

# **Capstone Portfolio**

**English as a Foreign Language (EFL)**

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**March 2013**

**Abstract**

This capstone portfolio demonstrates my theoretical understanding of the unique needs of students learning English as a second language, and my capability of using theories to inform my teaching in EFL context. In the first part of this project, I state my perception of my position as a language teacher in Philosophy of Teaching statement. By reviewing theory from sociocultural, linguistic, and pedagogical perspectives, I exhibit how I will bridge between theory and practice. In the second section, I demonstrate my comprehensive understanding of eight critical TESOL domains from perspectives of learners and learning, learning environment, curriculum, and instruction. For each domain, I use at least one artifact of my previous work as evidence to illustrate my competence in the domains addressed. In the third section, I raise questions and discuss further implication for the profession. By exploring possible ways of pursuing these issues in my future career, I not only demonstrate my understanding of critical issues in EFL education, but also show my strong commitment to this field.

## **Table of Contents**

Philosophy of Teaching

TESOL Standards for EFL Teachers

Standard 1: Planning

Standard 2: Instructing

Standard 3: Assessing

Standard 4: Identity and Context

Standard 5: Language Proficiency

Standard 6: Learning

Standard 7: Content

Standard 8: Commitment and Professionalism

Reflection and Questions

Appendix

Artifact A: Three Genre Reading Scaffolding Lesson Plans

Artifact B: Observation and Interview Project

Artifact C: Lesson Plan for Practicum (“The Ugly Vegetables”)

Artifact D: Educational Linguistics Case Study

Artifact E: Assessment Analysis Project: Basic Information and Student’s English  
Language Proficiency

Artifact F: Foundations Fieldwork Experiences

Artifact G: Reflective Journals

Artifact H: Lesson Plan (“A Rice Sandwich”)

Artifact I: Presentation on Southeast TESOL Convention

Artifact J: Class Observation Report

## Philosophy of Teaching

As English Language Learner teachers, it is our job to know students' cultural identities and communities, how their unique backgrounds influence their language learning, and the best way to serve their needs and help them achieve higher academic success and English proficiency. After a deep immersion into theoretical studies, I believe that I have formed my own philosophy of teaching to give answers to the questions above.

### **Understanding of Students and Curriculum**

As an ELL teacher, I believe that the primary mission for us is to know our students. It is not an easy task since the students we will have are mainly those with diverse cultural identities. Today, the population of the people who speak a language other than English is growing at an increasing speed (García, 2005; Skinner et al., 2010). However, their diverse language backgrounds and their unique communities are rarely factored into the instruction in the classrooms. Without adequate language support, recognition of their identities, and involvement of their communities in the classroom, many ELL students are marginalized (Corson, 2001; Townsend & Fu, 2001). All of these facts remind me that as an ELL teacher, I should never neglect students' special needs due to their unique identities and their different communities that they live in. In fact, the students' communities can be a gold mine for teachers to enrich their instruction. Based on Jiménez's (2009) study and my field trip to a southeast Nashville immigrant community along Nolensville Pike, I found that community literacies are especially useful for teachers as foundations for their instruction. The knowledge of the communities will not only help teachers to know their students better, but can also help to

form bonds among students, and improve the efficiency of teaching. Teachers can take the initiative to help the students' communities get involved in school. Finally, it will benefit the students' academic progress, and studies have shown this involvement to be effective (Nieto & Bode, 2011).

The second thing that I need to understand is how students' cultural identities affect their language learning, so as to help them succeed in the current curriculum. According to Corson (2001), ELL students are in a less powerful position, and the mainstream education in the U.S. has always been trying to shape students' identities. If the teacher doesn't pay attention to this fact, language minority students might feel inferior to others unconsciously. This will certainly prevent them from learning the new language. What's more, as many ELL students have a low English proficiency level, the language barrier can also prevent them from further learning. Therefore, as an ELL teacher, I need to stress the importance of their unique cultural backgrounds and incorporate their identities into the instruction. In this way, the language minority students are empowered in the process of culturally responsive instruction (Cummins, 1986; Ogbu & Simons, 1998). What's more, a teacher should focus on the cultivation of critical language awareness during the implementation of the curriculum (Corson, 2001). It happens that some curriculums use a "distorted lens" to let students view some minority groups with prejudice (Nieto & Bode, 2011, p. 121), and all teachers should avoid this. As an ELL teacher, I will help all students to build critical thinking on the issues concerning majority and minority groups, and develop a respectful and harmonious atmosphere in the classroom. ELL students cannot gain higher academic success if they

feel uncomfortable and alienated in the classroom, and it is our responsibility to help them feel esteemed and empowered.

Based on the previous studies and current situation, I believe that a two-way bilingual education program is the most suitable program to serve the needs of ELL students. Just as Thomas and Collier (1996) recommended, I believe that the most successful programs should have two factors: one is a long-term instruction of academic content in students' first language, and the other is a socioculturally welcoming environment for language minority students. To start with, instruction through students' L1 is of great importance to students' cognitive development. According to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, the learning of the first language can greatly influence a person's development of higher mental consciousness (Johnson, 2004). A qualified program for ELL students should provide enough instruction to facilitate their acquisition of their first language, otherwise their cognitive abilities cannot be fully developed, and this will harm their potential for future academic success. Therefore, I believe that L1 education is especially important for ELL students, and it is not appropriate to have the students be totally submersed only in English when their L1 abilities have not been fully developed. Second, I believe that the change of sociocultural context in schooling will benefit the learning of ELL students to a large extent. When ELL students are immersed into a brand new language environment, it often happens that they cannot catch up with the academic level of "mainstream" students, and their languages and cultures are not stressed in school. This may cause the language minority students to feel that their identities are inferior to the majorities. Therefore, building an environment that recognizes their cultural identities will increase their confidence and self-esteem and finally improve their

academic achievement. The effectiveness of this environment has been proved by previous studies. Cummins's (1986) study showed that the empowerment of minority students can help them avoid academic failures, and one of the key methods is the incorporation of their cultural features into schooling. Kirk-Senesac (2002) also affirmed the benefit of an environment where students' identities can be nurtured and respected through a program of two-way bilingual immersion. Consequently, based on the studies and my reflection, I believe that a two-way bilingual education program can best serve the needs of ELL students. It provides the instruction for them to develop a higher cognitive ability and a socioculturally welcoming environment by affirming the importance of their native languages.

From the discussions above, I have formed a theoretical understanding of how to best serve the students to learn English. I believe that the affirmation of their cultural identities is of great importance to their academic success; this affirmation can be reflected both in the concentration on their native languages and the involvement of their cultural backgrounds. To start with, in order to best serve the ELL students, there should be legal and institutional supports for their first languages. A solid acquisition of their first language will help the development of their cognitive level, and this is the foundation of their future academic success. Also, by affirming the significance of their home languages, their self-esteem is elevated, which will also benefit their learning of a new language and content subjects. Second, it is of vital importance to integrate their cultural backgrounds into teaching, thus creating a culturally and socially welcoming environment. As ELL teachers, we should properly deal with cultural diversity in the classroom and use it as an advantage to enrich our instruction. One of the most effective

ways is the involvement of community and household knowledge. Teachers can introduce this knowledge to the classroom by collecting and interpreting community literacies (Jiménez et al. 2009), interviewing and inviting family members to school to share their household knowledge (Jiménez et al. 2009; Moll et al. 1992; Nieto, 2000), combining students' experiences in their daily lives to language instruction (Martinez et al. 2008), etc. These strategies can make the instruction more culturally responsive by introducing their funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992; Ogbu & Simons, 1998); what's more important, they can create a school and social environment that values their cultures, which will empower ELL students and benefit their higher academic achievement (Cummins, 1986).

### **Communicative Language Teaching**

Besides the general understanding of students' identity and curriculum, I also value my position as a language teacher. Based on the framework of Communicative Language Teaching, which believes that "the primary function of language use is communication" (Brandl, 2008, p.5), I am dedicated to helping students acquire the ability to communicate in depth using target language in a different cultural context.

As a start, I believe that the students can make greater progress only when they are empowered and fully motivated. By letting my students be aware of and participate in my teaching plan, I want them to feel empowered as active contributors rather than passive recipients in the classroom. Students' first language is not forbidden in my classroom; however, I let them understand when it is appropriate to use their native language and why. Through my teaching, my students can understand and appreciate the beauty of the diversity that a foreign language could bring to them; however, they should never be



convinced that the native language proficiency is their ultimate goal. In my classroom, I convince my students that they could become proficient bilinguals regardless of to what extent they are “native-like”. By maintaining a low affective filter (Krashen, 1982), I help my students be fully empowered and motivated on their journey marching towards highly proficient bilinguals.

Only strong motivation is not enough for students to learn a new language; I believe that effective second language teaching should be organized based on the 5 Cs of the National standards, namely Communication, Communities, Comparisons, Connections, and Cultures. Among all the standards, I strongly believe that the ultimate goal of my teaching is to foster students’ competence in communication. Bearing this in mind, I implement task-based instructional activities (Brandl, 2008, p. 8) into my classroom. Built on the real life context of the target culture, all the activities are able to provoke the exchange of new information. Through activities such as true/false, yes/no, and multiple-choice questions, I let my students identify the key elements from authentic oral and written discourses that occurred in a context where real communication happens. After this guided input, I model communicative tasks in terms of topic development, vocabulary building, and necessary linguistic support to facilitate students’ meaningful output production. Students’ competence in interpretive mode is particularly emphasized; therefore, they need to learn to think critically and produce arguments with originality. I value meaning over form, so correction only appears in a form of constructive feedback that can promote sustainable improvement. By doing structured task-based activities, students are empowered to use the target language as a means to communicate ideas, rather than merely producing accurate sentences.

Setting communication as the ultimate goal of my teaching also informs my attitude towards language accuracy. I firmly believe in the importance of teaching grammar. In my classroom, form-focused activities (Brandl, 2008, p. 185) are used to enhance accuracy in the target language. However, I do not allow my students to be overwhelmed by mechanical rules. I believe that grammar teaching can be better and more effectively situated in the framework of communicative language teaching and should never be taught without context. Through communicative task-based instruction (Brandl, 2008) and teaching of meaningful lexical chunks, students can gradually learn to use grammar simultaneously. In this way, students are never frustrated by the lack of connection between “knowing what” and “knowing how” throughout the communication process in the target language.

In order to improve my students’ communicative competence, I integrate my teaching with authentic and meaningful input (Scott, 2010, p. 101). As a 21<sup>st</sup>-century language educator, I take the greatest advantage of rich and authentic materials in my target language that is brought by modern multimedia technologies. I believe that authentic language input, such as novels, videos, pop music, movies, news, etc., are far more effective than the artificial resources that are specially designed for language learning purposes, even at the earliest stage of language learning. By carefully selecting and using meaningful authentic materials, students can not only be fully motivated to learn the language in engaging scenarios, but also become active participants in the communicative tasks based on real-life situations. In addition, the culture of the people speaking the target language is also integrated into classroom through authentic input. In this way, students can greatly improve their communicative competence in the target

cultural context from an acquisition-rich learning environment powered by authentic materials.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the theoretical and personal reflection in terms of students' identity, curriculum, choice of program and legal issues, I believe that the most effective strategy to serve ELL students is to linguistically and culturally value their identities. By affirming the importance of their first languages, combining their household knowledge into language instruction, and by creating a multicultural environment, I believe that ELL teachers can not only help the ELL students reach a higher level of academic success, but also develop multicultural perspectives for all students.

As a language teacher, I believe my passion and understanding in the target language and culture guarantee my devotion to constantly improving my teaching practice. With my efforts in empowering students as proficient bilinguals, contextualizing task-based activities, and incorporating authentic materials with structured instruction, I believe my students can develop their competency in communication in the target countries and be stimulated to become life-long learners of the target language.

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## TESOL Standards for EFL Teachers

### **Domain 1: Planning**

#### *Artifact A: Three Genre Reading Scaffolding Lesson Plans*

Planning is an important domain for language teachers, especially for ELL teachers. To demonstrate my ability to make comprehensive, relevant, and effective lesson plans, I composed a *Three Genre Reading Scaffolding Lesson Plan*.

#### **Learners and Learning**

I understand that in a learning environment with mixed native English speakers and English Language Learners, teachers should carefully choose the topic and conduct activities so as to facilitate students' learning. The learners in my classroom may come from diverse cultural backgrounds with different prior knowledge, but there are some topics that can be understood by all the students. I believe that all the learners have experience in nature, so I chose the appreciation of nature as the main theme of this set of lesson plans. I understand that ELL students are special learners who need to develop understanding of the content knowledge and English proficiency at the same time, so I modify my plans to cater to their needs. To make the content knowledge more accessible to ELLs, I plan to use visual aids, including graphic organizers, videos, and online pin board (Pinterest), to facilitate their learning. All the three lesson plans contain the learning of vocabulary so as to help ELLs fully understand the text.

#### **Learning Environment**

I also understand that the learning environment is complicated. In the classroom, there are students from diverse cultural backgrounds with different cognitive level and language proficiency. To help all students achieve both content and language goals in this complicated learning environment, I include differentiated instruction in my lesson plans.

I assess students' prior knowledge at the start of the lesson and use students' answers to group students for further activities. I also understand that in a learning environment with many native English speakers, ELL students can feel intimidated. To get all the learners into classroom activities, I use tools like "talking squares" to ensure that all students have equal chance to express themselves.

### **Curriculum**

Based on the curriculum standards of students' grade level, I designed the lesson plan to help students understand figurative language and analysis of characteristics. The lesson plans have both language and content objectives, so ELL students can meet the curriculum requirements in language arts in a comprehensible way. In addition, by using various multimedia tools to facilitate learning in my planning, I enriched the curriculum with up-to-date new technology for learners. Students have access to online Web 2.0 tools such as Pinterest, Facebook, VYou, and Yodio to accomplish tasks, which will ensure their better performance in this digital age within the current curriculum.

### **Assessment**

This set of lesson plans contains various types of assessment. At the beginning of each lesson, I plan to assess students' prior knowledge to inform the differentiated instruction in the following sections of the lesson. At the end of each lesson plan, I use an interactive online graphic organizer as a means of assessment. ELL students will face fewer language barriers in doing the graphic tasks, so the assessment can better measure their mastery of content area knowledge. In addition, students are required to record and share their thoughts on online video communities such as VYou. This assessment can



lower ELL students' affective filter by providing sufficient time for them to prepare at home.

**Domain 2: Instructing***Artifact B: Observation and Interview Project*

From my *Observation and Interview Project* in the course “Analysis of Teaching,” I have experienced the implementation of a complete lesson, and acquired the understanding of factors that contribute to effective instructing. The lesson that I observed was a fourth grade English literacy lesson. Through observing the lesson and interviewing the teacher and a student, I deepened my theoretical understanding of effective teaching tools that we developed in this lesson.

*Artifact C: Lesson Plan for Practicum: The Ugly Vegetables*

For the practicum of “Methods and Materials for Teaching Linguistically Diverse Students” course, I designed a lesson plan to teach an English literacy lesson to second grade students. By combining language objectives with content objectives as well as using culturally responsive materials, I implemented the lesson to cater both native English speaking students and ELL students’ needs.

**Learners and Learning**

For the lesson *The Ugly Vegetables*, I interviewed the teacher and some of the ELL students in the classroom so as to understand the learners and how they learn. In the classroom, there were nineteen students, and eight of them are ELL students from China, UAE, Mexico, and India. In a classroom mixed with ELL students and native English speakers, I believe that I need to pay attention to the language itself. I made my lesson comprehensible to all the learners by choosing culturally relevant materials, introducing the topic with visual aids, and instructing vocabulary explicitly. I believe that these factors benefit the learning of both ELL students and native English speaking students.

### **Learning Environment**

From the *Observation and Interview Project* and my lesson *The Ugly Vegetables*, I understand that the appropriate learning environment for different age groups can be different. For my lesson conducted in second grade classrooms, all the students were sitting on the carpet when the teacher was lecturing, which helped them concentrate on the topic. They would only return to their tables when they were working on their assignments. The classroom was decorated with artifacts that represent various cultures, and the atmosphere was lively. In the *Observation and Interview Project*, the students were in the fourth grade in a suburban elementary school. The tables in the classroom were arranged in groups, and the students sat in the groups when the teacher was instructing. The classroom was also decorated with more academic words that promote higher-order thinking skills and fewer pictures, which was more appropriate for the cognitive development level of fourth grade students. The two different learning environments in classrooms with students from different age groups help me understand the importance of arranging learning environment based on learners' ages, demographic characteristics, and cognitive development levels.

### **Curriculum**

By adding language objectives to the lesson objectives in my lesson plan *The Ugly Vegetables*, I demonstrate my understanding of the importance of language instruction in the curriculum of ELL education. Different from students from language majority group, ELL students' challenge in the lesson is far more than content knowledge. However, we should also never assume that the students who cannot speak English well have low cognitive and metacognitive thinking skills. In this lesson, I choose to set both language

and content area objectives for all the students, including ELL students. By doing this, I show my intention to challenge ELL students while making input comprehensible.

### **Assessment**

From the *Observation and Interview Project*, I recorded and analyzed the formative and summative assessment of the lesson. The teacher used a program, “Study Island”, to assess students’ understanding of the key concepts through multiple-choice questions. Throughout the lesson, the teacher also assessed students’ understandings by letting them show thumbs up or raise hands if they understood, and use body language to show their choice to the items. By analyzing the multiple forms of assessment during the lesson, I demonstrate my comprehension of importance of using diverse formative assessments in classrooms.

**Domain 3: Assessing***Artifact D: Educational Linguistics Case Study*

In the case study, I demonstrate my understanding of educational linguistics as well as the ability to assess non-native English speaker's language proficiency from various linguistic perspectives. I conducted a series of interviews with an Ethiopian immigrant, a non-native English language speaker, and analyzed audio recordings and written documentation for various linguistic aspects, including phonology, phonetics, morphology, morphophonology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. To have a deeper understanding of various features that could influence the speaker's English proficiency, I also interviewed the learner about his learning environment and curriculum setting. Based on the analysis of the speaker's linguistic features and other factors that could affect language learning, I assessed the interviewee's level of English language proficiency development and designed comprehensive instruction plans.

*Artifact E: Assessment Analysis Project: Basic Information and Student's English Language Proficiency*

During my practicum for *Language Assessment of English Language Learners* course, I worked with an ELL student from Chinese cultural background, and analyzed the student's situation in depth. In this artifact, I choose the first and third part of the analysis project, which illustrated the learning context and students' cultural and linguistic background, and analyzed students' English language proficiency with the evidence from two assessments, the Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM) and Tennessee English Language Placement Test (TELPA).

**Learners and Learning**

From the case study of an adult Ethiopian refugee (*Artifact D*), I demonstrate my understanding of the learner's need, which is to improve his proficiency of English in academic settings and further his education after high school. Based on the learner's situation, I carefully analyzed the recording of his speech from various linguistic aspects, including phonology, phonetics, morphology, morphophonology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. I commented on the learner's ability in these domains, and designed learning plan to help him improve his language accuracy in academic setting. This artifact proves that I have the ability to analyze English learner's specific needs, and design responsive learning plans.

### **Learning Environment**

In *Artifact E*, I showed my understanding of the learning environment through the introduction of the basic information of the ELL student. The classroom is one of the most important learning environments for the student I worked with. In the classroom, the picture decorations create a welcoming and attractive environment for young children. Besides, the artifacts from various countries in the room also show that the teacher value ELL students' cultural backgrounds. In addition, through the assessment of students' acculturation level, I acquire the information of her learning environment at home. Based on the information of both school and home learning environment, I form a deeper understanding of the learner's native language and English proficiency development.

### **Curriculum**

From *Artifact D*, I show my ability to make adaptation on curriculum based on students' specific needs. Unlike the ELL student in *Artifact E*, who was lacking of oral English proficiency, the interviewee in *Artifact D* was very fluent in speaking. Based on

the interview, in which he expressed his intention to improve his language accuracy, I specifically analyzed his errors in various linguistic categories, and made suggestions on his future instruction plan. By adding more support on meaningful use of grammatically correct sentences and phrases in academic settings to the current curriculum, I believe that the learner will be able to approach his goal step by step.

### **Assessment**

In order to comprehend the ELL student's linguistic and cultural background as well her English proficiency in *Artifact E*, I revised *Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale* to assess her acculturation level, assessed her oral English proficiency using SOLOM, and interpreted her score in TELPA. This artifact exhibits my ability to assess students' English proficiency and relevant background information with various assessment tools. The analysis of the reliability and validity of TELPA based on the published information also demonstrate my understanding of the evaluation of standardized assessment.

**Domain 4: Identity and Context***Artifact F: Foundations Fieldwork Experiences*

In the practicum for the ELL Foundation course, I interviewed with administrative staff and teachers in Nashville State Community College (NSCC), explored relative case laws and judicial rulings, experienced an ESL classroom in NSCC, and investigated immigrants' community in southeast Nashville. This artifact records my findings in my fieldwork experiences, and demonstrates my understanding of learners' identity in a larger context.

**Learners and Learning**

From my fieldtrip experiences, I formed a deeper understanding of who English Language Learners are and how they learn. From my conversation of key players in NSCC, I got the overall demographic information about the learners. I understand that for the learners who came to the United States with low English proficiency, they can encounter struggles in both language and identity recognition. Many adult English Language Learners are learning English in NSCC as well as working a full-time job to support their families in the States and in their home countries. From the exploration of the community where adult and young ELLs live, I understand that learners live in a neighborhood with mixed cultures. I collected transnational literacies and designed culturally responsive activities to catering learners' needs.

**Learning Environment**

From my fieldtrip experience, I learned that ELLs could learn English both inside and outside schools. In NSCC, adult students learn English in a bright, organized, and large classroom. Due to the number of students, the classroom is teacher-centered with



limited interaction between teacher and student. My experience in Glencliff High School in Nashville helped me understand the learning environment of younger ELLs. The majority of students in the classroom are ELLs, and they interacted more with teachers. The local community is also an environment where learning takes place. From the rich bilingual input in the neighborhood, students can improve their language proficiency. Also, the local community provides teachers with great resources to conduct culturally responsive teaching.

### **Curriculum**

From the learning of case laws and judicial rulings regarding ELLs, I understand that ELL students' content-area learning requirement is not different from mainstream students. However, most of the schools are working hard to design curriculum that can better meet ELL students' needs. From my fieldtrip experience, I realize that ELL students' identity formation process is complicated. Moving from a diverse sociocultural environment and living in hybrid immigrant communities, ELL students are influenced by two different cultures at the same time. Therefore, I recognize that students' household knowledge should be taken into the curriculum of teaching, so as to help them feel more empowered and motivated to gain academic success.

### **Assessment**

In my fourth fieldtrip experience, I perceived a deeper understanding of English Language Learners' cultural background. This perception provides me with first-hand information of ELL students' cultural background, which provides useful information to help me understand the necessity of assessing students' acculturation process. In addition, by knowing students' communities, cultural tradition and social norms, I can better

analyze the cultural bias and face validity of the current English proficiency assessment for ELL students.

**Domain 5: Language Proficiency**

A qualified language teacher should always have a high proficiency in the target language. Being an English learner for fifteen years, I have developed my English language proficiency in both academic settings and basic interpersonal communication settings. In this domain, I will demonstrate evidences of my English proficiency in academic settings and interpersonal communication, and how it reveals my English proficiency in my future career.

During my undergraduate years, I passed the TEM-8 (Test for English Majors, Band 8; the highest level for English major students in China) with a high score. In addition, I pass the TOEFL test with a score of 108 out of 120, which further illustrates my English proficiency in academic settings. During my past year and a half at Vanderbilt University, I can comprehend instructors' lectures, participate in classroom discussions, and write all the assignments in English with no difficulty. I accomplished all the courses with high scores, which partly proves my ability to use English in academic settings. In the fall of 2012, I also gave a presentation at the Southeast TESOL Convention in Knoxville, Tennessee. The presentation was well received by the audiences, including professors and in service teachers. This presentation further demonstrates my oral English proficiency in academic settings.

Besides academic English proficiency, I have also developed my basic interpersonal skills in English. During my time in the United States, I actively participate in academic and non-academic social events, and communicate with friends and roommates who are native English speakers frequently. Furthermore, I worked as a student assistant in Central Library service desk, helping Vanderbilt scholars and students

solve problems related to the functions of the library via phones or face-to-face communication. This part-time job has greatly improved my interpersonal skills, and enabled me to communicate with people from different linguistic backgrounds to help them solve practical problems. I believe that my experiences in my daily life and in my part-time job help me attain a high English proficiency in social settings.

My academic English proficiency and basic interpersonal skills will definitely bring benefits to me as a teacher. I have experiences working as an English training teacher in China, which shows my ability of using English in EFL settings. My practicum at Eakin Elementary School provides a chance to communicate with and instruct students from a diverse cultural background in a U.S. school setting. All these experiences prove that I have the ability to use English for educational purposes. Therefore, I believe that my English proficiency will make myself a qualified English speaker as a teacher in EFL setting.

**Domain 6: Learning***Artifact G: Reflective Journals*

Besides my English proficiency, I also form a solid understanding of students' learning processes when they are learning a new language. To demonstrate my ability to meet the TESOL standards in the domain of learning, I chose eleven reflective journals I wrote in *Foreign Language Learning and Teaching* course. These journals record my perception of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) framework, second language acquisition theory, bilingual education, as well as concrete lesson plans of language teaching.

**Learners and Learning**

To start with, this set of journals reveals my understanding of second language learning from cognitive, linguistic, and pedagogical perspectives. In *Journal # 6*, I demonstrated my understanding of learners in cognitive level with the elaboration of *Ullman's Declarative and Procedural model*. In *Journal # 1 and # 2*, I analyzed CLT framework and how it influenced my teaching. Specifically, *Journal # 4, #7, and #8* shows my understanding of grammar learning for second language learners. I realized that grammar could be best learned with comprehensible and authentic language input, meaningful lexical chunks, as well as proper used form-based activities. *Journal # 3, #9, #10, and #11* illustrate my ability to apply the theories of foreign language learning into concrete lesson plans. In these lesson plans, I use authentic materials to cater learners' needs. Moreover, I form a deeper understanding of learning second language as a dynamic process in *Journal #5*. I understand second language learners could become proficient bilingual regardless of to what extent they are "native-like".

### **Learning Environment**

This set of journals also demonstrates my perception of the learning environment for learners in EFL classrooms. In EFL settings, students are situated in a mainstream culture with limited access to the culture in the target languages. However, learners can learn a foreign language more effectively when they use the target language in real-life context. Based on CLT theories, I understand that language teaching should have a set communication as the ultimate goal. Therefore, EFL teachers should create authentic learning environment that can provide students with rich and comprehensible input in the target language.

