

Capstone EFL portfolio  
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### **Abstract**

This EFL portfolio reflects what I have learned in the two-year program of English Language Learners in Vanderbilt University. It combines all I have learned in different courses and my own experiences in practicums. I also demonstrate my understanding in teaching English as a second language.

There are three sections in this portfolio: philosophy of teaching, professional knowledge, and final reflection and application. In the first part, I focus on three different theories in education. They are Constructivism's perspective, Sociocultural theory, and Chomsky's viewpoint of language acquisition. I also show my understanding of these theories and combine them to create my own philosophy of teaching. In the second part, I use theories in my teaching philosophy to analyze my artifacts and interpret my understanding in different teaching domains. In the last part, I make a reflection about my experiences in practicum courses to show how I applied these theories in real teaching and where I should make progress. In addition, I propose some possible applications in my future teaching based on my teaching philosophy.

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### **Philosophy of teaching**

After three semester's learning in ELL program, I have learned a lot about how to support ELL students in teaching. There are a lot of theories of multilingual education, and different views of teaching and learning. In addition to my learning experience in the classroom, I also have opportunities to put theories into practice by visiting local schools and being teaching assistant in ESL courses. These learning experiences help me summarize my own teaching philosophy which can be implemented in future teaching.

My philosophy of teaching is mainly constituted by Constructivism's perspective, Sociocultural theory, and Chomsky's viewpoint of language acquisition. These theories converge on the importance of creating a student-centered learning process. In addition, improving students' higher-order thinking skill and communicative competences are also indispensable. In order to achieve these goals, I will connect these theories and put them into practice. In constructivism's view, the background and culture of the learner are important parts in teaching and learning because constructivists believe that human can acquire knowledge through the interaction between their experiences and ideas. Therefore, I will value diverse cultural experiences in classroom practice (de Jong, 2009), and affirm students' identities. It also emphasizes that the learner should be actively involved in the learning process and relate to their prior experiences. In my opinion, it has similarity with Noam Chomsky's theory. Chomsky believed that it is important for human to interact with the society and gain communicative competences when they are learning, so he focused on competence and performance in language learning, which gave rise to Communicative Language Teaching. This approach regards interaction as an important goal of study, so I think cooperative learning and alternative assessment can be used to pursue this goal

because they pay a lot attention to communication and interaction. Besides students' engagement, teachers also play important roles in the class. Teachers need to provide students with supportive environment, materials, and modeling so that students can have an effective learning process. Therefore, Vygotsky's concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is a good way for teachers to realize how to support students' learning. Based on my understanding of ZPD, teachers should provide scaffolding for students by showing them what they should do in classes, and giving them opportunities to do tasks or activities with peers. Scaffolded opportunities should result in students being able to do these things individually. In this process, students should be fully engaged and the teacher needs to facilitate their involvement.

### **Students' Cultures and Backgrounds**

According to sociocultural theory, society makes an important contribution to individual development. It also emphasizes that human learning is a kind of social process, which should connect with people's interaction, culture, and backgrounds. Vygotsky (1978) also mentioned that parents, peers, and culture are responsible for developing higher order thinking skill. Therefore, in my teaching, I will take advantage of students' different cultures and backgrounds in class. If students find that their own cultures, languages, and knowledge can be used in learning, they are more willing to interact with each other and be active in class activities.

At first, I pay attention to leverage students' funds of knowledge. As De Jong (2009) pointed out, the notion of funds of knowledge is students' knowledge acquired from their families and the community. As for me, adding their funds of knowledge to class activities can help students acquire new knowledge efficiently, since they see what they are learning

has a connection with their own lives. Therefore, students can know the reason for learning. Also, teachers can encourage students to bring and share their knowledge and skills in the class. It can not only enhance access to curriculum but also establish a meaningful relationship between teachers and students. Thus, students can realize they are valued by the teacher and peers, so they are more willing to talk and engage in class rather than listen to the teacher passively.

In addition to students' funds of knowledge, their native languages can also be used in teaching. One reflection of taking advantage of students' languages is translanguaging, which can help students develop multiple languages proficiencies (Cummins, 2007). "Translanguaging practices include code-switching, translating, and language brokering, or interpreting between culturally and linguistically diverse individuals" (Tse, 1996). By using translanguaging, students can apply their own languages and knowledge to classes and have time to communicate with peers.

Further, knowing students' family backgrounds is another important part for my teaching. I believe that if family are involved in students' learning, they can be more active and dedicate their time to participate in class activities. Since students' backgrounds might be different, it is necessary to collect students' family information and think about how to connect them with curriculum.

### **Communicative Language Teaching**

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is based on the notion that language should develop in a supportive social context (Curran, 1972). Therefore, communication and social interaction are significant factors in the teaching process. In terms of communication, I think the teacher should design class activities which need group work or students'

cooperation so that they can interact with each other. As for social interaction, the teacher should bring authentic materials in the class and involve a part of students' own experience. Thus, students cannot only acquire knowledge but also improve communicative competence and higher order thinking skill.

Wilhelm (1999) mentions that language learning "occur best in situations which encourage negotiation of meaning and learner collaboration with other learners." Therefore, giving students opportunities to do assignments or think about questions independently are important. As for me, I believe that cooperative learning can be a good way to help students think independently and learn from each other. In order to facilitate cooperative learning, the classroom arrangement should be convenient for group work. Meanwhile, students can participate in some activities which they are interested in. These activities should be related to students' lives so that students can have a clear link between class and outside world. In this way, students can improve their communicative and higher order thinking skills by negotiating and collaborating with others.

In addition to the learning process, another important factor in teaching is assessment. Since I believe in the benefits of student-centered and social interaction, I will definitely evaluate my students by alternative assessment. Alternative assessment, also called authentic assessment, is a kind of assessment which emphasizes authentic tasks that require students to apply what they have learned. Brophy (2004) mentioned that assessment information will be most useful when it can reflect progress made towards major instructional goals. Applied linguists also attempt to construct communicative competence within the context of language assessment (Celce-Murcia, Dornyei & Thurrell, 1995). Therefore, authentic assessment, which focuses on evaluating students' performance, can

give students more opportunities to practice language, improve higher order thinking skill, and reach communicative goals. Furthermore, different authentic tasks, such as debate or role play, can encourage students' engagement, since they are more interesting and vivid than standardized assessment. Thus, the class can be more student-centered.

