CAPSTONE PORTFORLIO

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Abstract

This portfolio is a collection of artifacts, experience, and reflection I have during the two-year learning at Peabody College, Vanderbilt University. The paper consists of three parts. First, I introduce my teaching philosophy which highlights teachers' caring for learners, constructivist learning, strategic scaffolding, and influence of L1 on L2 acquisition. With the guidance of EFL standards, I provide six artifacts as supportive evidence to demonstrate my understanding of every TESOL domain in four professional knowledge areas: the learner, the learning contexts, curriculum, and assessment. Furthermore, reflecting upon all the work I did, I explain how I applied theories to my practical teaching. The last section elaborates on the challenges I might encounter in my future teaching context and possible solutions to these problems. I also discuss how to continue growing my professional skills and bring my teaching philosophy to life in my teaching practices.

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Teaching Philosophy

With the rapid growth of the EFL[1] student population around the world, more language teachers are needed than in the past. However, teaching, especially second language teaching, is not an easy job. EFL teachers need to receive training and preparation in order to work effectively with students before starting their teaching careers. They will also inevitably face multiple challenges that are unexpected in a real-life classroom because of various factors related to students, parents, communities, curriculum, their own teaching strategies and styles, etc. In this case, it is important for EFL teachers to form their own guiding principles on teaching so that they will not be lost in the journey as a teacher. By working with professors, colleagues at Peabody College, and the elementary ELL students during my practicum, I came to realize that to be a quality EFL teacher, I should learn about students' backgrounds and language demands, and to use effective instructional techniques to stimulate students' passion for language acquisition and improve in communicative competences. In the following sections, I will explain the idea specifically from four aspects: caring for learners, constructivist learning, scaffolding, and the importance of L1 in L2 acquisition.

Caring for Learners

Building a caring relationship with students is one thing that educators agree is essential in student educational experiences. Gay (2010, p.48) defined "caring for" as "active engagement in doing something to positively affect it", which specifically, is manifested in the form of teacher attitudes, expectations, and behaviors about students' human value, intellectual capability, and performance responsibilities. This aligns with personal values and experiences. As an EFL teacher

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[1] EFL is learning English in a non-English-speaking country while ESL in an English-speaking country. I used them both in the capstone, "EFL" for my philosophy and reflection parts in terms of my future context, and a broader title "ELL" instead of "ESL" for the PKA part.

candidate, the first consideration I wish to know is who my students are in my future teaching context. Although ELL students in China are not as culturally and linguistically diverse as those in the U.S., they differ in life experiences, values, home environment, and socioeconomic status. Learning about student interests, respecting their perspectives, holding high expectations for them, and asking for feedback is necessary to build connections with learners, especially those from minority groups who share different native languages than Mandarin Chinese. Furthermore, knowing students' learning needs, both academically and socially, is important as well. Students in the same class are typically at different levels of English proficiency. Therefore, teachers need to use feasible teaching methods and instructional strategies to accommodate the various needs of these learners. Additionally, considering their personal life goals, teachers need not only to provide academic supports but also shows empathy for emotional support.

Constructivism

Windschitl (1999) pointed out that a growing number of teachers are embracing constructivist teaching. It has been another crucial theory that educators need to understand in order to foster critical thinking and independent learners. Windschitl (1999) also elucidated the fundamental ideas of constructivist learning from two aspects. First, students' background knowledge profoundly affects how they explain the subject matter. This statement underscores the importance of student funds of knowledge in teaching and learning. The supporting evidence can be found in Moll's (1992) qualitative research. Findings represented that, by capitalizing on household and community resources, educators could organize classroom instruction that far exceeds in quality of the rote-like instruction learners accept in schools. Similarly, Jimenez et al. (2009) pointed out that one of the methods of building productive relationships with students is to embrace and implement transnational and community literacies. Unquestionably, students'

previous knowledge is a resource that I will absolutely try to incorporate into my instruction practices. It cannot be obtained without assistance from and collaboration with student parents and local communities. This approach is beneficial but, unfortunately, can easily be ignored by some EFL teachers. One explanation might be that these teachers are more likely to "teach to the test" under tremendous pressure instead of bringing diversity into classrooms and spending time recording and creating log files for the students to develop a deeper relationship with them.

Secondly, constructivism is premised on the belief that applying knowledge to solve authentic problems and engaging in "sense-making" dialogue allow students to learn most effectively (Windschitl,1999). Some principles of the Principled Communicative Approach (PCA), a revised term of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the 21st century proposed by Dörnyei (2010), echo the idea to some degree. According to Dörnyei, for example, PCA should be meaning-focused and include controlled activities to promote the L2 skills in meaningful communication. Moreover, it should offer learners extensive exposure to L2 to improve implicit learning mechanisms and multiple opportunities to participate in genuine L2 interaction. The principles of both constructivism and CLT emphasize authentic input and meaningful interaction in communicative situations. Essentially, with funds of knowledge as a foundation, through practice and experience of the increasingly expansive range of communicative contexts and events, learners gradually construct knowledge with new things and improve their communicative competence (Savignon, 2001). Classroom applications of constructivism can be a variety of activities such as mind mapping and group study, where I will work as a facilitator while students experience and work collaboratively to solve the problems.

Scaffolding

According to Hammond & Gibbons (2005), scaffolding, as a metaphor term, has been commonly used in various educational contexts. Many researchers such as those from the

University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) and the Multicultural Programs Unit showed interest in investigating scaffolding in effective pedagogical practices. In this case, Hammond & Gibbons (2005) proposed a network model of scaffolding that gives clear insights into lesson planning. This model of scaffolding was presented at both macro and micro levels. In terms of the macro designed-in level, except for students' prior knowledge and language demands, which are described earlier, the model highlights the role of task selection and sequencing in teaching. Undoubtedly, careful planning enables students to move progressively towards the understanding of complicated concepts. Moreover, multimedia tools can be used to provide audio and visual aids so that students can have various access to similar information. Mediational texts and artifacts are also helpful for mediating student learning. Besides, explicit instruction of program and unit goals is necessary for a class. By discussing and reflecting on specific tasks and what they have learned, students are able to increase their metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness. At the micro-level, teachers scaffold student learning by recapping, recasting, appropriating, and eliciting spontaneously. The message exchanges and interactions that occur among them provide students with opportunities for facing and solving new learning challenges.

The WIDA standards (2012) describes "scaffold" as an intentional act for teachers to bridge the gaps between students' already acquired knowledge and new skills. However, because of students' different English proficiency levels, EFL teachers often need to differentiate instruction and assessments to make the content area more comprehensible and challenging for the whole class. Thus, in planning lessons, I would differentiate learning objectives, classroom materials, and assessments to support individuals who struggle with content areas.

L1 in L2 Acquisition

EFL teachers should also be aware of the importance of students' native languages in learning English. First, students can improve their strategic reading, translation, and engagement through translation activities, which can help to improve their English reading comprehension. During the activities, students are pushed to recognize and discuss texts' vocabulary, syntax, semantics, and grammar (Goodwin & Jiménez,2015). When translating a certain text, students need to do an intensive reading, which indicates that students have to figure out each word's meanings, reorganize the order of the words and sentences, and make proper word choices. All of these activities are beneficial for students to have a better understanding of English texts. Second, Lewis et al. (2012) claimed, in bilingual classrooms, home languages can be used as a bridge to learn complex concepts or to follow teachers' instruction, especially for children who are struggling to assimilate content and engage in the process of learning. Since I plan to teach elementary students in the future, I can envision how I will use both English and Chinese in my class. I might explain complicated concepts and instructions in Chinese to make sure students truly understand class contents.

In addition to L1, the second language learning process is also influenced by other factors. For example, sociocultural variables such as exposure to quality input, interaction opportunities, provision of quality education, autonomy, and independent activities will affect English learning (Kim, 2011). Compared with EFL students, ESL students who learn English in an English-speaking country have more opportunities to interact with native speakers and receive better instructions. Thus, they are more likely to make greater progress in learning English. To increase my students' language proficiency and cultural awareness, I will expose them to authentic materials as much as possible. Besides, psychological factors, such as positive feedback and self-

efficacy, also help facilitate student process of English learning (Ozfidan et al., 2014). The encouragement from teachers or peers can help children build confidence in L2 acquisition. Moreover, if students want to achieve a particular goal, for instance, pursuing higher education in an English-speaking country, they will also gain significant motivation to learn English. To sum up, a variety of factors, including sociocultural factors, learning environment, and learners' attitudes, contribute to second language acquisition.

In conclusion, my guiding principles on teaching are to show caring for my students by learning about their culture, language, personal interests, and needs, to incorporate student funds of knowledge into teaching, to scaffold student learning strategically, and to apply students L1 to L2 acquisition. Based on these principles, in my future teaching context, I will try my best to create a student-oriented, warm, and caring EFL classroom where students can engage in various meaningful activities and progressively improve their L2 communicative competencies.

Artifact Analysis

In the following sections, I will demonstrate my understanding of each domain in EFL professional knowledge areas with my experiences and artifacts at Vanderbilt over the past two years. At the same time, I will specifically explain how these facts reflect my philosophy of teaching.

Professional Knowledge Area 1: Learner

English Language Learners (ELL) are different in many ways such as native language, culture, language proficiency, goals, and so forth. These contextual variables are essential to incorporate into instruction techniques, curriculum design, lesson organization, and supporting materials. Like Brown (2007) states, "Even if you could somehow pack a suitcase full of the most current teaching resources, you would still have to face the question of who your learners are,

where they are learning, and why they are learning", no matter how many resources teachers have, they might still need to know learners' variables and learning needs in order to be qualified for teaching.

TESOL Domain 4: Identity and Context

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

Basically, this domain highlights the contribution of student identity and surrounding communities to learning. In other words, it is important for teachers to use resources from local communities and student backgrounds in their instructional practices. I will show my understanding of this domain through two projects from the course EDUC 6520-02 Foundations for English Language Learner Education (2019 Fall).

Artifact A

The first project, called School Investigation (See Part One in Artifact A, p.36-41), mainly focused on the influence of student identity on learning. The visit to Haywood Elementary School first gave me a glimpse of ELL students' routines in Nashville. Then after observing a typical ELL class and talking to the teacher, I had deeper insights into how to use resources students brought to class. The issues on the existing ELL program in the school also stimulated my reflection on the huge assets made by students' cultural and linguistic differences.

Haywood Elementary School, located in Turley Drive Street, Nashville, TN, serving grades Pre-K-4, had more than 700 students from over 30 countries. Most of the ELLs were Hispanic students. I spent four hours visiting the school. During the trip, I collected plenty of information

about the school's services for ELLs. It was evident that the school was devoted to increasing ELL students' exposure to English. For example, various featured extracurricular activities were provided for students, especially for ELLs, such as Chicki Booms Latin Dance Club and EL Reading Club. Moreover, ELL teachers were trying to create a caring and supportive learning environment for their students. One example could be found in my class observation. When a student translated an English word into a Spanish word, the teacher said positive words such as "Good! you can do both!", to create a welcoming environment for students' native languages. She also made a few attempts to connect students' culture and language to the class. For instance, she would encourage students to find similarities and differences between pronunciation rules of English and Spanish when teaching vocabulary.

However, the situations mentioned above just happened a few times in the class. From what I noticed, both the teacher and the students preferred not to use languages other than English in the class even though they could. This inclination was revealed from the English-only class materials, the classroom decoration with English words, and the conversations between students who share the same native language. In a word, the immersive ELL classroom allowed students to get exposed to English as much as possible while ignoring the importance of L2 in L1 acquisition. Therefore, in the school visit report, I pointed out their insufficient and ineffective practices in connecting student background knowledge to class. In the meantime, I gave some constructive suggestions for the teacher's instruction under the state's English-only policy. For example, they could build household funds of knowledge to learn more about the students and their families. They could also engage parents in after-school bilingual storytelling with their children. Though it seemed impossible, I still analyzed the possibility of creating a translanguaging classroom to bridge the gap between the teacher and the ELL students. Moreover, the school investigation

promoted me to think about the importance of learners' needs and goals. I agree that formal or informal assessments are necessary to determine students' language proficiency and learning needs. After knowing what students already have and what they want to learn, teachers can tailor the curriculum, adjust instructional strategies, and collaborate with general subject teachers more effectively.

Besides student background knowledge, the local community is another critical factor in shaping student learning. Since my previous artifact does not include substantive evidence of incorporating knowledge of community resources into planning, instructing, and assessing, to further explore this important aspect of the TESOL domain, I am including additional artifact analysis that introduces my experience in exploring different cultural communities in Nashville. It also reveals my thoughts about utilizing community literacy resources in language teaching.

In the 2019 fall semester, I had a chance to explore the local Latino community and the Chinese community in Nashville. During the field trip, I took some notes and photos of community resources such as bilingual ads and posters that could be used as supporting materials for ELL classrooms (See pictures in Artifact A, p.48). After that, I wrote an analysis paper about the significance and ways of incorporating community literacy in teaching (See Part Two in Artifact A, p.42-48). Generally, this field trip further built up my thinking of community resources increasing students' metacultural and metalinguistic awareness. Take K&S World Supermarket as an example. There was a variety of food from East Asia and Latin America. Students from other cultural and linguistic backgrounds could have access to learn about the two communities' food culture, eating habits, and lifestyle by exploring such a place. In doing so, students could recognize the cultural differences. Then they might be able to think about how to take a proper attitude toward a different culture. Thus, cultural gaps were bridged among various diverse groups in the

classroom. Moreover, I believe the local community's literacy is a good resource for teaching. For example, as I said in my analysis paper, words from billboard ads could be used in teaching vocabulary, frequent expressions, and grammatical structures. Teachers could use bilingual product descriptions on food packages as original translation materials. Through these activities, students could be aware of linguistic differences between English and their native languages. However, it should be noted that only if the community resources reflect certain groups of learners' backgrounds, can they be maximumly used as support materials for class. It is not uncommon that some teachers find it mismatching between their students' backgrounds and the local community resources they possess. In this case, this activity might not be feasible anymore.

Connection to Teaching Philosophy: My experiences in the course EDUC 6520-02 Foundations for English Language Learner Education helped me gain more insights into the importance of student identity and learning contexts. These two activities described earlier are tightly connected to my philosophy of teaching by emphasizing the importance of teachers' caring, learner's native languages, and funds of knowledge. Specifically, first, I agree with Gay's (2010) demonstration of caring, namely, active engagement in doing something to affect it positively. Teachers should actively learn about students' background knowledge and then leverage it in class to motivate their passion for learning. Second, I acknowledge the important role a student's native language plays in second language learning. For example, in this school visit, to solve the existing problems, I gave the teacher suggestions about utilizing students' first language in teaching. Finally, the second paper, Community Investigation, presented the positive effects of student knowledge from communities on teaching, which indicated the importance of contexts in shaping student learning.