### **Curriculum**

This set of journals will definitely help me design curriculum of language teaching in EFL setting. In most of the EFL teaching context, especially in China, the English learning curriculum is mainly designed based on learning grammar. After learning the CLT, I realize that the teaching units should be organized based on different themes and real life tasks, rather than grammar knowledge. In addition, I understand the importance of adding more authentic materials to the current curriculum. Teaching language with materials specially designed for language learners all the time is not effective teaching; language learning is more likely to occur in authentic situation through meaningful use of the target language.

### **Assessment**

In the lesson plans of teaching listening and speaking in this set of journals, I clearly demonstrate my ability to design assessment. Specifically, to guarantee the validity of assessment, teachers should clarify the purpose of each assessment. In the

listening lesson plan, I designed the assessment of students listening comprehension in the form of true or false questions. I did not ask students to write the answer with sentences, because students' writing abilities can greatly influence the correctness of their answers, and the result of the assessment cannot reveal students' listening comprehension level. I believe that the assessment I designed in the lesson plans reveal my ability to conduct valid assessment.

**Domain 7: Content***Artifact H: Lesson Plan (“A Rice Sandwich”)*

I understand that students can learn most when they use language for a genuine purpose. Therefore, I include content objectives together with language objectives when I plan my lessons. This artifact is an example of the lesson plans that I wrote with clearly stated content-area goals. I chose a story (“A Rice Sandwich”) from *The House on Mango Street*, a book telling stories that happen in an immigrant community in the States. With language support for ELLs, this lesson plan also contains content-area learning goals, including identifying important sentence and learning structure of persuasive writing in Language Arts classrooms.

**Learners and Learning**

In this lesson plan, I demonstrate my understanding of teaching learners in a classroom with both ELLs and native speakers. To make the content area knowledge more comprehensible for ELL students, I use graphic organizer rather than merely text description. In the activity “Persuasive Map” both ELL students and mainstream students can acquire the idea of persuasive writing structure in an explicit way. To make all the learners achieve the content-area goals, I grouped students according to their English proficiency level, and let them do the same activity with different carefully designed culturally responsive questions. ELL students are also allowed to use their native language with translation, so as to make it possible for all students to participate in the activity without being afraid. Also, the story I chose to teach is high culturally relevant to ELL students’ lives. I believe that all the adaptations in my classroom will promote effective learning for all the learners.



### **Learning Environment**

In this lesson plan, I understand that ELL students need to learn both language and content-area knowledge in a learning environment with students from diverse background. When they are mixed with native speakers, ELL students can have a high anxiety level. Therefore, I use differentiated instruction to help students learn the content-area knowledge in an environment with students with different English proficiency level.

### **Curriculum**

In this lesson plan, I demonstrate my understanding of curriculum setting for ELL students. I recognize that although ELL students are still in the process of learning English as a second language, they also need to meet the State Curriculum Standards. Based on this curriculum requirement, I set objectives of the lesson plan corresponding to the standards. In addition, I incorporate culturally relevant materials into the curriculum, which shows my ability to make adaptations for ELL students in the current curriculum.

### **Assessment**

To assess students' understanding of content-area knowledge, I incorporate various types of assessment into the lesson plan. Students are required to write three key words rather than a long paragraph to demonstrate their ability to analyze the characteristics of the main character. The activity "persuasion map" is an assessment aiming at assessing students understanding of persuasive writing structures, and students are allowed to fill in the blank with the aids of their native language. These two assessments can both help all the students (including ELL students) to show their mastery of the content-area ability regardless of their English proficiency level.

**Domain 8: Commitment and Professionalism***Artifact I: Presentation on Southeast TESOL Convention*

In the summer after my first year at Peabody College, I went back to China and became an English training teacher in one of China's largest English Teaching Institutions, and innovatively used a new Web 2.0 tool, *Pinterest*, in my classroom. Based on my theoretical understanding of the use of Web 2.0 tools in differentiated instruction, as well as Dual Coding theory in second language acquisition, I and two other classmates submitted our proposal, *Using Pinterest in Large ESL Classrooms*, to present at the Southeast TESOL Convention 2012. This artifact is a Prezi file that we used for the presentation in the conference. My teaching experience and my efforts in improving the effectiveness of EFL teaching show my commitment to my future career. In addition, sharing my findings and successful experience with a large group of English language teaching professionals at a national conference also demonstrates my efforts in influencing and learning from the broader teaching community and communities at large.

**Learners and Learning**

I understand that learners in my EFL classroom are Chinese high school and college students who are interested in improving their English. They are mostly self-motivated and interested in exploring American culture. Also, they spend much of their spare time online, and they talk about pop culture a lot with their peers. Based on my understanding of these learners, I chose to incorporate more authentic pop culture into my classroom. Specifically, I used Pinterest to prepare and implement my lesson plans. Also, I gave students tasks that required them to use Pinterest to collect authentic artifacts.

Students were strongly motivated, and the effectiveness of their learning improved greatly.

### **Learning Environment**

My presentation also shows my understanding of the learning environment of EFL classrooms in China. Based on my experience of teaching, I learned that due to the large number of students in classrooms, it is more difficult for teachers to interact with all the students. To cater students' need in such a learning environment, I used Pinterest as a tool for students to communicate with me and other students more efficiently. I have found that the use of web Web 2.0 tools is particularly beneficial to enhancing the learning environment with larger groups of learners.

### **Curriculum**

According to Communicative Language Teaching theories, authentic and comprehensible input is of great importance for second language learners. Therefore, based on the existing curriculum of EFL classrooms, I incorporate more authentic materials to facilitate language learning. By repining pictures, text, and videos from the online community shared by people all around the world, I helped students get in touch with English in an authentic context, which will promote their English learning.

### **Assessment**

In this presentation, we mainly introduced eight ways to use Pinterest in large EFL classrooms. Among all the methods, I especially emphasized the way Pinterest could be used as a tool to assess students. For example, teachers can have students create board and pin all the information they know about the topic. In this way, teachers can assess students' prior knowledge. Moreover, group activities can also include sharing their

discussions with classmates by creating a pin board on Pinterest. Teachers can view the online pin boards as a way of formative assessment.

## Reflection and Questions

The master level courses and field experiences have provided me with a comprehensive overview of the field, enabling me to bridge between theory and practice from linguistic and sociocultural perspectives. During my two years in this program, I have acquired ability to plan, instruct, and assess in EFL classroom setting. In addition, I have also learned the importance of adjusting my teaching practice based on students' identity, learning context, and the content of learning. With my high-level English language proficiency and strong commitment to this field, I believe that I will become a qualified language educator in EFL setting, influencing not only my students, but also other professionals in this field. With this goal in mind, I will continue my career with the pursuing of the following issues.

The first question to consider in my future career is the implementation of differentiated instruction in large ESL classrooms. Different from the classroom settings in the States, a typical ESL classroom in China may have more than forty students with English proficiency of various levels. Therefore, how to cater all the students' needs has become a major issue. In the future, I will continue investigating the most effective ways to implement differentiated instruction in EFL classrooms in China. I believe that the use of multimedia tools might be an effective way to facilitate differentiated instruction, so I will try to introduce the use of technology, such as Web 2.0 tools, to collect data, assess students' understanding, and instruct based on students' personalized needs.

The second issue that I wish to continue exploring is the balance between preparing high stake tests and implement communicative language teaching. When I continue my professional development in China, I will face students' needs in scoring

higher in high stake English tests, such as the English subject test in *National Higher Education Entrance Examination*. In the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) framework, students can acquire the grammatical rules more effectively through the meaningful use of the target language in authentic situations. However, with limited time in classrooms and pressures of the high stake formal assessment, language teachers will have to pay more attention on preparing the exam, rather than teaching language in the most effective way. I will continue pursuing a best way to balance these two situations, although the best way to deal with this problem might be a structural change of the language education system in China.

Last but not least, I will explore ways to introduce more authentic materials into EFL classrooms. The language education in China still heavily relies on artificially revised textbooks. According to CLT framework, authentic materials are much more effective in promoting students' ability to communicate in the target language. To pursue this goal, I will take fully advantage of the Internet to obtain authentic teaching materials. I also believe that cooperation with peer teachers in English speaking countries will also greatly enrich my teaching resource. More importantly, the innovation of teaching mode, increasing authentic materials in the textbooks, and addressing the use of authentic materials in national standards will also greatly improve the effectiveness of language teaching in China. Although I may not have the ability to achieve this goal in the near future, I will make every effort to working towards this objective.

Graduation is not an end of learning; rather, it marks a fresh start of a brand new journey. Beyond the theoretical foundation building and professional training at Peabody College, there are still many questions and problems that worth more investigation. I will

continue my career with these questions in mind, and actively involve into the process of pursuing these issues.



## THREE GENRE LESSON PLAN

Wenyang Sun  
Reading and Learning with Print and New Media  
Instructor: Emily Pendergrass  
April 2, 2013



**UNIT THEME: NATURE**

**Lesson One**

Poem:

*"I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud"* by William Wordsworth

**Lesson Two**

Prose:

*"Christmas Cat"* by James Herriot

**Lesson Three**

Song:

*"Starry Starry Night"* by Don McLean

<b>Lesson One:</b>		
<b>Poem: "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud"</b>		
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Date</b>
A Lesson on "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud"	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade English Language Arts Class (16 students, including 8 ELL students)	April 2, 2013
<b>Materials and Preparation</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sixteen copies of the poem: "<i>I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud</i>" by William Wordsworth</li> <li>• Sixteen sets of notes: each set contains one pink note, one green note, one yellow note, and one blue note.</li> <li>• Pinterest board "Iris" (<a href="http://pinterest.com/swyljh/iris/">http://pinterest.com/swyljh/iris/</a>).</li> <li>• PPT with all the key vocabulary words</li> <li>• Video on Youtube: <i>I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud</i> (<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lKej4AHnyH0&amp;feature=related">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lKej4AHnyH0&amp;feature=related</a>, from 1:15)</li> </ul>		
<b>Standard Addressed</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0701.1.19 Determine the appropriate meaning of figurative words and phrases (e.g., metaphor, simile, personification, pun) in passages.</li> <li>• 0701.3.11 Use strong verbs and figurative language (e.g., metaphors, similes) for emphasis or creative effect as appropriate to the purpose.</li> <li>• 0701.7.3 Recognize how visual and sound techniques and design elements (e.g., special effects, camera angles, music) carry or influence messages in various media.</li> </ul>		
<b>Desired Result</b>		
<b>Key Vocabulary</b>		
fluttering/stretched/bay/tossing/sprightly/glee/jocund/pensive/solitude		
<b>Student Objectives</b>		
<p>Students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the use of similes in poetry</li> <li>• Understand personification in this poem</li> <li>• Learn how to use music as a media to express feelings</li> </ul>		
<b>Assessment Evidence</b>		

Performance Task		Evidence
Review of the vocabulary		Students can identify key vocabulary
Activity “Identify the personification in this poem”		Students can identify at least two places where the writer use personification
Assignment: “VYou recording”		Students can choose the proper background music for this poem, and can explain the reasons.
Pin one of your favorite objects on our public pinterest board, and write a simile		Students can write at least one simile
Learning Plan		
Time	Activities	
15 min	I. Building Background	
1 min	1. Briefly review what was learned in the last reading class	
3 min	2. Teacher asks a question: “Do you know the state flower of Tennessee?”  When students answer “Iris”, show students a pinterest board of iris ( <a href="http://pinterest.com/swyljh/iris/">http://pinterest.com/swyljh/iris/</a> ).  Ask students to look at the pictures and say at least one word (adjective or verb) or one phrase to describe iris. They will come up words like “purple” or “beautiful” at first. Listen and try to see if any students say the phrases that compare iris to an object or a person. If there are no answers like this, inspire students to imagine that iris is a person or what iris looks like when there is a breeze in the picture. Ask students to think of one sentence that they feel can most vividly and poetically describe the iris in the picture. Write this sentence on the pink note. Collect all the answers.	
5 min	3. Watch a video: <i>I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud</i> ( <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lKej4AHnyH0&amp;feature=related">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lKej4AHnyH0&amp;feature=related</a> , from 1:15)  Tell students that today we will explore how William Wordsworth described flowers in his poem in the early 19 <sup>th</sup> century. Let students watch the video from youtube. In the video, students will form a primary impression on what the poem describes. At the same time, teacher will quickly review what students have written on the pink notes. Separate the answers that use simile or personification from the others. Use this information for further	

	6 min	<p>differentiation instruction in the following sections.</p> <p>4. Learn new vocabulary</p> <p>Teacher shows the PPT slide with the sentences that contain new vocabulary from the text. Ask students to guess the meaning of each word. Help them understand the meaning and usage of the new words.</p>
60 min		II. Student Activities
	5 min	<p>5. Read the poem</p> <p>Teacher gives every student a copy of “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud”. Ask students to read silently.</p>
	20 min	<p>6. Activity: “Identify the personification of the poem”</p> <p>Lead students to read the first stanza together. Let them circle the verb “dance”. Ask them “Do you think that a flower can dance? What is usually the subject of dance? What’s in your mind when you read the lines saying that the daffodils are dancing?”</p> <p>Ask if anyone know the skill that the poet was using when he wrote this sentence. Explain that the literary device that the writer used here is personification. Ask the students to guess the meaning of personification. Tell them that personification is “the representation of a thing or abstraction in the form of a person” (from dictionary.com).</p> <p>Bearing this in mind, let students identify another place in this poem where the writer used “personification”. Let the students rewrite this sentence without using personification on the green note. Group students in pairs, let them share their notes and identify the differences between Wordsworth’s version and theirs. Teacher leads them discuss why the poet used personification, and what is the characteristics of this technique.</p>
	20 min	<p>7. Pinterest Activity: “Write a simile”</p> <p>Teacher guides students to find another category of figurative language (hint: something is like something).</p> <p>Explain what simile is to students: “ A simile is a figure of speech that directly compares two different things, usually by employing the words ‘like’ or ‘as’.”</p> <p>Group students into four groups of four according to the results of pink notes (assuming that there are eight students that do not use any figurative language in their answers; group these eight students into group one and two, and the other eight students into group</p>

	15 min	<p>three and four). Teacher explains to students that they all need to write one simile. Students can choose one of their favorite flowers, animals, characters, or any other objects to write a phrase or sentence that contains a simile. In groups, students need to brainstorm the object that they want to choose, and what is this object similar to. All students are required to write their phrases or sentences on their yellow notes. Teacher will get involved into the discussion of group one and group two particularly, and inspire them to find a simile that they can write with examples.</p> <p>Teacher gives students an assignment: pin the relevant picture and write the simile under the picture on pinterest board. Students are instructed to login into our course pinterest account, and pin their pictures and similes to share with all the classmates. They need to write in the format of “name: your similes” (example: “William: I wandered lonely as a cloud”, which has been pinned by teacher as an example on the board, <a href="http://pinterest.com/swyljh/similes/">http://pinterest.com/swyljh/similes/</a>) Public Account ID: <a href="mailto:wenyang.sun@vanderbilt.edu">wenyang.sun@vanderbilt.edu</a>; Password: newliteracies</p> <p>8. Activity: Match the music!</p> <p>To help students understand the poet’s feelings and how music can influence the expression of these feelings, guide students to listen carefully to the following three clips of music (first 30 seconds):</p> <p>One: Rhapsody in Blue by George Gershwin (<a href="http://www.xiami.com/song/1770306550">http://www.xiami.com/song/1770306550</a>)</p> <p>Two: Childhood Memory by Bandari (<a href="http://www.xiami.com/song/2088564">http://www.xiami.com/song/2088564</a>)</p> <p>Three: Symphony No.5 in C minor, Op.67 - 1 by Beethoven (<a href="http://www.xiami.com/song/1770897325">http://www.xiami.com/song/1770897325</a>)</p> <p>Let students discuss which piece of music is more appropriate to express the poet’s feelings. Students are required to explain the reasons why they choose this one by illustrating the poet’s emotion in this poem, and forming empathy with the poet.</p>
15 min		III. Review and Assessment
	5 min	<p>9. Review vocabulary</p> <p>Teacher shows the slides with key vocabulary words again. Ask students to read and explain the meaning of these key words together.</p>
	5 min	<p>10. Review the similes and personification in this poem</p> <p>Ask students to review what simile and personification are again. Find two similes and copy the sentences on one side of the blue</p>

	5 min	<p>note; identify two places where the poet used personification and write the sentences on the back of the blue note. Write their names on the note and hand in to the teacher.</p> <p>11. Assignment: “VYou Recording”</p> <p>Teacher briefly introduces “VYou.com” social video and demonstrates the recording process to students. Students are required join the community of this class, record a simple video, and share with teacher and classmates. In the video, they are required to find a piece of music that they feel is appropriate to fit this poem. Read this poem along the music. After reading the poem, they need to use three to five sentences explain why they choose this piece of music and what was the poet’s feeling when he wrote this poem. Record their reading and explanation.</p>
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Text for Lesson One:

## **I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud**

By William Wordsworth

I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the Milky Way,  
They stretched in never-ending line  
Along the margin of a bay:  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they  
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:  
A poet could not but be gay,  
In such a jocund company:  
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.

<b>Lesson Two:</b>		
<b>Prose: "Christmas Cat"</b>		
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Date</b>
A Lesson on "Christmas Cat"	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade English Language Arts Class (16 students, including 8 ELL students)	April 2, 2013
<b>Materials and Preparation</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sixteen copies of the story: "Christmas Cat" by James Herriot</li> <li>• Sixteen pieces of paper (size: A5)</li> <li>• Handout One: "Signature Lines" (also see Appendix One)</li> <li>• Pinterest board "My Favorite Animal" (<a href="http://pinterest.com/swyljh/my-favorite-animal/">http://pinterest.com/swyljh/my-favorite-animal/</a>).</li> <li>• Video on Youtube: <i>Author Profile: James Herriot</i> (<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IffK_qSvr1A">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IffK_qSvr1A</a>, 2:43).</li> <li>• PPT with all the key vocabulary words</li> <li>• Story map (<a href="http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/storymap/">http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/storymap/</a>, also see Appendix Two)</li> <li>• Fakebook Sample (<a href="http://www.classtools.net/fb/60/DNNFUQ">http://www.classtools.net/fb/60/DNNFUQ</a>)</li> </ul>		
<b>Standard Addressed</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0701.3.3 Demonstrate awareness of audience through selection of medium or format, choice of supporting ideas, background information, word choice, and tone.0701.8.2 Sequence and identify the plot's main events, their causes, and the influence of each event on future actions.</li> <li>• 0701.8.4 Identify and describe character (major/minor, antagonists/protagonists) features and relationships in literary texts.</li> <li>• 0701.8.6 Identify how the author reveals character (i.e., what the author tells us, what the characters say about him or her, what the character does, what the character says, what the character thinks).</li> </ul>		
<b>Desired Result</b>		
<b>Key Vocabulary</b>		
gaze/courteous/contemplative/emaciation/listlessly/gaunt/haggard/surreptitious/inhalation		
<b>Student Objectives</b>		



Students will	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the main plot and important sentences of the story</li> <li>Learn how to analyze the characteristics of the main character</li> <li>Learn how to adjust tones and word choice when writing on a different media as a different person.</li> </ul>	
<b>Assessment Evidence</b>	
Performance Task	Evidence
Review of the vocabulary	Students can identify key vocabulary words
Activity "Signature Lines"	Students can identify the important sentences in this story
Activity "Character Map"	Students can fill the blanks of the character map by analyzing and discussing on the characteristics of the chosen character
Assignment "Create a Fakebook page"	Students can create a fake facebook page for the chosen character with proper tone and word choice
<b>Learning Plan</b>	
Time	Activities
15 min	I. Building Background
1 min	1. Briefly review what was learned in the last reading class. ("In the last reading class, we talked a lot about flowers in the poems. From the William Wordsworth's beautiful poem, we have captured the beauty in nature. Today, we will continue this topic of nature. We will explore the world of animals in another genre of literature, prose.")
3 min	2. Teacher asks a warm-up question: "Which animal is your favorite animal?"  After students give their answers, teacher asks them to use one to three words to briefly describe the features of their favorite animals. Then, teacher share teacher's favorite animal (cat) to the students ( <a href="http://pinterest.com/swyljh/my-favorite-animal/">http://pinterest.com/swyljh/my-favorite-animal/</a> ). By using the pinterest board with full of funny cat pictures created by the teacher, students can activate their schema about the features of cats, as well as keep being entertained. Teacher tells students that

	5 min	<p>today we are going to read a story written by a popular writer and vet, James Herriot. We will explore a story that happens to a cat in his book.</p> <p>3. Watch a video: <i>Author Profile: James Herriot</i> (<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IffK_qSvr1A">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IffK_qSvr1A</a>, 2:43)</p> <p>From the video, students can build up their background knowledge about the writer and the environment where the writer worked.</p>
	6 min	<p>4. Learn new vocabulary</p> <p>Teacher shows the PPT slides with the sentences that contain new vocabulary from the text. Ask students to guess the meaning of each word. Help them understand the meaning and usage of the new words.</p>
60 min		II. Student Activities
	15 min	<p>5. Read the story</p> <p>Teacher gives every student a copy of “Christmas Cat”. Ask students to read silently.</p>
	15 min	<p>6. Jigsaw Activity: “Signature Lines”</p> <p>Teacher gives each student a copy of Handout One (see Appendix One). Briefly explain what signature lines are (“Signature lines are important sentences in this story”). To make it easier for the first time, students are grouped into four groups, and each group is responsible for one part (one fourth) of the story. Students should write the “signature line” sentences, page number, and the reasons on the handout. After 10 minutes, students should share their results and discuss the reasons with their group members. Teacher gets involved in the discussion, and leads students to find what makes a sentence important according to their results.</p> <p>After the discussion, students are grouped into new groups, and “experts” should use one minute to share the “signature lines” and reasons in their assigned parts. With these important sentences, students can clarify the main plot of the story again.</p>
	15 min	<p>7. Activity: “Character Map”</p> <p>After the plot of the story is clarified, teacher inspires students to focus on the characters in this story. Teacher introduces the online interactive tool “Character Map” to students (<a href="http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/storymap/">http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/storymap/</a>), choose “character map”, also see Appendix Two).</p> <p>Teacher demonstrates the basic steps to students, and then divides students into four groups of four students (each group has two ELL students). Since the first two columns of the map (“What the</p>

	15 min	<p>character looks like” and “How the character act”) are much easier than the third one (“How other characters react to this character”), teacher will assign two ELL students to finish the first two columns, and two native English speakers to do the third column (every one of the two students will be mainly responsible for one character’s interaction with this character). For group one and group two, students are required to finish Mr. Hatfield’s character map; the students in group three and group four are responsible for Alfred’s character map.</p> <p>When all the groups are finished, teacher will let every group share some of their ideas on the map, and lead students to discuss the way that the writer revealed this character to us.</p> <p>8. Introduction Activity: “Fakebook”</p> <p>To help students better understand the characters in this story and learn how to adjust tones and word choice when writing on a different media as a different person, teacher introduces the fake facebook, “fackbook” to students (<a href="http://www.classtools.net/fb/home/page">http://www.classtools.net/fb/home/page</a>). Teacher first demonstrates how to create a character page, add “friend”, post new post, and interact with friends on the fakebook. Teacher can show one completed page that was created for the main character in <i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i> to students (<a href="http://www.classtools.net/fb/60/DNNFUQ">http://www.classtools.net/fb/60/DNNFUQ</a>). Based on this tool, students are assigned a project: create a fakebook page for a character in this story. The minimum requirements are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There should be at least three friends on the friends list.</li> <li>• Every character that shows up on the page should have a proper profile image that fits the description of the character’s appearance in this story (the images could be chosen from the internet).</li> <li>• There should be at least five posts on the “wall”. Every post should contain the interaction between at least two people.</li> <li>• At least two events that happened in the “signature lines” are represented in the posts.</li> <li>• The tones and words that the character used on this page should fit the description of the story, as well as the manner on the current social media.</li> </ul> <p>Students are encouraged to choose Mr. Hatfield and Alfred, and they can use the character maps that are created in this class as references.</p>
15 min	III. Review and Assessment	

	5 min	<p>9. Review vocabulary</p> <p>Teacher shows the slide with key vocabulary words again. Ask students to read and explain the meaning of these key words together.</p>
	5 min	<p>10. Review the signature lines in this story</p> <p>Give every student a piece of A5 sized paper. Ask them to write what is signature line on one side of paper. On the other side of the paper, students are required to choose one from the signature lines that they have written in activity six, and then copy this sentence on the paper. In two or three sentences, write the reason why they think this sentence is a signature line in this story. Teacher collects the paper.</p>
	5 min	<p>11. Assignment: “Fakebook Project”</p> <p>Teacher collects the four character maps created in this class, scans them and posts on our public pinterest boards (see <a href="http://pinterest.com/swyljh/your-character-map/">http://pinterest.com/swyljh/your-character-map/</a>, there is a sample on this board). Students can just click on the pictures, and the pictures will become large enough to see the details. Referring to the maps created in this class, students are required to create their “fakebook” pages on Mr. Hatfield, Alfred, or any other characters in this story that they are interested in. Students are required to share their fakebook page one week later, and teacher will evaluate their pages as the evidences of their mastery of characters analyzing skills and tone adjustment abilities.</p>

Appendix One

**Signature Lines**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Text: Christmas Cat

<b>Signature Line</b>	<b>Text Page #</b>	<b>This is a signature line because...</b>
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Appendix Two

**Story Mapping: Character Map**  
Christmas Cat by Wenyang

What the character looks like:

How the character acts:

Mr. Hatfield

How other characters react to this character:

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<b>Lesson Three:</b>		
<b>Song: “Starry Starry Night”</b>		
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Date</b>
A Lesson on “Starry Starry Night”	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade English Language Arts Class (16 students, including 8 ELL students)	April 2, 2013
<b>Materials and Preparation</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sixteen copies of the lyric of the song: “<i>Starry Starry Night</i>” by Don McLean</li> <li>• Sixteen sets of notes: each set contain one pink note and one orange note.</li> <li>• Pinterest board “Starry Starry Night” (<a href="https://pinterest.com/swyljh/starry-starry-night/">https://pinterest.com/swyljh/starry-starry-night/</a>)</li> <li>• Video on Youtube: <i>Vincent (Starry Starry Night)</i> (<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dipFMJckZOM">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dipFMJckZOM</a> ).</li> <li>• PPT with all the key vocabulary words</li> <li>• Song “<i>Starry Starry Night</i>” (<a href="http://www.xiami.com/song/1768924492">http://www.xiami.com/song/1768924492</a>)</li> </ul>		
<b>Standard Addressed</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0701.7.2 Examine the relationship between the visual (e.g., media images, painting, film, graphic arts) and the verbal in media.</li> <li>• 0701.7.3 Recognize how visual and sound techniques and design elements (e.g., special effects, camera angles, music) carry or influence messages in various media.</li> <li>• 0701.8.13 Identify sound devices (e.g., alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhyme scheme), figurative language (e.g., metaphor, simile), and other conventions of verse in poetry (e.g., limerick, lyric, narrative, haiku) and explain how these contribute to the poem’s meaning and to the poem’s effect.</li> </ul>		
<b>Desired Result</b>		
<b>Key Vocabulary</b>		
palette/chills/linen/sanity/flaming/blaze/swirling/haze/hue/weathered/ragged/thorn/		
<b>Student Objectives</b>		
<p>Students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand how music can influence the expression of meaning.</li> <li>• Identify the relationship between visual (painting) and the verbal (lyric) in this song.</li> <li>• Learn how to write a short poem based on paintings.</li> </ul>		

