

English Language Learners Capstone Portfolio

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### Abstract

This ELL capstone portfolio demonstrates my knowledge and understanding of how to best serve English language learners and my ability to put the theories that I have learned through this program into practice. This portfolio contains three sections: the first one is my philosophy of teaching; the second one is the professional knowledge in which I will provide artifacts of supportive evidence demonstrating my understanding of the eight domains of the TESOL standard. I will focus on the following four parts in each domain: learners and learning; the learning environment; curriculum, and assessment. In the last section, I will put forward with my reflections and what I will do to bridge theory and practice.

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### Philosophy of Teaching

After my two-year learning experience in Vanderbilt, I have formed my philosophy of teaching. As a future ELL teacher, I think motivation plays a major role in students' learning life because meaningful learning only occurs when students are motivated to learn, therefore, how to motivate students is central in my philosophy of teaching. I will discuss it from the following perspectives: students and their communities; theoretical understandings of how students learning English are best served; curriculum; and assessment.

#### **Students and their communities**

I believe students are more motivated to learn when the learning environment is compatible with and responsive to their background so I will try my best to learn my students and their community. ELL students come from different areas with different cultural background and different levels of acculturation so they may have a hard time adapting to new school life due to culture and language barriers. In order to help students to overcome these barriers and achieve optimal learning, teachers should know their students as a "whole" person, not merely as a "student" by learning their custom, history, culture. additionally, investigating their prior knowledge is also necessary for teachers to design instruction accordingly. In addition, teachers should investigate students' family background since it is a valuable resource for teaching. This idea is reflected in the theory of "Funds of knowledge" which is defined by Moll et. al (1992) as "the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being". Households contain ample cultural and cognitive resources with great, potential utility for classroom instruction (Moll & Greenberg, 1990; Moll et al., 1990).

In addition, teachers can encourage students' parents to be involved in students' learning in order to affirm their identities and promote their academic performance. This is important especially for those who have just come from a different culture or social group, since there may be miscommunication between those parents and schools. Therefore, schools should invite parents to participate in school activities, communicate with parents on a regular basis, and also invite parents to help students in the home (Concha, 1991). For me, I will often hold teacher-parent conferences; inform them about the school regulations; invite parents to visit my class; design some activities that parent could be involved in such as parents as classroom storybook readers (Allen, 2007); and encourage parents to help their children with studying at home.

In conclusion, once teachers know students' background knowledge and use it in classroom instruction, as well as seek cooperation of schools, parents, and students themselves, students will feel respected, have interest and motivation to learn.

### **Theoretical Understandings of How Students Learning English are Best Served**

I believe if teachers can identify and promote students' unique cultural strength, students will feel valued and motivated to learn. Through this semester's field trips and school observations, I formed an understanding of how students learning English are best served. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy has influenced me the most. This is an instructional approach which is teaching to and through students' personal and cultural strengths, their intellectual capabilities, and their prior accomplishments (Gay, 2010).

This pedagogy also stresses that students should be centered in the class. I think it makes sense because it is easy for teachers to do all the talking in class, but students are the ones who need opportunities to practice their oral English and also improve their communicative competence. Therefore, teachers are not supposed to do much talking to students but they should provide opportunities for students to talk to each other by

having discussions and sharing ideas (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2013). Researchers also have found that English learners are more engaged when working with partners or in small groups than they are in whole class instruction or doing work individually (Brooks & Thurston). Therefore, I ask students to work in pairs or groups all the time when they do exercises. Depending on the tasks, I would like to use different grouping methods according to their culture backgrounds. For example, some topics may need students who come from the same areas to discuss; and some topics may need students coming from different backgrounds to discuss, both of which can enable students feel eager to share and generate more ideas.

In addition, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy also asks teachers to value all students, care about them and set high expectations for them. “Being academically demanding and personally supportive” (Gay, 2010) is the idea that impressed me the most from our readings on this topic. I will never accept “I cannot do it” from my students but encourage them to keep trying. I think if teachers set high expectations to students and let students know it, students will have a sense of satisfaction, feel trusted and be motivated.

An important aspect of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy is to incorporate students’ home language. I will allow students’ mother language into the class by making students compare grammatical patterns of the mother language and English and design some translation activities. Through translation, students can develop their proficiencies in two languages and deepen their metalinguistic awareness and metacognitive development (Jimenez et al., 2015). Students can also draw on their translation experience in writing. Many bilingual skills, like those involved in translation, are naturalized, seemingly invisible, and largely unrecognized (Martinez et.al., 2008). Therefore, it is the teacher’s responsibility to help students recognize the

richness of their everyday language practices, which can be used toward the development of academic skills (Martinez et al., 2008).

By identifying students' unique cultural strength and employ it, encouraging them to work in small groups, setting high expectations, and allowing students to use their mother language, teachers can create a beneficial environment for students to feel motivated and achieve optimal learning experience.

### **The Curriculum**

In order to have a curriculum that could facilitate students' learning, it is important for teachers to know the language policy and make adaptations accordingly because policy is not always ideal. Language policy involves "what the government says and does through its laws, legislative statutes, regulations, and bureaucratic practices that affect the use of one or more languages used by the people it represents" (Heath, 1983a, p.56). Different from America's current situation where education policies have reflected pluralist and assimilationist tendencies (Schmidt, 2000), China's educators have been arguing a lot about whether or not to continue adopting grammar-translation method when teaching the second language. No matter which method is proposed by the government, I think teachers play the most important role in policy implementation because it is teachers who really interact with students in classrooms. Since grammar still takes up a major place in exams, it is not realistic to get rid of grammar in China's English education but I will try my best to incorporate authentic materials for students and encourage them to use the target language in authentic context. Currently, most English textbooks that China uses are still artificial ones in which some content are outdated and unpractical, but thanks to VPN, I could have access to Google and YouTube in China to find authentic materials for my students to promote their communicative competence.

In addition, I will help my students to do goal-setting which include both short-term and long-term ones at the very first beginning. Once they achieve one of them, they could taste success and have a sense of satisfaction and then have the motivation to learn more. In addition, I will design some challenge tasks for their students according to their learning ability in order to stretch their mind. For some students, they are not willing to take challenges since they think if they could not do well on challenge tasks, their parents and teachers would think they are not smart enough. However, teachers should encourage them to do some hard tasks so that they can move to the next learning level and at the same time teachers are supposed to scaffold the learning process by giving them appropriate information and support which is also what “Zone of Proximal Development” proposes. It refers to the range of knowledge and skills that students are not yet ready to learn on their own but can learn help from their teachers (Tharp& Gallimore, 1998). Teachers should always keep in mind that students need their appropriate support and help to move to the next level.

### **Assessment**

Effective teaching cannot get rid of some manner of assessment. The point is to make assessment appropriate and valid. We should keep in mind that assessment does not only mean high-stakes tests but also include low-stakes tests. High-stakes tests mean those used to make critical decisions about students and teachers which include promotion, retention, and graduation (Alexander, 2006) such as China’s college entrance examination, while low-stakes assessments are forms of evaluation that will not impact heavily students’ final grade or other big decisions. I will not stick to high stake but also use other forms of assessment. Although it is easy and effective for teachers to adopt standardized assessments, there are some factors that may influence student’s performance such as stress or bad mood. Therefore, in order to precisely

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assess their English language proficiency, I will also closely observe their classroom performance, such as observing facial expressions during instruction, join group discussions and listen to their response. In addition to tests, I may also incorporate case study, portfolio or project into assessments since these alternative assessments give me a chance to keep track of their progress of the semester.

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## Professional Knowledge of the TESOL Domains Draft

### **Domain 1: Planning**

For students' better understanding and comprehension, teachers must produce lesson plans that target specific learning objectives, explore students' prior knowledge, make connections between students' old knowledge and new knowledge, give students opportunities practice new knowledge, assess their learning and help them to move to next level. I think if these objectives can be achieved, students will feel motivated to reflect old knowledge and grasp new knowledge. The artifact I choose to use in this domain is my writing pathways and instruction project (Appendix 1).

#### Learners and Learning

There is a great possibility of me going back to China to teach and I would like to work in a private school in China so the project is designed for 4<sup>th</sup> grade Chinese students who study in a private elementary school. Drawing on my theoretical framework, I think knowing students' background and prior knowledge the first step. I discovered that the students have been learning English for almost three years and they are preparing for the middle school entrance examination. Since they are in a private school, they have some classes taught by foreign teachers who speak English natively, they have a good language learning environment. Besides, most students who go to private school also means they come from a wealthy family and their parents put great emphasis on English education, therefore, their English ability is much better than students in public school. In addition, the teachers in private school have more freedom to design their own curriculum. All of this information demonstrates I have the ability to know students' backgrounds and family. When I designed this project, I tried hard to incorporate TV shows and debate to interest them. I think these activities would

definitely trigger their motivation because they can learn things through having fun. I also put great emphasis on group work so they can generate more ideas and at the same time, they have a chance to practice oral English and communicative skills. After reflecting, I found that what seems to be missing here is the involvement of parents. If I were given the second chance to write this project, I will definitely invite parents into classroom when we have the debate class to add more fun to this activity.

### Learning environment

Although my students are all Chinese, some of them may belong to a national minority and they have different cultural background. Students also have different cognitive and language proficiency, so in order to help them all achieve academic success, I tried to give them differentiated instruction by dividing them into several learning groups based on their language level. The content knowledge is not difficult for them since have already learned how to write argumentation. What hinders them is their English language proficiency so I decided to group them according to language levels. Fortunately, private school does not have many restrictions for both teachers and students so the classroom atmosphere is lively and full of freedom.

### Curriculum

Most students will go to America to receive a further education so the curriculum is based on the Common Core Standards of their grade level which can better prepare them for further study. Standards Alignment include:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1	Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons
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	and information
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1.A	Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer's purpose
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1.B	Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1.C	Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., for instance, in order to, in addition
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1.D	Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented  (retrieved from Common Core Standards

### Assessment

This project contains various assessments. At the very beginning, I will assess students' prior knowledge so I can group students for the differentiated instruction in the following days; students are also required to submit a card which demonstrates what they have learned from this class at the end of each class; through everyday classroom observation, I can also assess their mastery of writing; before submitting their final work, students are asked to turn in several drafts. I would very much like to keep student's first draft so I can get a chance to track their improvement. Given what I have

said about in assessment part in my teaching philosophy, I have the ability to use different kinds of assessments.

### **Domain 2: instructing**

It is teacher's responsibility to provide a safe and welcoming environment for students to have the best learning experience. I have learned from my mentor teacher that providing coffee and snacks for students can relieve their stress and help them feel more comfortable. Only if students feel being respected and loved, can they feel motivated and be totally immersed in studying. It is also very necessary to provide scaffolding and to interact with students as much as possible. The artifact I choose to use in this domain to show my capacity is my lesson plan for students at my practicum site, Belmont Methodist Church ESL program (Appendix 2).

#### Learners and learning

This program is designed for adult learners to improve their English proficiency, especially oral English proficiency. The program has six levels and I was placed in the sixth-grade classroom which served students with relatively high English proficiency. According to my philosophy of teaching, the first step is knowing students. From observation and interaction, I have found that most of them spoke fluent English with accent and grammar errors and some of them have not received a systematic grammar instruction. My mentor teacher told me that although he also hated grammar, but it was still necessary to give some grammar instructions, so every class he would still insert some grammar knowledge in class. After discussion with my mentor teacher, we decided to teach students comparative and superlative adjectives. Back then I thought it is a good decision because I assumed students were not familiar with it.

When I did this lesson plan, I found that students performed very well but they showed less interest and motivation. One way to explain this outcome is that they

students were pretty familiar with comparative and superlative adjectives. Given what I have said about the importance of knowing student, I have not done a good job in investigating their prior knowledge. In addition, one shortcoming of this class is that I have not provided a clear instruction when they did the last activity. Some students did not understand what they were supposed to do. I should have modeled it with my mentor teacher at the beginning to set an example.

#### Learning environment

The classroom is decorated with many artifacts that reflect various cultures which indicate that each one here is respected and valued. The environment is very welcoming and homey. Students from different areas are grouped together since they do not share home language so they can only communicate in English which helps them to improve English language proficiency. It is exactly the perfect version of what I illustrated in my teaching philosophy. In this place, culture is respected and valued; different students are grouped together to generate more ideas.

#### Curriculum

The learning purpose of most students is to improve their oral English proficiency, so the activities that I designed all required students to work in groups. Although content objectives are as important as language objectives, my students are all adult and they have relatively high cognitive and metacognitive learning skills, so when I plan and instruct lessons, the focus is mainly on language objectives. For example, the content objectives for this class would be students will be able to how to compare things and give persuasive reasons, however, obviously those adult students know how to compare things and give reasons in their mother language. I think this demonstrates my ability to make adaptations to curriculum.

#### Assessment

During the class, I asked students to complete interpretative, interpersonal and presentational tasks to see if they grasped the point. In addition, when they did exercise, both my mentor teacher and I circulated the class to see their performance and then we shared ideas on students' progress. One shortcoming is that since I forgot to ask students about their prior knowledge of comparative and superlative objectives, the first two assessments were too easy for them. In addition, this is a huge class, so even though both my mentor teacher and I circulated the class, we still could not observe everyone's performance. Afterwards, my instructor suggested that I could put a phone or iPad on each table to record their voice and then listen to them.

### **Domain 3: Assessing**

Teachers should be able to analyze students' learning progress and outcomes based on their performance. Summative assessments and formative assessments are what teachers need to use to assess their students and then teachers can make decisions of their next step to help students achieve learning goals. When giving assessments, teachers should let students know the purpose of these assessments is not for criticizing, but to help students see the weakness and make improvements. Therefore, after assessments, teachers are supposed to discuss the outcome with students and give them suggestions on how to improve. Once they get this idea, I think they will be less afraid of assessment and gain motivation to make improvements. The artifact that I choose to use in this domain is my final analysis paper in assessment class. In my practicum, I worked with a female adult student from Kurdistan and gave her several assessments to see her English language ability and then designed a learning plan for her (Appendix 3).

#### Learners and learning

My project participant is Jijan and she has been lived in America for 2 years. The

reason for attending this ESL program is that she wants to improve her English proficiency and then find a job in America. In order to fully analyze her English Proficiency, I interviewed her several times and recorded them; collected her writing samples; and always sat beside her in order to observe her classroom performance. I am so surprised on how much effort it will take to fully know a student. Although I have spent a lot of time with Jijan, I still feel I did not know her well since sometimes, I was amazed at something she did not know at all and something she did know.

After collecting and analyzing this information, I designed a lesson plan for her to make improvements.

#### Learning environment

As for her learning environment in the classroom, the teacher and students respect each other's culture and custom, they also form friendships with each other which helps her promote learning efficiency. In addition, nobody in our class shares a mother language with her which makes her only speak English in class. From the interview, I got to know that her learning environment at home is also beneficial since most time her family members use English to communicate with each other so she is totally immersed in an English-speaking atmosphere.