TESOL Domain 4 highlights the importance of learners' identity and local communities in shaping learning. Learners' heritages, backgrounds, learning goals, attitudes, and community resources significantly impact their second language acquisition. Learners, however, can only benefit when these resources are appropriately leveraged in or out of class settings. In this case, teachers become one of the most critical components that influence students' language acquisition. Thus, in the next TESOL domain, this capstone describes how teachers can be equipped with knowledge of language and learning processes to support students' language learning.

TESOL Domain 6: Learning

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

To explain this domain specifically, with the increasing professional knowledge of language and language learning, teachers are able to identify students' levels of second language proficiency, track the progress they make every day, and then use their knowledge of language acquisition to help students reach the next level.

Artifact B

In this part, I selected a case study from the course EDUC 6530 Educational Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition as an example to explain how I used various quantitative measures to analyze an EFL student's language abilities based on the pedagogical theories of second language acquisition. All the data was collected from an online interview. After analyzing the data, I gave her a few suggestions that might help address the issues on her English learning (See Artifact B, p.49-67).

At the beginning of the report, I introduced some basic information about the EFL student, Zilin, including her educational background and language background. I also analyzed the influence of sociocultural variables on Zilin's English learning process in detail. This connects to my teaching philosophy because I agree with Kim (2011) that sociocultural elements such as exposure to quality input, interaction opportunities, provision of quality education, autonomy, and independent activities will affect English learning. Therefore, authentic language input and interaction, as well as independent learning strategies, are needed. Findings in the case study showed three main sociocultural factors that impacted Zilin's English learning. First, the pressure from standard English tests made her pay attention to test skills instead of language skills. Second, living in a non-English speaking country caused a lack of authentic language use in the second language contexts. However, I also noticed that Zilin's goal of pursuing a master's degree in Western Literature became a huge incentive to learn English. Hence, she showed a great passion and enthusiasm to improve her English language proficiency and professional skills, which embodied how a learner's goals and needs to shape his/her second language learning as described earlier in Domain 4.

In the body part of the report, to determine Zilin's English language proficiency and the issues on her English learning, I assessed her oral and written samples in four dimensions: phonology, semantics, grammar, and pragmatics skills. In this assessment, the data of Type-Token Ratio and The Mean Length of Utterance (MLU), collected from quantitative measures, laid the foundation for the analysis. As hypothesized, Zilin's English learning problems mostly resulted from few authentic language practices in speaking and writing. The study indicated, when Zilin had time to organize words, she could use diverse and rich academic language to express her opinions centered on a given topic. Nonetheless, I found that in improvisational conversations, she

made more mistakes in grammar, word selection, and frequent expressions, less diversity and spontaneity found in her language as well. Generally, findings showed that Zilin was an independent English learner who reached a higher level in writing than speaking. Then I provided some constructive suggestions for Zilin to improve her English proficiency. For example, she could do repetitive practices, make self-correction with recoding, and ask for oral corrective feedback from others to reinforce her phonological awareness. Additionally, she could try to improve the speed at organizing words and thoughts by setting a timer in language practices. It could also help her to avoid inappropriate and redundant conversations in daily conversations.

This case study represents the important roles of student learning needs and language proficiency play in teachers' instruction. This information is important for teachers to decide on applicable instructional strategies to accommodate learners' various problems. For example, in this study, I managed to identify Zilin's learning process and weaknesses in oral language skills through qualitative and quantitative methods. Then according to the data I collected, I was able to give her corresponding feedback to improve her English skills. It aligns with my belief that to teach effectively, teachers need to learn learners' learning needs and tailor instruction for them.

Besides, the case study once again proved the influence of students' native language on L2 acquisition, which obviously echoed my teaching philosophy. It was also consistent with the theory of Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis (LIH), "bilingual readers' skills in their first language (L1) predict language and literacy skills in their second language (L2) due to a common underlying proficiency (CUP) that makes conceptual knowledge, cognitive, language, and literacy skills interdependent across languages" (Cummins, 1981, 1991, 2016, cited from Emily Galloway, slide 16, 2019). Zilin unconsciously made past tense mistakes even though she knew the grammatical rules. One of the reasons might be the different language rules between Chinese and English. Since

the form of a Chinese verb never changes, it is possible that Zilin did not focus on the word transformation in English either. Consequently, sometimes she used the same word whether in the present or past tense. Apparently, Zilin's perception of the usage of the first language impacted her understandings of the second language.

Connection to Teaching Philosophy: In conclusion, the case study of Zilin's SLA presented my practice in using SLA theories and quantitative methods to understand learners' second language acquisition. It reflected my teaching philosophy that sociocultural factors, student learning needs, and student native languages significantly influence second language acquisition. Most importantly, authentic language practices in and out of class are necessary to improve learners' English language skills.

To sum up, this professional knowledge area consists of two TESOL Domains: learning, identity, and context. The main idea is that teachers should recognize the importance of learners' identity, local community literacy, funds of knowledge resources in teaching. Drawing on these resources and the knowledge of students' learning experiences, teachers can improve their classroom practices. However, teachers usually find it difficult to transform theory into practice. Even though possessing those resources, teachers might still not be capable of creating a supportive learning environment for their students. Therefore, in the next professional knowledge area, I will discuss components that contribute to teachers' high-quality instruction, and how teachers can engage students in language learning with clear course objectives, appropriate class contents, consistent curriculum, and meaningful activities.

Professional Knowledge Area 2: The Learning Contexts

Learning context is another essential factor in shaping student learning, which refers to the environment in which students are learning something. It consists of classroom activities, educational content, and teachers' teaching styles.

TESOL Domain 2: Instructing

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

Specific explanation of the concept is that high-quality instruction can create a supportive environment where students are engaged in meaningful activities to accomplish specific content and language objectives. Moreover, students show their respect for each other during interactions. To demonstrate my understanding of supportive learning environment and high-quality instruction, I chose the rehearsal activity from EDUC 6540: Methods and Materials for English Language Learner Education as the supporting artifact.

Artifact C

The purpose of the rehearsal activity was to develop our skills in implementing high-quality instructional interactions. In this activity, I designed a lesson to teach a complex text and rehearsed it in my class where my colleagues were my students. Then I received helpful feedback from my professor and peers. The class materials were composed of a less plan (See Artifact C, p.68) and a visual aid (See sample PowerPoint slides, p.69-70). In this section, I am explaining how to create a supportive learning environment for students by breaking down concept barriers with scaffolding and engage them in respectful interactions throughout meaningful activities.

Productive scaffolding across the lesson. The sample online class aimed to teach second-grade ELL students to identify and distinguish facts and opinions in a complicated text. To achieve

the goal, I gave explicit instruction to help students to understand the two concepts: fact and opinion. For example, I explained the terms specifically using sample sentences. It was worth noting that the definitions and examples I used were simplified from the original complex ones. Simpler versions could help students avoid confusion about complicated and abstract concepts. Then I moved onto the next task, "Finger Game". In this task, students must judge on their own whether the given sentence was a fact or an opinion. They were supposed to show their fingers on the screen to represent their choices. The task became a little bit difficult with complex sentences and limited thinking time, which measured students' understanding of important concepts. Next, students were asked to read a text and categorize each sentence into "Fact" and "Opinion". In this step, students were required to work collaboratively to accomplish the task. By doing so, meaningful exchanges and interactions occurred among them. Finally, students were asked to write their own sentences to represent a fact and an opinion using the knowledge they have learned. As we can see, in this lesson, tasks sequence were well-managed from simple to complex. The effective scaffolding across the whole lesson enabled students to move progressively towards an understanding of complicated concepts. This rehearsal lesson can be regarded as a typical example of my philosophy of task selection and sequencing in designed-in scaffolding.

Moreover, the visual aids used in the class also display my teaching principle of using multimedia tools and graphic organizers to make class contents comprehensively. For example, I include many images of animals that are unfamiliar to students (See picture 2 on page 69). Also, I used a T-Chart to compare two concepts to make the differences more visible for learners (See picture 3 on page 70).

Engaging students in respectful interactions: Given my teaching philosophy, what stood out to me here were students' motivation and the sense-making interactions between them. In this

lesson, I designed various activities for students to accomplish individually or collaboratively. For the first "Finger Game", I received plenty of positive feedback from my colleagues. The opportunity to show their understandings using body language other than utterances helped students actively engaging in classroom activities. They were motivated to give their responses and complete tasks in different ways. Additionally, in group discussions, students were allowed to share and exchange their thoughts with other members. By doing so, students could learn how to appropriately add on or oppose others' perspectives. Thus, students came to acquire skills in negotiating ideas with others in a respectful manner from such interactions.

Connection to Teaching Philosophy. Many of my teaching principles can be found in the rehearsal activity. First, careful instructing helps students understand complex contents in more depth progressively. Task selection and sequencing play essential roles in the designed-in scaffolding. Moreover, the application of instruction techniques such as multimedia tools and graphic organizers is beneficial for students' learning. Besides, meaningful group activities help to create a friendly and instructional learning environment in which students can learn how to respect individual differences. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that language and content objectives were clearly presented to students at the beginning of the lesson, which reflects my teaching philosophy that explicit instruction of course goals is important to promote teaching effectiveness.

In conclusion, this domain describes components that an effective class should include. In a word, meaningful and purposeful activities as well as strategic scaffolding, especially appropriate task sequences, are necessary to create a supportive learning environment for learners. This professional knowledge area, however, is mainly focused on how to teach. Next, I will explain what to teach.

Professional Knowledge Area 3: Curriculum

Curriculum design or adaption is something that every EFL teacher would confront in their teaching career. Curriculum refers to academic content and lessons that are taught for specific subjects. EFL teachers need to consider the plan for instruction and content areas included in the curriculum.

TESOL Domain 1: Planning

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

To be well-prepared for their courses, EFL teachers need to make a clear plan for instruction to achieve teaching and learning objectives. Plans, however, are not fixed in practice. Instead, in order to make sure lessons meet student learning needs, teachers have to adjust their plans according to student performance in practical teaching.

Artifact D

For this domain, I selected the curriculum I designed for the ELL student in my practicum as an artifact to show how I made plans for my instruction based on student needs and how I adjusted lessons in my teaching practices (See sample lesson plans in Artifact D, p.71-72).

Preparation for determining student learning needs. During my practicum in the 2020 fall semester, for some reason, I switched the program of teaching in an elementary school in Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) to a one-on-one online tutorial program in Study Buddies Connect (SBC). Leonardo, the second-grader I worked with, was a Spanish-speaker who needed help in English speaking skills. The first thing I did was to appoint an online meeting with his mother and him to learn about the student's learning needs. During the meeting, Leo's mother described issues on Leo's English learning and her expectations for Leo in the program. Through

conversations with Leo's mother, I came to realize that Leonardo's most urgent need was to correct his mistaken English pronunciation. Then I decided that the class should focus on phonics, especially vowel sound and particular consonant sounds such as th, sh, ch. Furthermore, I did an informal diagnostic test of Leo's pronunciation ability with the help of an experienced ELL teacher in SBC. The result indicated that the student had speech articulation issues exactly on the sounds as his mother mentioned. Moreover, we found that Leo could not consistently blend sounds while he knew most of the soft vowel sounds in isolation and simple CVC sequence. Therefore, I decided that developing speaking fluency was another important part in our classes. After knowing all the problems and needs Leo had in English learning, I began to design targeted phonics lessons, concentrating on the digraphs Leo struggled with. Since it was a short-term program, I could only cover some of the content, including long vowel sounds (a, e, i, o, u) and consonant digraphs (th, ch, sh, wh, gh, ph, gr).

Plans Modification: Unsurprisingly, changes happened in my instruction plans when it came to teaching materials and techniques. In the preliminary plan, I presented pronunciation rules and arranged repetitive oral language practices. Nonetheless, it was evident in the first two lessons that the rules were too complicated and tedious for Leo to take in. Moreover, with limited English proficiency, Leonardo had difficulty in comprehending the meaning of words and texts as well as reading aloud. As a result, the first two sessions had only little production in teaching digraph "th". Fortunately, I modified my instruction plans and managed to improve my instruction in two ways. First, I tried to apply Leo's existing knowledge in class. Rather than presenting the pronunciation rules by myself, I was trying to figure out what Leo knew about the sound by asking questions such as "do you know…?" and "do you remember…?". If time permitted, I would encourage Leo to recall known words containing the sound. Sometimes I would even ask him to make up a

sentence with new words. Simultaneously, I would also give him direct oral corrective feedback if he uttered incorrect pronunciation.

Second, I replaced complex texts with simple fluency practice texts full of rhythm and smooth flaws. Images and videos aligned to the texts were also used as supporting materials to ensure Leo's comprehension of the story. Positive results from the action came out soon. I found that the time we did the Read Aloud activity was the moment Leo engaged in class most. Leo's consistent passion and interest in learning new words and sounds significantly improved my instruction's efficacy and efficiency. Moreover, it showed the advantages of using visual aids once again. To sum up, I believe that plans for curriculum should be flexible in practical teaching. Teachers need to adjust plans based on their students' performance and changing learning needs.

Connection to Teaching Philosophy: In this domain, I share my practicum experience in designing curriculum according to student learning needs. In my classes, I tried to learn the student's prior knowledge to connect class content to his life experiences, which shows my caring for the student consistent with the fundamental idea of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (Gay, 2010). Moreover, it is important to know what students want before we plan for instruction. In my classes, I applied the student's previous knowledge in teaching, which reflected the idea of constructivism that students' background knowledge profoundly affects how they explain the subject matter. Moreover, my understanding of using visual aids and oral corrective feedback in teaching and learning is also connected to one of my teaching philosophies: teachers scaffold student learning by recapping, recasting, appropriating, and eliciting contingently at the micro-level.

Planning is the starting point to design a curriculum. After building a framework and leaving flexibility for potential changes, the next is to determine the content we would like to

include. Students' learning needs and funds of knowledge play an important role in the process, which relates back to Domains 4 and 6 again. Teachers can design lessons accordingly if they identify student learning needs. Moreover, when deciding class contents, teachers need to consider how to incorporate students' prior knowledge into class contents to engage students in language learning.

TESOL Domain 7: Content

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

Curriculum content is another essential component in teaching. Contents taught in ELL classrooms are not only for communicative purposes in daily life but also for academic purposes in various subject areas. Therefore, EFL teachers need to design lessons that help achieve both language and content objectives.

Artifact E

This artifact is a complex text video that I created for the course EDUC 6540: Methods and Materials for English Language Learner Education in the 2020 fall semester (Sees Artifact E, p.73-75). The targeted audience of the video was the 5th grade ELL students. The asynchronous lesson was designed to achieve both language objectives and content objectives in social studies. At the beginning of the class, students would learn the concept of the cause-effect relationship. Then they would read a text about ice sheets melting to identify all the cause-effect relationships in the texts

using a graphic organizer. Finally, they needed to write a brief summary of the text to show the logic of the cause-effect relationship.

