

CAPSTONE English Language Learners Portfolio

Ruoyu Chen

Peabody College, Vanderbilt University

March 1, 2017

Abstract

This capstone portfolio demonstrates my professional knowledge and teaching competence of how to best serve English language learners (ELL) to help them improve their English ability and also learn together with them. I analyze my past two-year work and reflect upon the knowledge and practice that a qualified ELL teacher needs to possess in order to support students' learning and maximize their potentials.

The portfolio contains three parts: 1) statement of teaching philosophy 2) Analysis of artifacts 3) implication for future teaching. In the first part, I synthesize across Vygotsky's zone of proximal development theory, Jim Cummin's language interdependence theory, and culturally responsive teaching approach. Combining with my understanding of language teaching and learning, I discuss how these theories and frameworks influence me to build my own teaching philosophy and belief. In the second part, I reflect on the artifacts that I have created during my two-year study in Peabody College, and align them with the TESOL standards to show my competence as an ELL teacher in different domains. In each domain, I specifically focus on learners, learning environment, curriculum, and assessment. In the third section, I reflect upon my two-year learning experience in ELL program and identify my direction for my future teaching and continued professional development.

Table of Contents

Statement of Teaching Philosophy	4
TESOL Standards For ESL/EFL Teachers of Adults	11
Domain 1: Planning	11
Artifact A: Unit plan for <i>Going to downtown</i>	
Domain 2: Instructing	13
Artifact B: Lesson plan for <i>Wedding culture</i>	
Domain 3: Assessing	15
Artifact C: IPA for unit plan (Artifact A)	
Domain 4: Identity and Context	17
Artifact D: Experience paper	
Domain 5: Language Proficiency	20
Domain 6: Learning	21
Artifact E: SLA case study report	
Domain 7: Content	23
Artifact F: Lesson plan for <i>task-based learning</i>	
Domain 8: Commitment and Professionalism	26
Artifact G: Observation paper	
Implications for Future Teaching	29
Appendix	36

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

I believe that it is crucial for educators to respect and learn every culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) student's backgrounds and use them as scaffolding tools to support students' learning. Because culture plays a role not only in communicating and receiving information, but also shaping the thinking process of groups and individuals. And by creating a comfortable and academically enriching environment that emphasizes student's unique cultures and funds of knowledge can guide them to learn new things by building on what they have already known and also promote their self-identities. I used to teach English to a Chinese student, who was 5th grade and just moved to U.S. at that time. And I noticed that using his first language as a supporting tool and connecting the learning content with his culture and personal experiences had not only set up our trust relationship but also increased his confidence in English and built the connection between two different cultures and languages. Therefore, I consider culturally responsive teaching, a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning (Ladson Billings, 1994), as my guiding principle to instruct me how to design a classroom that values every student's cultural and linguistic experiences and provides full and equitable access to education for students from diverse backgrounds.

As a whole, my overarching education belief starts from Lev Vygotsky's theory about the zone of proximal development. Based on his theory, the zone of proximal development is the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under

adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978). And Vygotsky believes that learning occurs in this zone. What I see from his theory is the significance for teachers to be facilitators or guides to assist students' learning and to scaffold them bit by bit and help them move up to a higher level of learning and development instead of just directly transmitting knowledge to students. "Instruction should emphasize connections to what learner already knows in other familiar, everyday contexts" (Zeuli, 1986). Therefore, when I design my lessons or programs, I will bring students' cultural experiences to the classroom, serving as an effective tool to develop their zone of proximal development because these experiences are learners' prior knowledge that can be continually built on.

Students' cultural background

Prior to the class, collecting each student's unique cultural backgrounds can help teachers to create a culturally diverse learning environment and to alter teaching strategies to better scaffold students' learning. On the one hand, teachers can learn students' personal experiences that related to their home countries or cultures from students' introduction. Teacher can encourage students to create a family or home country journal to write down some important information or stories that they want to share and would like teacher to be aware of, maybe including features about their first languages, religion beliefs, home traditions, and so on. In order to build a trusting bond, teacher can first create his/her own journal that introduce him/herself and cultural experiences to not only bring teacher and student closer but also set a model for students to follow. In this way, students have chance to practice their English writing and at the same time their backgrounds are more accessible to

teacher.

On the other hand, teacher can also utilize various resources in students' families and communities. Reaching out to students' families and parents will help teacher learn more about their family history and life experiences. Teacher can conduct home visits in which parents are able to talk freely about their stories and their expectation and concerns for their children. Since students from different backgrounds might have different ways of learning and different educational beliefs so through communicating with their parents, teacher can better understand their thoughts and create suitable strategies to maximize students' learning. Also, students' communities actually provide various types of teaching and learning resources and "funds of knowledge" that can serve as lesson materials (Moll et al., 1992). For example, posters with students' native language can be used in translation activity during class to enhance their second language learning.

Curriculum design

I strive to develop a learning environment that is relevant to and reflective of students' social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds and create curriculum that is integrated, meaningful, and student-centered in order to challenge students to develop their higher-order thinking and skills. Teacher should use students' home cultural experiences and their strengths of native language as foundation upon which to develop their L2 proficiency. Because students' strength in one subject area will support new learning in another. Likewise, by using their personal experiences and their home language as teaching resources, teacher can easily make connections between school and real-life situations (Padron, Waxman,

&Rivera, 2002), which will enhance students' learning motivation and improve their knowledge application in daily life.

From this perspective, I will first create the culturally diverse environment by decorating the classroom with artifacts from students' home, posters with their native languages, and even maps of their home countries. All these decorations will enlighten the classroom and give students a sense of belonging so that their self-identities will be enhanced and they can maximize their learning in such familiar and secure environment.

Secondly, children learn about themselves and the world around them within the context of culture (Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University, 2002). But students from minority cultures may feel pressured to disavow their cultural norms and beliefs to assimilate into the main stream at school, which can interfere with their emotional and cognitive development and result in school failure (Sheets, 1999). Therefore, I will utilize students' cultural and personal experiences in each unit and each lesson to make sure that they can relate what they learn in the classroom with their every day life and activities so that they will not feel alienated and disengaged from the majority stream of school. For example, I can design different unit around students' culture backgrounds, like traditional festivals, famous historical sites, or special cuisines to improve their L2 competence. For each topic, students who come from the same background are encouraged to collaborate and prepare a presentation or report in English to the whole class to share their heritage. In this way, students' interest will be aroused because they are going to introduce their own funds of knowledge that other people are not familiar with so that they will feel

proud of their nations and themselves and be more motivated to learn and to use L2.

Thirdly, students' strengths in their home languages that they bring to the class cannot be overlooked. According to Cummins' language interdependence theory, the relationship between L1 and L2 can be emphasized in learning so that students can use what they learn in L1 as resources for learning in the target language (Cummins, 1979). Also, "people in multilingual settings will develop their languages according to the differential needs for the two languages and/or the different social functions of these languages" (De Jong, 2011). Therefore, utilizing students' first language ability as scaffolding tools to support their learning and comprehension in target language can be a very effective and accessible method. One of the teaching strategies is to use text materials that contain students' native language to design translation activity in order to set up the connection between two different languages. Still, students can work as a group and they are also encouraged to complete the tasks within the help from their communities. By participating such learning activity, students are offered opportunities to compare their L1 and L2 and deepen their understanding of target language by finding out the similarities and distinctions.

Conclusion

With the movement towards globalization and the increasing diversity in communities and schools, we as educators need to develop in-depth understanding of cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students if we want to facilitate their learning at school and engage them into the main stream but still keep and strengthen their self-identities. I will strive to learn every student's cultural and linguistic backgrounds and motivate their learning by

integrating their unique funds of knowledge into my curriculum. And I also understand the importance of gain the knowledge of students' different ways and understandings of learning. Thus I will adjust my teaching methods to meet students' proficiency and needs and bridge cultural differences through effective communication between school and community, teacher and student. As teacher of CLD student, I will maximize their learning opportunities and efficiency by the support from their cultural and linguistic strengths and lead them to become successful learners and reinforce their positions in both cultures.

Reference

- Cummins, J. (1979). Linguistic interdependence and the educational development of bilingual children. *Review of educational research*, 49(2), 222-251
- De Jong, E. J. (2011). *Foundations for multilingualism in education: From principles to practice*. Caslon Pub..
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dreamkeepers*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishing Co.
- Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). *Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms*.
- Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University (LAB). (2002). *The diversity kit: An introductory resource for social change in education*. Providence, RI: Brown University.
- Padron, Y. N., Waxman, H. C., and Rivera, H. H. (2002). *Educating Hispanic students: Effective instructional practices* (Practitioner Brief #5).
- Sheets, R. (1999). Relating competence in an urban classroom to ethnic identity development
In R. Sheets (Ed.), *Racial and ethnic identity in school practices: Aspects of human development*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1980). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard university press.
- Zeuli, J. (1986). "The Use of the Zone of Proximal Development in Everyday and School Contexts: A Vygotskian Critique." Paper presented at Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. San Francisco, CA.