### **Supporting student's learning**

In my view, the role of teachers is not only to dispense knowledge, but also to cultivate independent thinkers, to respect students' ideas, and learn from students. One critical concept for supporting students' learning is "zone of proximal development" of Vygotsky (1962), which is an area between what a learner can do without help and what can be done by assistance. In second language learning, Krashen also proposed similar theory. His *i+1* model suggested that students should be exposed to language that is a little above their current proficiency level (Krashen, 1985). Therefore, as a teacher, providing appropriate assistance to students can be helpful for their learning. Meanwhile, scaffolding students within a zone of proximal development (Griffin & Cole, 1984) is significant. When the teacher gives students a task to do, the teacher needs to make sure the task is beyond students' current ability but is not a big challenge for them. During the task, the teacher should give modeling for students so they can know how to do. After that, the teacher can provide students with supportive materials, such as handouts, slides, organizers, etc. and when students are doing tasks, the teacher can take rotation to observe different student's work and give individual instruction or feedback. By this way, students can have an opportunity to think and learn independently. Besides providing assistance for students, leveraging students' prior knowledge is also necessary. Hammond and Gibbons (2005) mentioned that considering students' prior knowledge and experience are critical elements



in scaffolding, and locating new learning in students' prior knowledge can facilitate students to engage in learning. As for teachers, using students' prior knowledge and experiences in their teaching can let students feel that they are valued and be more willing to engage.

We should admit that scaffolding plays an important role in student's learning development. Besides that, assigning students with meaningful tasks can also support their learning. When I was learning the course of EFL Methods, the most impressive approach for me is task-based language teaching. In my opinion, task can help students understand their learning goals and know what they are doing. In addition, tasks are more practical and attractive than lecture. Therefore, students will be more willing to share their opinions and engage in classes. Task-based language teaching is goal-oriented, which can motivate students to learn by doing meaningful tasks to achieve various goals. It usually contains three parts: pre-task, task cycle, and language focus. In pre-task, the teacher should introduce topic and task so that students can prepare themselves to the task. And in task cycle, teachers should facilitate students to do the task and be supportive. The last part is language focus, which asks students to analyze their own works and practice new things occurring in the task. In this cycle of learning, students can acquire new knowledge by experience and cooperation with others.

In my opinion, students need assistance and support especially when they are learning writing, because it requires students to combine strategies, methods, and skills with their own independent thinking. Therefore, in order to develop students' writing skills, I will focus on Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) Instruction. It is an approach that helps students learn specific strategies for planning, drafting, and revising text in writing.

In this learning process, students are treated as active collaborators (Graham & Perin, 2007). It “develops self-efficacy for writing, and attributions to strategy knowledge and effect” (Harris, Graham, Friedlander, & Laud, 2013). The six stages of SRSD are: develop background knowledge, describe it, model it, memorize it, support it, and independent use (Graham & Perin, 2007). In addition, it focuses on using culturally appropriate texts, engaging students’ voices, and incorporating students’ funds of knowledge, since teachers can use culturally knowledge, prior knowledge to make learning more relevant to students’ lives (Toppel, 2015).

As I bring together these theoretical strands, I am led to emphasize interactivity, authenticity, students’ culture and identity, and scaffolding in my future teaching. these concepts are lenses that guide my practice of teaching and help me analyze pedagogical artifacts in different domains of teaching.

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Wilhelm (1999)

## Professional Knowledge

### Domain 1: Planning

In my view, planning is a significant part of teaching. Before each class, teachers should have an instructional plan which can help students meet learning goals step by step. In the perspective of culturally responsive pedagogy, communication and interaction are important for students' learning. The teacher's role in classrooms is a facilitator. Therefore, instructional plans should contain different tasks or activities to promote students' engagement and the class is student-centered while the teacher can facilitate students to improve higher-order thinking.

The artifact which I chose to express my understanding of planning is a lesson plan designed for 4<sup>th</sup> grader Chinese students in EFL Methods course. Since I believe that scaffolding is a way to help students learning independently, my lesson plan emphasizes that teacher introduce and model at first, and then students do tasks individually. In addition, I think cooperative learning can not only let students think independently but also learn from each other. Therefore, all activities in my lesson plan need group work. In my design, the unit theme is Beast Fable, and this lesson focuses on "Shepherd Boy and Wolf", a story talks about honesty. The learning goals for students are understanding the main words in the text, using these words to make sentences, and understand the meaning of the text.

At the beginning of the lesson plan, I played a video of the story so that students can have a big idea of it. I also used slides and handouts to give them introductions of the story and activities so they can know what to do in this class. After that, I divided students into different groups to do the task which asked them to change the story to a play. In this task, students can work together and contribute different ideas to making the play. Through this

kind of cooperative learning, students can not only know how to cooperate with others but also learn from each other. It can also help them to improve communicative competence. During group work, they need to know how to negotiate, appeal for help, ask for information, be polite, etc. Thus, they have the opportunity to practice language and learn to communicate with others. In addition, if a student has questions, he or she can figure them out by peers' help. Students can also share their opinions, combine them, and then finish a play by themselves. In this learning process, I am a facilitator and observer. If students have difficulties, I can provide them with my ideas. I also have rotations in each group to observe their learning and facilitate their engagement.

After students finish their task, I decide to let them present their plays. This is another way for them to have output and input of the language. In addition, it is a meaning-based task which focuses on understanding the meaning of the Beast Fable, so presentation can let students know different perspectives about this story. Therefore, they can have a more complete and comprehensive understanding of its meaning.

In addition to understand the whole text, students also need to understand main words meanings in the text. In order to reach this learning goal, I give students forms in which they need to fill out words meanings and sample sentences. This is a whole classroom activity, so everyone can share his or her idea. Through this activity, I want to use authentic questions, such as "if you are a shepherd, what do you do?". I think it is important to mention because it is a way to facilitate students' higher order thinking. Besides authentic questions, I can also use other tools. An example is that I want to students to understand "flock" and "creep out", I can use a picture of a flock of birds, or a video of a thief creep out of a house. These kinds of authentic materials can help students understand these words

better and link what they learn with the outside world.

As for assessing, I use a performance assessment which is performing their plays. In the end, I use IPA chart to assess students' performance. This rubric focuses on their language performance, such as their comprehension, language control, and organization of discourse. It is a way to help the teacher know students' language proficiency and whether they understand the meaning of the text.

Overall, I felt this lesson plan was well-aligned with my philosophy of teaching because it contains cooperative learning, so students can have opportunities to communicate and negotiate with each other. Further, it also exhibited my idea of using authentic assessment to improve students' communicative and comprehensive competences.

### **Domain 2: Instructing**

In terms of instructing, it contains important aspects of my philosophy of teaching to the way students make connections between old and new knowledge, the way teachers facilitate and support those connections, and the manner in which students interact with each other.

The artifact which I choose is a lesson plan for my practicum course. I took my practicum in Vanderbilt GES course. Students in this class are ELLs and spouses of Vanderbilt students. One of the course goals is to provide students with opportunities to interact with each other and practice English. In addition, the course also focuses on helping students know more words, phrases, and sentences to interact with other people in different situations. Based on both goals, I created activities to facilitate them talking to each other and teach them useful phrases and sentences.

