

Capstone EFL Portfolio

English Language Learners (ELL)

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Abstract

This portfolio project demonstrates my understanding and competence in teaching adult English language learners. It is consisted of three parts. The first part is my philosophy of teaching which presents theories that influence me as an ELL teacher and my beliefs regarding teaching ELLs. For the second part, I use artifacts that I created during my two years of study at Vanderbilt University as supportive evidence to show my proficiency in eight domains from the TESOL Standards for ESL/EFL Teachers of Adults: planning, instructing, assessing, identity and context, language proficiency, learning, content, and commitment and professionalism. The last part is my reflection on how to apply theories to practice, drawing implications for my future teaching.

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Philosophy of Teaching

Language teaching has undergone many shifts and trends over the last few decades, from Grammar-translation Method to Audio-lingual Method, and to the advocate of communicative language teaching now (Brandl, 2008). There is no doubt that the primary function of language use is communication. Thus, as a teacher, my primary goal is to equip my ELL students with communicative competence which as defined by Brandl (2008), encompasses a wide range of abilities—linguistic competence; sociolinguistic competence; discourse competence; and strategic competence. I won't put all my efforts in improving student's language proficiency, instead I will place my language teaching in a real-life context where students can also learn useful communication skills. To accomplish communicative language teaching, meaningful and comprehensible input is necessary. And students are given chances to conduct authentic language practice which requires meaningful interactions.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory suggests the importance of interaction in teaching and learning, creating opportunities for both teachers and students to interact with communities at different levels (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). As a teacher, I work under state's language policies or laws, follow state's or district's standards, and fit my teaching into school's language program. I work closely with my ELL students, but at the same time, I would also like to involve students' family and neighborhood cultures in my classroom. As pointed out by Jim énez, Smith and Teague (2009), the community that student lives in can be a valuable resource for teachers to get to know their students. And

what's more, teachers can make great use of the information in community to help students develop literacy. Community fieldtrip and engaging family deepen teachers' understandings about students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds and funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992). With this information, teachers can plan for culturally responsive and meaningful lessons that tap students' prior knowledge and then build new knowledge on them.

Almost every class I took in my two years of study mentioned the important role of student culture. I believe that each student, especially culturally and linguistically diverse student, can add great value to classroom teaching and learning. In order to motivate all students to contribute to the classroom, I prepare myself to be a culturally responsive teacher (Gay, 2010), and help my students develop cross-cultural understanding and an awareness of respect for diversity. I think that affirming identity is a process that each ELL student needs to go through when entering a brand new culture. As a culturally responsive teacher, I value student's home culture and language. I strive to make students believe that their differences in culture and language are assets for them.

Regarding class content and curriculum for ELL students, the most important thing that I learned from the Supreme Court case *Lau v. Nicholas* is that same does not necessarily imply equal. For ELLs, equity is not served by providing them with the same instruction while making specific accommodations for their needs (de Jong, 2011). So as a culturally responsive teacher, I will employ culturally responsive teaching and modify my curriculum for ELLs. However, I won't water down the curriculum, because I believe that

ELLs are just as intelligent as mainstream students. On the contrary, I hold high expectations for them and give assignments that are challenging for them.

From Krashen's affective filter hypothesis, I understand the critical role of learning environment for students. Affective variables such as motivation, attitude, anxiety, and self-confidence can either promote or hinder student's receipt of input, and thus influence the acquisition of language (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). To take advantages of those affects to promote learning, I need to lower students' affective filter by creating an encouraging and comfortable learning environment. And it starts with building relationship with students and caring about not only their academic performance but also their lives, because I believe that the way I treat my students will have great impact on them.

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Domain 1: Planning

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

Artifact A: Multi-genre lesson plan—American Born Chinese

Planning is an indispensable part of teaching. Careful planning precedes classroom instruction. By planning, teachers set goals that they want to achieve and expectations for students' learning. It is planning that gives teachers a chance to think everything through in advance, and try to fit different aspects, such as state standards, classroom environment, and students' needs, together into instruction. Planning takes great time and efforts. Before carrying out a plan in classroom, teachers revise it over and over again to make it feasible and meaningful. After the lesson, teachers reflect on and modify it to make it best address learners' needs.

This multi-genre lesson plan was an assignment I did for the course Reading and Learning with Print and New Media. It was designed for 9th grade English Language Arts class and included three lessons. I prepared to teach it in a class mixed of mainstream students and ELLs. It aimed to lead students to think about identity and stereotype as they are in the process of exploring and forming their identity. This lesson plan is an example of how I related classroom instruction to students' real life and took learners' needs into consideration while planning.

When planning for the lesson, I chose class materials very carefully so that they are accessible to ELLs in the class, but also challenging enough for mainstream students.

What's more, they stimulate students' interests in learning. The book *American born Chinese* is used as a main source. And supplementary materials include video, picture, online article, and so on. Students learn a new type of literature—graphic novel through this lesson. The language of the book is easy to read, but the meaning behind it leads students to further discussion which involves them in higher-order thinking. We focus on one of the themes of this book—stereotype, discussing it at national level and also in daily life.

I designed several activities for this lesson making sure that it is not teacher-centered lecturing all the time and there is plenty opportunities for learners to communicate and interact so that they can learn by doing and from each other. My intention of engaging students in group or peer activities is also aligned with Common Core State Standard that students can initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners. The objectives of this lesson is compatible with course curriculum to meet Common Core State Standard, for instance, understanding figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings; integrating multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats, etc.

Students receive both formative and summative assessments for this lesson, which include class participation (group discussion, anticipation guide, word study, and exit card), drawing their own graphic novel or film strip, and creating a book trailer or eBook for *American born Chinese*. By providing different assessments throughout the lesson,

students can demonstrate their learning by different means and not only determined by final exam or project.

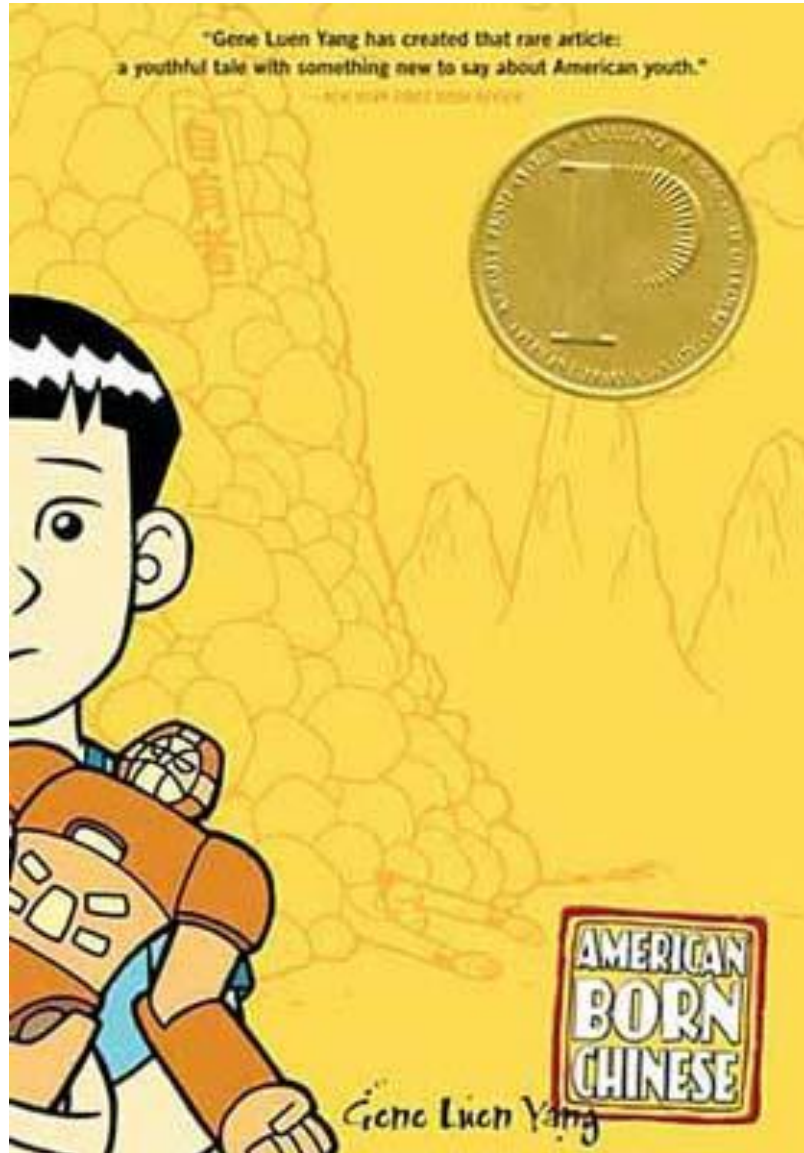
Artifact A: Multi-genre lesson plan—American Born Chinese

American Born Chinese

by Gene Luen Yang

Grade: 9th--10th grade

Subject: English Language Arts



♦ **Rationale**

In my class, half of the students are ELLs. Although they have already adopted English proficiency that allow them to survive or even academically succeed in a mainstream classroom, they are still the minority who have more or less experienced repositioning themselves after entering into a new environment and trying to fit in. And as adolescents, all my students are in the process of exploring and forming their own identity. It's necessary to talk about some serious issues behind the book such as identity in class which will have an impact on students' future and also involve students in higher-order thinking. A related issue to identity—stereotype will also be discussed in the class. Stereotype not only exists at national level, but also in our daily life. It even exists in school and in a classroom. Therefore, I want my students to be aware of stereotype hoping that they will know how to deal with it after our lessons.

♦ **Objectives**

Students will learn a new type of literature—graphic novel.

Students will initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions.

Students will be able to use their own words to retell a story.

Students will synthesize information from different sources (inside and outside class) and work in groups to design a book trailer/e-book.

Students will be able to make reasonable prediction about the characters.

Students will have their own opinions toward a certain statement and be able to explain.

Students will grasp new vocabulary through instruction, peer teaching, and discussion.

Students will understand author's choice of language use, structure, theme, etc.

♦ **Standards**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3

Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.6

Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.2

Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.1

Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.5

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.2

Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.

◆ **Materials and Recourse:**

“What is a ‘Graphic Novel’?” by Jessica Abel

American Born Chinese by Gene Luen Yang

You are not your country: top 10 national stereotypes from

<http://www.nationalstereotype.com/you-are-not-your-country-top-10-national-stereotypes/>

the Prejudice Map according to Google

31 Maps Mocking National Stereotype around the World by Yanko Tsvetkov

Anticipation Guide worksheet

Exit Card worksheet

Word-list

Videos from YouTube (book trailer samples)

Whiteboard/Smart Board

Markers

Computer, Projector...

Lesson 1

Bellwork:

- ◆ Students talk with shoulder partner. *What’s a graphic novel? When talking about graphic novels, what’s the first thing that come into your mind? Can you give some examples of graphic novels?* (5 minutes)
- ◆ Give handouts *“What is a ‘Graphic Novel’?”* by Jessica Abel to students. And have them read silently by themselves. (5 minutes)
- ◆ Discuss what a graphic novel is and how it is different from comic book as a whole

class. Write students' answers on whiteboard (using T-chart to compare graphic novel with comic book).

- ◆ Summarize and explain graphic novel using PowerPoint. Check if students have any questions so far. (20 minutes)

Activity: *Anticipation Guide* (Individual→Small Group→Whole Class)

(Now you know what a graphic novel is, and then we are going to read one. But before we get into the book, I want you to take a look at the handouts I just gave you.)

- ◆ Hand students the Anticipation Guide handouts and have them mark their opinions to the statements on Anticipation Guide. *Think about why do you make such decisions and be prepared to share your opinions with your classmates?* (3 minutes)
- ◆ After finishing their sheet individually, have students share their thoughts with the students at their table. *What's different between yours and your classmates'?* Explain your reasons. (10 minutes)
- ◆ Open the discussion to the entire class. (7 minutes)
- ◆ Ask students to keep this Anticipation Guide as a reference. *We will come back to this later after reading the book American Born Chinese and see if you change your mind about any statements on this sheet.*

Exit Card: Write down something new you've learned today and something that you're wondering. (5 minutes)

Homework: Read the graphic novel *American Born Chinese*.

Assessment (formative): group and class discussion; anticipation guide; exit card

Lesson 2

Bellwork/Group Activity:

- ◆ Students share thoughts on the book *American Born Chinese* with their shoulder partner. How do you think about the book/the characters in it? What do you like/unlike about it? (5 minutes)
- ◆ There are three main characters in the book *American Born Chinese*, so have students work in a group of three. Each student in the group takes a piece of paper and write down some of the characteristics/traits that the character assigned to him/her. (3 minutes)
- ◆ After everyone in the group finishes, rotate the paper in small group. The other two students can add any other characteristics that are left out by the first student. Small group activity is done when three characters' papers are completed by all three members in the group. (7 minutes)
- ◆ Write three characters' names on the whiteboard, and then ask each group to tape their characteristics papers under each name. Compare each group's answers, and then come up with a conclusion about each character. (10 minutes)

Word study:

- Give students word-list handouts. Go over the words on the list (teach pronunciations, meanings, and give examples of the use of each word and then

have students practice). (15 minutes)

- Ask students if there are any other words that they don't know or are not familiar with in the book. Have students work in small groups--peer teaching. If there are still unsolved new words in the small group, bring them to the whole class to see if other students can help. If not, then teach students. (15 minutes)

Book study:

Select some parts of the book to analyze and study as a whole class using PowerPoint. (25 minutes)

- Plot→compare and contrast how the characters of the Monkey King, Jin Wang, and Wei-Chen develop and grow. Ask students to predict Wei-Chen's life choices.
- What lesson does the Monkey King learn that he tries to pass onto Jin?
- Why does the Monkey King insist that all the monkeys begin wearing shoes? What does it imply? Will wearing shoes help the Monkey King achieve what he wants?
- Why does Jin tell us his audience, his childhood story through a flashback interwoven between past and present?
- Language→Find examples of irony in the book, and discuss how the author uses it to shape/develop his stories. Also, the use of idioms, slang, similes?
- Compare and contrast the author's use of verbal and visual imagery. Discuss how images can be used to relay complex messages—taking the opening images and words for each of the stories as examples (p7, p23, p43). How do the words and the images help distinguish the stories and set their tones respectively?

Exit Card: Choose one of the character in the book, and tell his story without using pictures. (5 minutes)

Homework: Draw your own comics/graphic novel/film strip. Explain assignment to students. (*You don't have to draw perfect and you don't have to draw a book. Several pictures will be just fine as long as they can express what you try to convey. Don't forget that you can always use words to help you explain.*) (5 minutes)

Assessment (formative + summative): group work about characters in the book—check students whether they have read the book; group and class discussion; word study; create a graphic novel

Lesson 3

Bellwork:

- ◆ Print out the article *You are not your country: top 10 national stereotypes* from National Stereotype website (<http://www.nationalstereotype.com/you-are-not-your-country-top-10-national-stereotypes/>) and give it to students. Have students read this fun article individually and then share some thoughts with the entire class. (15 minutes)
- ◆ Ask students to think about the following questions: Why do stereotypes exist? Are

they ever accurate? Can a stereotype ever be positive? What is the connection between stereotypes and racism/sexism/etc.?

- ◆ Ask students to keep these questions in mind, and then introduce stereotype to them using PowerPoint.

Stereotype/Finding True Identity (30 minutes)

- ◆ Define stereotype
- ◆ Examples of stereotype in daily life → more in-depth involving race... (provoke students to think about this serious issue)
- ◆ Pros and cons
- ◆ Influences
- ◆ What we should do about it?
- ◆ Relate to the book *American Born Chinese*

Show the Prejudice Map according to Google and a map made by Yanko Tsvetkov mocking national stereotype around the world to students and suggest them checking out other works by Yanko Tsvetkov on the website themselves

(<http://alphadesigner.com/mapping-stereotypes/>). Yanko Tsvetkov has made 31 maps mocking national stereotypes from different perspectives.

Unit Wrap-up/Post-reading Activity: review *Anticipation Guide*

- ◆ Have students take out the Anticipation Guide we used in the first class. Let them go over each statement by themselves, and mark any changes they have made after reading *American Born Chinese*. (3 minutes)
- ◆ Discuss as a whole class. Go over each statement and write down how many students have changed their mind respectively on the whiteboard. Ask several students to share what makes them change their minds after reading. (10 minutes)
- ◆ Ask students to note the statements that have the biggest and smallest numbers of students switching positions. What are those statements? Can this imply something? (7 minutes)

Homework (Final Project for this unit): *Creating a Book Trailer/e-Book*

- ◆ Students work in small groups (3-4 students) to create a book trailer for *American Born Chinese*, or summarize what we've learned in class and then make an e-book (introducing graphic novel/the book *American Born Chinese*...). Students will need to present their work to the whole class.
- ◆ Show students some examples of book trailers on YouTube. Explain project expectations to students. Discuss as a whole class about what can be included in book trailer/e-book. Track students' answers on the whiteboard so that students can refer to them later. (15 minutes)
- ◆ Break the class into small groups. Give students time to discuss with their group members deciding which project they will work on and how. (10 minutes)

Assessment (formative + summative): group and class discussion; anticipation guide review; final project (will be graded)

What is a "Graphic Novel"?