Teaching language that supports learning in specific content areas. The lesson contained both language and content objectives. In terms of content goals, students would be able to identify the causes and effects of ice sheets melting based on the given article. For the language objectives, students would be able to acquire the key vocabulary of ice sheets melting and cause-effect relationship. Moreover, students would be able to summarize the text logically. On the one hand, by accomplishing these objectives, students could learn critical concepts in social studies, such as global warming and sea level rising. Besides, the understanding of the cause-effect relationship could help students quickly grasp the gist and structure of a text in reading. In a word, teachers need to include academic language in their classes to help students achieve academic success. At the same time, a balance between language and content objectives is needed.

Using academic language orally and in writing: This lesson provided students with an opportunity to use graphic organizers to find the logical relationship in the text. The small group discussion enabled students to acquire and use academic vocabulary and concepts in an authentic situation. Moreover, the task that required students to write a summary of the text made it possible for them to communicate in academic writing.

Collaborative teaching: One of the feasible methods for teachers to better teach academic language is to work with subject-area teachers. By cooperating with subject-area teachers, ELL teachers can modify their vocabulary instruction according to the content covered in specific subjects. Teachers are able to build foundations of vocabulary and concepts for students, especially for those at a lower level of English proficiency than the average. In this way, the possibility for all levels of students to achieve academic success would be improved considerably.

Connection to Teaching Philosophy: The artifact highlights the authentic language practice orally and in writing, which demonstrated the main idea of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Practicing target language by interactions with others helps improve student language competencies. By practicing the academic language in speaking and writing, students will be better equipped to acquire new knowledge in various subject areas.

This professional knowledge area consists of two big domains of curriculum design: planning and content. For planning, first, EFL teachers should determine student learning needs. And then they need to prepare for the possible modifications of plans. I use my practicum experience as an artifact to demonstrate my understanding of this domain. During my practicum, I made a lot of preparation including a diagnostic test to determine the student's learning needs. However, I found my pedagogical strategies not feasible for the student. To solve the problem, I modified my primary plan and learning objectives to achieve leaner's learning goals. In terms of content, I illustrate my experience in choosing content areas and designing a complex text video for 5th grade ELL students in a course. For this domain, I emphasize the importance of appropriate and specific language and content objectives in each lesson as well as the application of academic language in teaching.

The two artifacts, however, only showed how planning and instruction were executed in my class, not the influence of assessments on planning and instruction. Therefore, in the next professional knowledge area, I will describe my practice in assessing an ELL student's reading and writing ability to explain how assessments impact planning and instruction.

Professional Knowledge Area 4: Assessment

According to Brown (2019), assessment is an ongoing process that encompasses an expansive range of methodological techniques. Every time students give responses or comments. Teachers appraise students' performance even without being aware of it.

TESOL Domain 3: Assessing

Teachers recognize the importance of and are able to gather and interpret information about learning and performance to promote the continuous intellectual and linguistic development of each learner. Teachers use knowledge of student performance to make decisions about planning and instruction "on the spot" and for the future. Teachers involve learners in determining what will be assessed and provide constructive feedback to learners, based on assessments of their learning.

Assessments, no matter formal or informal, occur almost every day in school. They are indispensable tools for teachers to identify student advantages and shortages in learning so as to decide or modify instruction plans based on the assessment results. In this domain, I used the assessment project completed in the course EDUC 3760-01: Assessment of English Language Learners as the supporting material to demonstrate my understanding of assessing (See Artifact F, p.76-85).

Artifact F

This project aimed to evaluate an ELL student's language use in a content area, specifically, English language arts. The ELL student, Alonzo, was an 11-year-old boy in 5th grade at an intermediate school in a medium-sized Midwest town. I evaluated his oral reading and writing abilities based on the samples provided by Purdue College of Education, and then I gave constructive recommendations for the teacher to improve Alonzo's language competencies.

To assess Alonzo's reading ability, I took a Running Record (See sample on page 81) to capture his reading and thinking process based on the sample video that recorded his oral reading performance. When Alonzo was reading, I took notes of the errors and self-correction that happened in his utterances. Those errors and self-correction on meaning, structure, and visual were critical references to analyze the student's strengths and weaknesses in oral reading. Next, I assessed his reading ability from five aspects according to the benchmarking rubric for text reading levels and the running record's findings. The result indicated that Alonzo got a "2" out of "5" on the Fix-up Strategy, a "4" on Story Structure/Retelling, Text Interpretation as well as Fluency, and a 3 on Connection to Personal Experiences and Prior Knowledge. Generally, Alonzo scored 17 out of 20 points, which implied that he reached a high level of oral reading. However, according to the evaluation results, Alonzo lacked self-correction skills. At the end of the assessment analysis, I gave some suggestions for Alonzo. For example, he could collect the misreads made in oral speaking and review frequently. Besides, he could also record when he is reading aloud to reinforce self-monitoring. This assessment practice shows that running record is a useful assessment tool to systematically evaluate a student's oral reading and identify the error patterns. It could also assess the appropriateness of the reading materials for a particular level of students.

Additionally, I assessed Alonzo's writing sample based on the 6-Trait Scoring Rubric (See sample rubric on pages 84-85). Generally, Alonzo received an overall 4 in his writing, consisting of a "4" on Ideas, a "5" on Organization, a "3" on Conventions, a "3" on Voice, and a "4" on Word Choice and Sentence Fluency. The data showed that Alonzo needed to improve his understanding of conventions in writing, such as spelling and grammar. According to Escamilla & Coady (2001), Spanish writers must control rules around the use of accents, tildes, and the dieresis, while none of them exist in English. Thus, it possible for a Spanish speaker to make mistakes in these

conventions when using English. For example, since "h" does not make a sound in Spanish, Spanish speakers probably misspell words with "h", just like Alonzo spelled "should" as "sould". In a word, all the information revealed the necessity to increase Alonzo's metalinguistic awareness. First, explicit instruction was needed. The teacher could design phonics lessons to improve Alonzo's English pronunciation. Moreover, the teacher could collect and explain pronunciation and grammar rules that Spanish speakers usually make mistakes with to reinforce their understanding of English. To improve an essay's organizational structure, Alonzo could learn to write an outline before writing and use visual maps or graphic organizers to guide thinking. Besides, peer and self-evaluation were also important. The teacher should give time for students to formulate ideas and feedback to polish their languages. From my perspective, the 6-Trait Scoring Rubric is a useful writing assessment tool that includes all the traits a good writing needs and clarifies each standard in multiple dimensions.

        Connection to Teaching Philosophy: In this TESOL domain, I describe specific steps and methods to assess an ELL student's English speaking and writing skills based on a case study. First, I gathered and interpreted the data of Alonzo's language use based on a running record and the 6-Trait Scoring Rubric. Consistent with each standard in the rubric, I gave him specific scores in both oral reading and writing ability. Then I utilized the knowledge of the student's performance to make instructional decisions and provide constructive feedback. In this assessment practice, the effect of student learning needs on teachers' decision-making is exhibited. Only if we know what students already have and still lack can we make feasible instruction plans for future teaching. Various assessments, whether formal or informal, are great resources of valuable information about student learning. On the other hand, teachers need to consider how they can observe and record students' performance effectively. What measurement they can take? What kind of

assessments and strategies do they decide to use in teaching? Finally, it should be noted that limitations existed in this project. Although this project explained the value of student performance in teachers' decision-making, it did not show how it looks like in practical teaching. Since Alonzo was not my student, I could not either involve him in determining what was assessed or track the progress the adjusted instruction brings to. This is what I will focus on in my future teaching contexts.

<div align="center">**Application to Practice**</div>

TESOL Domain 8: Commitment and Professionalism

Teachers continue to grow in their understanding of the relationship of second language teaching and learning to the community of English language teaching professionals, the broader teaching community, and communities at large, and use these understandings to inform and change themselves and these communities.

In the section above, I shed light on professional knowledge of ELL and highlight examples that echo my philosophy of teaching. I am dedicated to showing my caring for culturally and linguistically diverse students, creating and sustaining a constructivist classroom by leveraging students' prior knowledge, designing meaningful and interactive activities, and using instructional scaffolding strategies in my teaching practices. The outcomes, however, will not always be what I anticipated. I faced numerous challenges in applying my teaching principles to practice.

Lack of opportunities to use translation in teaching. As I spotlighted in the philosophy section, ELL students' first language has a great impact on their second language acquisition. Consistent with Goodwin & Jiménez (2016) opinion, translation is an excellent method to increase students' linguistic awareness and support English reading comprehension. Thus, quality instruction is needed to help students recognize translation as a cognitive and linguistic resource

useful for reading and comprehending English texts. Nonetheless, although I was able to modify the guiding reading texts for students in my practicum, I failed to design and utilize collaborative translation activities in my class because of the limited number of students. As a result, I could not see to what extent students could obtain positive effects from a translation such as eliciting students' rich interaction and metacognitive thinking. In my future work, I plan to be more mindful of opportunities in which translation and translanguaging might be incorporated into my practices such as teaching vocabulary and translation workshops. For example, I can provide texts both in Chinese and English and then remove the text's target vocabulary to have students fill in the blanks. Moreover, in the workshops of translating texts or songs, I can observe whether rich exchanges and interactions in both languages occur in groups.

Lack of creativity in designing classroom activities. Another problem I encountered in my practices was that I always struggled to provide creative activities that could not only achieve language and content objectives but also help improve students' engagement in learning. From my perspective, classroom activities should be entertaining so that students would not suffer from the pressure of accomplishing tasks. However, making a balance between purposes and enjoyment of activities is a big question to think about. If too much emphasis is put on creativity and entertainment, students will undoubtedly be distracted from tasks in an activity. To avoid such distractions from learning goals, I need to make sure every activity purposefully fulfills a segment of the overall lesson objectives, and more importantly, clarify these objectives to students at the very beginning of the task. Furthermore, as a facilitator and monitor, I need to keep track of tasks when students are using digital devices in class. It is necessary to keep them from overusing multimedia tools.

Beyond the challenges described above, there are more considerations in terms of my future teaching contexts.

Large class sizes. Since I am interested in teaching English in elementary school when I go back to China after graduating from Peabody School, my targeted students will be a large classroom that generally can accommodate 40 to 50 EFL students. A small classroom can help create an intimate and caring environment in which every student could get attention from teachers and feel valued. On the contrary, in a large classroom, teachers are not likely to focus on every child in the limited teaching time, which could lead to students' disengagement in second language learning. The inequality of including activities such as answering questions could possibly cause students' avoidance of participating in class because of multiple reasons, such as limited English proficiency, feelings of ignorance from teachers, or personalities. I believe collaboration could help solve the problem. Teachers need to provide opportunities for students to work together. In group discussions, everyone's voice can be heard. Those who struggle to follow teachers' instructions because of limited English proficiency could receive help from students with a higher level.

Selection of teaching materials. As an essential general subject for EFL students in China, English has required textbooks that cover many languages and content objectives. Typically, students would have tremendous pressure from many forms of tests, so it is inevitable for teachers to pay attention to students' academic language practice. In this case, whether students have sufficient exposure to authentic language is one of my concerns. Authentic materials, including texts, tapes, and videos, give real-life examples of language used in various situations. A teacher should be careful when selecting supporting materials that are both authentic and appropriate for students' levels. Therefore, combining audiovisual media and digital tools with traditional print is

something I will explore in my future teaching context. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, local community literacy is another vital resource for teaching and learning. For example, in my future context, English can be found everywhere as a lingua franca. There are large amounts of English advertising slogans for various products and English broadcasts at all subway lines. The rich resources can be useful for developing students' literacy and learning skills.

Professional Development. To foster my growth as an EFL teacher and move my teaching philosophy forward, collaboration with students, parents, colleagues, schools, and communities is necessary. For example, teacher workshops can help improve teaching quality and effectiveness. By sharing teaching experiences, analyzing teaching programs, discussing potential strengths and weaknesses of teachers' pedagogical practices, and coming up with possible solutions, teachers can develop practical and concrete teaching strategies. Additionally, I will try to build two-way communication with parents to encourage parental involvement in children's education. Information collected from parents through interviews, home visits, and parent-teacher conferences can also give me an insight into students' learning needs so as to improve my instruction. School policies also have an influence on teachers' instruction. If necessary, I will negotiate with administrations to adjust policies or ask for equipment. Finally, it is important to build a reciprocal relationship with students, which references my teaching philosophy. If I show caring and kindness to students, students will more likely feel be valued and encouraged. By doing so, more feedback occurs in class, helping me better meet student learning goals and needs.

In conclusion, as an EFL teacher candidate, I will encounter multiple challenges in my future work. To help my students achieve success in language acquisition, I will keep life-learning to develop my professional knowledge in the four areas: learners, teaching context, curriculum,

and assessment. I will also apply my teaching philosophy to practices and move it forward through

professional development.

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Artifact A: School Investigation and Community Literacy Investigation in Nashville

Part One

School Investigation

Introduction: Haywood Elementary School, located in Turley Drive Street, Nashville, TN, serving grades Pre-K-4, has more than 700 students from over 30 countries. 65% of the students in this school are Hispanic, while 10% are white and 16% are Asian, which indicates that students in this school are mainly English language learners. According to the interview with the first-grade teacher in the school on November 1, 2019, the number and the demographics of students are consistently changing due to the U.S. government policies. In recent years, Spanish-speaking students are dramatically increasing and there is even a whole class speaking Spanish. The school has 11 ELL teachers in total and several of them can speak Spanish. Besides, there is also a full-time Spanish translator, who usually translates for parents who do not speak English. Haywood Elementary School devotes to educating children in diverse, multicultural environment and preparing them for higher education. In order to achieve the goal, this school provides a variety of featured extracurricular activities for students, especially for ELLs, such as Chicki Booms Latin Dance Club and EL Reading Club. Moreover, the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) team in this school also define and help students who need additional assistance and supports. With the help of the team, limited English Proficient students (LEP) are able to improve their English skills.

Interview and Class Observation: When it comes to the language program used in the school, the teacher said that ELLs and native English speakers are educated together for most of the day. However, ELLs will be taken out of their standard curriculum classroom to take a one-hour language class every day. In this program, ELLs usually spend 30 minutes on computers and another 30 minutes in a teacher-guiding class. During the class observation, I found that ELLs in

the class were usually divided into two groups. The first group was listening to English songs, repeating after the tape and watching English cartoons on computers, while the other was learning English with a teacher. However, neither the teacher nor the students use languages except for English in the class. One of the reasons might be the diversity of students' native language. Although most students' L1 is Spanish, other languages exist in the class. It would be challenging for the teacher to incorporate various languages to her instruction during such a limited time. Another possible reason is that to provide more authentic language exposure for ELL students, the teacher tried to use students' native language as little as possible. According to de Jong (2011), in multilingual settings, additive bilingual programs can help increase minority language status in classroom and meet English language learners' goals of building and maintaining oral and literacy skills in their native language. Obviously, Haywood Elementary school faces challenges in improving linguistic equity with its pull-out ELL program. In this case, I was wondering if there would be any changes in the ELL student service program. It was noteworthy that the teacher told me that these students are inclined to speak English in school, even with friends who share the same culture and language with them. They would never communicate with their classmates in their first language, which was the same with what I have observed in the class. For example, when someone spoke a Spanish word intentionally or unintentionally, nobody, except for the teacher would give a response to it.