Domain 1: Planning

Artifact A: Unit Plan for “Going to downtown”

Planning is a very significant domain for teachers of English language learners because we need a well-established and comprehensive lesson plan to create an academic and natural learning environment for students to maximize their learning efficiency. Also, teachers need to modify plans to meet different students’ needs and level to make sure that every student can actively engage in the class and achieve their learning goals. During planning process, teachers need to clarify the content and language objects for learners as well as teaching materials, class activities, and time arrangement to ensure students’ learning quality.

I designed this unit plan “Going to downtown” on October 2016 as a mid term project for the course of teaching English as second language. The requirement was to create a unit that has a specific theme and detailed objects to help students meet the standards of the final Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA). The target **learners** in my unit plan are recent immigrants to U.S., whose English proficiencies are novice mid and are expected to reach novice mid at the end of the course. The general object of this unit is to help students learn about direction and travel in English as well as related western culture.

The general purpose of the whole unit is to improve learners’ practical language ability so that they can communicate with others in English naturally and correctly in different daily activities. So in order to enhance learners’ English speaking competence, I create some class activities that encourage them to have discussion in a group or present their ideas in front of the whole class so that learners can have more opportunities to practice speaking English.

Also, it is very important for teachers to consider learners' current language proficiency level and adjust their lesson plan to cater to their needs and ability. As I designed my unit plan, I particularly chose several texts that are appropriate for novice mid learners, which contain basic and necessary words for day-to-day use and simple grammar that will not affect their comprehension.

In order to create a academic yet relaxing learning environment for learners to maximize their engagement and learning efficiency, besides grammar and vocabulary drills, I designed several interesting and practical tasks and projects for learners to participate in. In this way, students will not get bored by those repetitive drills and they will be motivated to learn in such creative and free environment.

There are eight lessons in the unit and each class focuses on not only the topic of this unit, but also several language objectives, including reading and writing skills, discussion, and presentation, that are aligned with course curriculum. In addition, as I have mentioned before, I picked some appropriate mentor texts to make the curriculum more accessible and comprehensible for learners.

Students can assess their learning through multiple ways in the unit. For example, I will ask them to write a short paragraph about the most important thing they have learned at the end of the class so that they can evaluate what they have understand and what have left deep impression on them by this simple assessment. Also, to reduce students' pressure or stress about getting assessment, I will let students do peer evaluate so they can get feedback from others and also provide their own suggestions.

Domain 2: Instructing

Artifact B: "Wedding culture" lesson plan

Instructing is the most important and visible part of teaching because teachers need to adjust their teaching strategies catering to students' current language proficiency and needs in order to scaffold their efficient learning in the class. Also, during the instruction, teachers need to create supportive environments that engage all learners in purposeful learning and promote respectful classroom interaction. Therefore, learning students' backgrounds, setting clear language and content objectives, and creating interesting and meaningful activities all play significant roles in providing good instruction.

I designed the lesson plan about wedding culture as a midterm work for course of teaching second language literacy in my second semester. The overarching strategy that I used for lesson plan was backwards design, which required me to take account of target students' information and learning purpose as I decided the course objectives before planning. I set my students as immigrants who have moved to U.S. for a while but still need to improve their language skills and need more support to adapt in the new culture environment. Thus, in my lesson plan, I paid much attention not to use complicated and obscure in my instruction and teaching materials and the lesson was emphasized on culture learning through various interesting classroom activities that could engage all students. For example, I will group students from the same culture backgrounds and ask them to discuss about their wedding tradition and make comparison with western traditions so that students will not only have more comprehensive understanding of this tradition but also easily engage in discussion that

taps into their own cultures.

This artifact shows I understand the language domain because firstly, I create a supportive and relaxing learning environment for learners to actively involve in meaningful and purposeful learning. On the one hand, in order to reduce potential language barriers for learners, I specially pick a short video clip of a wedding scene from a popular TV show that contains simple yet authentic English so that learner can understand the content as well as accept enough input. On the other hand, I use learners' culture background to intrigue their discussion so that they will gain more confidence and maximize their learning opportunities.

Secondly, while I designed the curriculum, I put emphasis on the learning objectives for students because I believe that only if I have clear and practical goals for learners to achieve, can I create purposeful and effective curriculum that can really help students' learning. For instance, I want my students to be able to recognize and use new vocabulary in reading and writing after the class. So I use a mentor text and many pictures as tools to help learners understand new words and leave enough time for them to practice. These curriculum targets can work as a guideline for me to create appropriate activities and curriculum that can boost students' interests and learning.

Last but not least, the assessment for learners of my lesson plan is to write a short essay about the wedding tradition in their home countries and try to use as many new words as they can. This provides learners with opportunities to practice new vocabulary and sentences as well as demonstrate their understanding of the lesson content. This assessment can not only improve learner's language ability but also help teachers to learn more their backgrounds.

Domain 3: Assessing

Artifact C: IPA (unit plan)

Assessment is a very significant part in teachers' instruction because it can show how students improve during the unit learning and how teachers can adjust their teaching strategies to meet most students' needs. In order to design an appropriate and effective assessment, teachers need to recognize the important of and be able to gather and interpret information about learning and performance to promote the continuous intellectual and linguistic development of each learner. Also, teachers need to use knowledge of student performance to make decision about planning and instruction and giving constructive feedback to leaners.

I designed the Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) for my teaching English as second language class and it is related to my unit plan "Going to Downtown" (Artifact A). Based on what I am going to teaching in the unit plan, I designed three parts of assessment, including interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational assessment, which evaluates students' reading comprehension, writing ability, and also speaking competence. There are multiple types of assessments in my IPA instead of just paper-based test, such as giving presentation, communicating with peers, which can not only reduce students' stress but also provide more ways to evaluate their ability and give practical feedback to help them move forward.

This artifact shows I understand this language domain because first of all, I designed all my assessment content according to my curriculum content and catering to learners' language proficiency so that I can make sure there is no knowledge left behind that will not be tested

and also learners will be capable to take the evaluation. For example, when I choose the text to be used in the interpretive assessment, I especially picked the article that contains most key words of my unit plan and other simple everyday vocabulary without any complicated sentence structures. In this way, students will have no problem understand the whole article and can be evaluated with their linguistic competence.

Secondly, I intentionally create multiple forms of assessment so that learners' language ability can be evaluated more comprehensively and they can receive more useful and meaningful feedback. For instance, besides traditional paper-based test, in my IPA, there are also interpersonal conversation test and presentation test so that not only learners' reading and writing skills will be assessed, their formal and informal oral English will be evaluated as well. What's more, providing learners with different types of test can reduce their stress and create a more relaxing and diverse learning environment. Because students will not consider themselves as a test-taker but an English speaker and their confidence will be boosted.

In addition, most of my assessments have actually appeared in my curriculum. Students will have opportunities to practice their test during each lesson so that they will not feel totally strange about the final evaluation and can be able to apply what they have learned in the curriculum to the test. For example, learners will be asked to do mini presentations during the unit to practice their presentational skills and to be well prepared for their final assessment. It is very important for teachers to integrate curriculum content with assessment because only in this way, can learners' capabilities be assessed accurately and can learners themselves and teachers know what need to be improved and how to improve.

Domain 4: Identity and Context

Artifact D: Experience Paper

As ELL teachers, it is very important to understand who learners are and how their communities, heritages and goals shape learning and expectations of learning. Also, we need to recognize the importance how context contributes to identity formation and therefore influences learning. And we should use this knowledge of identity and settings in planning, instructing, and assessing.

This experience paper is one section of the project for foundations for teaching ELLs class. In this essay, firstly, I described the community on Nolensville pike where a lot of immigrants live and work there. I mainly focused on the historical background and diverse cultures of this community so that readers would have a clear idea about it. Secondly, I talked about what kinds of language materials that I had found in this area, such as posters with Spanish and Chinese, and how I could use them as teaching tools to help my ELL students enhance their self-identities as well as improve their English competence. In the last part, I discussed about the significance of respecting and learning students' cultural backgrounds and their living environments. I also provided several ideas about how we as teachers can reach out to their communities and be more familiar with them.

In this artifact, first of all, I recognize the importance of knowing students' diverse backgrounds and understand that students' identities and cultures play a significant role in their language learning. Through the visiting of Nolensville pike, I directly interacted with the living environment and neighborhood that students live in and work at. And I got the

opportunities to see their daily life in the community, which I found very useful and efficient to promote their learning and creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment because learners can practice English in a familiar context and they can use what they have learned in their real life situations.

