part-time concert pianist. How is this expectation reflected on Jing-Mei in the novel? This question also helps students to clarify the author's personal experience and her fictional work.
- Teacher reviews the class and introduce the final project of this section of the unit: watch the adaptation movie of the novel and write a reflection over them.

### **DAY 4 TURN AROUND – ANOTHER INTERPRETATION OF THE STORY**

- Students will watch part of the adapted movie of the Joy Luck Club. Through this activity, students may add visualize understanding to their comprehension of the novel. In addition, by compare and contrast the movie adaptation to the original novel. Student will come to know another form interpretation by the director and playwright. By appreciating others' understanding and presentation of their understanding, students may better grasp the theme of the unit in addition to the reading and classroom discussions. Meanwhile, the characters and Chinese culture presented in the movie provide alternative access for students to understand the diversified culture they have.

**CLOSURE:**

- As the section-ending project, students will write a reflection on the plot, organization, and their interpretation of the novel and movie. In addition to the part that is directly linked to the story, students’ reflections will also focus on the concept of narrator, voice, and point of view.
- The reflection will count as a major part of the .

**Section Three**

**UNIT NAME:** Who Is the Storyteller? – Understanding Authors and Narrators

**ESTIMATED TIME:** 75 minutes

**GRADE/SUBJECT:** Grade 11; ELD Reading

**ORGANIZATION OF STUDENT LEARNING:**

<b>OBJECTIVES:</b>	<b>STANDARD:</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>
Students will understand the use of words and the consequences in a text.	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text.	<input type="checkbox"/> Formative <input type="checkbox"/> Summative  
Students can evaluate the text	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.5 Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging	<input type="checkbox"/> Formative <input type="checkbox"/> Summative  
Students will understand the point of view of the author in an informational text.	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.6 Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the	<input type="checkbox"/> Formative <input type="checkbox"/> Summative  

	power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.	
	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.	<input type="checkbox"/> Formative <input type="checkbox"/> Summative

**“I CAN” STATEMENTS:**

- I can understand that sarcasm can be veiled in the form of propaganda.
- I can notice the source, author, and the validity of a text, be it a mail, news, or ads.
- I can have my own opinions of the credibility of texts, and I know what I can find authentic information on the Internet.

**LEADING QUESTIONS:**

- Do you think this story is true? Why?
- Who might wrote this article, and why?
- What is sarcasm?
- What evidences make you belief information, for example, an article, a commercial, or a statistics posted on the Internet.

**MATERIALS AND RESOURCES:**

KIM JONG-UN NAMED *THE ONION*'S SEXIEST MAN ALIVE FOR 2012 [UPDATE]



*THE ONION* IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THAT NORTH KOREAN SUPREME LEADER KIM JONG-UN, 29, HAS





word cloud and Kim's photo. Teacher will ask students who the man is, what they know about him and his country, and what they think of his choice of fashion. Teacher will record students' answers on the whiteboard. Students may come to the question that why an article will consider Kim as "the Sexiest Man".

- Teacher introduces the parody news website: [theonion.com](http://theonion.com) to students.
- Students read the full text of the news article on a web browser. Then teacher asks whether students think the story is true, why the editor would create such a ridiculous story, and how the Onion differs from other online news websites such as Yahoo!, NPR, or CNN, etc.
- Teacher orients the class and directs the class to discuss *what the elements of good news report are*. Students may respond answers such as accuracy, disinterestedness, brevity, clarity, etc. Then, teacher asks students what their opinions about the Kim article are.
- Teacher record the compare and contrast of "a good news report" and the Kim article in a Venn diagram.
- Based on what students learn from the previous sessions, teacher brings up the topic: author and narrator, again. Teacher will ask students what they think about the editor of the Kim article and why he / she would fabricate "news."
- Teacher asks student to recollect the literature works they have read that employed sarcasm and irony (such as Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift). Teacher will ask students to make connections of these previous texts with the Kim article. Text-to-text links may help students better understand the point of view and the purpose of the author.

**CLOSURE:**

- Students will be given a short next of news happened recently in the U.S. Based on the fact reported in the news, students will use sarcasm and ironies to rewrite the story. After presenting the adapted news to the class, students will write a reflection of how they "manipulated" the words and languages to change the meaning of their stories and how to evaluate a text in terms of credibility and author's purpose.

**Appendix B & C: Tutoring Plans and Reflections**

Tutoring Plan

Ningyu Zhang

Date: 1/29/13

Time: 1:10 – 1:40 pm

Place: Reading Clinic, Bailey High School

Activities:

Self-introduction on hallway to reading clinic

Survey of student 5 minutes

as introduced on 1/22

Reading a new book 10 – 15 minutes  
use cover pictures and illustrations as hints  
go over key vocabularies  
discuss reading content with student

Word work game 5 minutes (probably the slap game)  
add new ones from the reading

Writing a one sentence story response 5 minutes  
mark traces

Sending students back

### Tutoring Plan

Tutor's name: Ningyu Zhang (Joe)

Date: 2/5/13

Student's name: Y'asmin Summer

Time: 1:10 – 1:40 pm

Place: Reading Clinic, Bailey High School

Framework applied: Directed-Reading-Listening-Thinking Activity (DRLTA) (Carrasquillo, Kucer & Abrams, 2004, pp. 63-64)

Material(s) used: *Dogs 101*

The material is non-fiction. It lists several famous breeds of dogs and introduces information such as instruction for grooming and the dogs' temperament. No specific structure is applied. However, it generally follows a general-specific narrative. Note: The connotation of "101" might be confusing to the student.

Activities:

Rereading *Dogs 101* pp. 1-8 3 minutes  
Focus on proper names of breeds and abstract such as Terrier and temperament

Continuing *Dogs 101* 15 minutes  
Add key vocabularies that the student needs to decode with effort into Slap

Discuss reading content with student by prompting her past experience with dogs (the student keep a dog)

Word work game (probably the slap game) 5 minutes  
Try to keep the student engaged

Writing a sentence from the text 5 minutes  
 Sending students back

Total time consumed: around 28 minutes

#### Reference

Carrasquillo, A., Kucer, S. B., & Abrams, R. (2004). *Beyond the beginnings: Literacy interventions for upper elementary English language learners*. Clevedon [England: Multicultural Matters.

#### Tutoring Plan

Tutor's name: Ningyu Zhang (Joe)

Date: 2/12/13

Student's name: Y'asmin Summer

Time: 1:10 – 1:40 pm

Place: Reading Clinic, Bailey High School

Today's goal: finish *Dogs 101*; encourage more self-correction; give prompts that make student monitor where her reading gets stuck; and continue testing student's ability of reading up-side-down (optional)

Framework applied: Directed-Reading-Listening-Thinking Activity (DRLTA) (Carrasquillo, Kucer & Abrams, 2004, pp. 63-64)

Material(s) used: *Dogs 101*, pencils and markers, student's binder and notebook, and word work game materials

#### Activities:

Rereading *Dogs 101* 5 minutes  
 Go over the part covered last week

Continuing *Dogs 101* 15 minutes  
 Encourage student to use contextual cues for understanding  
 Explain, replace, and test new vocabulary in the passage  
 More self-correction instead of "teacher provided" if miscues occur

Word work game (continue the slap game) 5 minutes

Writing 5 minutes  
 Try "dictating" a sentence excerpted from text

Sending students back

Total time: around 30 minutes

Reference

Carrasquillo, A., Kucer, S. B., & Abrams, R. (2004). *Beyond the beginnings: Literacy interventions for upper elementary English language learners*. Clevedon [England: Multicultural Matters.

Tutoring Plan

Tutor's name: Ningyu Zhang (Joe)

Date: 2/19/13

Student's name: Y'asmin Summer

Time: 1:10 – 1:40 pm

Place: Reading Clinic, Bailey High School

Today's goal:

- Gain familiarity of the information in the new book
- Continuing encouraging self-correct more
- Gain the awareness of using contextual cues

Material(s) used: *Dogs 101*, a new non-fiction book, pencils and markers, student's binder and notebook

Activities:

Review (reading) *Dogs 101* 5 minutes  
Focus on vocabulary (i.e. A.K.A., retrieve, origin, and companion)  
Try encouraging retelling

Start with a new book (preferably non-fiction) 20 minutes  
Focus on fluency and self-correction  
Let student use more contextual cues (illustrations and flow of information in the text)

Skip the word work game  
Review key vocabularies in the session next week

Retelling reading content 3 minutes  
Comprehension and memory of key facts

Sending students back

Total time: 28 minutes

### Reflection

In the review session I tested the student some details about the last book as well as key vocabularies. She could replace the word with a synonym (companion, partner, and friend) and provide a definition of a verb (retrieve). We started a new book *To the Moon and Beyond* of level 44. Although the new book has the same reading level of the former one, the structures and content are very different. For example, information in *Dogs 101* is organized in fraction: every entry has the same structure in which different features of dogs are introduced in small blocks. On the other hand, the new book has longer paragraphs and a more formal narrative. Pictures in the new book are less than the old one. These caused some difference in reading. I could not count the word she read per minute, but I felt that she read paragraphs faster than information in fraction. In addition, the new book has more new information and works, such as the Soviet Union, *Sputnik*, and NASA. However, Y'asmine showed interest of the topic. She asked what animal did the former Soviet Union sent to the space after reading and joked how a monkey would drive the spaceship.

She should have learned the idea of gravity in science class. But to make it clear, I raised the book up and dropped it on the desk. In addition, I made a simile with a pencil to show how a staged rocket works in addition to the illustration in the book. The pencil tip was referred as the payload. In order to send the "pencil tip" into the space, the rocket had to drop a part after the fuel contained in that part runs out. These visual demonstrations helped the student understand the text better.

She had sporadic self-corrections toady. She also use the start of words to try decoding new words such as "aeronautic." This means in the following session I will help her a) speed up, b) concentrate and self-correct more, and c) find more phonetic cues of words. Although words like *Sputnik* and aeronautic are new to her, they do not have irregular pronunciation pattern. Therefore, I want to her to try reading these types of words aloud instead of turning for help every time.

### Tutoring Plan

Tutor's name: Ningyu Zhang

Date: 2/26/13

Student's name: Y'asmin Summer

Time: 1:15 – 1:45 pm

Place: Reading Clinic, Bailey High School

Semester goal:

Be able to read chapter book at student's grade level

Use word-level knowledge to decode and contextual cues to comprehend  
 Improve self-monitoring skills while reading; Be more aware to self-correct

Today's goal:

Know the new book *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (graphic novel)

Use graphics and context to predict the following story

Material(s) used: *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, pencils and markers, student's binder and notebook

Activities:

Review (reading) *To the Moon and Beyond* 5 minutes  
 Review key vocabulary (i.e. gravity, rocket, payload, etc.)  
 Retell how a staged rocket works

Start with *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* 20 minutes  
 Look at the illustration on cover, guess who is Tom  
 Read the profile pages; predict characters of each role (Tom, Aunt Polly, Injun Joe, etc.)  
 Read first chapter (before Murder at the Graveyard)  
 Focus on fluency and self-correction

Skip the word work game  
 The graphic novel might be more interesting than word games!