For bilingual educators, it is critical to consider ways of breaking down barriers of language separation and to leverage students home language in their instruction. In bilingual classroom, "translanguaging tries to draw on all the linguistic resources of the child to maximize understanding and achievement" (Lewis et al. 2014, p655). Thus, in this class observation, I was wondering how the teacher inform translanguaging pedagogy in their classroom. However, sadly,

the teacher in Haywood Elementary School would not use students' first language in class even as she could. Lewis et al. (2014) argued that translanguaging may not be effective when children in the early stages of language learning. Then another question is that how can students who already have a reasonably good grasp of both languages use their home language to think, reflect and extend their inner speech in such a situation? It is hard to answer because translanguaging practices in this classroom would never happen. ELLs students are not encouraged to learn second language by using skills acquired through their first language.

With regard to class materials, there is no mandatory textbooks for ELLs. Instead, Haywood Elementary provides plenty of reading materials, such as books with pictures for ELLs each class. However, I did not find any books, pictures or articles in different languages. On the contrary, the class I observed is decorated with many English words and sentences. For example, there is a vocabulary wall with a lot of commonly used words, such as "under", "drink", "good" etc. This immersive environment allows students to get as much as exposure to English. Nevertheless, culturally teaching responsive approach tells us that teachers who really care for students honor their humanity. They need to make ethnically diverse students feel recognized, respected, valued, seen, and heard (Gay, 2010). Constructivism classroom also requires teachers to use students' background knowledge to inform classroom practice (Windschitl, 1999). The question is that how the teacher shows her caring for students without using students' community literacy in classroom. The teacher I observed tried to show her caring for students by using positive words in ELL class. For instance, when a child spoke both English and Spanish words, the teacher would say "Good! you can do both!". Also, the teacher attempted to connect students' existing knowledge to her instruction. For example, she would compare the pronunciation of an English

word with a Spanish word to find the similarities. However, these attempts are not sufficient for a bilingual classroom.

Collaboration among teachers is also important in ELL classroom. The ELL teacher in Haywood Elementary School told me that they have regular meetings with teachers from other basic subjects. After knowing what students will learn in this semester, ELL teachers will help ELLs build background knowledge for these subjects. For example, ELL teachers will teach discipline-specific academic words in advance in order to prepare ELLs for a better understanding of concepts, texts and so forth. When asked how to assess ELLs English proficiency and how to modify the assessment according to their progress, the teacher said that they teach with WIDA English development standards. However, ELLs classes in this school are divided based on grade level. In other words, even if an English language learner has attained a higher level of English proficiency, he/she can only stay in the same class. Furthermore, they do not have tests for ELLs to determine their English proficiency. As a result, how to make sure students with different level of English proficiency to get access to enough knowledge must be taken into consideration. One more thing I found was about the corrective feedback in class. Corrective feedback (CF) refers to teacher and peer responses to learners' erroneous second language (L2) production. Feedback can encourage self-correction in using second language (Li, 2013). In the observed class, students got prompt feedback from both the teacher and their classmates when they mispronounced, which was beneficial for them to reinforce the awareness of correcting.

Recommendations: Based on the problems I found in the observation, suggestions are as follows. First, ELL teacher in Haywood Elementary Schools should try to use students' cultural and linguistic knowledge in their class. For example, teachers could build household funds of knowledge by home visiting, questionnaires, and meetings. Furthermore, they could select texts

related to student culture and language as supporting classroom materials and design activities like storytelling for ELLs to share their experiences. The school could also build "class libraries" with books in different languages in each class. It is good way for ELLs to maintain the value of their culture and languages. It is necessary because of the diversity of the student identity. By using students' native language such as Spanish in class, teachers can show their caring for students. Moreover, teachers can use L1 to better explain concepts and make sure students really understand what has been taught in class. Second, Haywood Elementary should establish an appropriate assessment system for ELLs. Before doing this, the school should divide ELLs based on WIDA level, instead of grade level. In this way, teachers can meet different needs for students with various English-proficiency level. Furthermore, the school can assess ELLs English proficiency more frequently than annually tests. Then ELL class should be adjusted according to the scores. Thereby teachers can meet higher studying needs of language learning for more proficient students.

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Part Two

Community Literacy Investigation in Nashville

Due to all the safety, economic, environmental and social factors, the number of immigrants in the U.S. has increased dramatically over the past few decades. It is worth noting that Chinese-speaking population has accounted for a large part of it. According to the 2017 Demographic profile data from the U.S. Census Bureau, there are about four million Chinese immigrants in America. Under the circumstances, teachers are facing tremendous challenges with more English language learners from China in their class.

However, it seems a little different in Nashville since the number of Chinese-speaking population has remained relatively steady in this city with the figure 2700 in 2010 and the figure 3200 in 2017.

Chinese communities in this city are not concentrated in one place. Instead, they are usually scattered around the Vanderbilt University. Nonetheless, a relatively small population of Chinese students does not mean teachers can ignore their special needs of learning. On the contrary, English language teachers need to make more efforts to help them to integrate into the mainstream. Moreover, it is estimated that about 80% of Asian in Nashville graduate from high school and around 50% of them get their Bachelor or higher degree. Also, according to the data of the poverty status, the percent of Asian people who are below poverty level is about 13%, a relative low percent compared with other races. Thus, based on the data about education situation and poverty status of Asian, it can be inferred that Chinese-speaking population in Nashville attach an importance to education and can afford the tuition for their children. With all the data about Chinese communities in Nashville, the paper aims to find artifacts about the Chinese community literacy in this area and

attempts to analyze how to use the community literacy in teachers' instruction when there are Chinese students in their class.

Although there are no chunks of Chinese residential areas in Nashville, Chinese people can be found in other places and organizations, such as Nashville Chinese School, K&S World Supermarket and Greater Nashville Chinese Association (GNCA). In these places, people can get access to be exposed to Chinese community literacies. For example, Nashville Chinese School is good place to explore Chinese culture.

Nashville Chinese School (NCS), established in 1987, is a federally recognized non-profit organization. Its mission is to enrich the community by providing Chinese language classes as well as arts and culture classes to children and adults in the Greater Nashville area. NCS aims to provide a nurturing, diverse learning environment for students of all ethnic backgrounds. Currently, over 100 students attend NCS classes on Saturday mornings at the H.G. Hill Middle School. Except for language and culture courses for students, NCS also organize various activities to help students to experience Chinese culture and to do practices based on what they have learned in class. For instance, to celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival, the school often invites students and their families to learn making mooncakes. Classrooms are decorated with red banners on which slogans are written in Chinese characters. Besides, NCS holds story-telling contests to stimulate students' imagination and improve their ability to use language in a specific situation.

In addition to the education institution, Chinese people can also be found in K&S World Supermarket. K&S is an international supermarket where people can find a variety of foods from Asian countries, including China, Korea, and Japan. Therefore, it is a one of the best places where Chinese people would like to go shopping. It provides different types of Chinese sauces, noodles, steamed buns, dumplings and so forth. Many of the products are imported from China with Chinese

characters on the packaging. The product descriptions are also written in Chinse. Therefore, you can find a lot of Chinese community literacy in this supermarket. Generally speaking, an important way to learn a different culture is to have a clear understanding of its food culture, which helps a person to learn people's eating habits and lifestyle from different culture background. Thus, teachers can use what they find in the supermarket to their class.

Apart from the places mentioned above, Greater Nashville Chinese Association is another organization that connects Chinese communities with each other in Nashville. GNCA is a non-profit organization representing the Chinese community in the Middle Tennessee area, which was established in 1984 with members from a diverse background including mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and other Southeast Asian countries. Its mission is to promote education resources and culture understanding in both the Chinese and the local communities in the Middle Tennessee area. GNCA usually posts a lot of major cultural events on its official website and social media accounts. By joining in the group on Facebook and WeChat, members can communicate with each other in either English or Chinese. People can share their experiences about the Chinese cultural event or just talk with each other about their daily life. Obviously, it is another good way to have exposure to Chinese culture.

After finding so many resources for community literacy, what should be taken into consideration is how to leverage the community literacies to improve teachers' instruction when there are Chinese students in their classes.

When having Chinese students in their class, teachers need to show their caring about their students. However, not only showing caring about the students, what teachers should really focus on is to care for their students, which means they should take active engagement in doing something to positively affect their students' sate of being. Thus, it compasses a combination of

concern, compassion, commitment, responsibility and action (Gay, 2010, p.48). Therefore, in order to make students feel valued, teachers are supposed to acquire knowledge of the students' native culture and help them develop a critical consciousness of who they are, their values and beliefs. To achieve this teaching goal, teachers should take full advantage of community literacies in their culturally responsive teaching. For example, teachers can take the pictures of foods from China in K&S World Market to lead a discussion about what Chinese people usually eat in their country. By comparing Chinese eating habits and Americans' eating habits, students can even learn about the differences between the two countries' agriculture. In this way, teachers not only convey their feelings to their students, but also convert the feelings to actions. Students will be more engaged in class activities with knowledge from their own culture, which is beneficial to achieve their academic progress. In addition to respect the cultural background, ethnic identity, and humanity of students, teachers who care hold them accountable for quality academic, social and personal performance, and ensure that happen.

Besides, teachers can visit the local Chinese language school to communicate with teachers there in order to have a better understanding of Chinese students' culture, or they can just invite teachers in the school to share Chinese traditional culture and Chinese language in their class. In this way, students in the class can learn the differences between different cultures, and during the process, Chinese students can feel the caring from their teachers.

On the other hand, using community literacies in class helps promote constructivism learning. Constructivism emphasizes that students' background knowledge profoundly affects how they interpret subject matter and that students learn best when they apply their knowledge to solve authentic problems, engage in "sense-making" dialogue with peers, and strive for deep understanding of core ideas rather than recall of a laundry list of facts. (Windschitl, 1999, p. 752)

Since students' background knowledge plays an important role in their academic success, teachers should encourage students to bring their existing knowledge to the classes. For example, when talking about dialects in different areas, teachers can encourage Chinese students to share with the class about the different types of dialects in Chinese. It is helpful to intrigue students' interest, because they are able to apply knowledge from their social and cultural contexts in learning. Moreover, students' knowledge from their community can help literacy learning. For example, they can learn frequent expressions, idioms from billboard ads. The bilingual product description on packages can help increase their metalinguistic awareness.

To sum up, Chinese communities in Nashville provide rich resources for teachers to use in their instruction. Chinese community literacy can be found either in stores and associations or online. Teachers need to make full use of the resources to improve their instruction based on appropriate pedagogies.

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Picture 1

Picture 2

Artifact B: A Case Study of Second Language Acquisition

Report for Zilin's SLA Analysis

Basic information

Zilin is a 22-year-old Chinese girl. She is one of my best friends and we studied together at the same university for our bachelor's degrees. I choose Zilin as the participant for my analysis because I prefer to teach adult English language learners or Elementary students in China when I graduate from Peabody school. We had two 15-minute interviews in total. Due to the distance, the two interviews took place on a chat software called WeChat. The first interview started with a few questions about Zilin's experiences in learning English, then we communicated with each other as different roles in five situations. Finally, Zilin carried a persuasive speech on a particular topic. In the second interview, we talked about Zilin's written sample, such as the challenges she faced in writing and the efforts she made to improve writing skills. The analyses in this report are mainly based on the first interview.

Education background

Zilin has got her bachelor's degree in arts from Tianjin University of Finance and Economics. She is currently studying for her master of the degree in Translation and Interpreting at Suzhou University, China. Since English is an important part of compulsory education in China, Zilin has been learning English for 15 years. However, Zilin told me that in the first 10 years, she just learned English to pass exams instead of aiming at mastering English. As a result, she had never practiced speaking English until she started her undergraduate study. Zilin majored in Business English in undergraduate study. She took a lot of business lessons to get her bachelor's degree. During this period, her focus was on business knowledge while she also took English classes, such as English Speaking and Intensive Reading. In her graduate study, she began to

acquire knowledge about English translation and interpretation. She mentioned that now she would spend an extra 5 hours except for fixed class hours in learning English every day now. Zilin told me that she often speaks English with her graduate classmates and teachers in class. Now without business lessons, she has more time in English translation in school. Moreover, her families only speak Chinese at home, so Zilin never speaks English outside school.

Language background

Zilin and her families' native language is Chinese. She never speaks English with her parents. Moreover, Zilin has never been to any English-speaking countries up to now. Therefore, she has few opportunities to be exposed to the English language environment. Zilin mentioned that the only way she can get in touch with English native speakers is to talk with her foreign teachers in class. She told me that she wants to improve her English speaking and writing skills.

Sociocultural factors that affect English language proficiency

School culture is a critical factor that influences Zilin's proficiency in the English language. Since exams play important roles in the education system in China, most schools put too much emphasis on improving students' grades. Consequently, English classes in China are usually teacher-oriented instead of student-oriented. English teachers often pay less attention to oral English because it is not an important part of Gaokao. Every time in English, they were required to take notes consistently and memorizing all the notes after class. As a result, as Zilin said, she did not have chance to speak with classmates in English until she went to college. She seldom spent time in practicing speaking English either before starting her study at the university. All of these lead to Zilin's limited proficiency in English speaking.

The second important factor is the input from English. Since Zilin learns English in China and has never been to English-speaking countries, it is more difficult for her to learn English in

daily life. What Zilin has learned from her textbooks is not enough to have a comprehensive understanding of the English language and the cultures hidden behind. Therefore, to get more input of English, Zilin can listen to English radios, watch English movies, and read English newspapers. Only with sufficient accumulation, can Zilin be able to output.

Another factor that may affect Zilin's proficiency in English is the feedback from peers or teachers. On the one hand, since Zilin only speaks English with her classmates in class, she is not able to get feedback outside school. In other words, it is less likely for Zilin to find the errors in her speaking and writing. On the other hand, Zilin might be discouraged from learning English if she receives negative feedback from her teachers or classmates. Furthermore, the misguiding feedback from her classmates might lead her to the wrong direction of English learning. In these situations, feedback may cause negative effects on Zilin's English proficiency.

The last factor is self-efficacy. Zilin said that her goal of learning English is to be a qualified English translator in the future. The specific goal she sets will be an incentive for her to learn English. She shows great passion and enthusiasm to improve her professional skills, which I believe can help improve her English skills to achieve a higher proficiency level of English.

Description of Zilin's Oral and Written Language Abilities

This part is composed of the analyses of Zilin's phonology, semantics, grammar and pragmatics skills. The phonology analysis begins with an overall assessment of Zilin's phonology skills. It talks about pronunciation in oral English. The semantics part analyzes Zilin's word choice in speaking and writing. Then this article analyzes Zilin's grammar skills in both oral and written language. Finally, this article explores language use in different situations.