Secondly, I will bring what I found that might be useful and meaningful for my teaching to the curriculum design and create relevant class activities to engage every learner in active learning in a diverse and relaxing learning environment. For example, I collected several posters and advertisements, which contains students' native languages from the community and I will use them as language materials to encourage students to translate them into English version. Students with same language backgrounds will be grouped together to work on their translation project. Through this activity, learners' self-identities will be enhanced because their native languages are valued in the classroom and they can share their own backgrounds with teachers and whole class. Also, their English learning will be boosted through comparing their first language with English and using what they already know to learn new knowledge.

Last but not least, in this essay, I also mentioned that how teachers can bring students cultures and communities backgrounds to their language assessment in order to provide more information to teachers and also support learners' learning. My idea is asking students to pick one traditional artifact in their home country and do a short presentation to introduce it to the whole class. Through this presentational assessment, students' interests will be aroused and they will feel less anxious about the assessment because their main task is to introduce their

family cultures to others instead of English speaking test. Learners will complete their assessment in a relaxing and interesting environment.

Domain 5: Language Proficiency

Teachers for English language learners need to have high level of English proficiency since they should model language in a way that learners can imitate and provide them with rich and authentic English during the class so that learners can maximize their learning efficiency by receiving enough language input. To be more specific, proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing means that a teacher is functionally equivalent to a native speaker with some higher education and can demonstrate their proficiency in social, business, and especially academic English.

As a non-native English speaker, I made many efforts to improve my English proficiency in order to meet the standard and be a qualified English teacher. First of all, I passed the Toefl test with a pretty decent score (106 out of 120) before I started my graduate school in Vanderbilt University, which shows that I can speak English fluently, accurately, and appropriately in different contexts and I can understand native speakers' words in many settings, including academic, social, and business. Secondly, I also took the GRE test and got a satisfied grade (320 out of 340), which reveals that I can understand vocabulary of different domains and comprehend high-level academic articles and I can write formal English essays, using professional vocabulary and well-established structures in a very limited time. Last but not the least, I used to be an intern English teacher during my vacation. I conducted my classes in English and instructed learners to speak and write academic English, which shows that I am able to use my English proficiency to create a learning environment rich in language input and help learners to improve their language competences.

Domain 6: Learning

Artifact E: SLA Case study report

Adult and child ELL learners have different learning patterns and ability of second language acquisition so it is very important for teachers to recognize the differences and utilize their understanding to better support individual learner's learning. Also, teachers should draw on their knowledge of language learning to understand the processes by which learners acquire a new language in and out of classroom setting. And they need to use this knowledge to maximize each learner's learning opportunity and efficiency.

This case study is the final project for my educational linguistic course. Through the whole semester, I worked with a non-native English speaker (adult) and I tried to analysis different aspects of his English competence by recording our conversations and analyzing his English writing. This report contains several sections, including phonology, semantic, grammar, and pragmatic. In each section, I described his strengths and weakness in using English in detail and used the linguistic and acquisition theory that I learned in the class to analyze the reason and possibility of his current problems. What's more, I provided him with many applicable learning strategies to help him better improve his English ability.

During the case study, I first tried to learn more about the learner, including his culture and linguistic background, prior education experiences, as well as his current learning goals. Because as long as we as teachers can comprehensively understand who learners are and what they need, can we create and design a most suitable and effective learning environment and curriculum to support their learning. For example, after I learned that he actually was

good at academic English but just felt nervous and unconfident when he talked to native speakers, I suggested him to find a language partner so that they could talk in English regularly and he would have more time practice his oral English and be more confident. Because his learning goal was to improve his daily communication ability, the curriculum and his practice should happen in the learning environment that is related to his real life situations. I believe that it is very significant to make curriculums and learning environment catering to learners' needs and requirements so that they will have motivation to learn and the instruction will be more goal-oriented and effective.

Besides knowing learners' basic information, it is also critical to recognize their strengths and weakness so that teachers can find the best solution to solve their problems. Since my case study participant is from China, I noticed that most of his problematic pronunciations were caused by his native language, Chinese. So I designed a curriculum to help him pay attention to the differences between Chinese and English and encouraged him to practice repeatedly what he found very difficult to pronounce. Also, based on his current language competence, the assessment that I recommended him to do was to record audio diary every week so that he could listen to his speaking and find out what he has improved and what he needs to make efforts. Through this kind of self-assessment, learners will feel less pressure about the test and will have more time to evaluate themselves.

Domain 7: Content

Artifact F: Lesson Plan (Task-based Teaching)

The learning content plays a significant role in English language education. Teachers need to understand that language learning is most likely to occur when learners are trying to use the language for genuine communicative purposes. And it is very important for teacher to know that the content of the language courser is the language that learners need in order to listen, to talk about, to read and write about a subject matter or content area. What's more, teachers should design their lessons to help learners acquire the language they need to successfully communicate in the subject or content areas they want or need to learn about.

I designed this lesson plan as a midterm project for my TESOL class in my third semester. At the beginning of the course, I create a unit plan for ELL students with mid-novice level of English proficiency, focusing on teaching the content about direction and location. This lesson plan belongs to the unit and would be conducted in the middle or late period of learning. It is worth mentioning that I used task-based teaching approach in this lesson because at that time, my students should already be familiar with related vocabulary and simple conversation. Learning through completing a task will give them more opportunities to talk and use the language in that context.

First of all, since the learners in my lesson plan are immigrants who need to improve their daily communicative competence effectively, teaching them about describing locations and giving directions would be a practical and useful content that they can use in their real world situations. Thus, learners will be more motivated in the classroom and they will be

willing to engage in activities more actively.

Secondly, the class activity or the task that I designed in this lesson plan will make the learning environment more relaxing and appealing. I will group students into small group and ask them to create a mini travel brochure introducing the famous places in their home countries. Through this task, learners' cultural backgrounds and prior experiences are added to their learning, which will build a bridge between what they already know and what they are going to learn. Also, in this learning environment, learners will feel less intimidated about speaking English in the classroom because they will communicate with their peers. They will fully concentrate on their project when the subconscious learning happens.

Thirdly, when I created the curriculum, I intentionally chose several teaching materials, such as Nashville's travel brochure, to increase learners' authentic language input and help them understand the whole project. Also, during the curriculum, I will first model writing a short introduction of my hometown so that learners will be clear about how they can complete the task. I believe that these teaching tools and strategy can make the curriculum more accessible to learners and will boost their learning efficiency.

Last but not least, after students create their travel brochure in their small groups, they will give the whole class a small presentation about their project and also hand in their brochure as assessment. Through this lesson, learners will be assessed with not only their presentational ability, but also their interpersonal competence as well as their writing ability. But instead of asking them to do the paper-based test, this assessment will reduce learners' anxiety about being assessed individually and will allow teachers to understand their

language competence, strengths and weakness more comprehensively. Only through this way, can teachers provide more appropriate and constructive suggestion and instruction to the learners to improve their learning.

Domain 8: Commitment and Professionalism

Artifact G: Observation Paper

As English language teachers, we need to update our knowledge about second language acquisition and also improve our ability of teaching and learning. It is very important for teachers to continue to grow in their understanding of the relationship of 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. In other words, teachers need to not only deliver knowledge to learners, but also absorb new concepts and beliefs from students' performance, different resources, as well as our colleagues.

During the first semester, I observed an ESL class in a field trip of the foundation course. All the students were adults, who just came to the United States as refugees. So the big learning objective in this class was to use English to communicate naturally in daily contexts. What I found most helpful and impressive about this observation was that though I had learned a lot about second language acquisition from books and lectures, I still saw many new things and teaching strategies that I had never paid attention to. Compared to normal ESL class in colleges or other communities, this program only served refugees, which means as teachers, we must take students' culture backgrounds and their prior experiences into consideration when we try to design and deliver the lesson. That was something that I could never experience and build my own belief only through reading theoretical essays and listening to lectures.

In the first part of my observe paper, I discussed about who the learners were in details. Because through the observation, I understand that it is very crucial for teacher to understand his/her students both linguistically and culturally, especially when they have diverse and special backgrounds. Learning about learners tells not only what you should teach them, but also how you should teach them. Since all these learners in this program were refugees, there were many sensitive questions and content that teachers might need to avoid in order to take care of their emotion and feelings. Also, some learners were new arrivals so they were at the silent stage where they barely produced language and teachers would need to find suitable strategies to help them and encourage them.