In order to leverage students' prior knowledge, I chose my topic as "communicating with customer service" based on pre-class survey. In this survey, my mentor teacher and I asked students about their interests and demands of topics they want to practice. Since the majority of them have experiences of interacting with customer service, students can easily connect what they will learn to their prior knowledge. At first, I used a video of a conversation in car rental center which they were familiar with. After they watched the video, I gave students an opportunity to discuss what happened and evaluate customer service in this video. I provided students with guiding questions, such as "Why was the man (Jerry Seinfeld) frustrated? How did the woman deal with the problem?", which can facilitate them to communicate with others by discussion. Besides that, I asked them to share their own experiences with customer service representatives so that they can take advantage of their prior knowledge. I believe these are also instances of CLT which focuses on students' communication and interaction.

Besides leveraging students' prior knowledge, I also focus on scaffolding so that students can learn in ZPD. At first, I created a supportive learning environment for them. I designed different tasks related to the topic so that they can have enough time to practice and communicate; I used different vision aids, such as video, slides, and handouts which can help them understand and memorize the content; I asked students to sit and discuss in small groups so that they did not have pressure to speak in front of the whole class. In addition, before students did tasks, I always offered materials and modeling to support them. At the end of the class, students needed to write dialogues based on different scenarios. In order to support them, I gave students handouts of useful phrases, asked students to learn phrases in groups, and explained these phrases to them. I also asked them to reorganize a



conversation which was related to customer service. Thus, they can understand what this kind of dialogue looks like. And before they did each activity, I always did the task first to give them an example, so they can have a better understanding of it. Last but not least, I believe the sequencing of tasks also providing a scaffolding for students, because “each task served as the building block for the next” (Hammond and Gibbons, 2005).

### **Domain 3: Assessing**

Assessment plays a powerful role in academic learning. As a teacher, it is important to test students’ academic performance to make decisions for future planning and instruction. Based on my teaching philosophy, I prefer to use authentic assessment to evaluate students’ performance and give students constructive feedbacks for their future development. The artifact which I use in assessing is the final report of in Education Linguistics course. In this report, interviews and writing samples are two way for me to assess my participant’s English proficiency.

From sociocultural theory’s view, it is important to know learners’ backgrounds since their language learning closely connect with social and cultural environment. Therefore, I designed an interview to know her English learning background. In this interview, I asked questions such as “How long have you been learning English?”, “What improves your English most”, etc. Besides the interview, I also described the environment and situation of learning English in China which has a great impact on Chinese students. In the light of the information, I had an understanding of my participant’s learning backgrounds.

After knowing my participant’s learning background, I focused on assessing her English language proficiency. In order to have an overall assessment of her English proficiency, I used Language SLA chart to analyze another interview between my

participant and I. This interview emphasized on daily conversation rather than an academic one, so my participant can feel more comfortable about familiar topics. The sample questions in the interview are “How was your holiday?”, “What kind of food did you taste?”, etc. According to this chart, her English proficiency is in level four, which means her English is in high intermediate fluency. Generally, she can express her thoughts completely most of the time except sometimes she forgets some specific words. Further, she is capable of participating in everyday conversations though sometimes she depends on context to understand meanings. But to some extent, she shows good comprehension and can engage in conversations in daily life. In terms of vocabulary, I used an online tool called Test Your Vocab to test her vocabulary. This tool asked her to choose the words she can recognize and then gives a result of her vocabulary volume. The result shows that she knows about 6,000 words, which is lower than level four. However, I think this tool can only be a reference to her English proficiency, since it has two problems. One is that it contains vocabulary that is uncommonly used in daily life. The other is that the number of words is limited, and they cannot represent the whole vocabulary. Therefore, it cannot reflect a comprehensive result of her language ability. Drawing on my theoretical framework, I believe authentic assessment, such as writing journals or retelling a story, can give me more information. These assessments pay attention to students’ own experience and knowledge, so students can share more opinions and give more output on it.

After analyzing my participant’s English abilities, I also give her some suggestions to further develop her English proficiency. One suggestion I mentioned is that she can listen to some audio materials, such as VOA English and broadcast, sentence by sentence. According to Krashen’s Input Hypothesis, students can progress if they have an input of

language which is more advanced than their current levels. Therefore, listening to news may be a challenge for her since she cannot totally understand, but after she gets enough input, she can progress. Another advice is that she can communicate with a native English speaker, and let the person tell her wrong pronunciations. According to the Monitor Hypothesis, it is important to find a person or device that can help language learners to edit their language performance. Therefore, if she finds someone who can talk English with her, once she makes a mistake, the person can help her to revise. This also related to my philosophy of giving students chances to communicate with others.

#### **Domain 4: Identity and Context**

In socioculturalism's perspective, learning language always connects with learner's social environment. One implication of this theory is that schools and teachers knowing students' social background and helping them realize their identities can improve their language learning. The artifacts are photos for a field trip in J.E. Moss Elementary School. After my observation, I realized how the teacher respects students' identities and how the school provides students with a supportive learning environment.

The language policy in J.E. Moss Elementary School is English-only. Ms. William's, a teacher in this school, told us that J.E. Moss doesn't offer bilingual education because of the lack of bilingual educators and resources. Another reason is that the student population is so diverse that it is impossible to cluster a sufficient number of students to establish a bilingual program. The class I observed was Ms. Tarkington's class. She asked students to say "good morning" to their classmates in both English and Spanish at the beginning of the class, which meant other languages were not forbidden in the classroom, but the whole class is still English dominant. The materials were in English, and even the communication

between students was English.

Although the language policy in JE Moss is English-only policy, I still found some characteristics to show that the school and teachers value students' cultures and identities. De Jong (2009) states that in order to apply the Principle of Affirming Identities, teachers should provide students with opportunities to display their knowledge and skills. We can see that the Principle of Affirming Identities values diverse cultural experiences in classroom practice. In terms of Ms. Tarkington's class, she usually interacted with students by using the IRE pattern. When the students answered questions, she often gave some short comments and asked about other students' opinions. In addition, when she found that students were quiet or distracted, she called students' names and let them express their perspectives. Also, when the teacher gave a lecture, she used soccer, which students were familiar with, as an example, and give them the opportunity to discuss it. In addition, Moll, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992) mention that teachers sometimes should be co-researchers to study the funds of knowledge of students, because teaching and learning can be motivated by students' interests and engagement. In Ms. Tarkington's example, she combined students interests with learning, so it really helped students to be engaged. After the school investigation, I went to Facebook seeking information about J.E. Moss. Interestingly, I found that the school held an activity which was a celebration of a traditional festival in some students' hometown (picture 1). I believe this is a way to affirm their identities, because students can participate in this celebration and learn their own cultures. In other words, "students invest their identities in the creation of texts, which can be visual, dramatic form" (Cummins & Early, 2011, p. 3).