Assessment Evidence	
Performance Task	Evidence
Review of the vocabulary	Students can identify key vocabulary
Analysis of the VYou assignments in the first lesson	Students can choose the most proper music for the poem, and write at least one reason.
Activity “Listen, Read, and Match”	Students can correctly correlate the paintings of Van Gogh with the lines of the lyric
Assignment “Make a Yodio”	Students can choose at least three paintings, write a short poem, and make a yodio.
Learning Plan	
Time	Activities
15 min	I. Building Background
1 min	1. Briefly review what was learned in the last reading class. (“In the last two reading classes, we have talked about lovely flowers and animals in literature. Now we will continue the topic of nature, but we will focus on the nature in artists’ eyes.”)
2 min	2. Teacher asks a warm-up question: “What is your favorite song?” Teacher encourages all the students to share their favorite songs. After they share the songs’ names, they are asked to talk about the theme or the topic of their favorite songs. Teacher tells students that we are going to listen to a song. Students need to listen carefully and guess the theme of this song.
4 min	3. Listen to the song “ <i>Starry Starry Night</i> ” ( <a href="http://www.xiami.com/song/1768924492">http://www.xiami.com/song/1768924492</a> ) Students are required to listen to this song with their eyes closed. After they have finished listening, teacher leads students to discuss and guess what this song is singing about.
5 min	4. Watch a video “ <i>Vincent (Starry Starry Night)</i> ” ( <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dipFMJckZOM">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dipFMJckZOM</a> ) With their eyes open, students are shown the video of this song. In this video, the song sings accompany with different pictures of Van Gogh. Teacher asks students to guess the theme of this song again. Some of the students will know the topic of this song, and teacher will invite them to talk more about Van Gogh. Teacher will



	3 min	<p>then introduce more about the paintings and story of Van Gogh to students.</p> <p>5. Learn new vocabulary</p> <p>Teacher shows the PPT slides with the sentences that contain new vocabulary from the text. Ask students to guess the meaning of each word. Help them understand the meaning and usage of the new words.</p>
60 min		II. Student Activities
	5 min	<p>6. Read the lyric</p> <p>Teacher gives every student a copy of “Starry Starry Night”. Ask students to read silently with the song as background music.</p>
	20 min	<p>7. Talking Squares Activity: Analyze how music can best match poems</p> <p>Teacher ask students what they feel when they were reading the lyric with this song as background music. Does the song match the lyric? Students are required to share their thoughts on what makes music match the written language.</p> <p>After the discussion, students are grouped four groups. Teacher chooses four of the students’ assignment on “VYou” project (in the first lesson, “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud”), and find the music that these students chose (students’ names stay anonymous). Let all the students listen to the four pieces of music (each for 15 seconds). Write their feelings about these pieces of music on the pink notes. Students are then required to think about which one can best match the poem, and the reasons why the music can match. In groups, students need to share their thoughts in the form of talking squares (so as to make sure every student can have the opportunity to talk). Teacher can listen to some groups’ discussion, and give adequate feedback when one round is finished.</p>
	20 min	<p>8. Activity: “Listen, Read, and Match”</p> <p>With the song as background music, teacher shows the pinterest board “Starry Starry Night” (<a href="https://pinterest.com/swyljh/starry-starry-night/">https://pinterest.com/swyljh/starry-starry-night/</a>) to students (on the pinterest board, there are four paintings painted by Van Gogh that are mentioned in this song). Teacher zoom out each picture for students, and ask them to find the sentences or phrases from the lyric that mention the enlarged picture. On the orange notes, students are required to write their answers for the four pictures. In four groups of four, students need to exchange their ideas on the orange notes, discuss their reasons, and reach a consensus. Every group should share their answers</p>

	15 min	<p>after the discussion, and teacher helps them to find the correct one. (Possible answer: Picture 1: “field of amber green”; Picture 2: “weathered faces lined in pain”; Picture 3: “swirling clouds”; Picture 4: “flaming flowers that brightly blaze”)</p> <p>After the discussion, teacher showed the video “Vincent ”again (<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dipFMJckZOM">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dipFMJckZOM</a>). With pictures and lyrics, students can confirm their guessing, as well as form a deeper understanding on the theme of this song.</p> <p>9. Activity: write your own poem for pictures</p> <p>In order to help students better understand the connection between visual and verbal art, students are required to write a short poem based on paintings or other pictures.</p> <p>Teacher will recommend several pinterest boards with rich resources to students (for example, <a href="https://pinterest.com/shawcara/van-gogh/">https://pinterest.com/shawcara/van-gogh/</a> and <a href="https://pinterest.com/crazyrebecca/van-gogh/">https://pinterest.com/crazyrebecca/van-gogh/</a>). Students can choose three to five pictures from these boards on Van Gogh’s work, or they can choose other artists’ paintings if they like. They need to collect three to five pictures, arrange them in a certain order, and write a poem according to the content, color, or even feeling of the chosen pictures. Every chosen picture should be at least mentioned once in this short poem. The poems should at least contain three lines.</p> <p>To give students an example, teacher will choose three of Van Gogh’s paintings, and place them in an order. In groups, students are required to brainstorm how to compose lines with the figures of speech that we have learned before (e.g., similes, personification, metaphors, etc.). With the pictures and their imagination, every group should come up with a few poetic phrases or sentences. After the brainstorming session, every group should share their phrases or sentences with other classmates.</p> <p>After the group activity, students are required to start thinking about the pictures that they wish to choose to finish their poems.</p>
15 min		III. Review and Assessment
	5 min	<p>10. Review vocabulary</p> <p>Teacher shows the slides with key vocabulary words again. Ask students to read and explain the meaning of these key words together.</p>
	5 min	<p>11. Review the relationship between vocal, visual and verbal art</p> <p>Guide students to review the two activities, which are “match the</p>

	5 min	<p>music with poem” and “match the lyric with paintings”. Lead students to discuss how music and paintings can influence people’s understand of the written words.</p> <p>12. Assignment: “Yodio Project”</p> <p>Teacher demonstrates how to make a Yodio (an online movie maker that can easily add your voice to a photo, see <a href="http://www.yodio.com">www.yodio.com</a>). Students are required to record their poems of paintings on Yodio. Students need to upload their chosen paintings as pictures, and read their poems when the picture mentioned in this line displayed on the screen. For students that need more challenges, they can choose the proper background music while they are reading. Students are required to share the link of their complete yodio to classmates next week.</p>
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Text for Lesson Three:

## Vincent (Starry, Starry Night)

By Don McLean

Starry, starry night.  
 Paint your palette blue and grey,  
 Look out on a summer's day,  
 With eyes that know the darkness in my soul.  
 Shadows on the hills,  
 Sketch the trees and the daffodils,  
 Catch the breeze and the winter chills,  
 In colors on the snowy linen land.

Now I understand what you tried to say to me  
 how you suffered for your sanity  
 how you tried to set them free.  
 They would not listen  
 they did not know how  
 perhaps they'll listen now.

Starry, starry night.  
 Flaming flowers that brightly blaze, Swirling clouds in violet haze,  
 Reflect in Vincent's eyes of china blue.  
 Colors changing hue, morning field of amber grain,  
 Weathered faces lined in pain,  
 Are soothed beneath the artist's loving hand.

For they could not love you,  
 But still your love was true.  
 And when no hope was left in sight  
 On that starry, starry night,  
 You took your life, as lovers often do.

But I could have told you, Vincent,  
This world was never meant for one  
As beautiful as you.

Starry, starry night.  
Portraits hung in empty halls,  
Frameless head on nameless walls,  
With eyes that watch the world and can't forget.  
Like the strangers that you've met,  
The ragged men in the ragged clothes,  
The silver thorn of bloody rose,  
Lie crushed and broken on the virgin snow.

Now I think I know what you tried to say to me,  
How you suffered for your sanity,  
How you tried to set them free.  
They would not listen, they're not listening still.  
Perhaps they never will..

Observation and Interview Project

Wenyang Sun  
Analysis of Teaching  
Instructor: Trapper Baum, Ph.D  
April 2, 2013

### Observation and Interview Project

Interview and observation can always bring benefits to the future teachers. In order to have a deeper understanding of the theoretical statements from our classroom, I visited a local public school three times. During my first two visits, I acquainted the teacher and acquired the basic knowledge about this school. According to the teacher with more than seven years' teaching experiences, the school is located in a relatively high-income neighborhood. Most of the parents of the students hold at least one degree in higher education, which also partly explained their concentration on their children's education. The teacher receives several emails from the parents everyday. Because of this, the teacher listed teacher-parent relationship as the biggest challenge of her work. Being well educated at home, the students are very well behaved. They walked quietly on the hallway after lunch, did the recycling job in order, and greeted strangers like me politely. I also observed two lessons during my first two visits for my first stab of this project, so as to let the students become familiar with my existence in the classroom. The lesson that I observed for this final project was a fourth-grade literacy lesson. After my first two visits in September, I scheduled my third visit with the teacher for my final project. For the last visit, I would interview the teacher before the lesson, observe a complete lesson, and interview a student and the teacher after the lesson. In the following parts of this essay, I will illustrate my visit in depth.

#### **Pre-observation Interview**

In the pre-observation interview, I interviewed the teacher about the lesson. During the interview, not only did I get a big picture about the lesson, but also acquired the teacher's own perception about her lesson.

**The Basic Information About the Lesson**

The first few questions are about the content of this lesson, the larger content of this lesson, and the goal of this lesson. The teacher explained that the lesson would be a review lesson about poetry elements such as similes, metaphors, and the sound elements. For the whole semester, the students are working on the literacy menus, which are notebooks that record and evaluate their literacy activities in this class. They have to accomplish certain things (e.g. one poems for memorizing, five practices on “Study Island” computer program, two to five fluency cards that contain various poems, etc.) every week, and they should have completed a menu on poetry by this class. From the five lessons in the previous week, the students had learnt the elements in the poetry already. This lesson would be a review of the previous lessons, so as to help students do better on the test on the next day. The goal of this lesson was to help students substantiate their memory about the different terms in poetry, and also help them become familiar with answering test-like questions (multiple-choice questions) with their poetry knowledge.

To better understand the lesson from a micro aspect, I then asked the teacher to talk more about the materials, the activities, and differentiation of this lesson. The material that the teacher would use was the “Study Island” program, which is an internet-based computer program that the school bought to assess students’ literacy learning. Every student has an account on the program. They can login into their accounts on the three computers or ten ipads in the classroom, choose the literacy unit (such as poetry, novel, etc.) that they are learning, and do tests or practices by choosing the right answer from the multiple-choice questions in the program. The program contains a large pool of

practice items in each unit, and the students are assigned different items randomly when they are doing exercises. In the poetry unit, every item of the practice contains a short poem and a multiple-choice question beneath the poem, asking students to identify certain poetry elements that appeared in the poem above. The teacher also has her account on the “Study Island”. Different from her students’, her account has access to the practices and tests that her students have done. She can also easily view the scores of each student’ practice or test, so as to understand how well have her students understood the main concept of the literacy unit, such as simile and metaphor in this poetry unit.

This lesson could be divided into two parts. In the first half of the lesson, the teacher would use the “Study Island” practice questions and let her students give the answer. She would open the program on her computer, project the computer screen onto the interactive whiteboard (which is a large whiteboard connected to a computer and projector, where users can use a interactive pen to control the computer through the projected screen), and display one item of the practice at one time to the students. The students would need to think about the answer silently first, and then discuss the answers with their group members. The teacher would then choose one person from each group for each item, and let the student explain the answer, as well as click on their answer on the interactive whiteboard. After the answer is submitted, the program will show if the answer is right or wrong. After discussing about ten to fifteen items, the teacher would summarize and end the instruction part. The students would then have free time working on their menus. When asked to further explain what could students do to meet the requirement on the menu during the second half of the lesson, the teacher explained that the students could do more practices on the “Study Island” using the computers and ipads



to enhance their understandings of the elements in poetry, and in the meantime, prepare for tomorrow's test. The students could also prepare for their poem-reciting day (which was three days later) by reciting their chosen poems to their partners and have their partner record their voices on ipads. I then asked the teacher whether students could freely choose their poems to memorize or not. The teacher answered that the students could choose whatever poem they like to memorize for the poem-reciting day. However, the teacher did offer several long poems for students to choose from. If the students could recite one of these long poems, they could get extra credits.

When asked to explain the differentiation of this lesson, the teacher said there would be not much differentiation during the first half of this lesson. Since the first half was a short review lesson, the teacher would group the students into groups of four randomly, and all the students would do the same items at the same time. However, the students would continue working on their menus during the second half of the lesson, and the menus are different. Just as what is mentioned before, to meet the requirement of "memorizing a poem" in the menu, the students could choose the poems to memorize, and they could challenge the long poems if they wished to. In this way, all the students could be properly challenged according to their willingness and abilities. Therefore, the teacher believed that the menus were the biggest part where differentiation took place.

### **Students' Prior Knowledge and Misunderstanding**

When asked to talk about students' prior knowledge, the teacher explained that she had been teaching the poetry elements (e.g. metaphor, similes, etc.) in the previous week, so she supposed that all the students have acquired this knowledge. I then asked her to further provide evidence of students' understanding of the knowledge, and she

explained that she got this impression from students' class performance and their scores on the "Study Island" practice. During the previous lessons on poetry, the teacher noticed that her students could answer her questions about poetry elements mostly correctly.

What is more, she found that her students got high scores on their practice in the poetry unit of "Study Island" program, which also indicated that her students' have a good mastery of the key elements. Therefore, she believed that the students' have acquired the basic knowledge of poetry elements, which is the most important prior knowledge for this short review lesson of these elements.

I then asked the teacher if the students had any misunderstandings. The teacher mentioned that the students used to be confused with the differences between metaphors and similes. She said that she used to tell the students to consider "simile" as "smile" during her previous lessons. She said to the students, "When a person smile at you, it means that the person likes you. So similes have 'like' or 'as' when comparing one thing to another, whereas metaphors do not." She hoped that the students could remember the difference between similes and metaphors in this way. However, she would still consider this difference as the most possible misunderstanding of the students for this lesson.

### **Previous and Planned Assessment**

When asked to talk about the previous and planned assessment about this lesson, the teacher mentioned both formative and summative assessments. In the previous lessons, the teacher had some formative assessments about the students' performance. Just as what is described before, the teacher asked students questions about poetry elements, observed the students as they were working on their literacy menu about this unit, and viewed the scores of students' practices in the poetry unit of "Study Island"

program. During these previous assessments, the teacher found that the students could answer questions correctly in most of the times, do the tasks on the literacy menu independently, and get high scores on the practices in “Study Island”. Therefore, she believed that the students had a very comprehensive understanding of the previously taught knowledge from the results of the assessment. For this lesson, the teacher also planned to use formative assessment. She would let students give the answers with reasons to the items regarding poetry elements from “Study Island”, and consider students’ answers’ correctness as the evidence of students’ understanding. In the second part of the lesson when students would be working on their literacy menus with various tasks (e.g., memorizing and recording of the chosen poems, doing more practices on “Study Island”, etc.), the teacher would observe the students performance as she walked around the classroom. In addition, the teacher would also check students’ scores on the “Study Island” after the class as another formative assessment. Just as what is mentioned before, this lesson was a review lesson to help students’ prepare for tomorrow’s test. The formal test on the next day could be considered as a planned summative test. In the test, the students’ understanding of the knowledge in this poetry unit would be comprehensively tested in the form of multiple-choice questions.

### **Management of Conversation and Interaction**

I then asked the teacher how would she manage the conversation and interaction. The teacher explained that she would give students certain amount of time to discuss the items displayed on the interactive whiteboard during the first part of the lesson. When asked to explain how long would be considered as the “certain amount of time”, the teacher said that she would observe and listen to students’ discussion as she walked

around. Normally, as the questions would be quite easy, she would leave the students about one minute to discuss in groups. However, if she found that her students had not reached conclusion when time was up, she would extend the time of discussion up to one minute and thirty seconds. She would not wait for longer than one and a half minutes, because that would take up the time where they could do other items. The teacher also mentioned that after the discussion of each item, she would select one person from a group to present and explain the answer of the group. She would call different group and different student each time, so as to maximize the number of students participated in the interaction.

### **Alternation Plan of the Lesson**

After discussing the management of conversation and interaction, I asked the teacher what might cause her to change her plan. She told me that anything could happen in the classroom to make her change the plan. I further asked her to give examples, and she said that except for the accidents like fire alarm, some of the students might had very vague idea about the elements of the poetry elements. In that case, she would need to stop and change her plan. She would lead students to review the definition of the terms using students' menus and her previous PPT before they continued working on the items from "Study Island". She did not mention other alternations, but I remembered that she did talk about the use of interactive whiteboard, so I asked her what would she do if the electronic device were not working well. She told me that she would use the mouse to control the computer if the interactive pen of the whiteboard were not working, and she would let the students use the ipads to read the items if the computer were not working.

From the interview with the teacher, I found that the teacher was very clear of the content, objectives, materials and the activities of the lesson. She was confident with her students' competence to achieve the goal of this review lesson; at the same time, she also prepared formative assessments to evaluate students' understanding. She was experienced in managing interaction and conversation, but she also prepared alternative plan to deal with some of the unexpected issues. Because the instruction part of this lesson was a short review of basic poetry elements, I did not hear much about the differentiated instruction among students, the summative assessments during the class, or the activities other than group discussion. In spite of that, the teacher had made a comprehensive preparation for this lesson, and I found more evidences in the class observation.

### **Class Observation**

The lively atmosphere attracted me when I first stepped into the classroom. There were colorful boxes arranged at one side of the classroom, and bookshelves with various books at the other side. Six groups of four tables were set in the middle, facing the side with whiteboard, projector screen, the collection of ipads, and the "DJ Area". Behind the tables was a relaxation area, with cozy rugs, sofa and pillows for students to read comfortably. There were also photos of students arranged in the order of birth month, cute alphabets, numbers, world map, and basic reading skills lists on the wall. The lights in the room were bright and soft. Generally speaking, the room was well decorated and organized; the students would not feel too relaxed or stressed. Also, since this was my third visit to this classroom, the students were friendly to me, and they were not curious about my existence.

The class began with a “zero noise signal”. The classroom was noisy at first, and then the teacher said loudly, “Poetry!” The students replied together loudly, “Rock my world!” Then the students stopped talking and looked at the teacher. This “zero noise signal” shared by the teacher and the students would be used repeatedly in the lesson when the teacher needed the students to end discussion. From students’ immediate silence, I could tell that this code was effective in ending discussion. Also, the students’ looked excited when they were saying “rock my world”, which showed their motivation to explore more about poetry (“motivation”; Tool II.B.1).

The teacher began the lesson by stating the purpose of this lesson: “ We are going to do a review today because ... what are we going to do tomorrow?” Students answered, “Tests!” The teacher continued saying that before they started their review together, the students needed to get their interactive notebook (menu) out, and reviewed the terms of poetry that they had learned in the previous lessons. The teacher wanted her students to review the terms together in their groups, so the students started talking about the terms with their group members. During their discussion, I noticed that the students were all talking about the terms referring to their menus intently (“student to student talk”; Tool II.D), and I did not find any students chatting about irrelevant topics (“off task behavior”; Tool II.C).

After two minutes, the teacher ended students’ discussion with their “zero noise signal”, “Poetry!” “Rock my world!” The teacher continued to explain that for today, they would review the elements of poetry differently. They would use the “Study Island” to do multiple-choice questions. She said that she had set up a “Study Island” session on her computer, and the students would answer the questions. She walked to the interactive

whiteboard to set up the equipment (“location of teacher”, Tool III.C) while she was continuing explaining how would they review the poetry elements. She said, “So, hopefully you know the terms by now because you have been studying them everyday, but you may not be able to apply them. In order to do that, we are going to go through some ‘study island’ today, and let’s see if we can do up on the board (interactive whiteboard).” As the teacher was connecting students’ prior knowledge of poetry to the topic of today (“teacher uses students’ base knowledge and skills to develop concepts and complex processes”; Tool IV.D.1.a), the interactive whiteboard was not set up immediately. While they were waiting for the whiteboard to get ready, the teacher asked the students what did they like about poetry. The teacher waited for about 5 seconds until half of the students raised their hands (“wait time after questions”, Tool III.F), and then she called seven students to answer one by one. The students gave different short answers, and the teacher restated students’ answer and gave short positive comments like “great”, “good”, and “I love alliteration, too” (“response to + and – answers”, Tool III.I.2).

When the equipment was ready, the teacher began to explain how would they do the activity for today. She told the students that when an item was displayed on the interactive whiteboard, everyone should look at the item silently. Students should think of the answer by themselves first, and show their answers by raising their fingers (one finger represented answer “A”, two fingers represented “B”, etc.). Then, the teacher would say “Groups!”, and students should discuss the answer and why they choose the answer with their group members. The discussion should last for about thirty seconds. After the discussion, the teacher would choose a student to present and explain the group’s answer, and students from other groups should listen carefully. From the teacher’s words, I found

that her explanation was very clear and detailed (“clarity of teacher’s expression / directions”, Tool III.D).

After the explanation, the teacher displayed one item from the “Study Island” program on the interactive whiteboard, and asked students to think about the answer silently. The item contained one simple poem. Beneath the poem, there was a multiple-choice question, asking students to identify which one of the four lines from the poem contained a simile. The answer should be “D”, and I saw nearly all of students raised four fingers after about one minute. The teacher then said “Groups”, and all the students started talking with their group members. After nearly exactly thirty seconds (“Pacing – time constraints”, Tool IV.G), the teacher ended the discussion with the “zero noise signal”. The teacher chose one student from one group to come to the front of the classroom, and asked the student what would he choose. The students said, “The answer is D, ‘as sly as a fox’. We thought it a simile because it has ‘as’ in it, and it compares the boy to the fox”. The teacher restated the student’s answer, and asked the boy to explain the reason again so that everyone could hear him. She emphasized the importance of “as” in identifying similes to the students by repeating the boys’ explanation. Just as what she said in the pre-observation interview, she thought the students might have misunderstanding on the differences between similes and metaphors. Her deliberately emphasis on the use of “as” in similes showed her intention to help students clarify their possible misunderstandings (“Teacher identifies predictable misunderstandings”, Tool IV.F.8). Then, the teacher informally assessed students’ understanding by saying “Raise your hand if you get that.” (“Types of assessments - formative”; Tool V.C.1) All the students raised their hands. The teacher then asked the student to click and submit his



answer on the interactive whiteboard. The computer program showed “correct” on the screen, and the teacher clicked “continue” button to display the next item.

The second item required students to identify the poetry elements in a line in a poem, “Superman is the man of steel”. Everything went on smoothly just like the first item: students thought about the answer silently and raised their fingers, and then discussed the answers with their group members. For this item, the teacher called a student’s name from another group. The student went on the stage, and explained that the answer should be metaphor. Just like before, the teacher restated the boy’s answer, and asked other students to raise their hands if they agree. All the students raised their hands again. The teacher then asked the boy to click on the answer on the interactive whiteboard. The boy clicked on an answer, but the program showed that the answer was wrong. The boy suddenly realized what was wrong, “Oh, no! I press the wrong one.” (“Students self-correct, self-regulate”, Tool II.H) The teacher responded immediately, “But that is a perfect example. That could happen if you are taking a test and not paying attention. Would Sam (pseudonym) get credit for that? (Student: ‘No...’) No, but Sam got the answer. So I am glad he did that for a teaching point, because that’s important. When you are doing that (test), you got to pay attention.” From the teachers words, we can see that she was scaffolding students to understand what should they pay special attention to when they applying their knowledge of poem elements to answering multiple-choice questions. She talked about what Sam did and what should be done in the test (“Scaffolding – making discrepancies between what child has produced and the ideal product”; Tool III.I.3.4), and commented encouragingly that she was glad that Sam did this to help students learn (“Scaffolding- controlling frustration”; Tool III.I.3.4).

The third item that appeared on the board was more complicated. In the poem, there were two lines that contained the poetry elements that the students were reviewing; one had a simile, and the other contained a metaphor. The simile sentence appeared before the metaphor one, but the questions was asking students which of the following lines had a metaphor. When the students were asked to read the question silently, I saw some of the students raised two fingers, which indicated that they choose the option B (the line with a simile). However, the correct option should be D (the line with a metaphor). After several seconds, some of the students who chose B changed to four fingers, but there were still two or three students raising two fingers when the teacher said “groups”. After the group discussion, the teacher chose a student from a third group to explain the answer. The student explained the right answer and the reason to choose this answer. As before, the teacher asked students to raise their hands if they agree. Nearly all the students had raised their hands. The teacher said, “OK, go and choose your answer. But before you do, I did see some people think B is the answer. Who could explain that to me?” From the teacher’s question, I found that she was trying to guide students to think about their thinking (“Guiding students toward metacognition”, Tool II.G). She asked a boy who raised his hand immediately to answer this question. The student said, “Well, at first, I choose B, because it says the man is like a dandelion moves back and forth. But then, I read the question, and it says that ‘find the one with metaphor’.” The student seemed to be very clear about why he had chosen the wrong one before (“Student self-correct”, Tool II.H), but he did not explain the reason clearly. The teacher said, “So, first, you were like, ‘Oh, I know, that got to be the answer’ because of what? (Student A: simile) It’s a simile. We know that we are doing simile and metaphors right now, so that

got to be the answer, right? How many of you make mistakes because you don't even read the question and just think you know what it is because of that? (More than four students raised their hands) Yeah. Is that a simile? (Students: Yes.) Yeah. Are we study simile and metaphors? (Students: Yes.) Yes! Would that make sense for that to be the answer to the question? (Students: Yes.) Is that the answer to THIS question? (Students: No!) So what does that teach you how to do?" Most of the students answered, "Read the question." The teacher said again, "Read the question. That's what you should do to answer multiple-choice questions." From this series of questions that the teacher asked, I could see that the students were gradually getting the lesson that they should learn from this item. The teacher did not tell the students to "read the question" directly, but she successfully made the students understand the importance of reading the question ("Role as Coach, prompting students' justification"; Tool III.I.1.b.i).