An analysis of Phonology

In this section, I will provide a more detailed analysis of Zilin's pronunciation and fluency. Regarding pronunciation, she uses the [z] sound for the consonant sound [ð] in words such as "the", "these", "other" and so forth. These words were usually incorrectly pronounced as [zə], [ziz] and [ʌzər]. According to the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, L1 interference is what constitutes the main obstacle to L2 learning (CITE HERE TOO). Robert Lado claimed that "those elements which are similar to [the learner's] native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult" (Lado, 1957, p146). This theory helps to explain why Zilin pronounces the consonant sound in this way. Zilin's first language is Chinese, in which there is no voiced dental fricative sound. Therefore, it is possible that Zilin pronounces [ð] as [z] without being aware of the mistake. In this example, first language acquisition exhibits a great impact on second language acquisition. Second, concerning fluency, Zilin often had hesitation and pauses when speaking in English. During the interview, whenever Zilin gave her answers to the questions I asked, she would always start with the word "Uhm". It was also frequently used when she attempted to find appropriate words to express her own opinions. For instance, Zilin used "Uhm" 13 times when she tried to answer three questions about her English learning experiences. Pronunciation may also be contributing to Zilin's weaknesses in fluency, as she may require additional processing time to think about how to produce unfamiliar sounds. According to The Perceptual Assimilation Model (PAM), adults perceive non-native sounds with better or worse accuracy depending on how closely the sound maps to existing categories in our own, native sound system (CITE). The Chinese phonological system is very different from the English phonological system, so it is hard for Zilin to completely perceive English words' sounds.

Although Zilin faces challenges in improving fluency and pronunciation, she was good at producing her viewpoints and explaining her arguments. For instance, in the persuasion practice,

regardless of fluency or pronunciation, Zilin performed well in presenting a clear description of her opinion and made a critical analysis with a logical structure about the issue. Moreover, there are some sounds that have a positive transfer from her native language to the second language. For example, the pinyin "ai" in Chinese is similar to the sound [e] sound in English. Therefore, it is not uncommon that some English language learners get confused with the sounds [e] and [aɪ]. Consequently, they often pronounce the word "like" as [lek]. However, Zilin was succeeded to pronounce the [aɪ] sound in the conversations, which is another advantage of her phonology.

An Analysis of Semantics

The written transcript analyzed is extracted from Zilin's paper and the oral transcript is a part of the persuasion practice from the first interview. According to the Type-Token Ratio, the written sample has 130 tokens and 87 different types of words. In other words, the type-token ratio is 66.9%. Similarly, the oral transcript has 300 tokens and 156 different types of words in total. Therefore, the type-token ratio is 52%. The lexical density of the writing sample is 66.41% while the oral sample is 52.17%. TTR indicates a large amount of lexical variation and a low TTR indicates relatively little lexical variation. Thus, from the data, we can see that the written text shows greater lexical diversity than the spoken text. Zilin's strength is that she used a lot of academic words and terminology in her writing, such as "skopos", "in order to", "coherence rule", "sufficiently" and "intertextual coherence". In other words, the written text contains numerous long and complex words, which exhibits that Zilin had a good understanding of these concepts and she was able to use diverse words in writing. However, the spoken text indicated her limited choice of words. For example, Zilin was comfortable to use "Okay" and "yeah" to answer my questions, which showed that maybe she did not know other words that are frequently used in casual conversations, such as "sure", "cool" and "great". Moreover, Zilin was used to using repetitive

sentence structures. For instance, she used the structure "They/I will find it difficult to" twice in a 100-tokens text, which means Zilin might need to accumulate a variety of words and sentence structures to express her opinion in speaking. There are a number of factors that affect word choice. First, the time of thinking plays an important role in word choice. Zilin had little time to think about the questions when she talked with me, which caused her choice from a relatively restricted vocabulary. On the contrary, Zilin was able to select and plan the words or sentences she could use in her writing because she often had plenty of time to do so. Second, the first language can influence the selection of the words in the second language to some extent. The differences between languages require one's strengths and ability to create connections using his/her strong theory of mind, or recognition of conventional languages for objects. For example, Zilin matched the word "quickly" and the phrase "express my opinion" in our conversation, which was wrong. However, it did make sense when the phrase was translated into Chinese word by word. The last one is the accumulation of different types of words. If Zilin had not acquired enough oral or academic words, then there was no surprise for her to have limited word choice.

An analysis of Grammar

Morphological Ability Analysis: There are 204 words in the oral transcripts, consisting of 255 morphemes, which means there are 1.25 morphemes per word in the text. The Mean Length of Utterance (MLU) in the 26 utterances is 9.8 (see Appendix 1). It is noteworthy that Zilin used many words that included both free and bound morphemes, such as "appropriate", "beneficial" and "besides". Regardless of the context, these words indicated that Zilin attempted to use advanced words when she was speaking, which showed her morphological awareness. However, although Zilin noticed the importance of suffixes such as "-s" and "-es" in presenting plural nouns, she made some mistakes in her speaking. For example, when she said that "I usually speak English

with my classmate", she did not add the suffix "-s" to the word "classmate". While Zilin has acquired basic grammar skills in the past years, she would still make this kind of mistake unconsciously now and then because of the influence of her native language, just as Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis (LIH) states, "bilingual readers' skills in their first language (L1) predict language and literacy skills in their second language (L2) due to a common underlying proficiency (CUP) that makes conceptual knowledge, cognitive, language, and literacy skills interdependent across languages" (Cummins, 1981, 1991, 2016, cited from Emily Galloway, slide 16, 2019). It is a difficulty for Zilin to overcome such a challenge.

The written transcriptions have 203 words which are comprised of 307 morphemes. There are 1.51 morphemes per word. The MLU in the 19 written utterances is 16.2 (see Appendix 2), which is much higher than that in the oral sample. Compared with the oral transcripts, words in the written sample are more complicated, which means more morphemes are included in per word. Similar to her attempts in speaking, Zilin used numerous complex words in this transcript. Words like "determined", "intertextual", "coherence" and so forth have more than 2 morphemes. Besides, there were fewer grammar mistakes in the writing sample. In a word, in terms of morphological ability, Zilin performed better in academic writing than in casual talks.

Syntactic Ability Analysis: Regarding with syntactic ability, the main difference between oral and written samples might be the diversity of a sentence's structure. In the casual conversations, Zilin was able to use a complete sentence to convey her messages. On the one hand, she tried to use connectives like "besides" to form a logical way of thinking. However, on the other hand, there also existed structural ambiguity in some sentences. For instance, the sentence "we will find it beneficial" lacks an object. People might wonder it was beneficial for "who", so it was an incomplete sentence. Another problem is that Zilin did not pay much attention to the tense when

she was talking. It seemed that she always restricted herself to the comfort zone. That is, Zilin was used to using present tense no matter what she talked about. She felt free to use the present sentence because she did not need to change verbs by adding suffix "-ed" or things like that. Consequently, she made mistakes when she had to use other tenses. When asked "how long have you been learning English?", Zilin answered that "I have learning English for 12 years". The word "been" was ignored. In her academic writing, Zilin succeeded in using a variety of logical linking devices (connectives) to hang the sentences together. For example, she utilized enumeration, inference and transition words such as "first", "second", "thus" and "in order to" to process her thinking in her article, which made it logical, clear and cohesive. Moreover, Zilin also did well in using grammatical and lexical linking devices. Anaphors could be easily found in every sentence. When she put on the word "it", I knew it referred to "coherence rule".

An analysis of Pragmatics

When we use the meanings of words, the context in which they occur will definitely have a critical influence on what the producer intends to convey.

First, linguistic context, also known as co-text, refers to the set of other words used in the same phrase or sentence to help to interpret a focal word (Yule, 2017). In other words, what has been said previously is important to the meaning of words. For example, in our role-playing dialogue about whether or not to lend notes to Zilin's classmate, we knew that the "notes" here referred to class notes, not notes for other purposes.

Second, in contrast to linguistic context, situational context refers to every non-linguistic factor that affects the meaning of a phrase (CITE). An example could be seen in the situation about Zilin accepting an offer to pursue a Ph.D. from a professor. Zilin replied that "the city is too far

from my families", which can either be a simple statement of fact of the long-distance or implication that she would not accept the offer.

Finally, social context is the social relationship of the people involved in communication (CITE). Since Zilin was my classmate during my undergraduate study, both of us were not as nervous as meeting strangers. However, Zilin also took this interview seriously, such that she would never start a conversation or ask me any questions. This is how the social context influenced our conversation.

According to Paul Grice, there are four maxims in most conversational exchange, the quantity maxim, the quality maxim, the relation maxim and the manner maxim (CITE). Generally speaking, Zilin performed the quality and the relation maxim well, while she failed to adhere to the quantity and the manner maxim.

In the first place, about the relation maxim, Zilin's speech was relevant to the conversation. For example, when Zilin attempted to persuade the principal to require students to take foreign language classes in a persuasion practice, her speech was tightly related to the issue. She also organized her ideas by using many transitions such as "the following are my reasons", "first", "then", "also" and so forth. In this way, what she said was always central to the topic.

Additionally, as for the quality maxim, people are not allowed to say that which they believe to be false or for which they lack adequate evidence (Yule, 2017). Zilin adhered to this maxim by telling the truth, her real thoughts, and opinions during the interview. When asked about the challenges in speaking with a foreigner, Zilin honestly described the difficulties she often faced in the process.

However, it seemed that Zilin did not pay much attention to the manner maxim, which requires the conversation to be clear, brief and orderly (Yule, 2017). For instance, in the situation

about disagreeing with her classmate respectfully, she said: "I will try to persuade you", which was inappropriate in the conversation. Moreover, in the persuasion practice, Zilin said "I want to make a rule such as requiring students to take foreign language classes". The mistakes made in this sentence would make it hard for others to understand what Zilin tried to convey.

Finally, sometimes Zilin seemed not to be able to obey the quantity maxim which refers to make one's contribution as informative as is required, but not more or less (Yule, 2017). In the situation about lending notes to her classmate, Zilin used too many repetitive words and sentences in her reply, "it is your obligation and duty to". Zilin explained a lot about why she could not lend her notes to her classmate. Those words made the conversation redundant when it could have ended with a concise sentence.To sum up, Zilin was good at applying the quality and the relation maxims in her communication, but not the quantity and manner maxims. Thus, she might need to make more efforts to improve the skills in these aspects.

In my opinion, there are two main factors that influence Zilin's ability to maintain a socially acceptable conversation. On the one hand, the person who Zilin talks with can lead to either a positive or negative conversation. When she speaks with a friend, she might feel free and relaxed to express her opinion. Otherwise, she might make more mistakes. On the other hand, the education background has an impact on Zilin's performance. Typically, the English class in China is teacher-cent. As a result, students usually do not have enough opportunities to speak with each other in English, which leads to poor oral English.

Assessment of Zilin's Current Stage of Second Language Acquisition

According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Language- Self-Assessment Grid (CEFR), Zilin has achieved the B2 level, which indicates that she has become an independent English user. However, her demonstrated speaking proficiency is relatively lower

than the overall B2 level. Proficiency can be evaluated from two aspects. One is spoken interaction and the other one is spoken production. On the one hand, Zilin can interact with some degree of fluency and spontaneity with others in English. Zilin can present clear and detailed descriptions of a wide range of subjects related to her field of interest. She is capable of explaining her viewpoints on a topic. When it comes to familiar topics, Zilin is able to take an active part in the discussion. On the other hand, issues with fluency and pronunciation impede her ability to communicate effectively. Sometimes, she needs to search for proper words in a conversation, which results in hesitation and pauses that negatively impact her fluency. In addition, poor pronunciation is another weakness of Zilin's oral English. Hinofotis and Baily (1980) note that "up to a certain proficiency standard, the factor which most severely impairs the communication process in EFL/ESL learners is pronunciation, not vocabulary or grammar" (p.124). Now that Zilin has reached a B2 level of English proficiency, it is important for her to make a breakthrough in pronunciation. Zilin is good at producing and explaining her arguments in speaking. However, her fluency and pronunciation need to be improved. Regrading with the writing production, Zilin has achieved a higher level than B2. She has been a proficient use of English. She is able to express herself in clear, well-structured text and can express her points of view at some length. The written transcript shows that Zilin can write about complex subjects in an essay. When it comes to grammar skills, Zilin performed better both in morphology and syntax in her academic writing than casual conversations. In casual conversations, Zilin realized that it was important to describe her thoughts and emotions in diverse and various language, instead of a simple word. However, she often forgot to add suffixes to words to present plural nouns and different tenses. On the contrary, Zilin did well in her academic writing. She was able to use different connectives and anaphors to make logic and lexical links between sentences and paragraphs. She could also use more complicated and diverse

60

words in her writing. Nonetheless, it is more vital to choose appropriate words than advanced words or phrases. For example, Zilin said "it is of great importance to", which could be more concise by using an adjective.

To sum up, according to the CEFR, Zilin has achieved B2 level in speaking and C1 level in writing and she perform better in academic writing than speaking in grammar.

Specific Instructional Plan for Zilin

First, in order to further develop Zilin's phonological skills, it is critical to help her reinforce phonological awareness. A teacher should provide rich L2 listening materials in class because enough input of a second language can help Zilin acquire frequent words, expressions, and idioms used in English, which are beneficial for language transferring. In this way, Zilin is able to save time in selecting proper words when speaks with others in English. Secondly, teachers need to give oral corrective feedback based on her pronunciation. Sometimes, Zilin fails to realize that she makes mistakes in pronunciation. At this moment, a teacher should give prompt feedback to Zilin to help her enhance phonological awareness. Also, self-correction plays an important role in the process. Feedback encouraging self-correction is relatively motivating and makes classes more dynamic and interactive (Lyster, 2004). Moreover, by talking with others and get prompt feedback, Zilin would be able to figure out the mistakes she often makes and improve her grammar skills. To develop grammar skills, Zilin could give speeches on different topics and record what she is saying. In this way, she could check if she uses the correct tense or if she adds required suffixes. In order to improve syntactic ability, Zilin could build her language database by accumulating different linking devices. She could also read good journal articles and books to learn how to use connectives to organize ideas. Second, what Zilin needs is repeated retrieval in order to improve semantics skills. According to Lavoie & Mark (2014), Although vocabulary

acquisition can vary from one learner to another, some studies have found that words repeated seven times are integrated by most learners. Therefore, Zilin could benefit from repeated practices of using diverse words in her speaking and writing. In this way, Zilin could not only expand her vocabulary, but also make decisions in word choosing with less time in for her speaking or academic writing. Moreover, it would be helpful to learn synonyms of words. Zilin could replace words with their synonyms to improve lexical diversity. When using a word too much in a conversation or article, Zilin could use its synonyms to convey similar meanings. In order to avoid inappropriate and redundant conversations, Zilin should always take into consideration how to organize her words. She practices abstracting key information and concluding the main points from articles or conversations to improve her communication skills. Because it is impossible for Zilin to be exposed to an English-speaking environment, she can learn English with resources from the Internet, books and the like. For example, she can imitate the native speaker's pronunciation from the radio, or she can memorize the frequent expressions from movies and books. I believe in this way, Zilin would make progress in her pragmatics skills.