#### Curriculum

Based on her intention to learn English in order to find a job, I make some adaptations on the curriculum. Except for some activities that aimed at improving her oral English, I also encouraged her to do some writing. For example, I taught her how to write formal emails since it is an essential skill in workplaces. Generally speaking, Jijan speaks relatively fluent English although at a slow pace and what hinders her to fully express herself is vocabulary so I also incorporate many vocabulary instructions when I design lesson plans for her.

### Assessment

In order to fully understand her English proficiency and cultural background, I used many kinds of assessments. To assess her level of acculturation, I implemented the Asian American Multidimensional Acculturation Scale (AAMAS) and Language Experience and Proficiency Questionnaire (LEAP-Q). Furthermore, I completed a Sociocultural Environment rubric to assess Jijan's learning environment in the classroom. I used the Woodcock-Munoz Language Survey (WMLS) to assess her oral English language ability. I also assessed the validity and reliability of WMLS which showed my ability to assess assessments. In addition, to get a big picture of Jijan's oral English proficiency, I used an observational protocol which was Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM) to assess her oral English. Although she seemed to have motivation to learn English and performed well on many assessments, I still worry about her because she has a baby to take care and according to what she told me, her mother-in-law does not like her to go to ESL programs but would like her to clean the house. Therefore, I realize that knowing a student is much more complex than a couple of interviews, it needs a lot of effort and requires teachers to consider from many perspectives.

#### **Domain 4: Identity and Context**

As a future teacher, I know how important it is to be aware of students' background knowledge and their community. ELL students come from different areas and they have different cultures so teachers should try to explore what is behind them in order to help them affirm their identities and help them gain motivation to learn. The artifact I use to show my ability is my paper *Local Chinese Community Literacy* in foundation class (Appendix 4).

### Learners and learning

In this practicum, I got a chance to visit some Asian supermarkets and also interviewed some Chinese immigrants to know their or their children's SLA process. I realize how frustrated ELL students are when they first come into a classroom due to low English proficiency and culture barriers. Fortunately, they have qualified teachers helped them and this is precisely what I would expect to see because teachers really play an important role in decreasing students' struggles in language and identity.

#### Learning environment

It is very necessary to provide extra support for ELL students to help them improve English proficiency and once they possess enough English proficiency, ELL students' requirement should be same as non-ELL students. In addition, teachers should always create a safe and loving environment where students feel loved, respected and comfortable because that is a precondition for students to attain learning objectives. In addition to teacher-student interaction, student-to-student interaction should also be promoted.

#### Curriculum

Although ELL students' English proficiency is varied, their expectation is not being lowered. However, schools should provide supports such as ESL programs for students and make adjustments to the curriculum. For example, students' household knowledge can be included in the curriculum to increase their self-esteem and motivation. If possible, teachers can invite students' parents or other family members into classroom activities.

#### Assessment

From my assessment class and several practicum experiences, I have realized that teachers should precisely assess students' acculturation level in order not to misplace any student. I saw how frustrated a student was when she was misplaced in the highest

grade when I did my practicum. In addition, if it is possible, school should provide tests in students' native language so their test results will not be affected by language barriers. In my teaching philosophy, I have said also about the importance of incorporating student's home language in instructional activities. Investigating their culture and custom is very necessary because teachers can then design classroom activities accordingly to meet their needs.

### **Domain 5: language proficiency**

I have learned English for almost 16 years and have developed English proficiency in both academic settings and personal communication settings. I had a high score in English when I attended college entrance examination. Therefore, in my undergraduate study I chose English education as my major because I have passion for both English and education. During the undergraduate years, I passed TEM-4 and TEM-8 (Test for English Majors, Band 8 is the highest level) with a high score. When I was a junior, I passed TOEFL with a score of 104 out of 120 and GRE with a score of 320 out of 340 with is a good indication of my English proficiency in academic settings. What is more, during my one and half year studying in Vanderbilt, I have been actively participating in class discussions and complete all the assignments on time which can also prove my capacity to use English in academic settings.

In addition, I also have a strong interpersonal communication skill in English. During my time in the United States, I made some American friends and communicated with them a lot to get to know American food, history and culture. Besides, I have worked as a graduate student research assistant under the department of Peabody Research Institute in which I got a chance to communicate with students in primary and middle school. Furthermore, I am also working as a student worker in Vanderbilt Recreation and Wellness Center service desk and my job is to help students and faculty

to solve problems related to the facilities in the Rec through phone or face to face communication which greatly improved my interpersonal skills. I think these experiences benefit me a lot and also proves that my English proficiency is qualified as a future ELL teacher.

### **Domain 6: Learning**

As an ELL student, I have learned English since I was a first-year grader in primary school so I totally understand the process of acquiring a new language and I think my personal experience can benefit me a lot as a future English teacher. In addition, I conducted a case study of a non-native English speaker for educational linguistics and SLA class to fully understand how learners could acquire a second language in and out of classroom settings. I can use these experience to support my students' learning. The artifact I use in this domain is my final report on that case study (Appendix 5).

#### Learners and learning

In this paper, I assessed the overall English language proficiency of my participant, who is from China and now studies in Vanderbilt. As I said before, there is a great chance for me to go back to China and teach Chinese student English, so I want to gain more insights on Chinese student's English learning process. In order to know her background information, I conducted several interviews with my participant; had many daily interactions with her; and even visited her community which showed my ability to fully know students and their community. I also came up with some sociocultural factors that may influence her language ability. After collecting her speech, several writing samples and former test scores, I assessed her language ability from five domains which are phonology, semantics, pragmatics and grammar and then gave her instructional plans.

#### Learning environment

Since my participant has learned English for almost 16 years and the English education she received mostly happened in China (lack of foreign teachers and qualified English teachers), her English still stays in mediate level. In addition, I also realized that first language exerts a lot of influence on second language which can be showed by her disordered sentence structure, stress and intonation errors. Although I did this case study in the first semester, I still help tracking her English proficiency. I found that during her time in America, she has been making great improvement.

### Curriculum

In China's English language teaching context, the curriculum is test-oriented so it put a lot of emphasis on grammar which I find is detrimental to students' English language learning. Take my participant as an example, her oral English proficiency is not comparable to her grammar knowledge. Therefore, although she got nice scores on TOEFL and GRE, it still took a long time for her to communicate with native speakers fluently. I think this represents most Chinese students' situation. Like I said in my teaching philosophy, Chinese English education focuses too much on grammar and overlooks students' oral English ability. Besides, there is a lack of authentic materials in most schools. After receiving education in Peabody, I know how important to use authentic materials and promote students' communicative competence.

### Assessment

I used various kind of assessments to assess my participant's English language proficiency which included interview, collecting her writing works, observing her performance in classroom activities and assignments. Based on my assessment results, I gave her many instructional suggestions on how to make progress. It is not the end of a learning circle, as what Zone of Proximal Development suggests, when I find this student achieves a level; what I should do next is to set a higher level and give further

suggestions and this is exactly what I did. I still continue to observe her performance in class and check her progress.

### **Domain 7: Content**

Language is a tool for communication, so students should learn English for genuine communicative purposes. Qualified ELL teachers should design lessons to help students acquire the language they need to solve problem in authentic context. Therefore, when I design a lesson plan, content objectives and language objectives are both included to meet learners' needs. The artifact I use in this domain is my lesson plan *Western food vs Eastern food* for an EFL class (Appendix 6). In this lesson, I provided both typical eastern and western food for students to taste and let them make comparisons about them. The whole unit is about food.

#### Learners and learning

This lesson plan is designed for 10<sup>th</sup> grade Chinese students whose English level fall between novice and intermediate. Before this class, students have already learned past tense, so they have prior knowledge about it and in this class they will continue to practice past tense by asking them to say some past experience related to food. The language objectives are students will be able to use past tense to talk about past experiences. The content objectives are to guide students to have a cultural perspective and students will be able to compare things and give persuasive reasons. Those objectives are my expectation to my students, it is important because I think expectations can motivate them to achieve the optimal learning.

#### Learning environment

My lesson plan is designed for students in China's private school. For these students, learning English is not for taking college entrance examination, but go abroad to study which enable teacher to pay less attention to grammar and test but focus on

how to improve students' communicative competence. I am happy to see that they have more access to authentic materials and foreign teachers which are beneficial to their study. In this class, students' interpersonal and presentational skills are highlighted.

### Curriculum

According to Common Core Standard, for reading: "10<sup>th</sup> grade students could determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text". As for speaking: "10<sup>th</sup> grade students could present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task". Since they will go abroad to study, the curriculum follows the Common Core Standard. What I overlooked is to incorporate Chinese into this class. If I were given the second chance, I would definitely use their home language and design a translation activity to help them deepen metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness. Later on, they can also draw on this experience in writing.

### Assessment

To assess both students' content and language knowledge, I used various tasks which include interpretive task, interpersonal task and presentational task. Furthermore, when they work in groups, I always circulate the class and observe their performance to see if they truly master the knowledge. One problem I noticed is that there are too many group works going on in class which makes it difficult to observe their performance one by one.

### **Domain 8: Commitment and Professionalism**

Although my studying at Vanderbilt is about to come to an end, I will not stop

growing my understanding of the relationship of second language teaching and learning to the community of English language teaching professionals, the broader teaching community and the communities at large. I chose to use part of my micro and macro analysis in this domain (Appendix 7). To be honest, my teaching experience is very limited and the most influential one is my practicum experience. I have three recorded lessons there and both my instructor and mentor teacher gave me many valuable comments which enabled me to reflect deeply and I included those in my micro and macro analysis.

### Learners and learning

After spending a whole semester with students, I have built a rapport with them and I know how important it is. In addition, I try to make input comprehensible and the language I use is understandable and approachable to students. One thing my instructor pointed out is that I should be more professional when I deliver a lesson. Since all the students are older than me, sometimes my behavior is not professional enough and even a little childish. It is more than important to dig students' prior knowledge. I have made this mistake and I am still figuring out ways to do it when I have a large class. Maybe I can use questionnaires to see how much they know about a topic before I design a class.

### Learning environment

Teachers should provide a safe and comfortable learning environment. I noticed that each time there was a new student registered, my mentor teacher made him/her sit beside students who came from the same country which I like very much. Drawing on my theoretical framework, I believe this demonstrates the importance of decreasing students' stress when they have a new language and cultural environment. When doing different kinds of activities, we also have different table arrangements regarding to

address students' needs and this is what I would expect to see because different activities need different grouping methods.

### Curriculum

Most students' learning purpose is to improve their oral English proficiency and communicate well with native speakers, but there are a few students' learning purpose are different such as finding a job or applying for green card. Teachers should also design differentiated instruction to address these students' needs. My mentor teacher also like to use authentic materials such as novels and movies which I also would like to try in the future.

### Assessment

Formal and informal assessments are both needed. At the beginning, students were given a relatively formal assessment and based on the results, they were placed into different levels of classes. However, later on, we found they were some misplacement which indicated how important to use both high-stake and low-stake assessment. fortunately, students' placements are not fixed. If they feel overwhelming to catch up with others or if they feel superior to others, they can transfer to other classes anytime. During the class, there are many informal assessments going on and sometimes students did not even notice they were assessed which enabled teachers to see students' learning progress from other perspectives.

### Reflections

After two-years study in Vanderbilt, I think I have the ability to plan instructions to promote students' learning, create supportive environments, adopt various assessments and provide constructive feedback to learners. As a future ELL teacher with high English language proficiency, I can use my own experience on acquiring second language to support students and give them advices.

It is easy to be fully equipped with theories, the point is to apply theories into practice. Here is what I am going to do: When I become a teacher, the first step would definitely be get to know every student. What I plan to do is to conduct one-to-one interviews with them and also their parents. It is not enough just by interviewing them, so if possible, I would also like to visit their home to know their learning environment at home since out-of-school learning environment is also important. Once I know their learning needs and prior knowledge, I can design a curriculum that is suitable for them. In addition, I think once students realize I regard them not merely as a student but as a person and I really care about them, they will have more motivation to learn. When I instruct them, I prefer to group students and use differentiated instructions from time to time since their language levels may be varied and I need to consider how to make comprehensible input. Group work is also what I like to encourage students to do. I believe student-student interaction benefit them a lot because they are willing to contribute to their small group so they have more motivation. As for assessment, I would like to use both formal and informal assessments to precisely assess them.

For sure, I will encounter many difficulties when I apply what I have learned in Peabody into practice in China's context because there are so many differences between the two countries. First of all, different from the classroom setting in the United States, a normal classroom in China has at least forty students, the number is more in public

schools, which makes it very hard for teachers to address every student's need. I will try my best to explore student's learning purpose, their family background and their learning habit to group them and give differentiated instruction. In addition, I think co-teaching is a great way to cater for each student and monitor their performance. When I did my practicum, even though there are two teachers, I still felt not all students got enough attention. Although co-teaching is very rare in China, I will communicate with my colleagues to see if we can make it work. What is more, a serious problem in China's English education is that most textbooks are artificially and lack authentic materials. However, only through authentic materials can students improve their ability to communicate and solve problems in the target language. Fortunately, I think Google will not be forbidden to use in the near future in China so I can search and incorporate more authentic materials into classrooms. Besides, with the help of VPN, I can also get access to YouTube and other websites to gain resources. There are still other problems waiting for me to solve, but I strongly believe that through dedication, passion, corporation with others, I will find solutions to tackle these issues and better serve my students.

Graduation does not mean the end of learning, I will still continue equipping myself with linguistic theories and put them into practice. With my commitment and passion to this field, I think I will become a qualified ELL teacher.

**Appendix 1: Writing pathways and instruction project****Genre-Specific Learning Objectives for the Unit**

The students will be able to make a claim about a topic and try to support the reasons.

The students will be able to write a few sentences to hook their readers.

The students will be able to use words and phrased to glue parts of piece together.

The students will be able to write an ending and perhaps suggest an action.

The students will be able to separate sections if information using paragraphs.

The students will be able to give reasons to support their opinions and include examples to support their reasons, perhaps from a text, their knowledge or personal life.

The students will be able to make deliberate word choices to convince their readers by emphasizing or repeating words that make readers feel emotions (Calkins, Hohne & Robb, 2014).

**Reference**

Calkins, L. M., Hohne, K., & Robb, A. (2014). *Writing pathways. Performance assessments and learning progressions*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

**Agenda**

Class1	Class2	Class3	Class4	Class5
Launch day	Launch day	Mentor text	Mini-lesson	Introduce
Use mentor	Let students	“should school	brainstorm	rubric
text “what I	choose their	require kids to	First draft	Continue
like about	favorite topics.	bring eco-	Group	drafting
summer, what	Four debates.		discussion	Due class7

I hate about summer and if I were in charge of the world”. Watch a video. Let students have a glimpse of this genre.		friendly lunches”. Explain the process of “DEFENDS” Choose topics		
Class6	Class7	Class8	Class9	Class10
Mini lesson Continue drafting	Due day Writer’s workshop	Edit and revise their draft	Post final essay on discussion board	Individual meeting Comment on peer’s writing

### Launch

Class 1: (principle 3, 4&6)

1. Read the mentor text: what I love about summer and what I hate about summer.
2. Answer the following questions:

What is the main idea of the two poems?