Besides talking about learners in the first part, I also described the classroom environment. I noticed that the walls were decorated with world map, paintings of different cultures, and some unique artifacts. I think all these decorations created a culturally welcoming learning environment. Students could see their own cultures or traditions in the classroom, which made them calm and relaxed. Also, during the class, the instructor allowed students communicate with each other in their native language. I found this strategy very thoughtful and effective. What we used to learn in the book was to encourage students to speak English more often but in this class, considering learners' language ability and their emotional status, using native language could actually help them step out of the silent stage and actively learn in a culturally responsive learning environment, where they feel comfortable to talk.

In the second part of the paper, I mainly discussed about the details of the curriculum.

Since the students from the class that I observed were all beginning English learners, the teacher used many strategies and materials that fitted their language proficiency and their learning ability. For example, I noticed that the teacher used a lot of gestures and visual tools, such as videos or pictures, to help students understand the content and provide scaffolding. This was aligned with what we had talked about in class that when designing curriculum, we needed to adjust our teaching methods according to students' different learning status and competences. The curriculum needs to provide them with comprehensible content and some support to push students move forward.

Through this observation, I also gained new understanding of assessment. Every student who decided to attend this ESL class would need to take a pre-assessment. Through this assessment, teachers were able to know how their language abilities are and what kind of tools that might be useful to help them learn. We talked a lot about summative assessment in the class because that was an important part of students' learning. However, after the observation, I understand that the pre-assessment is actually necessary because it not only provides students' information to teachers, but also serves as an evidence to show how students grow during the learning process.

All in all, this observation helped me connect what I learned in classroom with what I should do as a teacher and also helped me improve my teaching philosophy and belief.

Implications for Future Teaching

Retrospecting my two-year course study at Peabody College, I can confidently say that I have absorbed as much knowledge as possible and my competence of being an effective ELL teacher has been improved day by day. Considering English education as my future career, I benefited a lot from these learning experiences and I believe that I will look back constantly to gain more new understandings of education as I moving forward as a teacher and a student.

During these four semesters, I got plenty of opportunities to design, plan, and implement language lessons for culturally and linguistically diverse students. Through these practiced, I gained deeper understandings of the importance of catering to learners' needs and interests as well as tailoring my teaching strategies to meet their language proficiency and backgrounds. The theories, frameworks, and historical backgrounds of language teaching and second language acquisition have supported me with designing effective and engaging class activities and creating welcoming and positive environment for students to maximize their learning opportunity and efficacy. What's more, the fieldtrips and teaching practicum provided me with opportunities to make connection between theories and practices. I also found the answers to many questions that I was confused with in class through observing experienced teachers and implementing lessons by myself.

The artifacts presented in this portfolio demonstrate my competence in each of the TESOL domains. I planned and implemented several lessons that catered to students' different backgrounds and their learning purposes. I am also familiar with multiple formats of assessments and able to design one based on students' learning status and needs. I learned

how to give constructive feedbacks and adjust my teaching approach according to students' performances. In addition, I continued to develop my professional knowledge of teaching and learning through reading more related research articles and having discussion with peers and experienced teachers. I believe that everything I gained from two-year learning will support me to become a qualified English teacher in China and I will definitely adapt my teaching philosophy in my future classroom.

My Ideal Classroom

I plan to become a high school English teacher in China after my graduation. Admittedly, I clearly understand that there are huge differences of education system and language teaching between the U.S. and China. I believe that the ultimate goal of English learning is the same: to be equipped with great communicative competence and higher order thinking skills to prepare for better future possibilities. Therefore, taking all the differences into account, I will adjust the teaching strategies and techniques that I learned here to fit in English classroom in China and cater to Chinese students' needs and proficiency. I will also bridge between theories and practices in my future classroom so that I can design and implement the most suitable and effective lesson to help my students become successful language learners.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

In my future classroom, as an English instructor, I will value what students bring to the class from their families and backgrounds and make the best use of them to make my teaching more accessible. Also, I will bring western cultures to the classroom so that my

students can learn English in specific contexts and use language as lens to see the world.

As an English teacher, it is important for me to recognize and emphasize students' cultural references in every aspect of learning in the classroom (Ladson Billings, 1994). Since my future teaching context is high school in China, it is a lot easier for me to combine my students' culture backgrounds with my teaching pedagogy. Though they will not learn English in an English-speaking environment, using students' prior experiences and Chinese traditions as bridges to make connection with what they already know can still serve as a very effective and engaging approach.

One classroom activity that I am definitely going to apply in my future classroom would be culture comparison. As shown by my *Artifact B*, I designed a lesson plan that introducing the western wedding traditions by encouraging students to make comparison with their own cultures. This lesson will tap into students' prior knowledge, which will help them to build more comprehensive and deeper understanding of new concepts. This kind of activity will be easy to conduct in my teaching context since all my students share the same culture background. Therefore, every student will have the opportunity and interest to engage actively in the lesson and make their own contribution to the learning process.

Backwards Design

In order to make my future lesson effective and tap my students' full potential, backwards design will help me create goal-oriented lessons and involve every student in active learning and meet the course requirement at the same time.

When we were discussing the biggest problem of applying teaching strategies that we

have learned here to classrooms in China, most of us mentioned the pressure of high-stake tests. Since the main contents that our students will be assessed are vocabulary, grammar, and reading, it seems that there is little space for us as teachers to organize interesting classroom activities to improve their communicative competence. From my personal English learning experiences, repeated drills and memorizing are the most used strategies to help us prepare for the test. However, I believe these learning methods will decrease students' intrinsic motivation and interest of learning English. Therefore, my role as a teacher is to create engaging learning environment and conduct meaningful lessons to improve students' communicative competence as well as prepare them for the tests.

In my future classroom, before designing and creating my class activities, I will first set learning objectives and can do statements, which will guide me to choose the most suitable and meaningful materials and activities. In my lessons, I will not only teach to the assigned textbooks and enhance knowledge about vocabulary and grammar but also bring content knowledge and communicative skills to the classroom. As shown in my *Artifact A* and *F*, I included vocabulary list, reading and writing project, and student collaboration task in my lesson plans and all these tools and strategies were carefully selected based on the learning goals and test requirements. Students will have opportunities to learn vocabulary and grammar and they will also have time to communicate with each other in English and develop their spoken ability. Backwards design will support me to make clear what I want my students to achieve during the lessons and will also provide me with guidelines of how to lead and scaffold them to meet the goals and their best potentials.

Continued Professional Development

Comparing to the classroom in the U.S., there is a totally different traditional learning environment in schools in China. First of all, the classroom size is much bigger. There are usually around 50 students in one class, which is a problem for teacher who wants to observe each student's performance and also organize class activities. In addition, most classes in China have pretty strict rules for students to follow, such as being quiet when the teacher is talking and raising hand before speaking. Therefore, students are tend to stay silent through the whole lesson and there is few opportunity for them to discuss or participate in activity.

As an English teacher in China, I want to change the situation and their learning environment so that they can become positive and productive learners instead of silent listeners. Therefore, I will continue to learn how to change the traditional classroom norm in China and develop my ability of leading and managing students to learn through activities. I will learn how to effectively coach students to have discussion, debate, or complete task with peers in order to make my future students better fit in the new environment and boost their learning.

Another area that I need to make more effort is the balance of using Chinese and English instruction in my class. I want to increase students' English language input but I still need my lesson to be accessible and comprehensible. Thus, I will continue to develop my understanding and skills through my future teaching experiences and discussion with professionals.

Conclusion

It is the two-year learning in the program of English language learners that enables me to gain new understanding of education and become more confident of being a teacher. I have learned that being an excellent teacher need to devote myself to the classroom and my students. I need to be loving, considerate, professional, and also introspective in order to care about my students and make progress with them. Every professor that I met here in Peabody College showed me what a great educator look like and I feel so luck to have the chance to learn from them and always look up to them even after my graduation.

Even though I understand that the teaching context in China is so much different than that in the U.S., I still have the faith in me that I will be able to use what I have learned to create my ideal classroom in China. Because I did not just learned many specific teaching techniques and strategies, I also gradually built up my teaching philosophy and belief with the entire course that I took and all the theories and frameworks that I learned. I understand the importance of learning every student and their backgrounds. I gained the knowledge of how to recognize and enhance students' identities. I am equipped with abilities of giving students' constructive feedback and adjusting my teaching methods based on their performance. After two-year learning, I feel more confident and assured of being a teacher. I will keep looking back to enhance myself and keep moving forward to become who I want to be.

Reference

Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dreamkeepers*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishing Co.