Critical Reflection

From the experience of comprehensively analyzing a non-native speaker's English language acquisition, I realize that a lot of works need to do to assess one's proficiency in a language. We need to collect oral and written samples, refer to multiple articles and data. Therefore, this case study helps me to develop skills in collecting, sorting, and analyzing different types of resources. Moreover, I have learned from this case study that it is important to master basic SLA theories before giving evaluations and instructions to an English language learner. SLA frameworks can be considered as guidance for teachers to inform instruction and they can ensure that teachers are on the right track when they assess English language learners' performance.

From the case study, I realize that an EL teacher must recognize the influence of students' native language on second language acquisition. When learners of the second language want to write or speak in the target language, they tend to rely on their first language structures. In my teaching practices in the future, I would try to figure out in what ways students' first language influence English acquisition and provide tailored courses for EFL students in China. Another thing I think important in teaching is to make a balance between spoken English practices and academic writing, reading or listening in class. Few speaking practices Chinese students have in class contribute to poor skills in oral English. In my future teaching, I would always keep it in mind that give equal opportunities for students to speak English as well as listen, write and read.

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Appendix 1

The following chart represents the data to calculate the Oral Mean Length Utterance (MLU).

Utterance	Number of Morphemes
My native language is Chinese	5
I have learning English for twelve years	9
Now I usually learn English by reciting core words every day	14
And I also listen to English news from BBC, CNN or other programs	15
Besides,	3
I read English novels and watch English TV series and movies	14
I usually speak English with my classmate and teachers in English class	15
Once when I communicated with my foreign teacher	10
I find it difficult to express my opinion quickly	12
I find it difficult for me to choose appropriate English words to express my own opinion	22
Although it is easier for to give my idea in Chinese	12
when I speak to foreigners in English	9
I always feel struggle	6
Yes	1
our teachers are willing to make sure we know this kind of knowledge	16
Yes	1
I think it is of great importance to teach culture in class.	13
If we students learn culture and pragmatics of one language	11
We will find it beneficial	6

And we can learn the language better	7
For teachers	4
I have some advice	4
For example,	2
teachers can provide some situations for students	12
And they can lead a group discussion in the situations	13
Students can play different role in these situations to communicate with each other	18
Total number	255

Average MLU: 255 morphemes per 26 utterances=9.8

Appendix 2

Utterance	Number of Morphemes
"Skopos", meaning aim or purpose in Greek	9
Stresses the purpose of translation action	11
As a complex theory of action	8
The theory of translation action begins with a specific situation includes the source text	22
Under the skopos theory	4
The translation action is "an offer of information" produced in a target culture which simulates a source information offer	29
In order to better understand the skopos theory	9
Here are the three principles explained in detail	11
First, as the highest rule of the theory of translational action	16
"Skopos rule" can be understood in other words that "the end justifies the means"	19
But when setting the skopos	6
A skopos can't be set until the target audience is known and a particular function	20
Making sense for them is determined	9
To accomplish the skopos	5
Translators are required to be familiar with the target culture and have "an additional competence in the target language".	27

Second, the coherence rule indeed refers to two conditions that the message itself is coherent and its received situation is "sufficiently" coherent too	38
Actually, coherence rule also known as "intertextual coherence"	17
Takes precedence over "fidelity" for it doesn't demand the "perfect" translation or "the" optimal translation	26
Thus, what translators pursue are "successful" but may be deficient translations.	21
Total number	307

Average MLU: 307 morphemes per 19 utterances=16.2

Artifact C: Rehearsal Activity

Lesson plan

Topic: Facts and Opinions	Class: Grade 2		Date:
Content Objectives - Students will be able to identify facts and opinions.	**Language Objectives** - Students will be able to categorize details in a text as facts or opinions and explain why. - Students will be able to write at least one sentence that shows a fact and another one shows an opinion according to the picture they are given.		
Key Vocabulary Fact, opinion, statement	**Materials (including supplementary and adapted)** Markers, whiteboards		
Time (30 minutes)	**Activity** - The teacher explains definitions of facts and opinions using a T-chart. Then the teacher shows students examples of facts and opinions and ask them a question, "Do you think it is a fact or an opinion? Why?". After volunteers answering the question, the teacher further explains what a fact is and what an opinion is based on these examples. (8 minutes) - The teacher divide students into four groups. Each group would read and work together to find out the facts and opinions in a text. Then they need to think about and answer the question, "Why did you categorize the sentences in this way?". Every group shares their answers and opinions with the whole class. (15 minutes) - The teacher shows students a picture of a lion. Students need to observe the picture and then write one sentence that show the fact about the lion and another one that shows an opinion of the lion on their whiteboards. Then students share their sentences. (7 minutes)		

Picture 1

Picture 2

Picture 3

More examples

Feathers help keep birds warm.	Fact
Everyone should have a pet bird.	Opinion
Pandas are white and black.	Fact
Pandas are cute.	Opinion
Woodpeckers are annoying.	Opinion
Snakes do not make good pets.	Opinion
There are many types of dolphins, around 40 different species.	Fact

Retrieved from https://unsplash.com/

Picture 4

Read and find out the facts and opinions in the text.

Group 1

(A) Giraffes are amazing animals! (B) They are the world's tallest mammals. (C) Their long necks and long tongues help them get food from tall branches. (D) Their long legs make them fast. (E) I think it's fun to watch them run. (F) They can run as fast as 35 miles per hour. (G) Aren't giraffes interesting?

Facts	Opinions

Why did you categorize the sentences in this way?
Are there any clues that show they are opinions or facts?

Artifact D: One-on-One Tutoring Program

Lesson plan 1

Topic: Digraph "th"	Class: Grade 1	Date: 11/05/2020
Content Objectives - Students will be able to distinguish the two sounds /θ/ and /ð/.	**Language Objectives** - Students will be able to read aloud sentences and a text that contain th digraphs with fluency.	
Key Vocabulary Thumb, earth, this, brother, weather	**Materials (including supplementary and adapted)** fluency practice sentences, Mia and Sophia (a "th" digraph story)	

Time (30 minutes)	Activity
	- Warm-up question: the teacher asks, "Do you have anything that you want to share with me today?". Have the student to share his experiences. (3 minutes) - Connecting to previous knowledge: the teacher guides the student to review the homework for the last class (key digraphs and vocabulary: thumb, chin, ship, where). Then the teacher explains today's learning objectives. (5 minutes) - The teacher introduces the two sounds of the digraph "th", /θ/ and /ð/. The teacher asks, "What do you know about the digraph th?", "Do you know the words that have th sounds?". Have the student answer the questions. Then the teacher shows the student key vocabulary that have different sounds of "th" and asks, "Did you find any difference between the two sounds". Have the student to answer the question. Then the teacher explains the difference. Let the student read aloud the words and give them oral corrective feedback. Then have the students read aloud twice. (12 minutes) - Have the student read the fluency practice sentences that contains th digraph and ask him to pay attention to two different sounds. The teacher gives oral corrective feedback. Then have the student read the aloud the sentences that he struggles with again. (10 minutes) - If time permits, have the student read a more challenging practice text "Mia and Sophia".

Lesson Plan 2

Topic: The Long A Sound	Class: Grade 1	Date: 11/18/2020
Content Objectives - Students will be able to identify the long a vowel sound.	**Language Objectives** - Students will be able to spell and read words containing diagraphs ay, ey, ai, ei, eigh, a_e.	
Key Vocabulary rain, veil, day, they, eight, cake.	**Materials (including supplementary and adapted)** Powerpoint slides.	

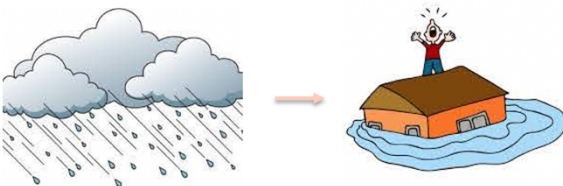| Time (30 minutes)	Activity
	- Warm-up question: the teacher asks, "Do you have anything that you want to share with me today?". Have the student to share his experiences. (3 minutes) - Connecting to previous knowledge: the teacher guides the student to review the content for the last class (key digraphs and vocabulary: ph, gh, photo, laugh). Then the teacher explains today's learning objectives. (5 minutes) - The teacher asks, "What do you know about the five vowels in the letters?". Then the teacher introduces the five vowels (a, e, i, o, u) and the long a sound. Have the student read the word list and asks, "What rules did you find in the list?". Then the teacher introduces the rules of the pronunciation of digraphs ay, ey, ai, ei, eigh, a_e. Then the teacher uses specific words to explain the pronunciation rules. When teaching the new vocabulary, the teacher asks questions such as, "What do you know about the word according to the picture?", "Do you know the numbers from 1 to 10?", "Do you like cakes?". Have the student make up a sentence with word by himself first. Then the teacher gives the student the example sentences and have the student read them aloud. Then the teacher explains the meanings of the words and pronunciation rules of the digraphs. Let the student read aloud the words again and give them oral corrective feedback. (22 minutes)

Artifact E: Complex Text Video

Screen shot from Complex Text Video

Picture 1

Cause and Effect

Cause: Why something happens.
Effect: What happens as a result

Cause ⟶ Effect

The heavy rain caused a flood.

There was flooding because of the heavy rain.

Signal Words

So
As a result
Because/because of
Therefore
Consequently
Due to
Which cause
Lead to

Picture   **2**

Melting Ice Sheets

An ice sheet is a thick layer of ice that covers a large area for an extended period of time. During the last glacial period, most of the Earth was covered by ice sheets. Today, there are only two ice sheets in the world. One is the Antarctic ice sheet, and the other is the Greenland ice sheet. Ice sheets form as layers of snow accumulate over time.

These ice sheets are shrinking as they melt more quickly than snow can accumulate. Many scientists believe that global warming is playing a role in the melting of the ice sheets. Global warming is the increase in the world's average temperature. Most scientists believe that the global warming the Earth is now experiencing is caused in large part by human activity. Humans are releasing gases into the air that trap heat in the atmosphere. One major way they are doing this is by burning fossil fuels.

The melting ice sheets can have big effects on the planet. As more water melts and enters the ocean, the sea level rises. The rising water could cover cities that sit near the coast. These cities include New York City and New Orleans, Louisiana. One other effect of the melting ice sheets is that the ocean water will become less salty as it mixes with fresh water. This could disrupt ocean ecosystems that rely on certain levels of seawater to survive.

Picture 3

Melting Ice Sheets

An ice sheet is a thick layer of ice that covers a large area for an extended period of time. During the last glacial period, most of the Earth was covered by ice sheets. Today, there are only two ice sheets in the world. One is the Antarctic ice sheet, and the other is the Greenland ice sheet. Ice sheets form as layers of snow accumulate over time.

- What is an ice sheet?

- How is an ice sheet formed?

Picture 4

Melting Ice Sheets

These ice sheets are shrinking as they melt more quickly than snow can accumulate. Many scientists believe that global warming is playing a role in the melting of the ice sheets. Global warming is the increase in the world's average temperature. Most scientists believe that the global warming the Earth is now experiencing is caused in large part by human activity. Humans are releasing gases into the air that trap heat in the atmosphere. One major way they are doing this is by burning fossil fuels.

- List all the cause-effect relationship in the paragraph.

- Find the objects the author talking about in the paragraph.

Cause	Effect
Global warming	Melting ice sheets

- signa... lue in on the cause-effect relationship.

Human Activities	Global warming
Burning fossil fuels	Gases trapping heat
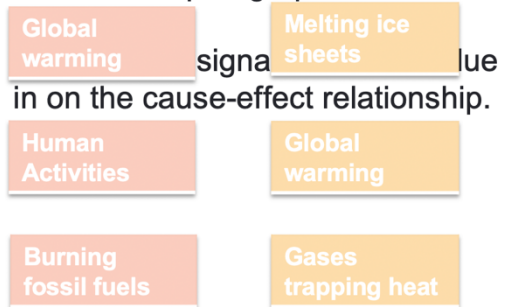
Picture 5

Melting Ice Sheets

The melting ice sheets can have big effects on the planet. As more water melts and enters the ocean, the sea level rises. The rising water could cover cities that sit near the coast. These cities include New York City and New Orleans, Louisiana. One other effect of the melting ice sheets is that the ocean water will become less salty as it mixes with fresh water. This could disrupt ocean ecosystems that rely on certain levels of seawater to survive.
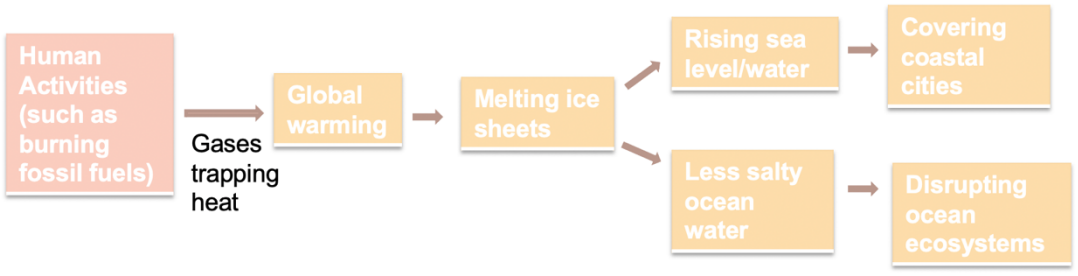
- List all the cause-effect relationship in the paragraph.

Cause   Effect

Melting ice sheets

Rising sea level/water → Covering coastal cities

Less salty ocean water → Disrupting ocean ecosystems

Picture 6

Write a brief summary of the text based on the cause-effect chain using the following sentence stems.

- Due to___,___.
- Because___,___.
- ___because of___.
- ___lead to___
- ___. As a result/Consequently/Therefore/so,___.
- ____causes/which causes___
- ___have big effects on/impact___

Human Activities (such as burning fossil fuels) → Gases trapping heat → Global warming → Melting ice sheets → Rising sea level/water → Covering coastal cities

Less salty ocean water → Disrupting ocean ecosystems

Artifact F: Language Use in a Content Area Evaluation

Alonzo was an 11-year-old boy in 5th grade at an intermediate school in a medium-sized Midwest town. This paper aims to analyze his reading and writing abilities based on a video and a writing sample.