The discussion about the fourth item went on as before. However, when the teacher asked a student from the fourth group to explain the answer, the student did not explain the reason clearly. The student said, "I choose D because it says 'darkness crept into the city like a thief', and it has 'like'." The teacher asked the student, "Is every sentence that uses 'like' is simile? (Students: No.) No. So what is it? What does it also have to do? (Student A: Compare.) So what is it comparing in this one?" Clearly, the teacher was asking students to clarify their thoughts on the definition of simile ("Teacher and students asked reflective questions – clarifying"; Tool IV.I.1). The teacher waited for about three seconds for students to think by themselves. Then, she turned to the student who was presenting this item and said, "Is it comparing darkness to the city? Or what?" The student said, "Darkness". The teacher continued, "So it's comparing darkness

crept into the city to what? To a...” The student said, “Thief.” The teacher concluded, “A thief, right? OK, good job.” From the teachers’ questions here, we could see her intention to help the student explain more specifically (“Asking students for evidence and encouraging specificity”; Tool III.I.b).

The sixth item was also about simile. After the routine of the individual thinking, group discussion, and student presentation, the teacher talked more about the topic. In the item, there was a simile saying, “His hand is as big as a grapefruit”. The teacher said after the student explained the answer, “So this is a good example. First of all, what is that, ‘as big as a grapefruit’? (Students: Simile.) So does this show you why does the author want to use simile? I saw you thought this was funny when you saw ‘his hand is as big as a grapefruit’. What would happen if you see ‘his hand is swollen large’ (‘Strategies – Teacher asks students to predict outcomes’; Tool IV.F.6)? Does everybody have a different image in your heads when you see ‘his hand is swollen large’? (Students: Yes.) Yes, it might be this swollen (the teacher used body language to depict a big hand), or a tiny bit of swollen. Does everybody have pretty much the same idea when you see ‘swollen as a grapefruit’? (Students: Yes!)” From the teacher’s words, we could see that she was using contrasting cases to compare different ways to describe a swollen hand, therefore led students to think about the advantage of using simile in this case (“Strategies – Teacher uses contrasting cases”; Tool IV.F.2). She was also making discrepancies of the two ways of expression by using body language and concrete cases, so that the students could see and “feel” the differences (“William’s Affective / Cognitive Model – analogies, discrepancies”; Tool IV.F.9). The teacher continued, “So now you understand why the author used simile. Then why would you, as a writer, use simile?”

(Student B: It's faster.) Yeah, it's a lot faster way. The author could have said, 'his hand is swollen, it's swollen two centimeters on each...' with all that kinds of detail. But do we get it quickly if he or she said 'as big as a grapefruit'? (Students: Yes!) Yes! So as a writer, think about that. Think about using similes in your own writing; in your own poetry, in your own prose, in the story you write. Because you can help all of your readers picture what is in your head by putting simile in it." From the teachers' words, we can tell that she was trying to inspire students to use the element "simile" in their own writing ("Transfer of concepts from one context to another is supported by teacher" Tool IV.J). In this way, the teacher helped students connect a term in this poetry unit to their own writings ("Authentic Instruction – connectedness to the world"; Tool IV.D.5.c).

The discussion about the seventh item went as usual. Since the students were very familiar with the activity routine, they finished this item in a very short time. As before, the teacher asked students to raise their hands if they understand the answer to this item. After seeing all the students' hands, the teacher ended this session and changed the practices in "Study Island" program to the items related to the sound elements of poetry. Before she started the new session, she did a formative assessment again ("Types of assessments - formative"; Tool V.C.1). She asked students to show their thumbs, "Let me see if you got this. Thumbs up if you think you got similes and metaphors; thumbs down if you are still not sure." All the students showed their thumbs up. After seeing this, the teacher started the new session regarding alliteration.

As usual, the teacher showed an item on the interactive whiteboard. She asked students to think silently for about thirty seconds, and said "Groups!" However, she did not let the students discuss this item. About five seconds after saying "groups", she said,

“Look at the question. Here is a good teaching point. You need to be reading the question first. It says alliteration is used in which of the following lines. First of all, what is alliteration? Who can tell me?” About five students raised their hands immediately, and she chose one student to answer. After getting the correct answer, the teacher read the four options to students. She asked, “So what is the only one that has alliteration in it? Show me your fingers.” Most of the students raised two fingers. She continued, “Yeah, B. So do we need to waste time going up here and reading this (poem above the question)? (Students: No!) No. There are going to be some questions, and that’s the case. So do you need to read poems in the past items? Absolutely. But in this one, do you need to even go up here? No, because the choices are all here, and that’s all we need.” Clearly, the teacher was encouraging different strategies of choosing the right answer from multiple-choice questions, which could promote one of the students’ thinking-feeling processes, flexible thinking (“Teacher promotes the affective development of students by encouraging and reinforcing the connection of thinking and feeling in students through the eight thinking-feeling processes – flexible thinking”; Tool III.I.6). The teacher moved on to another item of alliteration. For this time, she asked students to think silently for fifteen seconds, show the answer using their fingers, and do a group discussion for only ten seconds. After the discussion, the teacher chose a different student from a different group to explain the answer. The student answered correctly, and the teacher made a short positive comment (“OK, good.”) She then quickly showed another item on the board. She let the students to think for about ten seconds, and let the students show her the answer with their fingers. She saw that nearly all the students knew the right answer, so she restated the answer and ended this session.

After the review of “alliteration”, the teacher led the students to review some other terms. She said, “Now when I say a word, you give me an example.” The interactive notebook that the students reviewed at the start of this lesson contained a table that contains examples for each element, so the students had already knew some examples. The teacher said, “Onomatopoeia!” All the students started speaking the examples of this term. Using the same method, the teacher helped students review the term “rhyme”, “repetition”, “line”, and “stanza”. Although the class became very noisy when the all the students were giving examples together, I could still hear that most of the students were saying the right examples. After reviewing these terms, the teacher ended the review part of this lesson. For the rest of the class, the students were free to do anything related to their interactive notebooks. During this period, I saw most of the students were engaged in their tasks. Approximately half of the students were doing practices on “Study Island” using computers and ipads in the classrooms. Two or three students were reading poetry books. Other students were working in pairs and reciting the poems that they choose to memorize for the poem-reciting day.

From the class observation described above, I saw engaged students, a well-prepared and responsive teacher, cohesive lesson plan implementation, some on-going assessment, and a joyful atmosphere. Besides the elements of tools that I mentioned in the previous description, I also observed other aspects in the tool that was well reflected in this lesson. The whole lesson contained teacher’s short lecture, students’ individual thinking, and group discussions (“Lecture, individual or group work”; Tool IV.D.3), and the interactive whiteboard was effectively used to display the items and show the process of choosing an answer (“Use of technology”; Tool IV.A.4). The teacher implemented an

activity that aiming at reviewing students' knowledge of poetry elements, as well as helping students accommodate to the test setting that has multiple-choice questions ("Activity has goal relevance, with multiple goals"; Tool IV.D.8). In the activity, the teacher gave one student a chance to present the answer in front of everyone after the each discussion. In the student's presentation, the teacher changed her role to a listener ("Teacher deliberately alters the roles and responsibilities of the teacher and student in classroom discourse"; Tool III.G.2), and she assumed the student as an expert in the item ("Assumption of expertise"; Tool III.I.f). She chose different student from different group each time, so that most of the students could participate in the activity ("Over / under-participation"; Tool III.I.g). Although students could make mistakes (e.g., press the wrong button), the teacher created a welcoming environment ("Teacher allows and explores student's mistakes"; Tool A.1), and gradually helped students to realize what should they avoid in the future ("Reflecting and cuing"; Tool III.J.1.3). All the evidences mentioned above indicate that the teacher did good job in conducting this lesson.

However, because this is a short review lesson about poetry elements, I did not see many aspects that are expected in an effective teaching and learning process. For example, the teacher only conducted one kind of activity because the lesson only focused on the application of poetry knowledge into test settings ("Teacher provides a variety of activities"; Tool IV.D.10); she did not show her knowledge of individual student, and there were no differentiation instruction involved ("Teacher recognizes individual differences"; Tool III.K); the group discussion was very short, so there was no way for the teacher to identify individual's contribution to the group ("Teacher recognizes individual's contributions to group"; Tool III.L); the task was not challenging enough



because nearly all the students could identify the answer quickly and easily (“Activity is challenging; has cognitive engagement potential”; Tool IV.D.7). However, all of these factors cannot conceal the fact that this was a well-delivered and effective lesson. I was more convinced from the student interview below.

### **Student Interview**

The student whom I interviewed was a nine-year-old girl, Ellen (pseudonym). After getting the permission from her mother, I got the chance to interview her after class.

The first question that I asked her after some warm-up questions was to let her describe what she saw from this lesson, and what she thought this lesson was about. She said, “Well, we started the poetry unit, we had a poetry menu, and we got poetry elements, and we made a study guide on the first day, and we studied them for the rest of the week, and we learned about similes, metaphors, alliteration, repetition, lines, and stanza.” It seemed to me that she was describing what this poetry unit was about, rather than what this lesson was about. So I asked her, “What did you see from today’s lesson? What do you think this thirty-minute lesson was about?” She answered, “Oh, we did some items from the ‘Study Island’.” I then asked, “Could you explain what these items were about?” She said, “They were about poetry elements like metaphors, similes, and alliterations. We reviewed these elements.”

The second big question that I asked her was the connection between this lesson and previous ones. She said, “Well, we learned a lot about poetry last week. We worked on our poetry menus, so we knew all the elements. Today we reviewed these elements. If we didn’t learn these elements before, we could not do the ‘Study Island’ today.” In answering the first question of this interview, she had mentioned all the elements that she

had learned, so she was very clear about what she had learned before this lesson. In answering this question, she was also sure that she used her prior knowledge to do the item on “Study Island” for this lesson. Therefore, I believe she knew the connection between this lesson and previous lessons.

As we moved on to the next question, I asked her what did she learn from this lesson. She said, “Well, I had won a poetry contest last year, so I am very familiar with poetry. But I did learn something from it, to do tests.” It seemed that she knew what she learned from this lesson, but she did not figure out how to explain more clearly. So I asked her a clarifying question, “What do you mean by ‘something’? Could you please give me some examples?” She then answered, “Well, I know what those elements are, but to do tests, you have to be really careful. You could have clicked on the wrong button, even if you know the right answer.” I then asked, “What else did you learn about testing skills?” She thought for a while and seemed confused, so I gave her a hint, “Why did you think some of the classmates chose B rather than D on...?” She answered immediately, “Oh, yes, you need to read the questions. You need to know what the question asked you to do. You might find similes in the poem, but if the question asks you to find metaphors, you could get the wrong answer.” From her answers, I found that she was quite clear about what should be paid attention to when doing multiple-choice questions.

Another issue that the teacher wanted her students to know was the differences between “similes” and “metaphors”, so I asked the student to explain the differences. Not only did she give me the correct answer, but also provide me with the right examples for each element. In order to see if she had any misunderstandings, I tried to give her harder tasks. The first question that I asked her was about why should poets use similes. She

answered, “Well, instead of just using adjectives all the time, like on the ‘grapefruit’ question, just like his hand is swollen large, if you say it’s like a grapefruit, you can get the picture that his hand is large, so it kinds of save space, too.” I said, “And...” She said quickly, “you can get the picture in your head quicker”. It seemed that she was very clear about the benefits of using similes. The second question was about whether she had used similes in her writing. She answered, “Well, no. I think it’s a little difficult. I think it probably be used more in kind of like emotional, kind of story, but not really poetry on a certain subject.” Here I found that she seemed to have misunderstandings on the use of similes, because she believed that similes are rarely used in describing a certain subject. To help her expand her notion on similes, I gave her a task to describe the trees outside the window using similes. I asked her, “So let’s look at the trees outside this window. Could you think of a simile to describe them?” She thought for more than ten seconds, and said it was difficult. So I continued, “Let’s look at the leaves on the tree. What do you think they look like? Could you compare the leaves to another subject?” She said, “They have different colors, so probably rainbows.” I continued, “How would you use the ‘rainbow’ to make a simile for the tree leaves?” She said, “Oh, the tree leaves are like rainbows!” I pushed her a little further, “Could you change this line into a metaphor?” She said, “Tree leaves are ... rainbows.” “So tree leaves are subjects, and you could make similes for them. Could you make a connection between these two facts?” She said, “Yes, similes can be used for describing these subjects.” From her answer, I believed she was very clear about how and where to use of similes.

In the last part of the interview, I tried to find if she could transfer her knowledge on poetry elements into another context. I heard her saying that she had written a poem

for the interactive notebook, and she had not used similes or metaphors in her poem, so I decided to see whether she could transfer her knowledge about similes and metaphors to her own writing. I asked her what her poem was about, and she answered, “Well, I do ... kind of what is recently going on. I write a poem about the test that we have on Wednesday (which was the next day of this interview).” I asked, “What do you think the test would be like?” She said, “I think it would not be so difficult, but I need to do practice on that.” I asked, “Could you think of another thing that is similar to this test? Could you think of one thing that is also not difficult, but you need to do lots of practices?” She thought for a while, “Um... not really. It’s... um... well... I think... that you could do... the test... to something that is also not difficult, but it’s easy after practice... So the test is like my soccer practice, cuz it’s... I have to practice, but in the game, I can do good... Kind of like test.” I asked, “So you compare test to your soccer practice. How would you make a simile for the test?” She said, “So the test... is like practicing soccer.” I continued, “Could you transform that into a metaphor?” The student said, “Soccer...um... The test is soccer practice”. The student told me that she would add this metaphor to her poem. From our conversation, I believed that she could transfer her knowledge to her own writing.

From the interview with this student, I found that she had a very solid understanding of the content of this lesson. She was very clear about the connection between this lesson and previous lessons. In addition, she learned how to apply her knowledge in poetry elements to test settings. Although she had some misunderstandings on where could similes be used, she seemed to understand this problem after our

conversation. From the last part of interview, I also found that she could transfer her knowledge of poetry elements to her own writing.

### **Post-observation Interview**

After the interview with the students, I interviewed the teacher again.

The first question was still about what did she “see” from the class, which included whether the lesson went as she had expected, and what did she see as most significant. The teacher said that the class went as she had expected. She said, “It was pretty good. You can tell that most of the kids are kinda understanding, and they were pretty sure how to do tests on this unit.” I tried to probe more from her answer, “So what do you mean by ‘kinda understanding’? Could you provide me with some evidences?” She said, “By showing their answers on their hands, I could see what each child was thinking. And when a kid or two might have a different answer, I could tell wow, they have chosen that, and I’ll explain that with class. And yeah, for the most part, they were all giving (the answer) pretty quickly and easily, so that let me know that they were getting the idea of it.” I then asked her what did she see as most significant, and she said, “They really were able to tell the differences between similes and metaphors, and that’s really a hard thing for kids to determine the differences, and they seems really get the idea for that. You can see from their fingers. And there was a sound element that we were just talking about, the alliteration, and that’s one of the terms that they have hard time with. So I let them have several questions on alliteration. And then, you can tell from their answers on ‘onomatopoeia’, ‘repetition’, and ... So I think they will do pretty well on test tomorrow.” From the teachers’ words, it seems that the class went as she had expected, and she was very satisfied with students’ performance.

Generally speaking, her class went on smoothly, and she did not change her plan significantly. However, I noticed that she did not finish all the items on the “Study Island” that she had prepared for this class. I asked her what caused her to do fewer items, and she said, “I planned to give them ten questions on each of the three elements (simile, metaphor, and alliteration), but then I found that they have got really good ideas.” I asked, “How did you know that? Could you give me more evidence?” She said, “Well, just as I said, they have showed me their fingers. I could tell that they have got it very quickly, so I don’t want to do all the ten items.”

I then asked her to what extent did she think her students had met her goal, and how she assessed students’ learning. She answered, “Well, I’ll truly be able to tell tomorrow, on the test. But I would say, at least ninety percent of my kids would score ... would master poetry element test at ninety percent or above.” I asked her, “How do you get this?” She said, “The students will take a pencil and paper test on tomorrow, and I’ll truly get the result by that. But I think, given the results of questions from this lesson at least, I predict that they will do very well on the test.” I asked her, “Are there other assessments that could prove that the students have met your goals?” She answered, “Well, I can also view their scores on their practice on ‘Study Island’. They need to do the practices; it’s part of their menus. And I can see that they are doing good on the practice.” From the teacher’s answers, I found that she was quite confident in students’ understandings. She believed that most of the students have reached the her goal, because she could see that her students had got high scores on their previous “Study Island” test, and her students could answer the questions mostly correctly in this lesson.

When talking about students' misunderstandings, the teacher thought for a while and said, "Not really misunderstandings. You know there's one that some of the kids want to choose the wrong answer because they didn't read the question. So that allowed me to have a teaching moment about test taking. And there was another child who selected the wrong answer on the computer after he had just explained the correct answer. Then I need to point it out, because the kids do that a lot when they know the right answer, but they may select the wrong answer on the computer. So I teach them to be careful all the way through, and not just select the answer, but make sure they select the right answer." It seemed to me that the teacher had discovered that some kids were lacking of test taking skills, so she remedied this by teaching and underscoring the importance of reading the question and selecting the right answer carefully. The teacher then added, "I'll be able to see if they really still have misunderstandings on tomorrow, after the test." I asked her what would she do if she found misunderstandings after the test, she said, "If there are one or two kids who will not do the test very well, I'll talk to them on Friday, so that I can see what they have missed, and why they don't understand." I asked, "So you will have a private conversation with these kids?" The teacher said, "Yes, I'll talk to the ones that don't do pretty well, which I don't expect to be very many. If it turns out that there are several that don't get it well, then I'll pull them in a small group and discuss it." It seemed to me that the teacher was confident about her students' understanding, but she was also prepared to find more evidence from the test on the next day, and talk with the students who had misunderstandings of this lesson.

### **Summary**

From this final observation and interview project, I was very impressed by the teacher, the students, and the teaching process. The teacher was well prepared for this lesson, and she was also experienced in managing the classroom instruction. From the pre-observation and post-observation with her, I found that she was fully aware of the content to be taught, what had been taught, how the students understood the lesson, and what she would do if something unexpected happens. Also, from the implementation of her lesson plan, I found that she was experienced in controlling the pace, giving students encouraging feedback to different answers, using different approaches to scaffold students, and using several other strategies to promote effective learning (as are mentioned in the class observation section above). The students are also very well behaved under her guidance. They actively participated in the interaction in the classroom, showed little off task behaviors, and stopped talking immediately when the teacher called an end to the group discussion. From the interview with one of the students, I found that she had little difficulty in grasping the main idea of this lesson, and she could transfer the knowledge to her own writing after the interview. Although several effective ways of teaching were missing (e.g. a variety of activities, recognition of individual differences, recognition of individual's contributions to group, etc.) during the teaching process due to the short length and low difficulty of this lesson, I still found it effective and engaging. I have learned much from this observation and interview project, and I believe that what I have learned from this project will definitely inform my future teaching practices.



## Lesson Plan on *The Ugly Vegetables*

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### OBJECTIVES

- Content Objectives
  - SW explain the concept of “perspective” in the story
  - SW comprehend the importance of sharing across cultures
- Language Objectives
  - SW identify key vocabulary
  - SW write sentences using “perspective”

### MATERIALS

- Prezi:
  - Including pictures of new vocabulary, vegetables, background information, and illustrations in the story
- “Perspective Book”:
  - Including a cover (a coloring page from the author’s official website); four pages with four uncompleted sentences (“From mom’s perspective, \_\_\_; From Grace’s perspective, \_\_\_; From the neighbors’ perspectives, \_\_\_; From our group’s perspective, \_\_\_\_.”)

### PROCEDURES

- Building Background
  - Perspective
    - Do you remember what is “perspective”?
    - Can a person’s perspective change overtime?
    - Share a story of myself: From my perspective, ... But one day, I changed my mind. Now I feel ....
    - Encourage students to share theirs
  - Garden
    - What do you see in gardens?
    - Show the authors’ garden
  - Vocabulary
    - Show vocabulary with pictures
    - Vegetable pictures from local grocery stores
  - Prediction
    - From what we have discussed, can you guess what this story will be about?

- Read the story
  - Read the story while show illustrations of the story
  - Pause when the mother says, “These are better than flowers”; Let student guess why she says so.
  - When come to some of the key vocabulary, show students the picture of the word again
  - Quick review of the story: Plant, Harvest, Make the soup, Share
- Activity: “Perspective Book”
  - Distribute “Perspective Book”
  - Model the process of writing the whole sentence on the board: “From Grace’s perspective, the vegetables are ugly at first.”
  - Let students work in groups; discuss what is their group’s perspective of the vegetables. Fill the final page “From our group’s perspective, \_\_\_\_\_.”
  - Students complete the other three sentences individually (“From mom’s perspective, \_\_\_\_; From Grace’s perspective, \_\_\_\_; From the neighbors’ perspectives, \_\_\_\_\_.”) If ELL students have difficulty in completing the sentences, they can write in their native language, draw pictures, or ask peers for help.
  - Students can decorate the book and color the cover if they still have time.
- Review and Reflection
  - Review “perspective”:
    - What is perspective? What is Grace’s perspective? Has her perspective changed?
  - Review key vocabulary: Show the pictures of new vocabulary again
  - Multicultural theme:
    - What will happen if Grace’s mom refuses to share her soup? What will happen if the neighbors refuse to share their flowers?
    - Address students’ culture background: In our classroom, we are so lucky to have friends from different cultural backgrounds (China, Mexico, UAE, India). We should share and learn.

Case Study of a Non-Native English Speaker

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December 7, 2011

### Case Study of a Non-Native English Speaker

How to most effectively and efficiently instruct an English language learner has always been the biggest issue that ELL teachers have to deal with. In this paper, I will explore the solution to this problem. During the three interviews with an English language learner, Tafari, I gained a lot of firsthand written and oral language data. Based on the assessment of his language level and an adequate theoretical framework, I designed an effective instruction plan to help him reach a higher level of English proficiency.

#### **An Introduction to Tafari**

The learner that I interviewed with is Tafari. He's a man around 35 years old, and he has lived in Nashville for 6 years with his wife and daughter. Tafari's native language is Amharic, which is a Semitic language only spoken in his motherland, Ethiopia. He started learning English during his high school years in Ethiopia, and stopped learning English after he received his high school diploma. Six years ago, he immigrated to the United States, and began self-teaching English ever since. This fall, he joined the ESL program in Nashville State Community College (NSCC) for the first time. He wishes that NSCC could enroll him in a degree program after he has finished the ESL course, and that he finds a better job after he receives his college diploma at NSCC. He was put into the class level of "advanced beginner". From our conversation, I could tell that his oral English was very fluent with a large vocabulary and minor mistakes. The interview with him was very pleasant because he was kind, enthusiastic and talkative. From what he had shared with me, I could tell that he loves his motherland and his family very deeply. In addition, although he is not very much satisfied with his social network here, he is very

optimistic about his future life. In the following parts of this case study, I will have an analysis of his English language proficiency.

### **A Description of Tafari's Language Abilities**

In this section, we will have a brief discussion of Tafari's written and oral abilities using the framework of linguistics. The description will include the strengths and weaknesses that he has in terms of phonetics and phonology, morphology and morphophonology, syntax, and semantics and pragmatics.

#### **Phonetics and Phonology**

In terms of phonetics and phonology, Tafari's oral language is good except for some small mistakes. He can pronounce most of the sounds clearly, and he never makes mistakes like pronouncing /r/ as /r<trl>/, which is a common mistake for many ELL students from some Arabic countries near Ethiopia. His mistakes are mainly in the level of phonetics.

1. /ŋ/ as /n/

To start with, he has difficulty in pronouncing /ŋ/. Let's take a look at the following examples from the recorded oral data.

Example 1. "you teaching something or learning something"

/yu tɪtʃɪn sʌmtɪn ɔr ləˈnɪn sʌmtɪn/

Example 2. "everything slow down"

/ɛvəlɪtɪn slo daʊn/

Example 3. "how long you stay here"

/həʊ lɒŋ yu ste hɪə/

From the examples above, we can clearly see that Tafari always pronounces /ŋ/ as /n/. Words like “something,” “teaching,” “learning,” “everything,” “long” all end up with a velar nasal consonant, but Tafari can only articulate it at alveolar part.

## 2. /r/ as /l/

What’s more, he cannot pronounce /r/, and he often pronounces it as /l/ instead. From the following Examples 4, 5, and 6, we can see that in words like “bring,” “very,” and “really,” the sound /r/ is replaced by /l/. In other words, whenever Tafari meets a palatal liquid consonant, he will produce the sound at his alveolar.

Example 4. “it bring a lot of job”

/it blɪn ʌ lʌt ʌv ʃʌb/

Example 5. “this time, this days, it’s very hard to find a job”

/θɪs taɪm θɪs deɪz, ɪts vɛɪɪ hɑːrd tʊ faɪnd ʌ ʃʌb/

Example 6. “oh, really?”

/oʊ rɪəli/

## 3. /ɔ/ as /ʌ/

Also, from Example 3, 4, and 5 it is clear that the back vowels (/ɔ/) in the words “long,” “lot” and “job” are all replaced by /ʌ/, which is a central vowel. The place of articulation is moved forward, and the perspective change happens repeatedly in his oral language.

From the three patterns analyzed above, we can also make a hypothesis that Tafari has difficulties in pronunciation when the sound is articulated in the back of his mouth. As far as what we can find in the collected data, he tends to move his tongue forward when he tries to pronounce the sounds that should be articulated in the back of his mouth.

### **Morphology and Morphophonology**

In the linguistic level of morphology, Tafari is mostly correct in the inflected version of nouns, but has problems with verbs and pronouns. In terms of morphophonology, his problems are concentrated on the pronunciation of plural forms.

Tafari rarely makes any mistakes when he needs to use the nouns that are inflected for number and case in both written and oral English. Apparently, he is fully aware of the inflected forms of nouns, and these forms include the most irregular ones. He is also good at using verbs that are inflected for tense and aspect. However, when it comes to the third person singular subjects, he often forgets to mark the person and number so as to change the form of verbs accordingly. In Example 2, he fails to mark the verb “slow” after “everything”. Other examples such as “She miss all of these things,” “My daughter remember all of her friends”, “She wake up early” all indicate that he does not often forgets to mark verbs inflected by person and number. However, he can use “is” and “has” and a few other verbs correctly when the subject is singular and third person, which shows that he knows the rule, but he cannot use it correctly all the time. What’s more, Tafari is not good at using different forms of pronouns correctly. For example, sentences like “You have to stay with he” appears frequently in his speech.

