Capstone Portfolio

English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)

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Abstract

The portfolio is an in-depth demonstration of how I, a pre-service teacher of English-language learners (ELLs), utilize professional knowledge in ELL education and language acquisition to maximize student success in and out of classrooms. It includes three parts. Part 1 Philosophy of Teaching illustrates overarching theories in language acquisition and pedagogy that influence me as a teacher, especially a teacher of ELL students. Part 2 Professional Knowledge contains eight standards in TESOL Standards for ESL/EFL Teachers of Adults: planning; instructing; assessing; identity and context; language proficiency; learning; content; commitment and professionalism. For each standard, I explain how I interpret the standard to fit the context of my future ELL teaching and present one or two artifacts as evidence to support my interpretation. The relevance between artifacts and standards is fully analyzed in terms of 1) learners and learning 2) the learning environment 3) curriculum, and 4) assessment. In the last part Vision for My Teaching, I briefly reflect upon the collection of coursework presented in Part 2, elaborate how these work demonstrates my professional abilities to bridge between theory and practice. Then, I identify possible challenges I will face and describe plans for meeting these challenges. In summary, the portfolio reflects what I learn regarding ELL education and language acquisition, what I actually do, and how my knowledge will guide my continued professional development in a classroom with ELLs.

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Philosophy of Teaching

In this section, I draw upon Vygotsky's sociocultural theory to introduce the overarching education theory that guides my teaching practice. Then, citing exemplar studies and theories in English-language Learners (ELL) education field, I elaborate my understanding of learners, community, and instructional strategies in ELL education.

Theoretical framework

My perspective of individual and language development, is grounded on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. According to Vygotsky (1986), individuals develop cognitive and linguistic abilities as they interact with others and perform social functions. As students interact with parents and community members, they are fine-tuning their behaviors to align with cultural beliefs and social norms. These socially mediated behaviors finally become internalized and affect cognitive development. For students, classroom is a major social context where interactions happen. A desirable classroom will not only have a positive influence on students' behaviors but also facilitate individual learning. Thus, being aware of the importance of social interactions, I aspire to create a welcoming classroom environment in which students foster collaboration spirit and establish respect for peers who are from different cultures.

We are living in a diverse society. We interact with people from different cultural backgrounds in daily life. But sometimes we have biased or stereotyped opinions toward people from less represented ethnic groups due to our lack of knowledge of the others' culture. The ability to efficiently work with people from different backgrounds determines how far we can go in an increasingly diversified society. Thus, it's necessary that I lead students to explore multicultural theme and learn about history and culture of other groups of people. For example,

in a series of lesson units, I instructed students to approach Amy Tan's *the Joy Luck Club* from multiple perspectives. I used multiple texts: a clip of interview on Amy Tan, Chapter 1 of *the Joy Luck Club*, and an excerpt of a book on Chinese family roles. Students were guided to explore the struggles, values, and culture of people from a different culture.

One of the important elements of the sociocultural theory is the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Vygotsky (1978) defined ZPD as

> *"the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers. For example, two 8 yr. old children may be able to complete a task that an average 8 yr. old cannot do. Next, more difficult tasks are presented with very little assistance from an adult. In the end, both children were able to complete the task. However, the styles methods they chose depended on how far they were willing to stretch their thinking process."*

When applied to educational contexts, ZPD is interpreted as the distance between learners' current knowledge and the actual proficiency level they can reach with external help. According to ZPD, learners are not blank slates. They have some knowledge and expertise before the very first school day, but they are not yet proficient at activating and applying all these knowledge in pedagogical or real life tasks. ZPD suggests that with proper and timely assistance, students can utilize the untapped knowledge and demonstrate a higher level of performance. This external guidance from educators or more capable peers is called scaffolding. Scaffolding is defined as the temporary support from teachers to prompt students to a higher level of performance and it is removed when students no longer need it (Boblett, 2012). The ZPD theory enlightens me that I should work within ZPD and offer enough opportunities for students to call on unutilized

repertoire of knowledge. At the same time, scaffolding theory directs me to support students' learning in order for students to digest new knowledge and surface a deeper level of learning.

While planning instruction, I always incorporate my understanding of ZPD and scaffolding theory into my lesson plans. For instance, in one of *the Joy Luck Club* lesson units, before reading, students watch a clip of interview on the author Amy Tan and discuss situations where they and their parents have different opinions and come into conflicts. The video clip and discussion are both scaffolding strategies. The interview video familiarizes students with the life experiences and cultural backgrounds of the author. The background knowledge of the author contextualizes students' later-on reading and facilitates their approach of the text. The subsequent whole class discussion helps students draw on their personal experiences and make meaningful connections with texts. These scaffolding strategies in the pre-reading stage reflect my belief of supporting students learning in order to realize learners' potential, build confidence, and lead students to a path of continual development.

Learners and community

One characteristic of a 21st century classroom is student-centered. While, as teachers go to great lengths to center varied activities around students, sometimes they fail to think at first who their students are, what knowledge and resources students bring to classroom, and what they really need. Getting to know students is especially important for teachers of ELL students because as more and more immigrants come to the United States, teachers should anticipate that there will be more culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students in their classes. Besides, ELL students come from cultures teachers are not familiar with and students' limited English proficiency may inhibit their ability to utter what they need.

One distinct feature of ELL students is that they speak languages other than English. A question ELL educators often ask is: should we allow students to use their native language in class? One may oppose the use of L1 on the grounds that ELL students' L1 interfere with their English development. Some believe that ELL students will not achieve English proficiency that enables them to participate meaningfully in America if teachers allow ELLs to fall back on their L1 whenever they don't understand what's being taught. I agree on the point that ELL students need English competence to participate fully and meaningfully in an English-speaking environment. But informed by Ruiz's orientations on language (1984), I view students' linguistic knowledge more as a resource.

Ruiz categorized three perspectives on language: *language as problem*, *language as right*, and *language as resource*. Proponents of *language as problem* regarded limited English proficiency as a liability for the country, thus CLD students should get remediation in English attainment. People who espouse *language as right* state that minority groups have right to maintain their heritage language. *Language as resource* orientation treats student's L1 as an asset not a barrier. This orientation enlightens me to legitimize and make use of ELL students' linguistic capital to facilitate their English and content area learning.

Some of the case studies I read substantiate that it's desirable and helpful for ELLs to use their first language when necessary. For example, in Townsend & Fu's study (1998), Xiaodi, a second-grade English learner, developed English literacy gradually when he could use Chinese to externalize his thoughts. Also his knowledge of Chinese culture greatly improved his English reading and writing skills. Inspired by this research, I will maximize the opportunities for students to utilize their L1 literacy to help improve their literacy skills in subject matters. I firmly

believe that even in English-medium programs, elevating the status of students' native language can be achieved through conscious efforts.

Students' heritage language can be a resource to promote content area learning. But I never thought that ELL students also possess a wealth of social and cultural knowledge until I read some authors' seminal work on "funds of knowledge". Funds of knowledge refers to "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992). Family and community provide students with a context for learning about practical activities, professions, and society functioning. This bountiful knowledge outside of school is a valuable resource that teachers can take advantage of to establish relevancy to students' life (de Jong, 2011).