Retell and write down the reading content 5 minutes  
 Probable prompts: How did Tom trick his peers into painting the fence?

What happened to Tom and Becky in school?

Sending students back

Total time: 30 minutes

Reflection

I expected that time-honored classics such as Tom Sawyer will be of interest to Y'asmine. I was right. Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn's stories are not only for kids. Grown-ups and foreign language learner will also find it worth reading. In the graphic novel version, the main story line was preserved, while the settings and side story lines are either drawn in graphics or omitted.

My goals for today's reading session were: 1) giving Y'asmine a big picture of the storyline and the greatness of the novel; and 2) making her predict the plot with the rich content cues in the graphic novel. My goals for this book also include linking other texts she has read (such as *Junie B. Jones*), making compare / contrast of the books, and linking the story with her life (I may give prompts after reading this book such as: Do you feel you and Tom have something in common?).

During the reading session, she was engaged. I can tell that she loves the graphic novel. For several times, she tried to flip the page to see what was on the next page before finishing reading the sentences. I made a little suspension for her. Right after the part where Injun Joe killed the doc, I stopped the reading and asked her to retell what's told in chapter one. On the way back to her classroom, I told her that many students have read Tom Sawyer, and Mrs. Connor might have read it when she was a student at her age. If she is interested, she can read the original novel! I can feel her excitement: Y'asmine was more talkative and she talked faster than usual on the hallway back.

Also, I was glad that she showed several reading strategies in today's session. First, she was able to use contextual cues and word parts to make conjecture. She looked at the illustration of Injun Joe, pointed at the headband, and guessed whether "Injun" is related to Indians because the two words has the same start of "In." Second, she

However, since Y'asmine was a little excited today, she did not notice many miscues. I had to pinpoint the word she missed. This showed me a small contradiction of engagement and self-correction. As teachers, we want students have both. However, when they are excited about the reading, they may lose track! In addition, I have a question about the word Injun. I did not tell her that Injun is a derogatory address of Indians. It was acceptable for Mark Twain's time, but is may be of an issue of ethnicity today. What's more, I don't know how severe it is to use the word in America now. Therefore, I did not touch upon this connotation. Should I make it clear next time?

Arbitrariness is a major feature of any language. However, being lack of connotations may cause trouble for me and my students. Personally I think it is acceptable to tell in an objective way.

## Tutoring Plan

Tutor's name: Ningyu Zhang

Date: 3/12/13

Student's name: Y'asmine Summer

Time: 1:15 – 1:45 pm

Place: Reading Clinic, Bailey High School

Semester goal:

Be able to read chapter book near student's grade level

Use word-level knowledge to decode and contextual cues to comprehend

Improve self-monitoring skills while reading; be more aware to self-correct

Today's goal:

Read at least four chapters in the graphic novel; understand the story

Use the graphics and context to predict the following story



Material(s) used: *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

Activities:

Review the first chapter of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* 5 minutes  
Recall the plot line and main characters

Continue with *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* 20 minutes  
Read at least two chapters (will ask student to read faster because of the reading level of the graphic books is too much below her grade level)  
Focus on fluency and self-correction

Retell and write down the reading content 5 minutes  
Probable prompts: write a sentence of anything about the story?

Sending students back

Total time: 30 minutes

Reflection

Today's tutoring session was started by asking Y'asmine to retell the story in the first two chapters and the main characters. I was glad to find that after a one-week interval, she could remember the storyline in the first chapter. This showed that she did comprehend the text when we began reading. The reading today was boosted up after I learned that the schools will have a two-week spring break after this week. I thought this will be huge gap of reading if we pause for two weeks. Therefore I tried to go ahead of time and we finished *the Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

While Y'asmine was reading, I paused several times to ask questions related to the story. For example, I asked why the people in town shot cannons (because they wanted to search Tom, Huck, and Joe's bodies), she did not answer correctly. This inference on text might be too hard for her. In another case, I asked who the pronoun "her" referred to, Y'asmine said it was Becky. However, Tom was referring to Amy. These showed that although Y'asmine's could understand the story and grasp the whole picture of the graphic novel, she needs focus more on inferences and details. On the other hand, I tried to make Y'asmine challenge the text. On the blood letter, Tom and Huck wrote "Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn swears..." I asked Y'asmine to examine the illustration and find the grammar mistake. Then I made her guess why there was a mistake. Unfortunately she seemed not comfortable to this activity, therefore I gave her my understanding that Tom and Huck are not "good" students at school so it is reasonable that they have grammar mistakes. Later I realized that this activity of making clarification is a part of 5 Cs metacognitive activity. I may explicitly use similar tasks in the future.

In my previous plan, I wanted to use the book to practice Y'asmine's metacognitive skills by linking the book to 1) other texts she read before, 2) her personal experience, and 3) the world. Unfortunately, I didn't have time after reading six chapters in forty minutes. I will try to incorporate these questions into the review part of the next tutoring session. But I am afraid that this activity will not yield the opportune result as expected after two weeks.

### Tutoring Plan

Tutor's name: Ningyu Zhang

Date: 4/2/13

Student's name: Y'asmine Summer

Time: 1:15 – 1:45 pm

Place: Reading Clinic, Bailey High School

Semester goal:

Be able to read chapter book near student's grade level

Use word-level knowledge to decode and contextual cues to comprehend

Improve self-monitoring skills while reading; be more aware to self-correct

Today's goal:

Start with a new book. Build student's personal connection to the new book.

Material(s) used: *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Who Killed the Cock Robin*

Strategy: the *ReQuest Procedure*

Student formulates her own questions about the materials; adopts an active inquiring attitude to reading; acquires reasonable purposes for reading; and improves independent reading comprehensive skills.

Activities:

Review *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* 5 minutes  
Unaided recall of the book

Read a new book 20 minutes  
We may do silent reading for this new book.

I would model questioning for the student. Then hopefully we will do reciprocal questioning.

The answers and questioning of the book will serve as summative assessments.

Retell and write down the reading content 5 minutes  
Unaided writing of a few sentences about the book

Acquire more information about the student

Total time: 30 minutes

## Reflection

According to my plan, today's goal for tutoring focused on making inference, silent reading, and reciprocal questioning. We began with an unaided recall of the Adventures of Tom Sawyer. Y'asmine could remember the main character (Tom, Injun Joe) and plot (white-painting the fence, pirate life, and found the treasure). Then we started with another book *Who Really Killed Cock Robin?* Since I had never heard about or read this book, reading this new book together with Y'asmine would be a perfect experience to explore something new since I could have many questions about the book as she did. Under this sense, I could model the methods to her which I used to approach the new book. Meanwhile, since we had been doing read-aloud in all of the previous sessions, I chose silent reading with Y'asmine for today's session. On the other hand, since it was more difficult to monitor her reading process with silent reading, I asked her to notify me whenever she finished a page, then we did reciprocal questioning under the ReQuest strategy. I planned to use the answers and questions of Y'asmine to assess her comprehension of the story.

After reading the table of contents, I asked Y'asmine:

T (tutor): What are the functions of the contents?

Y (Y'asmine): Contents show the pages of each chapter.

T: What else does the table of contents do?

Y: They show what each chapter tells.

This Q&As showed her inadequate but acceptable understanding about textual structure of chapter books.

After silent reading, reciprocal questioning seemed strange to her. I tried to demonstrate what higher-order thinking questions are such as: how did the bird die, and why did Tony (the protagonist) keep a journal of robins? However, the questions that she asked me consisted mostly of facts, such as: Who is Mary? Next time I will tell her what higher-order questions are. I might use a simplified definition that these questions are the ones that ask *why* and *how*. On the answering side, Y'asmine did not give me the answers I wanted. When answering why Tony took the bird observing journal (the page she just read said clearly that his older brother Izzy was drafted into the Army and he had to ask Tony to continuing the notes of robins for his graduate studies), Y'asmine answer the question with a far-fetching answer: Because Tony was hired. In addition, since Y'asmine did not understand the text, or because she was not concentrating on the reading, she did not answer some of my questions which required inferential thinking. When I asked how old is Tony (possible hints included that he is five feet and three inches tall, an eighth-grade math book was in his home, and he is eleven years younger than his older brother Izzy, who is a graduate student), she speculated with an answer: 22.

Judging from the dissatisfactory questions and answers, I felt that Y'asmine was not good at asking questions and she did not comprehend the text. This fact might result from her unfamiliarity of questioning skills and lack of concentration during silent reading. We will continue the first chapter with the same strategies after showing her how to ask questions.

### Tutoring Plan

Tutor's name: Ningyu Zhang

Date: 4/9/13

Student's name: Y'asmine Summer

Time: 1:15 – 1:45 pm

Place: Reading Clinic, Bailey High School

Semester goal:

Be able to read chapter book near student's grade level

Use word-level knowledge to decode and contextual cues to comprehend

Improve self-monitoring skills while reading; be more aware to self-correct

Today's goal:

Continue practicing student's silent reading skill and comprehension.

Material(s) used: *Who Killed the Cock Robin*

Strategy: the *ReQuest Procedure*

Student formulates her own questions about the materials; adopts an active inquiring attitude to reading; acquires reasonable purposes for reading; and improves independent reading comprehensive skills.

Activities:

Review 5 minutes

Unaided recall of the book

Continuing Reading 20 minutes

I would model questioning for the student. Then hopefully we will do reciprocal questioning.

The answers and questioning of the book will serve as summative assessments.

Retell and write down the reading content 5 minutes

Unaided writing of a few sentences about the book

Acquire more information about the student

Total time: 30 minutes

### Reflection

We had a slow progress for today's reading. Before we started reading, I asked what Y'asmine wanted today's reading to be like. She answer that she want to "read with her own

pace.” Y’asmine has not showed features a fluent reader. Even compared to other students in the reading clinic, she lacked fluency. However, it has long been disputed in teaching literacy which one comprehension and fluency should be the focus of reading. My philosophy of teaching literacy would argue that comprehension is much more important than fluency. Therefore, we took it slow and only read roughly one page in twenty minutes.

