ELL Capstone Portfolio

Amanda Saladin

Peabody College, Vanderbilt University

November 9th, 2015

Table of Contents

Part I: Statement of Teaching Philosophy

Philosophy of Teaching

In my Sophomore year of college, I deviated from my original plan of majoring in the sciences and decided to declare my undergraduate major as Elementary Education and Spanish. I made this change for one reason: I wanted to have the opportunity to change the lives of those around me. For me, teaching was an opportunity to touch the lives of my students while providing them with the best possible instruction to foster a love of learning. This type of learning culture was the foundation of what I wanted my classroom to be. As I made my way through both my undergraduate coursework and my work here at Vanderbilt, I was in search of theorists and teaching practices that matched my personal beliefs about teaching. When I read the work of Nel Noddings (1992, 2006, 2012), I knew that I had found a teaching theory that could provide me with a theoretical framework to develop my own teaching practice around. Noddings' description of a teacher as a carer challenged my understanding of what it means to create a positive difference in my students' lives. She clearly states that a teacher who cares about his or her students does not show affection, feelings, or behave towards students in a certain way. Instead, she describes caring as "a way of being in relation" (Noddings 1992, p. 17). In her theory, a teacher should put his or her own needs aside and focus on those of their students. By doing this the teacher is shifting their energy onto another human being and can celebrate a student's gains, mourn for a student's loss, and think through a student's problems.

However, my understanding of what makes an exceptional teacher moves beyond how they relate to their students to a more learning-focused theory.   Jim Cummins' theory of

Bilingualism and Cognition is a framework that fits both my personal beliefs about teaching and my goal of becoming a teacher of students who are learning English as a second language. This theory revolves around using students' prior knowledge, experience, and language proficiency to create curriculum. This theory paired with the work of Luis Moll and a students funds of knowledge allow for the connections built by the teacher as a carer to provide students with meaningful instruction. This type of instruction could provide my students with individualized and differentiated lessons to best meet each of their unique needs.

The Teacher as Carer

Nel Noddings' theory is centered around a teacher acting as a carer. This teacher puts students' needs above their own and uses every lesson and classroom experience to intentionally notice what each of his or her students need. This way of interacting with students is not something that comes easily. Noddings explains that it is not the carer who determines the caring but rather the cared-for. However, this relationship requires awareness from both parties. With this the carer must respond to the cared-for's needs, wants, and intentions for the entirety of the relationship. This is tied to the motivational displacement that must transcend through the classroom and into the real world. If a carer runs into a student outside of the classroom in the community, they will continue to show that support. However, all of this holds little meaning until the cared-for responds to the caring.

Similar to my own regard to the content of the lessons I want to teach, Noddings believes that the teacher as a carer should guide each child toward ethical life through their relationship. She would rather focus on building that part of the students' life than the content knowledge the student would gain through typical instruction. According to Noddings, a teacher must identify

his or her students' interests that have the potential to lead to intellectual activity. If a student is interested in trains, the teacher should create opportunities for the student to learn about many things using trains. These projects are considered to be mutually constructed because both the teacher and the student come up with their content. This is the elaborative piece that Noddings suggests will follow initiating the relationship and the student responding. This is where the teacher truly develops a caring community through modeling, dialogue, and practice.

This theory forms the backbone of my teaching philosophy because it puts an emphasis on the reason I decided to become a teacher in the first place. Making a difference in the lives of my students and developing their love for learning is something that I feel is extremely important and is supported in this theory. From these connections, a teacher can move in a direction that focuses more on how students will engage with and learn content.

Cummins' (1983) Theory of Bilingualism and Cognition

After establishing a meaningful relationship with students, I believe that it is the teacher's job to use their knowledge of the student and their past experiences, personalities, and learning styles to construct a curriculum and individual lessons. Because I am wanting to work with English Language Learners, I have decided that using Jim Cummins' (1983) theory of Bilingualism and Cognition would be an effective use of the knowledge I hope to gain about my students through our meaningful relationships. Cummins' (1983) theory begins with what the students are already bringing to the classroom and builds from there.

Cummins (1983) begins his theory using the idea that there is much more to a students' knowledge than is on the surface. He uses a double iceberg diagram to describe how what a student is able to demonstrate of their understanding in both their first language (L1) and their

second language (L2) is just the tip of what they know and understand beneath the surface. He

calls this area underneath the surface the "Common Underlying Proficiency" (CUP) which

consists of their understanding of the topic or material that can be transferred between the L1 and

the L2. The students' cognition and knowledge of the content in their first language lays a

foundation for their second language acquisition in that content.

He then goes on to explain how a student has both a Basic Interpersonal Communication

Skill set (BICS) and a Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) with their own

individual uses. BICS is the basic level of language proficiency that a person needs to

communicate. This area of language is dependent on things like context clues for understanding.

CALP, on the other hand, refers to the proficiency a person has in using English in academics.