Lastly, caring is an important issue in teaching students. One significant thing is to let

students feel recognized, respected and valued (Gay, 2010). In my view, offering a suitable environment for students is a way to reflect caring. For instance, when I entered the school, I found there were many signs in both English and Spanish, and there was also a welcome poster in different languages (Picture 2). In the other case, the classroom arrangement showed cultural diversity. There were many flags representing different countries hanging in the classroom, and a big world map with students' own countries and names posted on the wall (picture 3 and 4). The classroom arrangement was also comfortable for learning and relaxing. There were many ornaments in the classroom and artifacts on shelves, which made the environment very comfortable. The teacher's office table and a mini kitchen were in the classroom, making it feel like home. Further, there were lots of books for children on the bookshelves, different areas for students to study or play, and big desks which allowed students to sit together.

However, the thing I noticed was that it lacked constructivist learning in language arts course, the instruction was mainly teacher-centered. In terms of Ms. Tarkington's class, because they are already advanced class students, the teachers can design some tasks or problem-solving activities for them. Project-based learning (PBL) is a good model in the school. I believe this kind of learning can cultivate students' ability in solving authentic problems and critical thinking. However, there are many challenges of sustaining constructivist learning, such as the teacher's personal histories of traditional instruction, high demands on the teacher's ability to design tasks, and increasing students' engagement (Windschitl, 1999). Therefore, solving these problems is necessary. In my view, the school can provide teacher training project to help teachers improving their competence in constructivist teaching.

**Domain 5: Language Proficiency**

In order to be a language teacher, it is important to have a functionally equivalent language proficiency to native speakers. Specifically speaking, the teacher should have proficiency in the work place and academic English, and has an advanced level in English speaking, listening, reading, and writing. As for me, I will demonstrate my English language proficiency in two ways. One is my own experiences related to using English and the other is my score in standardized test and professional evaluation.

In terms of my working experience, I have a part-time job in Vanderbilt Recreation and Wellness Center. As a team member there, I need to help patrons solve different problems and cooperate with my colleagues. Therefore, I have enough opportunities to interact with native speakers to improve my listening and speaking skills. In addition, because of our practicum course last semester, I had the opportunity to become a teaching assistant in GES course sponsored by Vanderbilt English Language Center. During that experience, I needed to communicate with my mentor teacher and ELL students, write lesson plans, prepare for my teaching, and teach three classes. In my opinion, this experience not only gave me an opportunity to improve my English but also helped me accumulate knowledge and methods for teaching. Besides teaching experience, my mentor teacher also asked me to give two presentations at Glencliff High School. To prepare for these presentations, we collected materials, created slides, and design activities to engage students. Therefore, I improved my speaking, listening, reading, and writing abilities in this experience and also know more about high school students.

After introducing my experiences to improve English, I will focus on how my academic English proficiency is qualified. Before I went to Vanderbilt University, I had

taken TOFEL and GRE test. My TOFEL score was 102 and GRE was 315. I have high scores in TOFEL reading and listening. However, I still feel that I can have a progress in my English proficiency, so I participated in Academic Speaking in ELC. After two semesters' learning, my teacher evaluated my English proficiency level as advanced.

On the grounds of both my experience and performance in academic English, I think I am qualified to be an English teacher. And now, I am still trying to improve myself, such as taking English courses online, reading novels, and communicating with native speakers. I believe my English level will increase continually.

### **Domain 6: Learning**

In the perspective of constructivism and social cognitive learning theory, students can learn from each other by imitation or observation. The teacher's modeling and scaffolding can help students gain practical strategies for learning. As for improving students' writing skill, I believe SRSD Instruction is an appropriate approach to develop their literacy development. This instruction reflects how the teacher provides scaffolding for students and students can then write independently.

In Writing Pathways and Instruction Project, I designed a ten-lesson unit for 4<sup>th</sup> graders. These students are ELL students in JE Moss elementary schools. Some of them are newcomers in America, so their English language level ranges a lot. According to SOLOM data from their teachers, their language proficiencies are from level 1 to level 3. This unit focuses on argument writing, which asks students to give factual information and present reasons to support their ideas. Students should understand different points of views and hold their own views. They also need to know the structure of argument writing, use evidence or details to support their views, and try to convince their audiences.

Based on my agenda, there is a debate activity for students in day 3. In this activity, I will give students three options of the topic, which are related to their lives (Should schools have dress codes? Should students do homework? Should animals be used to test new products?). Then students will be divided into two groups to begin debate. Based on their own knowledge and understanding, they shall share their opinions with their peers, and try to persuade their opponents. In this process, they need to show their opinions, give reasons, support their reasons and do a conclusion. I designed this activity because I believe it is a kind of way to reflect culturally responsive instruction. In the debating, the teacher's role is a facilitator to control the process and engage students. The whole class is student-centered and they have enough opportunities to cooperate with their peers. It also asks students to have a critical thinking and using their prior knowledge. In addition, other activities like small group discussion and peer evaluation also reflect ideas of culturally responsive instruction.

Besides student-centered activities, I also pay attention to the teacher's scaffolding since I believe scaffolding can improve students' independent learning and thinking. For example, I will provide students with writing strategies on Day 4 which emphasize SRSD. The strategy I will choose is TREE strategy which can help students to write independently later. In addition, I will also decide to show students how it works by writing a small passage on the whiteboard. Other examples are two mini-lessons during these two weeks. In these lessons, I will help students understand what a statement is and let them know more transitional words. By offering this information, students can have a better understanding of argumentative writing and can use it in their own writing. At last, one-to-one instruction and individual conference are also used in this unit. In one-to-one



instruction, the teacher can know each student's specific ideas and problems. After knowing that, the teacher can accommodate the student's learning goal and give specific instruction. As for the individual conference, the teacher can give individual feedback and additional materials to help students improve their writing on the last day. It is a way to improve student's higher-order thinking and students can rethink their learning process.

### **Domain 7: Content**

Based on my philosophy teaching, I believe classes should be student-centered, and students have enough opportunities to share their opinions, communicate with each other, and connect their learning with the outside world. In my practicum, my teacher took a video of my teaching. In this video, I found something that accords with my teaching philosophy.

At first, I found that I really focus on bringing students' own experiences in teaching, so I connect content objective with language objective tightly. The content objective of this lesson is to let students know how to interact with customer service representatives, while the language objective is to let students understand and use phrases that usually appear in contacting customer service. As it mentioned in the SIOP Model, sometimes, ESL teachers need assistance in choosing appropriate content objectives for their lessons (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2013). Therefore, my mentor teacher and I did a survey in the first class. This survey helped us know what topics students are interested in and what content they want to learn. Customer service is one topic that students want to know more about. I believe this is an instance of Constructivism's theory, because it makes a connection between class and outside society. In addition, I use different materials to help them understand the interaction between customers and customer services in order to let students learn both content and language. Except giving students handouts, I also gave them

authentic materials, such as the video and the conversation for them to reorganize, to help them be more familiar with these useful phrases. In the end, the writing activity gave them a chance to use these phrases by themselves. After they had finished their dialogues, they presented in front of other students. This is precisely what I would expect to see because I realize I provide support for students' learning. It is a process that I support students to acquire new knowledge and then they can implement what they have learned into a new area (writing dialogues). I think it is also a way to promote higher-order thinking skills, since they needed to apply their knowledge to the task and create new things.