When I first got to know the "funds of knowledge" concept, I was skeptical about its practicality in some context: for young learners at their developmental stage of cognition, I doubted that these groups of students were able to understand and talk about the world around them. But the doubt dispelled after I taught the five 30-minute sessions social studies class. In that class, I introduced to students how family members' jobs and business contributed to the well-being of the family. From what those six-year-old kids uttered about their families, I got a glimpse of the family culture in their home country such as family values, family structure, and division of labor. I never expected that the topic of parents' jobs would reveal so many cultural things behind those walks of life. That's when I started to convince that whatever age learners are at, they have their own understanding of the environment they are living in and possess funds of knowledge I can make use of. The issue I should concern in my teaching is designing cultural relevant and appropriate activities to facilitate their use of funds of knowledge. I hope students,

especially ELL students, could feel easy, comfortable, and proud of relating to their native language and culture in my class.

Instructional practices

The curriculum I will adopt is multidimensional and culturally responsive. That is, the curriculum is not only in accordance with academic standards, but also emotional and personal: it relates to ELL students' real-life experiences outside the classroom. I base my cultural responsive pedagogy from Gay's description of the power of culturally responsive caring. Gay (2010) states that ELLs are more engaged in topics and activities that tap into their social life because the social life experiences characterize individuals and tell who they really are. What I observed in my class justified the statement. In the aforementioned social studies class, I asked students to draw a picture about things they did for their family. When they finished the work, they were excited to tell me the stories in the pictures. Sharing stories turned out to be so engaging that even the silent students got excited and volunteered to talk. So based on class readings and what I observed in that class, I will use culturally relevant materials that students are interested in and are willing to relate to.

Also, in my curriculum, I will set the goal of making students confident in their abilities to pursue further study at high levels and affect change. This idea aligns with one aspect of Gay's definition of culturally responsive teaching: to "expect highly" (Gay, 2010). My teaching experience also showed that students were motivated if teachers have high expectations for them. In the end of social studies class, I said to my students, "Now I will give each of you a diploma. A diploma recognizes your years of hard work and staying in school. I think all of you are talented enough to have a diploma someday." Students were attentive when I said this. They were also thrilled to get the symbolic "diploma" in our "commencement ceremony". I think at

the bottom of every English learner' heart, they are eager to succeed. In my future teaching, I will consciously convey the message to my students that I hold high expectations for them and I am always there to help them.

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<p style="text-align:center">Standards</p>

TESOL Standards for ESL/EFL Teachers provides guidelines for teachers to plan, implement, and modify instruction to satisfy the needs of English learners. The Standards is a primary resource I will refer to during my ESL teaching. So, in this part, I will present my interpretations of the eight domains in the TESOL standards: planning, instructing, assessing, identify and context, language proficiency, learning, content, commitment and professionalism. Then, I will introduce one or two artifacts that best fit my understanding of each domain. The relevance of artifacts and standards is elaborated in terms of 1) learners and learning, 2) the learning environment, 3) curriculum, and 4) assessment.

Domain: planning

Standard 1: teachers plan instruction to promote learning and meet learner goals, and modify plans to assure learner engagement and achievement.

I interpret the role of planning in promoting teaching and learning as two-fold: to familiarize teachers with standards; and to satisfy students' individual needs as much as possible through materials, activities, and assessments.

First, before teachers start a class, they should think over standards at national, state, and district levels: what students are expected to achieve at each grade level. Only if teachers know what their students can do and what performance are expected from students, can teachers establish proper objectives and modify their instruction to facilitate student growth in a systemic way.

Second, with the standards in mind, teachers prepare teaching materials, activities, and assessments. To assure learner engagement, teachers should link content and materials with what ELLs already know, or their *funds of knowledge*. Funds of knowledge are defined as the cultural heritages, expertise, and skills people acquire as they interact with the world (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992). The linkage between content and ELL students' life experiences outside of school is essential to engage learners and assure achievement.

In the following part, I will present Artifact A, a 3-genre lesson plan I did for the course Reading and Learning with Print and New Media. The lesson is designed for tenth grade English language art class. In this class, students will use three genres: excerpt from Amy Tan's novel *the Joy Luck club*, an interview video on the author, and a *the Joy Luck Club* film photography to explore the theme of diversity. The lesson plan reflects my professional knowledge in planning in terms of how I understand my learners, what learning environment I try to create, and how I allow students to demonstrate their learning.

Learners and learning. There are eighteen students in the class. Five of them are ELL students. Two of the ELLs were placed into the regular class one year ago. Though they have attended the newcomer class for one year before the placement, their content knowledge is still below average level. They need extra support in terms of building background knowledge and expanding vocabulary, etc. The other three ELL students joined the class just one month ago. They are silent most of the time. For them, it is important that at the initial stage, they are allowed to demonstrate their learning in ways that they feel comfortable, such as using pictures and writing in their native language.

The text I will teach in the lesson plan is Chapter 1 of *the Joy Luck Club*, a text with a diversity theme. I learn than my students are familiar with the theme because they have

approached texts of similar themes such as *American Born Chinese* and *the House on Mango Street*. Thus, they have basic knowledge to be mentally prepared for what will be introduced and discussed in this series of lessons. Besides, students have basic digital literacy and are comfortable using multimedia. That is, they can do independent work or collaborate with each other using digital learning tools such as discussion forums and shared documents.

Learning environment. While designing the three lesson units, I make efforts to create a *scaffolded* literature reading environment. Scaffolding is defined as "the use of some external support that makes a particular learning process possible and that can be discarded after the learning has taken place" (van Geert and Steenbeek, 2005). One strategy I use to scaffold students' learning is modeling. For example, before students discuss situations in their life where they have conflicts with parents or family members, I model and talk about my personal experiences first. Through teacher modeling, students will get a clear picture of which direction their discussion should go towards. Additionally, modeling in this scenario supports students' learning by allowing more wait time to respond. The extra wait time is especially valuable for ELLs who needs more time to formulate responses with their limited English (Herrera, Perez & Escamilla. 2010).

Besides in-class learning, I want to empower students with effective methods to extend learning to out-of-school setting. For example, in class, students are guided to create their personal online dictionary on Quizlet. One strength about individual dictionary is that students can include equivalent translations in their native language and associate their L1 with English. Making connection to ELLs' native language promotes a strong memory trace (Herrera et al, 2010) and increases their metalinguistic awareness. The other strength is that when ELLs

develop the habit of building up their personal dictionary, they are more likely to use the tool for continued vocabulary expansion outside class.

Curriculum. I adhere my teaching to Common Core State Standards for tenth grade ELA class. One standard I address in this lesson plan is

"Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text   says explicitly" (CCSS, 2010).

I use highlighting and graphic organizers to achieve the goal in this standard. Before students read text silently, they are told to pay attention to what is covered in the graphic organizer. The graphic organizer has questions regarding what the text says explicitly. For example, who is the narrator? What is the Joy Luck Club? Who started the Club and why did he or she start it? Students work in groups, highlight textual evidence to answer these questions and write down key words or sentences in the graphic organizer. The highlighting activity and graphic organizer guide students to consciously use in-text evidence to grasp the text's main idea.