How do the key details support the main idea?

Fill in the chart below

Argument for summer	Supporting details
Argument against summer	Supporting details

Could you think of more supporting details?

3. Read the mentor text if I were in charge of the world.

4. Rewrite the poem

If I were in charge of the world

I'd cancel \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ and also

\_\_\_\_\_

If I were in charge of the world

There'd be \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ and

\_\_\_\_\_ .

If I were in charge of the world

You wouldn't have \_\_\_\_\_.

You wouldn't have \_\_\_\_\_.

You wouldn't have \_\_\_\_\_

5. Have students discuss in table groups: what would you do if you were in charge of

the world and give reasons and report to the whole class.

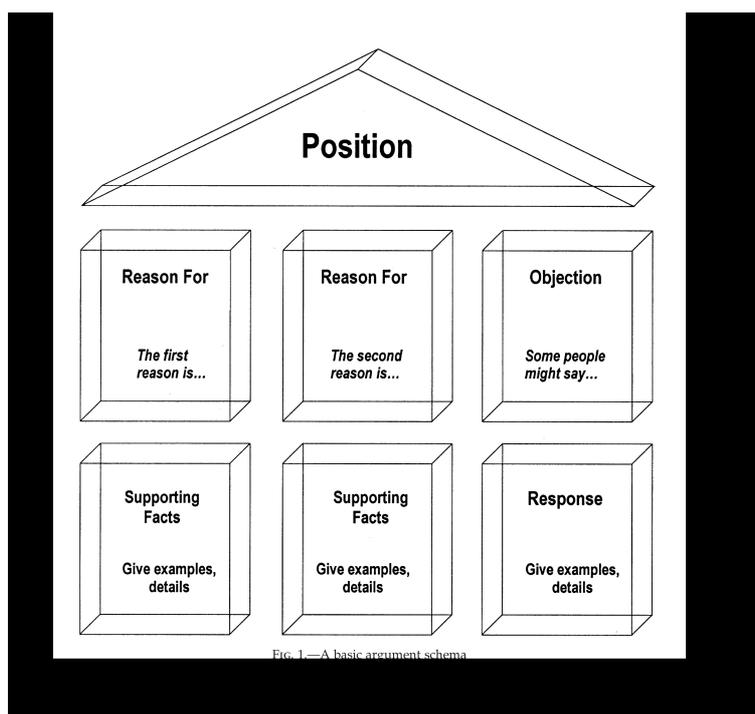
6. Watch the video clip *master chef* (retrieved from <https://www.bilibili.com/video/av596756/?from=search&seid=6935230796658671934>)
7. It is a cooking competition reality show. Students discuss in table groups: which group is going to be eliminated and give reasons to defend themselves. After discussion, show students the result.
8. Each group choose their favorite topic they would like to discuss from the following list or they can come up with a topic. Tomorrow we are going to have several debates!
  - School should give students more leisure time
  - Same-sex marriages are wrong
  - Marriage is outdated
  - We are depending on computers too much
  - Celebrities earn too much money
  - War is never an option for solving international disputes
  - Smoking should be banned
  - Homework is harmful
  - A woman's place is in the home
  - A man should have a wife for the family and a mistress for pleasure
  - You will be happier if you stay unmarried
  - Obesity is a disease

- Video games contribute to youth violence
- Cloning has a lot of benefits

9. Homework: choose an English debate competition, watch it and take notes.

Class 2: Debates (principle 2, 3, 4 &6)

1. We are going to have 4 debates based on the topics students choose or come up with. Teacher briefly introduce the procedure of the debate. In every debate, each side will have 4 group members and a reporter who will type in each side's reasons in google docs. The rest of the class will be judges. Based on the credibility of their argument, the judges will decide who is the winner!
2. As a whole class, put every reason and supporting facts the students give in the following chart (retrieved from Reznitskaya, A., Anderson, R. C., Kuo, & Li-Jen. (2007). Teaching and learning argumentation. *Elementary School Journal*, 107(5), 339-472).
3. Let students vote for the strongest reason to the least strong reason. Each group write the top three reasons on a topic on a paper and hang it in the wall.



Reznitskaya, A., Anderson, R. C., Kuo, & Li-Jen. (2007). Teaching and learning argumentation. *Elementary School Journal*, 107(5), 339-472.

### Invitations/activities & mini lessons

Class 3: (principle 1, 6 &4)

A . Read mentor text “should school require kids bring eco-friendly lunches”.

First we figure out new vocabulary, then use embedded reading strategy to helping students comprehend the text.

- (1). What is the claim in this text?
- (2). What is school’s opinion? What supporting evidence does it give?
- (3). What is some parents’ opinion? What supporting evidence do they give?
- (4). What is the author’s opinion? What supporting evidence does he/she give?
- (5). What is your idea? What supporting idea could you give?

### Writing task

Give me three reasons for each side and circle the strongest one you believe for each side and hand it to me after class.

B . Explain **DEFENDS** to students

#### Decide

- Decide on an exact position.

#### Examine

- Examine the reasons for the positions.

#### Form

- Form a list of points that explain each reason.

#### Expose

- Expose the position in the first sentence.

#### Note

- Note each reason and supporting points.

#### Drive

- Drive home the position in the last sentence.

#### Search

- *SEARCH* for errors and correct.

- See if it makes sense
  - Eject incomplete sentences
  - Ask if it's convincing
  - Reveal COPS errors & correct (See expanded COPS for more information).
- 
- Capitalization
- 
- Overall appearance • Punctuation
- 
- Spelling
- 
- Copy over neatly
  - Have a last look

#### References :

Alley, G.R. (1988). Effects of generalization instruction on the written language performance of adolescents with learning disabilities in the mainstream classroom. *Reading, Writing, and Learning Disabilities*, 4, 291-309.

Ellis, E., & Lenz, K. (1987). A component analysis of effective learning strategies for LD students. *Learning Disabilities Focus*, 2, 94-107.

#### C. Homework

Group work: Go through TIME FOR KIDS' debate section and choose your favorite topic and try to brainstorm as many as possible ideas, your group could choose your own topic if you like.

Class 4: (principle 2 &8)

1. Mini lesson: considering audience in writing: have students brainstorm people for whom they might write something. Discuss how writing for different people might be different. Show them the following example.

Dear Sir,

I write to offer my sincerest appreciation of your kind words and actions on Wednesday of last week. I find myself humbled by your generosity in sparing me so much time, especially since I am aware that your business ventures demand so much of you at present.

Sincerely,

E. Phillips Galloway

Dear Honey,

I write to offer my sincerest appreciation of your kind words and actions on Wednesday of last week. I find myself humbled by your generosity in sparing me so much time, especially since I am aware that your business ventures demand so much of you at present.

xoxo,

E. Phillips Galloway (retrieved from week 11 slide, EDUC 6530)

2. Rearrange seats, student will be in a new group and share with new group members the result the former group's brainstorm. The new group members can come up with some new ideas.
3. Students go back to their former group and create their first draft.

Class 5: (principle 8)

Mini lesson: how to hook your audience

Before presenting your claim, you should first write several sentences to hook your

audience, by asking a question, explaining why your topic mattered, telling a surprising fact or giving background information.

Then practice on the following topics:

Should we have a shorter school day?

Should I have a smartphone?

Should kids have jobs?

Should we have uniforms?

Should computers grade student's essay?

Class 6: (principle 8)

Mini lesson:

Instruction of building word banks: verbs, adjectives, nouns, and adverbs. In addition, opinion words and transition words.

In order to expand their vocabulary, students could jot down a list of specific nouns and powerful verbs in their notebooks and on a chart paper hanging in the room during they read. Students should continuously add to the lists words they feel are good examples or words they may like to use someday in their own writing. They may also write down some phrases or sentence patterns for future use (Buckner, 1999). At first, they may search their notebook for certain words when they write, however, after several times, when these words or phrases are stored in their deep memory, these expressions will come out naturally and continually when they write.

Class 7: (principle 2)

Writer's workshop

Students are randomly assigned to a group and discuss their final draft. Others students give some comments. Then go find someone to grade your final draft by using the rubric I give in class 5 and also give reasons. After 3 rounds, go back to their own seats and

look through the feedback.

Class 10:

Students receive my feedback in class 9 and class 10 they can have an individual meeting with me to have more individualized instruction of how to improve and then they could revise it to have a better grade.

Students gave feedback on at least three essays that their peer write. The feedback can include what you have learned from that essay and how could get improvement.

### **Appendix 2: comparative and superlative lesson plan**

#### Comparative and superlative

1. Ask students the following questions to elicit the topic.

Which country has a larger population, China or India?

Which country is the largest in terms of landmass?

Which place is warmer now, Tokyo or Mexico City?

Who is taller, Beto or Tomo?

Who is younger, Javier or Frida?

Who is the smartest person in our class?

Who is the oldest person in our class? (no offence)

2. Explain the rules of comparative adjectives and superlative adjectives new syllable

3. Exercise: write the comparative and superlative forms of the adjectives below.

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
cheap		
beautiful		
easy		
light		
heavy		

reliable

advanced

warm

4. In pairs, complete the questions and answers with comparatives and superlatives.

(1) A: What is the \_\_\_\_\_ place you have ever been to? (interesting)

B: \_\_\_\_\_ I have been to is \_\_\_\_\_.

(2) A: What is \_\_\_\_\_ building you have ever been in? (tall)

B: \_\_\_\_\_ I have ever been in is \_\_\_\_\_.

(3) A: Who is \_\_\_\_\_, Donald Trump or Lady Gaga? (famous)

B: \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_.

(4) A: Which fruit has a \_\_\_\_\_ smell, bananas or durians? (strong)

B: \_\_\_\_\_ have \_\_\_\_\_.

(5) A: What is \_\_\_\_\_ problem in the world today? (big)

B: The \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_.

5. Have students interview each other and ask about how life is different here than it was at home. Encourage students to use the comparative and superlative as much as possible during their interview. For example, a student might say “People here are busier, but life at home is slower.” Students can talk about weather, house, car, building, grocery.

### **Appendix 3: final analysis project**

#### Final Analysis Project

##### **Part 1: Jijan’s Cultural and Linguistic Background**

My analysis participant is a female adult student named Jijan (alias) who is 25 years old now. She is a sixth grade (advanced class) student in Belmont Methodist Church EFL program. She comes from Kurdistan, located in the north of Iraq and she speaks

Kurdish. She came to the United States two years ago. Her husband who has been live in the United States for more than twenty years works in Nashville and she takes care of her husband and their baby girl who is only thirteen months at home. She is applying for the green card right now since she wants to stay here forever and fortunately, the process goes very smoothly. Jijan started to learn English when she entered college in Kurdistan and she only learned some daily words, phrases and sentences. The English teacher asked them to practice those sentences and phrases in every class. Her major in college was information technology. After giving birth to her child, she wanted to find a job of that area, however, due to her limited English proficiency, she was not successful. Therefore, she decided to go to the EFL class to improve her English proficiency.

She speaks both Kurdish and English in her family and she lives with her father and mother and sister in law. Since they have been in the United States for many years, they tend to speak English. When she was not able to communicate with her family smoothly because of her limited vocabulary, they speak Kurdish. One interesting thing she told me is that her husband often makes fun of her accent which makes her feel more reluctant to speak English. However, she likes to speak English when she is in class because nobody will make fun of her. There are other Kurdish people in my class but I seldom see Jijan communicating with them by using Kurdish. Jijan avoids to speak English to her baby at home since she thinks that her baby will naturally learn how to speak English as the baby grows up. She does not want her baby to lose the language and culture of Kurdistan, so she speaks Kurdish to her baby.

#### Asian American Multidimensional Acculturation (AAMAS)

In order to assess her level of acculturation, I implemented the Asian American Multidimensional Acculturation Scale (AAMAS). I asked Jijan to answer those

questions and underlie the number that best represents her view on each item (see appendix 1). From the survey and what she told me in daily conversation, she is very proud of her own culture and language and want to preserve it and pass on it to her child. In addition, although she does not have much knowledge of American history, tradition and culture, she is willing to learn it and be part of it. she also told me that when she arrived at Nashville, she did not like the food at all. Now she cannot live without pizza and burger.

#### Language Experience and Proficiency Questionnaire (LEAP-Q)

In addition, I emailed her the Language Experience and Proficiency Questionnaire (LEAP-Q) and asked her to help me completing it based on her experience (see appendix 2). This questionnaire shows her language learning experience of both Kurdish and English which also includes her attitude towards English. When she was asked to choose to read a text in all her languages, she has a very high intension (90 percent) to read it in Kurdish. In addition, she also prefers to speak Kurdish more than English. From the questionnaire, I can also tell that she is really reluctant to read both in Kurdish and English. When she was asked to select how much does reading contribute to her learning and rate to what extent is she exposed to reading, she chooses very low score. That also explains why she always does not finish the homework about reading.

#### Sociocultural Environment Rubric

Furthermore, I completed a Sociocultural Environment rubric to assess Jijan's learning environment in classroom (see appendix 3). For culture, her culture is respected and valued as a source of knowledge and experiences in the EFL program. Although the purpose of this program is to help adult students blending in the American culture as soon as possible, my mentor teacher Frank also respect students' culture

background and allow them to speak their home language in class. He encourages students to bring their culture assets to class and we often have discussions regarding to this topic. As for language, it is supported to use first language at home and school. The teacher understands basic language acquisition stages and time lines and could explain the benefits of sheltered instruction. As for academics, the teacher understands the impact of language and acculturation on cultural and linguistic diversified students' academic progress and identifies general instructional strategies that benefit CLD students. One thing I want to mention here is that this EFL class does not provide many content knowledge, it's primary focus is on language. For families, the teacher expresses respect and value for their family, but it is impossible to involve their family members in our class since their families are either in home country or too busy. For community, the teacher is knowledgeable about and appreciates their community, but does not personally have communication with it due to many reasons. We cannot ignore the fact that our students are too diversified and it will take a lot of effort to get to know their community one by one.