By Jessica Abel

Q. What is a "graphic novel"?

A. Graphic novels have a few defining characteristics. But first and most importantly, they are long comic books. (I'll get back to the rest.)

Q. What is a "comic book"?

A. You may think you know the answer to this one, but stick with me a few minutes: A comic book is a magazine or bound book that contains "comics" (also known as "comix"). Comics is a medium for expressing information and/or artistic ideas that is defined by



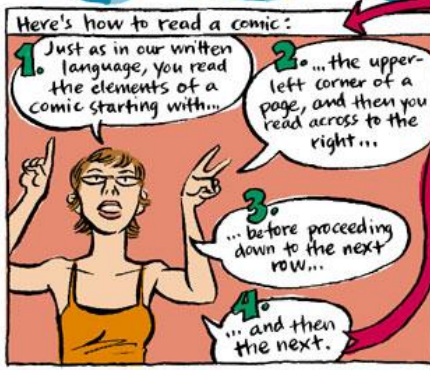
... and that's it. However, comics also often feature such things as

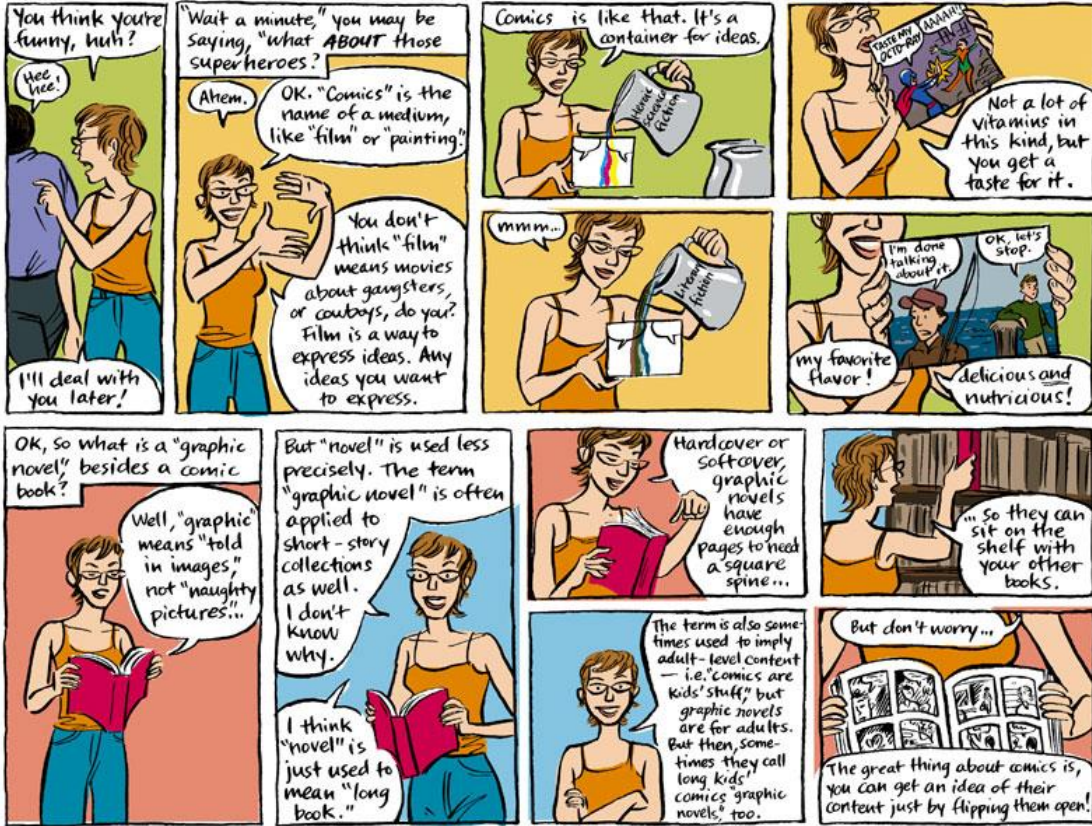
"word balloons."

...and sometimes "thought balloons."



These techniques aren't necessary to make comics, but they are quite common. There are other common, familiar, but even more optional elements of many comics, such as certain kinds of characters, like funny animals or licensed characters. But I'll get to that in a minute.





A Map Mocking National Stereotype

By Yanko Tsvetkov

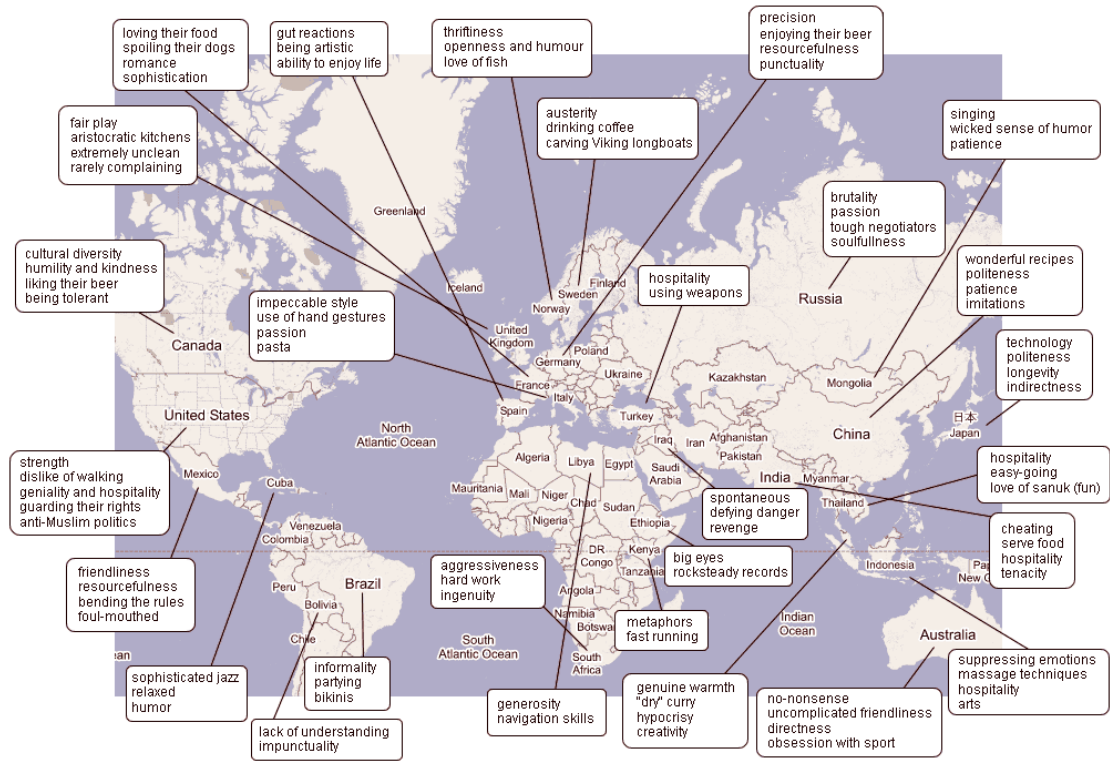
<http://alphadesigner.com/mapping-stereotypes/>

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO AMERICANS 2012

from Yanko Tsvetkov's Atlas of Prejudice
www.alphadesigner.com



The Prejudice Map according to Google



Domain 2: Instructing

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

Artifact B: Tutoring plans and reflections at Bailey Middle School

A big part of teaching is the delivery of instruction to students. The instruction should be culturally and socially appropriate. Student is the decisive factor of how to deliver instruction. And as a teacher, I need to be flexible about my instruction. During the class Reading and Learning with Print and New Media, I was paired with an 8th grade student who is a struggling reader. I met him once a week to help him improve reading skills so that he can overcome some difficulties in reading while learning for other subjects. The artifact is my tutoring plans and reflections after tutoring for every week, which shows that my instruction is to meet my student's needs. One-on-one tutoring enables me to put all my focus on one student to build a relationship with him, and modify content and adjust instruction style in time to better help him. Considering the fact that although the student is a struggling reader, his reading fluency is good, I put an emphasis on teaching him some reading strategies that can help him improve comprehension.

When I first met him, I didn't go into teaching directly, instead, I spent time introducing myself to him and getting to know him. For the first few weeks, I planned to introduce read aloud and think aloud to him, but he wasn't willing to read to me.

Therefore, I decided to give him more time. Instead of having him read to me, I read

aloud to him and then checked his comprehension. In this case, I changed my instructional plan during teaching according to student's reaction. After a few weeks, as we knew each other better, I asked him to read aloud to me again, and he agreed. During our tutoring, I tried to create an encouraging environment for my student so that he can build confidence in reading. I gave him positive feedback constantly, even just for a tiny progress he made.

Before asking him to try a new strategy, I would model first so that he wouldn't be stressed out, for example, the read aloud and think aloud strategy. And I slowed my pace to make sure that he learned, understood, and was able to apply the new strategies by himself.

The tutoring section is to involve struggling readers in extracurricular reading, so I don't need to worry too much about state standards and content curriculum. Students can choose their own books to read with the guidance of a reading specialist to assure that the books are at appropriate level for them. Every week, I would review previous chapters with him first, which on one hand, prepared him for the new chapter we were going to read, on the other hand, served as a formative assessment to check his comprehension and learning.

Tutoring Plan

Tutor Name: Qianyi Gao (Cherry) **Student Name:** Kevon Horton **Date:** 01/28/2014

Objective: He will be able to read aloud to me. And after reading, he will make efforts to tell me the story.

Materials needed: "Nerds"

Procedures:

1. Focus and Review: get to know how many chapters he has read; ask him to summarize what he knows after reading
2. Statement of Objective: can read one chapter both aloud and silently; be able to comprehend the story and retell in his own words
3. Guided Practice: take turns reading aloud one chapter, depending on his willingness; word study during and after reading and comprehension questions after reading
 - a) If a word, trips him up while reading, I will stop and ask him what does he thinks the word means and/or what word that he knows could replace the unknown word and still make sense. This is using context clues.
4. Independent Practice: re-read the chapter silently by himself; review vocabulary
5. Closure: summarize today's reading and predict what will happen in the next chapter

Reflection:

During today's tutoring section, Kevon and I read two chapters aloud together, which accomplished my goal for today's tutor. He has already read one chapter before. But when I ask him what it's about, he seemed unsure and couldn't tell me the story. While he read, I was impressed by his reading fluency. He was able to read without finger-pointing the book line by line. But he sometimes would re-read. Occasionally, he would ask me about a word that he doesn't know how to pronounce. I noticed that when I read, his attention wouldn't be on the book. He would look around, or play with his hand. In order to get his attention back to the reading, I therefore asked him to continue reading. Apparently he wasn't listening when I read, because he didn't know where to begin. So I'm in a dilemma. If I let him read alone, he would probably get bored quickly. While if I read with him, then he wouldn't pay attention when I read. Today, I didn't manage time well. In the end, I didn't have much time to check how well he comprehends the story. Next time, I will try to wrap up and start asking comprehension questions about 5 minutes earlier.

Tutoring Plan

Tutor Name: Qianyi Gao (Cherry) **Student Name:** Kevon Horton **Date:** 02/11/2014

Objective: He will be able to read aloud to me and pay attention when I read. After reading, he will make efforts to tell me the story.

Materials needed: ~~“Nerds: National Espionage, Rescue, and Defense Society” by Michael Buckley~~ “Response”

Procedures:

1. Focus and Review: ask him to summarize what he read before
2. Statement of Objective: can read two chapters both aloud and silently; be able to comprehend the story and retell in his own words
3. Guided Practice: take turns reading aloud one chapter, depending on his willingness; word study during and after reading and comprehension questions after reading
 - a) If a word, trips him up while reading, I will stop and ask him what does he thinks the word means and/or what word that he knows could replace the unknown word and still make sense.
4. Independent Practice: re-read the chapter silently by himself; review vocabulary
5. Closure: summarize today’s reading and predict what will happen in the next chapter

Reflection:

Kevon changed his book again this week. Before our tutoring section, he hasn’t started reading his new book, so there is nothing he can tell me about it. Like last week, we took turns to read out aloud. Since we had a problem with his attention last week during reading, this time, I told him that I will ask him to summarize what I have read hoping that he would pay attention. And I think it works. I noticed that he spent much more time listening to me than looking around. He is more engaged in reading. And he is able to continue reading what I have left without me telling him. So I think it’s necessary to let him read with a question or task in mind.

Tutoring Plan

Tutor Name: Qianyi Gao (Cherry)**Student Name:** Kevon Horton **Date:** 02/18/2014

Objective: He will be able to read aloud to me and pay attention when I read. And he will make efforts to give me a summary of what he has read.

Materials needed: “Response”

Procedures:

1. Focus and Review: ask him to summarize what he read before
2. Statement of Objective: can read 1-2 chapters both aloud and silently; be able to comprehend the story and retell in his own words
3. Guided Practice: take turns reading aloud one chapter, depending on his willingness; word study during and after reading and comprehension questions after reading
 - a) If a word, trips him up while reading, I will stop and ask him what does he think the word means and/or what word that he knows could replace the unknown word and still make sense.
4. Independent Practice: re-read the chapter silently by himself; review vocabulary
5. Closure: summarize today’s reading and predict what will happen in the next chapter

Reflection:

We finished what we left last week in chapter two and began a few pages in chapter three. He told me that Tuesday is the only time that he will read this book, so it has been a while since our last reading and he couldn’t remember what we have read. Like every time, we take turns to read out aloud. Last week, I got pretty good results with his attention issue by asking him to summarize after reading, so I did it this week as well. I’m actually surprised by his summary. He is able to capture some main points and give a very detailed description about what he has just read by himself. But when it comes to summarize what I just read to him, he can only catch some detail information. I think he didn’t pay full attention while I was reading. Therefore, at the end of the tutor section, I told him that he did a great job with his part, but I want him to pay more attention while I’m reading next time.

He changed his book last week, because he thought the last one was boring. I asked him how he thinks about this one so far, and he said he likes it. I think compared with the last one, this book is more related to his life which talks about stories about black people, so it’s probably easier for him to make some connections.

Tutoring Plan

Tutor Name: Qianyi Gao (Cherry)**Student Name:** Kevon Horton **Date:** 02/25/2014

Objective: He will be able to read aloud to me and pay attention when I read. And he will make efforts to give me a summary of what we have read.

Materials needed: “Response”

Procedures:

1. Focus and Review: ask him to summarize what he read before
2. Statement of Objective: can read 1-2 chapters both aloud and silently; be able to comprehend the story and retell in his own words
3. Guided Practice: take turns reading aloud one chapter; word study during and after reading and comprehension questions after reading
 - a) If a word, trips him up while reading, I will stop and ask him what does he thinks the word means and/or what word that he knows could replace the unknown word and still make sense.
4. Independent Practice: re-read the chapter silently by himself; review vocabulary
5. Closure: summarize today’s reading and predict what will happen in the next chapter

Reflection:

He read the book yesterday, so I asked him to give me a summary so that I can have a sense of what’s happening in the previous chapter. I’m glad that he could offer me some information that I didn’t know about the book although I’m not sure whether it is related or not since I haven’t read that part. After our warm-up conversation, we began our reading. He reads fast, but sometimes with errors. Usually, he can be aware of his errors, and go back self-correcting himself. Today, he seemed more focused than before when I read. He didn’t look around, instead he looked at the book. But I noticed that there is something in his hand that he played with a lot. I don’t know if that will be a distraction for him or not. As far as I can see, it didn’t seem to influence his reading, because he did a good job with summarizing the story after reading.

Tutoring Plan

Tutor Name: Qianyi Gao (Cherry)**Student Name:** Kevon Horton **Date:** 04/01/2014

Objective: He will be able to read aloud to me and pay attention when I read. And he will make efforts to give me a summary of what we have read. He will share some of the thoughts he comes up with while reading with me.

Materials needed: “Response”

Procedures:

1. Focus and Review: ask him to summarize what he read before
2. Statement of Objective: can read 1-2 chapters both aloud and silently; be able to comprehend the story and retell in his own words; generate some thoughts while reading
3. Guided Practice: take turns reading aloud one chapter; word study during and after reading and comprehension questions after reading
 - a) If a word, trips him up while reading, I will stop and ask him what does he think the word means and/or what word that he knows could replace the unknown word and still make sense.
4. Independent Practice: re-read the chapter silently by himself; review vocabulary
5. Closure: summarize today’s reading and predict what will happen in the next chapter

Reflection:

This week, I wasn’t able to tutor for the whole session since someone came in the middle and took him. I planned to use thinking aloud during our tutoring session, but he was taken away before I could get him start. At the beginning, we spent a little time chatting about spring break since it has been a long time since our last tutoring session. Then we started our routine—he reads first, then summarize what he has just read or any details that he remembers. I think he is now comfortable with summarizing the story after reading. After his summary, I asked him if he came up with any thoughts during reading. I expected to hear some thoughts, even they are unrelated to the text, but he said no. I took it as my entry point to the Think Aloud and was ready to show him this strategy, but someone came at this point. It’s a pity that I haven’t had the chance introducing Think Aloud today.