This is considered to be a more sophisticated skill in learning a second language and requires

more abstract thought. Both of these things are considered when designing instructional support.

Cummins (1983) relies on another diagram to demonstrate this balance.

In his diagram he describes a continuum with two sets of extremes. The first is how

embedded or reduced the context of the instruction is. On one end, the instruction could be

highly embedded in a context of which students have an understanding. On the other end, the

instruction could be context reduced in which case the content of instruction is shown only in the

light of academia. The other set of extremes is whether or not the instruction is cognitively

demanding or undemanding. When the content is cognitively demanding it may be difficult for

students to learn. It may require more abstract or complex thought. When the content is

cognitively undemanding students will not have to use critical thought. When using

Cummins' (1983) theory to plan instruction, I would like to think about my students CUP, BICS, and CALP and apply that knowledge to the aforementioned continuum. When dealing with content that may be cognitively demanding to my students based on their BICS and CALP, I would make it highly context embedded to help students develop and connect with their CUP.

I believe that this theory is a natural "next step" in my classroom. After building up the relationships with students through Nodding's theory, I can focus on using the knowledge of my students gained through my relationships with them to improve my instruction. And, because I value my students and what they bring into the classroom, the theory I believe will best allow me to reach my students is Cummins' theory. This theory matters to me because I want my students to feel as though they all have strengths and, even if they may not excel in some content areas, they are all bringing something of value to the classroom.

Utilizing School Communities

My overarching goal of teaching is to make meaningful connections and create positive differences in my students lives. Additionally, I would like to create these connections with students who have been marginalized in our society. English Language Learners (ELLS) are the students I would like to have in my classroom. Working with ELLs can be challenging because of the cultural differences between the school staff and the students' families. I believe that the work of Luis Moll has very useful ways of taping into students' "Funds of Knowledge" to aid in their learning (Moll, 1992). In his article, "Funds of Knowledge for Teaching" (1992), he describes how home visits to students' homes can increase teacher knowledge of what students are already bringing into the classroom. Moll's theory is that incorporating students'

backgrounds and making connections to students' cultures to the lessons we are teaching in the classroom is the best way to effectively teach students. Making home visits and bringing students' families into the school community is one way to access this knowledge so that the teacher can bring it into his or her lessons effectively.

To build upon this idea we can look at Allen's (2007) article, "Creating welcoming schools: A practical guide to home school partnerships with diverse families" that says that teachers need to learn how their students learn. The way that students learn is linked to a student's culture. Many cultures have specific practices surrounding education that are unique and different than ours. Teachers need to make an effort to understand what these differences may be and make the appropriate changes in their instruction to best fit their students. As a teacher, I find these theories and practices to be meaningful and important because it is the best way to utilize both the information learned through the use of Noddings' and Cummins' theories and the students' funds of knowledge. Students bring so much into the classroom and it is theories like these that allow us to use all of that potential to create the best possible learning experiences for our students. I believe that a master teacher does his/her best to effectively use these things as resources.

Connecting Theory to the Classroom

While reflecting on these theorists, I was able to come up with a practical plan of how they could be incorporated to my future classroom. I plan on beginning my teaching career in a middle grade, elementary school classroom with both English Language Learners and native English speakers. For me, the first step of integrating these theories is building the relationships I plan on having with my students. Focusing on Nel Noddings' work first will provide me with the

foundation for using the rest of these theories. To begin integrating Nel Noddings' teacher as the carer theory, I will get to know my students' interests and learning styles by incorporating lessons and activities that require the students to share about themselves and where they come from. Additionally, I will take anecdotal notes on one or two students each day to make myself intentionally notice each students' needs.

As I am building this relationship with students, I will schedule home visits with my students' families. Not only will this introduce the use Moll's work into my classroom, but it will also aid in my relationships with my students. Scheduling the home visit is the first step in a long process of understanding where my students come from culturally and using the knowledge to build my instruction. After the visits, I will be able to find useful materials, cultural practices, and community literacies that I can incorporate into my instruction to make it more context embedded for my students. Using community literacies like artwork can be useful in teaching things like visualization or illustration techniques to students within the classroom.

Adding pieces like this makes it easy for me to incorporate Cummins' theory of Cognition and Bilingualism into my classroom. By discovering community literacies and other cultural components related to my students, I will be able to create lessons that are both context embedded and cognitively demanding. I plan to create these types of lessons throughout the school year and the more I learn about my students the more I will be able to incorporate these meaningful activities.

Conclusion

Looking back on my experience at Vanderbilt and reflecting on the theories that make up my teaching philosophy was a grounding experience. I was able to think critically about the

things I have been incorporating into my current practicum and have been writing about in job applications. Through this reflection I have been able to determine the reasons behind my actions and thoughts, which has been an experience I believe to be incredibly important. We learn that stating lesson objectives throughout our lessons is important so that the students know why we are learning; but rarely do we take the time to restate our teaching philosophies which are the reasons we are teaching. My re-exploration of Noddings, Cummins, Moll, and Adams has allowed me to reinstate values and ideas I believe in and apply those to my work.