Secondly, I think providing students with opportunities to practice is also important. As for my teaching philosophy, a student-centered class should give students enough time to share their ideas, practice language, and cooperate with others. Echevarria and Graves (2010) also point out that if students have more time spending on using language, they will develop language proficiency faster. Therefore, I tried to create more opportunities for students to practice their English. In the first discussion, I asked students to discuss questions and share their experience, so I thought every student had a chance to speak. In addition, students wrote dialogues in pairs and would share their conversation in front of the class at the end of the class. Because this activity was in a smaller group, every student had more time to practice. As for assessment, during my explanation of phrases, I only asked questions like "Do you understand?" or "Do you have any questions?", which were just quick check. Therefore, I think I need to give more informative feedback and create some activities that can help students review what they have learned.

Last but not least, encouraging students' discussion is part of cooperative learning. As Zwiers and Crawford (2011) mention, conversation is a process of bringing your ideas to

the group, and shaping them when you listen to others' ideas. Therefore, in my class, I usually try to give students more opportunities to have a conversation in groups. In this lesson, I asked students to share their prior experiences of seeing a dentist. Boyd (2012) also states that asking authentic questions can push students to "initiate topics of discussion, to elaborate on their own responses, or to direct substantive questions". Therefore, I gave student some guiding questions, such as "why did you go to see a dentist?" and "what procedures did you have done?", which can facilitate them to engage in the discussion. In my opinion, the group discussion is also a good tool to connect the new knowledge with students' prior knowledge. When students leverage their own knowledge in learning, they will think the learning process is more meaningful. Besides peers' supports, teacher's attending can also facilitate students' interactions. When my students were discussing, I always went to different groups to listen to their discussions. Therefore, if they have any questions, I can help them. And if they keep silent, I can ask them some questions or share my own experience to generate conversations. However, a student was dominant in one group's discussion. This is problematic because not every student had a chance to share their ideas and communicate with others.

### **Domain 8 Commitment and Professionalism**

In my perspective, teaching should be considered as a lifelong career to pursue. Besides planning, instruction, and teaching, communicating with other teachers and connecting with teaching communities also play important roles. I believe connecting teaching with students' community and outside world is also important. In order to show my understanding of commitment and professionalism in teaching, I will exhibit my understanding of the relationship between teachers and different communities.

In my perspective, a teacher should connect to the broad teaching community. By communicating and learning from other teachers, the teacher can gain new ideas about teaching and students. It is also important for teachers to connect with other teaching communities, such as teaching conferences, educational organizations, or multimedia groups. If teachers see themselves as parts of teaching communities and regard teaching as a lifelong career, they will dig into this field and look for more materials, methods, philosophies, etc., since they want to bring the best to their students. As for me, I have registered a membership in American Council on the Teaching of Foreign languages (ACTFL), in which I can know other teachers' teaching experience and find something enlightens me. Therefore, I believe teachers cannot keep away from teaching communities since they are part of these communities.

In addition to teaching communities, making a connection with students' communities is also significant. In my view, teachers need to investigate students' community so that they can have a deeper understanding of students' identities and also connect students' backgrounds with teaching. As for me, I had a chance in practicum course to investigate Chinese communities in Nashville. I choose Chinese communities because I suppose that my students in the future have Chinese cultural backgrounds. After I investigated an Asian market, the most impressive thing I found was that all labels in the market were in both English and Chinese. I think teachers can take advantage of these literacies as teaching materials in the class. These literacies can also be used for translation activities for students so that they can take advantage of translanguaging. I also believe transnational literacies can build meaningful relationships between teachers and students, help students learn about their communities and fully engaged in learning (Jimenez, Smith & Teague, 2009). Also,

it is a way to help students connect their learning with their communities and cultural backgrounds. Another way to know students' community is investigating their family background. When a teacher understands students' family backgrounds, the teacher can develop a participatory pedagogy and establish relationships with both students and their parents (Moll et al., 1992).

Generally speaking, as a teacher, it is important to make a connection with teaching communities so that I can get new ideas and experiences. Besides that, I will also pay attention to students' communities, so I can have a deeper understanding of them.

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## **Reflection and application**

Through three semesters' learning, I have more ideas about teaching and I am still thinking about how to implement my teaching philosophy into classrooms. After gaining new knowledge of teaching through courses and practicum, I think I have a deeper understanding of teaching ELL students. I will elaborate the reflection on my own teaching and how to implement the methods I learned and my philosophy into future teaching. I will focus on three areas which are important parts for me to consider in the future: scaffolding and modeling, authentic assessments, and the interaction between teachers and students.

### **Scaffolding and Modeling**

From sociocultural perspectives, literacy learning occurs in a range of explicit and implicit teaching (Hull & Moje, 2012). In my understanding, it means that a teacher should give a clear instruction and explanation for students and then let students do activities or tasks by themselves. During this process, students actually gain new knowledge by their own, and the teacher is a facilitator to engage students. Therefore, as a teacher, I will consider both scaffolding and modeling.

Scaffolding students within a zone of proximal development (Griffin & Cole, 1984) is significant. When the teacher gives students a task to do, he or she needs to make sure the task is beyond students' current ability but is not a big challenge for them. In one of my practicum courses, I asked students to read several dialogues with their partner. However, I found that some of them finished this task quickly and began to talk about things unrelated to this lesson. Meanwhile, other students were still doing the activity and I supposed that they needed more time to finish. I think the reason is that my students have different English language proficiencies, some of them are in very high level while others low level to high

level. Therefore, I think I should spend more time to understand my students' language proficiency and gain more information about them before the course began. Actually, at the first class, we did a survey about what topics they were interested in and also used SOLOM rubric to assess their oral language abilities. However, I found that I still needed to collect more information about my students. What I am thinking is that I can have a one-to-one interview with each student. In this interview, I can also ask questions to know about their education history and language background. Another idea is differentiation. I can arrange students based on their language levels and then give them different tasks. For example, if I ask students to read dialogues, I can provide a more difficult and longer dialogue for high-level students, while giving low-level students an easier and shorter one. Or I can mix high-level students with low-level ones, so that more proficient students can work first and thus act as peer models for others (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2013).

As for modeling, I think it is a part which I make progress with. In another lesson I taught, I think I did not do a good job at modeling. It focused on helping students interact with customer service representatives more effectively. In this lesson, I decided to use a video to grab students' attention and lead them to think about customer service in their own lives. However, there was a problem with this activity. Because I want to use more authentic materials in my teaching, I chose the video on YouTube and it is a part of a TV series. Therefore, there were some idioms in it and the characters in the video spoke a little fast. Meanwhile, I did not show questions to students before I played the video. In this situation, students were confused when I asked them to discuss and no one began to talk. At that time, I played the video again and then they began to discuss. I think it is better to have a clearer sequence to facilitate students to do an activity. For example, I can show the questions for



students at first, and then ask them to think about these questions while watching the video. And then they can begin to discuss. If they were still struggling in the discussion, I can play the video again. However, I asked students to do a matching task in another lesson. In this task, they need to find definitions of each word and put them together. At that time, I explained this task orally and also did it by myself to help them understand this task. After that, I could see that they can do the task more fluently so I supposed that it was helpful.