Tutoring Plan

Tutor Name: Qianyi Gao (Cherry)**Student Name:** Kevon Horton **Date:** 04/08/2014

Objective: He will be able to read aloud to me and pay attention when I read. And he will make efforts to give me a summary of what we have read. He will share some of the thoughts he comes up with while reading with me.

Materials needed: “Response”

Procedures:

1. Focus and Review: ask him to summarize what he read before
2. Statement of Objective: can read 1-2 chapters both aloud and silently; be able to comprehend the story and retell in his own words; generate some thoughts while reading
3. Guided Practice: take turns reading aloud one chapter; word study during and after reading and comprehension questions after reading
 - a) If a word, trips him up while reading, I will stop and ask him what does he think the word means and/or what word that he knows could replace the unknown word and still make sense.
4. Independent Practice: re-read the chapter silently by himself; review vocabulary
5. Closure: summarize today’s reading and predict what will happen in the next chapter

Reflection:

Before he got here, I noticed that his name was on the board saying that he has finished “Response” which is a high school level novel. I felt so proud of him when I saw that. He has already read about 5 pages of the new book. And before we started our reading today, I asked him what he has read and what the story is about. He started talking immediately. After reviewing, we started reading aloud as usual. At some point, when I have a sense about the book, I stopped him, and asked him to tell me who are the main characters in this book and what their relations are. I want to go into the plot a little bit with him, and see whether he was just reading the words or he was reading the meaning and understood what he read. Names in a book sometimes can be confusing, so it took him some time to recall every main character’s name correctly. As for the relations between characters, he did a great job in sorting them out.

Tutoring Plan

Tutor Name: Qianyí Gao (Cherry) **Student Name:** Kevon Horton **Date:** 04/15/2014

Objective: He will be able to read aloud to me and pay attention when I read. And he will make efforts to give me a summary of what we have read. He will share some of the thoughts he comes up with while reading with me. He will be able to compare differences between this book and the last one he just finished.

Materials needed: “Tears of a tiger” by Sharon M. Draper

Procedures:

1. Focus and Review: ask him to summarize what he read before
2. Statement of Objective: can read 1-2 chapters aloud; be able to comprehend the story and retell in his own words; generate some thoughts while reading; compare this book with the one he just finished (writing style, content, etc.)
3. Guided Practice: take turns reading aloud one chapter; word study during and after reading and comprehension questions after reading
 - a) If a word, trips him up while reading, I will stop and ask him what does he think the word means and/or what word that he knows could replace the unknown word and still make sense.
4. Summarize today’s reading and predict what will happen in the next chapter
5. Closure: summarize his achievement during reading clinic for this semester, expectation for his future reading.

Reflection:

Today is our last session of tutoring. We started with him reading aloud as usual. And after reading, he would summarize the story and recall some details from the text. Since he finished the last book not long ago and he has already made some progress with the new one, I asked him to compare these two books to see whether he notices any differences. And I’m glad to see that he answered with confidence and told me that they’re about different stories and then gave me a brief summary of each book. Then I asked him if there is any differences in writing style, such as the use of narration and conversation. After my hint, he responded quickly explaining that one has more narration, the other one is almost full of conversations. Through this comparison activity, I believe that he is engaging in reading now, at least with these two books he chose, because he is able to notice the differences. At the end of our session, I summarized a little bit about his achievement in our tutoring sessions. For example, at the beginning of this semester, he had problem with summary of what he read, but now giving a brief summary after reading seems to become a habit for him. He is making progress with his reading during this semester, and I hope that he can keep up with his good habit and continue reading.

Domain 3: 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 assessments of their learning.

Artifact C: Case Study of a Non-native English Speaker

Assessment serves as an indicator for both learners and teachers. It reflects past learning and teaching, and guides future learning and teaching. To better learn students’ ability and potential, teachers can adopt multiple assessments in different settings, and then gather and analyze all information. The goal of assessment is to know students’ learning status so that teachers can offer more targeted instruction to meet students’ needs and help them make progress.

For the course Educational Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition, I studied an adult non-native English speaker. This study lasted about three months and was focused on her oral and written language ability. I kept record of her data and analyzed it, and kept track of her progress. To get data, she read articles that I prepared for her, had random conversation with me, and also wrote paragraphs that I assigned. I assessed her current stage of English acquisition in terms of grammatical morphemes, negation, questions, possessive determiners, relative clauses, and reference to past. And as for her

oral language, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics are also examined.

After assessing my learner and determining her current stage of English acquisition, I came up with a specific instructional plan for future use. Through assessing, I knew her strength and weakness of language learning, which help me decide where my focus should be later. It took a long to gather multiple writing and oral samples from the learner and analyze data to determine learner's language acquisition. But for both the learner and I, the most practical and meaningful element of this study is the implication for future instruction. The learner was eager to receive feedback from my study to continue English learning. And for me, my instruction could be more specific and targeted if I had a chance to teach her.

Case Study of a non-native English speaker

by Qianyi Gao

➤ ***The Learner and What's Acquired***

Introduction to the learner

My learner is a middle-age Chinese woman named Jane. She was born and raised in China. And mandarin Chinese is the language she uses all the time, home, school, workplace and etc. About half a year ago, she and her family moved to the United States. She is now taking some English classes offered by the church, twice a week. These classes are mainly focus on conversational English. And her daughter who goes to college in Nashville is her tutor at home.

Jane has learned English for more than ten years since fifth grade. And English was a required course in her college where she had to pass an English proficiency test to graduate. At that time, she also took a TOEFL test, preparing to study abroad after graduation. However, due to some personal reasons, she gave up the opportunity to go abroad and started working in China after college. There weren't many opportunities to let her use English, especially English speaking and listening, in the workplace. So her English got rusty over time. But she often reads English articles and plays games in English, which help her at least maintain English reading ability.

Description of the learner's oral and written language abilities

In general, my learner has a successful acquisition of English phonetics and

phonology. Her pronunciation, although not native-like, has minor errors which I will illustrate in detail later.

In terms of Morphology, my learner knows the functions of nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and pronouns, but she has problem with plurals, especially in oral language (see Appendix line 116-119; line 126-127 words underlined). From the data I collected, I think she has some knowledge of the plural rule in English, because she uses plural form from time to time. However, she doesn't possess the ability to use the right plural form consistently. And I assume that this is influenced by her first language—Chinese. Unlike English, there is no inflectional morphemes such as plural *-s* or *-es* in Chinese that can add to a word and simply change the form of the word to indicate some grammatical “meaning”. In Chinese, when indicating plural, we change the quantifier while the noun stays the same form as singular. Although my learner can't use plural form correctly, I am astonished by her solid understanding and proper use of the plural rule of morphophonology. She can make a clear difference between the allomorphs /s/ and /z/ in plural form, for example, she knows to pronounce /s/ in “coats” and /z/ in “beds”. And after repeating tests, I am sure that this is not a random phenomenon.

For Syntax, the samples from my learner show that she has acquired some grammar rules, but she also makes unconscious grammar mistakes which I will explain later.

As for Semantics and Pragmatics, she uses inappropriate words in both oral and written language, which often leads to vague meanings of her utterance. I first thought she has very limited vocabulary which prevent her choosing appropriate words and

producing sentences, but when she read a book, I found that she knows much more words than I assumed. The problem is that though knowing the meaning(s) of a word, she doesn't know how to use it. Besides, I notice that she can recognize some Tier 3 or Tier 4 level words which as she told me, are learned from playing computer games, but she can't distinct some Tier 1 words, such as "tomato" and "potato", "lettuce". When my learner doesn't know how to use language to convey her meanings, she would use gestures, and if her daughter is with her, she would ask for help.

- ◆ *Phonetics/ Phonology*

As I said earlier, my learner's overall English pronunciation is pretty good. Many of the common pronunciation mistakes that Chinese learners make don't exist in her speaking, for example, the labiodental sound /v/ and the liquid sound /l/. I think it has something to do with her pronunciation training in elementary school where her English teacher paid much attention to correct her pronunciation. But it doesn't mean that she has no problem with phonetics/phonology. Like many other English learners, my learner can't pronounce *th* sound correctly. There is no such interdental sound in Chinese. In order to pronounce the /θ/ and /ð/, my learner will substitute them with the similar alveolar sounds /s/, /z/ or /d/. Using the sound /s/ to replace /θ/ is hard to detect. I have to watch her mouth very carefully and ask her to produce the sound over and over again. Her choosing of /z/ or /d/ to replace /ð/ doesn't seem to have a pattern, for example, I found her pronouncing the word "them" as both /zəm/ (see Appendix line 52) and /dəm/ (see Appendix line 70), and "this" as both /zɪs/ and /dɪs/.

Lengthening the voiceless consonants at the end of a word is another error she makes. And in order to pronounce the lengthened voiceless consonants, she would add a vowel at the end. For example, she pronounces the word “book” as /bʊkə/ (see Appendix line 36, 50, 54) and “but” as /bʌtə/. There is no such feature as voicing in Chinese, so a Chinese English learner is usually lack of awareness of making a distinction between voiced and voiceless consonants. And this type of lengthening is more obvious when she talks to people than when she reads a book aloud.

Besides, she usually puts stress on the wrong syllable, or tends to stress every syllable. This may also be influenced by her first language, because Chinese uses tone instead of syllable stress to distinguish words and meanings.

- ◆ *Syntax*

In oral language, Jane mainly uses simple sentences. In written language, she produces more coordinate sentences and complex sentences than simple ones, but usually with mistakes. For instance, her choice of verb tense is inconsistent in the main sentence and dependent clause, which I will give a specific example later. Another common mistake she makes in a complex sentence is her use of auxiliary verb. She tends to overuse auxiliary verb “would” and “should”. For example, in line 13 (see Appendix), she tries to explain what the game “usually” does after start, but she inserts an unnecessary “should” here. And in this complex sentence, she also violates the pronoun agreement. She wrote “when I start the game, it should tell ME that YOU are locked in...” (see Appendix line 13) which should be “...tell ME that I am...”, because she is the one in the

game.

Concerning sentence structure, from her use of simple sentence, coordinate sentence and complex sentence, I can tell that Jane knows the S rule that $S = NP + VP$ or $S = S + CC + S$. However, she sometimes can't put the rule into practice well, especially $S = S + CC + S$. In her writing samples, I found that there are many run-on sentences (see Appendix line 14-16, line 90-94). When forming a verb phrase (VP), the only mandatory element is the verb head (Justice, 2004). But in her writing, Jane omitted the verb "be" when she added an auxiliary verb "would" that should precede the verb head (see Appendix line 10). After I found this, I looked into other samples I collected hoping to see similar error, but I couldn't find any other evidence. This is the only time that she added an auxiliary verb in front of "be" verb. She has no problem with auxiliary verb preceding other verbs like "feel" (see Appendix line 17, 96), "tell" (see Appendix line 13), "lie" (see Appendix line 91) and etc. I think this error may only occur when it involves "be" verb, because the verb form of "be" in structure "aux + V" is different from other verbs. Unlike other verbs, the original form "be" can hardly use in a sentence directly, so it may cause confusion for Jane. But this is only my guess, I will need more data to see whether it's a mistake caused by careless writing or other reasons.

Jane also misuses or omits articles and prepositions, which is a common mistake made by many English learners. For example, there is a more appropriate preposition, like "among", to use in the sentence "IN all kinds of computer games..." she wrote (see Appendix line 7). And she missed an indefinite article "a" in "look like horrible movie"

(see Appendix line 14). Though I can point out the mistakes she made, it's difficult to find a pattern of her mistakes regarding articles and propositions.

What's more, Jane has understanding about tense choice, taking her email to a friend as an example. In her email, she first used present tense to express her present feeling which is "I'm so glad to receive your email..." (see Appendix line 89-90). Then she started telling her friend about what happened in the past few days using simple past tense (see Appendix line 90-93). Later in the email, she changed to present perfect tense "I have started read the little book..." (see Appendix line 93-94). Though she has an error here with "read", I can tell her intention of using the right present perfect tense to express the action that she began in the past and continue doing. From this sample, I can see that she knows to change tense when referring to different time, action or state, but the verb form she chose may be inconsistent with the tense of the whole sentence. For instance, in the sentence "I have started read the little book that you GIVE me..." (see Appendix line 94), the present tense verb "give" here is in fact an action happened in the past, and it's inconsistent with the present perfect tense used in the main sentence.

➤ *Analyses and Interpretation*

Assessment of the learner's current stage

When I first met Jane, she was with her daughter at an American friend's home. She barely said an English word, because she had her daughter translate for her. But now, she can talk to an American even without the presence of her daughter. Although sometimes she still can't express herself clearly, she is willing to speak English with the help of her

nonverbal behaviors. Jane's development of oral language and written language is unbalanced. Although she is making effort to close the gap, it takes time.

Regarding grammatical morphemes, from the samples I collected, it's not exactly consistent with Krashen's (1982) second language grammatical morpheme acquisition sequence (Lightbrown and Spada, 2013). For example, according to Krashen, a learner should have showed a higher degree of accuracy for plural *-s* and possessive *-ing* than regular past *-ed*, but for Jane, it's the opposite. I think this situation may be due to Jane's learning experience. Her first exposure to English was thirty years ago, and then she stopped learning for about twenty years. Now she is trying to retrieve what she has learned before. So the development of her language now is not necessarily represent the real sequence of her language acquisition. I have witnessed Jane using most of the Brown's fourteen morphemes, including contraction (see Appendix line 89, 96 words underlined) which should be the last one to acquire. But she never used possessive *-s* and 3rd person present tense in our conversation or her writing.

In terms of negation, I found limited data. I think she has reached stage 3, because she knows to put the negative element "not" after auxiliary verb "is". But since I can't find any other evidence to support, her acquisition of negative sentences is still undetermined.

As for questions, I don't have much evidence of her producing questions. She has never asked me a question in English. I assume that she has at least reached stage 4, because there was once that I heard her asking her friend who had a newborn baby at

home “how is the little baby?”.

In terms of possessive determiners, Jane is at the beginning of stage 3—post-emergence. She can differentiate the use of “his” and “her”. Although it seems that she has a preference to use “his” instead of “her”, she does correct herself as soon as she realizes it.

Regarding relative clauses, she can produce sentences with relative clauses in the subject and direct object positions. I only found evidence of her using relative clauses in writing. She usually uses simple sentences in oral language.

For reference to past, Jane can use both irregular verbs and regular verbs correctly in her writing. But when it comes to oral language, she rarely uses past tense, instead she would use present tense to talk about things happened in the past.

Discussion of an SLA theoretical framework

My learner is middle age woman who has used her first language Chinese for more than forty years. So there is no doubt that her English is more or less influenced by Chinese. As I analyzed earlier, some errors she makes are because of the influence of Chinese, for example, the *th* pronunciation, syllable stress, and plurals. In her oral language, she uses present tense all the time regardless of things that happened in the past. This may be also due to first language influence, because in Chinese, there is no verb tense, instead we add a time phrase to indicate the tense. Also, I found that in oral language, she tends to make more these types of mistakes than in writing. Speaking and writing are highly connected with thinking (Lightbrown & Spada, 2013). From my own

experience and readings, I know that a person's thinking process is always in first language unless his/her second language reaches native-like and the development of two languages are balanced. For Jane who obviously has unbalanced development of the two languages, her thinking is in Chinese and then she needs to turn it into English expression. It takes time for her to produce English, but oral communication often doesn't provide enough time. Unlike speaking, writing usually gives her more time to process so that she can recall the English language rules that she has learned to avoid some of the mistakes.

Jane's English learning has a twenty-year gap. After she graduated from college, she didn't have many opportunities to use English, especially oral language. From the perspective of usage-based learning, learners develop a stronger and stronger network of associations or connection between language features as well as between language features and the contexts in which they occur (Lightbrown and Spada, 2013). Jane may know many of the English grammar rules, but she was lack of experiences of applying them to contexts. Usage-based theory can explain why she can't speak a whole sentence but can write a lot when I first met her. After she graduated from college, she didn't have a chance to speak English, because there was no need for her to use it to communicate. In fact, even when she was in college, there weren't many opportunities to speak English, because teacher put more focus on grammar instruction and a student's reading ability than speaking in China. Different from English speaking, Jane kept using her English reading and writing abilities over the years. She has helped a friend translate a Chinese

book into English. Besides, she likes playing online computer games, and as she said, “the most challenging room escape games are often made in U.S.A and the websites are all in English.” In order to play her favorite games, she has to read and write in English.

When Jane and I watched a movie or listened to radio together, she has told me more than once that she knew every word in a certain sentence, but she just couldn't understand the meaning of the whole sentence. I think that the information and input processing theories (Lightbown & Spada, 2013) may explain this phenomenon. Learners use cognitive resources to process information, but their processing capacity is limited and cannot pay attention to form and meaning at the same time (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). As information processing theory states, “learners at the earliest stages will tend to use most of their resources to understand the main words in a message” (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Compared with writing and reading, due to lack of experience and practice, Jane's speaking and listening skills are still at beginning level. So when listening to English, Jane can only capture single words that she knows. She is unable to notice and process other language features within limited time. I believe that if the sentence is in written form, she can understand it perfectly.