## **Part 2: Jijan's English Language Proficiency**

### The Woodcock-Munoz Language Survey (WMLS)

I used the Woodcock-Munoz Language Survey (WMLS) to assess her oral English language ability (see appendix 4). The WMLS English and Spanish forms each contains four tests measuring different aspects of language proficiency. The picture vocabulary test and the verbal analogies test are used to assess students' oral English proficiency. Picture vocabulary measures the ability to name familiar and unfamiliar pictured objects. Although the test contains a few receptive items at the beginning, it is primarily an expressive semantic task at the single word level. The items become increasingly difficult as the objects appear less and less frequently in the daily life. Verbal analogies measure the ability to comprehend and verbally complete a logical word relationship. Although the vocabulary remains relatively simple, the relationships becomes increasingly complex. The test taker must discern the inherent relationship between the words and generate an appropriate response.

We did the assessments in the Starbucks on 21th Ave. There were just a few people on that morning and it was pretty quiet. Before the actual test, we chatted for a while and then I explained the assessment to her. On the WMLS tests, there is a chart that suggests where to begin and using suggested starting point with basal and ceiling levels helps saving a lot of time. The basal is established when the subject responds correctly to the six lowest numbered items administered or when Item 1 has been administered. If the basal is not obtained, test backward until the subject has met the basal criterion or until the page with item 1 has been administered. Then return to the point at which testing was interrupted and continue testing. The ceiling is met when the subject responds incorrectly to the six-highest numbered items administered or when the page with the last test item has been administered. The test results are shown in appendix.

We did the Picture Vocabulary test first. Based on the suggestion in the test. I started with the word “igloo” and her answer was a kind of ice house which is wrong. Then she did not recognize the next word “theater”. Afterwards, she recognized the word “pyramid”, but did not give me the right answer of “panning gold”. The basal is not established so I tested backward. This process went on and at last, her basal is item 11 “scissors”. I continued to test her from where was interrupted which is item 33. She got it all wrong until the item 36. Therefore, the ceiling is met because she did not recognize the whole page. She got 28 items correct in total so the age equivalent (AE) is 8-1 and the grade equivalent (GE) is 2.5.

Based on the suggestion of the Verbal Analogies test, I began to test her from item 13 “puppy”, but she did not respond correctly to the six lowest numbered items so I tested backward. The basal is item 9 “grass” because she responded correctly from item 9 to item 14. I continued to test her from item 17 and she responded all wrong from item 28 to item 33, so I stopped the test. Through calculation, she got 27 items correct in total so the age equivalent (AE) is more than 22 and the grade equivalent (GE) is more than 18.

In terms of the receptive and expressive language of the oral language tests, picture vocabulary is an expressive language test, while verbal analogies involve both receptive and expressive language. One thing I want to mention here is that I could not find a computer that supports the CD-RW which should be used to interpret her score since Vanderbilt has upgraded all the computer system and the CD-RW was been made long time ago. I think this test is used to assess student’s academic oral English proficiency, however, Jijan has never received schooling here and she just needs every day English so this test is too demanding for her. From what I have observed in class, her level of the first part should be higher.

## Reliability and Validity

Reliability: the calculation of reliability statistics for each grade level is based on the data from subjects at that level in the norming sample who took each test. The test reliabilities were calculated by the split-half procedure, using odd and even raw scores, and were corrected by length by the Spearman-Brown formula. The cluster reliability was calculated by Mosier's procedure. The media reliabilities range from 0.80 to 0.93 for the tests and from 0.88 to 0.98 for the clusters. Based on the Brown checklist (Brown, 2010) and Pray checklist, this test meets the following requirements: it is consistent and dependable. The administration instructions are clear, simple and concise. It gives clear directions for scoring and has uniform rubrics for scoring. However, some items are ambiguous to the test taker. For example, people who live in tropical or sub-tropical areas may not be familiar with item 29 (igloo).

Validity: content validity is the extent to which the content of a test represents the domain of content that it is designed to measure. The tests included in the WMLS were selected to provide an overview of oral language, reading and writing skills. Items at all levels of difficulty are provided in each test so that the complete range of ability is covered. The WMLS used the cluster concept, which combines results from two or more tests to provide a broader measure of ability, to minimize the danger of making important decisions based on a single, narrow aspect of behavior. The principle of cluster interpretation was adopted to improve the content validity of measures for broad abilities such as oral language and reading-writing skills. Based on the Brown (Brown, 2010) and Pray checklist, this test meets the following requirements: it measures what it proposes to measure and does not measure irrelevant variables. It relies on empirical evidence and involves performance that sample's the test's criterion. This test also offers useful, meaningful information about Jijan's oral English proficiency. It is

supported by a theoretical rationale.

Concurrent validity: the extent to which scores on a test are related to scores on a criterion measure, is typically expressed as a correlation coefficient between the test and the criterion. The more similar the test is to the criterion measure, the higher the validity coefficient will be. The less similar the test is to the criterion measure, the lower the validity coefficient, a condition that implies less accuracy in predicting the criterion behavior. There are several studies such as school age study, university study and grade K to 3 Bilingual study that provide evidence for validity of the WMLS normative Update.

Construct validity: inter-correlations among the measures of a battery provide one kind of information regarding construct validity. Lower correlations imply measures of dissimilar constructs. Higher correlations imply measures of similar constructs.

#### Student Oral Observation Matrix (SOLOM)

In addition, to get a big picture of Jijan's oral English proficiency, I also used an observational protocol which is Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM) to assess her oral English.

As for comprehension, I give her a core of level 3. She could understand most of what I said at slower than normal speed and gave me appropriate answers. However, sometimes she misunderstood my questions and I needed to repeat or rephrase what I said. For example, when I asked her "how is your application of green card going", she seemed confused. I asked "are you applying for green card", she said "yes". Afterwards, I asked "is it easy" she said "no, no, I think ..., after..., then she made a gesture of fingerprinting, and continue said "I can get it. My country has a kind of policy that makes it easy, but, uh, to become a uh, oh, I do not know that word... it is hard" "citizen" I said. "yes, citizen, it is hard to become." There was also one time my mentor teacher

Frank asked students to write a check on their behalf to someone else and Frank provided an example. Jijan did not understand and just copied the example. After I explained to her again, she knew what she was supposed to do.

For fluency, I give her a score of level 4. She can communicate with me fluently in everyday conversation especially some specific topics. For example, when we were talking about her baby girl and her love story with her husband, she said a lot because she really enjoyed this topic. In addition, I always sit beside her in class and based on my observation, she can also communicate with classmates in group discussion fluently. However, there are occasional lapses while she tries to search for the correct manner of expression.

As for vocabulary, I give her a score of level 4. One thing that really impresses me is that when she is stuck due to limited vocabulary, she can always rephrase her ideas and on most occasions, she does not use inappropriate terms. For example, one day when we were on break, an Asia lady said to her “Jijan, how long did you do your make-up, it is so beautiful”, Jijan answered “uh, half an hour, you are beautiful, too. I am always, uh..., I hope I can have an Asia face”. At that point, she was trying to say that she is envious of Asia face but she does not know the word “envious” so she said another sentence which is very smart.

As for pronunciation, I give her a score of level 4. Her pronunciation is always intelligible, although there is an accent and sometimes the intonation and stress is inappropriate. However, it does not hinder listen’s comprehension. I guess the reason is that I am also a non-native speaker so her pronunciation seems good to me. However, for native speakers, or people who have been lived in the United States for a long time such as her husband, there are some flaws in her pronunciation.

As for grammar, I give her a score of level 3. There are frequent grammatical errors

and word order errors. She is always struggling with tense and part of speech. In addition, she makes a lot of mistakes of preposition. For example, when we talked about night clubs in each country, she said “there is many club here and I go there once...”. In addition, when we had mini grammar classes, she had difficulty to understand the teacher. During the group discussion, I always detect her table partners help her a lot on grammar exercises.

### **Part 3: State and Federal Assessment Requirements**

“It is the policy of Tennessee Adult Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, sex, disability, religion, age, political party affiliation, or actual or potential parental, family or marital status in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Tennessee Code sections 216.9 and 256.”

For adult learners like Jijan, state and federal should provide standardized, ongoing assessment of learner progress to ensure that all adult learners could become proficient in literacy and language skills. “To ensure accuracy and consistency, the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, division of Adult Education, prescribes that Tennessee’s adult education providers use standardized assessment with proven validity, reliability, and are approved for use by the NRS.”

The data that collected through the standardized assessment are supposed to be used to place student at proper levels of instruction, to see student strengths and weaknesses, to monitor their progress and to decide their mastery at specific levels of instruction or readiness to exit adult education.

When adult students enter a program, they should be pretested and it also serves as part of the intake process. “The pretest is a standardized assessment that levels the students in an Educational Functioning Level (EFL) and it is the basis for determining their EFL and class placement. It is also the baseline which programs use to measure student learning gains.”

“the assessment series used to pretest and posttest students, and thereby measure educational gains, is Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS). According to CASAS, when providers assess student’s basic language proficiency, they should follow the following guidelines: observe how well the student communities and

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fill out forms; consider number of years of formal schooling and other information on demographic records; administer CASAS oral screening; administer CASAS writing screening. A student should also be post-tested after they receive at least 40 instructional hours to assess their progress. In addition, it is encouraged to assess in all areas in which instruction is provided. It is not necessary to posttest only in the area with the lowest pretest score.

**Part 4: Jijan's oral language, reading, writing abilities in a content area**

My practicum site is an adult ESL program and the purpose is to help students improve their oral English language proficiency. Fortunately, my mentor teacher, Frank also incorporates reading and writing in class. For example, students are asked to read two books this semester, one is *The Old Man and Sea* and the other is *A Christmas Carol*. In addition, sometimes they also read articles and do exercises about reading comprehension. As for writing, all students were asked to write an essay about themselves and their learning purpose and teachers used that as part of evidence for placement. They rarely practice writing skills in class except for one time, Frank asked them to practice writing a letter and a check. Due to the limitation, I can only observe and collect information about her English language proficiency in the context of this classroom and I will discuss it from three perspectives: oral language, reading and writing.

**Oral English**

In part two, I have already discussed her oral English language proficiency by using WLMS and SOLOM. In addition, from my observation of her performance in class, I found that it is quite easy for her to communicate with her classmates and teachers although she speaks a little bit slower than others. Her vocabulary is also expanding during this semester. Last class I asked her why she was absent last week and she told me that she had to do housework with her mother-in-law. During that conversation, she used words such as “vacuum”, “burdensome”, and “fatigue” which really impressed me a lot.

On every Thursday, Frank would invite some native speakers to class to have conversations with students and each table will have at least one native speaker. Students are asked to read an article in a newspaper or magazine before class and take

turns to present it to others in this table. I have always sit with Jijan to observe her performance. I noticed that she was always the last person to share although she had the ability to present her article to others and answer their questions. Normally this activity lasts one hour so each student will have approximately twelve minutes. If some student is very eager to share and shares a lot, the last person will not have enough time to speak and unfortunately, Jijan is that last person. I also found that she was very reluctant to speak in whole class setting but when her classmates or I wanted to chat with her, she was very talkative.

### Reading

Generally speaking, I think Jijan's reading proficiency is very high. In Frank's class, students are always called to read one paragraph of articles so Frank could have a chance to correct students' pronunciation mistakes. Jijan was asked to read a paragraph of an article named "Benjamin Franklin" one time and she really did a great job. In fact, there are many hard words included in that paragraph but Jijan made almost no mistakes. The sentence structure is also complex, "his colorful life and legacy of scientific and political achievement, and status as one of America's most influential Founding Fathers, have seen Franklin honored on coinage and money; warships; the names of many towns, counties, educational institutions, namesakes, and companies; and more than two centuries after his death, countless cultural references", and I am so surprised that Jijan read it fluently and passionately although in a little bit slow pace.

In addition, I still choose to use the WMLS to assess her reading ability. I have already used test 1 and test 2 to assess Jijan's oral English and this time, I used test 3 which is letter-word identification to assess her reading (see appendix 5). According to the suggestion, I began the test from item 30 "shoulder" and she got them all right until item 40 "moustache". Even though we went to the last item 57 "enceinte", she still did

not attain ceiling. All in all, she got 49 items correct and based on the scoring table, the AE is 13-9 and the GE is 8.2.

Although Jijan is a good reader but when it comes to reading comprehension, she is very struggled. For example, there was one time that she did a reading comprehension about Mickey Mouse and there were ten multiple choices regarding to the article. She only had 5 correct. When I asked her to explain some words to me, she did not know them at all. Therefore, although her pronunciation is great but actually sometimes she does not what the meaning of those vocabulary.

### Writing

As I said before, there are not many opportunities for students to practice writing skills in this class since the main focus is helping students improve oral English proficiency. In addition, students also do not deem writing as an important element. Therefore, it is quite difficult to see Jijan's overall performance on writing. The only time I saw her writing was a check and a letter and what she did was simply copying what the teacher wrote on the handout.

In order to assess her writing, I asked my mentor teacher to send me the essay that Jijan wrote when she registered at the beginning of this semester. She was supposed to introduce herself and also state the reasons for her intention to learn English. Her essay is as follows:

*My name is Jijan. I am 25 years old. I am from Kurdistan. I have a daughter. She is very very cute. I learn English because I want to find a job at America. When my daughter grow, she can take care her and I can work outside. I live with my husband; my gaughter; my mother and father in law; mu husband's sisters; We live in a big house. I do not have a pet because it is tired taking care my baby. She run a lot in home, I always scare her falling and hurt.*

### 6-Trait Scoring Rubric

I chose to use 6-trait scoring rubric to evaluate her writing (see appendix 6). In terms of ideas, I give her 5 points because I think the ideas in the essay are well marked by enough details and information. She presented trustful details which support the main theme. Most of the details are clear and relevant to the topic and other details also stay with the topic.

As for organization, I give her 4 points and I think its organization structure is strong for readers to understand without much confusion. Although this essay does not have a very clear introduction and conclusion, the sequencing is logical. Firstly, she gave a brief introduction of herself and then put forward with the reason of why she wants to learn English and some details about her family members. The pacing is good although sometimes spend too much time on details that do not matter. The organization supports the main point though transitions are obscure.

As for conventions, I give her 5 points since there are some mistakes in the essay. The everyday words she uses are almost correct except for some tiny mistakes that I think are due to carelessness. The punctuation is usually correct and the grammar is good. I just noticed a few mistakes about preposition and singular forms which do not hinder reader's comprehension.

For voice, I give her full points. She speaks directly to readers in an individual, compelling and engaging way. When I read her essay, I feel a strong interaction with her since I can sense that her writing is very honest. The tone and voice are also very appropriate for the purpose and audience.

For word choice, I also give her full points. The words she chooses are precise and specific. Her language is very natural and engaging.

As for sentence fluency, I give her 5 points. I think mostly of this essay has a sense of rhythm and flow, however, there are some room for improvements. All sentences are accurate but the essay seems like lacking of variety since most sentences are simple sentence.

### **Part 5: Instructional Recommendations and Assessment Plan**

Based on my collections of her assessment results and observation of her performance in class, I have some instructional recommendations for her to improve English proficiency. In addition, I also design an assessment plan for her and her teachers to use in future.