### **Authentic assessment**

After I understand the advantages of using authentic assessment, I believe it will be an important part of my future teaching. Although I do not have enough opportunities to use it in classrooms, I have some ideas of how to put it to practice. In my view, Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) is a good method for English teachers to evaluate students' performances. It contains three kinds tasks: interpretive tasks, presentational tasks, and interpersonal tasks. According to the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages, these tasks should reflect five goal areas: communication, cultures, comparison, connection, and communities. Therefore, these tasks should be closely related to what students have learned and their culture and knowledge backgrounds.

In addition, portfolio assessment is recommended as an alternative that can better meet students' motivational needs and give them informative feedbacks. Portfolios is a set of an individual's or a group's accomplishments that can illustrate their progress over time (Brophy, 2004). In students' portfolios, they have the choice in deciding which work to put in it, so everyone's portfolio can be unique and reflect his or her knowledge, skills, or abilities (Farr & Tone, 1994). Further, it gives students self-assessment opportunities. It can encourage students to become more reflective about their work and be self-improvement.

Lastly, it allows students to accumulate a collection of their work and evaluations which can reflect students' long-term progress (Alexander, 2006).

As for me, these assessments are meaningful and can also improve students' higher order thinking skills. And they are definitely fit my teaching philosophy of student-centered, because they focus on letting students practicing and doing rather than teacher lecturing. Therefore, they should be applied to my future teaching.

### **The Interaction Between Teachers and Students**

In my future teaching, I need to consider how I can interact with students effectively. After I rethinking of my own teaching in practicums, I found that the interactions between students and I were limited. In most of the time, I just asked students a question, and after they answered it, I would say "great", "yes", and "good". In my view, this kind of interaction is more like IRE pattern, and it limits students' higher order thinking and connecting new knowledge with their prior knowledge. Therefore, in my future teaching, I can give students some questions related to lesson content, and asked them to brainstorm the answers. For example, in one of my teaching lesson, we discussed our experiences to see dentists. Before they began discussing, I had only given them some guiding questions. In my opinion, what I can do better in the future is that before asking students to discuss, I can ask them to brainstorm some words or phrases that they used when they saw a dentist. I can also ask them to share some words to express their feelings. By doing this, students can have more opportunities to leverage their prior knowledge to think about this topic and connect the knowledge to the new one. In my teaching philosophy, I pay attention to use students' funds of knowledge in the classroom. But I think if I can encourage students to leverage their funds of knowledge by themselves, it may be more helpful. They can feel

more engaged and regard the lesson as a meaningful learning process.

In addition to encouraging students' using their prior knowledge, I also want to help students improve their higher-order thinking skills. One of the ways to do that is asking following questions after their answers. For example, if a student tells me an answer, I can ask him or her questions such as "Why you think so?", "what will happen if...?", or "how can you do that?". These questions can push students to think deeper about the original question and think more about learning content.

In conclusion, after learning and practicing, I have a clearer understanding of my teaching philosophy and methods. Although my teaching is not perfect and should be improved in some aspects, I believe that my teaching philosophy can help me to have better ideas. In the future, I will think about how to scaffold students so that they can have a meaningful learning process, how to interact with students with more effectively, and how to engage students in learning.

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**Appendix***Artifact 1 “Shepherd Boy and Wolf” lesson plan*

**Lesson Plan**  
**Shepherd Boy and Wolf**

Teacher / School:	Danni Zhang/ Grade 4 Chinese students in an elementary school. They are novice English learners.
Unit Theme:	Beast fable
Which “Can Do” statements for this unit will students be making progress on today?	I can listen to the story and understand it. I can understand the meanings of roles in this story. I can change the story into a play with group members.
Which standards will students be making progress on today?	Students can understand the meanings of main words in the text, and can use these words to make sentences. They can change the text into a play (change the person and tense). They can understand the meaning of the text.
Time:	90 minutes (45+45, two classes)
Materials Needed:	Story video PowerPoint Handout 1 (a form to help student complete play) Handout 2 Pens
Methodological Approach:	It is a meaning-based task, which ask students to understand its meaning and moral. Also, IPA is used to evaluate students’ work.
What is this lesson’s connection to other lessons in this unit?	In this unit, all the lessons are beast fable. In each story, there is a moral which tell them to be good men. In addition, all of contain words related to animals and actions. At last, past tense is used in all stories.

Stage	Teacher Activity	Student Activity	Issues Anticipated	Time	Materials Used
1) Preparation the night before	Check the video and PowerPoint. Read instruction plan carefully.	Be prepared to have a class. Bring pens and blank papers.	Students forget to prepare the tool needed in the class.	20 mins	All materials needed in the class.

2) Pre-Task	Introduce the topic by PPT, and play the video to students. Then tell them the task they need to do.	Watch the video and think about its main idea. Be prepared to write a play.	Students may not understand it.	10 mins	PowerPoint video
3) Task	Divide students into different groups. Go to different groups to provide help.	After understand the story, student should change it to a play with group members.	Students may have difficulties to understand some words.	25 mins	Handout 1 Pens
4) Planning/Report	Organize students to present their plays.	At first, each group introduce their plays, and then they represent different roles to read dialogues of their own plays.	Students may not want to present.	25 mins	Students' plays
5) Analysis/Assessment	Give feedback to each group. Organize them to discuss.	Students evaluate each group's work. Talk about how to change tense from the text to plays.		10 mins	Students' plays
6) Practice	Help students to understand word meanings by multiple ways (question, video, picture, etc.) Discuss	Work with the teacher to figure out word meanings and the moral. Then they need to use these	Spend too much time on making sentences.	20 mins	Handout 2

	whether the moral is helpful.	words to make sentences.			
7) Student follow up work after class	Guide students to perform.	Groups need to practice their plays and can perform in front of others in the next class.		1 hour	

## Text

A Shepherd Boy tended his master's Sheep near a dark forest not far from the village. Soon he found life in the pasture very dull. All he could do to amuse himself was to talk to his dog or play on his shepherd's pipe.

One day as he sat watching the Sheep and the quiet forest, and thinking what he would do should he see a Wolf, he thought of a plan to amuse himself.

His Master had told him to call for help should a Wolf attack the flock, and the Villagers would drive it away. So now, though he had not seen anything that even looked like a Wolf, he ran toward the village shouting at the top of his voice, "Wolf! Wolf!"

As he expected, the Villagers who heard the cry dropped their work and ran in great excitement to the pasture. But when they got there they found the Boy doubled up with laughter at the trick he had played on them.