Memorization and imitation played a big part in Jane's early year English learning, especially imitation which I think has great impact on her pronunciation. Her first English teacher was an American Chinese who spent a lot of time on English pronunciation. The teacher would record herself reading English letters and words, and ask students to imitate her pronunciations at home. Jane remembered that the teacher has spent a whole

day correcting her pronunciation of the word “pig” to make her sound like a native speaker. Imitating a native speaker at the very beginning of her English exposure may be the reason that Jane doesn’t have a strong foreign accent and has overall good pronunciation.

Social interaction influences Jane’s English acquisition. During the first few times we met, when people spoke English to her and she didn’t understand, she would turn to her daughter or me for help. People who spoke to her would then assume that she can’t speak English, so they would talk to us directly. But when I met Jane again in early October, I found that something changed. When she didn’t catch what people said, she would negotiate for meaning by saying “Pardon?” instead of asking for help instantly. Her clarification request often leads to modifications such as slowing down speech rate and using simpler words, by the other speaker. Negotiation for meaning leads to authentic interaction which brings more opportunities for practicing. And I can see Jane’s improvement in speaking and listening.

What’s more, although Jane seems to disadvantage in learning English because of her age, I think that her cognitive maturity, literacy in first language, and prior knowledge and experience all facilitate her English acquisition.

➤ ***Implication***

Description of a specific instructional plan

One of the problem that my learner encounters is that she knows the Chinese meaning of a word, but she doesn’t know how to use it. Only knowing the meaning is

enough for reading, but when it comes to productive skills such as speaking and writing, it will prevent her from producing sentences and conveying messages. So I will focus on the application of vocabulary. In order to produce the language, my learner first needs to have a large amount of input which brings her examples of correct language using. And reading is the best way to gather useful information. I will choose different types of reading materials such as fictions and news reports for my learner, ensuring that she has been exposed to English in different contexts. When she encounter a new word, she used to look up the English-Chinese dictionary to know the Chinese meaning of the word. I will still have her do it, because knowing the Chinese meaning will allow her to match the new English word with something that she already knows. The problem with Chinese explanation is that it may be misleading, because sometimes, there is no exact same words in Chinese and English. So I will also ask my learner to look up an English-English dictionary to see the English explanation of the word. After understand the real meaning of the word, she will go back to the reading examining how the word is used. And I will provide her with more examples, and ask her to use the word to produce sentences of her own.

Another problem with my learner's vocabulary acquisition is that she acquires quite a lot of Tier 3 or even Tier 4 words, but can't recognize some Tier 1 words. So I will build up her vocabulary mainly focusing on Tier 1 words, especially words that are commonly used in daily communication. Speaking is her weakness, I therefore plan to have conversation practice with my learner every week. Our conversation topic can be about

anything, daily life, a book, a movie and etc.

Also, considering that my learner is an adult with some knowledge about English grammar, I will choose to give her a systematic grammar review. I hope that she can build a grammar system in her mind so that when she produces language, she has a structure to refer to. Practice is always important. Except for worksheet that I will prepare for her after every grammar lesson, I will also ask her to write English diary which has to contain the grammar points we cover in class.

I won't pay much attention to her pronunciation problems and use of propositions, but I will correct her when she makes a mistake. Her pronunciation problems, such as *th* sound and lengthening voiceless consonants, won't affect her communication with others, so I think there is no need to spend too much on them. As for propositions, I will only talk about specific use of a proposition when she makes an error. Instead of spending time on topic like proposition which is hard to teach and explain, I would rather save time for what is teachable such as sentence structure.

Critical reflection on this project

This project is the first time that I work closely with an ELL. So for me, this experience is like an adventure, making mistakes and learning from them to be better in the future. As an ELL teacher, I need to use the standard language with correct structures when talking to my ELL students, because for my students, I am an important resource of their language acquisition, and they would imitate my language use. Since I am an ELL myself, I sometimes would also unconsciously make pronunciation or grammatical

mistakes. So at the same time of teaching ELLs, I need to continue developing my own English literacy.

Knowing learner's first language can be helpful for teaching, because it becomes easier to analyze learner's mistakes and help correct his/her mistakes. And this can not only benefit for teaching, but also learner's learning, especially when the learner is an adult like mine. After diagnose the problem, I will tell my student what is the problem and what may be the cause of this problem, letting him/her know the relationship between his/her first language and second language. I believe that for an adult, after knowing the cause of a problem, he/she will consciously pay more attention to the problem and try to avoid it.

However, when working with ELLs who share the same first language with me, I need to balance the use of both languages, keeping in mind that their goal is to acquire English proficiency. Although second language acquisition can somewhat benefit from the help of first language, overusing the first language can have counter effect. My learner speaks mandarin Chinese at home with her family, and she doesn't have a job yet which means that although she is in an English-speaking country now, her exposure to English is nearly limited to a two-hour English class twice a week. Under this circumstance, I become another source for her language learning. But when we met, we used Chinese to communicate for most of the time, except when I told her that I need to gather samples. My learner found it difficult to express herself in oral English. I think it's largely because of her lack of chances to practice. And I, as a teacher, need to create

opportunities for my students.

What I learned from working with my learner is that motivation is an influential factor for second language learning. It is hard to imagine a woman who starts learning English in her 40s. In fact, if Jane was still in China, she wouldn't have re-learned English. However, she entered a brand new world. To survive in this new environment, she first needs to know the language used in this new place. Although she can rely on her family, there may be one day that her family can't be around her and help her out. Besides, she also needs to communicate with other people. As Jane told me, she doesn't have a job now, mainly doing some housework at home and going to church, but she is thinking of getting one next year. English is now her main concern, because she worries that her limited English proficiency will be an obstacle of her getting a well-paid job. All of these reasons drive my learner's language learning.

Implications for future work with ELLs

For adult learners, I think it is better to correct their mistakes instantly than ignore or wait for the "right time". Usually, adult learners develop better cognitive awareness than young children. They are more open to corrections. After finding out a specific error, they have the ability to relate it to a language rule or generalize their own rules so that they could avoid this type of error in the future. When they realize that they often make this type of mistake, they would pay more attention to it and tend to self-correct when it happens again.

Besides, building a warm relationship with students is crucial. The communication

between teacher and students can be beyond course contents. Taking my learner as an example, as we get along with each other, she is no longer a project subject for me, instead she is like my mother. I am about the same age of her daughter, so at first, it's a little embarrassing for both of us. Treating her as a student doesn't seem to be the best option for our relationship. After I found similarities between Jane and my mother, I decided to see her as my mother, and I wanted to know her life stories, not just her experience of learning English. Being in a new environment in late 40s is challenging and even intimidating. So when Jane sensed that I really care about her and I am willing to give her a hand when she needs, she opened her heart to me as well. Now, we are family. I think that a warm relationship always requires mutual efforts. And as a teacher, I would like to take the first step by showing my students that I respect and care about them.

What's more, language learning does not only happen in classroom. In fact, it can happen anywhere and anytime, both consciously and unconsciously, for example, Jane's vocabulary acquisition partly comes from the computer games she played. For adult learners, self-learning plays a big part in their learning process, because they usually don't have ample time as full-time students to sit in a classroom listening to teachers. Besides learning a new language, they have jobs and family to worry about. So as their teacher, except for classroom instruction, I need to figure out other tasks or activities outside the classroom that will promote their English acquisition. And in order to accomplish that, I will start with knowing my students' interests. From Jane's experience, I conclude that the possibility of acquisition and learning increases when the task is

related to students' interests.

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Appendix

Date: 09/18/2013

Name: Jane Liu

Background: I asked the learner to write a short sample for me. I didn't give her a specific topic, so she can write about anything that she is interested in.

I like play games through I am not a young girl. In all kinds of computer games, the room escape game is my most favorite. The room escape games include lots of logical puzzles and riddles, such as Sudoku, tic-tac-toe, and so on.

I almost track the updates of some correlation webs every day. I would very exciting when I found the new room escape games. These games are designed in a closed place, for example, a house, a jail, a school, a hospital, a car, or a cave, any rooms can stuck you in. When I start the game, it should tell me that you are locked in somewhere and you must try to find clues to escape. Some games look like horrible movie, some are like lovely cartoon. I have to use all kinds of knowledge to find clues and break the codes one after another. Sometimes I google the history story, sometimes I do some math work, or search the Wiki in my adventure. When I use my 'spy' skill escape successfully, I would feel so happy! I love the challenges in these games, so I love the room escape games.

Date: 09/21/2013

Name: CG (me) and JL (learner)

Background: I gave her a book to read aloud.

CG: I want to collect some oral samples today. Can you read something for me?

JL: Okay (nod).

CG: How about this book? I just borrowed it from the library.

JL: Yeah (nod).

CG: Which chapter you want to read?

JL: It's okay. Something short.

CG: Okay, then this one?

JL: (nod. Look at the book, pausing for a moment, and then start reading.)

Help, I don't want to read this book

Ever since my teacher said I was a reluctant reader, I spend every ("very") waking minute avoid my mother and her latest idea of how I should use my time. Waste my time is more like it. "The (/zə/) librarian said you'd love this (/zɪs/) book (/bʊkə/)." I dive out my bedroom window onto the roof of the garage. "One chocolate chip per page" she calls. "That's the old rate. My price has gone up." As soon as my mother starts to climb out after me, I throw myself through the opened attic window. A few minutes later, I hear her at the bottom of the attic stairs. "Two chocolate chips per page, but that's as high as I'll go, dirk." While my mother tries to bribe me down from the attic with chocolate, I

rummage through the cardboard box to see if there is a stick I can use to shoot my way out. Instead, I find a stack of letters my father wrote to my mom when they were dating and some newspapers. When I open one of them up, the headline reads “little girl found dead on beach”. The newspaper dated ten years ago. I have to do the math with dust on my fingers. I’m facing my mother upside down. I ask mom about a dead seventeen years old girl on an island we’ve never been to, but she does not know what I’m talking about. So I toss down the newspaper. When she pick it up, her expression changes. “This has nothing to do with you” she says. “No kidding” I answer. “I just want to know why we have it.” She yank me down. “Instead of making up a story, you are going to read one”. She puts the newspaper in her back pocket and then lends me the library book (/bʊkə/). I like to read if everyone just leaves me alone. I like to draw. My father is a professional illustrator. I took his (“her”) idea and made it in my own. So instead of writing the vocabulary words, now I draw them (/zəm/), anything to get out of reading. My parents insist I use this system all the time.

If my life were a book (/bʊkə/), I’d have my own cool adventure instead of reading about someone else’s. If I were the main character in an exciting story rather (/razə/) than (/dən/) some kid who has to read all day, I’d spend a summer to find out how the girl in the newspaper ended up dead.

Date: 10/05/2013

Name: CG (me) and JL (learner)

Background: The same book for her to read aloud.

CG: So we will read another chapter today. What do you think?

JL: It's okay (nod. Flip through the book, choose a relatively short chapter, and then start reading).

Torture in the classroom

The next morning, Mr. Williams picked up where my mother (with a rising tone) left off. She passed all the summer reading list. Wearing a demented smile and acting as if she is tossing out free candy. I put my head on my desk (/deskə/). Mr. Williams ignores me, “you will read three books from this list and write a report on one of them (/dəm/).” The way our principal shifted assignments next year. “I’m happy to see I will be your teacher again in September.” I swear I’m not a trouble-maker, but somebody had to stop the madness. “Are you saying we have you again next year, and we have a report due on the first day of school?” I asked. As reading and writing homework for the summer, it’s just not adorable on my schedule. My friend Mike thinks he is funny. The teacher’s voice has the same weird tone as my mother’s, “Please tell us about all these summer activities, I can’t wait to hear.” Summer is like a pajamas. The teacher places the reading list in front of me. I like Mr. Williams, but I won’t complain if he is kidnapping by a crazy bank (/bæŋkə/) robber. The reading list, unfortunately, isn’t going anywhere. I stare at it and

wonder what I've got myself into. One of the books is about a kid and his dog of summer vocation and all the exciting things they do together, and lessons the boy learns. I have a dog. And trust me! That stuff only happen in books.

Date: 10/17/2013

Name: Jane Liu

Background: Jane got an email from one of her friends in China asking about her life in America. This is the email that my learner replied, informing about her current situation.

Hello, Becky,

I'm so glad to receive your email. Thank you for everything you doing for us, especially you praying for me. It was a sunny day after two rainy days when I left, three flights were all on time, and I could lie down when sleep because the other seats beside me were empty in the last long flight.

Because of jet leg, I suffered several sleepless nights and sleepy days. Everything is ok now. I have started read the little book you give to me, I try to study it as well as English.

Thank you for the gifts for us, I love it. I hope I can discuss about it with you someday.

It's great to meet you and your family. I could feel the friendship and kindness in your sweet home. Miss both of you, and lovely kids, and two dogs.

Please forgive me if my poor English make any mistakes.

Take care!

Blessings,

Jane

Date: 11/22/2013

Participants: CG (me) and JL (learner)

Background: Earlier that day, I was sorting the samples I got from Jane. And I found the first writing sample she gave me—a short introduction to computer games she likes.

We've talked about it before in Chinese, and I thought that it would be great to listen to her describing her favorite entertainment.

CG: You said you like playing games, what kind of games?

JL: I like computer games. I, uh, I play computer game every day. My favorite computer game is room escape game. That's very interesting for me.

CG: What is room escape game? Why you think it's interesting?

JL: Room escape game is one kind of, uh, just like logic game. In one room escape game, there are many puzzles, such as, uh, a lot of puzzles include mathematic problem, uh, and jigsaw, I think it's jigsaw, such as Sudoku, uh, anyway, there are a lot of question (plural) you have to answer, so you can find some code (plural).

For example, there is a house, and several room (plural) are locked, so you have to find the key to open the door. You can find some clue (plural), or sometimes you have to find some code (plural) to uh, safe, uh, or box, uh, many of puzzles waiting for solve, uh, find the answer, so it's very interesting for me.

Uh, I love the room escape game because they are very interesting and very, uh, challenging. More challenging for me when I play the game, for example, I have to use

many knowledge, uh, for every area, for example, mathematics and uh, sports, for example, football game and Olympic game's knowledge

The room escape game has very, uh, has many different kind (plural). For example, some game (plural) are horrible. And some game is lovely for children, uh, suit for children, and some not for children because a lot of blood, and crime scene. You have to find the killer, and, oh, murder. So it's very horrible.

Domain 4: 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.

Artifact D: Community Literacy Field Work

An essential question that teachers want to know is who our learners are. Getting to know students is one of the most important things that teachers should do, but it is hard. Students come from diverse backgrounds, which makes each of them a unique individual learner. The background context is also vital. Entering into a brand new culture, ELLs struggle not only in daily life, but also in confirming their identities and finding their positions. There are many factors that influence a learner's learning goals, habits, and even abilities. By getting to know our learners' life, teachers can understand the reasons and expectations of their learning so as to make teaching tailor to their specific needs. Especially for adult learners, tailored instruction is more obvious. In the contexts of a well-educated ELL who is pursuing a higher level degree and an ELL from low SES lack of education who is trying to find a job, teachers provide totally different instruction.

At the beginning of my program of study, I did a community literacy fieldtrip for the course named Foundations for ELL Education. I visited a Mexican community in Nashville, and interviewed a worker at a small bus company run by a Mexican. In order

to make my visit meaningful, I did a little research on Mexican community in Nashville in advance, and gathered valuable background information for this trip and probably for future teaching as well if I encounter learners from Mexico.

After this transnational and community literacy fieldtrip, I thought about how teachers can incorporate it into classroom. And as I said in the paper, this can become a project for both teachers and students. And I thought of several activities that I could use in classroom with my students to promote cross-cultural communication, for example, creating a world map on which students pin their hometowns, and inviting students' families to be guest speakers of our class. Students develop an awareness of diversity and learn to respect different cultures through community literacy activities. Moreover, I wanted to have students be the tour guide when visiting their community. And this is an opportunity for students to confirm their identity and see the value of their own culture.

Bringing Transnational and Community Literacies into Classroom

On a sunny afternoon, I visited Tornado Bus Company—a small business run by a Mexican in Davidson County, Nashville. Unlike many other advertisements with fancy words or images, a huge sign outside the company with only long lists of destinations in both the U.S and Mexico (see Figure 1) had my attention. And as I walked in, I found that except for restroom and tickets signs (see Figure 2) are bilingual, others are either English-only (eg. signs with regulations or rules) or Spanish-only (eg. travel tips or bus schedule) (see Figure 3). This made me wonder what's the reason for the different use of languages in this community? What messages can I get about the people in this community from the texts? As a teacher, how would I make use of the information? And how can I bring community literacy into classroom and incorporate with traditional instruction? In order to find out the answers, I interviewed Juan, a man working at Tornado Bus Company. From what I've learned, transnational and community literacy could be an indication for teachers about their students (Jimenez, Smith & Teague, 2009). Therefore, teachers should take full advantage of transnational and community literacy resources, applying it to teaching and seeing it as a way to promote students', especially ELLs' academic achievement. What's more, teachers may encounter communication barrier during their community investigation and literacy project, thus activities involving students and families from local community would be a solution.