Assessment. In this lesson plan, I will use performance-based assessment to evaluate students' learning. Performance-based assessment, also known as alternative or authentic assessment, is "a form of testing that requires students to perform a task rather than select an answer from a ready-made list" (Sweet, 1993). It examines what students can actually do using specific skills and competences. More importantly, it reflects students' incremental growth and avoids biased judgment on students (Herrera, Murry & Cabral, 2013).

I use portfolio as performance based assessment to examine students' understanding of diversity. The portfolio is a collection of written assignments and online tasks: a printed out Popplet, a graphic organizer, an inquiry chart, and an ongoing online word list. The portfolio

allows students to integrate digital learning tools with traditional written articles to demonstrate a deep and ongoing understanding of the text and the diversity topic.

Domain: Instructing
Standard 2: Teachers create supportive environments that engage all learners in purposeful learning and promote respectful classroom interactions.

One of the key words in this standard is *supportive*. In my understanding, a *supportive* classroom is where every student is given equal chances to be involved and to show their performance in a way that accords with their existing knowledge and proficiency level. Given the fact that many ELLs have limited English proficiencies and their life experiences are different from their white peers, supports from teachers and peers are essential for ELLs to survive and thrive in a new environment.

The other key word is *respectful*. A *respectful* classroom culture is important in promoting students' understanding of and respect for people from different cultures. This can be achieved by legitimizing the linguistic and cultural resources students bring to classroom and by welcoming students' multiple perspectives. For example, inviting ELLs to share their life stories back in their home country is one way to make them feel included (Allen, 2007).

The artifact for this domain is a lesson plan (Artifact B) I did for the course Teaching Second Language Literacy. I design this lesson for an eighth grade newcomer class or a pull out program. In this lesson, using the video "HSBC Funny Culture Ads" as a lead-in, students explore in what ways people from one culture can be different from people from another culture and the possible impact of cultural differences on interpersonal communication. I use the lesson

plan to elaborate how I lead students to purposefully explore the theme of cultural differences in a respectful and supportive learning environment.

Learners and learning. The ELL students in the class come from diverse cultural backgrounds and have limited English proficiency. Given their limited English, I use many strategies to scaffold their learning in this lesson. For example, I use two advertisement videos as teaching materials. One reason I choose advertisement is that it is authentic and demonstrates real English use. The other reason is that videos provide visual aid. Compared with written text, visual representation lowers students' anxiety and supports students to understand the content better. For learners who have limited English or little L1 literacy, I think videos are effective to build up their background knowledge.

The learning environment. I use modeling and heterogeneous grouping to create a *supportive* environment. In order to help students know how to fill out the graphic organizer, I use the second episode of the advertisement that students will watch later to *model* what to put in the organizer. Besides modeling, a supportive environment is also achieved by *heterogeneous grouping*. Each group consists of students from different backgrounds and with different language proficiencies. Since the theme of this lesson is exploring cultural differences, students' different ethnic backgrounds can elicit meaningful conversations on cultural differences. Also, grouping students according to their levels provides a chance for slow learners to learn from students with better English proficiency.

Besides being supportive, it's important that the classroom culture be respectful. To achieve this, I design a cultural appreciation activity. In this introductory activity, students get to know their classmates' eye color, native language, home country, lucky numbers and colors in their culture. The knowledge of other students' culture, no matter how superficial it seems, can

bring students closer and teach students to respect other classmates' cultures that are as unique as theirs.

Curriculum. The standard that guides my lesson plan is CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1. It specifies what eighth graders should achieve in speaking and listening in English language arts class.

Comprehension and Collaboration:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. (CCSS, 2010)

As mentioned earlier in terms of learning environment, I assign students with different levels and cultural backgrounds to each group. The grouping aligns with the standard by allowing diverse partners to engage in collaborative discussions. Besides collaboration, "building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly" is also reflected in the lesson plan: after each group presents their understanding of the video, other students are asked to add on and talk about their opinions.

Assessment. I assign journal writing as homework. The journal writing does not solely examine basic facts but invite students' own perspectives and critical thinking on what they have learned. Students are expected to synthesize class discussions and draw upon their own experiences to elaborate on how two cultures might differ from each other. In the next part, based on the clip of video they watch in class and other online resources, students will investigate into the impact of cultural differences on communications, a topic that students are encouraged to further explore on their own. This self-learning prompts students to garner

whatever information they can get and sparks critical thinking. On the other side, teachers can get a glimpse of students' self-learning ability and preferences of sources of obtaining information. This knowledge can inform instruction and better meet students' needs.

I think journal writing is a powerful tool to look into students' actual learning. Students are not timed to complete the work or pressed to produce within a short time or in a rigorous testing environment. They can feel more at ease marshaling their thinking and keeping editing their work until they are satisfied.

Domain: Assessing

Standard 3: Teachers recognize the importance of and are able to gather and interpret information about learning and performance to promote the continuous intellectual and linguistic development of each learner. Teachers use knowledge of student performance to make decisions about planning and instruction "on the spot" and for the future. Teachers involve learners in determining what will be assessed and provide constructive feedback to learners, based on assessment of their learning.

The standard makes it clear that the role of assessment is to gather information and inform instruction. With regard to interpreting assessment data, it is important that teachers do not make hasty conclusions about students' abilities based on test results. For example, ELL students who perform badly in math do not necessarily lack math knowledge. It is possible that their limited English proficiency impedes their demonstration of "authentically internalized knowledge" (Herrera et al, 2013). To obtain a holistic picture of students' learning, it is suggested that teachers gather supplementary data through informal assessments such as observations and interviews.

After collecting assessment data, teachers are expected to plan targeted intervention based on the data. For instance, if ELLs are struggling with comprehension, some comprehension strategies should be introduced or reinforced at a proper time.

In this domain, I will present two works from the course Reading and Learning with Print and New Media. The works are part of a case study. The case study measures the reading abilities of Han, a seventh grade ELL student from Burma. Artifact C is the results of Basic Reading Inventory (BRI). I will explain how I interpret BRI results and what implications they

have for instruction. Artifact D is a compare and contrast chart I designed for a subsequent tutoring. I will elaborate how this chart reflects the responsive intervention I made for Han based on BRI results.

Learners and Learning. In this case study, I get to know my learner Han through conversations, interest survey, and interview. Han attended a public school in Burma. The classes were taught in Burmese only. When he came to the U.S. four years ago, he had zero English. Upon arrival in the U.S., he was put into a newcomer class. One year later, he exited from the class and was placed into a regular class.

With regard to Han's reading abilities, he is a struggling reader. His reading abilities are three grades below average grade level. Han took STAR Reading test before I worked with him. The result showed Han's instructional reading level is 4.0, indicating that he will be best served by instructional materials prepared for the fourth graders. His grade equivalency is 4.4, which means his reading performance is comparable to that of an average fourth grader after the fourth month of the school year.

Han does not read books very often. If required to do so, he will choose graphic novels because they have less words and more pictures. Though his reading abilities need improving, he does not show much interest in reading. For a struggling reader like Han, I choose texts with topics that interest Han, for example, soccer, to arouse his interest in reading. Then, I examine what strategies he has and encourage him to use the strategies he has to deal with texts of unfamiliar topics. Last, given his progress, I will probably introduce some new strategies to help his comprehend better.