References

Allen, J. (2007). Engaging Families *Creating welcoming schools: A practical guide to home school partnerships with diverse families*. New York: Teachers College Press and International Reading Association. (Chs. 3, 7, 8, 9; p. 39-51; 93-124).

Cummins (1983), J.. (1983). Language Proficiency, Biliteracy and French Immersion. *Canadian Journal of Education / Revue Canadienne De L'éducation*, *8*(2), 117–138. http://doi.org/ 10.2307/1494722

Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice, 31*(2), 132-141.

Noddings, N., & Ebrary, Inc. (2012). *Philosophy of education* (3rd ed.). Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press.

Noddings, N. (2006). *Critical lessons : What our schools should teach*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Noddings, N. (1992). *The challenge to care in schools : An alternative approach to education* (Advances in contemporary educational thought series ; v. 8. ^A102177). New York: Teachers College Press.

Part II: TESOL Standards

Table of Contents

Domain 1: Language

1a. Candidates demonstrate understanding of language as a system and demonstrate a high level of competence in helping ELL students acquire and use English and listening, speaking, reading, and writing for social and academic purposes.

1.b. Candidates understand and apply concepts, theories, research and practice to facilitate the acquisition of a primary and a new language in and out of classroom settings.

The Standard Explained

Understanding the unique complexities of language and how it is learned at any age are essential for teaching English Language Learners. Teachers must apply their understanding of how language can be learned through both social and educational experiences to their own teaching. When teaching language learners, the teacher should use these experiences, as well as their understanding of how these experiences can affect the language learning process, to provide effective and meaningful instruction.

The Artifact

The artifact I have chosen to prove that I have mastered this standard is a case study written about the language learning process as it pertained to an adult English learner from China. (Appendix A) The case study describes how the learner understands English phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics in comparison to his first language, the Mandarin dialect of Chinese. Additionally, it takes a close look at his educational background and his motivation to learn English to develop a plan of action for his future English learning. The case study provides a comprehensive view of his strengths in speaking English as well as targeting a few weaknesses that could be improved for native English proficiency.

The Rationale

This artifact provides an example of how I have mastered this standard and am able to use it in my own teaching for several reasons. Through the rich description of the **learner's** understanding of the five aspects of language; phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, it demonstrates my knowledge of language. The use of the learner's educational background and motivation to learn English exhibits my understanding of how adult learners use experiences in **learning environments** both in and out of the classroom to learn a language.

To begin, I took a deep look into the phonology of his first language and his second language to determine why he made some of his mistakes. From here I was able to lay out some of his errors using a phonetic alphabet. For example, I noted that the student "had problems pronouncing every phoneme within a word. This could be connected to the fact that Mandarin does not have many multi-syllabic words. He frequently left out a phoneme in the middle of the word. Occasionally, he dropped the phoneme at the end or the beginning of a word…The consonant sounds being left out, avoided, or mistaken for all seem to be phonemes articulated in the alveolar. [d], [t], [n], [s], and [l] are all articulated in the alveolar. There does seem to be a pattern with phonemes that are voiced being left out. [d], [l], and [ɹ] at the end or the middle of a word are also left out." (Appendix A, p.8)

Afterwards I described the student's use of morphology though a careful comparison of the morphology in his first language and English. In Appendix A, you can see that I was able to focus on both his oral language and his written language for this aspect. From here I was able to find some of the student's strengths in his morphological use in English. For example, I noted

that despite the differences between English and Chinese morphological systems, the student had

no trouble navigating some of the more complex spelling patterns in English while writing both

formally and informally.(Appendix A, P.12)

To continue my search into his language abilities, I looked into his use of syntax. I was

able to take a closer look at his syntax through the use of phrase structure trees. For example:
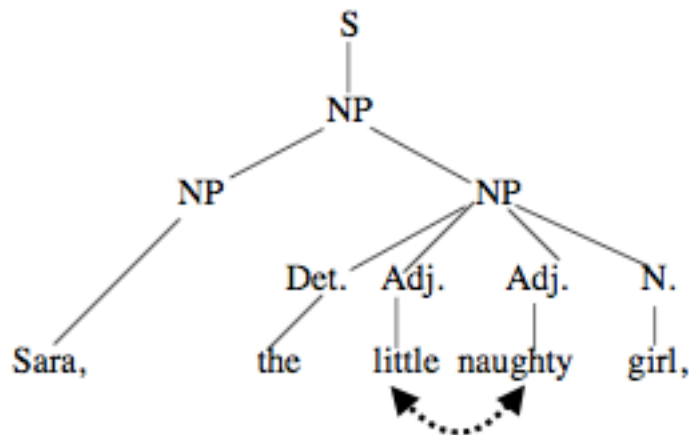
The dotted line with arrows notes where I saw the errors. In this example, he is making a

syntactical error in his speech. "As shown by the dotted arrows these two adjectives should have

been placed in opposite order. This is a common mistake for English learners so it is not

surprising that Joey is confusing this placement. However, these are little mistakes and do not

completely interrupt the meaning that he is trying to express." (Appendix A, p. 18). From these

models, I was able to determine exactly where he found trouble with the English syntactical

system.