Reading Ability Evaluation: To assess Alonzo's reading ability, I took a Running Record to capture his reading and thinking process (See Appendix 1). The result shows a high accuracy rate, 93%, in reading, which means that the text is appropriate for instructional level for use in guided reading. Moreover, after reading the text, Alonzo gave correct answers to five questions based on prompts (See transcript in Appendix 2). According to the benchmarking rubric for text reading levels, I will assess Alonzo's reading ability from five aspects. First, regarding the fix-up strategy, Alonzo displayed an awareness of his own reading process to some degree. Five self-correction could be found in his oral reading. For example, he replaced "dissen" with "disagreement", "isan" with "island" when he read the words again. However, the running record indicated that some self-corrected words convey no meanings and were grammatically incorrect. Also, the general self-correction rate was quite low being 36%. Therefore, Alonzo could only get 2 points in this dimension. About story structure/retelling and text interpretation, Alonzo demonstrated an understanding of the "gist" of the passage by using story structure (characters, setting, problems/solutions, details) in summarizing. On the one hand, Alonzo identified the detailed information he needed from the text. For example, when asked about the relationship between the Puritans and the Native Americans in Rhode Island, he quoted the text, "They had lived in peace with Native Americans", to answer the question. On the other hand, we could see Alonzo's logical thinking of making inferences in Question 5. He explained his inference and drew a conclusion about the consequence of the Puritans moving to New Hampshire. Moreover, while

Pierce (2003) believes that summarizing, predicting, and asking questions for clarification are three important and difficult during-reading strategies for language learners to master, Alonzo showed his ability to summarize key theme, paraphrase and interpret a text by analyzing the colonist setting, Puritans and native Americans' relationship and behavior. In this case, I gave him 4 points in story structure and 4 points in text interpretation. When it comes to fluency, Alonzo demonstrated automaticity in oral reading by using effective phrasing, appropriate expression, and an efficient pace. Even though there were some pauses at unfamiliar words, he displayed a comfortable flow, pace, and fluency of reading based on punctuations and sentence structures. He could get 4 points in this part. Finally, I did not see much about the connections between students' personal experiences and prior knowledge in this reading sample though, the meaningful responses demonstrate a clear connection to the text. Thus, I gave Alonzo 3 points in this aspect. Alonzo scored 17 out of 20 points, which indicated that he was successful in the reading and the text was appropriate for instruction. Instructional Recommendations are as follows. First, Pierce (2003) pointed out that guiding students to monitor their own progress helps them become independent readers. Due to the low self-correction rate, the teacher needs to guide Alonzo to self-monitor the reading process. To achieve the goal, the teacher could use an anticipation guide to provide a purpose for reading activities and clear criteria for evaluation of Alonzo's work. In doing so, Alonzo could better set goals for learning. According to Gotllieb (2016), translinguistic transfer, translanguaging, and the intentional interexchange between students' L1 and L2 are bound to occur. Using his full linguistic repertoire, Alonzo could maximize his understanding and communication by drawing from his resources from both native and second languages, and prior knowledge. Also, to improve Alonzo's reading abilities, it is important to teach him reading skills like using graphic organizers to guide thinking.

Writing Ability Evaluation: In this section, I will analyze an argumentative essay Alonzo wrote about "why Bubble Gum Should be Banned" based on the 6-Trait Scoring Rubric (See Appendix 3). **Ideas:** In the writing sample, Alonzo narrowed down the topic so that it only talked about why gum should be banned in school. Even though the essay focuses on a specific aspect, I could clearly see where Alonzo was headed. Then he provided three reasons to support the main idea that gum should be banned in school. The first one was left with a little confusion that I did not understand at all. The second was that students might choke. The last one is that gum could stick to others' shoes. While the examples were general and vague at times, the essay stayed on the topics. The rubric shows that Alonzo is at level 4 of Ideas. **Organization**: about the organization or structure of the essay, I found there were obvious beginning, conclusion, and transitions. For example, the essay started with a statement of his opinion and ends with the words "these are the reasons we …". Moreover, it had transitions such as "One reason", "Another reason", "Also", "Or", etc. Apparently, the structure is clear and smooth with one statement, three supporting ideas, and a conclusion. The sequence made sense as well. However, it did not highlight important parts such as the supporting evidence in the essay, so Alonzo could score 5 in the organization. **Conventions:** Alonzo stumbled conventions even on simple tasks. For example, there were a lot of spelling errors, such as "have" as "hav", "they" as "there", and "sould" as "should". Alonzo also made numerous grammar mistakes. It seemed that he did not know how to use if and what if clauses as well as negative structures, which could be found in sentences like "should no have". Besides, verbs were a lack in some sentences, like "if there in gym class". However, Alonzo demonstrated his understanding of the use of capitalization and punctuations such as commas and periods. Generally, he reached level 3 in conventions. **Voice:** this writing sample clearly showed Alonzo's positive attitude to banning bubble gum in school. Also, he used

the third point of view "They" to communicate with readers while keeping a safe distance from them. The problem was that it was hard to identify one or two unique moments in the essay. It seemed that Alonzo did not step out of his "comfort zone" in writing. Basically, Alonzo's writing sample received a score of 3. **Word Choice**: Alonzo attempted to use active verbs such as "pop", "choke", and "step on" to make the writing vivid. Furthermore, he tried to use relatively complex structures such as "there is", while verbs were a lack in the sentence. In general, words are adequate and correct. I could easily understand what Alonzo was communicating. In terms of word choice, Alonzo could score 4. **Sentence Fluency**: On the 6-Trait Scoring Rubric, Alonzo's writing sample was at level 4 of sentence fluency. For one thing, Alonzo's writing sample had various sentence beginnings and connecting words. For another, some of the sentences were only constructed correctly, instead of with a sense of rhythm and flow. Some parts still need work to increase the sentence fluency. To sum up, Alonzo received an overall 4 in his writing sample.

 Recommendations: The results show that Alonzo needs to improve his understanding of conventions in writing, such as spelling and grammar. According to Escamilla & Coady (2001), Spanish writers must gain control of rules around the use of accents, tildes, and the dieresis. None of these conventions exist in English. They also mentioned that because "h" does not make a sound in Spanish, Spanish speakers probably misspell words with "h", just like what Alonzo did with "sould". The teacher could find and explain the spelling or grammar rules that Spanish speakers usually make mistakes to reinforce their understanding. To improve the organizational structure of an essay, the teacher could teach Alonzo to write an outline before starting writing.

 Another essential thing is that the teacher should give opportunities for Alonzo to practice writing after he/she models the student' understanding of the rules of formulating ideas, refining words, and so forth. And then detailed feedback should be given in time.

References

Escamilla, K., & Coady, M. (2001). *Assessing the writing of Spanish speaking students: Issues and suggestions*. In J. Tinajero & S. Hurley (Eds.), Handbook for literacy assessment for bilingual learners (pp. 43-63). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Gottlieb, M. (2016). *Assessing English language learners: Bridges to Educational Equity Connecting Academic Language Proficiency to Student Achievement*. California: Corwin.

Pierce, L. (2003). *Assessing English language learners* / Lorraine Valdez-Pierce. National Education Association.

Appendix 1

RUNNING RECORD (Reading Sample: Life in the Colonies)

Student Name: Alonzo   Date: 11/13/2020   Level: Grade 5   Recorder: Yuqing Liu

E= Errors SC = Self Correction M = Meaning (semantics) S=Structure (syntax) V= Visual	E	SC	E			SC		
			M	S	V	M	S	V
✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ Puritans ✓ ✓ Noo Enland In 1628, people called Puritans moved to New England.	3				✓✓✓			
✓ ✓ ✓✓ ✓ ✓ ther ✓ ✓ Puritans They wanted to be free to follow their religion. Other Puritans	2				✓✓			
✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ started the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Everyone there had								
✓ ✓ follow ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ dissen ✓ R/dissen/SC to have ___ the same beliefs. No dissent, or disagreement,	2	1	✓					✓
✓ ✓ was allowed.					✓			✓
R/SC ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ that ✓righting ✓ ✓ ✓ Roger Williams did not think this was right. He and his	2	1	✓	✓	✓✓			✓
✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ Rh-o-de Isan/RISC family went to what is now Rhode Island.		1						✓
✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ would ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ In Rhode Island, people could follow any religion. They	1		✓	✓	✓			
✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ Naive ✓ lived in peace with Native Americans.	1				✓			
✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ Some people left Massachusetts to find better land. They								
✓ ✓✓✓ ✓ Other SC started went to live in Connecticut. Others went ED north to start a	2	1	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ naf/RISC ✓ fishing town. This became New Hampshire. Many Native		1	✓		✓			✓
✓ Americans								
✓ ✓ ✓ lands ✓ ✓ ✓ there lost their land to the colonists.	1		✓	✓	✓			
Totals: 109 words	14	5						

Accuracy Rate:93%   Error Rate: 7%   SC Rate: 36%

TW-E/TW = AR   TW/E = ER   (E + SC)/SC = SCR

Appendix 2

Transcript for the Reading Sample

1. What year did the Puritans arrive in New England?
[Correct Answer: 1628]

Alonzo: "In 1628."

2. Where and why did Roger Williams and his family move?
[Correct Answer: Rhode Island. They wanted to move to a place where they had freedom of religion.]

Alonzo: "They just like it because they followed the same religion, same from England. He thought that was not right, so his family and him moved to the Rhode Island. Then there, on Rhode Island, people will follow any believes they wanted and they could follow any religion."

3. What was the relationship between the Puritans and the Native Americans in Rhode Island?
[Correct Answer: They lived in peace with the Native Americans.]

Alonzo: "They had live in peace with Native Americans."

4. What other places did the Puritans go, and why?
[Correct Answer: They went to Connecticut, New Hampshire, and the North to find better land and start fishing towns.]

Alonzo: "People left Massachusetts because they were tired of following the same religions and they could not disagree so then they went to find a better land. And they went to live to Connecticut. And other people went to start a town where they could fish and that became the New Hampshire."

5. After the Puritans moved to New Hampshire what happened to the Native Americans?
[Correct Answer: The Native Americans lost their land to the colonists.]

Alonzo: "And many native Americans did not have any home (short pause) to the colonists. They took their home away."

Appendix 3
Alonzo's Writing Sample

Whe should not
be able to hav gum in school.
One reason we should not
have gum in our school
it to what happends if
some one pops it it will
be evrt were. Also if there
speaking to the class they
could choke. Or if there in
gym class they could also
choke. Another reason they
sould no have gum in
school if the gum falls
in the floor and you
step on it. These are
the reasons we should
no have gum in class

6-Trait Scoring Rubric

6-Trait Scoring Rubric

IDEAS

6 This paper is extremely clear or focused. Relevant anecdotes and details enrich the central theme.
A. The topic is narrow and manageable.
B. Relevant, telling, quality details give the reader important information that goes beyond the obvious or predictable.
C. Accurate, precise details are present to support the main ideas; appropriate use of resources provides strong, accurate, credible support.
D. The writer seems to be writing from knowledge or experience; the ideas are fresh and original.
E. The reader's questions are anticipated and answered.
F. The writing makes connections and shares insights and understanding of life, and a knack for picking out what is significant.

5 The ideas/content in this piece are well marked by detail and information.
A. The topic is focused but still could use additional narrowing.
B. More than half the time the details and support are clear and relevant. Other details are general but stay with the topic.
C. Credible details are present which support the main idea/theme.
D. Some new ways of thinking about this topic are presented.
E. The writer is clearly aware of questions the reader may have and attempts to answer them.
F. A clear theme has been developed from the topic.

4 The writer has defined the topic, although the development is basic or general.
A. The topic is fairly broad; however, it is clear where the writer is headed.
B. Support is attempted, but does not go far enough yet in flushing out the key issues or story line.
C. Ideas are reasonably clear, though they may not be detailed, personalized, accurate, or expanded enough to show in-depth understanding or a strong sense of purpose.
D. A few examples of "showing" are present, but the writer relies on general examples.
E. The reader is left with a few questions but is generally clear about the content.
F. The writer stays on the topic and begins to develop a theme.

3 The reader can understand the main ideas although they may be broad or simplistic.
A. The topic is becoming clear, however because it is so broad or lacks specific focus, the reader often must infer to get the overall message.
B. Support is sporadic.
C. A general sense of the idea is present though not enhanced by significant details.
D. A heavy reliance on "telling", not "showing" examples.
E. The reader is left with many questions due to lack of specific information.
F. The writer has not yet focused the topic past the obvious.

2 No one main idea stands out yet, although possibilities are emerging.
A. The paper hints at topics, but does not settle on one yet.
B. Support is incidental or confusing.
C. Several possible ideas may be present which could become central themes/ideas on different pieces of writing.
D. The writer makes statements without specifics to back them up.
E. The reader has so many questions because of the lack of specific information. It is hard to "fill in the blanks."
F. Glimmers of the writer's topic or main point show up occasionally.

1 As yet, the paper has no clear sense of purpose or central theme. To extract meaning from the text, the reader must make inferences based on sketchy or missing details. The writing reflects more than one of these problems:
A. The writer is still in search of a topic, brainstorming, or has not yet decided what the main idea of the piece will be.
B. Information is limited or unclear or the length is not adequate for development.
C. The idea is a simple restatement of the topic or an answer to the question with little or no attention to detail.
D. The writer has not begun to define the topic in a meaningful, personal way.
E. Everything seems as important as everything else; the reader has a hard time sifting out what is important.
F. The text may be repetitious, or may read like a collection of disconnected, random thoughts with no discernible point.

IDEAS

ORGANIZATION

6 The organization enhances and showcases the central idea or theme. The order, structure, or presentation of information is compelling and moves the reader through the text.
A. An inviting introduction draws the reader in; a satisfying conclusion leaves the reader with a sense of closure and resolution.
B. Thoughtful transitions clearly show how ideas connect.
C. Details seem to fit where they're placed; sequencing is logical and effective.
D. Pacing is well controlled; the writer knows when to slow down and elaborate and when to pick up the pace and move on.
E. The title, if desired, is original and captures the central theme of the piece.
F. Organization flows so smoothly the reader hardly thinks about it; the choice of structure matches the purpose and audience.

5 The organization is smooth with only a few small bumps here and there.
A. The writer goes farther than the obvious beginning and conclusion, but needs to step up one more notch.
B. The transitions are logical but may lack originality.
C. Sequencing makes sense and moves a step beyond the most obvious structure.
D. Though the pacing is under control, there are still places the writer needs to highlight or move through more quickly.
E. The title (if required) settles for a key idea rather than capturing a deeper theme.
F. The organization generally works satisfactorily if not yet so smooth to escape obvious detection.

4 The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader through the text without too much confusion.
A. The paper has a recognizable introduction and conclusion. The introduction may not relate a strong sense of anticipation; the conclusion may not tie up all loose ends.
B. Transitions often work well; at other times, connections between ideas are fuzzy.
C. Sequencing shows some logic, but not under control enough that it consistently supports the ideas. In fact, sometimes it is so predictable and rehearsed that the structure takes attention away from the content.
D. Pacing is fairly well controlled, though the writer sometimes lunges ahead too quickly or spends too much time on details that do not matter.
E. A title (if desired) is present, although it may be uninspired or an obvious restatement of the prompt or topic.
F. The organization sometimes supports the main point or story line; at other times, the reader feels an urge to slip in a transition or move things around.