The learning environment. Han has limited academic English, but he does not receive extra help from the teacher. The test prompts and assignments are not modified to fit Han's

English level. As I talked with his teacher, the teacher confessed that she did not give Han sheltered instruction because Han was put into her class just two months ago and she did not yet know in which areas Han needs extra support. Thus, the classroom environment is not supportive enough for Han.

As I learned from Han, the home literacy environment does not appear to be facilitating his reading abilities, either. His parents are not well educated and they don't have time to read to him. There are not many books in his home. All the books are his brother's and sister's textbooks in high school and college. Few books are suitable for his grade level and interests. The lack of good literacy environment at home partly explains why Han shows no interest in reading. Thus, through one-on-one targeted tutoring, I want to provide opportunities for Han to expose to texts of different genres and lead him to better approach a text.

Assessment. To identify Han's reading levels (independent, instructional, or frustration) and determine areas for intervention, I administered BRI, an informal reading test. According to the result (see Artifact C), Han has little difficulty making inferences and evaluations. However, he is struggling with facts, vocabulary, and topic in a text. In a word, the main problem is the lack of ability to capture details. With regard to vocabulary, Han was able to identify most of the words in the graded word list. But I cannot hastily draw the conclusion that Han has an average grade level vocabulary. The passages in the BRI are mostly decontextualized narrative texts. It is reasonable to anticipate that Han will have more problems dealing with texts of more abstract and subject specific vocabulary.

Artifact C shows that Han needs instruction on identifying facts and the main idea of a text. It is suggested some responsive instruction targeting the grasp of key facts and main idea be given to Han.

Curriculum. The text I choose is an excerpt from *the House on Mango Street*. One reason for my selection is that its reading level (4.8) is close to Han's instructional level (4.4). Another reason is that the character Esperanza is a Mexican-American girl who lives in an apartment with her family before she moved to the house on Mango Street. Since I learn that Han lives with his family in an apartment, just like Esperanza's previous living condition, I think Han can somehow relate to his personal experience and thus, understand the text better.

To help Han grasp the text's structure, I lead him to highlight the topic of this excerpt: houses. After highlighting three houses mentioned, he is guided to connect these elements and reformulate the texts through Artifact D: compare and contrast chart. By doing this, I want Han to consciously structure the elements in his mind and form a network that can store and connect new information to existing one effectively.

Domain: Identity and Context
Standard 4: Teachers understand the importance of who learners are and how their communities, heritages and goals shape learning and expectations of learning. Teachers recognize the importance how context contributes to identity formation and therefore influences learning. Teachers use this knowledge of identity and settings in planning, instructing, and assessing.

An understanding of who learners are is important for teachers to implement tailored instruction. Some teachers view ELL students as blank slates who do not possess prior knowledge for teachers to build upon. But ELLs have their own conceptual understandings. Besides, they bring to classrooms their native language, cultural heritages, customs, and expertise (Jiménez, Smith & Teague, 2009). Thus, in today's diverse society, teachers need to be aware of the broader context such as *communities* students grow up and are influenced by. For instance, if some students come from a culture that does not consider late submittal of assignments wrong, it's necessary to make grading policy clear for these students at the beginning of class. Besides understanding communities and heritages, teachers should learn about students' *goals* in order to inform targeted instruction and assessment. For example, students who want to improve reading skills should be provided instruction on using reading strategies effectively.

I will present Artifact E, the paper I wrote for a final analysis project required by the course entitled Assessment of ELL Students. The analysis project investigates into the English proficiency level and educational needs of an adult English learner Hannah. The paper first talks about Hannah's linguistic and cultural background. The information is obtained through conversations, Bilingual Verbal Ability Tests (BVAT), needs survey, and teacher comments. In the latter part, the paper recommends instructional change and an assessment plan for Hannah. I

will use this artifact to explain my understanding of the role of identity and context in shaping learning.

Learners and Learning. My learner Hannah is from Korea. She came to the U. S. last July. Hannah is well educated. She majored in Library Science for her undergraduate study. Later, she obtained her master's degree in Archive Management. She works at Korea Copyright Commission and she is now taking a leave of absence.

Regarding her English language learning history, she has been learning English since she was in middle school. English tests in Korea have the gatekeeping function. Whether a student can get a quality college education or not is to large extent affected by his or her score on the English test in college entrance examination (personal communication, February 25, 2014). After graduation, a solid mastery of English skills is important to secure some nicely paid jobs. When Hannah goes back to Korea, she wants to work at the international department, a department where fluent English is an asset. For career advancement, Hannah is very determined to improve her English abilities. Her career *goal* and *identity* stimulate her to pursue fluent English. Her expectations require from teachers targeted instruction on communicative language skills.

The learning environment. The setting I observed Hannah learning English is the General English for Spouses/ Partners (GES) class offered by the English Language Center. The main objective of the class is to improve students' communicative skills. The teacher tries to maximize student-talking time. But given the limited class time and the number of students, students do not have much time speaking English in class. Through one-on-one tutoring, I want to give her more time to speak and practice English. At the end of each tutoring, Hannah gets feedback on her language behavior in class. She is also told of her assessment results so that she knows her weaknesses and can move toward a direction for improvement. For instance, after I

administer BVAT, I point to Hannah what pronunciation problems she has and which areas of vocabulary she needs to build. Debriefing after assessments greatly helps students to identify their learning problems and make responsive moves. In summary, I make efforts to create a learning environment that Hannah's errors addressed timely and her needs are satisfied.

Curriculum. All the teaching contents derive from the problems popping up in conversations and assessments. According to the anecdotal records and assessment data, I propose an instructional plan for developing Hannah's abilities in speaking and reading. In terms of speaking, Hannah did not have much problem with fluency, but she needs instructional support for some pronunciation and grammar issues. For example, my learner Hannah would pronounce voiced consonants as unvoiced, especially in consonant blend sounds. For example, "br-" in "brave" was pronounced as /preɪv/. Thus, I recommend a 5-minute mini lesson to address the pronunciation error.

The selection of reading materials is based on students' after-class reading materials such as magazines, newspapers and novels. Hannah mentioned that she likes to read "weekend magazines on fashion and travel" and she "just enjoy(s) reading that. It is not difficult to understand and (there are) a lot of pictures in there" (personal communication, April 11, 2014). I will suggest teachers look for teaching materials from these "weekend magazines", establish relevance to students' prior experiences, and thus "heighten students' motivation" (Brantley, 2007).

Assessment. Before the class begins, Hannah takes a diagnostic oral assessment. The test identifies Hannah's speaking abilities at low intermediate level. But the designated level is too general and fails to tell in which areas Hannah needs extra support. As a supplement, I administer Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM) to evaluate Hannah's overall

speaking abilities in comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. The informal assessment lowers Hannah's anxiety and captures her real language produce. In terms of writing, I collect Hannah's assignments as writing samples and use 6-trait scoring rubrics to fully analyze Hannah's writing samples in terms of content, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions.

Domain: Language Proficiency

Standard 5: Teachers demonstrate proficiency in social, business/ workplace and academic

English. Proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing means that a teacher is

functionally equivalent to a native speaker with some higher education.