Like many ELL students, Tafari does not pronounce the plural morpheme “-s” or “-es” as most of native speakers. According to a rule of morphophonology (Justice, 2004, p. 140), the [z] allomorph of /z/ should be used after voiced consonants and vowels. However, Tafari pronounce the end of every plural form of a noun as [s]. From Example 5, we can clearly see that “days” is pronounced like /des/. Other examples, such as /skils/

(skills), /skuls/ (schools) and /yɪəs/ (years) imply that Tafari does not obey the plural rule in English, which pronounce “-s” as [z] after voiced consonants and vowels.

### **Syntax**

Tafari is good at making complete sentences, but he has tiny problems with phrase structure rules, especially the preposition phrase (PP) and the verb phrase (VP).

From the data we have collected, Tafari likes to use PP at the beginning of the sentence. From Example 5, we can find that he tried to use two PPs in front of the main sentence. However, Tafari omitted the preposition in PP. The same omission can be found throughout the conversation, such as “Anytime, they can block them.” According to *Phrase Structure Rules for English* (Justice, 2004, p. 189), with several exceptions, PP should be the combination of P and NP. In Tafari’s case, he often omits the proposition when the PPs do need the proposition, thus making the PP structure incomplete.

In addition, Tafari’s speaking of English tends to delete “be” in many sentences. To make it more general, Tafari often omits auxiliaries or “be” verbs in VPs. From Example 1 and 3, what we can find is that Tafari did not say the auxiliaries “are” and “will”. Here are some more examples: “They paid less”, “Everything made in China”, “Everything slow down”, etc. Those examples demonstrate that Tafari likes to delete auxiliaries when he tries to form a VP.

From the aspect of syntax, we observe the deletion of the preposition and auxiliary in PP and VP. Although I have never learned Amharic, I can make a hypothesis that in Amharic, there might be no preposition or auxiliary existing in a sentence.

### **Semantics and Pragmatics**



As an English language learner, Tafari has achieved a relatively high level of language proficiency. Our topics included geography, economics, politics and higher education, and I was surprised to find that he could express his opinions with accurate vocabulary without any difficulties. Also, although he only received a high school diploma twenty years ago, he is very knowledgeable and contributed plenty of high-quality information to our conversation.

To examine his language in terms of pragmatics, we can use the framework of Grice's Maxims, which contains the maxims of quality, relevance, quantity and manner (Bergmann et al., 2007, p. 274). Tafari showed high language proficiency in terms of quality, relevance and manner. However, in the aspect of quantity, he sometimes violated that maxim. One of the requirements in the maxims of quantity is: "Do not make your contribution more informative than is required" (Bergmann et al., 2007, p. 275). Tafari flouted this rule in two occasions. One was when I asked him where he came from, and his answer was much more than "Ethiopia". He talked a lot about the country's geography, the political situation, the history (in which he proudly announced that Ethiopia is the only country in Africa that has never been colonized by Europeans), and even the discovery of the "ancestor of human being", Lucy. The other was that when I asked him if he had child or not, he talked a lot about his daughter, including her age, characteristics, hobbies, and her remarkable curiosity for knowledge. From the violations of maxims of quantity mentioned above, we can see his enthusiasm in talking about these two topics. He was so proud of his country and his daughter that he liked to share the relative information with other people. This violation not only offers more information, but also reveals his preferences.

### **Assessment of Tafari's Current Stage of Second Language Acquisition**

From the language data that I collected from the three interviews with Tafari, I will put him in level 3, with his writing and speaking ability both in stage 3 (Pray & Wilson-Patton, 2011).

Since the only writing sample that I have got is a thank you note with 77 words, I cannot guarantee that his writing ability is exactly in stage 3. However, from the only writing sample of Tafari, his writing language fits some of the patterns in stage 3. Generally, he can write the form of a "thank you note" according to the teachers' requirement, which shows his ability to write according to the audience and purpose. He has a good acquisition of morphemes and can mark the past tense of regular and irregular verbs (examples: "All those days were great days for me", and "I learned a lot about the skills of listening, conversation, interview, and other important and useful words.>"). However, he only referred to the past two times with two common past tense verbs ("were" and "learned"), so we cannot know if he can "use past tense with few errors", which is the requirement of stage 4 (Pray & Wilson-Patton, 2011, p. 4). He can also refer to future since he wrote the sentence "This knowledge will help me a lot". However, since there's no question, negation and third person possessive determiner in the writing sample, we cannot assess his writing abilities in these domains.

In terms of speaking, the assessment is more complicated. Generally, his oral English fits what is described in stage 3. His communication ability is above stage 3 because he can communicate in English in the setting of interview and casual conversation, and he shows a high ability in participation of content-area discussions, such as geography, politics, and history. He has a large vocabulary, since uncommon

words like “pediatrics” and “orthodox” appears in his words. He can also use “his” and “her” correctly in various contexts, which partially fits the requirement of possessive determiners in stage 4. However, his ability to form questions doesn’t meet the requirements of stage 4. Let’s look at the following examples: “Does there any private schools in China?” “Does any mechanisms to control this?” and “How long this continue in China?” These examples show that he acquire the knowledge of “do-fronting” and “wh-fronting”, which is a pattern in stage 3. However, he misuses the verb in the “do-fronting” sentences. The first examples show that he has a tendency to use “does” all the time even though there should be “is”. In addition, he fails to fit the standards of stage 4&5, which requires “inversion in wh- questions with both an auxiliary and a main verb” (Pray & Wilson-Patton, 2011, p. 4). From the third example and other questions in his oral language, we can find that he often omits the auxiliaries (like “does” in the third example). Therefore, his ability of questioning remains in stage 3. What’s more, his use of negation also cannot reach stage 4 with several wrong marks for tense and person. Therefore, it might be suitable to put his overall ability of speaking at stage 3.

From the discussion above in terms of writing and speaking, we can find that Tafari’s proficiency of English reaches intermediate level. Based on the data we can get, I think it is appropriate to assess his English proficiency as level 3.

### **An Analysis of Tafari’s English Acquisition Using Sociocultural Theory**

Looking back at Tafari’s experience of English learning, I can divide his learning process into three periods. In the first period, he was in Ethiopia and did not know that he could have a chance to immigrate to the United States. He learned little English in high school, but acquired a high proficiency of his mother tongue, Amharic. With the

development of his first language, his cognition level was elevated, and he formed his deep and active thoughts on the outside world. His large span of knowledge and critical thinking can be reflected from our conversation topics. In the second period, Tafari moved to the United States with poor English. He found a job as a factory worker and learned English by himself at home. Also, he seized every chance to talk with his colleagues, the people in the church, and his daughter, who acquired a high proficiency of English just like native-speakers. Finally, he became fluent and capable of communicating meanings, including the most abstract and complicated concepts. However, his English is still different from native speakers with mistakes in pronunciation and grammar. In the third period, he was enrolled in the ESL program in Nashville State Community College. He began to systematically learn English with the motivation to get a college degree and better job, and this is where my interview with him takes place. From the three periods, we can see that his L1 proficiency, his smart brain with high cognition level, his own experiences of two different social settings and his motivation to learn a second language have all contributed to his acquisition of English. Therefore, to better analyze his learning process, I believe that Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (SCT) is the best framework. Compared with behaviorism and cognitive tradition, SCT "restores the proper balance between external and internal human realities", and comprehensively combines "the social, cultural, political, historical, and institutional contexts" with "the development of human cognition" (Johnson, 2004, p. 16-17). In Tafari's case, his cognition level and his experience in the social context have both contributed to his current English proficiency. In the following part, we will analyze Tafari's acquisition of English using several SLA studies under the framework of SCT.

Under Vygotskian theory, Washburn (1998) believes that SLA research should focus on zone of proximal development (ZPD) rather than actual level of development, and this strategy can be applied to the study of fossilization process. He conducted research and found that nearly all the fossilized speakers in his study had lived in the United States for five or more years. According to his study, Tafari, who has lived in the United States for six years, is very likely to be a fossilized speaker. In Washburn's opinion, fossilized speakers need "more explicit assistance to notice the difference between the utterance produced by them and the model utterance" (Johnson, 2004, p. 135). Lacking of explicit instruction in his first and second periods, Tafari's ZPD had never been scaffolded before he came to this ESL classroom. This can explain why Tafari has no problems with complicated communication of content meaning, but he still fails to communicate accurately.

In Tafari's second period, his active communication with English speakers benefits his ability to communicate meaning clearly and fluently. Swain (2000) argues that the interaction promoted by Vygotsky's SCT should be called "dialogue". She believes that collaborative dialogue is helpful in helping second language learners to know the strengths and shortcoming of their language proficiencies. From the conversation with Tafari, I find that he talks with his daughter a lot in English. His daughter has the high proficiency of English since she came to the United States when she was only 3 years old. Tafari mentioned that his daughter is curious and smart, and likes to talk with him on various topics. The dialogues between Tafari and his daughter may contribute to Tafari's mastery of English since "collaborative dialogue" is an important tool for language learning according to Swain (Johnson, 2004, p. 144).

According to activity theory, which is viewed as a part of sociocultural theory, Gillette (1998) illustrates the point that learner's personal orientations towards second language learning can "affect their strategic approaches to language learning" (Johnson, 2004, p. 149). Also, in Gillette's study, this orientation seems to be "closely associated with the participants' exposure to the world at large", and "those who have traveled and lived abroad" seems to have stronger motives to learn L2 (Johnson, 2004, p. 149). In the second and third period, Tafari lived in the United States for six years, and he is fully aware of the importance of English to his life. He also attended the ESL course in Nashville State Community College in order to pursue a college degree and have a better job. From these clues, we can find that Tafari is fully motivated in learning English. As the motivation is "a major force for determining the outcomes of an activity" (Johnson, 2004, p. 148), we can see that Tafari's high proficiency in English is related to his high motivation in learning the language.

Therefore, based on the framework of SCT, Tafari's acquisition of English is positively influenced by his cognitive development in period one, his willingness to interact with English speakers in period two, and his high motivation in learning the new language in period two and three. However, since he did not have a systematic language instruction in period two, his English is not perfect with some pronunciation and grammar mistakes. To remedy these problems, I will design an instruction plan for him in the following section.

### **Design of an Instruction Plan**

According to Tafari's high communication ability and lack of accuracy in pronunciation and grammar, I choose the strategy of "Get it right in the end" (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 165) to design my instruction plan.

In Lightbown and Spada's (2006) study, they offer six proposals for second language teaching. The first one, which is "Get it right from the beginning", is apparently not suitable for Tafari since he has learned English for so many years, and he has passed the beginning period. The second and third strategies, which concentrate on listening, reading and talking, are still not applicable to Tafari. Till now, Tafari has acquired those abilities with enough input and output, so it will not make sense if the instruction continues to reinforce the same things. The fourth proposal named "Two for one" indicates combining language learning into content teaching. This will not be what Tafari needs because he will have all the content courses in English if he is successfully enrolled in NSCC. In addition, proposal two, three and four all concentrate on meaning, but pay no attention to the accuracy of language, which is exactly what Tafari needs. The fifth proposal, "Teach what is teachable", lacks of theoretical background supporting the sequence of language acquirement. The only suitable proposal is the last one, "Get it right in the end". This strategy is especially suitable for learners who "have difficulty with language features that do not have a major impact on the clarity or accuracy of their message" (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 175), just like Tafari, who has no problems with expressing the meaning of his message, but has tiny problems with those features that can cause misunderstanding. Therefore, this form-focused proposal is the right remedy for learners like Tafari.

In this proposal, there are two main methods, which are “form-focused instruction” and “corrective feedback” (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 168). In Tafari’s case, I would like to use the analysis of the data collected from the three interviews and design an individualized instruction plan.

First, the instruction should contain a specified instruction concerning the forms. All the instructions are carried out during our communication that is designed by me for different purposes. After analyzing the data that I collected before the instruction, I find that there are four units on four main issues that Tafari has problems with. The first issue is the instruction on the pronunciation of /ŋ/, /ɾ/, /ɔ/ and the allomorphs of /z/ in the plural forms of nouns. I will make a comparison between the standard pronunciation and his pronunciation, so as to make him focus on these sounds. The second unit is the instruction on the verb forms after third-person singular subjects. Tafari often neglect the “-s” after the verbs, and I will reinforce the knowledge of this grammatical morpheme. The third unit is on the formation of propositional phrase (PP), and I will stress the importance of proposition in a PP. The last unit is about the use of auxiliaries, including “do,” “be,” and so on. I will lead him to realize the existence of auxiliaries in Standard American English, although it is often neglected in the informal daily communications.

Second, the interactions with corrective feedback are necessary after form-based instruction. After clarifying the mistakes that Tafari frequently makes, I will have relative conversations that lead him to use the features that are problematic. Different from “Get it right in the beginning”, in which I will correct all the mistakes concerning those features, and make him repeat until he can speak the correct form naturally, I will look for the right moment to make him notice his words when they are different from those of more



proficient English speakers. During such communications, Tafari will notice the right forms repeatedly, and his awareness of his mistakes will increase. Finally, his overall English proficiency will be naturally developed from such corrective feedback interaction.

With the combination of form-focused instruction and corrective feedback, I believe that Tafari can improve the accuracy of his language as well as maintain his strength in the communication of meaning, and will finally benefit both the “efficiency” of his learning and “the level of proficiency” he will eventually reach (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 165).

### **Conclusion and Reflection**

In this paper, the linguistic features of Tafari’s written and oral English is carefully described and assessed. Using the framework of sociocultural theory, I analyzed Tafari’s language acquisition process, addressing the impacts of both cognitive development and sociocultural environment. Based on this framework and Tafari’s typical mistakes, I designed an instruction plan with four units of four different form focuses. The four units will be implemented with clear instruction and frequent corrective feedback. In this way, Tafari can maintain his strength in conveying meaning, and his language accuracy will be efficiently improved. Therefore, he can be more prepared for academic need of English in his future study in NSCC.

From this case study, I have learned two things that are most helpful to my future career as an ELL teacher. First, a good teacher should spend time to become fully aware of the strengths and shortcomings of the students’ language. In this way, the teacher can design the most efficient and helpful instruction plan that can help students be aware of their typical mistakes. Students will not waste time on learning the ability that they have

already acquired, or make the same mistakes without awareness. Second, form-based instruction is still essential to effective teaching. Nowadays, the grammar-based teaching method is widely criticized, and people tend to use more communicative approaches to teach a second language. This tendency is especially evident in China's English classes. However, from this case study, I find that Tafari, who has lived here for 6 years and can communicate the meanings without any problems, encounters a bottleneck when he wants to reach the requirement of academic English. Without any form correction feedback before he came to the ESL class in NSCC, he could not recognize his mistakes of forms, because these mistakes did not affect the meaning that he intends to convey. As an ELL teacher, we should pay more attention to form-based instruction, and concentrate on seizing the right moment to guide students to realize their mistakes in forms during the interaction. With adequate correction feedback, the students' language accuracy will improve naturally, and this will greatly benefit their future academic success.

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Appendix:

Artifact E: Assessment Analysis Project: Basic Information  
and Student's English Language Proficiency

Analysis Project

Part I and Part III

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February 9, 2013

### Analysis Project

In this project, I will analyze an ELL student's educational needs in a second grade classroom setting. By analyzing the student's cultural and linguistic background, whether her needs are being met in the context of state or federal assessment requirements, her stage of English language proficiency, her language abilities in a content area, I will design a instructional and assessment plan that can best meet students needs.

#### **Part I: Basic Information**

The student I observed in this project, Lucy (pseudonym), is an eight-year-old girl. She came to the U.S. in last September, and was considered as an EL Beginner according to her teacher. In this part, I will introduce the basic information about her cultural and linguistic background, and the setting of this analysis project.

#### **Cultural Background**

Lucy has been in the United States for five months now. Before she came here, she had lived China since she was born. Both of her parents are Chinese scholars, and worked in colleges before they came to the States. Her father is a visiting scholar at Vanderbilt University, and her mother does not work during their time in America.

Herrera, Murry, and Cabral (2007) mention seven renowned formal acculturation assessments to assess students' acculturation from different culture groups (p. 106). Among them, Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA; Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lew, & Vigil, 1987) is specially designed for Asian-heritage students. To get a deeper understanding of her level of acculturation, I asked Lucy a series of simplified questions based on SL-ASIA (see Appendix One). To reduce her anxiety, I ask

all the questions in our daily conversation in Chinese. From her answers, I get some useful information to help me understand her level of acculturation. Lucy can speak Chinese very fluently, and she always prefers to speak Chinese. She and her parents all identify themselves as Chinese with no doubt, because they have just moved here. All her friends are Chinese students, and her parents' friends here are mainly from Chinese community at Vanderbilt University. She does not have friends from other cultural backgrounds, and she does not show much interest in making friends from non-Chinese backgrounds. She loves watching Chinese cartoons, and reading Chinese books. However, she does some reading in English everyday. Her parents read American bedtime stories to her every evening, and she often borrows young children's English books from her ELL support teacher at her school. Her parents love to bring her to occasions that related to Chinese tradition. For example, she told me that she was going to participate in Vanderbilt Chinese New Year Celebration. When doing tasks on food in class, she told me that she loved Chinese food, and she did not like American food at all. As to the last question, she considered herself as Chinese without hesitation. From the results, we can find that Lucy has a relatively low level of acculturation, and she recognize Chinese as her only ethnic and cultural identity. Her acculturation level should be thoroughly considered when designing instruction plans.

### **Linguistic Background**

Lucy has one-year formal schooling in an elementary school in China, and she is very fluent in Chinese. Born and raised in a Chinese-speaking environment, she spoke Chinese all the time with her parents, her friends, and her teachers in China. From my observation, her writing skill in Chinese is above her grade level compared to students at

her grade in China. She told me that she keeps a diary everyday since kindergarten. When I saw the diary she showed to me, I found that she can write most of the Chinese characters right, which is not very common among second graders in China. She is quiet and shy in her personality, so she does not interact with other students in the classroom very often. However, she is very observant and records what she sees in school in her Chinese diary. From this fact, I find that Lucy has a high proficiency in her native language. Her proficiency in Chinese can be very beneficial to her, because according to Vygotsky, the learning of the first language can greatly influence a person's development of higher mental consciousness (Johnson, 2004).

English language is a mandatory subject in Chinese K-12 school system, so Lucy learned some English in her first grade in China. However, she told me that she did not like her English teacher in China, so she was not very interested in learning English then. Also, she did not know that she would have her second grade year in the United States, so she did not pay much attention to this subject. I checked her English textbook of the first grade in China, and found that the content is very much simplified. The main objective of first grade English in China is to foster students' interests in English, rather than teaching the language systematically. Based on Lucy's experience, her English lessons in China did not even achieve the primary goal of the curriculum, because she was not motivated enough to learn English.

### **Setting**

The school that Lucy attends is an elementary school located less than one mile from Vanderbilt University campus. Her teacher has more than twenty years of teaching experience, and she has more ELL students in her class than any other second grade

teachers' class every year. In this year, she has nineteen students in her classroom, and eight among them are considered as ELL students. Among the eight ELL students, four of them are considered as EL beginners (according to the teacher), including Lucy. However, other EL beginner students have basic oral English proficiency, and they interact with their classmates a lot. Just as what is mentioned before, Lucy is a quite and shy girl, and she will never speak English unless her teacher asks her to. She used to have a good friend in her class. However, her friend, who is also a Chinese girl, left the school at the beginning of this semester. Although there are three boys who can speak Chinese in her class, she does not speak to them very often, even in Chinese. She is silent for most of the time, and she only speaks English in a low voice when her teacher is doing one-on-one instruction.

### **Part III: Student's English Language Proficiency**

To assess student's English Language Proficiency (ELP), I used Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM) and Tennessee English Language Placement Test (TELPA). Based on the result of both assessments, I believe that Lucy's stage of ELP should be in Level 2, "Beginner", in Tennessee English Proficiency Levels.

#### **Result of Observational Protocol: SOLOM**

I observed her oral English proficiency based on SOLOM, and give her a score of 6 out of 25, which is equal to 1.2 / 5.0 (see Appendix Two). However, there is great difficulty in administrating SOLOM assessment.

I observed Lucy's performance during the lecture time, and also observed her interaction with group members during group activity time. Due to her lack of English proficiency and her introvert personality, she rarely spoke to her classmates or teachers.



Therefore, I cannot get enough information about her oral English proficiency. To get a more comprehensive understanding of her oral abilities, I also tried to ask her some basic questions in English, so as to let her speak more.

I gave her a score of 2 out of 5 in the category of comprehension. She could follow the teacher's basic instruction, such as "line up", "take a break", "come to the carpet", "put the paper into your folder", etc. The description of score 1 in comprehension is that the student "cannot understand even simple conversation". Based on Lucy's performance in classroom, I believe that she is beyond this level. However, she is not qualified to get a score of 3 in comprehension, because she still have difficulty in understanding some more complex and abstract instructions, such as activities in social studies lessons.

In the categories of fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar, all her scores are ones. She did not speak to her group members for most of the time, so there was basically no conversation with classmates at all. When I asked her simple questions such as her name or the date in English, she could only answer the questions with single words or severely fragmented phrases, like "Lucy" or "Thursday". Therefore, she is scored one in the category of fluency, because her speech was "so halting and fragmentary that conversation is virtually impossible". When I asked her some other questions such as her feelings and the location of her house, she would think for several seconds and tell me in Chinese. I encouraged her to express herself in English, but she told me in Chinese that she did not know how to say that in English. Based on this fact, I give her a score of one in vocabulary, because she had a very difficult time in making conversation due to vocabulary limitations. Her pronunciation could be very clear when

she repeated after the teacher or me. However, when there was no modeling prior to her speech, her pronunciation was very difficult to understand. For example, she would often pronounce the first half of a word or sentence and omit the second half. When a word or a sentence was about to end, I could not even hear her voice. A possible explanation could be that she was too shy to speak the whole word or sentence. However, based on her performance, I can only give her a score of one in pronunciation, because her "speech is virtually unintelligible" due to pronunciation problems. She is also scored one in grammar category. She did not respond in whole sentences very often, which made it difficult for me to measure her grammar in her speech. However, lacking of whole sentence also reflected her lack of ability to produce grammatically correct sentence. Therefore, a score of one will suffice her performance in the category of grammar.

### **Result of Standardized Assessment: TELPA**

Due to the difficulty to pull the student out of the classroom for a long time to finish a new standardized English proficiency assessment, I choose TELPA as the assessment that I will use to analyze Lucy's English proficiency. Lucy took the TELPA test in September 2012. According to her teacher, she got a score of 4 in listening, 0 in speaking, 0 in reading, and 8 in writing. She got a score of 12 in total, and was considered as a beginner.

Based on TELPA Administration Manual for Grades K-2, the total score of this test is 81. A student who has a score between 1 and 49 will be placed in TELPA Placement Level 1; if the score is between 50 and 71, then he/she will be placed in Level 2; students who are scored higher than 72 will be placed in level 3. I notice that the range for Level 1 in TELPA Grades K-2 is extremely large. According to the placement level,

all the students who get a score of 1 to 49 will be placed in the same level. However, students who are scored 1 and students who get a score of 49 will definitely have a distinct level of English proficiency. Moreover, the TELPA Placement Level is not equal to Tennessee English Proficiency Level, because it has only three levels in total. Also, there is no table explaining the relationship between TELPA Placement Level and the predicted ELDA Performance Level in the TELPA for Grade K-2 (although the manual contains the conversion table for TELPA Grades 3-12). Therefore, Level 1 in TELPA Placement Level can have different interpretations in terms of Tennessee English Proficiency Levels. The teacher is informed that the student is considered as a beginner in Tennessee English Proficiency Level, which is Level 2. I cannot obtain the exact conversion table between TELPA Placement Level and Tennessee English Proficiency Level, but the result that the teacher gave to me (Level 2 - Beginner) can be considered as Lucy's English proficiency level based on her result of TELPA.

Unfortunately, because TELPA is a high-stakes language assessment in Tennessee, I cannot get the technical manual of TELPA. Without the statistics generated from mass data (e.g., reliability coefficient, validity coefficient), it is impossible to make a justifiable comment on the validity and reliability (including both content validity and criterion-related validity) of this assessment. However, by looking through the TELPA items, I have found that some of part of the TELPA may lack of face validity (Tennessee Department of Education, 2009). First, for some items in listening test (e.g., Item 17), the listening part is too long and loaded with too much information. Considering students' age and cognitive level, these items look much more likely to be the items that test students' ability of memorization, rather than listening skills. Moreover, in the listening

and writing tests, there are more than ten items regarding lines, circles, and squares. This may measure students' math content area knowledge rather than just language skills. If the student does not know the knowledge before, he/she may fail too many items.

According to the administration policy, students who miss three items consecutively will not be allowed to do more items in this section. This may lead to the result that a student who has no prior math knowledge of these concepts will be rated lower than they should be, because they lost the chance to do other items in this section after three mistakes on items with lines, circles, and squares. Therefore, the examining of the face validity of TELPA reveals that TELPA still needs to be improved to be more valid.

### **Similarities and differences between the result of SOLOM and TELPA**

From the discussion above, we can find that the result of SOLOM and TELPA on Lucy's case does not contradict to each other. In SOLOM, the student's average score in the five categories is a little bit more than one, which represent that the student's oral English proficiency is more than zero, but not much more. The result of TELPA test shows that the student is in the level of beginner, rather than Level 1, "Pre-functional". This result also demonstrates that Lucy's English proficiency level is not more than "pre-functional", which represents "no functional ability in listening, speaking, reading and writing English". Also, Lucy cannot be placed at a level above Level 2, because her English proficiency is not high enough. In this sense, the results of SOLOM and TELPA are very similar.

However, the results of the two assessments have differences. The SOLOM score is only slightly more than 1 (1.2 out of 5). In other words, Lucy's oral English proficiency is still far from score 2. In TELPA test, however, Lucy was placed exactly at

the second level of Tennessee English Proficiency Level. From the results, we can find that Lucy's level of English proficiency is assessed higher in TELPA than SOLOM. The main reason that causes this result can be that SOLOM only measures oral English proficiency, while TELPA measure all the four skills. Based on my observation, Lucy's weakest skill among the four skills is speaking, because she is shy and does not talk to others in English. Because TELPA also measures reading and writing skills, Lucy can have a chance to show her relatively strong skills, therefore get a higher score. Another explanation is that the data I get from SOLOM is very limited and not reliable enough. Because SOLOM is conducted in authentic situations, the result I observe can vary dramatically due to students' mood, the difficulty of the lesson, and even the atmosphere of the classroom. It is possible that the day I observe Lucy does not represent her actual English proficiency due to some of the reasons above.