Finally, I looked into the student's use of semantics and pragmatics in the same manner as

the other aspects of language. I found that the student's "use of pragmatics is conventional, he

occasionally slips by combining idioms and phrases he has seen before in an incorrect way. For

example, in his written sample Joey writes " no matter under what circumstance". Clearly he has heard, and probably used, the phrase "under any circumstance" or "no matter what" to express the meaning that something is always done. Here Joey is flouting the maxim of manner and quantity by combining both phrases. This causes his message to be obscure and wordy." (Appendix A, p.20) Though a look at simple errors like this I was able to determine where the student was struggling and was able to inform my future instruction.

Before describing my learner's use of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, I explained my understanding of each of the major components of language. These understandings were described using various readings and research as well as my personal analysis of them to best understand my learner's language proficiency. After this synthesis, I was able to compare my learner's first language, Mandarin, with English. I carefully dissected each language component for both Mandarin and English. I then used this knowledge to highlight differences that may still be causing the learner to make mistakes **for example**. This **assessment** is proof that I am able to use my knowledge of language to best support my students in their academic goals.

I also researched my student's motivation to learn English as well as his past and current experiences with using English. This exploration allowed me to analyze what **curriculum** and learning experiences would best suit my student. In turn, this interpretation proves that I am able to use my knowledge of ways my students interact with English both in and out of the classroom to provide them with the best instruction for their language learning. Some of the best ways to use this information of a student's language is to create differentiated instruction by grouping

students by their misunderstandings and providing them with explicit instruction and language

objectives that best fit their needs as language learners. The SIOP model has several excellent

ways of integrating this instruction. (Echevarría, 2012) That being said, there is also a time and

place to place students in mixed abilities groups so that they may learn from each other.

References:

Echevarría, J., Vogt, M., & Short, D. (2012). *Making content comprehensible for English learners: The SIOP model.* (4th edition). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Domain 2: Culture

2.a. Candidates know, understand, and use the major concepts, principles, theories and research related to the nature and role of culture and language development and academic achievement that support individual students learning.

2.b. Candidates know, understand, and use knowledge of how cultural groups and students cultural identities affect language learning and school achievement.

The Standard Explained

        As a teacher it is my job to learn about my students' community and cultural backgrounds. An understanding of strengths and weaknesses that my students may be bringing into the class will allow me to differentiate my lessons and assessments to best fit each unique student. Teaching English Language Learners specifically will require me to have a concrete understanding of where my students come from and how their community affects their learning.

The Artifact

        The artifact that I have chosen to include as evidence of my understanding and competence with this standard is a paper written on my understanding of the Spanish-speaking community in Nashville, Tennessee (Appendix B). The artifact provides a rich description of the community and how it affects the learning of the Spanish-speaking students in the Metropolitan Nashville Public School system. The paper outlines the strengths of the community and what they can bring to the classroom. It also highlights a few things that may make it difficult for teachers to teach Spanish-speaking students within the norms of an American classroom.

The Rationale

This in-depth look at the Spanish-speaking community that many of the students in the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools come from, allowed me to understand how students' cultural backgrounds can affect their learning in positive ways. As teachers of English Language **Learners**, it is our job to take the possible problems of having students with unique cultural backgrounds and turn them into positives. In this paper I was able to explore a cultural community to discover ways that I could incorporate student culture to benefit my instruction. I used the work of Louis Moll (1992) and Allen (2007) as a backbone for my search of ways to incorporate my students' cultures into my classroom. Moll (1992) and Allen (2007) have theories that push teachers to understand where their students come from and to use that information to provide students with instruction that is both effective and culturally relevant. This backbone provides an example of how I was able to use research and theories to develop my understanding of   culture and language development to provide students with an accepting **learning environmen**t so that they can be successful in their learning. According to the work of Moll (1987), instruction containing aspects of a student's cultural background can improve their learning and performance.

Through this research I was able to come away with resources from the community, like artwork and unique forms of story telling, to develop **curriculum** and **assessments** that were culturally sensitive. The example used in my artifact to demonstrate this, is incorporating the unique storytelling from of one of the latino cultures in Nashville into lessons on retell and/or visualization. By incorporating things like the ones I discovered in my investigation of the Spanish-speaking community in Nashville, my students will see the connection they have with

the content which will boost their achievement and language abilities. However, to push this thinking into practice I will be able to incorporate these ideas into SIOP based lessons. (Echevarría, 2012) Containing both culturally relevant material and explicit language objectives for students is the key to utilizing the information discovered through this artifact and the work of Moll (1992) and Allen (2007). As a teacher, it will be my goal to strive for this balance in my practice.