Cummins (1984) differentiates two kinds of language proficiency in second language development. Basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) is basic English for daily communications. Cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) is academic and content specific language mostly used in decontextualized learning. Language teachers should build students' communicative English abilities to successfully undertake daily activities. Also, teachers need to make sure students demonstrate academic English proficiency in order to cope with cognitively and linguistically demanding content knowledge.

Aside from students' language development, teachers, as role models for students' learning a second language, should also demonstrate proficiency in social, workplace and academic English. This proficiency makes sure that students be provided with right input and when they make mistakes, they are given correct feedback. More importantly, maintaining proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing is a professional code of conduct language teachers must adhere to. Keeping learning and pursuing native like proficiency show that teachers take their language-teaching job seriously and professionally.

In this language proficiency domain, I incorporate my in-class observations together with speaking and writing samples, to support my interpretation of this standard. All these work is for the Assessment of ELL Students course. Artifact F is an audio recording on my interview with learner Hannah. In this interview, I probe into Hannah's English learning history and her goals of learning English. Artifact G is the writing sample from Hannah. Hannah wrote the short essay

upon my request to collect her recent written work. For this written assignment, Hannah can choose any topic she likes and there is no limit on the number of words. These two artifacts reflect my English abilities, particularly spoken English, and my intention to promote students' both conversational and academic English proficiency.

Learners and Learning. As what have been described in the previous domain Identity and Context, Hannah is an adult learner of English. She comes from Korea and has been learning English since middle school. In general, Hannah is at the intermediate level of English acquisition, during which stage learners "mirror language use that approximates that of their native-English-speaking peers" but with occasional error occurrences (Krashen and Terrell, 1983; Herrera at al, 2010). As what I observed in and after class, Hannah's English functions well enough to help her proceed successfully in daily conversations and academic discussions. Also, she can switch from English to Korean freely. For example, in one lesson talking about visiting a doctor, she translated medical word "ibuprofen" to its Korean equivalent to help her Korean classmates understand better.

The learning environment. I interviewed Hannah to glean information about history and her expectations of English learning, as well as her current English learning experiences in Nashville. This interview provides a lens into Hannah's linguistic background and language learning experiences. More importantly, it creates a genuine communicative environment where the conversation goes naturally and Hannah and I talk as friends. As what can be heard from the audio recording (see Artifact F), I demonstrate fluent English by initiating and facilitating conversations. I successfully direct the conversation to a topic that I want Hannah to elaborate on. For instance, when Hannah mentions she just took the Michigan Placement Test, I invite her to talk about her feeling about this test and whether she thinks this test reflects her real learning.

On my learner side, Hannah is able to use English for communicative purposes, such as expressing her opinions and making complaints. Hannah said once a week, she would go to the ChatELC, an English conversation program paring a group of English learners with one native English speaker. But she was reluctant to go after a few times because the program has more students coming in and "some girls speak too much". She quit when she realizes she does not have much chance speaking English. Thus, the interview shows my efforts to construct a real communicative atmosphere in which Hannah has chance to communicate her ideas efficiently to the audience (me, in this case) and improve her oral English proficiency.

Curriculum. Adult learners have many life experiences as resources to draw upon as they speak and write in English. When I assign an essay as homework, I allow Hannah to choose which topic she wants to cover and how long she wants the essay to be. I do not want Hannah to feel pressured or obligated to complete an essay of a given topic or with a minimum number of words. Rather, I hope the task is to some extent meaningful to Hannah as she can explore a topic based on her own interests and knowledge.

In the essay, Hannah talks about PSY, a world-famous Korean pop star, and his influence on exporting Korea music industry to the world. As what can be seen in this writing sample, Hannah used high frequency academic words a lot, such as influential, sprinkle, and spectacular. Besides, she demonstrates logical reasoning in this essay. She presents the topic in a logical order: how PSY becomes famous; his music and stage styles, and how these styles influence Korean pop culture. Hannah also has a mature understanding of English writing techniques. This is reflected in the correct use of linking verbs indicating time order ("till lately", "now", etc.) and hidden logical relations between sentences.

Assessment. Both the writing and speaking samples can be used for error analysis and assessment. The essay provides a window into students' general writing level. For example, it reflects word choice, lexicon repertoire, use of linking verb, and writing convention such as punctuation and citations. Regarding audio recording, I can pause and reply it many times to discover problems with my English as well as Hannah's. While talking, leaners usually do not have much time rehearsing English in mind. The speech sample can reveal more linguistic errors than what can be seen in a written work. These spoken errors offer a unique perspective to look into learners' L1 influence on English learning.

Domain: Learning

Standard 6: Teachers draw on their knowledge of language and adult language learning to understand the processes by which learners acquire a new language in and out of classroom learning. They use this knowledge to support adult language learning.

Teachers should draw on their language learning knowledge to have a holistic and systemic understanding of learners' English abilities and struggles. To prevent drawing hasty assumptions, the analysis of learners' productions should be developmental. For example, if learners fail to follow subject-verb agreement in complex sentences, it does not necessarily mean that they are at the beginning stage of English proficiency. Chances are that they are trying to integrate more structures such as dependent clauses into the sentence and actually they are now at a higher English proficiency level. Having realized that "an increase in error may be an indicator of progress" (Lightbown and Spada 2013), teachers can build upon students' current knowledge and introduce new language patterns. If teachers do not apply language acquisition theory and only analyze errors in a single context, the conclusions drawn may be unreliable.

What's more, students vary in learning abilities and beliefs. Teacher should not impose their own beliefs into students' but tailor instruction to meet learner needs. For instance, if some English learners have the ability of achieving better performance when they learn by themselves, teachers can recommend high-quality materials for them to learn after class and at the same time, keep track of students' learning so that they make progress.

For this domain, I will present a case study report (Artifact H) I did for the course entitled Educational Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition. In this case study, I collect writing and speaking samples from learner Joe, an adult Chinese learner of English. Then, I analyze these samples with regard to different language components and recommend instructional plans

for Joe. The final case study report shows how I apply knowledge of language acquisition to understand learners and inform instruction.

Learners and Learning . My learner Joe is twenty-four years old. He came to the U.S in August 2013 and majors in computer science at Vanderbilt. He has been learning English in China for fifteen years. When he studied English in China, he never talked to native speakers in or after class. His parents and friends speak Mandarin to him under all circumstances. So the main context of his English learning in China is the classroom.

Joe's motivations about learning English are mixed. On one hand, he is forced to learn English because English class is mandatory and makes up a large proportion of the final exam. He does not like the way English is taught in China. He said, "The teaching methods in China is not correct. There goes to take the tests, take the examinations. It did not make your English good. It just make you 做对题 (give correct answers)"(personal communication, September 2013). On the other hand, he really likes English. He took the SAT in high school in order to study abroad. Disappointed by the English teaching practices in China, he has been learning English by himself since middle school. His self-learning experience makes him believe that the best way to learn English is self-study and imitation. He describes his English reading and listening abilities as good, but he thinks he has great room for speaking improvement.

The learning environment. When Joe learns English in China, his English teacher seldom uses English in class. The topics in textbooks and teaching materials do not keep pace with real life issues thus fail to engage Joe. Joe listens to Voice of America a lot after class to know what's happening in real world. The recordings and transcripts of VOA broadcasting are major sources of his language input.