Although the results of the two assessment are slightly different, there is no doubt that Lucy's English proficiency level is more than "pre-functional", because she can understand basic instructions and produce simple utterances, which is more than "no functional ability" as described in Level 1. She still has great difficulty in producing grammatically correct long sentences, and still cannot understand most of the teachers' instructions; apparently, she cannot be placed in Level 3 either. Based on the discussion above, I believe that Lucy should be placed in Level 2 in Tennessee English Proficiency Levels.

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## Appendix One

## Acculturation Assessment Interview Guided Questions:

1. Language:
  - a. What languages can you speak?
  - b. What language do you prefer to speak?
2. Identity
  - a. How do you identify yourself? (Chinese, American, Chinese American?)
  - b. Which identification does your mother use?
  - c. Which identification does your father use?
3. Social Life
  - a. What was the ethnic origin of your friends?
  - b. If you could pick, whom would you prefer to make friends with?
  - c. Whom do your parents now associate within the community?
4. Entertainment
  - a. What is your movie / cartoon / music preference? (Chinese? American?)
  - b. What kind of book do you like to read?
  - c. Do you participate in Chinese occasions, holidays, traditions?
5. Food
  - a. What kind of food do you eat at home?
  - b. If eat outside, what kind of food would you prefer to order?
6. Describe yourself  
There are many different ways in which people think of themselves. Which ONE of the following most closely describes how you view yourself?
  - a. I consider myself basically a Chinese person. Even though I live in America, I still view myself basically as a Chinese person.
  - b. I consider myself basically as an American. Even though I have a Chinese background and characteristics, I still view myself basically as an American.
  - c. I consider myself as a Chinese American, although deep down I always know I am a Chinese.
  - d. I consider myself as a Chinese American, although deep down I view myself as an American first.
  - e. I consider myself as a Chinese American. I have both Chinese and American characteristics, and I view myself as a blend of both.

(Reference: Suinn, R. M., Rickard-Figueroa, K., Lew, S., & Vigil, P. (1987). The Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA). *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 47, 401-407.)

Appendix Two: SOLOM

Student Oral Language Observation Matrix: SOLOM

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Rater Name Wenyan Song Date 2/6/2013 Total Score 6/25

	1	2	3	4	5	Notes	Score
<b>Comprehension</b>	Cannot understand even simple conversation.	Has great difficulty following everyday social conversation, even when words are spoken slowly and repeated.	Understands most of what is said at slower than normal speed with some repetitions.	Understands nearly everything at normal speed, although occasional repetition maybe necessary.	Understands everyday conversation and normal classroom discussion without difficulty.	Able to understand basic instructions. Need to be slow. Difficulty in understanding teacher's teaching content.	2
<b>Fluency</b>	Speech is so halting and fragmentary that conversation is virtually impossible.	Usually hesitant, often forced into silence because of language limitations.	Everyday conversation and classroom discussion frequently disrupted by student's search for correct manner of expression.	Everyday conversation and classroom discussion generally fluent, with occasional lapses while student searches for the correct manner of expression.	Everyday conversation and classroom discussion fluent and effortless; approximately those of a native speaker.	Words. rarely sentences	1
<b>Vocabulary</b>	Vocabulary limitations so severe that conversation is virtually impossible.	Difficult to understand because of misuse of words and very limited vocabulary.	Frequent use of wrong words; conversation somewhat limited because of inadequate vocabulary.	Occasional use of inappropriate terms and/or rephrasing of the ideas because of limited vocabulary.	Vocabulary and idioms approximately those of a native speaker.	Almost no conversation	1
<b>Pronunciation</b>	Pronunciation problems so severe that speech is virtually unintelligible.	Difficult to understand because of pronunciation problems; must frequently repeat in order to be understood.	Concentration required of listener; occasional misunderstandings caused by pronunciation problems.	Always intelligible, although listener conscious of a definite accent and occasional inappropriate intonation pattern.	Pronunciation and intonation approximately those of a native speaker.	Can imitate native speaker's pronunciation No speech.	1
<b>Grammar</b>	Errors in grammar and word order so severe that speech is virtually unintelligible.	Difficult to understand because of errors in grammar and word order; must often rephrase or restrict speech to basic patterns.	Frequent errors in grammar and word order; meaning occasionally obscured.	Occasional errors in grammar or word order; meaning not obscured.	Grammar and word order approximately those of a native speaker.	No sentence. hard to measure grammar?	1



Field Experiences

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### Abstract

This essay is a combination of the four field trips in the practicum for foundations of the education of English language learners (ELL). In the first trip, we had an interview with the key players of the English as a Second Language (ESL) courses in Nashville State Community College (NSCC), and developed an overall understanding of the current situation and challenges for ESL education in Nashville. During our second exploration of case law and judicial rulings, the history and evolution of law systems of ELL education was clarified. The next experience is an observation of ESL class in NSCC. We experienced the real classroom and formed our own thoughts on ESL instruction. The last trip is the investigation of an immigrants' community in southeast Nashville. After experiencing the local stores and collecting transnational literacies, I have a deeper understanding of the ways to use the community resources to facilitate language instruction to ELL students.

### Introduction and Analysis of Field Trip to Nashville State Community College

Nashville State Community College (NSCC) is a school with students from diverse backgrounds and vibrant communities. Based on the needs of large numbers of immigrants and refugees in Nashville, the college offers the most systematic and qualified courses for English Language Learners in this area. In this article, more detailed information about the acceptance of students, the course arrangement, the teachers' information, as well as the biggest challenge that the program faces, will be thoroughly discussed.

Compared with other institutions, NSCC's ELL courses offer the most qualified ELL teaching resources in the whole Nashville area, and the program attracts students with diverse backgrounds. New students are mainly immigrants or refugees from various countries. The top five countries of the applicants are Egypt, Iraq, Somalia, Kurdistan, and Ethiopia. The number one native language of the new students is Arabic. With the same purpose, which is to pursue a better life for themselves and their families, students from different countries or with diverse religions respect each other and study together in harmony. Among the immigrant and refugee communities, the ELL courses are so popular that the faculty members of the program never need to worry about a lack of students. Everyday, at least one new applicant is brought to the ELL office by former students, who might be the new one's friends or family members. In addition, although the mission of the ELL courses in NSCC is specialized within the academic track, there are lots of students who have no wish to enter college also take the courses. Due to the increase in needs, the ELL program has expanded a lot. But because of the limitation of resources, the classrooms are still not big enough to meet the needs of everyone.

The program assumes that all applicants are literate in their first language and have acquired basic vocabulary in English. Therefore, to better meet the need of students with different English language proficiencies, applicants need to take a standardized language test called the “Michigan Test”. Full-time test specialists are available to serve the new applicants. Based on the score of the Michigan Test, students are placed into different levels from different aspects. When the students get the results of their placement, they can choose the courses they need, which makes their schedule entirely individualized. Also, the time of the courses is flexible, so the students can coordinate the classes with their work or family obligations. The program is not intensive, because every course lasts for a whole semester. Since the course is not strictly required by most of the institutions, ELL students can also sign a waiver form. Some students who went to a high school in the U.S. choose not to join the program because they believe that their English is much better than those new immigrants in the programs, although they also have some ELL issues.

Ideally, the teachers devoting themselves into this program should have a master’s degree in linguistics specializing in TESOL, some relevant certifications, and a lot of teaching experience. But the fact is that many teachers cannot meet all the standards mentioned above. Although the teachers in NSCC’s ESL program are known as a team with the best teaching quality of ESL in the whole area, more qualified teachers are still needed. In this program, there are five full-time faculty members, who are treated as any other faculty members in NSCC, together with many part-time teachers. The program is integrated into NSCC, which guarantees its financial support. Other schools with the similar program in this area might not be as lucky as this one.

With the large volume of need and highly qualified teachers, this program has become one of the most successful ELL programs in Tennessee, but there are still some problems that need to be solved. The biggest problem is that the number of teachers cannot match the large number of students. The number of new immigrants in need of English training is growing rapidly, but the number of qualified ELL teachers cannot satisfy the level of need.

The ELL program in NSCC has become one of the largest TESOL support programs in the whole Nashville area for its well-established system of students enrollment, course design and teacher employment. However, only when we solve the problem of the unsatisfied needs of the increasing number of students can we finally help more new immigrants and refugees enjoy their new life better.

From the interview, we found that NSCC offers one of the most popular ELL educations in the whole Nashville area, and has a relatively mature curriculum structure. However, during the short interview, what is clear is that there are lots of problems in the program. Among these problems, the imbalanced ratio of students and teachers, as well as the big diversity of students' backgrounds, are the two main issues that need to be addressed.

As is mentioned by the interviewee, one key problem at this school is the imbalanced ratio of qualified teachers and new students. The number of bilingual students enrolled in U.S. schools is increasing rapidly during the last decade (Garcia, 2005), and the fact is well reflected in the Nashville's growing number of newly arrived immigrants and refugees. On the other hand, ESL education has not gained adequate support to attract more teachers devoting themselves into this area. At NSCC, only five

faculty members are full-time ESL teachers. Others are part-time teachers, which means their work is neither stable nor well paid. Some people believe that ESL is “less demanding and rigorous than content fields”, but the fact is that “to teach language skills involves more than the ability to produce and understand language” (Blumenthal, 2002). There’s no doubt that ESL programs throughout the country deserve more support to improve the quality of teachers, for the qualification of teaching second language needs much more than just speaking the language fluently.

Another problem is that the students’ diverse backgrounds make teaching complicated. The new students of NSCC’s ESL program are usually over 20 years old, and some are even over 50 when they learn English for the first time. Since the age of learning to speak English is related to the difficulty of language acquisition and final English-literacy proficiency (Garcia, 2005), teaching a class full of new English speakers with discrete distribution of age must be a great challenge for teachers. What’s more, as English “hegemony” is trying to shape the students’ identities (Corson, 2002), how to respect the students as what they are and how to make the all the students respect each other’s identity is a tricky issue. In addition, the generation 1.5 issues described by Blumenthal (2002) also emerge in this program. As the interviewee said, those new immigrants who have received their high school education in the U. S. usually waive the chance to get ESL education in NSCC, although many of those students still have language issues.

The ELL program in NSCC is systematic and well developed, but it is far from perfect. If the faculty members can solve the problems of imbalanced ratio of teachers

and students, as well as the diversity of students that may cause troubles in teaching, the program will better serve the needs of its students.

### A Reflection on English Language Learners Legal Issues

As more and more immigrants are flocking into the United States, their languages had enriched the language diversity of the country. However, the increasing frequency of the use of different native languages in the country also brings problems concerning English Language Learners (ELLs). The attitudes of the public and government towards ELLs are changing as time goes by, and the changes are well reflected in the case laws and legislative decisions. Among these legislative decisions, there are lots of laws that are playing key roles in ELL education in the country, especially in Nashville. They affect the curriculum design of schools, the language study plans of ELL students, and the role of language teachers. Some of the legal decisions are so controversial that they are still under heated discussion.

#### **Federal Laws and Judicial Rulings on ELL Education**

In the last fifty years, a more comprehensive legal system for ELLs has been constructed, but it might not promote equality. This system has profoundly influenced ELL education in Nashville and Tennessee. In 1964, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act was passed. The law, which “forbids discrimination based on national origin”, contained the protection of language rights (Gándara & Hopkins, 2009, p. 24). Four years later, the Bilingual Education Act (or Title VII of Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 1968) was passed, which provided the authorized availability of federal funding for aid to serve language minority students (Jiménez & Rose, 2008). However, with no funding, the act was “largely symbolic” (Gándara & Hopkins, 2009, p. 24). In 1974, the situation was improved with the decision of *Lau v. Nichols*. At this time, the U. S. Supreme Court recognized the rights of students who speak minority languages to have their own



language choice, and forced school districts to make efforts to make instruction comprehensible to ELLs (Jiménez & Rose, 2008). To make the decision serve ELL students better, the decision of *Castañeda v. Pickard* (1981) concisely provided guidelines for the implementation of ELL programs, including the adoption of educational theory, the qualification of teaching resources, and the evaluation of the students' progress (Jiménez & Rose, 2008). One year later, the U.S. Supreme Court made a decision on *Plyler v. Doe* (1982), which gave every child an equal chance to get a free education in this country regardless of their immigration status (Zehr, 2011).

Although great progress had been made in terms of the protection of the rights of ELL students, the situation of bilingual or multilingual education was getting worse in the process of reauthorization of the Bilingual Education Act. The Act was reauthorized several times: in 1974, 1978, 1984, 1988, and 1994. In the process, the eligibility of the funding to spend on English-only program was increasing, and fewer schools were willing to support bilingual programs. Finally, in the newly reauthorized title of No Child Left Behind (2002), all references to any bilingual instruction were removed, and “the eradication of any mandate to support the development of native languages, or support academic instruction through native languages, was complete” (Gándara & Hopkins, 2009, p. 26).

### **The Implementation of ELL Laws in Nashville**

Based on the federal laws listed above, the Tennessee State Board of Education has issued an ESL program policy (TN State Board of Education, 2008), which directly determines the curriculum design of ESL programs in Nashville.

According to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (1968) and the decision of *Plyler v. Doe* (1982), all school districts in Tennessee must have anti-discriminatory policies to offer equal education opportunities to individuals regardless of their race, color, national origin, or documentation status. To comply with the decision of *Castañeda v. Pickard* (1981) and to better implement the ELL federal laws into practice, every school must identify ELLs, notify parents of their rights, choose the proper service delivery model, and meet guidelines for staffing ratios (Tennessee State Board of Education, 2008, p.1). More specifically, schools should first identify ELLs by “Home Language Survey” and “Fluent English Proficient” assessment, and teachers must modify instruction and assessment accordingly. In addition, parents of target students should be notified of the information on ESL education of their children in an understandable way. Moreover, in the aspect of service delivery models, No Child Left Behind “demands that all ESL service be founded on research-based educational practices” (Tennessee State Board of Education, 2008, p.2). The amount of hours per day of ESL services for ELLs in different English proficiency levels are restricted by state law, and the language proficiency determines the ELL students’ availability to receive high school diploma. Furthermore, staffing of ESL programs in Tennessee’s schools should meet two criteria; one is the effective implementation of the chosen service delivery model, and the other is the fulfillment of the requirement of federal compliance requirements. ESL class sizes shall not over the state mandated grade level class size, and the maximum ratio of students to full-time teachers is 45:1 (Tennessee State Board of Education, 2008, p.3).

### **A Brief Reflection on the ELL Legal Issues**

The ELL laws have so far largely influenced the curriculum design in school districts, the language learning process of ELL students, and the responsibilities of language teachers. However, the legal system is far from perfect and still need to be improved, because it lacks the consideration of ELL students' access to academic progress and the right to preserve their cultural identities.

From the panel discussion with an ELL lawyer, an advocate, a system coordinator and two students, we can see that the reality in Nashville fits what is required in the law. The advocate especially mentioned the course load, the identification process, the exit procedure from the program, and the monitoring period, which adequately meet the requirements of the state policy. What is most impressive is that the coordinator mentioned that they add English language education into content courses, which is not required by any forms of laws. Although many native English-speaking parents question the change, the coordinator believed that the change would benefit students' language proficiencies of both language minority and majority students.

From the facts above, there is no doubt that the ELL law system has greatly influenced the related schools, teachers and students. According to NCLB, which aims at promoting the academic achievement of immigrant students through English language teaching, schools need to give English-language assessments to ELL students after a "three-year window" adjustment period ("No Child Left Behind Act", 2011). In addition, to comply with the need for English language teaching, even some content course teachers need to know a little about English language teaching. The restriction on the implementation of ESL education requires language teachers to be more qualified in theory in order to carry out the chosen service delivery model. The legal system also

makes ELL students to focus on English learning, since it is directly related to their academic accomplishment in this country. In addition, language education can never be alone without a culture element. Just as what was mentioned by a student we interviewed, compared to bilingual or bicultural education, he believed that school paid more attention to assimilation, which exactly meets the requirement of NCLB.

The current legal system may be helpful for students to fit into the “mainstream”. However, it’s far from perfect and has lots of problems that need to be improved. Although President George W. Bush related the learning of English to the allegiance to the country in April 2006 (as cited in Gándara & Hopkins, 2009), Gándara & Hopkins (2009) believed that the focus exclusively on English would make native speakers always hold an advantage over English learners. Jiménez & Rose (2008) have the similar worry about the marginalization of the ELL students, and view the result as “characteristic of colonizing practices (p. 233).” Indeed, the “hegemony” of the English language is always trying to shape students’ identities (Corson, 2002, p.18), and those who cannot fit in the language environment are destined to be unsuccessful. Consequently, to provide language minority students with more access to academic progress, the legal system needs to give ELLs more multi-language supports in content courses and leave more space of language choices to the students themselves, rather than choose the only “right” path for the students. We always need to remember that “equal” is not equal to “same.” Moreover, in order to respect the ELL students’ identities as they are rather than shape and assimilate all the students into the so-called “allegiance” models, the legal system should provide more supports to respect ELL students’ culture diversities. Only in this way can we help

students of all languages live with self-respect and dignity, and bring the country closer to the assertion of “no child left behind.”

The legal system of ELLs in the United States has changed greatly during the years, and every change has affected the schools, students and teachers greatly in both positive and negative ways. The current legal system is far from perfect, because it has eliminated the language choice of students from diverse cultures and violated the students’ rights to have equal access to academic success, as well as the rights to preserve their cultural identities. To better serve the needs of ELL students, the legislative decisions should give ELLs more multi-language supports in content courses, and legitimize the rights for ELLs to gain adequate respect for their culture backgrounds.

### A Reflection on Class Observation in Nashville State Community College

Nashville State Communication College (NSCC) is known for its high-qualified ESL education program. Therefore, a field trip to NSCC's ESL classroom can provide us with valuable exploration of a real ELL education class. In this paper, the observation of the teacher, students, and physical environment in the ESL classroom will be carefully described. Furthermore, the advantages and deficiencies of this class will be discussed based on the framework of previous ELL academic studies.

#### **Class Observation**

In this part, the observation of the class will be presented concerning the teacher, students, and physical environment. Generally speaking, the class offered an excellent chance for students to learn grammar efficiently through highly-qualified teaching resources.

The teacher of this class was a full-time ESL teacher with rich experience in this field, and she was giving a class on the topic of "adjective clauses." From the class that we observed, it was easy to find that she was really good at teaching the knowledge and usage of English grammar to ELL students. She started the class with a review of "adverb clauses" and "adjectives," which helped the students to recall their knowledge of the relative concepts. In the process of teaching, she made a clear explanation of this grammatical phenomenon using colorful markers to clarify different components of the sentence. Using square, circle and arrow drawings on the words and phrases, she made it dynamic for the students to understand the formation of adjective clauses. What was most impressive was that she used an interesting metaphor which compared the subordinate clause to a kid; she explained that "kid" could be alone, and when the "kid" was running

ahead of an independent clause (as an adult), you needed to use a comma to grab him/her back for security. By using such vivid description, she made grammar teaching clear and interesting. In terms of interaction with students, she also showed her experiences in organizing the atmosphere of the classroom. She had rich facial expressions, which made the students laugh and focus on her words. When she was introducing a new piece of knowledge, she could always start with an example in real life (such as the camping she had gone to the week before the class), or a situation created by herself in the classroom (such as going straight to a student and saying “because I’m tired” in order to show that subordinate clauses would make no sense without independent clauses). However, as time was limited, she had no other interactions with students. Students answered her question together, and there were no extra activities. In addition, there were no examples concerning students’ unique life experiences based on their diverse cultural backgrounds.

From the aspect of the students, what could be observed was the fact that they were learning actively. In the process of learning a new concept, the students showed great concentration on the teacher’s instruction. They answered the teacher’s questions actively, did exercises in the textbook, and gave the teacher responses when they were confused. Most of the students in this class belonged to the group of voluntary minorities, since they had “more or less willingly moved to the U.S.”, and they expected “better opportunities” (Ogbu & Simons, 1998). They wished to have higher education and better jobs after finishing this ESL program, so they cherished this chance to improve their English proficiency level. Unlike the immigrant children, these students were adults who were fully aware of their mission to take this class. This awareness made the class proceed smoothly with students’ fully cooperation.

The appropriate physical environment setting of the classroom also facilitated the learning of the students. The desks were arranged in rows, which reduced distractions and improved the view of teachers' instruction. The bright, roomy and safe classroom provided the students' with the most comfortable space for learning. What's more, there were plenty of multi-cultural elements in the classrooms. We could find national flags and a large world map on the wall. These decorations can make the ELL students feel relaxed and comfortable, and they were also good for preserving the students' cultural esteem and creating a harmonious atmosphere in such a cross-cultural classroom. By arranging the environment in the ways mentioned above, the staff of this program provided a study space for the ELL students that best balanced the portion of academic and relaxed elements.

### **A Discussion on the Class Observation**

From the description above, an efficient, vivid and well-organized ESL class is depicted. Apparently, the class is excellent in providing a comfortable environment, clear instruction and opportunities for active students' participation. However, based on the framework of ELL theories, the problems concerning cultural diversity and teaching methods in this class still need to be discussed, since it's complicated in both theoretical and practical points of view.

To start with, it is generally believed that combining minority cultural elements with instruction is beneficial to ELL students. Ogbu and Simons (1998) noted that "culturally responsive instruction" is helpful for teacher and students' interaction, and therefore makes school a "less alien place" (p. 180). Corson (2001) also suggested that it would benefit ELL students' learning if teachers "borrow discourse norms" from other



culture, as well as show “respect and courtesy” (p. 59). What’s more, Jiménez et al. (2009) believed that instruction that incorporates literacy elements from minority communities can “help teachers better understand their ELLs and foster meaningful relationships with and among students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds” (p. 25). Generally, the mention of culture during the instruction is an effective way to bond the teacher with students. In this class, the ELL students would feel more comfortable if the teacher could use the students’ “funds of knowledge” (Moll et al., 2001, p. 133). Her camping story is a vivid introduction story of the concept, but it might be better if she uses more stories that are more familiar with these immigrant students from the different cultural backgrounds.

Furthermore, the instructional method of this class could be improved according to some ELL theories, although it is already highly efficient. In this class, the interaction between teacher and students was very limited, and the students had no interaction with each other. This teacher dominated instruction model can be categorized as a “transmission model”, which is not effective in cultivating students’ cognitive skills compared to “reciprocal interaction” model (Cummins, 1986). In addition, Laurel Shaper Walters noted the positive correlation between cooperative learning and students’ achievements (as cited in Nieto & Bode, 2011, p. 125). It seems that the class we observed lacks of students’ involvement, and this absence will impair students’ achievement. It would be better if there were more interactive activities in this class, since an absolute teacher dominated model is not the most effective instruction model.

Admittedly, the lack of cultural elements and interaction in this class can be criticized based on the current mainstream ELL theories. However, the theories will not

cause better results if we rely too much on them. In this case of the class observation, it's not feasible for us to add too much cultural care and class activities. First, the theories mentioned above mainly focus on immigrant children's ELL education. Since the culture conflict is not the biggest obstacle for adult students to learn a new language, it's not totally worthwhile for the teacher to spend too much time on culture observation, not to mention the fact that there're so many different cultural backgrounds in this classroom that it's a mission impossible to know all of them. Secondly, due to the time limit and the degree of intensity of this class, the teacher dominated model might be better in terms of concept clarification than the model that involves too many activities, which may waste lots of time. We are not attempting to say that the theories are not applicable to this case. However, we need to seek a balance between theory and reality, so as to better serve the need of adult ELL students in this ESL class.

### **Conclusion**

In this paper, an ESL class in NSCC is described in detail from the aspects of teacher, students, and physical environment. Generally speaking, the class was well organized with an experienced teacher, active students, and a comfortable environment. Although the class had many merits, it was not perfect, since the class had two weaknesses that had to be improved based on a framework of ELL theories (e.g., Corson, 2001; Cummins, 1986; Jiménez et al., 2009; Moll et al., 2001; Ogbu & Simons, 1998). One was the combination of multicultural elements, and the other was the increase in interaction between teacher and students, as well as that among students themselves. However, due to the cognitive level of the students and the time limit of the class, it's not

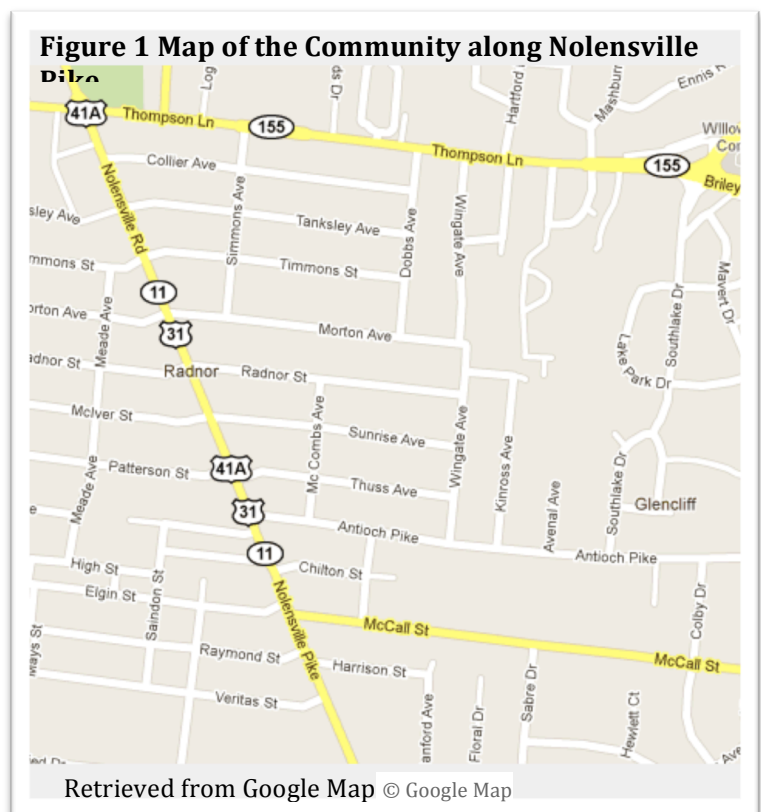
wise to strictly apply the theory in this case. We need to seek a balance between the application of the theory and the respect of reality.

### A Reflection on Community Exploration

To be ESL teachers, we have to face students' diverse cultural backgrounds. The differences in ethnicities among students may cause barriers of communication. However, the diversity can also be an advantage to enrich teachers' instruction. In this essay, we discuss the pedagogy of incorporating students' community literacies into language teaching based on our experience in an immigrant community in southeast Nashville. After introducing the basic information of the community and affirming the significance of community exploration, this essay offers several examples of incorporating community literacies into English instruction. Based on previous studies and my own experience, the merits and obstacles of the incorporation are also discussed.