References:

Allen, J. (2007). Engaging Families *Creating welcoming schools: A practical guide to home school partnerships with diverse families*. New York: Teachers College Press and International Reading Association. (Chs. 3, 7, 8, 9; p. 39-51; 93-124).

Echevarría, J., Vogt, M., & Short, D. (2012). *Making content comprehensible for English learners: The SIOP model.* (4th edition). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice, 31*(2), 132-141.

Moll,L.C., & Diaz, S. (1987). Change as the goal of educational research. Anthropology and Education Quarterly,18, 300-311.

Domain 3: Planning, Implementing, and Managing Instruction.

3.a.   Candidates know, understand, and apply concepts, research and best practices to plan classroom instruction in the support of learning environment for ELL students. Candidates serve as effective English language models, as they plan for multilevel classrooms with learners from diverse backgrounds using standards–based ESL and content curriculum.

3.b.   Candidates know, manage, and implement a variety of standard–based teaching strategies and techniques for developing and integrating English listening, speaking, reading, and writing and for accessing the core curriculum.   Candidates support ELL students in accessing the core curriculum as they learn language and academic contact content together.

3.c.   Candidates are familiar with the wide range of standards – based materials, resources, and technologies, and choose, and adapt, and use them in effective ESL and content teaching

The Standard Explained

        The significance of this standard in my teaching lies in the implementation and planning of quality lessons which are both meaningful and engaging. When planning lessons like these, the teacher must develop a standards-based curriculum and include learning goals for the students that will provide clear expectations for their achievement. The lessons also must be adaptable to incorporate motivational aspects to engage unique student interests, learning styles and abilities. Students may come from diverse cultural backgrounds and it is the teacher's job to provide instruction that uses these differences as a tool to create lessons that are all-encompassing.

The Artifact

        The artifact that I have chosen to provide evidence for my proficiency in this standard is a mini unit for a 5th grade English Language Arts class (Appendix C). The unit includes three lessons that push students to think about the same topic across three genres. The lessons are adapted to promote student engagement and are differentiated for the large number of English Language Learners in the class. The unit is centered around the guiding question: What is a hero?

Students wrote in a thought journal to compare ideas about heroes across three diverse texts. They were allowed to incorporate non-standard forms of writing as well as traditional writing. The unit is also filled with student collaboration as well as guided-release instruction on analyzing the same topic across texts.

The Rationale

This three-genre unit demonstrates my knowledge and competence with this standard because it is an example of how I can plan for an engaging literacy lesson with **learner** goals in mind. The design of this lesson was focused on **curriculum** standards and student goals. While planning, I determined which standard I wanted my students to learn and what I wanted them to be able to do after the lesson. This is highlighted in the objectives written at the top of each of the lessons I wrote for this unit. From these objectives, I was able to find assessments that could match these goals as well as design lessons that allowed students to reach these goals through the guided-release model of teaching.

The lessons included a plethora of activities designed to keep students in an engaging **learning environment** to focus them on the content I was teaching. Selecting a variety of groups that were consistently diverse provided students with scaffolding as well as motivation. Additionally, the student **assessments** incorporated technology and involved non-traditional reading response platforms. These elements were designed to keep students motivated and engaged in the reading process. Although the lessons were well thought out and contained descriptive details, they were also flexible as to when the teacher needed to provide additional scaffolds and activities to make the lessons more engaging for students. Elements like this

provide evidence of my ability to include this standard into my future teaching. I have the ability to plan my lessons with the balance between preparedness and flexibility to ensure student success as well as motivation.

However, one thing that the artifact does not show is my ability to use this knowledge with English Language Learners. The lesson focused on teaching in a mainstream classroom containing English Language Learners. Although there were some strategies included to best instruct English Language Learners, I believe that it would have been better to incorporate language objectives similar to those described in the SIOP model. (Echevarría, 2012) Through the use of language objectives, I would have been able to target the language goals I had for my students based on assessment. Additionally, I could build on this lesson to incorporate some of the strategies and techniques proven to be effective with ELLs like academic conversations (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011) and TRANSLATE (Goodwin & Jimenez, 2015). Most importantly, I will continue to discover the most recent research in teaching ELLs so that I can update my instruction to best teach them.

References:

Goodwin, A., & Jiménez, R. (2015). TRANSLATE: New strategic approaches for English learners. *The Reading Teacher, online ahead-of-print.*

Echevarría, J., Vogt, M., & Short, D. (2012). *Making content comprehensible for English learners: The SIOP model.* (4th edition). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Zwiers, J., & Crawford, M. (2011). *Academic conversations: Classroom talk that fosters critical thinking and content understandings.* Portland: Stenhouse. Chapters 2 and 3.