Appendix A: Unit plan for *Going to downtown***IPA Unit Plan**

Ruoyu Chen

- Course Information:
 - Student: Adult (immigrants or refugee); Novice Mid level
 - English Class (Speaking and Reading)
 - Location: U.S.
 - Time: one semester (3~4 months); 2~3 meetings/week; 1hour/meeting
 - Purpose: Helping students learn practical English so that they can adapt to the new environment quickly.
- Target proficiency level/standards:
 - Novice High
 - Proficiency Guideline (ACTFL)
- My goals for student performance:
 - Students can use simple English to communicate with others in everyday activities at the novice high level.
- Global Can Dos:
 - Interpretive (reading):
 - ◆ Students can usually understand short message on familiar topics.
 - ◆ Students can sometimes understand short, simple descriptions with the help of pictures or graphs.
 - Interpersonal (Speaking):
 - ◆ Students can ask for and give simple directions.
 - ◆ Students can exchange information using texts, graphs, or pictures.
 - ◆ Students can exchange some personal information.
 - ◆ Students can interact with others in every day situations.
 - Presentational (Speaking):
 - ◆ Students can present their life using phrases and simple sentences.
 - ◆ Students can present basic information about a familiar person, place, or thing using phrases and simple sentences.
 - ◆ Students can give basic instructions on how to make or do something using phrases and simple sentences.
- Thematic units in the course:
 - Introducing myself! (Including nationality, family members, jobs, home countries, and so on)
 - Going to downtown! (Including asking for and giving directions, understanding information about restaurant and bars in downtown on the pamphlet)
 - Can I have a “draft” beer? (Including ordering food or drinks in restaurant and bars, learning American food culture, introducing traditional food in their

- home countries)
- How much is this t-shirt? (Including buying clothes in the mall, interacting with shop assistant, understanding price tag and labels)
- Other important information about student performance goals:
 - Students can use what they have learned in class in their real life activities.
 - Students can experience more American cultures in the class.
 - Students can consider English as a very useful tool to help them improve their lives.
- Unite Theme: Going to downtown!
 - Time period, class meeting:
 - ◆ 4~5 class meetings
 - ◆ 1 hour/class
 - Other details about unit such as textbook, student preparation, etc:
 - ◆ Materials: Map of downtown, picture of direction signs (left, right, straight), pictures of locations (restaurant, bar, store), downtown introduction pamphlet
 - Key Can Dos:
 - ◆ Students can ask for directions to a place.
 - ◆ Students can tell someone how to get from one place to another. Such as go straight, turn left, or turn right.
 - ◆ Students can tell someone where something is located, such as next to, across from, or in the middle of.
 - ◆ Students can describe a location in downtown that they visit using simple phrases and sentences.
 - ◆ Students can identify destinations and major attractions on a travel brochure (downtown).
 - How will the activities you plan prepare students for the Can Dos?
 - ◆ Can Do: Students can ask for directions to a place.
 - Using pictures and vocabulary cards to teach students words of different locations, including restaurant, bar, store.
 - Teaching students the sentence that they need to say when they ask for directions. (Could you please tell me where is ...?)
 - Let students practice the sentence with different locations. (Could you please tell me where is the restaurant/bar/store?)
 - ◆ Can Do: Students can tell someone how to get from one place to another.
 - Using pictures of directions to teach students vocabulary about direction, including left, right, straight.
 - Teaching students phrases about giving directions, including go straight, turn left, turn right.
 - Pairing students and let them use the map to practice asking for directions and giving directions.

- ◆ Can Do: Students can tell someone where something is located, such as next to, across from.
 - Using map and pictures of places to teach students vocabulary about locations, including near, next to, across from, on the left, on the right.
 - Teaching students short sentences about giving locations. (Place A is near/next to/across from Place B)
 - Group students and let them practice the sentence using different words of locations.
- ◆ Can Do: Students can identify destinations and major attractions on a travel brochure.
 - Teaching students new vocabulary in the travel brochure, including words about famous locations, directions.
 - Teaching students how to locate places in the downtown map.
 - Let students pick one place in downtown that they are interested in and visit there in weekend. During visiting, take notes or draw a simple map of the place and surroundings.
- ◆ Can Do: Students can describe a location in downtown that they visit using simple phrases and sentences.
 - Helping students review words of different locations and teach them some simple adjectives that can describe these places, including crowded, noisy, clean, quiet.
 - Let students pick one place in downtown that they visited and took notes about. List main information that they are going to present, including location, direction, simple introduction.
 - Group students and let them practice their presentation together and get peer evaluation.

Appendix B: Lesson plan for *Wedding culture*

Lesson Plan

Ruoyu Chen

Topic: Wedding Culture	Class: Reading	Date: 04/08/2016
Content Objectives: 1. SWBAT discuss and list the wedding traditions in their own cultures. 2. SWBAT make comparison between American wedding traditions and their own cultures' wedding traditions.	Language Objectives: 1. SWBAT comprehend the reading material and complete the missing sentences in each paragraph. 2. SWBAT use key vocabulary in their writing. 3. SWBAT introduce the wedding traditions in their own cultures to other students. 4. SWBAT write a short paragraph about the wedding traditions in their own home countries.	
Key Vocabulary: Bride Groom Bridesmaid Best Man Engagement Ring	Materials (including supplementary and adapted): 1. A video clip about a wedding. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jP5xMSHgU0 2. Reading material: 6 things you won't believe happened at weddings I've planned 3. Worksheet	
Introductory Activity: Write "I do" on the whiteboard and ask students in what occasion does this little phrase appear frequently. Ask students what other phrases do people say in the wedding in other cultures and write those phrases on the whiteboard. (5 min) 1. Show students a video clip of a wedding scene from the TV series "Friends". https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jP5xMSHgU0 2. Discuss with students what would happen in the next scene of this video and let students share their unforgettable experiences of attending a wedding.		
Time: 8 min	What steps, procedures, components of your objectives do you need to identify or explicitly teach? 1. Ask students to scan the text. Explain to student that scanning text means to read a text quickly and to find particular information. And tell them that the text is about 6 things that the author met at weddings and their task is to find as many vocabulary that are related to wedding as possible. When a student sees a related word, he needs to say the word quickly and loudly. And the first student who	

7 min	says each wedding word will get a reward.
8min	2. Get students in small groups and ask them to work on the worksheet. Explain to students that their task is to fill in the right word that matches the picture. Make sure students check their worksheet with other students in the group.
5min	3. Explain to students that the last sentences of each paragraph are missing. Students read the text for the second time and match a sentence that is on the worksheet with a paragraph. And then compare answers with the whole class.
8min	4. Ask students to look at the table about wedding traditions on the worksheet. Explaining to students how to fill in the chart while teacher fill in the chart with American wedding traditions.
8min	5. Get students who share the same cultures in small groups and ask them to work on the wedding tradition chart and try best to use the key words when filling the chart. Communicating in their native language is allowed.
1min	6. Bring groups together and ask each group to present their cultures' wedding traditions.
Total: 50 min	7. Ask students to write a paragraph about their cultures' wedding traditions based on the chart they complete in the class as homework.

Appendix C: IPA for unit plan

IPA (Unit: Going to downtown!)

Ruoyu Chen

Authentic Text:

Downtown Nashville is the hub of the entertainment that defines Music City. Within mere city blocks, visitors can experience world-class art at the Frist Center for Visual Arts, catch a great Broadway play at the amazing Tennessee Performing Arts Center (TPAC), and see world-class concerts and events at the Bridgestone Arena.

Within walking distance is the legendary Ryman Auditorium regarded as the “Mother Church of Country Music.” The Ryman is a National Historic Landmark renown for its exceptional acoustics that has hosted musicians from Chris Isaak and James Brown to Patsy Cline and John Legend, as well as current and rising stars of all musical genres.

Wash it all down while enjoying some of the world’s greatest live music – offered free 24/7/365 – at one of the city’s many honky-tonks that line famous Broadway, including Tootsie’s, Robert’s Western World, The Stage, and Layla’s Bluegrass Inn.

Just a couple blocks from the music on Broadway is one of Nashville’s most vibrant art communities located on 5th Avenue of the Arts. This is the location of several art galleries including The Arts Company, The Rymer Gallery, and Tinney Contemporary. Each one offers a unique experience and showcases multiple art exhibits throughout the year featuring both local and international artists. Each month, everyone is invited to participate in the “First Saturday Art Crawl” allowing you to see Nashville’s growing art scene. Over 20 art venues participate presenting every genre of art which provides a truly artistic experience in Music City.

Part I. Interpretive Assessment

I. Key Word Recognition: Find in the article the English word/phrase that best expresses the meaning of each of the following definitions.

1. (Location): A noun that describes the place where something is at.
2. (Gallery): A room where works of art are displayed.
3. (Distance): A noun that describes the size of gap between two places.
4. (Downtown): The business district of a town or city.
5. (Concert): A performance of music by player or singers.
6. (Block): An area in a city surrounded by streets.

II. Main Idea: Using information from the article, provide the main idea(s) of the article in English.

III. Important words and phrases. For each of the following,

- Circle the letter of each detail that is mentioned in the article.
- Write the information that is given in the article in the space provided next to the

detail below.