We started with silent reading again. After Y’asmine read half a page, we did the reciprocal questioning again. Like what we did last time, I started by modeling the questioning. However, I felt when we keep reading silently, Y’asmine would not turn for help when she met a difficult word, which undermined her understanding. If she could not understand the text well, the ReQuest strategy might not be the opportune strategy. Because after I questioned, she gave me the wrong answers twice. Therefore I asked her to read aloud and switched the focus from questioning to predicting.

I asked Y’asmine whether she knew predicting. She said predicting is like when the news on TV predict the weather. I answer yes, and then I went deeper: Predicting is guessing with evidence and what you know with what you are reading. Good readers predict when they are reading. Predicting in turn helps readers understand the text better. After that I lead her to predict the reason of the death of the bird with think-aloud. I said the mayor in the story was campaigning against the use of DDT. DDT is a deadly pesticide. After bugs were killed by DDT, the chemical of DDT will stay in the bug, if the robin ate poisoned bugs, the chemical in the dead bug might kill the robin. Having given the sequence, Y’asmine said it was DDT that killed the robin. I congratulated on her guessing, saying what she just did was what all good readers did. However, I explain that a prediction might not be true. Since we just read six pages, the prediction might not be true. However, it was a very important step to read the book. By predicting, what you do is challenging yourself. During this process, readers may feel more engaged with reading.

However, even though we had a good start in prediction, I felt bad about today’s tutoring. Improving Y’asmine’s self-correction is a long-term goal that I focused nearly in all sessions. However, her awareness to self-correct has not shown improvement. In a previous reflection I guessed her lack of self-correction was because her attention was drawn by the plot of the story, therefore her fluency increased but the mistakes were overlooked. When we came to the new book, her interest was not as high as when we read the Adventures of Tom Sawyer, yet she still seldom self-correct. It was my last but one tutoring with Y’asmine, probably we will not achieve the goal of improving self-correct. When a student is not engaged, it better to reflect whether the material and teaching method was proper.

## **Appendix D: Tutoring Report**

### **Introduction**

Reading is not a meaningless and repetitive action that occurs in a stifling building which is required by a group of boring grown-ups who make a living on it. Most individual may have experienced the bittersweet of reading: reading frustrates us, reading enlightens us; reading

makes us weep, reading makes us smile; reading causes fidgets, reading makes one forget the time. As a reader, I believe reading is more than school work. Therefore, as a reading specialist, I believe that reading has two-fold purposes: schooling and pleasure. If a student correlates reading only with schooling, he / she may not be able to enjoy the pleasure of reading. It has been widely acknowledged that reading has a reciprocal relationship with comprehension. In other words, the more one reads, the better reader he / she will make. However, students vary in reading strengths and needs. As a result, achievements in schooling and pleasure are difficult to attain without the improvement of one's reading comprehension. Therefore, I hope I can help my students smooth their academic reading and increase the joy of reading. To help students become better readers, I would take efforts in the following five aspects: 1) having students increase vocabulary as well as word-decoding skills, 2) helping student develop a set of reading strategies and the automaticity of applying them, 3) helping students familiarize themselves with different textual structures and genres, 4) increasing the fluency of reading, and 5) providing after-reading comprehension assessments.

In terms of reading pedagogy, I agree with the statement that “there is no single method or single combination of methods that can successfully teach all children to read” (International Reading Association, n.d.). Therefore, I employ an eclectic teaching methodology. In addition, I understand that it is essential for a reading specialist to understand students' academic, linguistic, and socioeconomic dynamics. In the spring of 2013, I've been endowed with a valuable opportunity to put my philosophy of literary instruction into practice. I tutored a fifth grader at an urban middle school in Nashville, Tennessee. We met once a week at the reading clinic of the school. Each tutoring session lasted approximately thirty to forty minutes. This tutoring report will present 1) background information of the student, 2) a summary of tutoring, and 3) recommendations for future tutoring and a reflection of this experience.

### **Background Information**

Jenny (pseudonym) is a fifth-grader at Bailey Middle School. The eleven-year-old Nashville native lives with her parents and a three-year-old sister. She keeps a mini poodle and plays basketball in her spare time. Jenny's favorite books are the *Junie B. Jones* series, a collection of twenty-eight books of a bright little girl named Juniper Beatrice. English is Jenny's only language, but she once mentioned that if the school had offered Spanish courses, she would be interested in taking a Spanish class because “many people speak Spanish here.”

Jenny was referred to the Bailey reading clinic in the fall semester of 2012. The reason was that she read at a relatively low reading level (see Table 1); therefore the school hoped the reading clinic might push her over the top.

**Table 1:** *Assessment Results*

Assessment Results of Jenny (before and during tutoring)				
Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR)		Discovery Education Assessment (DEA)		
Date	Grade Equivalent	Date	Score	Level
10/12/12	4.7	September 2012	17	Basic
1/13/13	3.7	November 2012	14	Basic

4/9/13	4.3	February 2013	17	Basic
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Jenny is a quiet and well-disciplined student. Unless asked, she would keep quiet on the hallway to the reading clinic or back to her classroom. I also remembered once she noticed a piece of paper on the floor. She picked the paper up and found it was the name sign of Ms. Starling, the music teacher at Bailey. She politely knocked the door at Ms. Starling's classroom and handed in the sign paper. Jenny's series of nice behaviors left me a deep and good impression.

The girl is also mature. Upon leaving the reading clinic after finishing a tutoring session, many students would take a sticker of "good job" or "fantastic" away with them. However, Jenny never picked a single sticker when we signed out. The reason she came to the clinic did not seem to include requiring symbols of performance such as a sticker with motivating words.

In our first meeting, I made a brief survey on Jenny's reading background and interest. When asked what her favorite activity in her spare time was, Jenny answered, "reading." However, when I asked her what book she read during the winter break, Jenny's answer was surprising: "nothing." In a similar case, I asked Jenny on the hallway to the reading clinic what her favorite subject in school was. Without hesitation, Jenny replied, "reading." The responses I received were contradictory.

In order to have a closer look at Jenny's access to books and other types of literacy, I visited the school's library near the end of the tutoring. According to Ms. Greene, the librarian at Bailey, roughly one-fourth of students of Bailey come to the school library to check out books, DVDs, and *Playaway* audio books daily. However, Jenny was not a frequent visitor to the library: She had only been there four times in the spring semester. After the library visit (April 9, 2013), I asked Jenny when the last time she checked out a book was. Jenny answered "last Thursday" (April 4). However, she did not remember the title or the plot of the book she checked out less than one week ago. She only recollected that there was a girl on the cover. These answers indicated that she did not comprehend much of the book. Why would a student who claimed her interest in reading not actually read?

My understanding of the contradiction between Jenny's responses and reading performance was: Jenny might have developed a set of social interactive strategies and could apply these strategies in communicating with people. These strategies included replying to the questions raised by teachers, visitors, and tutors with pleasant answers that they expected to get from her. Although she was interested in reading, the test results and her performance during tutoring (will be introduced in the next section) suggested that she needed extra help in reading. The results of my research of Jenny's reading history were proven valuable in designing my tutoring plan and choosing reading materials in accordance with her specific strengths and needs in reading comprehension. The following part of this report will provide a synopsis of tutoring activities and present how the background information of Jenny was considered during the tutoring sessions.

### **Tutoring Summary**

It has long been disputed in teaching literacy whether comprehension or fluency should be the focus of reading. I agree with the statement that "comprehension should be considered the

heart of reading instruction” (Tierney, Readence & Dishner, 1980, p. 9), and is much more important than fluency. In the pre-tutoring survey, Jenny said that she wished she could read at her own pace during the tutoring. Therefore, I would take out fluency from my general teaching objectives in Jenny’s case, which meant that I would concentrate on comprehension, instead of the indicators of fluency such as speed, accuracy, and prosody. As a result, the specific tutoring objectives for Jenny were adapted to help her 1) read at her grade level, 2) increase vocabulary, 3) apply multiple reading strategies, 4) increase the rate of self-correction, and 5) increase the abilities to recall and summarize texts.

In each tutoring session, the activities included: a review of vocabulary and a three-minute rereading of the text from the previous session, a twenty-minute reading practice, and post-reading assessments. Table 2 lists the detailed information of all tutoring sessions.

**Table 2** *Tutoring Information*

Date	Reading Procedure	Tutoring Focus	Material Used	Reading Level	Genre	Assessment
1/29	N/A (pre-tutoring survey)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2/5	Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA)	Prior knowledge Using illustrations Vocabulary	<i>Dogs 101</i>	40	Non-fiction	Written Summary
2/12	Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA)	Self-correction Fluency	<i>Dogs 101</i>	40	Non-fiction	Oral Retelling
2/19	ReQuest	Self-correction Visualizing Questioning	<i>To the Moon and Beyond</i>	44	Non-fiction	Reciprocal Questioning
2/26	N/A (no specific procedure planned)	Making connection Contextual clues (illustration) Prediction	<i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i> (graphic novel)	17	Fiction	Written Summary
3/12	N/A (no specific procedure planned)	Self-correction Fluency Comprehension	<i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i> (graphic novel)	17	Fiction	Oral Retelling
4/2	ReQuest	Prediction Contextual clues (text structure) Silent reading	<i>Who Really Killed Cock Robin?</i>	44	Fiction	Written Summary
4/9	ReQuest	Predicting Text genre	<i>Who Really Killed Cock Robin?</i>	44	Fiction	Reciprocal Questioning
4/16	ReQuest	Predicting	<i>Who Really</i>	44	Fiction	Oral



			<i>Killed Cock Robin?</i>			Retelling
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The text types we used during the tutoring sessions included both fiction (N=2) and non-fiction (N=2). The reading levels of three of the four books (40, 44, and 44) were close to or slightly higher than Jenny's Grade Equivalent (3.7 and 4.7) according to the STAR tests. Only one book (graphic novel version of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*) had a significantly lower reading level (17) because I wanted to use this book to model making connections and predictions. Two reading procedures, namely Directed Reading Thinking Activity and ReQuest, (Tierney & Readence, 2004) were applied in most of the tutoring sessions. Both reading aloud and silent reading were employed. Each tutoring session included a post-reading test. The tutoring paused for three weeks because of spring breaks of the tutor's university and Bailey.

By applying the DRTA and ReQuest procedure, I focused the tutoring sessions on 1) arousing Jenny's interest, 2) developing background with her previous readings, 3) relating the text to her past experiences, 4) expanding comprehension strategies, 5) modeling questioning to the text, 6) increasing her awareness to self-correct, and 7) improving unaided retelling and summarizing. The following four snapshots are excerpted from my tutoring plans and reflections. They might help to show how the above methods to boost reading comprehension were embedded in different reading activities.

I expected that Jenny would like to read *Dogs 101* for more knowledge and interesting facts about her beloved mini poodle. Her background knowledge about dogs might keep her motivated while she was reading (February 5).