#### An Introduction to the Community

The immigrant community we visited is located in southeast of Nashville, along Nolensville Pike (see Figure 1). Since this area is where Glenclyff High School is located, and nearly all the teenagers of high school age in this community go to that high school, the demographic feature of this area can be reflected in the feature of Glenclyff High School. According to School Demographic Information<sup>1</sup>,



<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.mnps.org/AssetFactory.aspx?did=12403>

there are 6.9% Asian, 33.0% Black, and 33.1% Hispanic students in school of the school year 2010-2011. The school is “one of the most diverse schools in Tennessee”<sup>2</sup>, and 25.3% of students have limited English proficiency. Just as the demographic data of Glenclyff High School represents, the community we visited is one of the most diverse areas of Nashville. Among all the places in this neighborhood, supermarkets and grocery stores are best places to collect community literacies for two reasons. First, they are most closely related to everyone’s life in this neighborhood, so we can get a picture of what people in this area use and eat every day. Second, because they are so frequently visited by the residents, many advertisements concerning other services are spread here, and these offer us rich sources of literacy data of various kinds. Therefore, we choose supermarkets and grocery stores as the main target places to collect local literacies. We could identify Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Russian, and several other languages in this neighborhood. The community looks like any other low-income to average-income suburban area in this city, except for the numerous signs, posters, and goods in other languages, and large numbers of international markets.

### **The Importance of Community Exploration**

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<sup>2</sup> Cited from “Glenclyff High School Profile”, retrieved from <http://www.mnps.org/Page58144.aspx>

Knowledge of local community literacies is of great significance to teachers. To

**Figure 2 West Union Ad**



**Figure 3 Parcel Transportation Ad**



start with, it's a valuable chance for teachers to get to know more about their students.

For example, from Figure 2 and Figure 3, teachers can learn how students' families are

connected with their other

family members, relatives or

friends back in their

homeland. From Figure 4 and

Figure 5, which are the

pictures taken in local

international grocery stores,

teachers can get to know the

students' daily food in their

culture. The knowledge of

the students' community can help teachers feel close to the students, as well as break the cultural barriers between teachers and students.

Second, by knowing more about students' daily lives, teachers can build on students' prior knowledge and improve the effectiveness of instruction. Just as Martinez

**Figure 4 Market Food Photo**



**Figure 5 Market Food Photo**



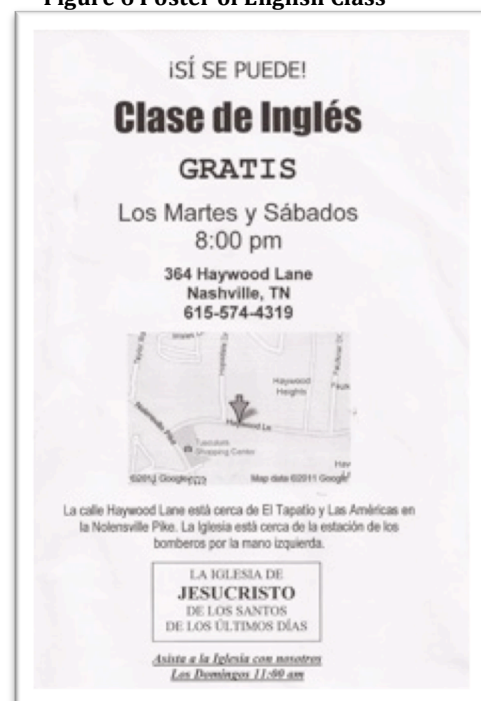
et al. (2008) has mentioned, many bilingual skills are “naturalized, seemingly invisible, and largely unrecognized and unvalued”. If the teachers can explore the community where their students live, they can better recognize and value those underlying bilingual skills. Based on what the students’ have known in their lives, teachers can find an easy and interesting way to help students learn a new language with their “invisible” bilingual skills.

Third, with the implementation of the cultural element into language teaching, students can learn from each other. By introducing literacies in students’ communities, teachers can evoke conversations on the topic of diverse culture, help students’ to be familiar with each other’s culture identity, and cultivate the bonds among students. These kinds of activities can broaden students’ horizon, facilitate content and language teaching, and more importantly, make students be proud of their unique cultural identities as we as respect other’s cultural background.

### **Examples of Incorporation Community Literacies into Language Teaching**

In 2009, Jiménez et al. conducted similar research on transnational and community literacies, and found three instructional activities using community literacies, including assorting collected literacies, translation of texts, and interview with relative people (p. 22-23). Based on their study and the literacies we collected during this field trip, I will give several examples of transforming community literacies as language teachers’ tools of instruction.

**Figure 6 Poster of English Class**







English. Also, the organizers of the activity are native speakers and English-Spanish translators. From this piece of flyer we collected, we find a bilingual community activity. We can encourage our students to take part into these kinds of activities so as to get more involved into a bilingual environment. What's more important, based on the topic we discovered, we can let the students ask their family members the way to cook healthiest food in their culture, and let every students share the way of cooking with all the classmates in English. If we have the chance, we can even invite one of students' mothers to come to the classroom and demonstrate the way of cooking, with her child serving as a translator.

### **A Reflection on Teaching with the Incorporation of Community Literacies**

Based on previous studies, knowledge of the community has been proved to be effective in facilitating instruction. However, it is still under discussion as to whether it's the most efficient way to teach language to minority students or not.

Before Jiménez et al. (2009) did the research affirming that “instruction that incorporates transnational literacies” is beneficial to ELL English education (p. 25), lots of studies had concentrated on the advantage of introducing knowledge from students' communities that reflect their cultural backgrounds. Cummins (1986) believed that “students' school success appears to reflect both the more solid cognitive/academic foundation developed through intensive L1 instruction and the reinforcement of their cultural identity” (p. 25), which stressed the importance of introducing L1 languages of various culture into classroom. This knowledge can be most efficiently obtained from the students' communities. Moll et al. (1992) also concluded that studying “household knowledge” (which they referred to as “funds of knowledge”) is of great significance for

teachers to foster well-established relationship with parents and students, because it can reduce “the insularity of classrooms”, and contribute to “the academic content and lessons” (p. 139). In addition, Martinez (2008) conducted a research showing that “it is possible to leverage what students are already doing in their everyday lives to help them develop academic literacy skills” (p. 430). Of course, visiting students’ communities is one of the best ways to know their everyday lives.

However, a visit to the students’ community will not always be an efficient way to enhance language instruction. First, an exploration of local community takes much time, and sometimes makes teachers uncomfortable. As the teachers are not usually familiar with the neighborhood, they may spend much time on finding the stores, restaurants or other areas where they can get applicable transnational literacies. Even if the trip to the community is well organized (just like ours), the information we get for half a day is still restricted to local grocery stores, which is not enough to represent the whole picture of students’ daily lives. In our trip to the community near Nolensville Pike, we sometimes feel uncomfortable to take so many pictures in the stores when other local people were shopping or looking at us curiously, although we got the permission from the managers. We felt like we were disturbing their lives and studying their lives because they were “alien” people. There may also be some places that the owners are unwilling to have us take pictures, which will take us more time to find similar places to study.

Second, adding too much information of community literacies might not be appropriate for intensive ESL education classrooms. Incorporation with local knowledge might be efficient for ESL classes in Glencliff High School, in which the ESL course is not intensive and students have enough time acquire the language with the aid of literacies

from communities. However, if the ESL class is an intensive language course, like the one in Nashville State Community College, it might not be applicable to spend too much time on introducing the various literacies collected in communities. It's still helpful for the students if teachers can combine the local literacies with language instruction, but it will use much time. Since time is already limited for the teachers to teach the language, spending much time on introducing transnational literacies might harm students' acquisition of the language, and the benefit of incorporation with community literacies may not be enough to compensate the harm. Therefore, we should be careful when incorporating too much of the community literacies into classroom, because it's a time and energy consuming process.

### **Conclusion**

Based on previous study and our experience of a field trip to an immigrant community in southeast Nashville, the importance of incorporating community literacies into English instruction is affirmed, and several examples of instruction built on collected materials are presented. However, we need to be cautious when combining too much community literacies, since doing so may cost lots of teachers' energies and instruction time. Therefore, we should apply the community literacies to teaching based on the course settings.

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Reflective Teaching Journal Week 1:

*Define “communicative language teaching” (CLT) in your own words*

In my opinion, communicative language teaching (CLT) is a teaching approach that contains various teaching methods, aiming at promoting students' communicative competence in the target language. Since CLT concentrates on students' overall communicative skills rather than purely linguistic competence, teachers who use this approach need to take the following three aspects into consideration.

First, teachers need to provide their students with sufficient, comprehensive and authentic input in the target language. Different from traditional teaching methods that mainly use language-teaching textbooks revised for second language learners, CLT approach calls for teacher's attention to authentic materials. By immersing students into a visual context that is most similar to the real target language speaking situations, teachers can help students better fit into the scenario that use the target language as a communication tool, rather than a pure accumulation of complex grammatical rules.

Besides using authentic materials, teachers who use CLT approach should also adjust their ways of teaching accordingly. Based on the theory that communication is the ultimate goal of language use, CLT rejects the language teaching approaches that pull language out of real-life contexts. In order to help students communicate in the target language, teachers should design tasks that stimulate students' conversation in the target language. By doing the tasks with language partners, students can not only learn how to

speak the language, but also acquire the ability to solve real-life problems that they might encounter when they are in the countries that speak the target language.

Using task-based instruction can also motivate students to learn the target language, which brings out the third aspect of CLT, the affective factors. Traditional language teaching often neglects students' personal feelings towards the instruction process, because the teaching focuses only on the language itself, rather than the subjects that use language to communicate ideas. As an approach that focuses on the improvement of communicative competence, CLT emphasizes the roles that students play in the learning context. Therefore, teachers should consider students' motivation, attitude, anxiety, stress and other affective factors when planning and implementing their instruction plans.

## Reflective Teaching Journal Week 2:

*In your opinion, how do the National Standards fit with the goals for CLT?*

According to Brandl, the primary goal for Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is “to make use of real-life situations that necessitate communication” (2008, p. 5). In this sense, the National Standards for foreign language teaching fit well with the goals for CLT.

One example that reveals National Standard’s connection to the goal of CLT is the encouragement of task-based instruction (TBI). It is clear that the standards under the category of “communication” (Standards 1.1, 1.2, 1.3) emphasize the flexible use of language on various topics. To help students acquire the target language through different settings, TBI is necessary to foster communication competence in a variety of real-life situations both inside and outside schools in other cultural contexts. Therefore, with the emphasis on TBI, National Standards can help students effectively communicate using the target language in the target settings, which is also the goal of CLT. We can also find evidences of the connection in Standard 2.1, 2.2, and 5.1, which also pay much attention on TBI from the aspects of cultures and communities.

Another good example of National Standards’ close relation to CLT is the concentration on rich and authentic input in the classroom. According to Standards under the category of “comparisons”, students should demonstrate their understanding of language and cultures through comparisons of the target ones and their own. Obviously, this goal cannot be achieved unless the students are immersed in a rich and meaningful input from the environment where people speak the target language. Also, the input is not



restricted to pedagogical related materials, which leave space for students to absorb knowledge written in the target language from the disciplines other than language teaching. This idea is well reflected in the category of “connections” (Standard 3.1 and Standard 3.2). The authentic input can also be irrelevant to academic topics, offering enjoyment to the learners; this kind of input is just what Standard 5.2 has described. Since the National Standards have emphasized so much on the authentic input, and authentic input has been mentioned in several principles of effective CLT, we believe that the National Standards can help students improve their communicative competence, which is the main goal of CLT.

Besides the examples mentioned above, the National Standards also indirectly mention collaborative learning (Standard 1.1), recognition of affective factors (Standard 5.2), and learning by doing approach (Standard 1.2 and Standard 5.1). All of these components are effective factors that can promote students’ communicative competence in their target languages. Therefore, I believe that the National Standards fit well with the goals for CLT.

## Reflective Teaching Journal Week 3:

*Find a first-year textbook for your target language. Analyze and describe how vocabulary is presented. List 5 strategies you would use to teach vocabulary.*

Based on my background and my future teaching settings, I found a first grade English textbook that is now used in Shanghai, China. Take the fourth unit titled “My Body” as an example. The unit contains two to three big pictures in each page. Every picture contains a cartoon kid moving or showing a part of his/her body (e.g., arms, legs, hands, etc.). Besides each picture, there is a simple sentence describing the picture (e.g., “This is my hand”, “This is my nose”, “Touch your arms”, etc.). The book also has an activity of singing a song with the vocabulary of the body parts mentioned in this unit. At the end of this unit, all the new words are listed for students to review.

If I were the teacher to teach the vocabulary in this unit, I would use the following strategies.

First, I would incorporate authentic materials to teach vocabulary. For example, with the access to the Internet, I can show students some videos on Youtube that contained the new words. Videos teaching basic Yoga postures, Salsa dances, or other body building exercises will repeatedly use the new words. By showing these videos produced by English-speaking countries, students can be immersed into authentic context of using these words. This will help trigger their interests in learning the words of body parts, and leave them deep impressions on the new vocabulary.

Besides the videos, I would also use multimedia presentation tools to show the pictures correlated to the new vocabulary. I would make a PPT, a Prezi document, or

even a board of Pinterest ([www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com)) before the lesson. During the lesson, I would show the lively pictures and the new words on each page, guiding students to pronounce, as well as making connections between words and pictures. According to Brandl, students' ability to recall the information could be enhanced by using multiple ways of input (2008, p. 78).

I would also use body languages to enhance students' learning of new vocabulary. For this unit particular, I would ask students to touch their parts of body when they are pronouncing the name of the body parts. As a teacher, I would also touch or move the relative part of my body when I mention the words.

Making use of the learners could also be a good strategy. I would conduct an interactive activity to engage all the students. A possible activity could look like this: student A tell a random student B: "B, please touch/move your nose (or other body parts learned in this lesson)"; B should do as what A says, and then B should call another student C to do the same thing to another body part, so on and so forth. This activity can help students become active participants of the lesson, as well as have a deeper memory of the new vocabulary.

Last but not least, I could incorporate drawing into this classroom. Students could draw a small person on the paper, mark each part of the person's body, and write the relative words besides the drawing. This activity could also be used as an assessment of the vocabulary, and would be a better enjoyment for students than mechanic dictation.

## A Form-Focused Activity

## Completion Drills

- Teacher: To smell the scent, I use...  
Students: To smell the scent, I use my nose.
- Teacher: To taste the soup, I use...  
Students: To taste the soup, I use my tongue.
- Teacher: To see the sky, I use...  
Students: To see the sky, I use my eyes.
- Teacher: To kick the soccer, I use...  
Students: To kick the soccer, I use my feet.
- Teacher: To drink water, I use...  
Students: To drink water, I use my mouth.
- Teacher: To hear the music, I use...  
Students: To hear the music, I use my ears.
- Teacher: To pass the salt, I use...  
Students: To pass the salt, I use my hands.
- Teacher: To chew the gum, I use...  
Students: To chew the gum, I use my teeth.
- Teacher: To think about the answer, I use...  
Students: To think about the answer, I use my brain.

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Reflective Teaching Journal Week 4:

*Complete Task1 (Brandl, 2008, p. 129). What are your current beliefs regarding the teaching and learning of grammar?*

Based on my own experiences and what I have learned from the classroom, my current beliefs regarding the teaching and learning of grammar are as follows.

First, I believe that it is necessary for teachers to teach grammar to the students. For novice second language learners, it is almost impossible for them to outline the grammatical rules of the new language. Lacking of systematic understanding of the new language could bring frustration to the learners when they could not form a sentence even after having stored some basic words and phrases in their brains. It would be irresponsible if the language teachers leave all of these blanks to the students. Therefore, I believe that the teaching and learning grammar is absolutely necessary. The only problem is how to teach grammar.

In my opinion, the teaching of grammar is most effective when the teachers introduce the grammar through real language speaking contexts. From my own English and German learning experience in China, I have encountered countless tables, charts, and exercises when learning grammar. These paradigms and drills were helpful to some extent. However, they could only help me understand how a sentence is structured; I still could not come up with sentences unless given a long time to think and refer to the rules. Therefore, explicit teaching of grammar is helpful, but introducing rules exclusively is

not enough. Second language teachers should create real language speaking context, and facilitate students' acquiring of grammar through language use.

Furthermore, I believe that non-native speakers can be better second language teachers in teaching grammar. These teachers have experienced the whole process of learning the target language, so they will never take everything for granted. It will be even better if the teacher share the same native language with the students, because the teacher will be more likely to notice the specific difficulties in the grammar of the target language that have commonly occurred to the same L1 speaking communities. However, some non-native speakers might concentrate too much on the forms of grammar, which might make their teachings isolated from real language use and become less practical. Therefore, non-native speaking teachers should teach grammar through using the language in real life context, so as to help students better internalize grammar rather than just memorize the formulas.

In conclusion, I believe that teaching grammar is necessary in second language learning, non-native speaking teachers have advantages in teaching grammar, and that the grammar teaching should never be isolated from language use in real life contexts. These are my current belief about grammar teaching and learning, and I believe I will have a deeper and more comprehensive understanding on this topic after encountering more theoretical supports in this class.

## Reflective Teaching Journal Week 5:

*How did this reading change your understanding of what it means to be 'bilingual'?*

For a long time, whenever people were talking about being “bilingual”, I would always think about a person who can speak two languages with equally high proficiency. Being bilingual was a label on those geniuses who have real talents in language, and have solidly mastered a second language. However, from the reading this week, my understanding about “bilingual” has been changed.

The first aspect of change that the reading brings to me is the clarification of the standard of being bilingual. Being bilingual is not a privilege of those second language experts; rather, all the second language learners could be considered as somewhat bilingual. As long as a person has two languages that are actually functioning, this person could be considered bilingual, regardless of the level of proficiency in second language. Hardly any adult second language learners could acquire native-like language proficiency in L2, but they should not be discouraged and consider being bilingual as an unattainable goal. The standard of being bilingual is not as high as becoming a native speaker of the second language, and second language learners should not be terrified by the standard.

Moreover, from the reading for this week, I start to realize that to be bilingual is not a static state; rather, it is a dynamic process. It is really inspiring and refreshing to think that “becoming bilingualism might best be described using a continuum, with ‘incipient bilingual’ on one end and ‘balanced bilingual’ on the other” (Scott, 2010, p. 52). In this sense, second language learners are all on the journey of becoming bilingual; all of them could find themselves somewhere on the continuum. As their proficiency in the second

language improves, they are moving one step further from incipient bilingual to balanced bilingual. Of course, being balanced bilingual is an idealized status of bilingual. However, the second language learners should not feel frustrated of being far away from becoming a native speaker in the target language. They should believe that they are already bilingual; they are just on their way to the balanced bilingual.

Therefore, with the new understanding of being bilingual, second language learners should feel more empowered. No one is actually monolingual because people all use or encounter other languages or registers in our daily lives. With such prerequisite, they are bilingual as they are learning a new language, no matter what level of proficiency do they have in that language. As they are acquiring the new language, they are marching closer to become balanced bilingual, and they remain the identities of being bilingual through the whole dynamic process. Besides, because bilingualism refers to “many kinds of dual-language functioning” (Scott, 2010, p. 52), the spontaneous code-switching in classroom should be considered as a skilled and rule-governed bilingual practice. This is not saying that teachers should encourage code-switching in the classroom; however, the teachers should recognize the values of such practices, making the bilingual students feel more empowered in their second language learning.



## Reflective Teaching Journal Week 6:

*Review Ullman's Declarative / Procedural model. What implications does this model have for your teaching?*

From Ullman's Declarative and Procedural model, I find two main enlightening views that have enriched my understanding about teaching, especially grammar teaching.

First, we should teach children and adult second language learners differently, and should not emphasize too much on repetition when teaching grammar to adult learners. According to the model, children's learning of a second language is different from the adults' (who are past the critical period of language acquisition). For children, the acquisition of grammar is restored in their procedural memory; although they cannot consciously recall this knowledge, they can use these rules spontaneously in their future without risks of forgetting. However, for adult second language learners, their knowledge of grammar is stored in their declarative memory. Even with countless repetitions, the grammar of a second language cannot get into the area of procedural memory. Therefore, when I start teaching, I should bear in mind two principles. The first is that we should use different methods and pedagogies when teaching young children and adult second language learners. Secondly, too much obsession with grammar drills is not the most effective way of teaching because no matter how hard the teacher tries, the knowledge of grammar cannot get into adult learners' procedural memory.

Furthermore, we should enhance grammar learning in rich semantic contexts. Based on Ullman, de Bot & Hulsen, and Saffran & Sholl's theories (as cited in Scott, 2010), words, especially concrete words, are more resistant to loss than grammar in adult

second language learners' declarative memory. For young children who are learning a second language, their knowledge of grammar is stored in procedural memory, so grammar is more resistant to language loss compared to words. However, for adult L2 learners who restore both their knowledge of grammar and words of the target language in declarative memory, their knowledge of grammar is more vulnerable to language loss compared to words, and they can remember concrete words better than abstract words. This notion has great implications in language teaching. For teachers who wish to leave as much knowledge as they can in students' declarative memory, spending most of the time teaching grammar exclusively is never a wise idea. The teaching of grammar should be embedded in the learning of words, especially the concrete words. Therefore, a better way to teach grammar is to create rich semantic contexts for students to learn grammar through language use.

In conclusion, based on Ullman's Declarative and Procedural Model, I believe that second language teachers should treat children and adult learners differently, abandon the pedagogy that relies too much on repetition when teaching grammar, and embrace the benefits brought by rich semantic contexts in grammar learning.

## Reflective Teaching Journal Week 7:

*How has your thinking about teaching grammar evolved during the semester?*

During this semester, my understanding about teaching grammar has greatly changed. Before I entered this course, I believed that teaching grammar was of vital importance. I was sure that any second language teachers should organize everything related to language teaching with a focus on teaching grammar. I also held a firm belief that students could never write or speak well until they had acquired the solid knowledge of grammar.

With my first acquaintance with Communicative Language Teaching theories, however, my view on grammar had changed to some extent. It seemed to me that teaching grammar was no longer the focus of language teaching; rather, the focus should be the proficiency in communicative competence. I started thinking that maybe we should not teach grammar at all; as the students were improving their communicative abilities, they would get to know the underlying rules with or without teachers' guidance.

However, this belief has soon changed as I am forming a deeper understanding in the CLT theories. I realize that teaching grammar is important; the only problem is how to teach grammar. Based on what I have learned from this course, I find three most enlightening perspectives regarding how to teach grammar.

Firstly, we should carefully choose the materials to teach grammar. The best materials are not the materials on textbooks especially designed for grammar teaching purposes; rather, any authentic and real-life materials could be a better choice, if used properly by teachers. Second language teachers should choose materials that could

provide students with rich and meaningful input, and helping students learn the grammatical rules through language use in real-life context in the target language-speaking countries.

What is more, teachers should carefully consider the problems regarding language accuracy. Teachers should not be overly obsessed with language accuracy and correct students too frequently, because students could become too timid to speak or write in the target language. However, if the teachers want to help students achieve a higher level of language proficiency, they could not avoid the problems regarding accuracies. Helping students improving communicative language competence does not contradict with using activities such as form-focused activities. The correct use of language forms is a process through which students could become more proficient in the target language; it is not an end or the ultimate goal of second language teaching.

I am also surprised by the role of words and phrases in grammar teaching. From the presentation of *Declarative and Procedural Model*, I learned that learning words and meaningful phrases could be more effective in helping students use grammatical rules spontaneously than learning and practicing grammar rules solely. Based on this notion, language teachers should pay more attention to the teaching of words and meaning-bearing phrases. They should realize that words and phrases are not only the mechanical language units that could be memorized by students alone; rather, if they are taught properly, they can greatly benefit students' grammar learning process.

## Reflective Teaching Journal Week 8:

*Who you are as a second language teacher?*

As a second language teacher, I believe that the students can make a bigger progress only when they are empowered and fully motivated. I want my students to feel empowered by letting them be aware of and participate into my teaching plan. I also want them to understand how amazing it is to become bilingual, and how the world is becoming more and more multilingual. Through my teaching, my students could experience the thrilled happiness when encountering another culture through language. They can understand and appreciate the beauty of the diversity that a foreign language could bring to them; however, they should never be convinced that the native language proficiency is their ultimate goal. In my classroom, I convince my students that they could become proficient bilingual regardless of to what extent they are “native-like”. With the lowest affective filter, I help my students be fully empowered and motivated on their excitable journey marching towards highly proficient bilinguals.

Besides, I believe that effective second language teaching should be organized based on 5 Cs on National standards. In my classroom, I enjoy helping students learning a second language through experiencing the beauty that only the exchange of ideas among diversified people could bring to them. Besides putting Communication in the center of standards guiding my teaching, I underscore the incorporation of different Cultures into the classroom. I like to have students discover the differences among cultures, and disclose more traits about their own culture through the Comparisons with a brand new one. Armed with a new language, I facilitate my students exploring the bigger

world in English, and Connect them with more authentic, academic, and classic materials that could broaden their horizon. By encouraging the students to use English outside school settings, I help my students to experience the joy of using a second language in their Communities, and become self-motivated life-long language learners.

Among all the standards, I strongly believe that the ultimate goal of my teaching is to foster students' competence in Communication. Bearing this in mind, I organize all of my teaching activities around the purpose of communication promotion. I believe in the importance of teaching grammar, and I have no doubt on the effectiveness of the properly used traditional teaching approaches, such as form-focused activities. However, I do not allow my students to be overwhelmed by the mechanical rules, and forget the ultimate goal of language learning, which is communication. Grammar teaching could be better and more effectively situated in the framework of communicative language teaching. Through communicative task-based instruction and teaching of meaningful lexical chunks, students can gradually learn to use grammar simultaneously. In this way, students are never frustrated by the lack of connection between "knowing what" and "know how" throughout the communication process in the target language.

In order to improve my students' communicative competencies, I integrate the teaching in four skills through authentic and meaningful input. Based on Communicative Language Teaching framework, I take the greatest advantage of rich and authentic materials in my target language that is brought by modern multimedia technologies. I believe that the authentic language inputs, such as novels, videos, pop music, movies, news, etc., are far more effective than the artificial resources that are specially designed for language learning purposes. By carefully selecting and using meaningful authentic

materials in my classroom, I believe my students can not only be fully motivated to learn the language in fancy scenarios, but also become active participants in the communicative tasks based on real-life situations. In this way, they can greatly improve their communicative competencies, have more confidence when they finally arrive at the countries that speak their target language, and be stimulated to become life-long learners of the target language.