- A. The interesting places in Nashville downtown:
- B. The location of art gallery in downtown:
- C. The famous restaurants in Nashville:
- D. The famous church in downtown:
- E. The art activities in Nashville downtown:

IV. Guessing Meaning From Context. Indicate the meaning of the following word from the context in the article.

- a. Downtown Nashville is the hub of the **entertainment** that defines Music City. Entertainment:
- b. The Ryman is a National Historic **Landmark** renown for its exceptional acoustics that has hosted musicians from Chris Isaak and James Brown to Patsy Cline and John Legend, as well as current and rising stars of all musical genres. Landmark:

V. Inferences. Answer the following question by providing as many reasons as you can. Your responses should be in English. Use details from the document to support your answers.

- a. If your friends or family are going to visit Nashville, which place you want to recommend them to have a look?
- b. What places do you think Nashville should have in its downtown?

VI. Author's perspective. Select the perspective or point of view you think the author adopted as he wrote this article and justify your answer with information from the text.

- A. Comic
- B. Factual
- C. Moral/Religious

Justification from text: _____

VII. Comparing Cultural Perspectives. Answer the following questions in English:

- a. Does your home city's downtown have these places for people to have fun? What do they look like?
- b. Do you prefer the downtown in America or the downtown in your home country? Why?

Interpretive Mode Rubric:

CRITERIA	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations		Does Not Meet Expectations
	Accomplished Comprehension	Strong Comprehension	Minimal Comprehension	Limited Comprehension
LITERAL COMPREHENSION				
Word Recognition	Identifies all key words appropriately within context of the text.	Identifies majority of key words appropriately within context of the text.	Identifies half of key words appropriately within the context of the text.	Identifies a few key words appropriately within the context of the text.
Main idea detection	Identifies the complete main idea(s) of the text.	Identifies the key parts of the main idea(s) of the text but misses some elements.	Identifies some part of the main idea(s) of the text.	May identify some ideas from the text but they do not represent the main idea(s).
Supporting detail detection	Identifies all supporting details in the text and accurately provides information from the text to explain these details.	Identifies the majority of supporting details in the text and provides information from the text to explain some of these details.	Identifies some supporting details in the text and may provide limited information from the text to explain these details. Or identifies the majority of supporting details but is unable to provide information from the text to explain these details.	Identifies a few supporting details in the text but may be unable to provide information from the text to explain these details.
INTERPRETIVE COMPREHENSION				
Guessing meaning from context	Infers meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases in the text. Inferences are accurate.	Infers meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases in the text. Most of the inferences are plausible although some may not be accurate.	Infers meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases in the text. Most of the inferences are plausible although many are not accurate.	Inferences of meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases are largely inaccurate or lacking.
Inferences (Reading/ listening/viewing between the lines)	Infers and interprets the text's meaning in a highly plausible manner.	Infers and interprets the text's meaning in a partially complete and/or partially plausible manner.	Makes a few plausible inferences regarding the text's meaning.	Inferences and interpretations of the text's meaning are largely incomplete and/or not plausible.
Author's perspective	Identifies the author's perspective and provides a detailed justification.	Identifies the author's perspective and provides a justification.	Identifies the author's perspective but justification is either inappropriate or incomplete.	Unable to identify the author's perspective.
Cultural perspectives	Identifies cultural perspectives/norms accurately. Provides a detailed connection of cultural products/practices to perspectives.	Identifies some cultural perspectives/norms accurately. Connects cultural products/practices to perspectives.	Identifies some cultural perspectives/norms accurately. Provides a minimal connection of cultural products/practices to perspectives.	Identification of cultural perspectives/norms is mostly superficial or lacking. And/or connection of cultural practices/ products to perspectives is superficial or lacking.

Evidence of Strengths:

Examples of Where You Could Improve:

* The Interpretive Rubric is designed to show the continuum of performance for both literal and interpretive comprehension for language learners regardless of language level. See *Implementing Integrated Performance Assessment*, Chapter 2, for suggestions on how to use this rubric to assign a score or grade.

Appendix D: Experience paper

Experience Paper

Part I. The description of Nolensville road community

Nolensville road community, also known as “international corridor”, is located in the south Nashville. Various international markets, bakeries, café and restaurant line the street, serving cuisine from all around the world and presenting diverse culture in this city.

Nolensville pike began to draw immigrants in the early 1990s because an entrepreneur opened a tortilla factory so the new arrivals came, from Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala and Panama. In 20 years, between 1985 and 2005, a three-block stretch of Nolensville with 42 storefronts went from no business owned by immigrants to 22 (Lind, 2013). Now, Nashville’s foreign-born population is nearing 12 percent. Hispanics are the largest group of newcomers and it also has a sizeable Kurdish population and Somali population. Immigrants from Asia also choose to settle here. Most immigrants operate business in this region and with the help and consultant service provided by Casa Azafran, an immigrant community center, their careers and lives has become better and better (Fitzpatrick, 2015) Walking along the Nolensville road, one will see various texts, like advertisements and posters, in non-English language, artifacts with different cultural features, and colorful decoration in many retailers and shops. Also there are enough access to hearing and speaking other languages because the large group of immigrants are working and living there. All these characteristics offer the community both cultural and linguistic diversity.

Part II. Implementation of texts and artifacts

During visiting the community, I collected many texts and artifacts and found that these

materials would be great teaching appliance to facilitate English instruction to immigrant students. Firstly, teachers can apply texts of different non-English languages to a translation activity in class. When visiting the community, I found that there were various language materials, like advertisements on the walls and signboards and flyers about activities (see pic1-2), including different languages and pictures of other cultures. Teachers can collect some of these texts and bring them to class. After categorizing them according to their languages, students with same native language will be grouped and together work on translating the texts into English. Based on Cummins' interdependence hypothesis, using students' knowledge of their native languages as a resource for learning second language is an efficient way to improve their second language proficiency (de Jong, 2011). This translation activity requires students' first language skills and their ability of English, which will help them to learn different language structures and enhance both their L1 and L2 skills.

Secondly, teachers can let students introduce some artifacts that are special in their home countries' cultures. During the field trip in the community, I noticed that there were a lot of different artifacts and decorations in Casa Afraza center, international markets and restaurants, which made the street colorful and attractive (see pic3-4). Those artifacts all have their own characteristics and present various cultures. Teachers can encourage students to bring some unique artifacts or pictures of them in their cultures and give a simple presentation about its history or story to the whole class. "Highly successful teachers teach to their students' cultural knowledge and experience" (Risko, Dalhouse, 2012). By doing this kind of activity, students will be interested in the topic since it is related to their home

countries and cultures and their self-identities will be enhanced. Also, by giving presentations, students' oral English skills will be improved and through their introduction, teachers will have the access to the cultural backgrounds of their students.

Part III. Become more familiar with the local community

During the field trip in Nolensville road community, I found most of the advertisements and posters are in non-English language, which would cause the language barriers to teachers who try to get familiar with the community. Indeed, as a teacher, it is difficult to learn all the native languages of students and that might get in to way when teachers want to experience the local community and its cultures. However, students know well about their mother tongues, cultures and local community they live in. Thus, teachers can treat students as experts and learn from them through the community literacy project. For example, teachers can encourage students to introduce their native language or the community they live in. By doing these kinds of projects, students will have opportunities to learn about their own cultures and teachers will get to know their students and the local community well.

In addition, organizing a casual gathering in the local community with students' parents can be a great opportunity for teachers to learn more about their students. Teachers and parents can meet at a café or a park in the community and talk about their children, their thoughts about school and class and even their experiences or stories in their home countries. Also, teachers can consult parents about the community or invite them to be a tour guide to visit the community. Through this kind of gathering, parents can know more about their children and their school life, teachers can learn different cultures from these experts.

Reference

- Alfs, L. (2014, December 5). Nolensville pike tells story of Nashville immigrants. The Tennessean. Retrieved from <http://www.tennessean.com/story/news/2014/12/05/nolensville-pike-tells-story-nashvilles-immigrant-community/19982309/>
- De Jong, E. J. (2011). *Foundations for multilingualism in education: From principles to practice*. Caslon Pub..
- Fitzpatrick, M. (2015, May 10). Nashville sets the U.S. bar for welcoming immigrants. CBC News. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/nashville-sets-the-u-s-bar-for-welcoming-immigrants-1.3060046>
- Lind, J.R. (2013, September 12). The world meets south Nashville. Nashville post. Retrieved From https://nashvillepost.com/news/2013/9/12/the_world_meets_south_nashville
- Risko, V. J., & Walker - Dalhouse, D. (2012). *Be that teacher: Breaking the cycle for struggling readers*. Teachers College Press.