A few days later the Shepherd Boy again shouted, "Wolf! Wolf!" Again, the Villagers ran to help him, only to be laughed at again.

Then one evening as the sun was setting behind the forest and the shadows were creeping out over the pasture, a Wolf really did spring from the underbrush and fall upon the Sheep.

In terror, the Boy ran toward the village shouting "Wolf! Wolf!" But though the Villagers heard the cry, they did not run to help him as they had before. "He cannot fool us again," they said.

The Wolf killed a great many of the Boy's sheep and then slipped away into the forest.

**Handout 1****The play for Shepherd Boy and Wolf**

Narrator:

Master:

Narrator:

Shepherd boy:

Narrator:

Villagers:

Narrator:

Shepherd boy:

Villagers:



Narrator:
Shepherd boy:
Villagers:
Narrator:
Students name

**Handout 2**

<b>Word meanings</b>
Shepherd:  Sentence example:
Pasture:  Sentence example:
Creep out:  Sentence example:
Spring:  Sentence example:
Flock:  Sentence example:

**Moral meaning:**

IPA Rubrics

## Interpretive Mode Rubric: A Continuum of Performance\*

CRITERIA	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations		Does Not Meet Expectations
	Accomplished Comprehension	Strong Comprehension	Minimal Comprehension	Limited Comprehension
<b>LITERAL COMPREHENSION</b>				
<b>Word Recognition</b>	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.
<b>Main idea detection</b>	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).
<b>INTERPRETIVE COMPREHENSION</b>				
<b>Inferences (Reading/listening/viewing between the lines)</b>	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.
<b>Author's perspective</b>	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.

## Presentation Mode Rubric—Novice Learner

CRITERIA	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations		Does Not Meet Expectations
		Strong	Minimal	
<b>Language Function</b> Language tasks the speaker/writer is able to handle in a consistent, comfortable, sustained, and spontaneous manner	Creates with language by combining and recombining known elements; is able to express personal meaning in a basic way. Handles successfully a number of uncomplicated communicative tasks and topics necessary for survival in target-language cultures.	Uses mostly memorized language with some attempts to create. Handles a limited number of uncomplicated communicative tasks involving topics related to basic personal information and some activities, preferences, and immediate needs.	Uses memorized language only, familiar language.	Has no real functional ability.
<b>Text Type</b> Quantity and organization of language discourse (continuum: word - phrase - sentence - connected sentences - paragraph - extended discourse)	Uses simple sentences and some strings of sentences.	Uses some simple sentences and memorized phrases.	Uses words, phrases, chunks of language, and lists.	Uses isolated words.
<b>Impact</b> Clarity, organization, and depth of presentation; degree to which presentation maintains attention and interest of audience	Presented in a clear and organized manner. Presentation illustrates originality, rich details, and an unexpected feature that captures interest and attention of audience.	Presented in a clear and organized manner. Presentation illustrates originality and features rich details, visuals, and/or organization of the text to maintain audience's attention and/or interest.	Presented in a clear and organized manner. Some effort to maintain audience's attention through visuals, organization of the text, and/or details.	Presentation may be either unclear or unorganized. Minimal to no effort to maintain audience's attention.

<p><b>Comprehensibility</b> Who can understand this person's language? Can this person be understood only by sympathetic interlocutors used to the language of non-natives? Can a native speaker unaccustomed to the speaking/writing of non-natives understand this speaker/writer?</p>	<p>Is generally understood by those accustomed to the speaking/writing of non-natives, although additional effort may be required.</p>	<p>Is understood with occasional difficulty by those accustomed to the speaking/writing of non-natives, although additional effort may be required.</p>	<p>Is understood, although often with difficulty, by those accustomed to the speaking/writing of non-natives.</p>	<p>Most of spoken/written language may be unintelligible or understood only with additional effort.</p>
<p><b>Language Control</b> Grammatical accuracy, appropriate vocabulary, degree of fluency</p>	<p>Is most accurate when producing simple sentences in present time. Pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntax are strongly influenced by the native language. Accuracy decreases as language becomes more complex.</p>	<p>Is most accurate with memorized language, including phrases. Accuracy decreases when creating and trying to express personal meaning.</p>	<p>Accuracy is limited to memorized words. Accuracy may decrease when attempting to communicate beyond the word level.</p>	<p>Has little accuracy even with memorized words.</p>

Evidence of Strengths:

Examples of Where You Could Improve:

# Interpersonal Mode Rubric—Novice Learner

CRITERIA	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations		Does Not Meet Expectations
		Strong	Minimal	
<b>Language Function</b> Language tasks the speaker is able to handle in a consistent, comfortable, sustained, and spontaneous manner	Creates with language by combining and recombining known elements; is able to express personal meaning in a basic way. Handles successfully a number of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations, primarily in concrete exchanges and topics necessary for survival in target-language cultures.	Uses mostly memorized language with some attempts to create. Handles a limited number of uncomplicated communicative tasks involving topics related to basic personal information and some activities, preferences, and immediate needs.	Uses memorized language only, familiar language.	Has no real functional ability.
<b>Text Type</b> Quantity and organization of language discourse (continuum: word - phrase - sentence - connected sentences - paragraph - extended discourse)	Uses simple sentences and some strings of sentences.	Uses some simple sentences and memorized phrases.	Uses words, phrases, chunks of language, and lists.	Uses isolated words.
<b>Communication Strategies</b> Quality of engagement and interactivity; how one participates in the conversation and advances it; strategies for negotiating meaning in the face of breakdown of communication	Responds to direct questions and requests for information. Asks a few appropriate questions, but is primarily reactive. May try to restate in the face of miscommunication.	Responds to basic direct questions and requests for information. Asks a few formulaic questions but is primarily reactive. May clarify by repeating and/or substituting different words.	Responds to a limited number of formulaic questions. May use repetition or resort to English.	Is unable to participate in a true conversational exchange.
<b>Comprehensibility</b> Who can understand this person's language? Can this person be understood only by sympathetic listeners used to interacting with non-natives? Can a native speaker unaccustomed to non-native speech understand this speaker?	Is generally understood by those accustomed to interacting with non-natives, although repetition or rephrasing may be required.	Is understood with occasional difficulty by those accustomed to interacting with non-natives, although repetition or rephrasing may be required.	Is understood, although often with difficulty, by those accustomed to interacting with non-natives.	Most of what is said may be unintelligible or understood only with repetition.
<b>Language Control</b> Grammatical accuracy, appropriate vocabulary, degree of fluency	Is most accurate when producing simple sentences in present time. Pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntax are strongly influenced by the native language. Accuracy decreases as language becomes more complex.	Is most accurate with memorized language, including phrases. Accuracy decreases when creating and trying to express personal meaning.	Accuracy is limited to memorized words. Accuracy may decrease when attempting to communicate beyond the word level.	Has little accuracy even with memorized words.