I made a simile with a pencil to show how a staged rocket works in addition to the illustration in the book. The pencil tip was referred as the payload. In order to send the "pencil tip" into the space, the rocket had to drop a part after the fuel contained in that part runs out. These visual demonstrations helped Jenny understand the text better (February 19).

When I asked what came to her mind when she saw the name Tom Sawyer and the author Mark Twain, she blurted "Dr. Sawyer," which indicated she was trying to build a text-to-world connection (February 26).

I tried to demonstrate what higher-order thinking questions are such as: how did the bird die, and why did Tony (the protagonist) keep a journal of robins? ... I would also show her what higher-order questions are. I might use a simplified definition that these questions are the ones that ask *why* and *how*. It is also necessary to continuing modeling good question behaviors (April 2).

In an authentic classroom context, graphic organizers, written summaries, and other types of prompts can be competent materials and forms of assessment. However, due to the lack of time and access to testing materials, the post-reading assessments were taken exclusively in the form of story-retelling and one-sentence written summary to test Jenny's text-based understanding. If she understood what she was reading, she would internalize the reading and express her understanding about the text without my aid. The following three writing practices in

Table 3 were her unaided responses to my prompt of “writing a brief summary of what you just read.” The mistakes appeared in Table 3 were deliberately typed so.

**Table 3** *Student’s Written Summary*

Date	Book	Student’s Written Response
2/ 5/2013	<i>Dogs 101</i>	Poodles are super smart, perhaps second only to the [Border Collie] in intelligence [sic].
2/ 26/2013	<i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i> (graphic novel)	Tom Sawyer is a hero he was punished by his Aunt to paint the, but instead he tricked his friend into painted the fence. He met Becky at schools and he wanted her to say she love him [sic].
4/2/2013	<i>Who Really Killed Cock Robin?</i>	Tony’s brother gave him a big respond to hold his write pad because he got drafted to the army [sic].

Jenny made mistakes in all of her three responses. For instance, *intelligence* in the first sentence was misspelled as *intelligance*; in sentence two, she dropped a comma and the object of *to paint*, while in the third sentence, *responsibility* was replaced by *respond*. In addition to these miscues, the contents of Jenny’s three summaries did not provide synopses of the stories. Instead of making the general summaries, her written responses only covered the beginning or latest information of the texts. For instance, Jenny’s summary of the beginning five pages of *Who Really Killed Cock Robin* covered only the plot on the last half page. In the same vein, Jenny’s oral retelling also reflected a similar need. After a two-week interval because of the spring break, we continued and finished reading *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* on March 12. I asked Jenny to orally recall the plot in the later chapters in the form of unaided retelling as an after-reading test. Although her retelling included the plots such as the murder in the grave yard and the boys’ pirate However, the part that she retold most clearly was still the scene of how Tom tricked his friends into whitewashing the fences. These indicated that she needed more scaffolds and modeling in summarizing and retelling.

The above part of the tutoring report reiterated the objectives of tutoring according to Jenny’s strengths and needs. Several pieces of evidence also described what we have done in the tutoring sessions. Jenny’s scores in STAR and DEA both increased during the tutoring (see Table 1). Although Jenny has been making progress, the test result showed that she still read below grade level. In addition, her weakness in retelling and summarizing required more attention in the future.

### **Recommendations and Conclusion**

Various literatures have argued that the reading level of a text is not the primary criterion in choosing a reading material. If possible, the materials can be chosen by students, so it might be beneficial to let Jenny to decide what she would like to read in the tutoring sessions. The book selected by Jenny can help us tap deeper into her reading habits and apply different reading procedures and strategies accordingly. The medium (real book or Playaway), type (non-fiction or fiction), and genre (novel or poetry) Jenny would choose can provide valuable information for the tutoring in building various text-to-text, text-to-world, or text-to-self connections. In a previous part of this report, I stated that Jenny might not have made the most of the resources in the school library. Therefore, future tutoring activities may include helping Jenny choose a book

in the reading clinic or the school library by herself. Before deciding which book to pick, the tutor might model previewing a book and scaffold on reading strategies such as visualizing, predicting, and making connections.

In addition, to better apply comprehension strategies, I would also suggest reading a book which the tutor has never read with the ReQuest procedure. Combined with the think-aloud process, this practice may present some real-time reading behaviors that Jenny could emulate. Other important considerations include modeling good questioning behavior and providing feedbacks on the questions. The focus on comprehension over fluency could be continued, as long as Jenny would read at her own pace.

Although being a native speaker of English, Jenny sometimes needed scaffold in phonemic awareness. For instance, she hesitated at reading aloud and mis-pronounced *Sputnik*, the first artificial satellite made by the Soviet Union, as well as pronounced the name of her favorite character Junie B Jones. Although it might be the first time Jenny saw the word, she could have predicted the pronunciation based on the phonemic rules or from words such as *spud* or *juniper* (abbreviated as *Junie*). In a similar case, the way she Therefore, choral reading with Jenny would be an activity worthy trying.

As suggested by the Bailey reading clinic, many tutors would include word work games at the end of tutoring. Due to our concentration on reading comprehension and the time limit, Jenny and I decided to skip the games and save the time for reading after trying two games. However, a word work game we played on February 5 revealed one of Jenny's special talents: reading upside-down words. The game was called *Slap*. It was applied to test students' letter-sound mapping skills as well as increase students' vocabulary. During the game I mistakenly took a card with a handwritten word *around* on it and thought the word was *punoib*. Before I noticed the mistake, Jenny blunted *around*. First I thought it was because Jenny had been using the same stack or word cards with which she was familiar enough to tell without thinking. However, after testing her with some randomly picked texts, I found that Jenny could read a chunk of upside-down texts with the fluency close to the fluency with which she read normally. Unfortunately, due to the focus of this report and lack of empirical research on this curiosity, this tutoring report did not further discuss this special talent of Jenny. Future studies on how to use this ability to comprehend texts may help her become a better reader.

Working with Jenny in the reading clinic was a great experience. I enjoyed the process of scaffolding what I knew about reading to a fellow student and watching her progress. Tutoring Jenny was an excellent opportunity to practice the literacy theories I learned and my pedagogy. Jenny is a nice and quiet girl. She likes reading is willing to become a better reader. What she need are more chances to practice her comprehension strategies and summarizing skills, and more importantly, internalize these abilities to automaticity. Thus, she could better enjoy the bittersweet of different reading experiences like all the good readers do.

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## **Appendix F: Investigate Project**

Importance, Benefits, Obstacle and Suggestion for Teachers' Studying a Chinese Community

I visited an ethnic-diverse district in the southeast suburb of Nashville Tennessee to investigate the Chinese community which resides there. During the visits, I obtained several pieces of printed literatures, took digital photographs, and interviewed a Chinese immigrant family. Several pieces of the collected artifacts can be viewed as transnational literacies because of their usage for “activities that span national boundaries” (Jiménez, Smith and Teague, 2009, p.17). Analyzing these prints, photographs and interview will amend the understanding to questions such as why teachers should familiarize themselves with the community; how they may benefit from doing it; what possible impediment they may be facing; and how they can leverage their pluralist awareness to ameliorate their relationship with the community.

### **Planting Knowledge from Knowing a Plant**

De Jong (2011) determines the dominated language as “used by a language group that is politically and socially placed in a minority situation” (de Jong, 2011). Accordingly, Chinese suffers from its minority and dominated status in the US linguistic context. Mr. Gwo Yunhan, my interviewee of the study, also confirms this idea judging from his experience living in the US as a Chinese-speaking immigrant. The linguistic environment in the community I investigated is amazingly diverse. At least four languages can be discerned on a small bulletin board of a community supermarket featured for providing Latino and Asian commodities (see Figure 1). Similar to the phenomenon recognized by a previous study (Jiménez et al., 2009), language substitution in Mandarin and Cantonese also appears. Figure 2 displays two labels of Gai Choy (a vegetable commonly grows nationwide in China) in the supermarket. The pronunciation and spelling of Choy suggest its derivation from the Cantonese manner of speaking /tsoi/ (Learn Cantonese, n.d.) of the Chinese character “菜” (vegetable), instead of the Mandarin articulation /cai/. Although the Chinese language is dominated, it thrives, displays an agreeable diversity, and contributes to the language context in the ethnic-diverse community. Teachers may discover this and similar meaningful linguistic facts in the community in their own visits. Such visits in the Chinese community help teachers perceive the Chinese Community better and disabuse the linguistic stereotypes that “limit our perception of entire groups of people” (Nieto & Bode, 2008, p. 66).

My investigation also finds an interesting similarity. The supermarket sells the same jerseys of *Fútbol Club Barcelona*, Chelsea Football Club and Brazil national team (see Figure 3) that can be seen wore by many soccer fans in China. On the other hand, it does not sell sport

jerseys other than soccer. De Jong (2011) opines that language, clothing and other symbols, are integral and noticeable parts of person's identity. The preference for different sports and their idiomatic clothing suggests culture and identity influences. In addition, the legality of stay also influences Chinese immigrants' identities. The September 2 issue of the weekly supplement to World Journal, a Chinese newspaper targeting overseas Chinese in North America, released a five-page cover story. The report introduces the effect of the recently approved Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (CDACA) and how the new act will benefit the Chinese communities (Han, 2012). The Chinese community embraces the CDACA and views it as part of the DREAM Act, which many illegal immigrants with young children dream being passed by the US Congress (Y. Gwo, personal communication, September 14, 2012). Knowledge of the Chinese community assists teachers in augmenting their recognition of students' identities and "build[ing] more meaningful relationships with them" (Jiménez et al., 2009, p.25).

#### Impending Problems and Possible Activities

Unfortunately, barriers and miscommunication between local schools and the Chinese community still remain. These problems are caused by parental language difficulties and cultural disparity (Y. Gwo, personal communication, September 14, 2012). This sad fact confirms findings of previous research that certain ethnically diverse families face isolation from the school culture, which can lead to miscommunication (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Figure 4 shows an English-Chinese bilingual label in the supermarket. With help of the vivid painting, "Live Live Cat Fish" and "游水猫" conveys the meaning unsatisfactorily yet acceptably. The signboard divides the correct spelling into "cat" and "fish", and turns the corresponding Chinese for "猫 (cat) 鱼 (fish)" instead of the correct translation "猫鱼" (catfish). On the other hand, although "游水" (swimming in Cantonese) can be understood by its denotation of the metaphor meaning "alive", it may confuse people for the lack of direct linkage between the two words. This example demonstrates how interrelated languages result in irregular and ungrammatical use, which represents the complex and intertwined language environment in the ethnic-diverse community that may cause problem in communication.