I couldn't get specific data on certain Mexican community in Nashville. But statistics on Latino community could somewhat provide me with a broad outline. According to report, 10% of Davidson County's population is made up of Latinos, whose numbers grew 134% between 2000 and 2010. Additionally, of the almost 40,000 business in the city about 1,500 businesses are Latino-owned (López, 2012). This number may show that Latinos have made some progress in their socioeconomic status in Nashville, TN, USA. However, I couldn't make the same assumption from the Mexican community I investigated. As Juan said, 95% of their customers are working-class Mexicans whose lives in the U.S didn't turn out as wonderful as they thought it would be (personal communication, September 1, 2013). So most customers would get one-way tickets at Tornado Bus Company, going back to Mexico and never coming back. And just as most of his Mexican friends, Juan came to the U.S with an American Dream, working hard every day. Now he is trying to come up with an idea for his App and make millions of dollars (personal communication, September 1, 2013).

In order to live in the U.S, most of the Mexican immigrants are bilingual. Hispanic Nashville is a site in English that provides comprehensive Hispanic news concerning the Hispanic community in Nashville. However, Spanish has greater and greater impact on the American society. And Mexican people have a strong tied community, so for some immigrants who can only speak Spanish, they could still survive. And as Morales predicted, by 2050, 10 percent of the world population will speak Spanish and the United

States will be the biggest Spanish-speaking country (Pais, 2011). This may lead to the status change of Spanish-speaking students in school in the future, however, I won't take it into consideration now.

The company card for Tornado Bus Company (see Figure 4 & 5) is in Spanish except for American city names, which indicates that Spanish instead of English is the commonly use language in this community. As Juan told me, approximately 90% of their Mexican customers are in a Spanish-speaking working environment (personal communication, September 1, 2013). So their children may have more contact with Spanish than English in daily life. And on the card, "Uniendo Familias—Mexico-USA" which means uniting families, tells the most important reason why people take the bus. It also implies the living condition for most Mexicans in Nashville. From the interview with Juan, I know that there are a number of Mexican students who have families back home or somewhere else (personal communication, September 1, 2013). Therefore, writing a letter to families who are not with them could be a meaningful activity for ELLs (Igoa, 1995).

As suggested by Jimenez, Smith and Teague (2009), "including transnational and community literacies can help students learn about diversity in their communities and help ELLs become more fully engaged in their literacy and content learning." And community literacy project can help teachers better understand the life world of their students and thus build more meaningful relationship with them. Also, bringing it into classroom makes it possible to build upon students' prior knowledge (Jimenez, Smith & Teague, 2009).

From the interview with Juan at Tornado Bus Company, I found that the most popular destination is Matehuala (personal communication, September 1,2013), the fourth-largest city in the Mexican state of San Luis Potos í which could give me a clue of the background of some students in the area. Moll (1992) recommended that students can write a brief introduction to their hometowns, and this is an activity I plan on doing with my future ELL students. Except for a brief introduction, I would also like to ask my students to prepare a picture of their hometowns. And in class, I would hang up a world map and then have each student talking about their hometowns and then putting their pictures at the right place. After everyone has finished, a class world map is completed. And then I would hang up the map somewhere in the classroom as a diversity reminder for all students. Inviting parents and other family members to be classroom guest speakers would enrich the possibilities for cross-cultural communication as well (Townsend & Fu, 2001). Allen (2007) pointed out that engaging families in students learning could increase student achievement. Igoa (1995) also agreed that families' support play an important role in student's acculturation process, and families should always be included. Family funds of knowledge are crucial resources for teaching. By capitalizing on household and community literacy resources, the quality of teaching would far exceed the traditional classroom instruction students commonly encounter in school (Moll, 1992).

When immigrant children enter into a new culture, they would feel isolated (Igoa, 1995). At that time, bringing transnational and community literacy that are familiar for them into the classroom would make them feel welcomed and help them adjust to the new environment. And Ladson- Billings(1994) and Gay's (2000) culturally responsive teaching should be used, making minority students feel that their culture, language and knowledge are respected (Wang & Phillion, 2009).

The Mexican community I investigated is not familiar for me. During my interview with Juan, I worried all the time whether my questions are appropriate, because I didn't know if some of the questions are offensive to certain cultural group. The biggest problem during my trip is probably communication barrier, which can be a common problem for teachers. So a suggestion for the teachers is that bring someone who knows the community or their culture and language along with you when paying a visit to a local community, at least for the first few visits (Jimenez, Smith & Teague, 2009). Because people are usually more relaxed and willing to talk when they meet someone sharing the same background. I learned a lesson this time, so next time, I would bring such a person along with me to the community. And I would also take Jimenez, Smith and Teague's (2009) suggestion, allowing students to be the tour guides around their neighborhood, so that "students will feel proud that their communities are valued and respected." Let the immigrant student guide a group of mainstream students around his/her community and have group discussion time after the tour. Besides, a following-up activity for students could also be conducted – asking students to write about their experience as tour guides or tourists and then share in the class. I, as a teacher, would also share my experience of entering into a new environment with my students, letting them know how uncomfortable I was at first but bettered with the help from my guide. This tour guide activity enables mainstream students to be aware of and maybe interested in diversity. For immigrant children, it gives them a chance not only to share their culture and language, but also be the dominant group. What's more, the following-up activity allows students practice their English writing, especially for ELLs.

Another obstacle factor for getting familiar with local community is time limit. So in the future, regular family visits or community field trips would be necessary for teachers.

Community is a good resource for teachers to know their students, although teachers may encounter obstacles during the process. Applying transnational and community literacy to teaching would not only be benefit for students, but teachers as well (Jimenez, Smith & Teague, 2009). Activities that combine transnational and community literacy with traditional teaching could be done either inside or outside the classroom. And besides ELLs, these activities could also involve mainstream students and families.

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Appendix



Figure 1



Figure 2

GENERAL RULES

Prohibited Items

- Flammable Articles
- Explosive Materials
- Guns and Firearms
- Batteries
- Thinner/Paint
- Gasoline
- Sharp Objects

1. If for medical reasons you use a syringe with needle we ask that you dispose of it appropriately.
2. An adult is permitted to carry two suitcases not to exceed 40 pounds each and one small carry-on bag. One suitcase not to exceed 30 pounds for a child with a ticket. Luggage is not permitted on seats. If you desire any information over baggage please feel free to ask one of our Representatives.
3. Laptops, Cell Phones, Cameras or any other personal device should be carried in a carry-on bag.
4. No machine (i.e. lawn mowers, weed eaters, etc.) that has previously contained gasoline is allowed on the buses except if it's new and enclosed in box.
5. All baggage including a carry-on bag must have an I.D tag attached. Luggage without a tag will not be placed inside the bus. If you lost your baggage please call one of our Representatives to assist you. We advise that you monitor your luggage during any transfers.
6. For your safety never approach the luggage compartment without the presence of a Terminal Attendant.

Cancellation, Refunds, and Exchange

- A 20% cancellation fee applies to all tickets. Partial used tickets are not refundable.
- Partially used round trip tickets may be submitted for refund when either the going or return portion is completely unused.
- Un-used Tickets are valid for 90 days only.
- Tickets may be exchanged for a different travel date or time at no charge. However, the ticket must be used within 90 days of the original purchased date.
- The Company is not responsible for any lost or stolen ticket.
- Fares are subject to change at any time without notification.

TERMINAL NASHVILLE, TN				
HOSPITAL	DIRECCION	TELEFONO	E-MAIL	TIEMPO
SOUTHERN HILLS MEDICAL CENTER	391 WALLACE RD, NASHVILLE TN 37211	(615) 781-4000	http://www.southhills.com	5 MIN
VANDERBILT MEDICAL CENTER	1211 MEDICAL CENTER DRIVE, NASHVILLE, TN 37232	(615) 332-5000	http://www.vanderbilt.edu/medcenter	10 MIN
CLINICA LA PAZ	4053 NOLENSVILLE RD	(615) 627-1282	http://www.lapaznashville.com	3 MIN
RENTA DE CARROS ENTERPRISE RENT-A-CAR	15119 OLD HICKORY BLVD, NASHVILLE TN 37211	(615) 445-2282	http://www.enterprise.com/rental	15 MIN
HOTEL				
THRIFTY INN	343 HARDING PLACE, NASHVILLE TN, 37211	(615) 834-4242	http://thriftynashville.com	7 MIN
AMERICAS VEST VALUE INN	97 WALLACE RD, NASHVILLE TN, 37211	(615) 833-6860	http://www.americanwest.com	7 MIN
TAXI				
NEW STAR	2720 NOLENSVILLE PIKE SUITE D, NASHVILLE, TN	(615) 775-6119		

Figure 3

TORNADO
BUS COMPANY
CONEXIONES CON

ADO Y

Uniendo Familias
MEXICO - U.S.A.

(615) 313 8843
1 866 998 6762

Nueva Oficina en:
4031 Nolensville Pike, Nashville, TN 37211

NASHVILLE, TN

Figure 4

TORNADO
BUS COMPANY

Nosotros viajamos por las rutas cortas
www.tornadobus.com

SALIDAS DIARIAS EN ESTADOS UNIDOS Y TODA LA REPUBLICA MEXICANA

BROWNSVILLE TX.	SAN ANTONIO TX.	CINCINNATI OH.
DALLAS TX.	WACO TX.	TOLEDO OH.
HOUSTON TX.	FLORENCE KY.	DETROIT MI.
EL PASO TX.	LOUISVILLE KY.	INDIANAPOLIS IN.
LAREDO TX.	LEXINGTON KY.	FORT WAYNE IN.
MCALLEN TX.	DAYTON OH.	FLORIDA

CONSULADO EN CD. JUAREZ CHIHUAHUA

APASEO EL ALTO	OAXACA	SAN LUIS POTOSI
CAMPECHE	POZA RICA	SINALOA
CANCUN	PUEBLA	SONORA
CELAYA	QUERETARO	TAMPICO
CHIAPAS	MATAMOROS	TIJUANA
CHIHUAHUA	MERIDA	TUXTLA GUTIERREZ
COMITAN DE DOMINGUEZ	MEXICO	VERACRUZ
GUERRERO	MORELIA	VILLAHERMOSA
GUADALAJARA	REYNOSA	Y MUCHOS DESTINOS MAS.
	SALVATIERRA	

OFICINAS EN U.S.A.

NASHVILLE TN. (615) 313- 8843/1866-998- 6762
 INDIANA IN. (317) 870- 0070 / 1870- 733- 0331
 ATLANTA GA. (770) 458-9218/1888-458-9218
 WEST MEMPHIS (870) 733- 0331 /1866-998- 6762
 SAN ANTONIO TX. (210) 922-9010/1800-754-1182
 HOUSTON TX. (713) 928-5500/1866-447-8012
 DALLAS TX. (214) 943-6268/1888-358-6762
 BROWNSVILLE TX. (956) 547-9200
 CHICAGO IL. (773) 247-3251
 EL PASO TX. (915) 351- 9002

OFICINAS EN MEXICO

APASEO EL ALTO GTO. (413) 166-2567
 CELAYA GTO. (461) 612- 2650 Y 616-0461
 HUETAMO MICH. (435) 556- 2777
 MATEHUALA, S.L.P. (448) 882- 5868
 MATAMOROS TAM. (868) 813- 5154
 MORELIA MICH. (443) 317-4799
 QUERETARO QRO. (442) 195-6060
 SAN LUIS POTOSI (488) 818- 4147

CON TORNADO UD. VIAJA SEGURO

Figure 5

Domain 5: 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.

Artifact E: Resume

Artifact F: Term paper—Making the choice: community college or four-year university

The delivery of teaching largely depends on teachers' language use which can be a very influential factor for the effectiveness and efficiency of teaching. As a professional, teachers enroll in teacher training program in an accredited institution and demonstrate language proficiency in different contexts. My resume shows that I have experience using English in a variety of settings, including schools, workplace, and attending other social activities. The term paper *Making the Choice: Community College or Four-year University* I wrote for Education and Economic Development class demonstrates my English proficiency in writing and also shows my ability of critical thinking and analysis.

Although I am not a native English speaker, I have acquired near-native language proficiency. During the two years of study at Vanderbilt University, I wrote academic papers, gave presentations, and communicated with faculty, staff, and other students professionally, which all help me improve my academic English ability. And at the end of my master program, I prove that I am able to use academic language in an academic setting. Other than studying at Vanderbilt University, I have also tutored at Bailey Middle School, worked at school library, volunteered for the 67th National Seminar of the

Education Writers Association and so on. These different roles that I played in different settings show that I can utilize language and change discourse accordingly in different contexts.

As an ELL teacher, being a non-native English speaker is my weakness and strength at the same time. On one hand, although I work hard to reach near native proficiency, there is still gap. So compared with native speakers, I need to put more efforts on my own language proficiency to compensate for my weakness in English. I understand that my language use influences my students, and I would like to be a qualified model as much as possible. On the other hand, being a non-native speaker myself, I know the difficulties and common mistakes that my students have. Thus, I am able to design curriculum that tailors more specific problems that students may encounter during learning.

Unlike other classes I took in the department of Teaching and Learning, the class Education and Economic Development covers topics that I have no background knowledge at all. And unfamiliar terminologies were used in class every week. However, in the end of the class, I turned in a paper with thorough analysis and gained the professor's recognition. Through this paper, I presented my English proficiency in writing academic paper even in an unfamiliar field, and also showed my learning and progress during this class.

Qianyi Gao

Mobile: 6154842737

E-mail: qianyi.gao@vanderbilt.edu

INTERPRETER/ PROJECT ASSISTANT/ OFFICE ASSISTANT/ ENGLISH TEACHER

Experienced in facilitating programs with challenges and complex situations; experienced in communicating with people from diverse cultural backgrounds; strong adaptability and flexibility; fluent in both English and Mandarin Chinese.

QUALIFICATIONS

-
-
- Administration
 - Business English
 - Human Resource Management
 - Negotiation & Communication
 - Translation (Chinese/English)
 - Event Planning
-
-

EDUCATION

Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, USA

Aug 2013-Present

Master of Education (expected May 2015) Major: English Language Learners

Capital University of Economics and Business (CUEB), Beijing, China Sep 2008-Jul 2012

Bachelor of Arts Major: Business English GPA : 3.6/4.0

Dickinson State University (DSU), Dickinson, ND, USA

Aug 2009-Jul 2010

Exchange Student Major: Human Resource Management

GPA : 4.0/4.0

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Nashville Adult Literacy Council, Nashville, TN, USA

Oct 2014-present

Office Assistant

- Providing daily office assistance, including filing, data entry, etc
- Keeping record of new-coming students and tutors, and matching them up

Bailey STEM Magnet Middle School, Nashville, TN, USA

Jan 2014-May 2014

Reading Tutor

- Assisting 8th grade student with development of reading skills
- Collaborating with school supervisors to best address student's needs

China Youth Cinema & Theatre Co., Ltd, Beijing, China

Jan 2013-Jul 2013

Translator/Interpreter/ Project Assistant

- Serving as a member of "Dino-tour China" planning team
- Designing pamphlet aiming at Elementary school students
- Dubbing for dinosaurs exhibition
- English translator/interpreter

Eduise (Beijing) International Education Consulting Co., Ltd, Beijing, China Jun 2012-Feb 2013

English Teacher

- Teaching high school students one-on-one of English vocabulary, oral English and English listening
- Communicating with students' parents regularly

Novo Nordisk (China) Pharmaceuticals Co., Ltd, Beijing, China Oct 2011-June 2012

E-learning Assistant

- Promoting and updating E-learning courses
- Proposing E-learning courses and projects, and providing analysis reports to department leader monthly
- Developing actionable plans to stimulate employees' interest in learning and getting feedbacks from cross-department employees regularly

Walt Disney World, Orlando, FL, USA

Jan 2010-Jul 2010

College Program

- Displaying and selling souvenirs, food and beverage, etc.
- Sharing Chinese culture with guests and colleagues
- Interacting with and assisting global tourists
- Dealing with conflicts between guests, and contributing to problem-solving
- Completing assigned work independently and engaging in teamwork

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY

Volunteer, Tennessee State Representative Campaign Team, TN, USA

Jan 2014-Aug 2014

Serving as a member of campaign team, participating in campaign events

Volunteer, 67th National Seminar of the Education Writers Association, TN, USA

May 2014

Assisting with preparation of the seminar, registration, and events

Student Assistant, Peabody Library, Vanderbilt University

Aug 2013-Present

Providing customer services at library service desk

Volunteer, "Give Kids the World" Project, Kissimmee, FL, USA

Mar 2010

Helping children who suffered from life-threatening illness, providing a free fantastic vacation for them

Volunteer, Capital University of Economics and Business, Beijing, China

Sep 2008-Jul 2009

Teaching English to elementary school students and hotel staff in partner community

HONOR & AWARD

- Second-class University Scholarship, CUEB May 2012
- Second-class University Scholarship, CUEB Nov 2011
- First-class University Scholarship, CUEB May 2011
- Second-class University Scholarship, CUEB Nov 2009
- Global Awareness Scholarship, Dickinson State University Aug 2009-Jul 2010
- Third-class University Scholarship, CUEB May 2009

Making the choice: Community College or Four-year University

By Qianyi Gao

Introduction

Community colleges in the United States develop rapidly and have become a vital component of the postsecondary education delivery system. As of 2011-2012 school year, 45% of all undergraduate students were enrolled in public two-year colleges, approximately 8.3 million students (Knapp et al., 2012. Cited by AACC Fast Facts). And it seems that with globalization and Obama's education agenda, the trend of growing enrollment in community colleges won't change. A high school graduate who decides to pursue postsecondary education may face with a dilemma--whether enroll in a community college or a traditional four-year college. Even within a community college, a student may be faced with a choice—enroll in a vocational program and enter workforce after graduation with a vocational certification, or choose an academic program with an intention of transferring to four-year institutions.