#### **Instructional recommendations for oral English**

Jijan's family members spend most of time speaking English at home and according to her description, she does not have much communication with her family except her husband but they usually communicate with Kurdish. I think it is such a waste for her not to talk more with her family. She has such an advantage and we all know how important for a language learner to live in this kind of environment. If she could use this resource, her oral English will grow a lot. In addition, I think Jijan's should overcome the shyness and speak more in public. She can also push herself to start a conversation with a native speaker such a cashier in a grocery store. I remembered when I just came to US, the teacher in ELC encouraged us to start a small conversation with a Uber driver and told us to maintain the conversation for at least five minutes. I think it is a great idea for Jijan, too. Furthermore, her teacher needs to encourage her to speak more by always asking her opinion.

#### **Instructional recommendations for reading**

Although her pronunciation is good, she still has some accent. I suggest her to listen more, and practice reading after listening to native speakers' pronunciation. In addition, in order to improve reading comprehension ability, she should expand her vocabulary and she can do that by jotting down every word she does not know when she reads magazines or watch TV shows. There are also some strategies for reading such as

summarizing and highlighting that she could adopt. She can also choose some English books to read in her free time.

#### Instructional recommendations for listening

In order to improve listening skills, I think Jijan should seize every possible opportunity to listen to native speaker's speech. Fortunately, by communicating with her family members, she can get some practice. In addition, she can listen to radios and music. I remembered she told me that she liked to listen to some English learning channels which is beneficial for her. Watching TV series is also a great way and it will not make her feel boring. There is also a way to practice listening skills which is to make phone calls to wherever has an answering machine such as Bank of America. During listening, she can dictate whatever she hears and then dial again to check if she gets all the information correctly.

#### Instructional recommendations for writing

Jijan does not need to practice spelling and punctuation in writing. I think the biggest problem is still her limited vocabulary which hinders her ability to fully express her ideas through an essay. I would suggest her to emphasize key vocabulary by repeating and highlighting when she sees them in articles, newspapers or TV programs. In addition, she can combine reading and writing together by searching reading materials of various genres and use that as good writing samples. Since Jijan wants to find a job in America, it is necessary for her to practice how to write formal emails as well.

#### Assessment plan

Assessment plays an indispensable part in one's learning process. Both standardized assessment and classroom-based assessment are needed to record Jijan's progress of learning development. The calendar of when teachers will administer assessments is attached in Appendix 7. As for standardized assessment, Jijan has never took a

standardized assessment and I suggest her to take the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP). It is a general proficiency test for adult non-native speakers of English. Although Jijan does not need to use English for academic purposes, she wants to find a job here and she needs English to communicate with her family members, so I still suggest her to take it. This test measures students' English proficiency in the six basic language skill areas which are writing, grammar, vocabulary, reading, listening, and speaking.

Teacher should use a variety of performance-based assessment tools and techniques to assess her English. For reading, since her pronunciation is good enough so we can just ignore pronunciation. Teachers can assign her some reading materials and afterwards ask her questions regarding to it to assess her comprehension. From to time, she can also be asked to retell stories or articles. For speaking, it is easy to observe because technically, this class is a speaking class. The point is that teachers should use observational protocols such as SOLOM to assess her oral English to see if she makes progress during a period of time. For listening, it is closely related to speaking. SOLOM contains the category of comprehension which can partly represent listening. In addition, teachers can play VOA or BBC news for students and then let them retell it. It is also a great way to learn new vocabulary. For writing, teachers had better to create authentic assessments for students and students can be allowed to choose topics to write. After they finish writing, teacher can use 6-trait scoring rubric to assess their work. At the end of the semester, teacher can make comparisons of their first draft and last one. Teachers can also hang students' work on the wall and make a writer book of class.

In fact, I do not if there is a chance to implement this assessment plan since Jijan might not register next semester's ESL class since she will be busy taking care of her baby, however, no matter where she will be, I hope the recommendations can help her.

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## Appendix 7

Assessment calendar (this program only offers class on Tuesday and Thursday).

From now to Jan.4 (winter break)	Take the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency.
Jan.4	Use SOLOM to assess her oral English proficiency. After playing some news, make Jijan to retell a piece of news to see her listening ability. The comprehension is SOLOM can also help to assess listening.
Jan.9	<p>Ask Jijan to write some paragraphs and she can choose topics. If she does not want to, teacher can offer help (ex: is immigration beneficial to American society or not or should we keep culture purified). This is her first draft. Teacher uses 6-trait scoring rubric to assess her work.</p> <p>Assign her some reading materials from IELTS or prep TOEFL. She will be asked to recall and relate information and content from definition or illustration passages about some topics. Let us see how many points she can get.</p>
Jan.11	In order to assess her reading and

	<p>speaking, Jijan will be asked to present an article from either newspapers or magazines in a small group with a native speaker.</p>
Jan. 25	<p>After giving her some great writing samples, make her turn in the second draft and give specific comments. Students can have a writer's workshop so they can share their writings and get peer advices.</p>
Feb. 9	<p>Reader's club: students are supposed to read a paragraph that they like best from the required reading books. Teachers pay attention to the mistakes they made and their pronunciation, intonation and rhythm.</p> <p>After reading (or playing a radio) a story to them, ask students to retell the story (or do a role play to make it more fun).</p>
Feb. 23	<p>Submit the third draft and use 6-trait scoring rubric to assess it. Compare the first draft and this one to see if she makes some progress.</p>

Mar.15	Presentation about their culture, history or custom. Other students and the teacher ask questions. Teacher use SOLOM to assess her performance.
April 5	At this time, she should finish one required book. Teacher pose some questions related to the book and let Jijan answer to observe her comprehension ability and if she can use the key vocabularies to answer the questions
April 23	Speaking assessment: ask her some questions and record her answers in order to evaluate by SOLOM. Compare it with the first result to see where the progress lies and where she can continue working on. Writing assessment: make her write a composition and use the rubric to assess it. Compare two results as well.
May 1	Take MTELP again.

#### **Appendix 4: Local Chinese Community Literacy**

##### Introduction

Chinese immigrants are now the third-largest foreign-born group in the United States after Mexicans and Indians, numbering more than 2 million and comprising 5

percent of the overall immigrant population in 2013. Chinese immigrants tend to have much higher educational attainment compared to the overall foreign- and native-born populations. In 2013, 47 percent of Chinese immigrants (ages 25 and over) had a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 28 percent of the total immigrant population and 30 percent of the native-born population. Chinese immigrants had much higher incomes compared to the total foreign- and native-born populations. In 2013, the median income of households headed by a Chinese immigrant was \$57,000, compared to \$48,000 and \$53,000 for overall immigrant and native-born households, respectively. In 2013, 19 percent of Chinese immigrants lived in poverty, a rate similar to all immigrants but slightly higher than the 15 percent posted by the native-born population. Chinese immigrants were less likely to be proficient in English and speak English at home than the overall U.S. foreign-born population. In 2013, about 62 percent of Chinese immigrants (ages 5 and over) reported limited English proficiency, compared to 50 percent of the total foreign-born population. Approximately 10 percent of Chinese immigrants spoke only English at home, versus 16 percent of all immigrants (Retrieved from <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/chinese-immigrants-united-states>).

Nashville has many immigrants of different races, which makes it a diverse city. In 2012, Nashville had the fastest-growing immigrant population of any America city (Retrieved from <http://www.tennessean.com/story/opinion/contributors/2015/05/17/nashville-welcoming-immigrants/27479183/>). Based on US census data, there are 1916 Chinese accounting for 0.35% of the total population (Retrieved from <http://nashville.areaconnect.com/statistics>).

Interview

Transnationalism is understood to be “the condition of cultural interconnectedness and mobility across space” (Ong, 1999) as well as “the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their social of origin and settlement” (Basch et al., 1994, p.7). A few days ago Professor Sharon took us to visit some Asian supermarkets and I had chance to see some Chinese characters on the package of the product. I thought maybe I could bring it into my class so I decided to interview some Chinese immigrants to gain more information about second language acquisition. I interviewed three Chinese Christians and the interviewees are Andrew, Andrew’s wife Yiwen and Michael. According to Andrew, there are some Chinese kids who come with their parents and continue their education in America. Like Andrew’s son, Yiwen’s daughter. They are over 30 years old now and they use mainly English and very little Chinese to communicate. When Andrew’s son came to America, he was 7 years old and Andrew sent him to a public school in south Williamson county. The little boy was frustrated at first and even vomited after class. But with the help of teachers, after less than a semester the child soon possessed the ability to communicate with native students. Yiwen’s daughter came to the US when she was in the first grade in elementary school. She barely had difficulties when she entered a private school in Nashville because she learned English in Taiwan before she came to America. Yiwen mentioned mingle, a kind of group activity her daughter liked which I think belongs to a constructivism teaching style that I want to use in my classroom. Michael, who is also my interviewer, are 22 years old now and received undergraduate study in Purdue University in America and now works in Nashville. His is an outgoing boy and likes to communicate with native speakers so he has a very low affective filter which is very good for SLA. Just as Spolsky (1989) argues, extensive exposure to the target language, in relevant kinds and amounts, and the opportunity to practice the target language are

essential to the second language learning: Learning cannot proceed without exposure and practice. So as a teacher, I will encourage my students to watch news or TV series and talk to native speakers to gain more exposure and practice and then let them to write down their thoughts about it. Michael also told me that, however, afterwards, he found his connection with native speakers are surface, they cannot have a deep communication. Therefore, he decided to make some Chinese friends and he told me that after a long time of interaction with Chinese speakers, he found it hard to use English fluently and it is difficult for him to switch to English when speaking with native speakers. Therefore, balance is very important. It is essential to maintain your English ability while at the same time have a deep interaction with your home country.

#### Teaching methods and activities

The teaching methods that I want to use in my class is constructivist teaching and culturally responsive teaching. In the interview, Andrew especially mentioned that teachers really cared his son a lot and this is one of the most important reasons of why this boy could blend in the community so soon. This kind of caring is one of the major pillars of culturally responsive teaching for ethnically diverse students (Geneva Gay, 2010). As a future teacher, I will give my students care to make them feel they are important and valuable. Caring interpersonal relationships are characterized by patience, persistence, facilitation, validation, and empowerment for the participants (Geneva Gay, 2010). It is important to get to know students and see the world they see and never give up on students. As immigrants, they may feel isolated and lonely, teachers should have as much as interaction with students to help build up their confidence and make them be more active in the classroom by encouraging them to express their ideas so they will feel respected and valued. An activity I design is to let students write notes to me anonymously about their feelings and then I will write back

to give them support and comfort and this can be our little secret. The reason I do this is that I want my students to know there is always someone care and support them. And when there is a discussion happened in my classroom, I will try to group native English speaking students and immigrant students and encourage them to share their own culture to each other. In addition, being academically demanding but personally supportive and encouraging is also necessary (Geneva, Gay, 2010). Andrew said whenever there is a teacher-parent conference, the teacher always said positive aspect of his son and was very tolerant to students. But I will have high expectations of my students and encourage them to at least have a try and be the best they could be because I believe, if you want your students to get sixty points out of one hundred, they will have sixty points. But if you set an expectation of one hundred points, they will get ninety.

Constructivist teaching is more than a set of teaching techniques; it is a coherent pattern of expectations that underlie new relationships between students, teachers, and new world of ideas (Mark Windschitl, 1999). This teaching method is mainly student-centered rather than traditional teaching and it is necessary for teachers to arrange the time for lecture, discussion and group work. Teachers must try to arrive at a new vision of their own. This vision must include serving as a facilitator of learning who responds to students' needs with a flexible understanding of subject matter and a sensitivity to how the student is making sense of the world (Mark Windschitl, 1999). A class activity I designed is as follow: students are going to learn vocabulary of jobs. At first, I will ask what their parents or other people who they are familiar with do for a living and based on this, I could know their prior knowledge about this subject. Then I will make four or five students a group and let them interview these people together because collaboration is very important in the learning process and I will ask them bring some

paper work to share in class if possible. Embracing and implementing transnational and community literacies is one way for teachers to begin to build productive relationships with students who are English-language learners (Jimenez, Smith & Teague, 2009). When we have class, each group must make a presentation to show what they found and share them to the whole class. Through this process, students can have a chance to explore on their own and also have a cooperative learning. Then I will give a lecture about this topic and ask my students what they still want to know about this. So next class we can still discuss it.

Based on what is mentioned above, teachers should take the responsibility to help ELLs to master the language efficiently and help them to blend in the community soon.

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## **Appendix 5: Final Report**

### Introduction to the learner

My participant, Danni is a first-year graduate student of English Language Learners, Peabody college, Vanderbilt University. She is now 23 years old. She was born in a wealthy family in Guiyang, Guizhou Province which situated in southwest China but her ancestral home is Shenyang, Liaoning Province in northeast China. Both of Danni's parents are well educated, her mother is an associate professor in Guizhou University; her father graduated from Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, a prestigious higher institution in China.

#### Linguistic background:

Danni's mother language is Mandarin Chinese and all her family members speak it. However, they tend to communicate with each other by using Guiyang dialect at home. Danni told me that although her parents speak dialect at home but she was not very fluent in it. The reason I guess maybe all her teachers and classmates speak Mandarin Chinese and actually she spends most of the time with those people. Danni has been learning English for more than 15 years since she was in her third grade in elementary school so English is her foreign language. Since English and Chinese belong to different language families, they have many significant differences which may take much time for Danni to acquire English. It may be difficult for Danni to read English texts and spell words correctly because Chinese does not have an alphabet but

uses a logographic system for its written language. In addition, some English phonemes do not exist in Chinese so Danni could not pronounce some words correctly which I will talk about in the next part. The stress and intonation in English and Chinese are different so Danni has some problems regarding word stress, sentence stress, and vocal variety. She also has a little Chinese accent. Chinese English learners may also struggle with tense since, in Chinese, there is no changing of verbs according to time. Furthermore, Chinese does not have articles so it is difficult for Danni to use correct articles in her writing.