## Reflective Teaching Journal Week 9:

*Select a short video (YouTube) of a person speaking in your target language. Write a lesson plan showing how you would teach it.*

Video: *A Typical Weekend Day for Mark* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXaCf8pi5xc>)

## Lesson Plan

- Objectives:
  - Review the present tense
  - Learn the phrase: "It's time to ..."
  - Learn how to describe a typical day
- Instruction Plan
  - Overview
    - Talk about what the teacher usually do on weekends (present tense)
    - Invite students to name several things that they usually do on weekend days
  - Teach
    - Explain the use of present tense in describing a typical day that commonly and repeatedly occurred
    - Introduce the content of the video from Youtube (which is about an American man, "Mark", who used a video recorder recording his life on a Saturday). Guide students to focus on the expressions of time and correspondent activities when listening and watching Mark presenting his day.



- Distribute a handout: on the handout, teacher lists six points of time and six things Mark does in two columns in random order
- Watch the video: *A Typical Weekend Day for Mark* (10 mins)
- Practice
  - Let students match the time with the activities
- Teach
  - Stop the video at the time when Mark said: “It’s 8:15 a.m. It’s time to have some breakfast”.
  - Explain the usage of phrase "It's time to ..." from the video.
  - Make sentences based on students’ response in the Overview section using “It’s time to ...”
- Practice
  - Let students look at the match-up practice on the handout again.
  - Let students make sentences based on the practice. (e.g., It's 8:00 a.m. It's time to feed the cats.)
- Communicate
  - Let students write what they usually do at 8:00 a.m., 12:00 a.m., 4:00 p.m., and 7:00 p.m. on a typical weekend day.
  - Let students share and talk about their typical weekend days with their neighbors.
- Homework
  - Let students write 5 to 6 sentences to describe a typical weekday using present tense.

## Reflective Teaching Journal Week 10:

*Select a short video (YouTube) of a person speaking in your target language. Write a lesson plan showing how you would teach it.*

Video: *A Typical Weekend Day for Mark* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXaCf8pi5xc>)

## Lesson Plan

- Objectives:
  - Improve listening comprehension skills
- Instruction Plan
  - Pre-viewing Activities
    - Talk about what the teacher usually does on weekends
    - Invite students to name several things that they usually do on weekend days
  - Listening Task
    - Introduce the content of the video from Youtube (which is about an American man, “Mark”, who used a video recorder recording his life on a Saturday).
    - Distribute Handout 1 (see [Appendix 1](#)): on the handout, teacher lists ten words (seven of the words will be heard in the video). Teacher asks students to write down a check mark before a word if they hear it.
    - Watch the video: *A Typical Weekend Day for Mark* (10 mins) while students finish practice on Handout 1.

- Give students Handout 2 (see [Appendix 2](#)): In this exercise, teacher lists six combinations of time and activities (8:05 a.m., 8:50 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 4:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m., 9:00 p.m.). Students are required to write True or False according to their memory.
- Watch the video again with pauses at the six time points in Handout 2. Confirm the answers with the students.
- Post-viewing Activity
  - Let students write what they usually do at 8:00 a.m., 12:00 a.m., 4:00 p.m., and 7:00 p.m. on a typical weekend day.
  - Let students share and talk about their typical weekend days with their neighbors.

Appendix 1:

**Do you hear ...?**

\_\_\_ wall

\_\_\_ waffle

\_\_\_ Trader Joe's

\_\_\_ trash

\_\_\_ flower

\_\_\_ Shiner

\_\_\_ pizza

\_\_\_ race

\_\_\_ panda

\_\_\_ race

Appendix 2:

**True or False**

**T F** 8:05 a.m.; Feed the cat.

**T F** 8:50 a.m.; Ride a bike

**T F** 12:30 p.m.; Work in the garden

**T F** 4:00 p.m.; Have some beer

**T F** 6:00 p.m.; Cook dinner

**T F** 9:00 p.m.; Watch TV

## Reflective Teaching Journal Week 11:

*Choose a speaking exercise from a textbook and write a lesson plan showing how you would teach it.*

## Lesson Plan

- Objectives:
  - Learn how to express personal preferences on color
- Instruction Plan
  - Overview
    - Show seven colors on the PPT
    - Teacher asks students to point out which color do they like best
    - Teacher talks about teacher's favorite color using the sentence, "My favorite color is..."
  - Teaching
    - Teacher says the name of the seven colors, and asks students to repeat after the teacher.
  - Practice
    - Teacher points at different students' clothes, and asks students "What color is his/her coat?" Students answer the color.
  - Teaching
    - Teacher introduce the sentence structures:
      - Do you like...?
      - Yes, I like...

- No, I don't like...
  - Teacher models a conversation about color preferences using the three sentence structures.
- Practice
  - A form-focused activity:
    - Teacher asks students "Do you like...", and students answer, "Yes, I like..." with seven colors.
      - e.g., Teacher: "Do you like red?" Students: "Yes, I like red."; Teacher: "Do you like blue?" "Yes, I like blue."; etc.
    - Substitute "Yes, I like..." with "No, I don't like...", and do the activity again.
- Communication
  - Teacher asks students to get to know their neighbors opinions on three different colors using the sentences in the previous activity.
    - e.g. Student A: "Do you like red?" Student B: "Yes, I like red." Student A: "Do you like white?" Student B: "No, I don't like white." Student A: "Do you like green?" Student B: "Yes, I like green."
- Teaching
  - Teacher introduces the word "favorite", and display two sentences on the PPT:
    - What is your favorite color?

- My favorite color is...
- Teacher reads the sentences, and asks students to repeat after the teacher.
- Communication
  - Teacher asks students to talk to three different classmates, and get to know their favorite colors.
    - e.g. Student A: “What is your favorite color?” Student B: “My favorite color is red.” Student A: “What is your favorite color?” Student C: “My favorite color is blue.” Student A: “What is your favorite color?” Student D: “My favorite color is yellow.”
- Homework
  - Let students write three sentences about their preferences of color.
    - Model:

I like yellow, green, and blue, and red.

I don't like purple, black, and white.

My favorite color is blue.



References

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*A Lesson Plan on A Rice Sandwich*

Wenyang Sun  
Teaching Second Language Literacy  
Instructor: Robert Jiménez  
April 2, 2013

Topic	Class	Date
A Lesson on “A Rice Sandwich”	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade English Language Arts Class (16 students, including 8 ELL students)	April 2, 2013
<b>Materials and Preparation</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sixteen copies of article “A Rice Sandwich” from <i>The House on Mango Street</i> (Cisneros, 1989)</li> <li>• Video on Youtube: <i>The House on Mango Street: A Rice Sandwich</i> (5 min, from <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_pXXnOMEXQ">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_pXXnOMEXQ</a>)</li> <li>• Pinterest board with new words: <a href="http://pinterest.com/swyljh/new-words-from-a-rice-sandwich/">http://pinterest.com/swyljh/new-words-from-a-rice-sandwich/</a></li> <li>• Graphic organizer: sixteen copies of Persuasion Map (from <a href="http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/persuasion_map/">http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/persuasion_map/</a>, also in Appendix One)</li> <li>• Index Cards: Four index cards with different four topics written on each card (see Appendix four)</li> <li>• One piece of blank poster paper</li> <li>• Sixteen pieces of blank paper</li> </ul>		
<b>Standard Addressed</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0801.3.11 Identify individual written selections as technical, narrative, persuasive, and/or descriptive in mode</li> <li>• 0801.4.18 Quote, paraphrase, or summarize text, ideas, or other information taken from print or electronic sources.</li> <li>• 0801.5.4 Analyze written and oral communication for persuasive devices.</li> <li>• 0801.8.6 Identify and analyze how the author reveals character (i.e., what the author tells us, what the other characters say about him or her, what the character does, what the character says, what the character thinks).</li> </ul>		
<b>Desired Result</b>		
<b>Key Vocabulary</b>		
canteen/patrol/suffering/anemic/especially/nun/hollered/skinny/raggedy		
<b>Student Objectives</b>		
<p>Students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the basic structure of persuasive writing</li> </ul>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn how to identify important sentences in the text</li> <li>Comprehend the characteristics of the main character: Esperanza</li> </ul>	
<b>Assessment Evidence</b>	
<b>Performance Task</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
Review of the vocabulary	Students can identify key vocabulary
Activity “Persuasion Map”	Students can understand the structure of persuasion essay, and organize an outline for persuasion writing on blank persuasion map
Activity “Signature Lines”	Students can identify the important sentences in this story
Discussion on the characteristics of Esperanza	Students can write and learn at least three words to describe her characteristics
<b>Learning Plan</b>	
<b>Time</b>	<b>Activities</b>
15 min	I. Building Background
1 min	12. Briefly review what was learned in the last reading class
3 min	13. Teacher asks a warm-up question to the students: “Do you remember the last time when you got embarrassed?” Students are encouraged to describe their experiences and feelings of embarrassment. After the discussion, tell students that we are going to read a story in which the main character gets embarrassed.
6 min	14. Watch a video: <i>A Rice Sandwich</i> ( <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_pXXnOMEXQ">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_pXXnOMEXQ</a> ) Let students watch the video from youtube. In the video, students can know the general story of the text, which will facilitate their reading in the next section (especially for ELL students). In the meantime, pause at 0:35 (canteen), 2:15 (nun), 2:48 (ashamed) to have students understand key words with visual clues in the video.
5 min	15. Use the pictures to help students learn other new words Show students the pinterest board created by the teacher ( <a href="http://pinterest.com/swyljh/new-words-from-a-rice-sandwich/">http://pinterest.com/swyljh/new-words-from-a-rice-sandwich/</a> , also see screenshot in Appendix Three). With the pictures selected by teacher, students can better understand the other new words in

		the notes under the pictures (including patrol, hollered, anemic, wrist, skinny, and raggedy).
60 min		II. Student Activities
	15 min	16. Read the story Teacher gives every student a copy of “A Rice Sandwich” (from <i>The House on Mango Street</i> , Cisneros, 1989). Ask students read silently.
	20 min	17. Activity: “Persuasion Map” Lead students to read paragraph four and five together. Ask them why Esperanza say these words in the two paragraphs (anticipated answer: to persuade her mother to allow her to eat in the canteen). Guide them to think of the structure of persuasion. Introduce an effective graphic organizer, “Persuasion Map” to students (“In order to persuade someone, you need to have reasons and have examples or evidences to support these reasons. Now I’d like to show you an effective graphic organizer tool to organize your persuasion: persuasion map.”) Model the process of making a persuasion map for these two paragraphs. First, open an online persuasion map tool at <a href="http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/persuasion_map/">http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/persuasion_map/</a> . Fill in the basic information of name, title, and thesis (explain to students that thesis is a statement that describes one side of an arguable viewpoint). Then, ask students to find out Esperanza’s first reason to persuade her mother. Summarize and fill it into the “Reason 1” part of the map. Enter more detail in the blanks of “Facts and Examples for Reason 1”. Repeat this procedure until the map is fully filled. A possible complete version is shown in Appendix Two. Give every student a copy of a blank persuasion map (see Appendix One). Group students into four groups of four (group one and group two each includes four ELL students; group three includes four above-level native English speaking students; other students are in group four). Give each group a piece of index card with a topic (give index card one to group one, index card two to group two, etc.). The topics for two ELL student groups are “Persuade your friend to learn a new language” and “Persuade your friend to visit your hometown”; topic for group three is “Persuade Harry Potter to quit Hogwarts and join your school”; for group four, the topic is “Persuade your friend to buy your English textbook”. Students are instructed to fill the blank persuasion map with the reasons and details to support their arguments in the assigned topic. For ELL students with little English proficiency,

	15 min	<p>they are encouraged to use their native languages or even drawings to organize their thoughts. The other more proficient ELL students in the group are responsible for helping this student translate the words in English.</p> <p>When all the groups are finished, every group should share three most persuasive reasons with the other classmates. With this activity, students can acquire deeper comprehension of the structure of persuasive writing.</p> <p>18. Activity: “Signature Lines”</p> <p>Teacher gives each student a copy of “signature line” handout (see Appendix Five, assuming that signature lines have been introduced in my previous lesson plan). Briefly remind students what signature lines are (“Signature lines are important sentences in this story”). Students are required to identify important sentences in this text. They should write the “signature line” sentences, page number, and the reasons on the handout. After ten minutes, students are paired to share their results and discuss the reasons. Teacher can get involved in the discussion, and lead students to find out what makes a sentence important according to their results.</p>
	10 min	<p>19. Discussion on Esperanza’s characteristics</p> <p>From all of the signature lines that students have written, let students identify the main plot of this story. Ask students to discuss Esperanza’s characteristics that are revealed in her persuasion to her mother and her tears with Sister Superior. Put a blank poster paper on the desk in the middle of the classroom. Let every student write as many words as he/she can think of to describe Esperanza’s characteristics on the poster with markers of different color. For ELL students with limited English proficiency, they are encouraged to write words in their native languages. When all the students are finished, teacher hangs the poster on the wall. Teacher then circles the words that might be new to some of the students. Let the students who wrote these words explain the meaning to other classmates in English. If there are words that are not written in English, the ELL student who wrote this word should explain and translate the word into English with other students’ help. From this activity, students can deeper understand Esperanza’s characteristics, as well as learn new words that often appear in the similar semantic context.</p>
15 min		III. Review and Assessment
	9 min	<p>20. Review vocabulary</p> <p>Teacher shows the pinterest board with key vocabulary words</p>

		<p>again. Ask students to read and explain the meaning of these key words together with the visual clues on pinterest board.</p>
	1 min	<p>21. Collect “Persuasion Map”</p> <p>Guide students to review the components of persuasive writing with persuasion map. Collect all students’ persuasion maps and evaluate students’ comprehension of this structure after class.</p>
	5 min	<p>22. Review the characteristics of Esperanza</p> <p>Unfold the poster on the wall. Let students quickly skim the text and their signature lines again. Give each student a piece of paper, and have student write at least three words to describe Esperanza’s characteristics. They are encouraged to write the word that they are not familiar with before this class. Collect the paper.</p>

Appendix One

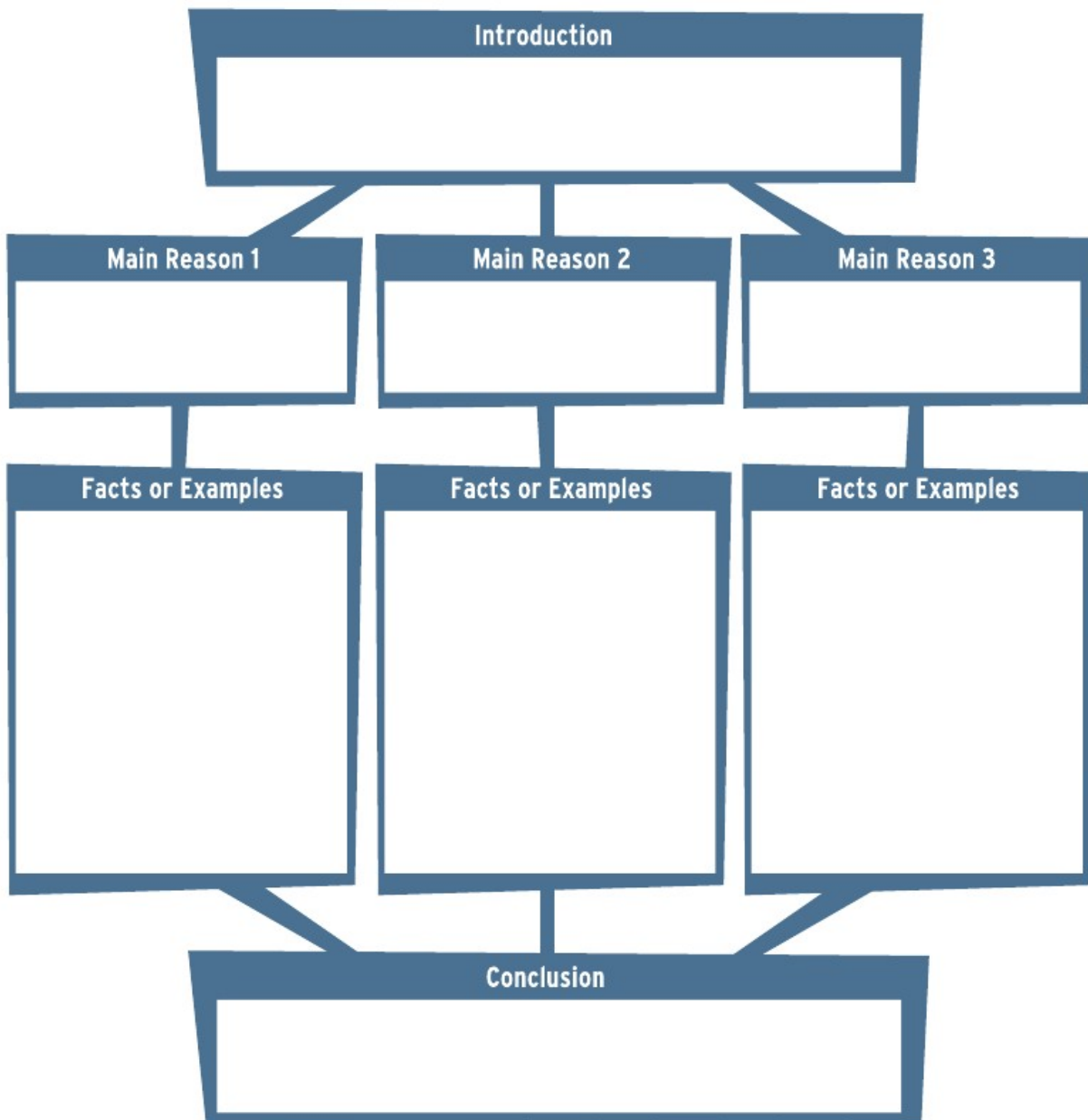
From

[http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/persuasion\\_map/](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/persuasion_map/)

# PERSUASION MAP

by: \_\_\_\_\_

topic: \_\_\_\_\_



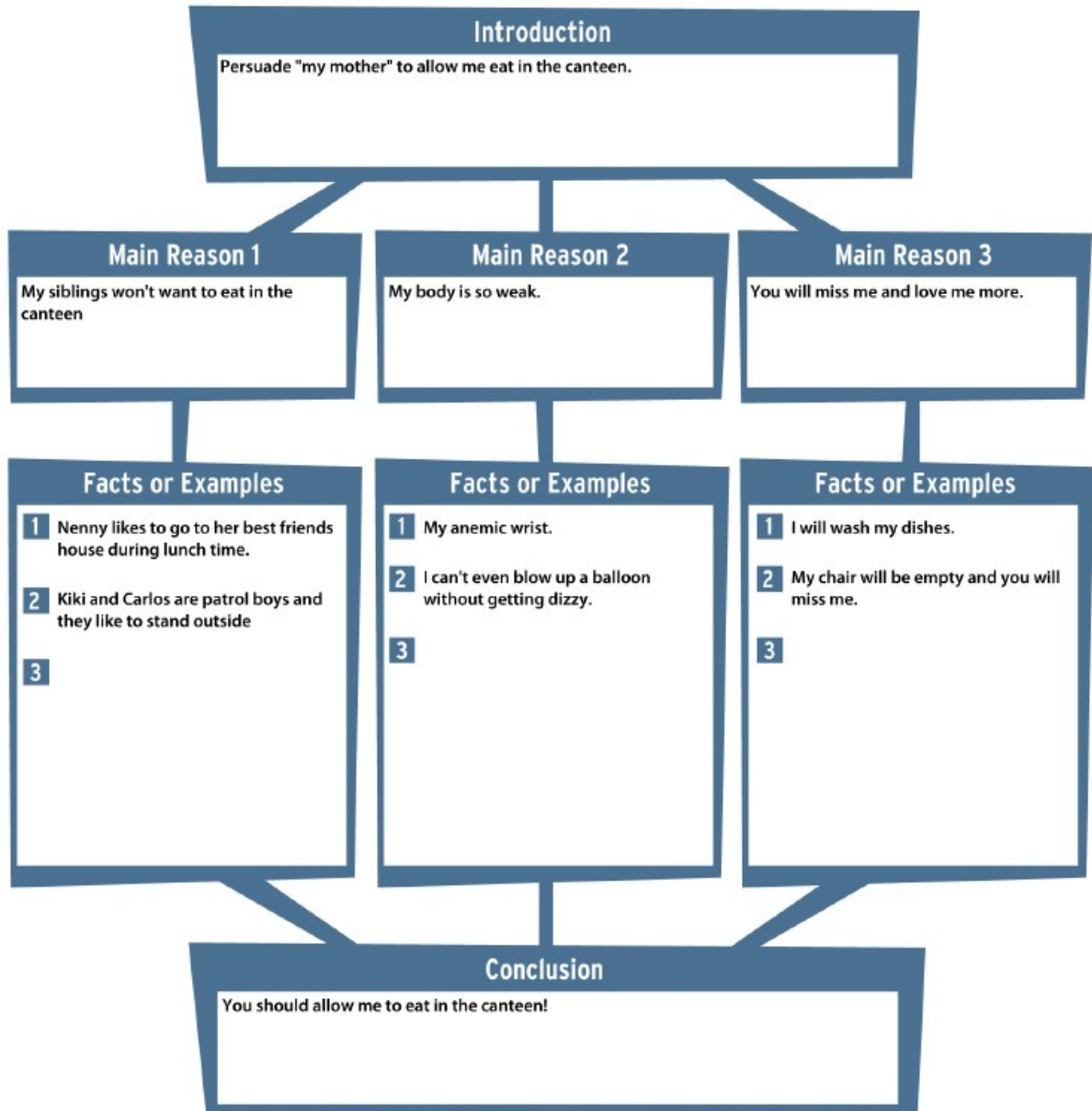


Appendix Two

# PERSUASION MAP

by: Wenyang

## A Rice Sandwich



Appendix Three

Screenshot from <http://pinterest.com/swyljh/new-words-from-a-rice-sandwich/>

The screenshot shows a Pinterest board with the following pins:

- suffering**: A man in a blue plaid shirt covering his face with his hand. Source: [google.com](http://google.com)
- canteen**: A large indoor dining area with many people sitting at tables. 3 likes. Source: [google.com](http://google.com)
- skinny**: A close-up of a very thin hand. Source: [google.com](http://google.com)
- raggedy man**: A man carrying a large, heavy load on his back. Source: [google.com](http://google.com)
- to get hollered at / nun**: A nun holding a measuring tape. Source: [google.com](http://google.com)
- anemic wrist**: A doctor examining a patient's wrist. Source: [google.com](http://google.com)
- patrol boy**: A boy in a uniform standing next to a car. 3 likes 2 repins. Source: [eons.com](http://eons.com)

Appendix Four

Index Card One

Persuade your friend to learn a new language

Index Card Two

Persuade your friend to visit your hometown

Index Card Three

Persuade Harry Potter to quit Hogwarts and join  
your school

Index Card Four

Persuade your friend to buy your English  
textbook

Appendix Five

<b>Signature Lines</b>		
Name: _____		
Name of Text: A Rice Sandwich		
<b>Signature Line</b>	<b>Text Page #</b>	<b>This is a signature line because...</b>

From Strategies in Practice 6.9 in Herrera, Perez and Escamilla’s (2010, p.155) book

### References

Herrera, S. G., Pérez, D. R., & Escamilla, K. (2010). *Teaching reading to English language learners*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Cisneros, S. (1989). *The house on Mango Street*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

## Part I: Handout of the Presentation

## Use *Pinterest* in large EFL Classrooms

Presented by Wenyang Sun, Xue Qiao & Ying Tang  
Peabody College, Vanderbilt University

### What is Pinterest?

site: <http://pinterest.com/>

Keywords	Advantages	Drawbacks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● a virtual pinboard</li> <li>● collaborative website</li> <li>● creation, organize and share</li> <li>● visuals (pictures, videos, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● open resource</li> <li>● immediate update</li> <li>● online archive</li> <li>● group collaboration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● invitation request</li> <li>● possible addiction</li> <li>● inappropriate postings</li> <li>● copyright risks</li> <li>● blocked in some countries</li> </ul>

### Rationale

#### 1. Digital Literacy

- Experience Web 2.0 (collaboration; consumers) (Handsfield, Dean, & Cielocha, 2009);
- Differentiated Instruction (multiple approaches; different need) (Tomlinson, 2003)

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

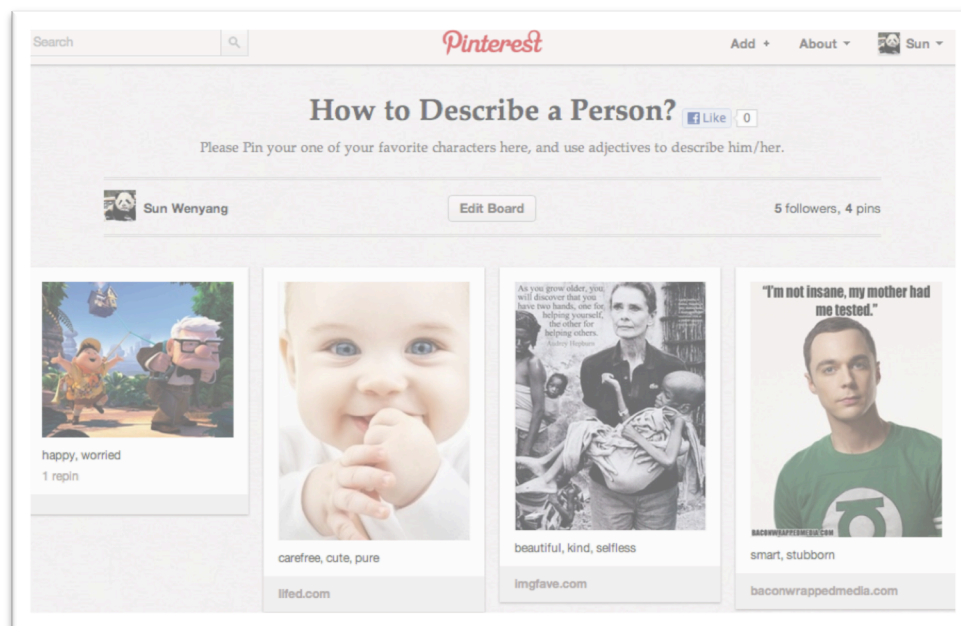
- the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs of learners are valued;
- people learn from each other and continually attempt to improve

#### 3. Vocabulary Input Enhancement

- Dual Coding Theory (remember images better than words) (Underwood, 1989, p.19);
- Spatial Contiguity (better memory when pictures and words are together) (Mayer, 2001, p. 189)

## Eight Effective Ways to Use Pinterest in Large EFL Classrooms

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



### References

- Bransford, J., Brown, A., & Cocking, R. (2000). *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.
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- Tomlinson, C. A. (2003). Deciding to the teach them all. *Teaching All Students*, 61(2), 6-11.
- Underwood, J. (1989). *HyperCard: An interactive video*. CALICO 6:7-20



Part II: "Prezi" of the Presentation

Please find the "Prezi" online by click on the following link:

<http://tinyurl.com/c5msd7w>