This paper will first give a brief introduction on community college in the United States—its past and present. Then it will examine four main purposes for students attending a community college today. In the next part, an economic comparison between community college and four-year university will be given with a focus on two specific programs. At last, implication and conclusion will be presented.

The past and present of community college

“The two-year college has been a distinctively American creation, and nowhere else has it attained such prominence” (Brint & Karabel, 1989). Once commonly called junior college, the first community college--Joliet Junior College was established in Illinois in 1901 (Phillippe & Patton, 2000. Cited by AACC). Until now, American community college has a century-long history. In the early 20th century, the United States faced with great economic and social challenges that stimulated the emergence of public community colleges. Many of early community colleges were an extension of high schools with a focus on liberal arts education and were more reflective of high school needs. Their goal was to narrow the gap between high schools and colleges and transfer students to four-year institutions. The size of early community colleges were usually very small with fewer than 200 students (Vaughan, 1995).

Influenced by the Great Depression in the 1930s, community colleges shifted its purpose and started offering job-training programs. Widespread unemployment pushed industries to seek new path to develop a more skilled workforce, community colleges therefore served as a new vehicle for educating industrial workers. During this period of time, more community colleges separated from high schools and moved towards higher education (Phillippe & Patton, 2000. Cited by AACC).

In 1947, community colleges got its first big boost with President Truman’s Commission on higher education (Phillippe & Patton, 2000. Cited by AACC). It suggested to increase educational opportunities after high school by establishing a network of public community-based colleges around the country to serve local needs with little or no direct

cost to students. In the 1960s, community colleges became a national network, and baby boomer greatly spurred the growth of enrollment. Since the 1960s, the number of community colleges has grown steadily. In the 1970s, many junior colleges that once located in high schools had left their origins to develop their own campuses and changed their names to community colleges (Vaughan, 1995).

In 2009, Obama administration has set a goal for the nation that by 2020, the United States will regain its position as the nation with the highest proportion of college graduates in the world (“the White House” website, 2009). In order to meet that goal, community colleges will play an essential role with little doubt. President Obama has placed a strong emphasis on making America’s community colleges stronger, ensuring that they are gateways to economic prosperity and educational opportunities for millions of Americans each year. In addition, Obama Administration has called for an additional 5 million graduates from community colleges by 2020 (“the White House” website, 2009). According to data from Association of American Community Colleges (2014), there are now 1,132 community colleges in total, and 986 of them are public. There is a great possibility that in the next few years, the number will grow accordingly to serve a greater population.

Purposes for attending community colleges

In the United States, community colleges implement ‘open enrollment’ policy, which means anyone with a high school diploma or equivalent may attend. Community colleges

provide higher education opportunities for those who may not be able to attend traditional postsecondary institutions. The age of students in community colleges range from teenagers in high school taking a high school program (eg., Nashville State Community College in Tennessee offers three major programs for high school students to let them begin college while still in high school—dual enrollment, joint enrollment, and dual credit) to adults who seek additional skills or pursue personal enjoyment and growth.

Community colleges offer various programs which often reflect students' different purposes for attending. Now, students choose a community college mainly for four purposes:

- 1) to transfer to a four-year institution

Originally, the goal of those initial community colleges was to transfer students to four-year institutions. Although new functions have been added to community colleges to meet various social and economic needs, its mission of transferring has been retained over time. Academic programs that are designed to prepare students transferring to four-year institutions are offered in community colleges. In Tennessee public community college system, for example, there is a transfer program called Tennessee Transfer Pathways (TTPs) that help students transfer to a Tennessee public university to complete a bachelor degree after earning an associate degree in community college (“Tennessee Board of Regent”, 2014). There is a large number of students who enroll in community college with an intention of transferring, and the number may keep increasing. “At one time, we mostly had people going towards the career degree, but I would say now that

more students are looking to transfer”, said Laura Moran, Director of Admissions in Nashville State Community College in Tennessee (personal communication, April 3, 2014).

2) for purposes of vocational certification

Besides transferring students to four-year institutions, another core task of community colleges is to prepare students for entering job market. Vocational programs help students gain job-oriented skills and enter workforce directly after graduation with a vocational certification. And community colleges are often in partnership with some local employers to train students with specific skills, which makes enrolling in certain vocational programs a guarantee of employment.

3) to take courses for reasons of self-improvement

Due to its low cost, low entry requirement, and high convenience, some people enroll in non-degree seeking program in community colleges for personal enjoyment or pursuing personal growth. For example, a working adult has an interest in painting with no intention of becoming a professional painter. Community college could be a choice for him/her to take several painting classes during spare time.

4) for purposes of acculturation

For some new immigrants and refugees in the United States, language is an obstacle that prevent them getting a better-paid job or entering a traditional four-year institutions which usually has language requirements for international students. Community colleges that offer English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs meet those

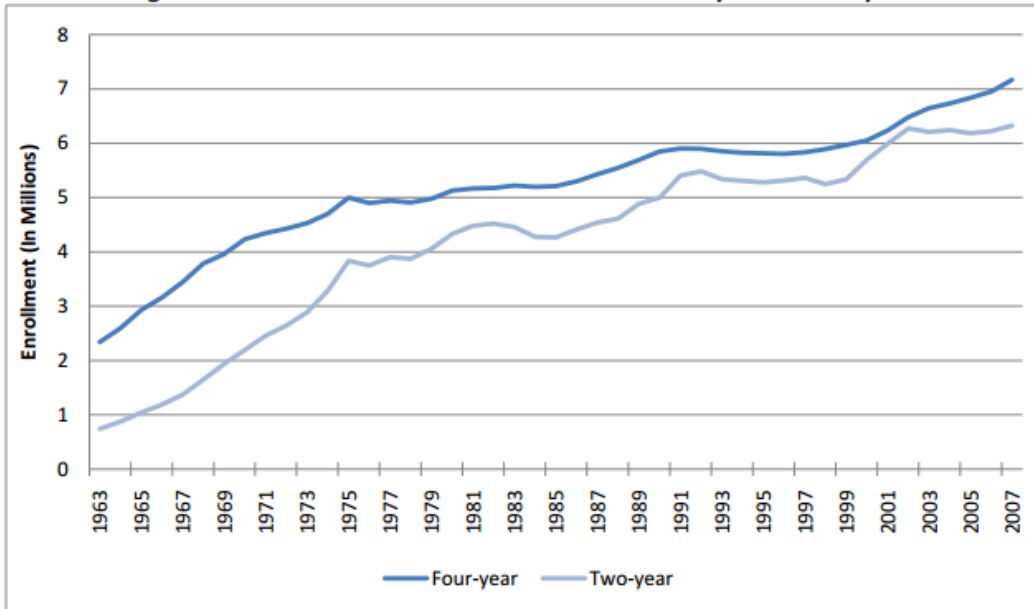
students' need to improve English proficiency at a relatively low expense.

Community college or four-year university

More and more people decide to pursue postsecondary education. Both two-year and four-year public institutions have increased enrollment over decades (Figure 1.1) (“Center for College Affordability and Productivity”, 2010). But attending college is an investment of time and money. Students want to make a wise decision that will pay off in the long term. They want to know the potential financial return of attending a school given the cost of tuition and fees, and the payoff of earnings before making a decision (“College ROI report”, 2013). Usually, for a high school graduate who decides to continue higher education, there is a choice between community college and traditional four-year university.

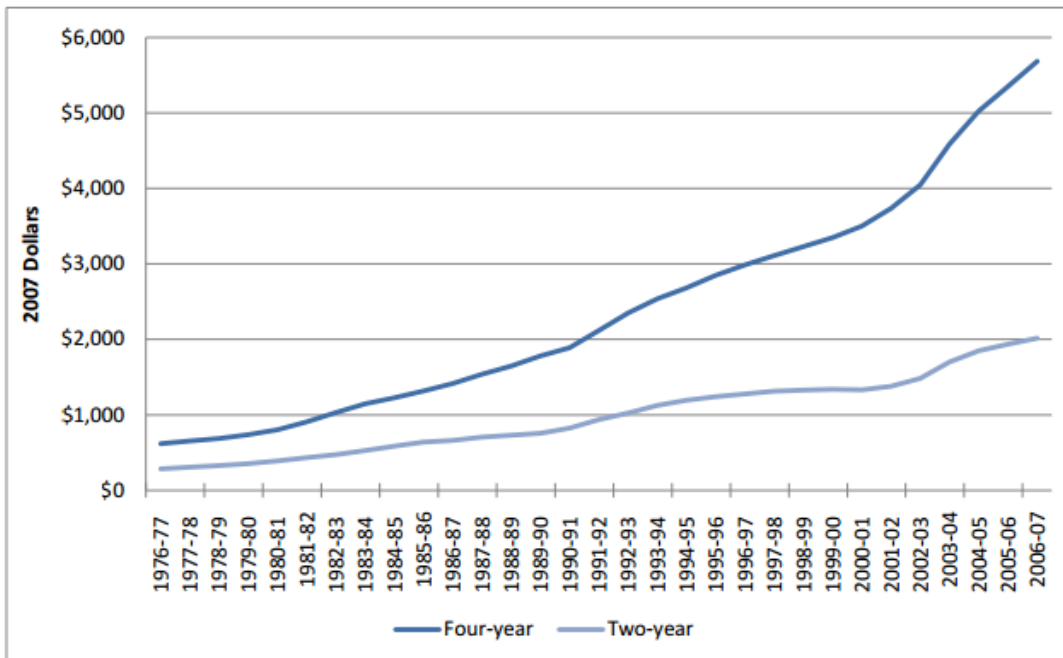
The costs of postsecondary education soars. According to data from Center for College Affordability and Productivity (2010) (Figure 1.2), since 1976, tuition and fees in both two-year and four-year public institutions increased, but four-year had more significant increase rate. It becomes a central concern for students to spend their time and money efficiently and effectively for higher education.

Figure 1.1: Public Institution Enrollment Trends: Two-year vs. Four-year



SOURCE: DIGEST OF EDUCATION STATISTICS, TABLE 190

Figure 1.2: Public Institution Tuition and Fee Trends: Two-year and Four-year



SOURCE: DIGEST OF EDUCATIONAL STATISTICS, TABLE 334

There are numerous programs in both community colleges and four-year universities.

The future earnings for different programs of study can vary greatly, thus it would be

unfair to make a general comparison between these two types of institutions regardless of the differences among programs. In order to make it relatively fair, I will narrow the comparison to two specific programs within public community college and public four-year institution¹. And to reduce the possibility that the results are affected by a local economy, I will narrow the comparison in only one state—Tennessee.

- **Associate Degree in Nursing vs Bachelor Degree in Psychology²**

Associate degree in nursing and bachelor degree in psychology are two popular programs in community college and four-year university respectively. One is a vocational program that tailors to a specific job, while the other one is an academic program that have broader application. According to data provided by CollegeMeasures, the average first-year earning for health professions and related programs with an associate's degree is \$46,606, compared to \$29,616 for a bachelor's degree in psychology ("PayScale", 2011). The average tuition and fees cost in 2012-2013 school year in TN is \$3,684 for community colleges and \$7,664 for public four-year universities ("Tennessee Board of Regents", 2013).

Suppose that two high school graduates choose to enroll in these two programs respectively and both finish their program on time which is two years for associate degree

¹ The comparison will not include private institutions. Private schools cost more, but students may have better earns. Including private institutions will make the comparison much more complicated.

² Kane and Rouse's (1995) report on labor market returns to two- and four-year college indicates that there is gender difference in earnings in terms of the level of degree completion. They claimed that there is evidence for the value of bachelor degree completion for men and associate degree for women. However, I couldn't find sufficient information to make the comparison between men and women within these two programs. Thus, the differences between genders will not be taken into consideration here.

and four years for bachelor degree, which student will have a better return on investment?

The total tuition and fees cost would be \$7,368 for student enrolled in community college, and \$30,656 for enrolling in public four-year college³. When we also add other expenses like housing, book and supplies, and transportations to the calculation, the cost for four-year is even much higher than two-year. Community college, as its name, more targets to local students and meets local needs, so most students are from the community. Living at home saves them quite amount of money on housing which can use to cover their cost of short commute. It's apparent that community college student in nursing program spend much less money and get higher first-year earnings than university student in psychology program. Nursing students can get monetary return on their investment in a few months, while it can take more than one year for psychology student in university. Besides, enrolling in four-year college may generate a higher opportunity cost because student spends longer time in school and loses more potential gains. And also, due to its affordability, community college students are less likely burdened by debts ("Center for College Affordability and Productivity", 2010).

Even though it looks like that an associate degree in nursing program has far better return than a bachelor degree in psychology, it is still too quick to jump into the conclusion. Because here we only take average first-year earnings for the two programs into consideration, while some studies indicate that overall lifetime earnings are still tied

³ The costs are calculated on the base of students who pay full-tuition and fees. In fact, over half of the students receive some types of financial aid in both two- and four-year college.

to increased education levels (“CollegeMeasures”, 2013). What’s more, unlike graduate with an associate degree in nursing who would be likely still doing nursing after 10 years, graduate with a bachelor degree in psychology may end up with a different field. The reason is that vocational programs in community colleges train students for a specific job, therefore, it is hard for them transferring to other jobs (Henderson, 2012). On the contrary, traditional four-year colleges provide students with more general skills which allow them to transfer between jobs more easily. Therefore, it is relatively easier to define the average annual earnings for highly-specialized nursing program students which is \$59,520 in TN. But psychology program students may scatter in different fields, and some are not even related to their program of study. Also, the earnings of psychology program students with different specializations vary greatly (eg. the gap between counselor and industrial psychologist can be as large as nearly \$50,000).

From the perspective of cost, nursing program in community college seems a better choice. In terms of earning, nursing student outearns psychology student during the first year, but lifelong earnings can be hard to determine. At the time we are in a dilemma about whether choosing a vocational program like nursing in community college or an academic program like psychology in four-year university, a new proposal made by Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam in 2014 may add some advantages to community colleges. He proposed that starting in 2015, two-year community colleges and technical schools will be free of tuition and fees for all students (Perez-pena, 2014), which will make the cost difference between community colleges and four-year universities even

much bigger.

- **The third choice—transferring from community college to four-year institution**

As stated earlier, transferring students to four-year institutions is the original mission of community colleges. And now, this is still one of the core tasks. Around the nation, 28% of bachelor's degree earners started at a community college and 47% took at least one course at a community college (Mullin, 2012).

At Volunteer State Community College in Tennessee, for instance, 44 % of 11,537 students enrolled in programs designed for transferring to a 4 year college in 2012-2013 academic year (“Volunteer State Community College”, 2013). Why would there be such a large number of students enrolling in community college with an intention of transferring? A major reason is the cost. In 2013-2014 school year, the average annual tuition and fees in the United States is \$3,260⁴ for public community colleges and \$8,890⁵ for public four-year colleges (Baum, Little & Payea, 2011). To get a bachelor degree from a university, students can either enroll in a four-year college which on average, will cost \$35,560⁶ to finish, or spend two years at both community college and four-year college which will cost \$24,300. If a student has a clear goal of earning a bachelor's degree, spending the first two years in a community college and then transferring to a four-year college is likely to be the best purchase. For those students who wish to transfer to a four-year college, community

⁴ in-district tuition and fees

⁵ In-state tuition and fees

⁶ This is the average tuition and fees cost for public four-year college. Private institutions will cost much more than this with average annual tuition and fees up to about \$28,000 for private non-profit schools.

colleges offer general academic education credits at a lower cost.

- **Social returns**

Studies show that compared with graduates only have a high school diploma, graduates with college credentials bring greater social returns which include but not limit to fewer demands on the state's safety net, lower crime rate, higher tax payment (Report: the Economic Impact of Community Colleges, 2014). But I couldn't find statistics that show the differences between associate's degree holders and bachelor's degree holders. It is hard to determine which program will contribute a lower crime rate to society. I assume that with longer education time and higher degree level, bachelor degree holders have more contributions. However, earnings may be a cause factor for crime. In this case, it may come up with an opposite conclusion. As for tax payment, it's closely related to earnings, so for the two programs compared in this section, registered nurse in community college may contribute more than psychology graduate in four-year university, at least for the first year. In terms of local community, community college graduates seem to bring more returns, since they are more likely to stay in the state than graduates with four-year degrees and pay taxes to their own state (Henderson, 2012). Compared with public four-year colleges, there is a greater chance of returning for public subsidies to community colleges.