Appendix

Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 4



Appendix E: SLA Case study report (Phonology)

Phonology mini-analysis

Part I. Introduction to my participant

My case study participant is Paul. He is thirty-three years old and is a visiting scholar in Vanderbilt University, whose research field is traditional Chinese medicine. Paul is from China and his native language is mandarin. He has been in American for about eight months and he will be come back to China in November. Before he came to Vanderbilt, he was graduated from University of Chinese Medicine and was a doctor in a hospital in Beijing.

Paul started to learn English when he was in middle school. Because at that time, there was no English listening and speaking in the English test of college entrance examination, his listening and speaking skills were not improved during his English education. In college, Paul passed the College English Tests and he focused on learning English for about four months before he came to America. Due to that kind of learning experience, Paul knows a lot of professional vocabularies and can read academic articles but he has low English proficiency in listening and speaking. Though he has been in America for several months, his oral English has not been improved significantly because most of the time he works in the laboratory and he seldom communicate with others.

Part II. Overall assessment of my participant's English phonology abilities

I have collected a twenty-minute audio recording of our interview, which I basically divided into two parts, topics about his research field and other random topics. Because Paul is familiar with his research so when I asked him some questions like “ describe your normal working day in the laboratory” he had more things to talk about.

According to the speech sample, I think Paul's English language abilities has reached the level 4 of high intermediate fluency from the Language Acquisition Chart. My reasons are as follows.

Firstly, during the interview, Paul understood every questions I asked, which showed good comprehension of him. Also, according to my questions and responses, Paul actively engaged in the conversation and produced connected narrative discourse, using accurate and expanded vocabularies and without frequent repeating same words. For instance, when I

asked him about the work experience in America, in his utterance “Em... the (/ze/=/ði/) experience ... eh... study in the (/ze/=/ði/) Vanderbilt is very important (/ɪm'pɔtənt/=ɪm'pɔrtənt/) for me. Besides the (/ze/=/ði/) research skills I learn (/lɜn/=lɜrn/) how to do the (/ze/=/ði/) research. And the (/ze/=/ði/) way to improve my with (/wɪs/=wɪθ/) the (/ze/=/ði/) ...eh... and the (/ze/=/ði/) how to ... how to... work with (/wɪs/=wɪθ/) others (/ʌzɜr/=ʌðɜr/)” we can see that Paul was able to express his thoughts clearly and intelligibly and was familiar with common sentences and phrases.

Secondly, though Paul made some grammatical errors but most of them were considered to be complex errors instead of basic errors. In Paul’s discourse, the most common grammatical error he made was tense errors. For example, He often forgot to use the perfect tense of the verbs when he expressed his words in the perfect tense. Also he sometimes used adverbs in sentences, in which adjective were correct. But all these errors did not make his words very difficult to understand.

Thirdly, Paul made some pronunciation errors during the interview, but in general his English pronunciation was clear and understandable.

Thus, I consider that the level of Paul’s English language skills would be the high intermediate fluency.

Part III. Assessment of my participant’s English phonology skills

a. Pronunciation. According to the speech sample, Paul’s pronunciation was pretty accurate and understandable. Among all his pronunciation errors, the most frequent and typical errors is that Paul could not differentiate /θ/, /ð/ sounds and /s/, /z/ sounds, which is the most common pronunciation variants of most of Chinese English language learners. For example, in Paul’s utterance “And there (/zeər/=ðeər/) are big carrier, aircraft carrier. Em... very beautiful. The (/ze/=/ði/) weather (/wezər/=weðər/) good”, all /ð/ sound was pronounced /z/ sound. This kind of error can be related to his native language Chinese.

According to the contrastive analysis hypothesis, the divergent second language phonological patterns can be explained on account of differences between the native language and the second language. That is to say, the native language background will influence the second

language learning. In mandarin Chinese phonetic system, there is no /θ/ and /ð/ sounds and other sound that needed to be pronounced with both tongue and teeth. Thus without effective instruction and enough practice, Paul could not make the correct pronunciation so he replaced these two sounds with other two similar /s/ and /z/ sounds from Chinese phonetic system. “Those elements that are similar to this native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult” (Lado, 1957).

b. Fluency. Reviewing the transcript, Paul paused and repeated some words for many times and basically there are two kinds of disfluency happened in his speech. The first one is that Paul always paused when he had difficulties finding the accurate vocabularies to express his thoughts. For example, in his speech “And the (/ze/=/ði/) way to improve my ... my... improve my with () the (/ze/=/ði/) ...eh... and the (/ze/=/ði/) how to ... how to... work with (/wɪs/=/wɪθ/) others (/ʌzɜrz/=/'ʌðɜrz/)", Paul seems to have been searching for a phrase meaning “communication skills” and he made a short explanation of that meaning with the clause “how to work with others”. This kind of disfluency is due to Paul’s limited English vocabulary. The second one is that Paul tended to repeated the initial consonant of some long and complicate words. For instance, his speech “In morning, we use to take short conference... short... short talk about the (/ze/=/ði/) ... the (/ze/=/ði/)... experiment and then (/zɛn/=/ðɛn/) we will do the (/ze/=/ði/) ex... ex... experiment” shows that Paul had troubles in pronouncing the word “experiment” fluently. Since in mandarin Chinese system most characters are monosyllabic, which is different from English system, before Chinese English learners need to pronounce a long English word with many syllables, like “experiment”, they have to consider all the sounds and stresses in that word, which will cause pauses and disfluency.

c. Intonation. According to the audio record, there is one distinct feature of Paul’s speech. That is there was no obvious stress in his speech and his intonation was much more flat than native English speakers. As Paul’s native language, mandarin Chinese is a syllabic-timed language, while English is stress-timed. Many Chinese English learners may read and speak English in a syllabic-timed rhythm (Li, Zhang, Li, Lo, & Meng, 2010). Also, according to the

critical period hypothesis, Paul did not develop the knowledge and the awareness of English intonation and also did not be exposed to an English-speaking environment at his “best” time, thus it will take him a lot of efforts to master the English intonation after that sensitive period (Baker, Trofimovich, Flege, Mack, & Halter, 2007).

Part IV. Further English learning suggestion

In general, Paul is able to communicate with people in English intelligibly and completely. According to his current status, my suggestions about his further English learning are as follows. Firstly, since the driving force behind learning a second language is meaningful communication, hanging out with some native English speakers each week can be a good way for Paul to practice his English speaking (de Jong, 2011). What’s more, imitating the native English speakers’ speech, such as news broadcast, can help Paul improve his English intonation.

Reference

- Baker, W., Trofimovich, P., Flege, J. E., Mack, M., & Halter, R. (2007). Child—Adult Differences in Second-Language Phonological Learning: The Role of Cross-Language Similarity. *Language and Speech, 51*(4), 317-342.
- de Jong, E. J. (2011). *Foundations for multilingualism in education: From principles to practice*. Caslon Pub.
- Lado, R. (1957). *Linguistic across cultures: Applied linguistics for language teachers*. University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor.
- Li, K., Zhang, S., Li, M., Lo, W. K., & Meng, H. (2010, November). Detection of intonation in L2 English speech of native Mandarin learners. In *Chinese Spoken Language Processing (ISCSLP), 2010 7th International Symposium on* (pp. 69-74). IEEE.

Appendix F: Lesson plan for task-based learning**Lesson Plan
Ruoyu Chen****Second Hour of the Unit: Lesson Overview**

Teacher / School	English teacher / ESL School, Novice Mid student
Unit Theme:	Let's go to downtown
Which "Can Do" statements for this unit will students be making progress on today?	<p>Student can tell someone where something is located.</p> <p>Student can describe a place with simple vocabulary and sentences.</p> <p>Students can identify destinations and major attractions on a travel brochure.</p>
Which standards will students be making progress on today?	<p>Novice-level speakers can communicate short messages on highly predictable, everyday topics that affect them directly. They do so primarily through the use of isolated words and phrases that have been encountered, memorized, and recalled. Novice-level speakers may be difficult to understand even by the most sympathetic interlocutors accustomed to non-native speech.</p> <p>Writers at the Novice level are characterized by the ability to produce lists and notes, primarily by writing words and phrases. They can provide limited formulaic information on simple forms and documents. These writers can reproduce practiced material to convey the most simple messages. In addition, they can transcribe familiar words or phrases, copy letters of the alphabet or syllables of a syllabary, or reproduce basic characters with some accuracy.</p>
Time:	50min
Materials Needed:	<p>Pictures of famous places</p> <p>Pictures of key words</p> <p>Travel Brochure</p> <p>Blank Posters</p>
Methodological Approach:	Communicative language teaching, task-based instruction
What is this lesson's connection to other lessons in this unit?	This lesson will help students retrieve the wordlist that they have learnt in day 1 and will improve their communication skills through group discussion, which will benefit their presentational competence.