Educational background:

From kindergarten to the undergraduate institution, Danni received her education in China. Now she is studying at Vanderbilt University in the United States. She started to learn English in the third grade in elementary school. According to what she told me, teachers in her elementary school just taught them some basic words and sentences such as “hello” and “good morning”. She found it interesting but sometimes she tended to confuse Pinyin in Chinese and English characters. When she was studying English in middle school, the teachers taught them more advanced vocabulary and grammar such as tense and part of speech which is tested in high school entrance examination. Danni did not perform well in that examination since she thought to recite vocabulary and to do grammar exercises are boring. In high school, Danni had a lot of pressure which came from the college entrance examination, so she had to learn English hard. Her parents sent her to cram school after regular class hours to learn vocabulary and grammar since this examination mainly focuses on grammar and vocabulary but overlooks students’ oral and written ability. Danni did many related exercises and got a relatively high score in English. She thought she could say goodbye to English but unfortunately, her major was English when she entered in undergraduate school. There is a special policy in

China when students apply for school, which is students could choose to transfer to other specialties when they are not matriculated by the specialties they declare. In order to enter Beijing University of Technology, Danni had no choice but learn English for another four years. During this process, she gradually fell in love with English and passed the CET4, CET6, TEM4 and TEM8 (CET: College English Test; TEM: Test for English Majors). When she was a junior student, she took part in an exchange student program and she had been studying in England for a month. That was a wonderful experience for her and she was interested in the history, culture, and custom of English speaking countries. Another turning point is an internship she had in the senior year. she went to rural China to teach English. She came to realize that education could change a person's life so she intended to further study education in America. However, it was too late to apply at that time so she had a gap year. During that period of time, she worked as a tutor in an English language school which focused on helping students with TOEFL. She passed TOEFL and GRE with relatively high scores. Now, she is studying in English Language Learners program at Vanderbilt University.

Sociocultural factors:

The sociocultural factors that may influence my participant's English language proficiency are as follows: firstly, Danni learned English at a very young age. According to Critical Period Hypothesis, the younger a student begin to acquire a second language, the better he will be. In addition, older learners of a second language can rarely achieve native accent. Although Danni started to learn English at a very young age, she did not acquire native-like fluency since she rarely has a chance to communicate with native speakers. Until she entered college, there were some foreign teachers who helped her improve speaking ability. In addition, she had four years of professional study of English which was beneficial for her to form a systematic

language. Like I mentioned before, both of her parents were well educated so they paid much attention to Danni's academic performance. She is also a diligent girl. I can see whenever she met difficulties related to study, she did not just give up but tried her best to overcome the obstacles. Second language acquisition is a tough process, only people who are hardworking can attain success and I think Danni is one of them. However, sometimes she was reluctant to communicate with native speakers since she is an introverted girl, which is not helpful for her to improve oral English. Since the English learning in China also overlooks the speaking ability, Danni's speaking is limited compared with reading, listening and writing in English.

#### Descriptions of the learner's oral and written language abilities

I will introduce Danni's oral and written language abilities from the following aspects: phonology, semantics, grammar, and pragmatics.

#### Phonology

As a non-native speaker, Danni's strength in phonology is pretty obvious. In terms of fluency and cohesion, she answered all my questions fluently and clearly with almost no hesitation and we can understand each other fully. As for pronunciation, most words she said were correct. However, there are many "um" and "er" and pauses in her speech. For example, "...um, I think my English still needs to be improved. ...as for writing and reading, I think... I think that as for reading, I think I... it is better for me to understand and to learn English than listening and ...speaking". This is perhaps because she was organizing her words through translating Chinese into English in her mind when she tried to answer my questions. Her English ability did not attain the highest level, but this did not hinder the understanding between us.

Danni's pronunciation is relatively good although the stress of some words and sentences was not perfect and she has a Chinese accent which is unavoidable since she

learned English in China. Sometimes she tends to elongate vowel sounds incorrectly, such as “but” [bʌt], “love” [lʌv] and write[rart]. However, I think she actually knew how to pronounce them correctly; it is just that she wanted to think for a second of what she was going to say. In addition, she did not perform well on the inter-dental sound [θ]; for example, the word “think” should be pronounced [θɪŋk], but she said it like [sɪŋk]. However, she did a good job on the other inter-dental sound [ð]. She also struggled with some vowel sounds, especially monophthongs. For example, she pronounced [lɪtəl] as [lɪ:təl], [ræli] as [ræuli], [ʃaɪnə] as [ʃaɪna] and [frɑ:ns] as [frɛns]. What is more, she sometimes put an alveolar consonant [n] after a vowel such as [kə'mju:nɪkɪt] to [kən'mju:nɪkɪt]. A serious problem is that she mixed an alveolar consonant [n] with a velar consonant [ŋ]. For example, she pronounced [rʌn] as [rʌŋ] and [ʌndə] as [ʌŋdə].

As Gass and Selinker observe, “A speaker of a language with a more marked NL structure (or in this case, a more marked contrast) than that which occurs in the TL will have an easier time learning the TL structure/contrast than a speaker whose NL is less marked than the TL” (Gass& Selinker, 2001). This correctly explains why Danni, a speaker of Chinese, has difficulty in producing some English words. In addition, based on the Interaction Hypothesis, the native language and the second language have a bidirectional influence, so Danni’s pronunciation of English is actually influenced by her native tongue (week7, slides). In Chinese, there are not inter-dental sounds and that is probably why she could not say it correctly.

#### Semantics

This analysis will contain two parts, one is a conversation between me and her and the other is her essay for USECC class about philosophical foundations of American education. In the conversation, I asked her some basic questions related to herself and

her new life in America and also her hometown. Her essay consisted of three sections, the first two sections introduced two philosophies in action named progressivism and perennialism and the last section was her own understanding about this.

In the conversation, we can see that she has a relatively high speaking ability and has already mastered how to use transition words such as “and”, “however” and “but” to make her sentences more logical and structured. And she was also able to produce long sentences with clauses. In addition, she has a great vocabulary which helped her to understand my questions and answered them without hesitation. During the conversation, the words she used are almost correct and she even used some hard words such as “adventure”, “alcohol” and “transportation” to answer my questions. All in all, this conversation went very smoothly and there were almost no misunderstandings between me and her.

However, there is still something that could be improved. The lexical density of the interview is only 35.77% (Table 1) which means she used some repetitive words. For example, she used many times of “I think” when she wanted to express her ideas, which could be replaced by “in my opinion” or “as far as I am concerned” to make the sentences more diverse and improve her lexical density. And I find she really liked to use the sentence pattern of “there be” such as “there are” and “there is” but actually she could have used different expressions to deliver the same meaning. What is more, she used some low-level words like “good” which could be substituted for more advanced vocabulary like “fabulous” or “amazing”. Also, she used “friendly” three times to describe people and actually she could use “amicable” and “genial” in order not to use the same word. And although she used many transition words, few of them are unnecessary. For example, she said too many “so”. In all, the vocabulary she possessed is good but still not enough.

As for the second part, the essay that she presented was very clear and she was able to use some hard words like “compatible” and “credulous”. In addition, she could master the use of phrases such as “pay attention to”, “rather than” and “apply to”. And the sentence structure is pretty good since the essay contains both short sentences and long sentences and she is really good at using conjunctions to make her essay logically. But the lexical density is only 48.85% (Table 2) which is although higher than the interview, still a little low as an essay. She used “focus on” four times in this small essay, and in fact, it could be changed to “concentrate on” or “center on”. Also, she mistook “radio” for “video” in the second section of her essay. In the end of her essay, she wrote “giving students a chance to experience what they learn is better for them to get knowledge” without explanation but I think she should make it more specific by giving more details or an example to make it more convincing.

Literacy development is a complex process that takes place over a lengthy period during which they gradually approximate versions of reading and writing (Peregoy, S.F.& Boyle. O.F. ,2013). Since my participant has been studying English for more than fifteen years and her major was English before, she has much exposure to English and shows good ability in semantics, of both oral and written language. However, there are also some problems in her written English like some words are relatively not appropriate to be used in an essay. That is because written language development requires substantial explicit instruction and practice whereas oral language is learned with relatively little explicit instruction (Peregoy, S.F.& Boyle. O.F. ,2013). One of the most important reasons that my participant has not completely master English is that English is a language that has many unique features. English put more emphasis on the structure while Chinese tend to focus on meaning. Also English likes to use passive tense and sometimes words are being omitted to avoid recurrences which are totally

different from my participant's mother tongue, Chinese (retrieved from <http://www.digmandarin.com/6-major-differences-between-english-and-chinese.html>).

### Grammar

What I analyze for grammar includes two parts: one is a daily conversation about Danni's dream job and her understanding of language learning, which has approximately 253 words; the other is a section of her education foundations paper class which has about 325 words. I calculated the number of morphemes of her oral and writing samples, which are 306 and 397 respectively. Since her total utterances in the conversation is 47. Her Mean Length of Utterance (MLU) is 5.38 while her utterances in the writing sample is 31, making the MLU 10.48.

We could see her morphology ability in many ways: she knew how to use prefixes and suffixes to create multi-morpheme words in her speaking; for example, she spoke words such as "undergraduate", "teacher", "education", "successful" and "farmer". Furthermore, she used derivational suffixes to change parts of speech such as "success", a noun, into "successful", an adjective; "deep", an adjective, into "deeply", an adverb. She also used many regular plural forms such as "differences", "languages", "characters" and "words" as well as irregular plural forms such as "children" and "families" in her speaking. However, she made some grammatical mistakes. For example, in some circumstances where she was supposed to use past tense, she used present tense, which means she overlooked some inflectional suffixes. For example, she did not make words "need" and "want" past tense by adding "ed". In terms of irregular past tense form, she forgot to change "fall" and "choose" into "fell" and "chose".

As for the writing sample, she also showcased her ability in morphology. She used words such as "immigrants", "arrivals", "information", "independent" and "director"

so it indicated that she had already developed the skill for using prefixes and suffixes properly. What is more, the words such as “replaced”, “interviewed”, “lives”, “containing”, “groceries” and “kinds” suggested that she knew how to use the right inflectional suffixes to change verb tense and single-plural form. Moreover, she knew how to add derivational suffixes to free morphemes such as “completely” and “daily” to change parts of speech. I also discovered that she used superlative adjectives in her writing such as “largest” when she described the scale of the Chinese community. I did not find any grammatical errors about single-plural form and tense, which indicated she had proofread it before. However, I still noticed an error she made: she wrote “have a deep understand of their lives”, but she should have used “understanding”. I think that she did know the grammar rule for past tense, but she did not carefully proofread and copyedit her paper.

In regards to her syntactic ability, there was a slight difference between her speaking and writing. In her speaking, she could speak complete sentences with a subject, predicate, and object and sometimes even with a clause, but it was a little hard for her to be consistent. For example, she said “Um, ok, just like the..., vocabulary we talked about last last week. Um, Chinese... there are many vocabularies in Chinese that um composed by... two or more characters”. As for linking devices, she used some logical linking such as “and”, “but”, “so” and “because” to express coordinative relation, adversative relation, and causal relation. She used “as for” several times when she tried to start a new sentence. She also used grammatical linking such as pronominal forms “they”, “he” and “we” to replace noun phrases. I noticed that she spoke “so” many times even though there was no causal relation, perhaps because when she was thinking, she did not want to just pause, so she tended to say “so” instead. Her syntactic ability in writing is very high since the sentences were complete and more complex comparing

to the conversation. The linking devices she used such as “therefore” and “although” made her writing very logical; “first”, “then” and “last” made her writing very clear. I do not see clear syntactic weaknesses in her writing except for diversifying sentences and word choice. The reason that she has a high ability of syntax is that she knows a language contains an infinite number of sentences and she is capable of understanding sentences that she has never heard before so she could create many complete sentences (Gass & Selinker, 2001).

### Pragmatics

The content I choose for pragmatics analysis is an 895-word conversation which took place in my bedroom between Danni and me. It was a casual conversation mainly about her daily life and study at Vanderbilt University and her hometown.

In regards to linguistic context, Danni did not only answer my questions in detail but also generate additional topics. For example, when I asked her to introduce herself, she replied “my name is...”, then she said, “I am interested in teaching English, so I come to Peabody to study education”. Therefore, it was very natural for me to ask her about the new life in Nashville. As for social context, we have almost equal social status and similar background since both of us come from China and study in Peabody College as graduate students now. In addition, she knew well about this case study so she did a good job as an interviewee in the conversation. Additionally, we are close friends so the conversation was very casual and there were many laughs during it.

In general, Danni adhered to Grice’s Maxims well. In regards to the maxims of quality, almost every time she gave me very trustful answers which were supported by enough evidence. For example, when I asked her to describe her hometown, she said that her hometown is a beautiful city and then gave me some details, “It is surrounded by mountains and the environment is really good because it is a city of forest and the

most popular thing in my hometown...”, which was trustworthy to me.

As for the maxims of relevance, almost all her answers were pertinent to the questions I asked. However, sometimes she tended to be irrelevant. For example, when I asked her if she liked her new life in Nashville, she did not give me a yes or no reply. Instead, she responded, “it is hard to say because the new life is totally different from my life in China...there are some other problems in life”. I had thought she was going to say her problems in life, but she continued “But I think because I am a person who like to take over challenges so ...I think problems are many in studying and in life”. She did not say the problems in life but something about her personality and then ended up her answer with a repetitive sentence which made me a little confused.

As for the maxims of quantity, she could always be as informative as she possibly can. For example, when I asked her to describe the Vanderbilt University, she gave me a very detailed answer. At first, she described the campus environment, “Vanderbilt is a beautiful school...”. Then she talked about the faculty, “I think professors and staffs in our school are very friendly...”. However, I found sometimes she gave me more information that I needed, such as when she was trying to describe her new life to me. As for the maxims of manner, her answers were clear and orderly. I could understand all her saying and there were almost no obscurity and ambiguity since she was really good at using understandable vocabulary and many linking devices. In all, she adhered to the maxims of quality and manner perfectly.

**Influencing Factors:** Since my participant have been studying English for more than fifteen years so she knew a lot of vocabularies and she was able to express her points with enough evidence. However, due to culture, we Chinese like to sidestep the main questions and talked about other affairs, so she sometimes generated irrelevant sayings. In addition, she did not have many speaking practices in China when she

learned English so the speaking ability was limited compared with other abilities.

Assessment of the learner's current stage of second language acquisition and SLA

theoretical framework

Overall assessment

According to the language acquisition chart, her English ability has already attained a level 4, which is high intermediate fluency. Students in this level can communicate thoughts more completely, can participate in everyday conversations without highly contextualized support.

In terms of phonology, Danni could answer all my questions fluently and clearly with almost no hesitation and we can understand each other fully. Most words she said were correct although there are some pronunciation problems. These problems related to pronunciation, stress, and intonation, however, do not hinder understanding between us. As for semantics, I do not know the exact number of vocabulary. I think approximately she possesses 10,000 receptive/active word vocabulary because she passed TOEFL and GRE with relatively high scores. She was able to imagine, create, contrast, explain issues effortlessly. Although her lexical density is not very high, I think it is since she lacked systematic practice. Once she followed my recommendations, she will improve a lot about her semantical skills. As for grammar, Danni showed the good ability of grammar skills which include both morphology and syntactic. On one hand, she was capable of using morphemes consisting of prefixes, inflectional and derivational suffixes although sometimes she forgot to add inflectional morpheme "ed" to original words in her speaking. Compared with the oral part, the writing sample had almost no obvious mistakes. On the other hand, her syntactic ability could be seen from the completeness of her sentences and the using of linking devices. However, her speaking is inconsistent so she should work on it in the future. In terms of pragmatics,

she adhered to the maxims of quality and manner perfectly. In order to improve her pragmatics ability, she should pay attention to the maxims of quantity and relevance.

#### Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework that informs my analysis include: Critical Period Hypothesis, Markedness Differential Hypothesis, Interaction Hypothesis and Threshold Hypothesis.

According to Critical Period Hypothesis, children as L2 learners are ‘superior’ to adults (Scovel, 2000), that is, the younger the learner, the quicker the learning process and the better the outcomes. Danni started to learn English at a very young age, that is why her English ability is achieving level 4-high intermediate fluency. However, since she had not been immersed in a totally English-speaking environment, it is difficult for her to possess a native-like accent.

As Gass and Selinker observe, “A speaker of a language with a more marked NL structure (or in this case, a more marked contrast) than that which occurs in the TL will have an easier time learning the TL structure/contrast than a speaker whose NL is less marked than the TL” (Gass& Selinker, 2001). This correctly explains why Danni, a speaker of Chinese, has difficulty in producing some English words.

In addition, based on the Interaction Hypothesis, the native language, and the second language have a bidirectional influence, so Danni’s pronunciation of English is actually influenced by her native tongue (week7, slides). Some morphemes that existed in English do not exist in Chinese. For example, in Chinese, there are not inter-dental sounds and that is probably why she could not say it correctly.

According to Threshold Hypothesis, in order for students to achieve the most cognitive benefits of language learning, they must fully develop skills in both their native language and second language. I believe that in order for students to achieve

maximum cognitive benefits of bilingualism, their native language must be used and valued in schools.

### Specific instructional plan

#### phonology

In order to improve my participant's phonological skills, I have some suggestions. To sound more native, she should pay attention to stress and intonation. What she could do is to listen to some news broadcast and mimic the pronunciation of native speakers. If she finds it so boring, she could also watch some interesting TV series. In addition, since now she is in an English speaking country, it is not difficult for her to communicate with native speakers. Therefore, she could ask for their help to correct her pronunciation problems. I know she is quite shy to ask for help, but she could make friends with her classmates and professors at first and then ask them if they could kindly help her. Furthermore, there is a wonderful class called academic speaking offered by English Language Center in Vanderbilt University and it is free for students. I highly recommend her to register since I got a lot of help. Instructors teach many knowledge and techniques related to oral English. There are many presentations in that class and instructors will record it which I think will be a big help for Danni to find her pronunciation problems, correct them, and then boost her confidence.

#### Semantics

My recommendations for her to improve semantical ability are as follows: in order to improve her semantical skills in oral English, she could try to communicate with native speakers as much as she could and since she is in America now, it is not hard for her to do so. There are many English corners here and she can also sign up in meetup website to meet local people who share the same interest with her to practice speaking ability. In addition, there is an amazing activity held by ISSS of Vanderbilt University

called First Friend and I highly recommend her to take part in so she could have a connection with local family and know more about their history and culture. As for writing ability, she could seek help from English Language Center and writing studio. Instructors will give her many help related to word choice and sentence diversifying. she could do more readings and whenever seeing a good sentence structure she could write it down. Therefore, when she needs to write papers or essays, she could mimic the sentence structure to make her writing more academic. Last but not least, she can expand her vocabulary by regularly checking up the synonyms through many applications and websites.

#### Grammar

I suggest Danni pay more attention to grammatical errors especially in terms of tense. When she speaks, she should think twice about the tense. In addition, she should avoid saying “so” for many times; and sometimes when she thinks of what to say, she could just pause. She misused the indefinite article “a” and “an” in the conversation once. I think she could record her audio when she makes presentations, therefore she could find her problems and correct them. As for writing, she should proofread and copyedit her writing more carefully since sometimes, she makes errors due to carelessness. There is a free online application called “Grammarly”, she could use it to help her detect errors related to grammar. She could also go to English Language Center and writing studio to seek help. She has some trouble when it comes to using articles, which many Chinese students also struggle with. The writer’s workshop class gave us some special training about articles and also some exercises which Danni should go back to review.

#### Pragmatics

Since currently, Danni is studying in an English-speaking country, it is easy for

her to talk to native speakers or watch TV shows to learn the expressions they use. Then she could mimic their way of expressing ideas. In addition, when answering questions, she should not sidestep questions but just stick to the point and try not to give unnecessary information. I think by always keeping Grice's four maxims in mind, she will not have big problems in pragmatics skills

#### Critical reflection

What I have learned:

Through this case study, I have really learned a lot. Firstly, I learned many linguistics knowledge during this process. In addition, I came to realize that there are various methods to assess English Language learners' ability such as lexical density and MLU.

I had always thought that through a test, we can get a whole picture of students' language ability. I had not realized that English ability contained phonology, semantics, grammar and pragmatics and although they seemed like separate but intertwined with each other. There are many factors that can influence one's second language acquisition. As an English language learner and a future language teacher, I can use what I learned in this case study to facilitate my own English acquisition and teacher my future students. Furthermore, in fact, this is the first time that I did a case study, I know how can I collect data and analyze the data I collected.

Implications:

As a future English teacher, I will use various tools such as language acquisition chart, MLU and lexical density to assess my students' English ability in the first class to get a general picture of their English level. Once I know each student's strength and weakness, I will design special curriculum for my students and give them recommendations case by case. Additionally, I will develop my students' reading,

writing, speaking and listening skills evenly. Now, Chinese teachers just overlook their students' oral English since it is not evaluated in some major examinations. However, I think the purpose of learning language is to communicate. Therefore, I will give design some activities such as presentations which include both individual and group presentations, and invite some foreigners to my class if possible to help my students improve their oral English. In order to motivate my students, I will also have some extra-curricular activities to elicit their interest in English and try not to make them feel learning English is boring.

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Transcriptions. <http://lingorado.com/ipa/>

## Appendix:

Table 1: Text analysis (conversation)

Total Word Count	621
Sentence Count	38
Average Sentence Length	15.72
Hard Words	33
Total Unique Words	225
Lexical Density	35.77%
Characters Per Word	4.12
Syllables Per Word	1.32

Table 2: Text analysis (essay)

Total Word Count	352
Sentence Count	24
Average Sentence Length	14.5
Hard Words	53
Total Unique Words	170
Lexical Density	48.85%
Characters Per Word	5.28

Syllables Per Word	1.61
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### Appendix 6: western food vs. eastern food lesson plan

#### Lesson Plan Template

Teacher / School:	Yuqing Zhang/high school (10 <sup>th</sup> grade Chinese students whose level fall between Novice and intermediate)
Unit Theme:	Food: Western food vs Eastern food
Which “Can Do” statements for this unit will students be making progress on today?	<p>I can understand what the video is talking about.</p> <p>I can finish the interpretive tasks after taking a bite of the food.</p> <p>I can comprehend the authentic text and finish both the interpretive and interpersonal task.</p> <p>I can actively take part in the debate and use persuasive reasons to support my opinion.</p>
Which standards will students be making progress on today?  <i>(These are the official standards that come from a government, professional, or school organization.)</i>	<p>According to Common Core Standard,</p> <p>Reading: 10<sup>th</sup> grade students could determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.</p> <p>Speaking: 10<sup>th</sup> grade students could present</p>

	information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.
Time:	60 minutes
Materials Needed:	Food Authentic text Video PowerPoint Handout Task paper
Methodological Approach:	Grammar translation, communicative language teaching combined with Interpretation Performance Assessment
What is this lesson's connection to other lessons in this unit?  <i>(Remember that this final lesson should be one of several lessons in the middle of your unit.)</i>	The unit is about American food culture. All the lessons are about food including this one.  Before this class, we have already learned past tense, this class we will continue to practice past tense by letting students say some past experience related to food.  Continue to foster their interpersonal and presentational skills.  Guide students to have a culture perspective.

stage	Teacher activity	Student activity	Issues anticipated	time	Material used
1. Preparation the night before	Find the video. Print the handouts and task papers.	preview	Students do not preview.	45 minutes	Video handout
2.opening activity	Play the video	Watch the video and think about differences between western and eastern food.	Do not watch it carefully	5 minutes	video
Interpretative task 1	Have students take a bite of the food and distribute task papers.	Enjoy the food and finish the tasks. Do you know the names of the food? Describe	Could not finish it	10 minutes	Task paper

		<p>your feeling</p> <p>when you</p> <p>take a bite.</p> <p>What is</p> <p>your</p> <p>favorite</p> <p>food, why</p> <p>do you like</p> <p>it, is it</p> <p>because of</p> <p>its flavor or</p> <p>is there any</p> <p>special</p> <p>meaning</p> <p>behind it?</p> <p>Discuss</p> <p>with</p> <p>partners.</p>			
Interpretive task 2	<p>Have</p> <p>students</p> <p>read an</p> <p>authentic</p> <p>text and</p> <p>finish tasks</p>	<p>Use target</p> <p>language to</p> <p>explain key</p> <p>words:</p> <p>braise fry</p> <p>stew boil</p> <p>steam roast.</p>	<p>Could not</p> <p>answer</p> <p>those</p> <p>questions.</p>	<p>15</p> <p>minutes</p>	<p>Text</p> <p>Task paper</p>

		<p>Guess meaning from the context: communally filleted wok</p> <p>What is the writing purpose of the author?</p>			
Interpersonal task	<p>Have students discuss with a partner about which kind of food is healthier and give reasons.</p>	<p>Discuss with partners and share opinions.</p>	<p>Reasons are not persuasive.</p>	5 minutes	
Presentational task	<p>Debate: If you could only choose one kind of food, what would you</p>	<p>Defend their arguments. Peer evaluation.</p>	<p>Not fully engaged.</p>	20 minutes	

	choose and why? Monitor the class.				
Closing	Close the debate and make a brief conclusion. Homework.			5 minutes	slides
Follow up work		Preview and review			

Authentic text:

### The top ten differences between Chinese and Western eating

You may have had Chinese food in Chinese restaurants in your country. Have you noticed some differences between Chinese eating and Western eating? Besides **chopsticks** vs. **knives and forks**, there are more differences that you may not know...

1. Chinese usually **eat communally** and share their dishes with others. Westerners usually enjoy individual servings.
2. Chinese cooks chop everything into **bite size pieces**, thus people don't need knives to cut it, and just pick up their food with chopsticks. Westerners cook food in big pieces and serve it with knives and forks for cutting it up.
3. Chinese usually **don't remove bones**, and just cut them and the meat into pieces. They cook fish whole. Westerners usually eat filleted fish, and meat with whole bones, or no bones.
4. Chinese **always cook vegetables** — frying, stewing, boiling, and steaming —

sometimes with soy sauce, ginger, and garlic. Western salads, or just boiling vegetables in water, are virtually unknown in China.

5. **Ingredients:** Chinese cuisine uses many ingredients rarely seen in Western cuisine, like winter melons and yams, tree fungi and lotus pods, frogs and dogs, feet, tongues, ears, and all manner of internal organs, etc.

6. **Using spices:** Chinese cooks like to add fresh/dried spices when cooking, like ginger, spring onion, mint, pepper, garlic, chilies, etc. Western cooks usually use processed spices like pepper powder, ketchup, etc.

7. **Seasoning bottles:** You usually won't find any salt, pepper, tomato sauce, or mustard on the table in a Chinese restaurant. But if you have breakfast at a dumpling and steamed bun shop, you can enhance the flavor with soy sauce or vinegar from a bottle poured into a dipping dish.

8. **Desserts:** Sweet desserts are served after Western dinners, while Chinese have fresh fruit or tea for dessert.

9. **Round tables vs. square tables:** Chinese traditionally eat at round tables, particularly family meals, as it's convenient to share dishes with others, especially with a lazy Suzy. Roundness symbolizes unity in China. Westerners eat at square tables, which is more convenient for individual meals, with long tables for bigger groups.

10. **Cooking methods:** Where Westerners limit themselves to boiling, frying, roasting, and baking usually, Chinese use more methods of cooking, like steaming, stewing, sautéing, braising, and quick-frying with a wok. Chinese usually use animal/peanut oil to fry food; Westerners use more butter, sunflower oil, and olive oil.

Hopefully sharing these differences will help you prepare for your China experience, and has given you some insights into Chinese culture.

Any other notes that you think would help me understand your lesson plan, please feel free to add them here:

Video comes from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oBFMxMSBMjg>

### **Appendix 7: final video analysis paper**

#### Final Video Analysis Paper

##### Macro-Analysis

The video that I use for macro-analysis is my first recorded lesson at my practicum site, Belmont ESL. This program is a multi-level program which has six levels. The classroom I am placed in is the sixth grade which serves advanced and moderately advanced adult students. The main goal of this program is to help adult learners improve their oral English proficiency and learn American culture.

##### Overview

This lesson includes two topics, one is email and the other is telephone English. I started the lesson by a warm-up activity. Although this activity does not have a close relationship with the learning content, I think to some extent it still engaged students and brought their attention to me. After the warm-up activity and an instruction about email expression, I asked them to do an email writing task by working with partners. The reason that I did not ask them to write alone is that I view learning as collaborative and interactionally-driven (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005). Learning should not only happen between teachers and students, instead, students can learn from each other during collaboration and communication. Based on my observation, all students finished this task very well. Therefore, I assumed that we were ready to move on to the next topic. Since email and telephone are two main communication tools we use today, I would also like students to practice telephone skills in this class. After sharing some tips and stories, I asked students to do a role play on telephone. The scenarios that I

provided gave students opportunities to participate in a range of authentic learning contexts.

According to what Hammond and Gibbons (2005) mentioned, in order to achieve design-in scaffolding, teachers should think carefully about the sequencing of tasks in order to “make students to move step-by-step towards more in-depth understandings of concepts”. However, I only paid attention to the individual task and ignored the relationship between sequential tasks which made this lesson turn out to be a less effective one. I think I should only focus on one topic next time and try to sequence the tasks in a better way to support my students.

### Scaffolding

At the very first beginning, I asked my students to do a warm-up activity which called “I have never done”, therefore, they could have a chance to know each other and I believe it is better for their subsequent cooperation since they do not have fixed table partners. Afterwards, I taught some email expressions and shared some tips on how to write a formal email in English. After that, they did an exercise which is to write an email by using the above-mentioned expressions. The second part of this class is telephone English. After sharing some tips on telephone English, I gave them four scenarios and asked them to do a role play on telephone.

When I deliver the lesson, I try to scaffold verbally by eliciting more language and information from the students. When students only provide one or two words responses to the questions I put forward, I would like to ask them to explain by telling me more fully since I want to give students the chance to speak more and advance their language skills (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2013). For example, when we talk about email expressions, I notice that some students were murmuring and I guessed that they may be familiar with the email expressions I provided, I encouraged them to speak loudly

and explain it to the whole class and then I added on something they missed. When we discussed how alphabet letter can be heard incorrectly on phone, I gave students opportunities to share their own stories. In addition, since this class has a quite large number of students, sometimes it is difficult to support each student during an activity. Therefore, I scaffold procedurally by partnering or grouping students for every activity, so the students who have more experience can assist those who have less experience. Just like Vygotsky's (1978) notion of the zone of proximal development (ZDP), by which he put forward that a more experienced peer can offer support when the task is beyond a learner's current ability and later on, this learner can independently tackle the same or similar problems. Furthermore, if students really could not catch up with other students and have difficulty finishing tasks or have further questions, I would definitely give them one-on-one teaching, coaching, and modeling (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2013).