Domain 4: Assessment

4.a. Candidates understand various issues of assessment (e.g., cultural and linguistic bias; political social and psychological factors) in assessment, IQ, and special education testing (included gifted and talented); the importance of standards, and the difference between language proficiency and other types of assessment (e.g. a standardized achievement tests of overall mastery), as they affect ELL student learning.

4.b. Candidates know and use a variety of standards-based language proficiency instruments to inform their instruction and understand their uses for identification, placement, and demonstration of language growth of ELL students.

4.c. Candidates know and use a variety of performance-based assessment tools and techniques to inform instruction.

The Standard Explained

To me the significance of this standard lies in the use of data collected from assessments. As teachers of language learners, we should do our best to provide our students with meaningful instruction derived from our understanding of their intellectual and linguistic development. Teachers should be able to assess this development while working with students to adapt their current and future instruction. While using assessment data should be the driving force behind instruction, teachers of ELLs should be wary of the issues that come with assessment that English learners typically face. Having a wide knowledge of assessments appropriate for theses students will allow teachers to best serve their students.

The Artifact

The artifact I have chosen to prove my understanding of this standard is a case study I wrote about an English learner I worked with for an entire school year. (Appendix D) The first semester I focused on collecting data through assessments which I implemented and which had been done by the school and state for the design of my lessons. The second semester was focused

on working with the student to reach his reading goals while continuously assessing him to adapt my instruction and completing final summative assessments.

The Rationale

This case study demonstrates my knowledge of this standard because it contains specific examples of how I was able to **assess** my student's performance and understanding of a topic both "on the spot" and for future instruction. I was able to look into the assessment data that had been collected by the school. The case study is comprised of an overall view of the work that I had done with my **learner,** examples of daily lesson plans, weekly reflections of my work with my student, and pre and post assessment data. These components of my case study demonstrate my ability to gather information on my student and use it to provide quality instruction to best serve my student's language development needs. Additionally, the assessment data shows the growth of my student which is another testament to how effective my use of this standard was and will continue to be in my development of a **curriculum** for my own classroom.

The weekly reflections were written every week that I worked with my student. They include my thought processes on which instructional steps to take next. I used these reflections as well as my formative assessment data to develop a plan of action that would allow me to teach this student in a way that provides him with the most opportunities for growth. They also provide an example of how I was able to think about the issues that the assessments may have had due to my student's unique cultural background and socioeconomic status. In several cases I questioned the validity of the assessments because of my student's lack of background knowledge on the subjects he was reading about in our assessment. Additionally, I kept my

student involved with this planning process. In the appendix G3 on page 56 of my case study there is an example of the goals worksheet that I included in each of my lessons. I worked with my student to set goals based on our evaluation of his performance that day. I decided to include him in this process so that he would be able to work towards independence and to create a **learning environment** that promoted student ownership of his learning. This process proves that I am able to involve my students in the collection of data and the design of my future lessons while providing them with constructive feedback.

To build on the knowledge that this artifact demonstrates, I would like to address the standardized tests that my student took that were going to be used in his educational future. He began the year at a level 1 on the ACCESS assessment completed by the state when he began his 4th grade year. Additionally, the student was gearing up to take the TCAP towards the end of our time together. I believe that these assessments were not a true representation of his abilities. He was learning so quickly that the standardized assessments were not representative of his language or content area knowledge. After looking into the psychometric principles of the ACCESS and TCAP assessments, I believe that it is my job as a teacher of ELLs to take my own assessments of my students to better understand where they are so that I may create instruction that is true to their abilities. One of my favorite things I learned from my practicum with this student was during a grade-level meeting to determine which students should be in with tiered RTI group. The teachers were able to add input based on their own informal assessments for the placement of their students. This is something that I believe I will advocate for with my own students.

Domain 5: Professionalism

5.a. Candidates demonstrate knowledge of history, research, and current practice in the field of ESL teaching and apply this knowledge to improve teaching and learning.

5.b. Candidates serve as professional resources for ELL students, and build partnerships with students' families.

5.c. Candidates collaborate with and are prepared to serve as resources to all staff, including paraprofessionals, to improve learning for all ELL students.

The Standard Explained

This standard incorporates the importance of being an expert in your field and the ability to share this information with a variety of people. Teachers of ELLs serve as their students' advocates to the school staff, community, and sometimes their families. EL teachers need to know how teaching ELLs has changed over time and what the best practices are today so that they can use them to inform their instruction. It is also the responsibility of EL teachers to share this knowledge with all of the people in connection with their ELL students.

The Artifact

The artifact I have chosen to prove my competence with this standard is a timeline and paper about the history of the laws and court cases that have shaped the teaching of English Language Learners. The paper discusses how the laws reflect a shift in view of how we should treat ELLs. The paper also discusses how I was able to make connections to these rulings with research and theory. From this careful inspection of the history, I was able to develop a sense of how to best serve the students I will be teaching in the future.