Numerous researchers have proposed seminal initiatives to ameliorate the interactions between classrooms and homes such as exploring family funds of knowledge, introducing bilingualism in schools and making authors in classroom (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992; Allen, 2007). The present study also visualizes several activities to enhance the teachers' understandings of the Chinese community. For example, Gwo and his family came to the US in 1994. They had lived in Texas, Alabama, and Indiana before moving to Nashville a year ago. If the teachers of Graham, Gwo's grandson, would engage family experience into the classroom, the Gwos' immigration history and experience of transforming from farm life in Taiwan to the US can serve as rich and recommendable materials for family stories. In addition, through family stories, the Gwos' family history and work history in Taiwan and the US are abundant source for funds of knowledge for teaching.

#### Conclusion

The aim of this paper has been to introducing the social and linguistic context in the Chinese community on southeast Nashville, as well as stressing the importance, benefits and

possible barriers for conducting investigation in the community. In particular I try to interpret the information acquired by an interview and several pieces of artifacts through some linguistic and educational theories. This study also encourages teachers to cultivate awareness in the pluralist pedagogy that embraces languages other than English as an important tool of teaching, instead of a hurdle or impediment.

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### Figure Captions

Figure 1. Bulletin Board in the Community Supermarket

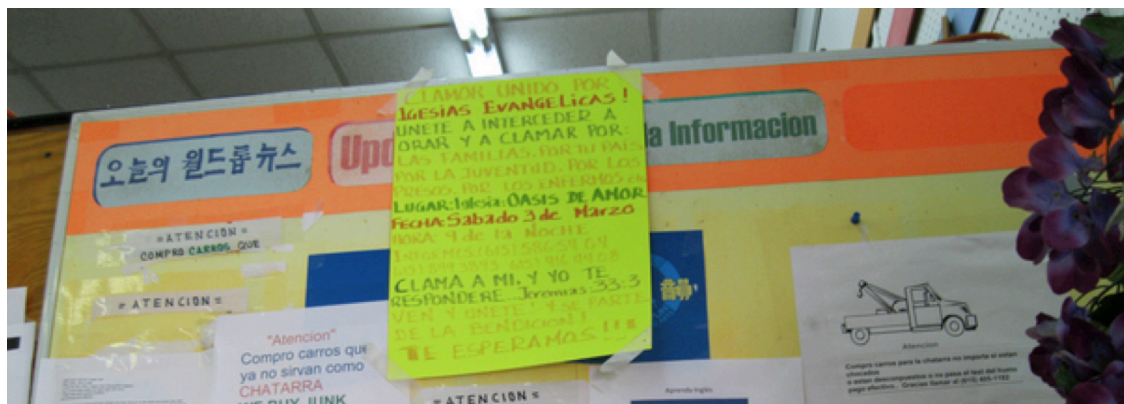


Figure 2. Gai Choy and Baby Gai Choy



Figure 4. An English-Chinese Bilingual label



### A Brief Review of Relevant Laws and Court Decisions Regarding ELL Teaching in Tennessee

The conflicts in educational policy for language minority (LM) students have been a central matter in the United States. Schmidt (2000) argued that the country “has experienced heightened political conflict over language policy for the last three decades” (p. 11). These tensions have engaged venues such as the media, local school boards, state legislatures, the Congress and courts, etc. (Schmidt, 2000). This essay examines how some major laws and regulations, as well as judicial rulings, jointly and profoundly influence the English education for English Language Learners (ELLs). It also discusses how a major statute acts on education in Tennessee from the perspective of a future ELL teacher.

#### What Are They?

The Bilingual Education Act (BEA) was added as Title VII in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in its 1968 reauthorization. As the first comprehensive federal intervention in the schooling of LM students, BEA had guided state and local education policies for 32 years (de Jong, 2011; García, 2005). However, researchers noticed that “in the 1980s, approaches that used only English were again accepted” (Lucas & Katz, 1994, p.540). This trend reflecting a preference to English-only policies continued and developed to the culmination as the pass of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, which led to “the demise of Title VII” (García, 2005, p.98). As the 2001 reauthorization of ESEA, NCLB not only “represents a significant change in federal educational policy in general” (de Jong, 2011, p.142) but also reflects policies on state and district levels (García, 2005).

In regard to the judicature, several pieces of judicial ruling also have profound influence on ELL students. Although no specific affirmative action to rectify the unequal treatment on ELLs was appealed in *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), the Supreme Court decision in *Lau* led to the establishment of several expectations on school districts known as the Lau Remedies. Furthermore, in *Castañeda v. Pickard* (1981), the US Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit set for the first time the three-part criterion regarding the linguistic right of ELLs (de Jong, 2011; García, 2005). The Fifth Circuit decision substantiated and clarified the Lau Remedies by interpreting the requirements of the Section 1703(f) in the Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA) of 1974. Other significant cases involving the EEOA include *Plyer v. Doe* (1982) and *Flores v. Arizona* (2000).

#### How Do They Act?

Although federal laws and the relevant court decisions continue showing the conflict in educational policies, they determine the establishment and implementation of state education laws and policies. The last two criteria in the three-pronged test introduced by the court decision of *Castañeda* function today in determining whether school districts have sufficient resources to implement remedy and whether the programs yield effective results (de Jong, 2011). Likewise, the Supreme Court ruled in *Plyer* that the state held no right to keep undocumented children away from school. Consequently, this particular decision is therefore written in the Tennessee ESL Program Policy as the states’ anti-discrimination policies and practices.

On the other hand, though NCLB does not prohibit bilingual education, this new English-only movement throttles the funds that English Language Learners (ELLs) could receive from



federal resources (de Jong, 2011). In addition to the direct financial factors, NCLB also affects state education laws in their practical handling. For example, scholars have observed a phenomenon that under NCLB, standardized tests assume increased accountability to accomplish the grade level expectation goals for students through achieving adequate yearly progress (AYP) (de Jong, 2011). Tennessee makes no exception to this reality by establishing the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP). The state also requires public schools and local education authorities (LEAs) to meet or exceed “a 95% participation rate in the required TCAP accountability tests for all students and for each student subgroup” (Tennessee Department of Education, 2010, p.28) to make AYP. Therefore, as a general measurement under NCLB, AYP is linked to a specific requirement on state level in the form of TCAP.

A deeper scrutiny will further unveil the NCLB-TCAP liaison and mirror their notable influence on ELLs in Tennessee. The state requires that “all limited English proficient (LEP) students are included in TCAP administration” (Tennessee Department of Education, 2010, p.45). Moreover, under NCLB, states hold the responsibility to measure the annual growth of an ELL student’s English development in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Consequently, Tennessee creates the English Language Development Assessment (ELDA) as a part of TCAP. Although ELDA does not affect AYP, the four subtests of the assessment correspond exactly to the four language skills required by NCLB. The state also keeps the English Linguistically Simplified Assessment (ELSA) as another part of TCAP for ELLs in reading/language arts, math, science, and social studies (ELL Assessment, para.1).

#### What Do They Mean (for a Teacher)?

The State Department of Education asserts that “the TCAP Achievement Test is a criterion-referenced test that has fresh, non-redundant test items and is customized yearly to measure academic skills and knowledge” (Tennessee Department of Education, n.d., p.3). However, this description does not indicate that TCAP has reasonable amount of tests. The abovementioned ELDA and ELSA are not the whole part of TCAP. Currently the test series include seven test items: the Achievement Test/ELSA/MAAS (grades 3-8), the ELDA Test, the Writing Test, the Constructive Response Assessments, and the End of Course Tests (Department of Education, n.d.).

It is not difficult to notice that ELL students can benefit from preparing for TCAP; nevertheless, TCAP plays an overwhelming role to students in Tennessee public schools, because the preparation of tests will cover a huge part of the curriculum. Pondering too much emphasis on tests to achieve AYP may slash down the latitude that teachers enjoy in tailoring their ELL-oriented education. For example, Knowledge Academy, a charter school located in southeast Nashville, assigns students in grades 4-6 with only the five major courses (English reading, English writing, math, science and social studies) which account for the TCAP assessments and AYP indicator. Therefore, students are actually suffering from lack of an integrated curriculum with history, geography and numerous electives.

Excessive emphasis on the preparation coping with federal standards results in other problems. The manipulation of tuning down difficulty of standardized tests, minimizing the official statistics of the number of ELL and revising the home language survey are not

uncommon in some states, as Timothy Hogan, the Executive Director of the Arizona Center for Law in the Public Interest, described (2012).

Due to the complex socioeconomic and linguistic context, some current statutes are doomed controversial. Some lawyers (Jammal & Duong, 2008) praised NCLB as “a historic opportunity” for its attention on and care about the academic and linguistic concerns of LM communities. While negative comments on federal laws have emerged in the academia. García noted that federal, alongside state and district, English education policies lacked consideration on the LMs’ essential needs (2005). It is hard to determine whether NCLB can be acknowledged as an educational milestone in the US until it expires in 2014. However, I propose the modification of re-adopting bilingual education to ESEA from the perspective of a bilingual ELL teacher. García defined that the heart of bilingual programs are competitive bilingual teachers who can address students English learning problems (2005). The court decision of *Castañeda* also required districts to provide qualified teaching staff. Therefore, ELL teachers may acquire more opportunities to teach in the ways that ELLs will embrace.

#### Conclusion

Charles Dickens wrote at the beginning of *A Tale of Two Cities*: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...” So does it work for ELL students in the Tennessee. Under the English-only policy, the immersion in the English-speaking environment does help them master English faster; however, it is hard for them to utilize their linguistic resources in the classroom. The bitter-sweet English learning experience of ELL students reflects the conflict of contradicting ideas which has been represented throughout the back and forth of education laws and policies.

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### Glencliff High: A Research Project

This essay presents a research on Glencliff High School. Based on the descriptive information, the school's socioeconomic, demographic, and linguistic dynamics are presented. An interview of the executive principal will reveal the school's efforts to accommodate the English Language Learners (ELLs) and the challenges of ELL education that the school is facing. The rest of this research will introduce observation of an English class and analyzes the educational practices in the class.

### Whom Does the School Serve: A Snapshot

Glencliff High, a school of a two-story building complex, is located at a quiet neighborhood along a two-lane road which links to an ethnically diverse community in southeast Nashville, Tennessee. Like many urban schools in the United States, Glencliff has experienced a number of major demographic changes since the last quarter of the twentieth century. Back in the 1950s, the time when Glencliff was established, it was a predominately white and middle-class school. But now, as Executive Principal Clint Wilson proudly described, the school is "the most diverse high school in the State of Tennessee" (C. Wilson, personal communication, October 19, 2012). It enrolls students of over 42 nationalities who speak 27 different languages. Among the 1250 grade 9-12 students, 35.5% are Hispanic, 30.4% African American, 26.8% Caucasian and 7.0% Asian. Eighty-percent of the students are on free or reduced-price lunch plans. It can be inferred that the majority of students are from families at or below certain poverty levels. More than 20% of the students are classified as ELLs. These figures draw an image of an urban high school in which ethnic, socioeconomic and linguistic changes are emerging.