When Joe studies computer science in the U.S., he is exposed to all kinds of authentic English use: ordering a meal in a restaurant, negotiating with car dealers, listening to lectures, reading English journals, etc. Joe is taking in language input in different occasions and in great amount. All the input is real, meaningful, and up to date, which are the exact language resources Joe has been aspiring for. But in an English-speaking environment, one thing absent is teachers' guidance. Joe says he does not learn grammar and pronunciation well back in China and he has difficulty making his ideas clearly understood. His lack of proficiency in writing is especially disadvantageous when he writes academic papers for accuracy. Thus, Joe is in need of a language teacher to provide him with targeted English instruction so that he can improve English and have access to more career opportunities.

Assessment. I've collected three speech samples: one is interview; one is his phone call to a landlord and another one is his presentation rehearsal. I have twelve written samples: seven project plans, two email correspondences, one text message, one presentation note, and one writing about his history of learning English. Theses samples are for analysis of his English language development. Since these samples have communicative purposes in real life, they are reliable sources to look into Joe's actual language use.

Some of Joe's syntactical errors are related to first language transfer. For example, Joe used singular nouns ("user") or the definite article ("the user") to talk about a categorical group of people ("users"). This usage was due to Chinese language influence. Instead of having plural nouns to refer to an unspecified group, the Chinese language uses singular nouns for generic reference. That explains why Joe used "user" or "the user" to express "users". But sometimes Joe was confused about usages. He used the wrong form "the user" in one sentence and the right form "users" in another context. It suggests that the influence of the learner's first language may

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not simply be a matter of habits, but a more subtle and complex process of identifying "whether a certain features seems to belong to the target language" (Lightbown and Spada, 2013). What implies is that when two language systems are conflicting with each other, teachers should make it explicit the differences between two language usages.

Curriculum. I do not provide instruction to Joe in this case study. But based on my analysis on Joe's writing and speaking samples, I have recommendations for tailored instruction for Joe. If Joe were to be taught someday, the desired curriculum would target his grammatical errors and improve his spoken English.

As mentioned earlier, Joe should be taught the correct use of general reference. For phonetic errors, Joe usually mispronounced /θ/ as /s/ because the Chinese language does not have the dental sound /θ/. So, "think /θɪŋk/" was pronounced as "sink /sɪŋk/". The similar transfer also occurred in the voiced pair /ð/ and /z/. The word "that /ðæt/" sounded like "zat /zæt/". Thus, it's expected that teachers instruct Joe on the correct place of sound articulation, especially of sounds that Chinese language do not have.

Domain: Content

Standard 7: Teachers understand that language learning is most likely to occur when learners are trying to use the language for genuine communicative purposes. Teachers understand that the content of the language courser is the language that learners need in order to listen, to talk about, to read and write about a subject matter or content area. Teachers design their lessons to help learners acquire the language they need to successfully communicate in the subject or content areas they want/need to learn about.

According to Cummins (1984), language learners need to master two sets of language proficiencies: basic interpersonal communication (BICS) and CALPs. BICs serve as communicative purposes and are used in daily interactions. Since English is used in real and natural settings, teachers should create authentic opportunities for students to use the language for genuine communicative purposes. That is, while students are learning a new language, they should have chances to apply their learning to real life settings and their language production, either in written or spoken form, should convey meaningful social messages. Communicative oriented classes require authentic language input. This can be achieved through using real-life materials such as newspapers, blogs, advertisements, etc.

In this domain, I present a lesson plan (Artifact I) I did for the course entitled Methods and Materials for ELL Education. The lesson plan is designed for an adult ESL class. Its objective is to use proper expressions to ask for recommendations and give suggestions. I use the lesson plan as evidence to support my interpretation of instructing.

Learners and Learning. The English for Spouses/ Partners (GES) class is offered by English Language Center at Vanderbilt University. It attempts to "help non-native speakers of English with a low to intermediate proficiency develop functional oral language skills commonly

used in social situations through a series of listening, speaking, and reading activities" (ELC website). Eight female adult learners registered the class. They come from Korean, Japan, Turkey, Colombia, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. With regard to the learners' linguistic backgrounds, their English proficiency levels vary greatly. The student from Colombia can hardly understand basic English. Some students are at the high intermediate stage of English language development. They do not have much problems speaking or comprehending English. The differences in proficiency levels require more variety of assignments prepared for fast learners and at the same time, more scaffolding and time allowed for slow learners.

The learning environment. Besides the GES class, almost all the students take the free ESL class offered by the Belmont Methodist Church. They also go to many English clubs in Nashville to talk with native speakers. So they know each other very well before they registered the GES class. The intimacy bonds students together and makes the classroom casual and nonthreatening. The classroom culture is inclusive and respectful. The teacher often includes culturally responsive materials such as home therapy and recipes in her teaching. Besides, she welcomes and values students' multiple perspectives on an issue.

For my instruction, I want to reinforce the message of causality and inclusiveness. Adding to that, I try to make the learning environment more supportive. The support is not only from me, but also from peers. For instance, five of the eight students are Koreans. Their English proficiency level varies. Proficient Korean students can explain new words or content in Korean to their less proficient Korean peers.

Curriculum. Since the purpose of the ESL class is improving students' oral English abilities, I choose to teach something students can use when they interact with English-speaking people. As all the learners are new to this country, there must be times that they don't know

some good places to buy clothes, have coffee, or listen to live music, etc. and need to ask for advice. Thus, the purpose of this lesson is to learn expressions of asking for recommendations. Students can use these expressions as they seek advice from people.

To engage all learners, I ask students to write down good places they will recommend to peers on a sticky note. Then, they will use the information on their partner's sticky note and ask for recommendation. The sticky note activity emphasizes that every student is an expert in a certain area. It also assures learner contribution to classroom activities. After the class, I collect all the sticky notes, scan, and email them to students so that students can look for their classmates' recommendations and try something new after class. I want to share this information and convey the message to students that all that they do and learn in class can be used in real life.

Assessment. Since the class focuses on spoken English, the assessments I used to evaluate oral proficiency are mostly performance based. For instance, as students ask recommendations from their partners, I observe whether students are using expressions they've learned correctly and what other expressions they use. Besides, I note down errors in pronunciation, grammar, and fluency. These errors are addressed at the end of the class.

Domain: Commitment and Professionalism

Standard 8: Teachers continue to grow in their understanding of the relationship of second language teaching and learning to the community of English language teaching professionals, the broader teaching community, and communities at large, and use these understandings to inform and change themselves and these communities.

Language learning occurs not only in carefully designed classroom environment, but also in wider contexts such as home, workplace, and the ethnic group students are affiliated with. For example, Asian culture values humbleness and obedience. Thus, quietness and withdrawal are typical of Asian students. Getting to know the community where ELLs grow up can understand their behaviors and help tailor instruction to meet their needs.

Besides getting to know students' community, it's important that teachers keep abreast of new teaching methods and conceptions in the teaching community. Regular professional training is one way to have growing understanding of the teaching community. Also, teachers can meet colleagues and learn from them for continued development.

For this domain, I present the investigate paper (Artifact J) I did for the course Foundations for ELL Education. The paper investigates the Chinese community literacies in Nashville and reflects my commitment to use cultural understandings to inform teaching and make change on communities. Then, I use my reflection upon an ESL conference I attended to demonstrate how I continue professional learning. Last, I present the teaching observation protocol (Artifact K) I did for the course Analysis of Teaching. The protocol shows how I perceive good teaching in the classroom.