#### Content and Language

This lesson contains two topics: one is email and the other is telephone English which is closely related to students' daily life. Since some students are going to pursue further education and some want to find a job in the United States, it is necessary for students to know some useful expressions that can be used in formal emails when they communicate with their professor in school or supervisor in workplace. The email expressions that I choose are very useful and also common to see. Therefore, when they see those expressions, they know their meaning. When they write emails to other people, they can use them. In order to detect if they really bear them in mind, I gave them a task by asking them to write an email by using the expressions. I told them it is not necessary to actually write on paper and they are allowed to tell their partner what they would write since I want students to grasp every possible opportunity to communicate

with each other.

From time to time, students need to communicate with the bank, water service or hospital through phone. It is unavoidable to make phone calls and it is really scary to do that for non-native speakers since they could not see the other person's face and moving lips. My intention is to help students to reduce anxiety when they talk on the phone. I shared some tips and made students do a role play so they can practice those common situations. Therefore, if they meet similar topics in future, they will be less stressed and more comfortable to deal with that.

#### Texts and Tools

Developing background knowledge and teaching key vocabulary are two effective ways to increase comprehension and achievement (Biemiller, 2005; Echevarria, Short, & Powers, 2006; Stahl & Nagy, 2006). Since the students are all adult and they all use emails and phones, I do not need to build too much background. I just started the topic by asking the question "are you nervous when you speak on telephone in English" to build a common ground so they could be interested in this topic. After introducing the topics briefly, I gave them the handouts I prepared. For their better learning and understanding, I also include vocabulary teaching, for example, "cc" in email.

In addition to building background knowledge, it is also important for teachers to know students' prior knowledge. All students have prior knowledge gained from schooling and life experiences, and teachers can informally assess what students know and can do. Therefore, teachers can make explicit connections between new learning and the material, vocabulary, and concepts previously covered in class. For example, I asked students to write an email which is about asking for leave to my mentor teacher. The reason why they will be absent is that they will have a conference next week. Students are supposed to use simple future tense which we already learned in this email.

The four scenarios I prepared for students are about rescheduling the appointment with a dentist, looking for customers, kid's issue and bank fraud. All of the situations are very common in daily life especially kid's issue since almost all the students have kids and from my observation, one of the most popular topics in this class is about their kids. Therefore, these topics are very suitable for students to practice no matter where they come from and what level of their English language proficiency.

#### Practice and Assessment

The warm-up activity gives students a chance to practice a fixed sentence structure which is "I have never" and they are supposed to come up with something that they have never done in their life. Students should also listen carefully and consider if they have done the action the speaker said. This process promotes their higher order thinking. Since this sentence uses perfect present tense, when I circulate the class, I get to know their prior knowledge of this grammatical point by observing if they use past participle after "I have never".

The email writing activity allows students to practice the expressions they just learned and at the same time, they also have a chance to communicate with their partner and correct each other's mistakes. When I circulate the class, I can help the groups who are in trouble and give a mini lesson to them. The telephone activity gives students an opportunity to deal with some real-life problems through telephone. If time permits, I should set a model with my mentor teacher and after they finish practicing, I can ask a group to present their conversation to the whole class, then the rest of the students can give comments to this conversation to see where the improvements lie.

#### Micro-Analysis

This micro-analysis is based on my second videoed lesson at my practicum site, Belmont Methodist Church ESL program. I will analyze this lesson from the following

perspectives: my interactions with students, students' thinking and interactions with one another, and the improvements I could make next time.

#### Lesson overview

The topic of this lesson is comparative and superlative. The language objective is to let students know when to use comparative and superlative and how to make an adjective become its comparative and superlative form. The content objective is to make students be able to make comparisons in daily life. I started this lesson by asking them a few questions which use either comparatives or superlatives to drag their memory and elicit the topic, then I explain the rules of making adjectives become their comparative and superlative forms. Afterwards, students were asked to do close ended and semi open-ended exercises to practice those rules in small groups and at last, they have an opportunity to further practice it by interviewing each other. The second and the last task are much more authentic than the first one and they are also more challenging.

#### Teacher-student interactions

At the beginning, I asked students some questions which contain comparatives and superlatives. I think by doing this, I could elicit their interests of the topic and also activate the class's background knowledge. In addition, when we interact together, it fosters a supportive environment and builds teacher-student rapport which will benefit on my later teaching (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2013). Afterwards, I gave instructions about when we should use comparative and superlative as well as the rules of making adjectives become their comparative and superlative forms. During this period of time, I asked students if it made sense and if they had any questions. When students were asked to complete the exercises, I did circulation all the time to see if they need support so I could offer help. For example, I found there was one student who had trouble

counting syllables of words and I gave him a mini-lesson. I also had some small chats with students to bring us closer together, for example, students were supposed to fill in the blank “the most interesting place I have ever been to is\_\_”, I showed great interest of their answers and they were very willing to tell me more details and the whole group then began to share stories. I think it can help students develop interactional competence. After students finished the tasks, I called them to share their answers with the whole class and I nodded and said “good” to their contributions as well as asked the other students if they agreed with him or her. However, I should have elicited more responses from students by saying “can you elaborate your answer” or “what else?” instead of just saying “yes” or “no”. I will discuss it further in the third part. During the whole class, I tried to scaffold and also gave their opportunities to have collaborative meaning-making. I also gave them more freedom in the task by offering semi open-ended tasks and open-ended tasks so they can make more progress in gaining new skills and content knowledge (Daniel, S. M., Martin-Beltrán, M., Peercy, M. M., & Silverman, R. ,2016).

#### Student-student interactions

It is easy for teachers to do all the talking, but students are the ones who need opportunities to practice their oral English. Therefore, teachers are not supposed to do many talking to students but they should provide opportunities for students to talk to each other by having discussions and sharing ideas (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2013). Researchers also have found that English learners are more engaged when working with partners or in small groups than they are in whole class instruction or doing work individually (Brooks&Thurston). Therefore, I asked students to work in pairs or groups all the time when they did exercises. During the group works, I found students support each other. For example, I asked students to work in pairs to complete the second exercise. From the transcript, we can see that at first, Carmen was confused and she

said “I do not know...”, but her partner Frida and another girl in that table were happy to help her understand this exercise. I should take the blame here since I did not do a modeling for them. In addition, since both Frida and Carmen speaks Spanish (one comes from Mexico and the other comes from Spain), they can communicate by Spanish when there are confusions and actually, I have found Frida explain things in Spanish for Carmen a lot of times, so good group configuration also can help students attain maximize achievement.

When students did the second and last exercise, they took many efforts to leverage their prior knowledge and build upon their ideas and other’s ideas, such as I mentioned before, when they were asked to say the most interesting place they have been to, they were willing to say more details. When they compare their hometown and Nashville, I heard many interesting conversations and the most important thing is, they were trying to use comparative and superlative in the conversation. Therefore, I think they meet the goals of the language objectives and content objectives.

#### Teacher’s improvement

Based on the valuable suggestions given by Shannon and my mentor teacher, Frank, there are some improvements I could make in my future teaching. The first one is about eliciting more responses from students which I mentioned above in teacher-student interactions. In the second exercise, the last conversation is: What is \_\_\_\_\_ (big) problem in the world today and the other should reply: The \_\_\_is \_\_\_\_\_. When I called a student, his answer was “the biggest problem in the world today is poverty. From his answer, I knew that he understood this grammatical point, so I just said that I agreed with you and move on to the next activity. However, if time permits, I should make extension of this conversation since all my students are adults and they are able to discuss this relatively complex question. I should have asked that students why he

thought that poverty was the biggest problem in the world and also asked for more responses from other students in the class.

In addition, I mentioned a kind of fruit “durian” in the fourth conversation, but I had not considered that many students did not know this fruit and it took some time for them to wonder what it is. In Carmen and Frida’ group, I heard there were some uncertainties about this fruit and they wasted some time discussing that, then they have not gotten the chance to finish the last conversation. Therefore, I should avoid this kind of mistake next time and dig into their background knowledge.

What is more, it seems that some students in this class have already known how to use comparative and superlative, so next time I should try to teach them some new knowledge. In fact, I have made the same mistake in my first teaching since I did not know their prior knowledge very well. This class has more than forty students from more than ten countries and it is not easy to explore their prior knowledge. I have always used this as an excuse but in fact there are ways to solve this problem. As my peers suggested, I can design some questionnaires for them or simply let them raise hands to see if they have prior knowledge regards to the target topics.

Furthermore, since almost all the students are older than me, sometimes I feel unconfident to teach them and I always have concerns such as if they are willing to listen to my lesson and what if they think it is a waste of time for them. Therefore, I acted very unprofessional during my lecture. It is also part of the reason that when I teach, I do not deem myself as their teacher subconsciously and acted very childish. Maybe deep inside of me, I was thinking if I did not act like a real teacher, they would forgive my mistakes when I taught them.

I also do not have a good control of time, to be specific, when students do exercises or activities, I could hardly find a perfect time to stop the activity. The English

proficiencies of them are varied, so some finish tasks quicker than others and once they finish, I notice they just chat with each other. It does not matter in this class because the purpose of this program to improve their oral English proficiency and chatting is a great way for their improvements, however, it may be a big problem in my future teaching so I am trying to figure it out.

#### Final reflection and implications

This semester I have completed the practicum course and have three video-taped lessons. Based on the practicum visits and my own teaching experience, I have some reflections and implications. I will talk about the learning goals that I have set for myself, and what I do to achieve these goals, and how I adjust my instructions to meet those goals over the past semester firstly, and then I will put forward with some questions about educating multilingual students.

I have set some learning goals for myself to improve instructions for ELLs based on the SIOP checklist (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2013). In terms of lesson preparation, content objectives and language objectives must be carefully considered and defined. I have made a mistake at the beginning of this semester: I started to think of the content and language objectives after I designed the whole lesson plan which made the lesson seem very unconnected. I realized that I needed to figure out what I wanted my students to learn through the lesson before I designed the activities. Therefore, when I designed the second and third lessons, I firstly defined the objectives and then kept sticking to them which made the lessons more coherence.

In addition, the language and content knowledge should be appropriate for age and education background level of students. I ignored students' prior knowledge and background information when I did my first lesson. The topic was about writing formal emails and communicating through telephone. I did not realize that many of my

students did business here and they were pretty familiar with those skills. Therefore, in the following two lessons I incorporated the grammar knowledge that I think most of them would have trouble with, but it turned out not to be the truth, so I still need to figure out how to avoid this situation.

I should design meaningful activities that integrate lesson concepts with language practice opportunities for reading, writing, listening and speaking. Just as I mentioned before, the main learning purpose of these students is to improve their oral English proficiency, so I come up with many activities such as role play and interview for students to improve their communication competence. Even if I just want them to fill in some blanks, I still expect them to do it in pairs or groups so they can speak to each other.

As for building background, the language and content concepts should be explicitly linked to students' background experiences. Though this semester's practicum, I formed an understanding of how students learning English are best served. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy has influenced me the most. Cummins argues that educators have failed to acknowledge that the difficulties faced by many students is that we do not build sufficiently on the wide variety of culturally specific literacy events that students experience in their homes and communities since we cannot just assume that all students share common characteristics. There is an instructional approach which is teaching to and through students' personal and cultural strengths, their intellectual capabilities, and their prior accomplishments (Gay, 2010). Although students' backgrounds are varied since there are sixteen countries represented in this class, I always try my best to tap into their background knowledge by asking questions such as which place is colder now, Mexico City or Tokyo and I also encourage them to talk about their own countries. For example, I asked them to compare their hometown with

Nashville when I instructed them about comparative and superlative. Furthermore, I should also keep reminding them of their past learning experience so they can connect them to new concepts. When I teach them how to use present perfect tense, I made a connection between the past simple tense that they learned earlier and the present perfect tense, which made the concept more comprehensible.

Key vocabulary should be emphasized as well since it is critical for students' academic development and achievement. In fact, I observed one female student in this class to write an analysis project for another course. Based on my observation, her limited vocabulary hinders her ability to fully express her ideas in speaking and writing. She has a high reading proficiency however, most of the time she does not know what is the meaning of those words. Unfortunately, I fail to emphasize key vocabulary over the whole semester. If I can be given the second chance, I will definitely include key ideas in my lesson. For example, when I instruct comparative and superlative, I can teach students some higher level adjectives and then encourage them to use in the activities. In the future, I can also use the activities such as word wall, concept definition map, four corners vocabulary charts that SIOP provide to teach vocabulary.

As for comprehensible input, I should use various techniques to make content concepts clear. In my first lesson, when I did the warm-up and role play, I did not give a very clear instruction since I was very nervous and I thought students knew how to do it. It comes back to students' prior knowledge again and I find I always make such mistakes. What I should do is to scaffold students by modeling this game with Frank or you or some student to make it easy for everyone to understand.

To promote students' higher order thinking is also an important job for teachers. What I should do is to provide some authentic materials and create authentic activities and allow students to respond authentically. In this process, students can really engage

in the learning actively instead of just sitting idly and taking in the information. Since my students are adult learners, they are already equipped with higher order thinking skills. What I want to do is to encourage them to think from different perspectives and express it in English.

I should allow frequent opportunities for interaction and discussion between teacher and student and among students. I think I have already done so much about interactions among students. What I need to think about is how to promote teacher-student interactions since the heart of the educational process is the interactions that occur between teachers and students. These interactions are major determinants of the quality of education children receive (U.S. Civil Rights Commission, 1973). Every time after students answer questions, I need to ask students to elaborate their answers if there is a need instead of just saying yes or no.

During my practicum, I have some emerging questions about educating multilingual students. The first one is about textbook. In my practicum classroom, there is no textbook and my mentor teacher, Frank can always come up with something to teach students and I am very impressed. I remembered some researcher once said something like “a good teacher should not use textbook”. In my own school experience, I have never met teacher that does not use textbooks. Therefore, when it comes to educating multilingual students, I am very curious about how much should teachers rely on textbooks. Another question is whether or not should we set the same academic standards to ELLs and non-ELLs. My answer was yes before today, however, I am not sure for now. My friend who is an immigrant told me that she knew some immigrants who came to US when they were 10 or 11 years old and their English proficiency is very limited. They finally chose to drop out of school because they felt so stressed and they could not catch up with other students. Therefore, I am wondering about should

teachers lower the expectation for ELLs?

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