### How the School Is Doing: An Interview

Research has indicated that drastic demographic changes negatively influence the urban schools (Gutiérrez, Larson & Kreuter, 1995; Valdés, 1998). However, despite the major changes, Glencliff is not on the failure track. The school is one of the only six high schools in Tennessee that made AYP in English in 2011. It also raised 0.5 point in the ACT achievement (Glencliff High School, n.d.). The school's recent educational highlights also include awards such as 2011 Community School of the Year.

The Principal attributes the school's three efforts to the school's educational successes: Maintaining high expectations, viewing diversity as strength, and providing a competitive curriculum. He also described the former two deeds as two of the most important practices for ELL educators.

One of these practices is strongly supported by research. Nieto and Bode (2008) stated that students' achievement is positively related to teachers' high expectation. Glencliff's high expectations for student performance and behavior coincide with this research. All grade-9 students are required to take either advancement via individual determination programs or

freshman seminars. Students are also recommended to take advanced placement (AP) courses. A former ELL student whom I talked to reported that she could not spell a single word in English when she came to the US six years ago. Now the 12<sup>th</sup> grade student has a higher-than-average score in AP English.

In addition, Principal Wilson addresses the school's view of diversity as strength as a must-do for teaching ELLs. Currently Glencliff has 20 special ELLs in the individual support and transition plans (ISTP) program. Students in the ISTP have *level zero* in their English Language Development Assessment. The school not only provides sheltered English instruction, in which a certified ELL teacher co-teaches these students, but also accommodates the students in their living and schooling. With the support of ISTP, many student who had no English proficiency adjusted to grade-9 classes within one year.

Given all the success of educating its diverse student population, the school cannot avoid all the bumps along its educational path. Since Tennessee only has large ELL populations in cities such as Memphis and Nashville, generally there is a lack of state push for legislation and policies that appeals for advocacies for ELLs. The school has to assume much accountability to support its ELLs under the state's current strictly English-only schooling policies. In addition, the school has not resolved the problem of misplacing students especially in Math. This is caused by lack of functional multilingual tests (C. Wilson, personal communication, October 19, 2012).

#### What's Happening in the Classroom: an Observation

My observation of an English language development (ELD) reading class at Glencliff applied ethnographic and quantitative observations. The setting, interactions, as well as the instructional methods and materials of the class will be introduced. Students' access to content and the appropriateness of instruction will also be evaluated.

Around twenty teenage ELLs were pulled-out in Mrs. Diehl's beginner-intermediate ELD class. Tablet-armed chairs were sparsely placed in the classroom. Posters of vocabularies and sample sentences in English, Spanish and Arabic were taped on the classroom walls. These hand-written flyers indicated that Latino, Egyptian and Somalia students were the majority in the class. Although the ELD program was English-only, we could observe the teacher's encouragement of students' native languages other than English. Generally, the classroom setting suggested that the atmosphere was free and relaxing.

In terms of interpersonal communication, the teacher-student interaction was conducted solely in English. Although Mrs. Diehl was supportive of other languages in her classroom, she did not use them for interactive or instructional purposes. Interactions between students, however, involved languages other than English. For example, Mrs. Diehl asked a Latina student twice to explain to her classmate in Spanish what the class was doing. Students also used their native languages to converse informally in addition to assisting one another with classroom work. But when the conversations were occurring in a native language, the class was well-disciplined and undisrupted.

We observed two subject matters, an illustration of a text and a grammar drill of prefixes, in Mrs. Diehl's class. The textbook used in the reading class was Level-C of *Longman Keystone*<sup>1</sup>, which is designated for ELLs in pull-out programs. The textbook suite is "designed for students whose academic achievement is two or more years below grade level" and it aims to help ELLs "be better prepared to transition to mainstream coursework across the curriculum" (Pearson, 2012). The text that was illustrated in Mrs. Diehl's class had an *880L* in Lexile Measure, which was of the same reading difficulty as that of the first *Harry Potter* book<sup>2</sup> (Lexile, 2012). The students understood the text of that level well. They responded correctly to questions which were related to the topic as well as details of the text. This satisfactory engagement with the method indicated that it was appropriate for this reading level.

During the sessions, Mrs. Diehl raised both *display* questions and *open* questions about the text such as, "What did the mother suggest for *Yu-Lan* to learn English?" and "Give me a word to describe the mother's characteristic." When the students whom she called "sweethearts" made grammar mistakes in their response and in the grammar drill, she gave feedback on errors by recasting the students' answer in the correct form. Additionally, her language of instruction was simple, illustrating a technique of language acquisition hypothesis that stressed students' input (Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

Some researchers have criticized pull-out second language instruction programs. They argue that under the current English-only policy, such programs lacked special assistance to ELLs and had the *assimilationist* nature that views native languages as a problem (de Jong, 2011; García, 2005). The class that we observed had some drawbacks. The students were relatively passive in participation. Mrs. Diehl sometimes had to point a student to answer her questions. However, the pull-out ELD reading class can be considered pedagogically sound according to some ELD program standards.

Based on my observation, Mrs. Diehl's class is effective in five aspects. One, her teaching method was appropriately tailored to the English proficiency of the students. Two, the instruction emphasized students' comprehension of what they were learning. Three, the language of instruction was modified and comprehensible. Four, the teacher allowed students to use their native language. Five, the teacher was concerned with formal grammatical training. These five features would justify the overall success of the class.

#### Conclusion

De Jong proposed four guiding principles for school decision: "striving for educational equity, affirming identities, promoting additive bilingualism and structuring for integration" (2011, p. 170). If fully adapted, these four principles can help schools provide more meaningful and appropriate education for ELLs (de Jong, 2011). Glenciff's efforts in promoting equity, respecting the diverse identities and integrating curriculum pathways can be merited as the benchmarks of its educational soundness. Additionally, it would be unfair to ascribe the monolingual education program as the missing puzzle. Under the current statutory

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<sup>1</sup> For detailed introduction, also see <http://www.pearsonlongman.com/ae/keystone/natl/book-c.asp>

<sup>2</sup> Lexile Measure is a ruler that rates an individual's reading ability as well as the difficulty of a book. See also <http://lexile.com/about-lexile/lexile-overview/> for more details.

contextualization, advocating additive bilingualism is difficult. In addition, pull-out English instruction programs can also be effective and successful under the current educational context in the United States.

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#### Appendix G: SLA Case Study

##### How Good You Are—A Case Study of a Non-Native English Speaker

This report will present a case study of a second language (L2) learner of English. Based on an interview and a writing sample provided by the learner, this case study will a) introduce the learner's ethnographic information, b) discuss her use of English by major linguistic aspects, c) evaluate the learner's current level of second language acquisition (SLA), and d) recommend a learning strategy according to major SLA frameworks. A reflection of the case study and the implication for my future teaching will also be stated.

The learner comes from Thailand, where English is not an official language. Before coming to the U.S., the learner had learned English as a foreign language (EFL) for ten years.

However, neither of her parents spoke English at home. And her English courses focused exclusively on training reading and listening comprehension skills. As a result, the learner seldom used English in Thailand.

However, the learner had a strong motivation of learning English. She spent time and effort on preparing the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The learner was enrolled in a master of business administration (MBA) program in Tennessee two years ago. When the learner graduated in the last summer, she had acquired a relatively high level command of English and could confidently use her L2 for different purposes.

Currently, the learner has an internship in the U.S. She does not use Thai often except chatting with her Thai friends on Facebook. But she enjoys her living and working in the country. She likes the English language and culture, and hopes her children can study in the U.S. in the future (C. Nantavichit, personal communication, September, 2012).

The learner's spoken English was highly intelligible. Her pronunciation was near standard; her tones and accent were fluent. The learner spoke interdental consonants /θ/ and /ð/ correctly, although Thai does not have these sounds (Wikipedia, November 19, 2012). However, she still had phonological errors. Table 1 lists four mistakes in her articulation. Table 1 *Four mistakes*

word	learner's pronunciation	correct pronunciation	different phonemes
Sure	/ʃyʊər/	/ʃuər/	/yu/ vs. /u/
Chicago	/čikago/	/ʃikago/	/č/ vs. /ʃ/
teacher	/tišər/	/tičər/	/š/ vs. /č/
shopping	/šɔbɪŋ/	/ʃɔpɪŋ/	/b/ vs. /p/

These phonological errors were probably influenced by her first language (L1). In English, /č/ (affricate), /š/ (fricative), and /y/ (glide) are categorized as palatal consonants (Justice, 2004). On the other hand, Thai has only one palatal consonant /j/.<sup>1</sup> In addition, Thai does not classify consonants by being voiced or voiceless (Wikipedia, November 19, 2012). The contrastive analysis hypothesis (CAH) purposed that a learner's L1 may cause errors in L2 (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Therefore, the lack of phonemic counterparts in the learner's L1 and L2 may have caused her confusion.

On a deeper level of phonology, the learner's speech varied in some English phonological features that belong to the "underlying level" (Justice, 2004, p.45). Table 2 presents an interesting variation of allophones of /t/. Like native speakers, the learner flapped /t/ in *city*. However, she either overused or overlooked the flapping rule in other words.

Table 2 *Allophones*

word	learner's pronunciation	standard pronunciation	different allophones
city	[sɪDɪ]	[sɪDɪ]	
center	[sɛnDər]	[sɛntər]	[D] vs. [t]
hotter	[hɔtər]	[hɔDər]	[t] vs. [D]

In terms of morphology, both the learner's written and spoken discourses were rich of grammatical variances. Her noun inflections and verb conjugations were correct for the majority of time. As an MBA graduate, the learner had a strong vocabulary. She used many professional and less frequent words in her writing, such as *synergy* and *OEM*. However, although the learner

had a strong mastery of the English grammar, she made several mistakes during the interview. Sometimes she could aware and self-correct them: “Now I didn’t now I don’t read it anymore.” In other cases, incorrect tenses, wrong prepositions, and lack of article remained unnoticed even in a short sentence: “I start[ed] learning English since [when], um, I was [a] very small kid.”