Implication and conclusion

From the comparison between associate degree in nursing and bachelor degree in psychology, a higher degree doesn't guarantee high wages, at least not initially in the job

market. What a student studies may matters more than where he/she goes to school.

Although it seems that for both individuals and local community, two-year public institution is a better choice or a better place to start postsecondary education, it is important to note that these two types of institution have different missions. And the population they serve varies. As said George Boggs, president of the AACC, “One is not more superior to the other one. Community colleges don’t have the research missions to bring new technology to market, but research universities don’t do workforce training.” (McClure, 2010).

Costs and future earnings are major elements to consider before making a choice between community college and university, but other factors such as personal interest and career goal are also influential. And there is always individual differences, so the conclusion from the comparison may not apply to any single student. In my opinion, students should not make a decision solely relying on the economic comparison between these two types of institutions, instead only seeing the results as a reference.

Though students have to make a choice between the two, for institutions, they should not be competing, instead working toward common goals to produce more college-educated workforce to meet the needs of 21st century labor market.

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Domain 6: 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 settings. They use this knowledge to support adult language learning.

Artifact G: Literature review paper—Age effect in second or foreign language learning

Language learning is a complicated process, which is influenced by many factors, such as learner's personality, age, motivation, and etc. Understanding those influential factors helps teachers to better support students' language acquisition and tailor to their needs. In Educational Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition class, I wrote a literature review paper on the topic of age effect in second or foreign language learning. I looked into two articles to examine the conceptual misunderstandings about how age affects second/foreign language acquisition and the implications for my future teaching towards students at different age groups.

As I investigated age effect in language learning, my belief that learning a new language at younger age is more likely to have better outcomes changed. I found out that in fact, by using metalinguistic knowledge, memory strategies, and problem solving skills, adult learners have an advantage in terms of the rate of learning. Compared with younger learners, adults make the most of language instruction, and acquire a new language faster and more efficient. This result offers me valuable information regarding my future teaching. I am aware that adult language learners have huge potential, so I should hold high expectations for them. Since they have better cognitive ability, I can

include abstract concepts, for instance, grammar rules in my teaching, believing that they have the ability to learn and then apply rules to language use themselves. Each learner has unique learning style and learning rate. I won't be able to apply theories of language acquisition to every single student. However, the theories such as age effect can provide me with a broad view of language learning.

Age Effect in Second or Foreign Language Learning?

by Qianyi Gao

I started learning English in third grade. A thirty-five minutes English class every week was like taking a break time. There were no homework and no exams. After learning English letters and simple words for two years, we finally began to learn simple sentences. “How are you?” I asked the girl sat on my right. “I’m fine, thank you. And you?” She answered. And then I turned to my left and said, “How do you do?”. And I would get the response “How do you do?”. This was a scene in my fifth-grade English class, and it kept showing up for almost half a semester. During that time, we did nothing else in class but practice those two short dialogues. After nearly four years of English study in elementary school, most of my classmates didn’t know how to make sentences and could only read the words or sentences in textbook. Sometimes, when I looked back, I couldn’t stop thinking that learning English for four years in elementary school is a waste of time, because the tiny progress I made during those four years could have been made in less than a year.

Now, in China, English instruction in schools starts from first grade, which is already earlier than I did. But more and more parents have their children take English classes in or even before kindergarten. Because they believe that learning a new language at a younger age is better than later and most likely to achieve high proficiency. However, is this true that early-immersion will easily lead to success in second language or foreign

language learning? And is there strong and convincing evidence that it is impossible to master a new language after one nears adulthood?

Compared with other aspects of individual differences, such as personality, aptitude, or motivation, age difference is easier to define and measure. However, the relationship between age and success in second language acquisition is hardly less complex or controversial (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). In order to better understand this topic, I will look into two articles, “Three misconceptions about age and L2 learning” by Stefka H. Marinova-Todd, D. Bradford Marshall and Catherine E. Snow, and “Age effects in second language learning: stepping stones toward better understanding” by Robert M. DeKeyser. Examining the common conceptual misunderstandings about how age can affect second/foreign language acquisition, difficulties and suggestions for improvement on conducting good researches on age effect. Knowing age effect in second or foreign language acquisition will help shape educational policy and curriculum design (DeKeyser, 2013). In order to better serve students, teachers will need to adjust their curriculum according to student’s age.

Critical period for language acquisition refers to a period of time when learning a language is relatively easy and typically meets with a high degree of success. Once this period is over, at or before the onset of puberty, the average learner is less likely to achieve nativelike ability in the target language (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). It is generally accepted among psycholinguists that a critical period for L1 acquisition exists, but it is controversial whether the critical period claim can apply to L2 learning

(Marinova-Todd, Marshall & Snow, 2000). Children are generally considered capable of acquiring a new language rapidly and with little effort, while in contrast, adults are believed to end up with failure. And this is one of the main reasons that so many parents or school administrators have children start learning a new language as early as possible, for example, English immersion in China starts from first grade. However, a close examination of studies relating age to language acquisition reveals that age differences reflect differences in the situation of learning rather than in capacity to learn (Marinova-Todd, Marshall & Snow, 2000). This means that the commonly accepted view ‘the earlier, the better’ due to the existence of critical period doesn’t make sense.

There are several misunderstandings about age effects in second language acquisition, as pointed out in both articles. First, many people have misinterpreted the ultimate attainment of children in an L2 as proof that they learn quickly and easily. But studies provided evidence that in fact, children learn new languages with less speed and more effort than adolescents or adults (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). The study published by Snow and Hohle in 1978 suggested that older learners acquire a new language faster and more efficiently than younger learners, especially in the initial stages of L2 learning. In other words, older learners have an advantage in terms of the rate of learning, because by using their metalinguistic knowledge, memory strategies, and problem-solving skills, they make the most of second or foreign language instruction (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

The second misunderstanding is the misattribution committed by neuroscientists

assuming that neurological changes within the brain account for differences in proficiency levels and explain the poorer performance of older learners (Marinova-Todd, Marshall & Snow, 2000). A lot of studies on the relationship between brain activation patterns and language proficiency have been done during the past few decades, however, there is no strong evidence that can prove these two are related. And researchers in neuroscience have admitted that the exact connection between learning and the state of the neural network is unknown (Marinova-Todd, Marshall & Snow, 2000). So at least so far, age effect in second language acquisition can't be proved and explained by using neurological methods.

Last but not least, a common error among researchers and public is that placing an enormous emphasis on unsuccessful adult L2 learners and ignoring the older learners who achieve nativelike L2 proficiency (Marinova-Todd, Marshall & Snow, 2000). The fact is that although some adults do have poor L2 outcomes, there are also many adults who succeed and achieve high proficiency. This misemphasis brings up the problems and difficulties in research on age effect, including sampling and testing.

Sampling is a sophisticated process and plays a crucial role in research, and it can influence the results directly. In research on age effects in SLA, sampling is one of the most neglected problems. In order to improve research and therefore better understand age effect in SLA, DeKeyser has offered several important points in his article that can be taken into consideration for future research, which include participants' L1 backgrounds, time of exposure to L2, socioeconomic backgrounds, age at testing, and sample size, etc

(2013). Sometimes, due to problematic testing conditions, successful adult learners may go undetected. So there is a need for researchers to find out the appropriate ways to assess L2 learners. And as DeKeyser suggested, various testing formats may be required, and a number of cognitive variables L2 proficiency may have to be assessed (2013).

So does the existence of those misunderstandings mean that previous findings about age effect in second language acquisition are wrong and there is no relationship between age and language acquisition? I assume that age does affect second language acquisition, but better and more qualified research needs to be done following the suggestions that DeKeyser gave. As concluded by Marinova-todd, Marshall, and Snow, “age does influence language learning, but primarily because it is associated with social, psychological, educational, and other factors that can affect L2 proficiency, not because of any critical period that limits the possibility of language learning by adults” (2000).

I used to have the same belief as many people that learning a new language at a younger age is more likely to have better outcomes. But the two articles made me start questioning my belief and change my position, and they also deepened my understanding about this age and language acquisition topic. The assumption that only early second or foreign language teaching will be effective is doubtful. In fact, starting foreign language course in early elementary will likely progress much more slowly than in secondary or college levels. But if second language or foreign language teaching has to start early in elementary school under the pressure of educational policy, then schools better equip with well-trained native or nativelylike teachers, and consistent, well-designed and ongoing

instruction. Usually, children who study a foreign language need several years of continued instruction to achieve even modest proficiency and later show long-term effects (Marinova-Todd, Marshall & Snow, 2000).

As a future teacher, I may not have the power to decide when to start second language instruction in school, but I will try to adapt my teaching to meet the needs of students at different age groups. For example, when teaching adolescence or adults, I will set reachable yet challenging goals, because I think by using metalinguistic awareness and problem-solving skills, there is huge potential for adult language learners. And with higher efficiency, older students can learn more than younger ones in the same period of time. I will also incorporate language teaching with culture, and connect L2 to students' prior knowledge about L1. While when teaching young children, with limited time of instruction every week, I will primarily focus on making my lessons full of fun and trying to stimulate students' interests in language learning. And instead of paying attention solely on second or foreign language teaching, I will also try to enhance students' L1 development at the same time, because often times, high level of proficiency in L2 for prepubescent children is at the expense of L1 (Marinova-Todd, Marshall & Snow, 2000). Therefore, I consider bilingual instruction as the best way to teach younger children, and monolingual-oriented for adult learners.

Besides, I think for both groups, the opportunities for authentic communicative experiences in the target language are very important during the process of language acquisition. Age differences usually relate to the differences of environment in which the

language is learned. Students surrounded by native speakers of L2 will have different learning outcomes from those who only have limited time of language instruction given by non-native speakers (Marinova-Todd, Marshall & Snow, 2000).

Though there is age effect in second language acquisition, teachers can do little to “improve” a student’s age. However, there are a lot we, as teachers, can do to influence a student’s learning strategies, motivation, and learning environment (Marinova-Todd, Marshall & Snow, 2000).

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- Lightbown, P., & Spada, N. (2013). *How languages are learned* (4th edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
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Domain 7: 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 course is the language that learners need in order to listen, to talk about, to read and write about a subject matter or content area. Teachers design their lessons to help learners acquire the language they need to successfully communicate in the subject or content areas they want/need to learn about.

Artifact H: First lesson plan for practicum at English Language Center

The choice of content is depends on students' levels of language proficiency, their interests, goals and so on. Teachers understand that students are more willing to engage when the content is relevant to them.

In my practicum at English Language Center, students are given the opportunity to choose class topics that they want to talk about. Unlike teaching K-12 where class contents are confined by state standards, there is more room and freedom for teachers regarding selecting class contents in an adult language class. The artifact is the first lesson plan I designed for my practicum at English Language Center (ELC). The topic is family memories, chosen by students at the beginning of this semester. Considering the level of students in this class is intermediate, and the class mainly focus on speaking. I decided to have students bring in their family photos and share stories orally in class.

Describing family photos and telling family stories to others are something that could happen in students' daily life, so this lesson is useful for them in daily communication.

Students in this class are spouses of VU community who don't usually get a lot of chances to use English. So while designing the lesson, I chose activities that could provide them as many opportunities as possible to interact with others in English. Through both small group and whole class work, each student gets to share their stories. And during sharing, it is obvious that everyone was very engaged. They enjoyed looking at others' photos and listening to stories. While listening, they would also ask questions which shows that they are intrigued. Before putting students into groups to talk about their photos, I collected and offered vocabulary that they can use in the following activity. The goal of the lesson is that students will be able to orally describe a family photo, and use adjectives to express their feelings. So the sharing part also plays a role of assessment for this lesson. Students show their competence in oral communication and applying new vocabulary to their photo descriptions.

Lesson Plan—Family Memories (30 minutes)

Qianyi Gao

Content Objective: Students will be able to recall a story from their photos, and share in class.

Language Objective: Student will be able to orally describe an old family picture, and use adjectives to express their feelings.

Time	Activity	Notes
5 minutes	Tell students that we will be talking about family memories today, and tell them the objectives of this lesson. Have them take out photos they have prepared and be ready to share with others. I will first show them how to do it with my own photo, and ask them to pay attention while I'm describing.	
15 minutes	Ask students what aspects have I mentioned in my description (expecting answer: when, where, who, what happened, how--feelings). Ask students what words (adj.) we can use to describe their feelings/emotions. (Categorize words into two columns—happy vs sad)	*Collect students' response on whiteboard. *Check understanding, any further questions? (Any questions about vocabulary, and what's can be included in your photo description?)
10 minutes	Divide students into three groups, and have them describe photos in small group (5'). Try to cover all aspects listed on the whiteboard in their description. Then have 4-5 students share in whole class (5').	*Grouping: group students according to shapes they get—each student gets a piece of paper with triangle, square, or circle on it, students with the same shape are in one group *Describing: when was the photo taken? Who are the people in the photo? Where was the photo taken? What were you doing? Do you remember what your feeling was

		when taking the picture? How do you feel when you look at this photo now? *Further questions?
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Domain 8: 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 understanding to inform and change themselves and these communities.

Artifact I: Reflections from Foreign Language Learning & Teaching class

Artifact J: Classroom observation reports

While teaching students, it also gives teachers a chance to learn. The quality of teaching is vital to students' success, therefore, professional development which helps teachers to promote their teaching quality is necessary. It's teachers' responsibility to stay up to date and keep improving their teaching to better address students' needs.

For the class Foreign Language Learning and Teaching, I observed three adult language classes and wrote classroom observation reports on them. In the reports, I examined and assessed teaching strategies, such as use of visuals and personalization of materials, that the language teachers used in their classroom, and whether those strategies were used effectively or ineffectively. Although I'm not teaching myself in this case, the observations gave me a clue of different teaching styles and strategies that I could use in my future classroom. Observing and analyzing other teachers is a great reference, which provides valuable opportunity for me to learn as a teacher myself.

Reflection is a process of learning and improving. For the same class, an important part is writing reflections on theories or topics that we discussed in class and how they

related to our teaching or learning experience. I reflected on TFLTA conference that I attended, oral language skills, class design, vocabulary, and culture, respectively. Each reflection shows my understanding about the topic and implication for future teaching. Being able to and willing to reflect and learn is essential for a qualified teacher who pays attention to professional development. And it benefits both teacher and students.

Artifact I: Reflections from Foreign Language Learning & Teaching class

Reflections on TFLTA Conference

I attended a Chinese section called teaching with success and fun. What stood out to me the most during this section is that being reminded again and again of the importance of bringing students' daily life into class. The presenter showed several great examples of her classroom activities, such as chatting time at the beginning of class. Motivation is a factor that has strong influence on students' language acquisition. How can teachers motivate students to learn is an essential question that teachers need to think about throughout teaching. Caring is a word that I thought of during this section: caring about students' life, and having the desire to know them. At the same time, give students a chance to know about the teacher and each other.

The keynote speech presenter shared an EPIC teacher module—E for Envision your outcome which pointed out the necessity for setting clear targets; P for plan your route to success which emphasized teacher development; I for implementing your plan; and C for collect data and reflect. It provided the ideas, but didn't really elaborate what should be expected to achieve and how. When the presenter talked about setting targets which would determine how well students learn, it made me wonder what the ultimate goal for learning another language is. It related to the presenter's knowing vs doing theory. For language learners, should they be able to know the language (such as grammar rules) or learn the language by doing? From my experience, I think both knowing and doing are critical in the process of language learning. Knowing probably plays a more important role at the beginning and in short-term, while doing weighs more and more in long-term.

The knowing and doing brings another point that we have discussed in class—a comparison between proficiency and performance. I like how the presenter described language learning and proficiency. She said, "Language learning is not about covering the curriculum, but uncovering proficiency." Students' performance can be seen as an indicator of their language learning, but not necessarily reflect their language proficiency. Compared to proficiency, performance is easier for teacher to assess in a classroom setting. Therefore, performance instead of proficiency is more emphasized in a language classroom. Even if we talked about proficiency in class, I think most of the time, it still means performance. However, proficiency—the language ability, not performance, is what a learner should fight for.

When it comes to the topic of teacher development, the presenter made her point that growth is more important than achievement, and this applies to both students and teachers. I agree with her that the growing process is more valuable than results. However, assessment is unavoidable which provides tangible evidence of growth. And students, teachers, even parents may need that proof.

In a word, this conference is a great experience for me both as a language learner and a language teacher. It provokes me to think about language learning and teaching in a deeper level, and reminds me of some concepts that I have learned in school. Since I

don't have much teaching experience, there weren't many opportunities to let me link what's learned in class to real teaching situations. But I was able to see the link from presenters' presentation or own experience in this conference.