Learners and Learning. I envision that I will have Chinese learners of English in my classroom. Thus, it's necessary and, as a Chinese native speaker, convenient for me to get to

know the Chinese community in Nashville. Some of the Chinese students came to the United States at a young age with their family. They received a few years' schooling in schools back in China. The instruction is mostly in Chinese. When they attend American schools, their limited L1 literacy and the demand on L2 (English) usage are great barriers for their academic attainment. Thus, to explore the Chinese community is to capitalize on their native language and home culture to promote English literacy and bring about academic excellence.

For some students, they were born in the United States but raised by Chinese parents who are closely attached to the community back in China. These students speak English in schools but talk to their family members at home in Chinese. They are stuck between the American culture that they grow up with and the Chinese community where their cultural root is. This group of Chinese students usually does not have language barriers but feel lost about their identity. Thus, I want to investigate into Chinese community and hope the information I glean can bring culturally familiar artifacts into classroom, lead them to know Chinese culture that is once strange to them, and let students appreciate values, beliefs that they are attached to.

The learning environment. Since there are not many English-Chinese immersion programs in Nashville, seldom do students of Chinese origin have chances to use Chinese to facilitate English learning. So, the main learning environment is English immersed classroom. But through the community literacy project, I found many bilingual artifacts available in Nashville that can be used to serve Chinese learners' learning.

For example, the K&S world market has many English-Chinese bilingual ads on walls. Most are in traditional Chinese characters (see Figure 1 and 2 of Artifact J). Since most of the Chinese in Nashville are from southern China and southern people use traditional characters, we are more likely to see the artifacts in traditional Chinese rather than in simplified Chinese, which

is used by people in North China. Using these artifacts as lead-ins, I encourage students to dig out and introduce language varieties in their native culture. Through this cultural appreciation class, I want students to know their home culture and capitalize on their cultural capital to facilitate metacognitive awareness.

Curriculum. Teachers usually get teaching resources from online database, libraries, and more importantly, other teachers in the same or similar professions. The community of English teaching professionals provides a platform to communicate with and learn from each other. Teachers should attend language teaching conferences or seminars once in a while to keep abreast of language teaching theories and improve professionalism.

Last November, I attended the annual Tennessee Foreign Language Teaching Association (TFLTA) Conference. Some in-service foreign language teachers presented many creative teaching ideas. For example, one French teacher once led students to use online architectural software to create a virtual house. Students used French words as legends to describe the items they created. It turned out that students were more creative than the teacher could imagine. This teaching activity echoes the increasing demand of technology and the focus on real world tasks in language learning. After the conference, I realize that in a 21st century language classroom, teachers should welcome and integrate technology to help create a student friendly learning environment.

Assessment. When it comes to assessment, what instantly pops up in my mind is assessment of student performance. But I think it's also important to assess and evaluate teachers' performance on a regular basis. To demonstrate my knowledge of assessment on teaching, I use the observation protocol (Artifact K) I designed as supportive evidence. The protocol covers five major areas: teachers assure students engagement and participation; teacher differentiates

instruction; teacher provides timely and constructive feedback; teacher challenges students toward high level of performance; teacher creates a non-threatening and respectful learning environment.

The protocol reflects my interpretation of what good teaching looks like in a classroom. Particularly, I include my knowledge of ELL education in the protocol. For example, Domain 5 looks into whether the teacher creates a non-threatening and respectful class culture or not. As today's classroom has more and more ELLs coming in, every teacher should attend to ELLs' unique needs and create a culturally inclusive classroom. The other reason I find the protocol applicable to other subject teaching is that attending to ELL students' needs does not necessarily compromise other students' interests. Rather, scaffolding for ELLs and a respectful class culture are conducive to cultivating humane characteristics of all students to understand and respect people from other cultural backgrounds.

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Vision for Teaching

Through my Master level coursework, I get to know and gradually gain an insight into language acquisition theory and ELL education. In this section, I will reflect upon the coursework presented in the previous part, discuss how I will bridge between theory and practice, and identify challenges and directions for continued professional development.

Reflecting upon coursework

ELLs are "double learners" (Carrasquillo, Kucer & Abrams, 2004). They learn grade level content knowledge as their English-speaking peers do. At the same time, they need to learn English to a level that their English proficiency can facilitate subject area learning. Truly but sadly, many ELLs are struggling with both content and English learning with little external support (Fu & Townsend, 1998). The unsupportive environment can be detrimental to ELL's academic performance in higher grades when content area learning places an increasing demand on English abilities. Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2008) advocate *sheltered instruction* through SIOP model (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) to attend to ELLs' unique language needs. Sheltered instruction is described as external support from teachers to develop students' English proficiency so that they have access to grade level learning (Hansen-Thomas, 2008).

Two coursework I did reveals my efforts to shelter instruction for ELL students. In **Domain 1 Planning**, I present a lesson plan targeting tenth graders. In this class, I use texts from multiple resources to explore the theme of diversity: video clip, excerpt of a book, and an online text. Taking into account ELLs' limited English proficiency, I adapt t he online text to a level that is challenging but not daunting for ELLs. Artifact B of **Domain 2 Instructing** is a lesson plan designed for a fifth grade newcomer class. In this lesson, before students watch a commercial ad, I use another video and demonstrate to students what information I want them to

look for in the ad. These strategies offer comprehensible input (adapting texts) and help students know what they are expected to do (modeling). I will continue using these strategies along with others to support ELL students' language and content knowledge development.

When ELLs communicate their ideas, they are constantly switching between two languages: English and their native language (Herrera, Perez & Escamilla, 2010). But the two languages do not operate independently. According to linguistic interdependence hypothesis (Cummins, 1979), languages are interconnected. Students will transfer knowledge of first language to learning another language. Consequently, L1 can influence L2 learning in a positive or negative way. What this hypothesis implies is that teachers should reveal to students similarities between two languages to aid L2 literacy development and point out differences to avoid consistent errors due to negative transfer.

Two coursework I did reflects how I bridge between interdependence hypothesis and my future teaching. Artifact E of **Domain 4 Identity and Context** is a case study on an adult ELL from Korea. In this study, I collect the learner Hannah's speaking and writing samples and fully evaluate her English abilities. While talking with Hannah, I find she always omits schwa sounds. Comparing Korean and English, I discover that Korean language does not have this linguistic feature. Artifact H of **Domain 6 Learning** is a case study report I did on an adult English learner from China. The learner Joe also has the schwa sound problem due to absence of schwa in Chinese language. In these two case studies, students apply L1 knowledge into L2 acquisition: they are prone to omit a certain English feature when their L1 does not have it. For responsive tutoring, I highlight the difference in schwa between English and their native language and teach a mini lesson targeting schwa sounds.

ELLs do not learn English on their own. According to social interactionist theory proposed by Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1978), children acquire a second language through interact with linguistically knowledgeable adults. These capable adults lower the complexity of their language or slow their speed to help children understand. It is through the socially mediated interaction that children gradually capture linguistic knowledge and move toward a higher level of language acquisition. The implication of Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory on language teaching is to provide opportunities for interaction and authentic language use.