The writing sample that was provided by the learner consisted of organized and complex sentences. Her paragraphs contained various syntactic types, such as complex-coordinate sentences, subordinate and relative clauses. However, the average sentence length is 17.3 words. Therefore, some sentences were not concise. For example, “some points are needed to be addressed” can be reduced with the change of the passive tone and the infinitive phrase. On the other hand, there were few vague or ambiguous sentences in the learner’s writing. The paragraphs were semantically in accordance with the “principle of compositionality” (Mihalicek & Wilson, 2011, p. 255).

The learner’s writing revealed some pragmatic errors. Some sentences and phrases were not in accordance with the formal register of business writing, such as “with advice from his *dad*.” Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford stated that non-native speakers lacked the subtlety in communication compared to their native counterparts (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). However, we do not believe that pragmatics is a major problem for the learner. Having been living in the U.S. for two years, the learner has mastered good communicative skills in English. Our interaction was smooth and agreeable throughout the interview.

Selinker (1972) believed that interlanguage, an intermediate state between a learner’s L1 and L2, showed both evolving success and errors of L2. Similarly, the learner’s discourse presented both complex use and obvious mistakes of her L2. These errors were not accidental or trivial mistakes. Therefore, judging from the interlanguage hypothesis, her SLA has not achieved an “absolute success” (Han, 2004, p.2).

This case study applied a SLA rubric to assess the learner’s current level of English. According the standards, the learner’s current English proficiency could be graded as *advanced*. As stated above, the errors prevented her to meet the *proficient* level, the highest grade in the SLA rubric (L. Pray, personal communication, Fall 2012). However, her pronunciation was near standard. She was familiar with the English grammar. Her writing presented sophisticated use of sentence structures. She could properly answer the prompts during the interview and adjust her writing register. In conclusion, her educational and vocational experience in the U.S. justified her advanced cognitive and communicative abilities in L2.

In terms of learning goals, we would not expect her English proficiency to rival that of a highly educated native speaker. Various SLA theories have conjectured that total masteries of L2 were rare (Han, 2004). Lightbown and Spada also reaffirmed that expecting “native-like mastery of the second language” is non-realistic and unnecessary (2006, p. 73). In the specific case of the learner, although her job in the U.S. required a high level of English, she was not expected to speak and write in flawless English.

Given the learner’s objective of English use and the difficulty of *absolute* mastery, we would set her learning goals to produce more *intelligible*, *grammatical* and *stylistic* discourses in both written and spoken forms. Having been in a career, the learner has no intention to study



further. Therefore classroom instruction was probably non-applicable to her. On the other hand, her inaccessibility to the Universal Grammar and likelihood of interlanguage fossilization might preclude the behaviorist strategies which value the *laissez faire* acquisition from the English environment (Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Han, 2004).

Therefore, to achieve the above three goals, we suggest the learner to a) take some pronunciation drills, b) focus on grammar in her speech, and c) write more concisely. No intense pronunciation and grammar exercise is needed since the learner knew the English sound rules and grammar well. Her drill may only consist of sounds that do not exist in her L1. In addition, she may need to avoid grammatical errors even in informal contexts. Finally, she can further hone her writing skills by communicative and vocational use.

This case study presented the ethnography of a non-native speaker, assessed her English uses, and provided a learning strategy. Although the empirical samples were sufficient to sketch the learner's proficiency, what the research presented was only an approximation to the learner's real L2 mastery. Therefore, this study was not without limitations. In this case, the suggestions could only be an alternative to the ideal strategy. However, this study was of pedagogical value based on its eclectic application of different SLA frameworks. More importantly, I understood the linguistic aspects of English, different SLA theories, and the interrelation of L1 and L2 more through this case study. It is beneficial if I apply the eclectic attitude and the empirical methodology in my teaching and research.

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#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> /j/ can be seen as the counterpart of /y/ in the International Phonetic Alphabet. But in Thai, the articulation point and manner of /j/ (palatal, approximant) is different from those of /y/ in English (palatal, glide).

## Appendix H: Obesity Lesson Plan

Topic: Healthiness	Class: Tusculum FRC
<p>Background and Rationale:</p> <p>Teaching beginning literacy to second language learners does not equal to teaching beginning readers. Student at this age group (middle school) might have received adequate L1 literacy and English-as-a-foreign-language instructions in their home countries before they came to the U.S. Meanwhile, literature in education theories has shown that students' L1 literacy skills can be transferred in their L2 literacy. Therefore, this class aims at encouraging students formulating their own questions to the text and their own manners of questioning based on their L1 and L2 literacy skills. However, not all students have had the experience to develop their L1 and English to age-appropriate level. Therefore, students of this class will be grouped in the manner so that each group has proficient students and students who need extra help developing their literacy as well as reading strategies. Special accommodations for students during the teaching activities will also be provided.</p> <p>The text used for this class is an article on healthiness selected from a monthly basal newspaper (Elizabeth Claire's Easy English News) designed for beginning ESL students in the U.S. The main teaching strategies applied in this lesson include ReQuest and K-W-L.</p>	
<p>Content Objectives:</p> <p>Students develop knowledge of obesity, nutrition, and reasons of overweight.  Students incorporate what they read and discussed on class as their background knowledge and use this knowledge for their content area classes and future study.</p>	
<p>Language Objectives:</p> <p>Students use reading strategies such as predicting and questioning to help them comprehending the text.  Students develop language skills in listening, reading, speaking, and writing.  Students form their own ways of questioning and use the questioning to understand the text.  Students become more familiar with the K-W-L cognitive strategies.  Students can summarize the text with the given form.</p>	
<p>Standards Referred:</p> <p>Tennessee Standards for English Language Learners  L.6.1 and R.6.1: Draw inferences, conclusions, predictions, generalizations (related to plot, character, setting, and topic).  R.6.2: Understand relationships between parts of a text (e.g., cause and effect, compare and contrast, chronological ordering).  R.6.3: Use knowledge of sentence structure to comprehend text.  W.2.10: Write descriptive compositions that include a thesis and some points of support.</p>	
<p>Key Vocabulary:</p>	

obesity, visitor, immigrant, overweight, obese, epidemic, danger, unfortunately, discouraging, elevator, escalator, dessert, medication, genetically, vending machine, sugary, frozen, sensitive, picky, self-esteem, lonely

#### Materials:

Copies of text *Obesity: America's fastest-growing health problem* (attached after this lesson plan)

The text is the headline article of the March issue of Elizabeth Claire's Easy English News. According to an online readability analyzer (<http://sarahktyler.com/code/sample.php>), the reading level of this article (Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level) is 4.29. The topic on obesity and healthiness seem to be age-appropriate and engaging, and the readability level will fit into the six-grade ESL curriculum.

Copies of vocabulary worksheets (attached after this lesson plan), K-W-L sheets, and summarizing worksheets (attached after this lesson plan).

#### Higher Order Questions:

What is causing the problem of overweight in America?

What are the dangers of obesity and overweight?

What are the costs of this problem?

How to cure the problem? Can you think more methods in addition to what the author provided?

#### Time:

#### Activities:

Teacher hands out the word worksheet. At the other side of each sheet there are two pictures. One is a gradation of weight of a kid and the other is Mac & Cheese. Students work in groups to discuss: 1) what is in the two pictures, 2) how these elements can be related? Students can write everything on the worksheet that comes into their minds when they see these two pictures. Then, students turn the other (front) side of the worksheet to look at the key vocabulary in the word cloud. Students do task two and three by themselves.

After the vocabulary preparation, teacher recapitulates the three basic steps of K-W-L: accessing what I *know*, determining what I *want* to learn, and recalling that I *learned* as a result of reading to students. Teacher uses the two step of K, brainstorming and generating categories of ideas as pre-reading activities. More specifically, teacher writes *overweight* on the whiteboard and asks students to brainstorm whatever they know about the term. Then teacher records students' responses and uses these responses for further discussion. Some of the responses might reflect students' curiosity and desire to learn more about the topic as the *W* part.

With the series of preparations, teacher may continue with the ReQuest strategy. If necessary, teacher may also provide more information about the basic concepts and vocabulary explanation to better utilize students' different background knowledge for understanding the text in the following activities.

Teacher asks a student to volunteer a modeling of ReQuest. Teacher and the student read the selected part of the text in turn (one sentence at a time). Then teacher and the individual student take turns asking and answering each other's questions about the selection. Teacher models good questioning behavior by think-aloud and

	<p>assesses students' understanding of the text. For example, after reading the third paragraph,</p> <p>The Centers for Disease Control says that thirty-six percent (36%) of Americans are obese. Another 33% are overweight.</p> <p>The teacher may ask the volunteer, "Why are so many people obese or overweight?" Then the teacher may explain how he / she came up with this question and encourage students to ask their peers and themselves <i>how</i> and <i>why</i> questions.</p> <p>After the modeling, teacher assigns a part of the text to each group. Students in the group read aloud the text to the class in turn. Before students do the questioning, teacher makes it clear that there is no "silly question" and each question of their peers and the teacher will be answered: Responses such as "I don't know" will not be acceptable. While the students read in their groups, teacher will stand by and jump in to help. If students ask vague questions, teacher will rephrase the question. After students' questioning, teacher and students change roles. Teacher questions the students while students answer without referring to the text. When taking the role of questioner, the teacher may incorporate predictive questions, the higher-order questions, as well as factual questions. Teacher also record students' responses on the whiteboard.</p> <p>As an accommodation for students who need extra help, teacher may give each group two chances to question the teacher. Under this situation, the teacher puts down his / her copy of text and answers students' questions. Teacher may also reinforce appropriate questioning behavior again.</p> <p>After the ReQuest activity, teacher asks students to take out the K-W-L worksheet again. Teacher goes over the major questions and answers and checks what questions that still need answering. If students are clear about the text and the questions, teacher hands out the summarizing worksheet. According to the information on the board and what student jot down on their K-W-L sheets, students summarize the text with the main idea, three supporting evidences, and a conclusion on the summarizing sheet. Teacher may ask students to discuss and compare their summaries within the small group, and then teacher asks volunteers to share their summaries of the text.</p>
Time:	<p>Review and Assessments:</p> <p>Teacher may ask students to discuss and compare their summaries within the small group, and then teacher asks volunteers to share their summaries of the text. The written summary will serve as both a summative and a formative assessment of this class and in the coming sessions.</p> <p>The assignment for this class is an activity named "knowing what you eat." Each student will cut and collect at least three nutrition facts labels in their homes. Students may glue the labels on a letter-sized paper and count how many servings an adult can have if any of the nutrients does not exceed the recommended intake. Students will also write on the paper which of the food they think is the healthiest. In the next class, students will debrief their findings to their group members and the whole class.</p>

## Word Worksheet



“I picked these words from the text, if you have new ones, please add them as you want!”