3 The organization is somewhat problematic and slows the reader's ability to engage in the text.
A. Either the intro or conclusion or both are clichés or just leave you wanting a lot more.
B. Transitions, when present, are repetitive or misleading.
C. The structure has taken over so completely it dominates the ideas. The sequencing is painfully obvious.
D. The writer lets one part of the piece dominate and loses control over the pacing.
E. There is just a passing glimmer of how the title (if desired) was selected for this piece.
F. The organization of the piece begins to distract from the content.

2 The organization of the piece needs a great deal of work to be effective. Only moments here and there give the writer a clue about what's going on.
A. The lead and/or conclusions are ineffective to guide the readers.
B. A little bit of help is offered to get from one idea to the next but not often enough to keep the reader from being confused.
C. So little useful structure is present, it's hard to get a picture of how the piece fits together as a whole.
D. Pacing feels awkward; the writer slows to a crawl when the reader wants to get on with it, and vice versa.
E. A title (if desired) doesn't match the content.
F. The organization is often problematic and frustrates the reader as they struggle with the ideas.

1 The writing lacks a clear sense of direction. Ideas, details, or events seem strung together in a loose or random fashion; there is no identifiable internal structure. The writing reflects more than one of these problems.
A. There is no real lead to set up what follows, no real conclusion to wrap things up.
B. Connections between ideas are confusing or not even present.
C. Sequencing needs lots and lots of work to make sense.
D. There is little sense of pacing being considered yet.
E. No title is present (if requested).
F. Problems with organization make it hard (almost impossible) for the reader to get a grip on the main point or story line.

ORGANIZATION

CONVENTIONS

6 The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions (e.g., spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, usage, paragraphing) and uses conventions effectively to enhance readability. Errors tend to be so few that just minor touch-ups would get this piece ready to publish.
A. Spelling is generally correct, even on more difficult words.
B. The punctuation is accurate, even creative, and guides the reader through the text.
C. A thorough understanding and consistent application of capitalization skills are present.
D. Paragraphing tends to be sound and reinforces the organizational structure.
E. Grammar and usage are correct and contribute to clarity and style.
F. The writer may manipulate conventions for stylistic effect – and it works! The piece is very close to being ready to publish.

Grades 7 & up only. The writing is sufficiently complex to allow the writer to show skill in using a wide range of conventions. For younger writers, the writing shows control over those conventions that are grade/age appropriate.

5 The writer stretches and tries more complex tasks in conventions; however, makes a few mistakes along the way.
A. Everyday words are consistently handled well but more difficult words are spotty.
B. Punctuation shows strength and enhances the readability in all but a few cases.
C. The punctuation is usually correct and takes a few risks.
D. Solid paragraphing skills are present although there may be a few adjustments needed on more complex pieces.
E. The grammar and usage is correct.
F. Just a few things here and there need to be edited before this piece is ready to publish.

4 The writer shows reasonable control over a limited range of standard writing conventions. Conventions are sometimes handled well and enhance readability; at other times, errors are distracting and impair readability.
A. Spelling is usually correct or reasonably phonetic on common words, but more difficult words are problematic.
B. End punctuation is usually correct; internal punctuation (commas, apostrophes, semicolons, dashes, colons, parentheses) is sometimes missing/wrong.
C. Most words are capitalized correctly; control over more sophisticated capitalization skills may be spotty.
D. Paragraphing is attempted but may run together or begin in the wrong places.
E. Problems with grammar or usage are not serious enough to distort meaning but may not be correct or accurately applied all of the time.
F. Moderate (a little of this, a little of that) editing would be required to polish the text for publication.

3 The writer stumbles in conventions even on simple tasks and almost always on anything trickier.
A. Although the reader can understand, even simpler words are not always correct.
B. Punctuation is spotty and inconsistent.
C. Proper nouns and the beginning of sentences are capitalized correctly; other words are random and don't show understanding of capitalization rules.
D. The piece may start off with a paragraph or two, but then the rest is one big glob of sentences.
E. There are serious grammar and usage problems scattered throughout the text.
F. Enough editing would have to be done to this piece that a student writer may need help to find it all.

2 Many errors of a variety of types are scattered throughout the text.
A. The spelling is phonetic; many errors are present.
B. Except for the simplest of punctuation (periods, question marks), the other punctuation is usually wrong or missing.
C. Only the easiest rules of capitalization show awareness of correct use.
D. Paragraphing skills are irregular and inconsistent.
E. A heavy reliance on conversational oral language affects the grammar in an inappropriate way for this piece.
F. There's quite a bit to be done here to edit the piece for publication.

1 Errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, usage and grammar and/or paragraphing repeatedly distract the reader and make the text difficult to read. The writing reflects more than one of these problems.
A. Spelling errors are frequent, even on common words.
B. Punctuation (including terminal punctuation) is often missing or incorrect.
C. Capitalization is random.
D. Paragraphing is missing, irregular, or so frequent (every sentence) that it has no relationship to the organizational structure of the text.
E. Errors in grammar or usage are very noticeable, frequent, and affect meaning.
F. The reader must read once to decode, then again for meaning. Extensive editing (virtually every line) would be required to polish the text for publication.

CONVENTIONS

6-Trait Scoring Rubric

6-Trait Scoring Rubric

6-Trait Scoring Rubric *(left vertical margin)*

6-Trait Scoring Rubric *(right vertical margin)*

VOICE

6 The writer speaks directly to the reader in a way that is individual, compelling and engaging. The writer "aches with caring," yet is aware and respectful of the audience and the purpose for writing.
A. The reader feels a strong interaction with the writer, sensing the person behind the words.
B. The writer takes a risk by revealing who they are and what they think.
C. The tone and voice give flavor and texture to the message and are appropriate for the purpose and audience.
D. Narrative writing seems honest, personal and written from the heart. Expository or persuasive writing reflects a strong commitment to the topic by showing why the reader needs to now this and why they should care.
E. This piece screams to be read aloud, shared, and talked about. The writing makes you think about and react to the author's point of view.

5 A sincere attempt has been made to address the purpose and audience for the writing in an interesting way. It skips a beat here and there, however.
A. It's a strong attempt although the best moments fade in and out.
B. Moments of insight make this piece come alive.
C. The writer pays attention to which tone is best used on this piece. It's not totally consistent but leans in the right direction.
D. Narrative writing has many moments when the writer feels connected.
E. Expository or persuasive writing leaves the reader with a sense of why the writer chose these ideas.

4 The writer seems sincere, but not fully engaged or involved. The result is pleasant or even personable, but not compelling.
A. The writing communicates in an earnest, pleasing manner.
B. Only one or two moments here or there surprise, delight, or move the reader.
C. The writer seems aware of an audience but weighs ideas carefully and discards personal insights in favor of safe generalities.
D. Narrative writing seems sincere, but not passionate; expository or persuasive writing lacks consistent engagement with the topic to build credibility.
E. The writer's willingness to share his/her point of view may emerge strongly in some places, but is often obscured behind vague generalities.

3 It would be hard to point to a unique moment or two, although the reader is trying desperately to "hear" the writer.
A. The writer keeps the reader a safe distance away. Hope of connecting is all that keeps the reader going.
B. No special moments stand out. It's all pretty much the same.
C. It's more important for this writer to hide and be safe than to try and connect.
D. Narrative writing tells only what it must. No care is shown to help the writer feel anything.
E. The reader has to wonder if the writer cares one way or the other about that topic. (Expository or persuasive.)
F. A glimmer of voice is all that is found here and that's a generous reading.

2 The voice in the piece relies on the readers good faith to hear or feel anything in phrases such as "I like it" or "It was fun."
A. The writing sits on the surface and does not reach out past the most stereotyped of phrases.
B. The writing is humdrum and "risk-free."
C. The writing does not acknowledge the needs of the reader to understand any point of view in the piece.
D. Narrative writing is just an outline and does not have any detail to engage the reader.
E. As an expository or persuasive piece it lacks any conviction or authority to distinguish it from a mere list of facts.
F. So many chances and yet the writer misses every opportunity to engage the reader.

1 The writer seems indifferent, uninvolved, or distanced from the topic and/or the audience. As a result, the paper reflects more than one of the following problems:
A. The writer speaks in a kind of monotone that flattens all potential highs or lows of the message.
B. The lack of voice begins to lull the reader to sleep.
C. The writer is not concerned with the audience, or the writer's style is a complete mismatch for the intended reader.
D. The writing is lifeless or mechanical; depending on the topic, it may be overly technical or jargonistic.
E. Narrative? Expository? Who can tell?
F. No point of view is reflected in the writing.

VOICE

WORD CHOICE

6 Words convey the intended message in a precise, interesting, and natural way. The words are powerful and engaging.
A. Words are specific and accurate; it is easy to understand just what the writer means.
B. The words and phrases create pictures and linger in your mind.
C. The language is natural and never overdone; both words and phrases are individual and effective.
D. Striking words and phrases often catch the reader's eye and linger in the reader's mind. (You can recall a handful as you reflect on the paper.)
E. Lively verbs energize the writing. Precise nouns and modifiers add depth and specificity.
F. Precision is obvious. The writer has taken care to put just the right word or phrase in just the right spot.

5 Attempts are made to reach for better and more precise words although not as often as possible
A. Words are correct and in many cases they are "just right."
B. It's easy to understand what the writer is communicating. Several "mind pictures" are present.
C. As the writer tries new words and phrases, they are usually more right than wrong.
D. The verbs are more active but still may need a little attention here and there.
E. There's care and attention paid to selecting the best words to fit the piece. It's moved past the "just functional stage."
F. The words and phrases are working really well.

4 The language is functional, even if it lacks much energy. It is easy to figure out the writer's meaning on a general level.
A. Words are adequate and correct in a general sense; they simply lack much flair and originality.
B. Familiar words and phrases communicate, but rarely capture the reader's imagination. Still, the paper may have one or two fine moments.
C. Attempts at colorful language show a willingness to stretch and grow, but sometimes it goes too far (thesaurus overload!).
D. The writing is marked by passive verbs, everyday nouns and adjectives, and lack of interesting adverbs.
E. The words are only occasionally refined; it's more often, "the first thing that popped into my mind."
E. The words and phrases are functional – with only a moment or two of sparkle.

3 The language is interpretable but without any energy. A little interpretation is needed to understand some parts.
A. Words are mostly adequate but add no flavor to the piece.
B. Simple words are all that are attempted and they may be so general they distract from the meaning. The verbs lack any pizzazz.
C. Few attempts are made at colorful or figurative language and even those work only at a limited level.
D. Although most of the parts of speech can be identified in the sentence, some misuse is confusing to the reader.
E. The words feel like rote response and reflect a lack of craftsmanship.
F. The reader gets meaning from the words in only the most general way.

2 So many places are flawed that meaning is often impaired. Wrong words are used and the reader cannot see any connection to the idea being shared.
A. Language is so vague (e.g., It was a fun time, She was neat, It was nice, We did lots of stuff) that only a limited message comes through.
B. Even simple words are used incorrectly. The verbs if present are flat.
C. No attempts are made to use figurative or colorful language.
D. Limited vocabulary and/or frequent misuse of parts of speech impair understanding.
E. Jargon or clichés distract or mislead. Persistent redundancy distracts the reader.
F. If you work very hard you can get a general understanding of what the piece is about – but it's not easy.

1 The writer struggles with a limited vocabulary, searching for words to convey meaning. The writing reflects more than one of these problems:
A. The language often makes no sense.
B. "Blah, blah, blah" is all that the reader reads and hears.
C. Words are used incorrectly, making the message secondary to the misfires with the words.
D. The lack of vocabulary and the misuse of parts of speech keep the reader from understanding.
E. Repetition of words and phrases/misuse of words and phrases litter the piece.
F. Problems with language leave the reader wondering what the writer is trying to say. The words just do not work in this piece.

WORD CHOICE

SENTENCE FLUENCY

6 The writing has an easy flow, rhythm and cadence. Sentences are well built, with strong and varied structure that invites expressive oral reading.
A. Sentences are constructed in a way that underscores and enhances the meaning.
B. Sentences vary in length as well as structure. Fragments, if used, add style. Dialogue, if present, sounds natural.
C. Purposeful and varied sentence beginnings add variety and energy.
D. The use of creative and appropriate connectives between sentences and thoughts show how each relates to and builds upon the one before it.
E. The writing has cadence; the writer has thought about the sound of the words as well as the meaning. The first time you read it aloud is a breeze.

5 Much of this piece has a sense of rhythm and flow, but some parts still need work. Technically the sentences are correctly structured.
A. Some of the sentences are phrased so carefully that the reader gets totally caught up in them; others remain a bit sterile.
B. Correct construction is present in the sentences and variety in type is present. Few examples of risk-taking are present such as dialogue or fragments.
C. Attention has been paid to different sentence beginners. Just a bit more attention here and the piece becomes musical.
D. Connectives are present but not completely refined.
E. You can read this piece aloud quite easily with only a moment or two of problems.

4 The text hums along with a steady beat, but tends to be more pleasant or businesslike than musical, more mechanical than fluid.
A. Although sentences may not seem artfully crafted or musical, they get the job done in a routine fashion.
B. Sentences are usually constructed correctly; they hang together, they are sound.
C. Sentence beginnings are not ALL alike; some variety is attempted.
D. The reader sometimes has to hunt for clues (e.g., connecting words and phrases like however, therefore, naturally, after a while, on the other hand, to be specific, for example, next, first of all, later, but as it turned out, although, etc.) that show how sentences interrelate.
E. Parts of the text invite expressive oral reading; others may be stiff, awkward, choppy, or gangly.

3 Technically correct sentences tend to create a sing-song pattern or lull the reader to sleep. Nothing in the sentences creates a sense of fluidity.
A. Sentences are generally correct although a few may be lacking some key ingredients.
B. You can read through the editing problems in this piece and see where the sentences logically begin and end.
C. There is a reliance on patterned sentence beginnings, however, a few sentences break out.
D. Only a very few and very simple connectives lead the reader from sentence to sentence.
E. You can read this aloud – after a few tries.

2 Even some of the easier sentences have structural problems which cause the reader to stop and figure out what is being said and how.
A. The phrasing does not sound natural because of problems in structure as well as placement of words.
B. To make the sentences correct and flow many would have to be reconstructed.
C. Many sentences begin the same way and may follow the same patterns (e.g., subject-verb-object) in a monotonous pattern.
D. Connectives, though present, are often misused or lead the reader in the wrong direction.
E. The text does not invite expressive oral reading.

1 The reader has to practice quite a bit in order to give this paper a fair interpretive reading. The writing reflects more than one of the following problems:
A. Sentences are choppy, incomplete, rambling or awkward; they need work.
B. There is little to no "sentence sense" present. Even if this piece was flawlessly edited, the sentences would not hang together.
C. So many sentences are incomplete that it is hard to judge the quality of the beginnings.
D. Endless connectives (and, and so, but then, because, and then, etc.) or a complete lack of connectives create a massive jumble of language.
E. The text is so flawed that it cannot be read aloud without the writer's help.

SENTENCE FLUENCY

6-Trait Scoring Rubric