The Rationale

The first page of the artifact contains a timeline of the laws and regulations that affect English Language Learners along with a description of the purpose, the decision, and what it meant for the views of ELLs at the time. While looking through this timeline it is easy to see how ELLs were often seen as a burden. Today teachers of ELLs can see the many positives that ELLs bring into the classroom; but, by looking into our nation's past we can see that many people do not see things the same. Because of this, our students will face adversity as they move through the public school system. I believe that by understanding how our laws and regulations have changed over time, I will be able to become an advocate for my ELL students. This means fighting for my students to not be seen as problems within my fellow teachers' classrooms, finding community resources for my students and their families, and developing a classroom community where parents feel welcomed. My understanding of the historical implications as described in the artifact (Appendix E) will help me find a platform to stand on.

I will be able to use this knowledge of how students from culturally diverse backgrounds have been treated in the past and currently to find ways that I can help my students. Just as we use non-examples with our students, I will be able to look into what our educational system has said about ELLs and their education to reach out to current legislators, fellow teachers, and administrators. This process will hopefully lead to the integration of research based-instruction to best teach English Language Learners. For example, currently in Tennessee there is an "English Only" law that does not allow for teachers to teach in languages other than English. However, many of the most recent research-based strategies support the integration of students' L1. The work of Amanda Goodwin and Robert Jimenez (2015) uses this theory. Their strategy,

TRANSLATE, has students use their knowledge in their first language to support their learning in their second language. (Goodwin & Jimenez, 2015) Practices like these that are both research-based and current are not allowed in states like Tennessee. As an educator, I will work with the other teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, and other school staff to advocate for this type of instruction for my students.

References:

Goodwin, A., & Jiménez, R. (2015). TRANSLATE: New strategic approaches for English

    learners. *The Reading Teacher, online ahead-of-print.*

Part III: Taking Action

After a careful reflection of my coursework at Vanderbilt, I believe that I am ready to take what I have learned and put it to practice in my own classroom. My goal is to work in a middle grade, elementary school classroom with both native speakers of English and English Language Learners (ELLs). The practice and mastery of the TESOL standards have allowed me to become a well-rounded teacher who cares for the whole child. I understand that each student brings with him/her things that can positively impact their education. As I move forward with my career in teaching, I will carefully address professional development opportunities, unique challenges, and who I am as a teacher.

Professional Development

Several of my courses at Vanderbilt University prepared me for seeking out opportunities for professional development. Many of my professors had new and upcoming research that were included into our discussion of class topics. Their connection to the current research inspired me to think of ways I could keep up with the most recent teaching practices throughout my career. One course in particular focused on finding opportunities for and facilitating professional development sessions. This course in my first semester at Vanderbilt laid the foundation for how I viewed professional development throughout my coursework. Connecting with teaching communities through professional organizations is one way that I discovered to be especially useful. I recently joined the International Literacy Association and I have found their journals very interesting and useful. I plan to continue my membership in organizations like this one to further improve on my teaching.

I also plan on attending professional development workshops and conferences similar to the one described in "Understanding Language: Language, Literacy, and Learning in the Content Areas; Commissioned Papers on Language and Literacy Issues in the Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards" compiled by Kenji Hakuta and Maria Santos after a conference held on April 5th, 2012 at Stanford University. This compilation of articles contains an overview of the conference. One of the main things I took away from it was the way it laid out the Common Core State Standards and made practical connections to teaching ELLs. Participating in things like this would allow me to develop a rich understanding of what is going on in the current research and to take this new knowledge and put it to work in my classroom.

Another aspect of teaching that I noticed while going through the TESOL standards is the historical and legal issues involved with teaching ELLs. One thing that I plan to continue to educate myself on as I move forward with my career are the legal decisions that could be affecting my teaching. As we are in an election year, this topic seems to be even more prevalent. Following decisions and proposed plans for both general education and the education of ELLs is something that I would like to continue to learn about as a form of professional development. With my master's degree in ELLs, I understand that I may be the leader and voice for my ELL students. Knowing what it going on in the legislature that could affect these students is something I must understand and share with my colleagues. However, I also understand that being a first year teacher means that I still have a lot to learn. There are many things that I will learn from my students and coworkers in my first few years and throughout my career.

Challenges

Although being a first year teacher will provide me with many opportunities to learn more about teaching from my colleagues, it will also bring in a new set of challenges. With my M.Ed. in ELLs and my Reading Specialist endorsement, I will have an abundance of knowledge that I am ready to use and share with my coworkers. However, one challenge that I foresee is being seen as inexperienced; and thus not knowledgeable or reliable for practical lesson ideas. I will want to fight to be an advocate for my students by implementing the theories and practices I learned at Vanderbilt, but I am nervous to see how these things will be received. I know that it will be up to me to support my claims with journal articles and research so that I may continue to advocate for my students and their education. Finding things that are relevant, current, and research based will be the key to making these changes.