Task Two:

Please sort the words (including your words) as *noun*, *verb*, *adjective*, or *adverb*.

Task Three:

Think about the meaning of each word (if you don't know), but don't ask or tell your neighbor the any of the meanings. If you don't know, that's totally OK, guess the meaning and I will talk about it later.

Obesity	Unfortunately	Vending machine
Visitor	Discouraging	Sugary
Immigrant	Elevator	Frozen
Overweight	Escalator	Sensitive
Obese	Dessert	Picky
Epidemic	Medication	Self-esteem
Danger	Genetically	Lonely

Summarizing Worksheet

First Supporting Evidence:	Second Supporting Evidence:	
<table border="1"><tr><td data-bbox="678 695 1055 1071" style="text-align: center;">Main Idea:</td></tr></table>		Main Idea:
Main Idea:		
Third Supporting Evidence:		

## Appendix I: Classroom Observation Reports

Name of observer: Ningyu Zhang Level of class observed:  
intermediate

Topic of the day's lesson: English Sentence Structure

**Indicate whether the teaching strategies below were *effective* or *ineffective*.**

**Briefly JUSTIFY your assessment.**

- Use of target language [quality and quantity of L2; teacher talk vs. student talk] :  
**effective**      **ineffective**

The class was taught in an *English as a Second Language* background as opposed to *English as a Foreign Language*. The students spoke different native languages while the teacher was a native speaker of English. Therefore, English was used exclusively throughout the class for instruction, explanation, and maintaining class discipline.

The students had limited chance to talk in L2 except being pointed to ask or answer questions.

- Use / integration of 4 skills [listening, speaking, reading, writing]:  
**effective**      **ineffective**

The class aims to promoting students' reading and writing proficiency. However, during the observation, no explicit integration of the four skills was observed. The majority of time was used on grammar explanation of the assignment of the previous class.

On the other hand, since the teacher spoke a great amount of English in the class, it would be unfair to deny the function of input through listening for the students.

- Use of visuals [book, board, technology supported]:  
**effective**      **ineffective**

The classroom was equipped with a computer and an overhead projector. The latter was frequently used to cast the teacher's answer on the whiteboard. However, the computer was barely used during the class. The textbook for the class was not used during the entire lecture. The students and teacher referred to their handouts for the majority of time. The only multimedia visual aids used in the class was a picture of Russian Stacking Dolls when the teacher explained the nested adjective / adverbial phrases in English

- Length / variety of activities [indicate average # of minutes per activity]:  
**effective**      **ineffective**

The teacher did not provide a variety of meaningful tasks. A major chunk of time was used for the grammar explanation, which was a pedagogical task. The following part listed the start / end time of each activity.

Class Schedule	9:30 – 10:50	80 mins
Greetings and head count	9:34 – 9:38	4 mins
Quiz	9:38 – 9:52	14 mins
Grammar explanation	9:52 – 10:42	50 mins
Assigning homework project	10:42 – 10:50	8 mins

- Personalization of materials [relevance to students' lives]:

**effective**    **ineffective**

The highlight of the class was the teacher's use of the material. The teacher would explain the nuances of English verbs and verb phrases such as sit / sit down / sit up; run / run around with physical demonstrations of these action verbs. These series of physical movements made the students relax in the class. They also burst into laughter for several times.

- Small group work [number of students, purpose of activity]:

**effective**    **ineffective**

N/A – No small-group activities was performed; no collaborative learning of students was observed as well.

- Error correction [frequency and kind]:

**effective**    **ineffective**

In many a cases, the students responded to the teacher's cues in chorus, then the teacher wrote down the correct answer on the teacher's handout which was projected on the overhead. Thus, the students found themselves responsible to compare their responses to the teacher's answer and pick out their mistake. The teacher did not recast students' response or give explicit error feedback.

**Was this lesson successful? BRIEFLY justify your overall evaluation of the class.**

very successful \_\_\_\_ somewhat successful \_\_\_\_ not successful  \_\_\_\_

Seen from the perspective of CLT, the observed class was not effective. The following part will list the merits and defects observed.

Merits:

The teacher maximized the use of the material and made the input comprehensible.



The students are highly motivated during the class as they constantly responded to the teacher and raised questions.

The homework project assigned in the class was of great authentic value. The students were to read descriptions of 16 different career pathways exempted from [www.usa.gov](http://www.usa.gov) and generate a reading journal on the pathway that might fit them best (however, there was a defect associated with this merit).

Defects:

The class was devoid of meaningful and real-world tasks, the teaching approach involved greatly with the Grammar Translation Method in teaching a second language.

Students had very limited chance to learn from each other as the class was teacher-centered.

The homework did not integrate reading and writing skills in balance. There was not enough specification for the project. After the 50-minute grammar explanation the time left for the teacher to elaborate on or demonstrate the project was not enough. In addition, the students were only asked to type a minimum 100-word paragraph after reading a seven-page exempt.

Name of observer: Ningyu Zhang Level of class observed:  
Advanced

Topic of the day's lesson: Public Speaking Skills and School Life Interview

**Indicate whether the teaching strategies below were *effective* or *ineffective*.**

**Briefly JUSTIFY your assessment.**

- Use of target language [quality and quantity of L2; teacher talk vs. student talk] :

**effective**     **ineffective**

The teacher was a native speaker of English who had been practicing EFL teaching for decades, while all students spoke English as a second language. Both the students and the teacher used English exclusively except on a few occasions two students exchanged small talks in Chinese. All of students were international graduate students or visiting scholars in a private research university. They all had passed standardized English tests before they came to the US. Most of the student-student and student-teacher communications were smooth and meaningful. However, the students discourse also consisted of many grammar mistakes and unidiomatic expressions.

- Use / integration of 4 skills [listening, speaking, reading, writing]:

**effective**     **ineffective**

The class was divided evenly into two halves. During the first half, students watched a video and in the second half, students had over thirty minutes to practice interviewing and discussion skills. As many other ESL classrooms no matter which level of proficiency the students had, the class was designed to focus on a certain few language skills. The curriculum distinctions between reading and listening, as well as writing and speaking eliminated the chance for integration of the four skills. As a result, no explicit task or instruction on reading and writing skills was taken during the class.

- Use of visuals [book, board, technology supported]:

**effective**     **ineffective**

The classroom was equipped with an overhead projector. The teacher used a laptop computer to play DVD. Desks and chairs were arranged in horse-shoe shape so that the students' sight would naturally converge on the teacher and the projector screen. The DVD was trans-copied from VHS cassettes. The dressing style of the presenters, the music and visual effects of the video suggested that it was produced in the 1980s. The video was not made specifically for ESL learners. However, it presented the common teaching philosophy of that time: having

students mimic an idealized model speaker. In the video, a man deliberately made various problems such as using a monotonous tone, speaking too many jargons, and making inappropriate jokes. Then a host pinpointed these errors and demonstrated correct public speaking manners. Snippets of famous speech videos such as Dr. King's *I Have a Dream*, General MacArthur's *Farewell Speech to Congress* and Ronald Reagan's presidential television debate were interspersed in the video to show how great speakers did their job.

During the video, few questions were asked about the content. The instructor paused the video several times to recapitulate the skills and make pronunciation exercises suggested by the video. However, the students seldom took notes even on the information that the instructor wrote on the whiteboard. The students behaved passively in the activity that took the most of class time.

- Length / variety of activities [indicate average # of minutes per activity]:  
**effective      ineffective**

As stated above, the students did not engage in the first classroom activity which took over thirty minutes, which made nearly half of the teaching time ineffective. More activities could have been done in the rich 90-minute block had the video-watching been replaced by other tasks and activities. The following part listed the start / end time of each activity.

Class Schedule	4:15 – 5:45	90
mins		
Greetings and head count	4:16 – 4:20	4
mins		
Continuing watching a video on public speaking skills	4:22 – 5:08	
36 mins		
Paired group exercise on interviewing school related topics	5:09 –	
5:24 15 mins		
Students' sharing the results of their mock interview	5:25 – 5:45	
20 mins		

- Personalization of materials [relevance to students' lives]:  
 **effective      ineffective**

The students of the class were all international graduate students or visiting scholars in a prestige private research university. They all had passed standardized English tests before they came to the US. However, many of them were suggested by their advisors to take the English course because of their initial language difficulty. The textbook used in the course was published by a university press famous for its ESL education publications. The material was directly related to the students' life and study in the US. Although being a pedagogical task (see later discussion), the interview assignment offered the students chances to look deep into the difference of their educational experience and better adjust themselves to the American campus by understanding the differences.

- Small group work [number of students, purpose of activity]:

**effective**    **ineffective**

The fourteen students worked in seven pairs to practice their interviewing skill in academic settings. The interview questions mainly concerned about educational differences in the US and students' countries of origin. Sample questions included whether college teachers dress differently, whether the course load differs, and how students interact differently in class.

All students had roughly equal time to communicate their feeling and finding to their partners. However, many students did not interview the way it should be done: They looked at their textbooks, read a question silently, talked their answers to the partner, and moved on to the next topic. In this way, the communicative nature of interview was undermined. Communication was reduced to the sole oral exchanges of ideas.

- Error correction [frequency and kind]:

**effective**    **ineffective**

During the last twenty minutes of the class, each student was randomly called by the instructor to report to the class the most interesting answer that the student heard from his / her partner during the interview. And then the student was asked again by the instructor one of the questions on the textbook and presented his / her answer to the class. The instructor commented on students' answers and asked more on a few them. The instructor did not pick out or cast any grammar or pronunciation mistakes during the final Q&A. The instructor's strategy may be justified by a focus on meaning rather than form. However, from the students' perspective, they might remain unaware of the mistakes they made.

**Was this lesson successful? BRIEFLY justify your overall evaluation of the class.**

very successful \_\_\_\_ somewhat successful  not successful \_\_\_\_

In summary, the observed class was somewhat effective. The following part will list the merits and defects observed.

Merits:

The class was clearly structured as the instructor introduced the themes of the class (watch the last part of video, interviewing task, discuss student-teacher roles) and then wrote them on the whiteboard before the class started.

The students had good command of English and excellent cognitive skills, which prevent the instructor spending time on trivial questions such as grammar and words meaning.

The interview task was a real-life task. The discussion of differences in US and other foreign universities was more relevant to the students needs than simply practicing of asking and answering questions in front of class.

Defects:

The setting of whole class (arrangement of seats and structure, etc.) suggested that the class was teacher-centered. Students follow exactly what the teacher had designed for them.

The video material was out-dated and failed to provide relevant instruction to the university graduate students other than speaking tips.

The classroom activities were confined to three tasks related to listening and speaking. There was no integration of language skills.