In previous part, two coursework I presented demonstrates how I create opportunities for students to use language for genuine communicative purposes. In **Domain 5 Language Proficiency**, I include my interview on Hannah, an adult Korean learner of English. I choose interview instead of a questionnaire to learn about Hannah's language learning history because I want to give her as many chances to communicate with others and practice speaking skills. Artifact I of **Domain 7 Content** also reflects my intent to provide chances for interaction and authentic language use. Artifact I is lesson plan targeting adult learners in an ESL class. The content of this lesson is expressions for asking for recommendations. Every student becomes an expert in certain areas, such as shopping or hiking and writes down places to go in Nashville. Then, students walk around and ask their peers' suggestions based on their peers' "expertise". In this class, I try to create an authentic setting where students will use expressions they learn to perform real life function: asking for recommendation.

For **Domain 3 Assessment** and **Domain 8 Commitment & Professionalism**, I do not associate them with specific theory or literatures. Rather, I draw upon general knowledge I learn in my program of study and elaborate on my own interpretation. To illustrate Assessment, I

present result of the BRI I administered to Han, a fifth grade ELL student from Burma. The artifact shows my professional ability to implement an informal reading assessment, interpret data, and use data to inform responsive instruction. For example, BRI results show half of the comprehension questions Han missed are about facts. Thus, he is weak at identifying facts. So I design a highlighting activity to help Han identify and mark key events and moves in texts.

In Domain 8 Commitment and Professionalism, the artifact I present is a teaching observation protocol I designed. The five big categories cover student engagement, classroom management, feedback, teacher expectation, and class culture. Under each category, there are two or three subareas to list specific teacher action. The observation protocol embodies my knowledge of in-class instruction and my belief of what good teaching looks like. It is a tool for observation but also guidance for my own teaching. The artifact demonstrates that I have an overall understanding of what to notice or attend to in classroom in order to meet learners' needs and help them succeed.

Challenges I will face
Although I am equipped with professional knowledge, language acquisition theory and practicum experience, there are three challenges I think I will face when I start teaching. One of the challenges is catering to incoming new faces. Given the ongoing influx of immigrants into the Unites States and my interview with in-service teachers, it's anticipated that newcomer classes will have new ELLs coming in throughout the academic year. Thus, the classroom I find myself teaching is likely to have students of mixed ages and with different knowledge base. With ELLs keep coming in, I need to make sure pedagogical tasks are challenging for high achievers and at the same time not discouraging for students with low English proficiency levels. Besides,

it's expected from me to strike a balance between reintroducing content for new students and not wasting too much time for old students.

The strategy I will use to respond to this challenge is having as many ideas and carefully adapted materials at hand and ready to use. For example, I can add explanatory notes or pictures in the margins of every text to help learners at a low level understand. What's more, grouping configurations can paly an auxiliary role in having beginning newcomers catch up with other students. I can group students according to their proficiency levels so that old students can explain class rules to newcomers. In summary, coping with coming in ELLs requires flexibility and responsiveness. I will continue learning while teaching.

The second challenge I will probably encounter is students not being able to express themselves. This concern was from my practicum experience. I observed a fifth grade newcomer class last year. In that class, students rarely respond to teacher talk. They look down and feel uneasy whenever the teacher poses a question. I think one possible reason is that most students have little English thus cannot understand what the teacher is talking about, let alone respond. The other reason can be that students come from cultures in which withdrawal is typical and valued. They prefer to keep silent and respond in their mind rather than speak out in front of the whole class. Students' irresponsiveness thwarts my efforts to try to know them academically and intellectually. If students do not respond in any observable ways, I have no clue about what my students have learned and neither can I successfully implement responsive teaching.

I think at the initial stage I will do Total Physical Response (TPR) to let students know what is going on in the classrooms. For example, when teaching body parts, I will touch my body part and repeat the equivalent English word. To check students' learning, I will touch one part and utter one English word. Students shake their head to indicate that the match is right and nod

to indicate the other way around. Facial expressions and body gesture are universal languages. True beginners can get a glimpse of what the teacher is doing through exaggerated and dramatized teacher moves and respond in a way that they feel comfortable and less pressured.

The last challenge is working with parents. I work with individual students and teachers, but do not have much chance to get to know and talk to parents. Many parents of ELL students are non-English speakers. Some understand little English. I have a concern that parents may not understand what I say when I describe their kid's progress and explain my expectations from them. Additionally, not knowing students' cultural backgrounds is likely to cause miscommunication between teachers and parents. For example, in some culture, parents will only be asked to visit the school when their child makes trouble. If I report to parents their kid's progress, chances are that parents will assume their kid does something wrong and scold him or her. This mismatch between my intention and how parents interpret it will cause tension and jeopardize students' academic performance.

To respond to this challenge, I think I can have individual meetings with parents. In some cultures, parents do not feel comfortable visiting schools regularly. Thus, I will go to students' family and talk with parents. I can bring a bilingual helper or I can let my student translation for me. The home visits draw teacher-parents relationship closer and what I get from these visits will help my instruction. Thus, it's essential that teachers of ELLs understand the culture students come from and involve parents in their child education in a culturally appropriate way. If parents have the chance to participate, they know they are active constructors of their child's learning. They are more willing to participate later on. From the student side, ELL students can feel the support from home and they are more likely to excel.

What I see myself as a teacher in the future

I envision myself in the future as a teacher of ELL students. Thus, the ideal classroom I will be teaching is an ELL pullout program in a middle school. My role as a teacher is a *carer* (Noddings, 1988). That is, I care for students' academic growth as well as their emotional and intellectual development. I think Noddings' *carer* conception of teaching matches my philosophy of teaching perfectly. According to Noddings, teachers and students learn from each other and care for each other. This opinion aligns with my firm belief to legitimize students' cultural and linguistic capital. Since ELLs bring to classroom funds of knowledge (Moll et al, 1992), they are expert in some areas that teachers may know little about. Students can be experts and introduce to teachers and classmates their culture and heritages. In this way, as ELL students learn from teachers, they are also teachers of their teacher. The two-way learning creates a respectful atmosphere for growth of both teachers and students.

Mayeroff (1971) defines caring as: fostering the growth of another. That is, caring is for the purpose of growth. As *carer*, I make great effort to attend to students' emotional states and create a welcoming and non-threatening learning environment. In this trusting and *caring* relationship, both teachers and students grow intellectually.

Conclusion

This portfolio fully demonstrates my understanding of major issues in ELL education. The first part Philosophy of Teaching discusses big theories that influence me as a language teacher. In the second part Professional Knowledge, I use coursework to support my interpretation of the TESOL Standards that will guide my future teaching. The third part Vision for Teaching describes what I see myself as a teacher of ELL students and plans for pursuing continued professional development. In summary, I will act as a carer and engage with students

in a dialogical relationship. That is, I will not a dominator dictating students' learning. Students are not considered as docile listeners who are blank slates and should accept their ignorance. Rather, both parties are in the process of joint learning and inquiry. The role of ELL students is co-investigators. They have knowledge that their teachers do not have and thus can be teachers of their teacher. The role of me in this dialogue relation is a carer who not only lets students assume responsibilities of their own learning but also works with students towards the mastery of true knowledge.

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