Reflections oral language skills

English education starts at 3rd grade for most of public schools in China and continues through college. But English speaking has always been a weakness for most of Chinese students, which results from the fact that English instructions focus on grammar and give little attention to oral language. Assessments are all in written forms, and no oral involves. A common phenomenon is that in TOFEL test, there is usually a strong contrast between Chinese students' Reading/Listening/Writing score and Speaking score. Under this unbalanced circumstance, it's hard to judge students' real English proficiency. Speaking is not given enough attention in classrooms in China. Even there is speaking exercises, it's mainly about reading text aloud, and simple imitations. It was not until I entered college that I got opportunities to really produce the language orally.

Students in middle school and high school have pressures to take certain standardized tests proving that they have reached certain level of proficiency as required. English teachers are therefore also under a lot of pressures to assure that their students are on or above grade level. While in college, due to the fact that curriculum for college class is no longer restricted by districts (or cities, or provinces), instructors have more autonomy for their own classes. For example, instructors can choose class materials themselves. As a result, we, as students, are exposed to more authentic materials. The instructor for my Comprehensive English class in college would sometimes use latest news as class materials so as to keep us up with current issues around the world. And authentic materials were used to provoke students' critical thinking by activities such as debate. She also applied some great activities that involved students and emphasized not solely on the language, but also students' overall ability. She would use what similar to "jigsaw" mentioned by Brandl to promote student interactions. Speaking was a big part in her class, and it was not merely imitating any more. I consider that imitating is an important learning process in terms of language learning. But learners should not stop at the stage of imitation, instead, they should go beyond and start producing language to engage in communications.

Class size can be an influential factor for lacking of opportunity for developing oral language skills. Taken my own experience, from elementary to high school, all my classes had at least forty students, while in college, it cut down to around twenty students. In a smaller class, many activities, especially pair or group work are easier to conduct and monitor. And students can have more time to involve in.

Developing learners' oral language skill requires more attention in China. Compared with reading and writing, speaking is our prior means of communication in daily life. And both students and teachers need to make efforts to avoid the problem of dumb English.

Reflections on class design

Before entering classroom, one of the biggest worries for a novice teacher is class design—how to plan an efficient and effective lesson and how to make a lesson meaningful. Wiggins and McTighe brought up the idea of “backward design”, the practice of looking at the outcomes in order to design curriculum units, performance assessments, and classroom instruction. It seems normal to me that we have an objective in mind before taking any actions so that we know our directions.

I suppose that both in China and the U.S, class content and objectives are already set because of unified textbooks and state (or province) standards, so there aren't much room for teachers to think about them. What teachers can do is to choose instruction methods, and design classroom activities and assessments that can meet objectives. Before learning about Wiggins and McTighe's backward design, I used to consider instruction and assessment as two isolated parts in lesson planning. They are both related to teaching goals, but not necessarily related to each other. Last semester, when we were required to do lesson plans, I tended to design my lesson in time order, and since assessment is often the last step in class, I thought about it at the very end. However, according to Wiggins and McTighe, after identifying desired outcomes (goals), teachers should determine acceptable evidence which is assessment. Instead of planning our teaching first, we come up with ideas of how to assess our students. It's reasonable to think about assessment immediately after setting goals since they are inseparable. But I am wondering what differences will make when change the design order of assessment and instruction, especially in class? What will be the influence on students learning?

In China, individual teacher usually doesn't have much flexibility in terms of class design. Teachers work in groups to design lessons together and then come up with unified curriculum. It makes me wonder what is the most effective and efficient way of designing lessons, individually or in group? Each has its pros and cons. For example, designing in group like in China, teachers, especially novice teachers can learn a lot from others, and the unified curriculum is usually the best version because it gathers the best ideas from all teachers. While the disadvantage is that individual teacher is confined by the unified curriculum and loses creativity. As for designing individually, teachers have the most flexibility, but may be confined by their own thinking. For novice teachers, working with other colleagues may be a better way. Just as group work between students, group work between teachers when planning a lesson can stimulate individual thinking. Besides, I believe that there is no best lesson plan, only better lesson plan. And it takes time to modify to better meet students' needs.

Reflections on vocabulary

Vocabulary is a fundamental part of language learning. Language is based on vocabulary building, and one's vocabulary size has a great influence on language proficiency. But it also poses challenges for both students' learning and teachers' teaching. For students, vocabulary learning is considered boring. For teachers, vocabulary teaching is hard and usually ineffective. Sometimes, I view vocabulary and grammar as two similar component of language. They are both the basics, but whether to teach in class or not and how is questionable. Should they be embedded with other parts or taught separately?

In China, almost every student has a vocabulary book when preparing for TOFEL or GRE test. Especially for GRE test, being able to remember as many words as possible is like the key to a high score in the test. I was never a big fan of vocabulary, so I never paid much attention to it. When preparing for GRE, I tried to recite word lists on the book just as others did, but I couldn't keep up and decided that it's useless. In my point of view, knowing a word is not only limited to recognize its meaning, but more importantly, put it into use correctly. I know student who has gone over the word book several times, and almost remembered every word in it. I admit that he/she may have a large vocabulary size, but to me, it seems to have little to do with overall language ability.

Although I don't like learning vocabulary by rote, it turns out to be an effective way when it comes to test taking. In school, assessments are usually written tests in which reading takes a huge part, and most questions are about meanings. Only knowing the meaning of a word is sufficient for students. So memorizing word lists is what works best when dealing with tests. From my perspective, it brings up a debate concerning vocabulary acquiring—which is more important and useful: the quantity or quality of students' vocabulary?

What's more, I feel that when learner reaches certain level or age, vocabulary learning becomes even harder. I have discussed this topic with several of my cohorts before, and we all agreed that even we are studying in the U.S now and reading more English articles, our vocabulary size probably doesn't grow at all. And when we are writing in English, we are still using words that we used most frequently before. I used to hear the saying that when placed in target language environment, learner will acquire the language automatically. But from our experience, at least for vocabulary, it doesn't seem like the case.

Reflections on culture

When it comes to foreign language teaching, culture is an element that we will mention for sure in classroom since culture as described “the fifth skill” are closely related to language. As language teachers, we introduce foreign culture to students, and at the same time, take students’ home culture as reference for our instruction. Especially in my other courses about ELL education, respecting and taking ELL students’ culture into consideration in classroom has been repeated over and over again. And I agree that culture is extremely important in classroom. And I would like to be a culturally responsive teacher who relate students’ cultural backgrounds to teaching environment, content and so on.

But after reflecting on my own language learning experience back in China, I found that culture doesn’t get as much attention as it does in the U.S. One possibility could be due to the fact that the U.S is a country with great population of immigrants, while the composition of population in China is not that diverse. Most people share the same culture background, so we lack of a sense about culture differences which makes it easy to ignore. In college, as an English major, I did have a course called English and American Culture. That was the first time that culture was formal introduced in class. I doubt whether culturally responsive teaching could be applied in China.

Besides, the teaching of culture itself is controversial. In most cases, teachers are teaching culture in class merely because it’s required. But what and how to teach remain unsure. When teaching culture, teachers focus on the “Big C” culture, but what matters more in daily life is probably the “Little C” culture. Should teachers teach culture by lecturing? I don’t think so. However, this is how culture was taught in my college—teacher-centered lecture. Culture learning became a process of textbook reciting. As long as we could remember information in the textbook, such as authors of certain books or years of certain events, we would do well on assessment tests. Assessment tests were often multiple choice and true or false questions.

From my point of view, the “culture” I learned in college class is not very useful when I came to the U.S. Those big names and events are definitely parts of the American culture, but they are not as helpful as “Little C” culture when it comes to daily communication. And communication is our goal for language learning. So I think “Little C” culture should be given more attention in class. While the challenge for teachers is that “Little C” culture is usually trivial which makes it hard to organize and teach to students.

Artifact J: Classroom observation reports
Classroom Observation Report

Name of observer: Qianyi Gao **Level of class observed:** Intermediate Chinese
Topic of the day's lesson: Lesson 8—Working: 1. Why does Mingtian Zhang work? 2. Why does Lisa work? 3. Chinese college students 4. Xuemei's work 5. Lisa's roommate

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

Briefly JUSTIFY your assessment.

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

effective ineffective

The instructor uses target language Chinese all the time, but communication between students is still in English. To make students better understand, the instructor slows down her speech and speaks every word clearly. Students got good quality and quantity of exposure to Chinese from the instructor. Although students communicate in English, they are in fact negotiating for meanings most of the time.

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

effective ineffective

Listening and speaking are two main skills that student use in the class. The instructor seems to put students' speaking skill at an extremely important position. For example, after discussing each part of the text, the instructor would clean the board, and have students speak out what has been talked about. Based on the input they just got, students need to produce the content orally. Students need to read Chinese that the instructor put on the board, which is a little bit reading exercise. And there is no writing involved in the class.

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

effective ineffective

This is a pretty traditional class, with no technology being used. The instructor wrote topics of the day on the board before students coming in, and that's all she used for this lesson. No extra materials or visual aids were integrated into the class. But about the middle of the class, when they started talking about cities in China, the instructor asked a student coming up to the front and drew a map of China. And then the instructor used the map as a visual aid to continue their talk. Students are not required to use their textbook in the class since the instructor already put content on the board.

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

Before getting into topics of the day, there is a short warm-up activity about 5 minutes. The instructor would ask students some daily life questions, such as ‘have you had a job?’ and ‘do your parents give you money?’ that lead to today’s lesson. And for each topic of the day, the instructor would first provide a little background information, giving students a context to the topic. Then she would go over the text with students and have students repeat after her. Some topic-related questions may bring up by the instructor. The last step of each topic is that the instructor cleans up information on the board and have students speak. On average, each topic takes about 10 minutes, with the first one more and last one less.

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

The content of this lesson is all from textbook, with no supplement materials. Instead of only following the textbook, the instructor adds some questions to make it more relevant to students’ daily life and also make the junction of each topic smoother. The instructor asks questions that students would relate to their own experience. For example, the topic is about working, and instructor asked students questions like “have you ever got a job?” “What kinds of jobs you can get in Vanderbilt?” and so on. So the instructor is trying to make the content more about students themselves.

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

There is no small group work in the class. All activities are done as a whole class. And there is no activities aiming to have students interact with each other. All question and answer activities are done between the instructor and students.

- Error correction [frequency and kind]:
effective ineffective

Error correction is common in the class, with a focus on correction of pronunciations. The instructor would correct most of the pronunciation errors she heard by recasting. And after she provides the right form, she would ask students to repeat after her. Besides, when students make a mistake that is not pronunciation error, she would first repeat students mistake but in a questioning way, which makes some students realize there is a mistake. And usually, students would be able to self-correct.

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

very successful _____ somewhat successful _____ not successful _____

In general, I think this is a successful lesson. Students got quite amount of target language input. And they also got great opportunities to practice what's learned in class and be corrected by the instructor. But there weren't many outputs from the students. Although they are practicing a lot, it's more about imitation, and students don't actually produce the language themselves. And there could be some activities that students interact with each other instead of just teacher-student interaction.

Classroom Observation Report

Name of observer: Qianyi Gao Level of class observed: Elementary Spanish

Topic of the day's lesson: 1. What are you going to do? 2. Future tense 3. Furniture/Room settings (exercise in textbook)

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

Briefly JUSTIFY your assessment.

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

effective **ineffective**

Although this is an elementary Spanish class for true beginners, the instructor uses the target language Spanish for almost the entire class session. There are only a few times that the instructor would use English word to explain a new Spanish word so that students know what it means. And the only concept that the instructor uses English to explain is the difference between ground floor and first floor in English and Spanish respectively. From students' reactions to instructor's talking in class, although they may not understand every word the instructor said, they know what to do and what is expected. Students are frequently given opportunities to speak up and practice the target language. And the instructor tries to balance student's talk, giving each student about the same opportunities.

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

effective **ineffective**

In the class, three skills are used—listening, speaking, and reading, with an emphasis on speaking. There are activities that students can practice their speaking skills through the entire lesson. For most of the time, practice is done by pair work. Students listen to the instructor speaking Spanish and also listen to audio from textbook and then repeat after it, which integrate listening skill into the class. Like listening, students use their reading skill unconsciously since they need to read textbook, activity instructions and other materials in Spanish during the lesson. For this lesson, there is nothing related to writing for students.

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

effective **ineffective**

The instructor incorporates several visual aids into this lesson, such as using PowerPoint, textbook, and board. PowerPoint serves as a guide for the whole lesson, including grammar points, activities instructions, and also pictures of textbook pages. The use of board is more flexible. Whenever a student brings up

a new question (usually about a new word), the instructor would write something on the board so that all students can learn. Also, the board is where the instructor would write down the answers of her activities.

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

effective **ineffective**

The lesson can be divided into two parts—the first part is grammar instruction, and the second one is reviewing content from textbook. For the first part, two grammar points are introduced and followed by students practice in pairs. The first part takes about 20 minutes in total, and about 5 minutes for each subsection. For the second part, the instructor first spends about 5 minutes going over new vocabulary with students and having them read with her. Texts are explained and students practice in pairs for the next 15-20 minutes. In the end, vocabulary is reviewed again by repeating after the audio.

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

effective **ineffective**

The lesson is based on the textbook. It's not personalized to tailor students' needs, but the content in textbook is relevant to students' lives. It talks about furniture and room settings which can be used in students' daily lives. The instructor also specifically points out the difference between Spanish and English concerning first floor and ground floor which will have an influence on students' daily communication.

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

effective **ineffective**

Pair work takes a big part in the class. Especially at the beginning of the class, when a new grammar point--future tense is introduced, the instructor has students work in pairs to practice. Several questions are listed on PPT, and two students take turns to ask and then answer those questions. For the activity which word formation needs to be changed, students first work in pairs to negotiate the right form, and then the instructor brings the whole class together to check answers.

- Error correction [frequency and kind]:

effective **ineffective**

Recasting is what the instructor uses for error correction. Students are not corrected very often during the class. Most of the corrections happen during the activity which the instructor checks answers with students about changes of word formation for future tense. And most of the corrections are oral, but sometimes, after correcting a student orally, the instructor would also write the correct form on the board.

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

very successful _____ somewhat successful _____ not successful _____

Overall, I think the class is successful. It provides students with good quality and quantity of target language exposure. And students are given plenty of opportunities to practice, and at the same time, pair work allows them to interact and negotiate with others. Different forms of visual aids are used in the class to help students' learning. Although the instructor doesn't use authentic materials in the class or personalize the materials, the content is relevant to students' lives. And the instructor pays additional attention to some points, trying to make the content more useful in students' daily life.

Implications for Future Teaching

As I continue writing this portfolio, I also get a chance to have an overview of the theories that I learned in class and practices that I had in a classroom setting. I believe that theories provide the foundation for my teaching. I build my practices on theories, but at the meantime, modify my teaching based on targeted students to better meet their specific needs. For CLD students, their diversities in cultures and languages are both an advantage and a disadvantage for them. I am glad that I am an English Language Learner myself, which puts me in a position that sharing similar experience with ELLs and being able to understand the challenges and obstacles they face.

Teaching ELLs is challenging. We need to provide them with not only content knowledge, but also language knowledge that can help them gain access to content instruction. Concluded from what I learned in classes during two years of study, I have a picture in mind that what an ideal classroom looks like. However, through my practicum experience, I also understand that in reality, I won't be able to realize my ideal classroom. In a real classroom, there are a lot of dilemmas, therefore, being able to find a fine balance becomes vital to teachers. Besides, what makes teaching more challenging is the unpredictability in classroom.

I value a communicative classroom environment where students get authentic language practice. In my classroom, I would like to play the role of a facilitator and a guide, having student be the center. My notion of student-center covers from the choice of class content to the delivery of instruction. I take student's background and interests into

consideration while choosing class content, and instead of lecturing, I use activities to engage all students in learning. Project-based learning which requires multiple skills including critical thinking, creativity, technology skills, and collaboration, is one of my approaches. I group students into small groups and have them work on a project related to a current issue. In each small groups, I try to have students from different culture backgrounds. By doing this, students can not only keep up with current issues, but also discuss and get ideas from multicultural viewpoints.

As I said earlier, students learn less when their anxiety level is high. ELL students may worry about making mistakes due to their English proficiency all the time. Therefore, instead of pushing students speaking in front of the whole class, I create more opportunities for small group discussions to lessen students' anxiety. I group students based on their first language, trying to gather students sharing the same first language together since L1 can serve as a bridge to English acquisition. Also, I give students time for peer tutoring which can stimulate students' passion for learning, because from my experience as a learner, student-student interaction is more effective and efficient than teacher-student interaction, and students are more willing to learn when they take the initiatives.

Classroom is a place where my students and I are both learning. I insist that students can always bring assets into classroom with their diverse experience. I am a teacher and a learner as well. And I would like to create a classroom environment where all my students are not afraid to show their strength and are willing to share and make

contribution to the entire class. However, I suppose that this kind of learning environment builds on the trust between students and teacher. So building a trustworthy relationship with students is extremely crucial for me. And I always believe in my ELL students that they have the potential to be socially and academically successful.

I would like end my portfolio with a notion from one of my teachers: there is no good teaching, only better teaching. Thus, I will keep refining my teaching to better serve my students.