Second Hour of the Unit: Lesson Plan

Stage	Teacher Activity	Student Activity	Issues Anticipated	Time	Materials Used
1) Preparation the night before	Choose several famous places from students' home country. Print several pictures of each place and bring them to the class. Writing a short introduction for one famous place (Great Wall) using key words. Bring pictures of key words.	Review what they have learnt in previous class, including word list, three stories, and sentence structures.	Students will be able to memorize the key words and can match with their meanings.	20min	Pictures
2) Opening activity Retrieval Practice	Writing several key words on the board and place matched pictures next to them.	Students are encouraged to match the words with the right pictures on the board.	Students will be able to understand these words and match them with pictures.	5min	Pictures
3) Pre-Task	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Show students a travel brochure and tell them that they are going to create a travel brochure together. Pass student the short introduction paragraph of Great Wall to them and analyze the vocabulary and sentence structures in detail to make sure they have a 	Students will understand the mentor text (short introduction) and its vocabulary and grammar. Students will be grouped and offered pictures and posters.	Students will be able to understand the instruction.	10min	Travel Brochure

	writing model to follow.				
4) Task	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Group students and give each group pictures of one famous place, some key information (location, feature), and a blank poster. 2. Ask them to discuss about the place's location and features and using the poster to make one page of a travel brochure using words from the lists. 	<p>Students will discuss in English about the famous place and come up with several key points that they are going to put on their poster.</p> <p>They will write a short introduction paragraph for the famous place on the poster and decorate it with pictures.</p>	<p>Students will be able to communicate with peers in simple English about locations and place features.</p> <p>They will be able to use teacher's short paragraph as a model to write and design their posters.</p>	15min	Poster Pictures
5) Planning/Report	<p>Ask each group to show and introduce their poster in front of the class.</p> <p>Help them with their presentation when they have difficulties to explain their work.</p>	<p>Students will practice a short and simple presentation about introducing their posters and present their result in front of the class.</p>	<p>Students will be able to talk about their posters in short sentences.</p>	10min	
6) Analysis/Assessment	<p>Minute paper: ask students to write about what they have learned through this task, what they found difficult to do during the task, what</p>	<p>Student will evaluate this task by answering several questions.</p>		5min	

	they can improve next time, and what they did well this time.				
7) Closing	Tell students several key features of these famous places and let them guess which place is mentioned. Such as “What place is located in China, built with stones and very long?”	Student will guess the place when they are provided with key information about this place.	Students will understand the questions and memorize the name of these famous places.	5min	

Short introduction of the Great Wall:

The Great Wall **is located** in Beijing, China. It is built with stones and it is very long. **During holiday**, many people go to the Great Wall to **enjoy** beautiful views. **Near** the Great Wall, **there are** many restaurants. **Next to** these restaurants, **there are** also many souvenir shops where you can buy some special things. The Great Wall **is a great place for** people to visit and have fun.

Appendix G: Observation paper

Observation of the ESL to go program

Last week we visited the ESL to go program at a local church and observed the literacy English class and the intermediate English class. The environment of the church was great. It was quiet and had enough classrooms for students. There were about fifteen students in each class and they sat round a table so they could easily talk to their classmates. There were some interesting decorations in the classrooms, such as posters of other languages and mini-sized delicate sculptures, which have shown the cultural diversity of the students. Also there was a big poster of English alphabet on the wall, which would help students to read and memorize it. During the interview, we knew that the teaching process were usually divides into four parts, including presentation, practice, production and students' talking, but since we had limited time to observe, so we only watch the first part of the class, which still illuminated my understanding of ESL class.

Teaching Materials

In the literacy class, since most of the students have never learned English, the main content of the course is English letters. Every student had an alphabet book, which included the instruction of the writing of letters, simple vocabularies, and many pictures and exercises. Because of the students' limited English proficiencies, teachers could not make a lot of conversations with them. Therefore, the usage rate of the workbook was high and many class activities were based on it. In addition, the teacher has prepared some letter cards and vocabulary cards to let students read and answer questions.

In the intermediate class, each student had a piece of paper with new vocabularies and phrases and matching pictures. Since the main content of that class was common medical terms, the teacher also brought some small medical equipment, like stethoscope and blood pressure monitor, to the class in order to make students learn more about these knowledge. Because students in the intermediate class were ready to produce English language, the paper with the course content was only used at the beginning of the class.

It is obvious that the teaching materials in these two levels classrooms are different. Students in the basic level class rely more on the alphabet book because they are not ready to

have the whole comprehension of the class and the knowledge. On the contrary, the less frequent use of the teaching materials allows students to produce English more actively because they can talk about the knowledge that are not on the materials. Thus, from my perspective, teachers in these two classes have made good use of their teaching materials according to their students' current English levels and have made their classes effective and meaningful.

Teaching Methods

In the literacy class, there were several things that had attracted my attention. Firstly, the teacher used a lot of gestures during her presentation in order to make it easier and more understandable for the students. For example, the teacher wrote some letters slowly in the air with her fingers so that her students could learn clearly the writing of these letters. Also, the teacher used simple words and expressions consciously to explain the knowledge so that all students could keep up with the course easily. Secondly, though the teacher cannot understand the native language of her students, she allowed them to speak their mother tongues in class. It can help students to follow the teacher because when some students do not understand teacher's explanations or instructions, they can ask help of their classmates who can speak the same native language. Thirdly, the most questions that the teacher asked their students were yes/no questions. Since students in the basic level class are still not be able to speak a whole clear sentence in English, answering yes or no is much easier for them and also allowed teachers to know if they have understand new knowledge.

In the intermediate class, teacher used more complicated words and sentences in English during her presentation. Also, she tried to let her students to speak English frequently by asking them questions, letting then read the new vocabularies, and setting up a scenario to have proper conversations with them. Since students in the intermediate class had higher English proficiencies, they could all follow the teacher's lead and participate in the class activities. There was one game in the class has left me deep impression. Basically, it was a simple game that when the teacher was reading a story aloud, students need to raise their vocabulary cards when these words were mentioned in the story. Actually, reading aloud is

beneficial for students of all ages since it allows the teacher to involve students in the pleasure function of print and to develop general knowledge and literacy notions about story plots and characters (Peregoy & Boyle, 2013). Students paid much attention on both the story and the new vocabularies, which enhanced their listening skills and comprehension.

Though many students in this program have low English proficiency, in the class there was no bilingual instruction for them since there were so many different languages and providing interpretation is impossible. So it is important for teachers to tailor their teaching strategies according to the students' current English proficiency. Since teacher in these two classrooms all modified their teaching method, like deliberately speaking slowly and clearly, students in these two classrooms were very concentrated in the course and have actively participates in the class.

In addition, the activities and games organized by the teachers were effective and meaningful. A good teacher should see teaching as a goal-directed activity and when they encourage their students to engage in various activities in the class, they should know how to accomplish their goals and do so on a regular basis (Byrnes & Wasik, 2009). As far as I am concerned, the two teachers did a great job in conducting classroom activities. Teacher in the literacy class chose a simple game of questions and answers for students in order to improve their motivation and enhance the knowledge. Teacher in the intermediate class chose a more complicated activity to attract students' attention and consolidate the key knowledge.

In summary, the ESL classroom is very important for refugees since it is the first line of defense the cultural shock when they first come to America. It serves both refugees' need of a safe harbor and their need of tools of survival. So the ESL teacher need to instruct them how to communicate effectively, a basic and critical skills for refugees to adapt into a new culture (Lucey, M., Chaffee, M., Terry, D., Le Marbre, J., Stone, B., & Wiencek, D, 2000). Also, most refugees who just come to America are in the silent stage when they still do not accommodate to the strange environment and culture and are unwilling to socialize or communicate with others. Thus the ESL teacher need to put students' emotional needs into considerations and help them to find ways to communicate to get them through the period of

adjustment (Cristina, 1995). From my perspective, the classes in the ESL to go program have not only helped students to improve their English proficiency, but also provided them a warm and friendly environment to build their social network and gain confidence.

Reference

- Byrnes, J. P., & Wasik, B. A. (2009). *Language and literacy development: What educators need to know*. Guilford Press. (Ch. 12; p. 339)
- Cristina, I. (1995). *The inner world of the immigrant child*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. (Ch. 2; p. 38)
- Lucey, M., Chaffee, M., Terry, D., Le Marbre, J., Stone, B., & Wiencek, D. (2000). *Mental Health and the ESL Classroom: A Guide for Teachers Working with Refugees*.
- Peregoy, S. F., Boyle, O. F. (2013). *Reading, writing, and learning in ESL: A resource book for K-12 teachers*. Pearson Education, Inc. (Ch.5; p. 200)