There are many more challenges that come with advocating for my students. I am planning to move to a new city when I begin teaching. I know that learning abut my students' funds of knowledge, getting to know their culture and community, and finding local resources to support my students and their families are all things that I need to do to fully support my students. However, I know that it will not be easy for me to do these things in a new place. There are many ways that I could reach out into the community to find this information. I will need to take the initiative to seek out local organizations that help new-comer students and provide services for families speaking languages other than English. Additionally I could connect with other teachers in the area that also advocate for their students.

Teaching Identity

As I move forward in my teaching career, I will need to make decisions on how I will run my classroom. As mentioned in part one of this paper, my main reason for becoming a teacher is built on connecting with students. I see myself overall as a carer through the eyes of Nel Noddings (1992). However, I know that it takes much more than building relationships with students to be an effective teacher. I will need to use all of the information I have gained about my students through our relationships, my search into their communities, and my insight into their prior knowledge to build a curriculum and lessons that are effective. I plan to use the SIOP model (Echevarría, 2012) paired with Jan Richardson's Guided Reading model (2009) and other research based practices to incorporate all of the theories and practices I have adopted during my time at Vanderbilt.

The SIOP model (Echevarría, 2012) builds lessons from both language and content objectives developed by the teacher to best serve students' needs and abilities. My goal is to use my knowledge of my students' cultural background and their language abilities that I have gained through a variety of assessments to develop both language and content objectives that are personalized to my students. SIOP also develops several strategies used for ELLs (Echevarría, 2012) that can be easily incorporated with the Guided Reading model by Jan Richardson (2009). Her model is designed around meeting with small groups for literacy instruction that focuses on lesson objectives and strategy instruction/implementation. I believe that the language objectives and strategies from the SIOP model could be used during these guided reading sessions to differentiate my instruction for the students in my classroom that are English learners.

These instructional decisions also support the other theoretical models that I identify

with. Cummins'(1983) theories on bilingualism can be applied to these practices as well.

Understanding that students are entering the classroom with an abundance of experience and

knowledge, the majority of which may be in their first language, is essential. This is where I can

use my knowledge of Cummins'(1983) theory to connect what students already know in their

first language to our classroom. For example, when creating SIOP based lessons centered around

language objectives about academic language, I can use what my students already know to build

their understanding. According to Antrom et. al. (2010), Cummin's (1983) theory can be very

useful in the instruction of academic language for ELLs. Through outlining and understanding

the overlap between students' conversational English proficiency and their academic language

proficiency, teachers can access students' Common Underlying Proficiency through anticipatory

sets and engagement activities that activate student background knowledge. Instructional

practices like these that incorporate theory and research-based strategies are the practices around

with I hope to build my classroom.

Conclusion

While composing this portfolio, I have been able to reflect on my entire experience at

Vanderbilt University. My courses have prepared me to become a teacher who advocates for her

students, provides meaningful instruction, and is not afraid to continue to learn and improve

upon her practice. With a strong foundation of theorists and models that I can base these things

on, I believe that I will become a teacher of the whole child.

When I decided that I wanted to attend Vanderbilt University's Peabody College for a master's degree in ELLs I had a very narrow view of what I would be learning. With a major in Spanish and a background in working with ELLs whose first language was Spanish, I believed that I would be using my knowledge of my students' language to shape my teaching. I quickly learned that ELLs have a vast variety of backgrounds and not one is alike. My "cookie cutter" view of ELLs was modified to think about what kinds of things each student brings to the classroom. As I moved through my coursework I discovered theorists and research based practices that supported these ideas. From this foundation, I was able to see how I could apply this knowledge of where students come from into professional development opportunities and ways to reach out to my students' communities. I am confident that when I leave Vanderbilt and begin my career as a full-time teacher, I will do my best to get to know my students and their families, use that information to help my students, and continue to my journey as a lifelong learner.

References:

Anstrom, K., DiCerbo, P., Butler, F., Katz, A., Millet, J., & Rivera, C. (2010). A review of the
        literature on academic English: Implications for K-12 ELLs.
*Arlington, VA: The George Washington University Center for Equity and Excellence in
Education.*

Cummins (1983), J.. (1983). Language Proficiency, Biliteracy and French Immersion. *Canadian
        Journal of Education / Revue Canadienne De L'éducation*, *8*(2), 117–138. <u>http://doi.org/</u>
        10.2307/1494722

Echevarría, J., Vogt, M., & Short, D. (2012). *Making content comprehensible for English
        learners: The SIOP model.* (4th edition). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Hakuta, K., Santos, M., & Fang, Z. (2013). Challenges and opportunities for language learning in
        the context of the CCSS and the NGSS. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *56*(6),
        451-454.

Noddings, N. (1992). *The challenge to care in schools : An alternative approach to education*
        (Advances in contemporary educational thought series ; v. 8. ^A102177). New York:
        Teachers College Press.

Richardson, J. (2009). *The next step in guided reading: Focused assessments and targeted
        lessons for helping every student become a better reader*. Scholastic Incorporated.