Evidence of Strengths:

Examples of Where You

Could

Improv

*Artifact 2 “communicating with customer service” lesson plan***Lesson Plan**

<b>Teacher activity</b>	<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Students activity</b>
Introduce today’s topic and activities.	Danni	2 mins	
Show a video to students (a conversation between a customer and customer service), and then ask students to discuss the video and share their experiences of interacting with customer service (some guide questions on PPT). Watch the video again to verify their answer.	Danni	7 mins	Watch the video and then discuss what they notice in this video. Share their experiences according to guide questions.
Give students a sheet of useful phrases for customer service. Explain some phrases for them.	Danni	10 mins	Students can discuss these phrases with group members whether they have some phrases cannot understand.

Provide students with strips of sentences and ask students to reorganize the stripes. Show them the correct one on the slide.	Danni	5 mins	Make up a conversation and then each group takes turn to read each strip by the correct order.
There are 2 writing scenarios (complaint). Asked students to pick up one and write dialogues based on the situation they choose.	Danni	15 mins	Write a conversation with his/her partner based on the situation they choose.
			Students present their conversations in front of the class.

*Artifact 3 final report in Education Linguistics course*

Final Report

**Participant introduction**

My case study participant, Yuki, is my friend who is a 23-year-old girl. Now she is graduate student learning translation in China. She was my classmate when I was studying in Beijing University of Technology, and both of us majored in English. In the university, she also learned French as the third language. Her first language is Mandarin and because she comes from Southwest China, she can also speak the dialect in her hometown.

In terms of her English learning experiences, she has been learning English for about fifteen years. She really liked learning English when she was in elementary school, and she always got a high score in English tests. Therefore, she is always confidence in language learning. Meanwhile, she was born in a wealthy family. Her father is well-educated and

works as a manager in a company. Her father pays close attention to Yuki's education and sent to a private middle school which focused on English education. In that middle school, she became more interested in English and decided to further study English in the future. That is why she majored English in the university. When she was in the undergraduate program, she passed the CET-6 (College English Test-6), which is the highest English level test for all college students. Meanwhile, she passed the TEM-8 (Test for English Majors-Band 8), which is the highest-level test only for English majors in China. In addition to her academic performance, she also participated in Model United Nations and some interpreter volunteer activities. After she graduated from the university, she decided to study written translation in Beijing Normal University, which is a prestigious school in China. During recent two years studying, she has made a great improvement in English abilities.

Besides her English learning experiences, her character is also a factor which influences her English proficiency. Generally speaking, Yuki has a good sociability. She is an outgoing girl who is always willing to communicate with different people. When she was learning English, she is active to ask questions and chat with international students in China. It means she has a positive attitude towards learning English. However, the weakest part of her English skills is still speaking. In my opinion, although she learned English actively, there is still few opportunities for her to speak English in China.

With respect to sociocultural factors, the biggest influential factor is that English is a compulsory subject in Chinese schools. In addition, Chinese students are required to take English tests when they go to middle schools, colleges and universities. It means that English is a gatekeeper for Chinese students to get educational opportunities. Although in some universities, students can take part in tests of other languages, such as Japanese,



French, and Russian, to replace English tests, English is dominant. Therefore, the majority of Chinese students begin to learn English in kindergarten or earlier. However, English teaching in China is test-oriented, and teachers always use grammar-translation method which focuses on developing students' reading and writing ability in the target language. As a result, Chinese students pay more attention to learning grammars, doing exercises, and improving test skills, while ignore to develop speaking and listening skills.

There are also some other factors related to economic opportunities. In current China, if graduates want to find good jobs in big cities, they need to have high English proficiency, because foreign companies always have high payments and liberal benefits. In other companies, the situations are similar. These companies need English talents to adapt to economic globalization. Generally speaking, English is a high-status language in China, so the majority of Chinese students have to learn it in order to get educational and economic opportunities.

In a word, Yuki has a high English proficiency in China because of her background and personality, but she is still influenced by the English teaching style in China and the lack of English environment.

### **English abilities analysis**

There are total four samples for the case study. Three of them are oral samples which come from the interview between Yuki and I. The first oral sample is a formal conversation and focuses on her English learning experiences; the second one is more casual and is about her recent internship; in the last conversation, we talked about her holiday and some trifles in daily life. Another sample is an academic thesis which was written by Yuki during her undergraduate program.

### **Phonology analysis**

I chose two oral samples for phonology analysis, one was an interview focusing on her English learning and ability, the other was an informal conversation about daily life.

Generally speaking, Yuki spoke English fluently and clearly, and the majority of her pronunciations are accurate and understandable. The most impressive strength of her oral English is that she pronounced [ɹ] perfectly, such as “for”, “score” and “year”, which is always a difficult pronunciation for Chinese students. However, she still had a Chinese accent because the intonation is a little flat and there were some words she pronounced incorrectly. Further, when she answered the question about her English abilities, she said some words like “um...” and “Err...”, and also repeated some words like “I, I, I...” or “I just, just...”, which influenced her fluency and cohesion. But when she talked about the topics of daily life, she spoke more fluently.

In terms of pronunciation, Yuki could not pronounce “th” [θ] accurately when she spoke “think”, “thing”, “thought”, etc. Also, the pronunciation of “th” [ð], such as “the”, “them” and “this”, was incorrect. The reason why she could not pronounce “th” precisely can be explained by Markedness Differential Hypothesis, which was proposed by Eckman (1977). To understand the theory, we need to know an unmarked phonetic form is more common and usual than a marked one in the world’s languages while a marked one is less common and more unusual. In my opinion, [θ] and [ð] are two consonants that never exist in Mandarin, so they are marked phonetic forms which make it difficult for Chinese students to learn and pronounce.

Besides some different phonemes in English and Chinese, voiced and voiceless consonants are another problem. As it was mentioned by Gass and Selinker (2001), there

is no obstruent (voiced or voiceless) in word-final position in Mandarin Chinese. Therefore, it is hard for Chinese students to devoice. As for Yuki, she usually added a [ə] following a word-final voiceless obstruent, such as “first” and “just”, and used voiced consonant to replace voiceless. For instance, when she said “and”, “distracted” and “mind”, she changed [d] into [t]; when she pronounced “is”, “use”, and “these”, she replaced [z] by [s]. Another example is altering [v] to [f] when she said “solve” and “brave”. This example may result of two things, the inexistence of [v] in Mandarin and no obstruent in word-final position in Chinese.

In addition, when Yuki said “central” and “mall”, she used [ɹ] at the end of the words rather than [l]. Just as Contrastive Analysis points out, the native language has a negative transfer when people study a second language. Because in Mandarin, there is no syllable structure like having “l” at the final position of a word, many Chinese students replace [l] by [ɹ] in order to feel comfortable to pronounce such words. And there are some vowels’ problems, such as changing “novel” [ˈnɒvəl] into [ˈnɒʊvəl], “should” [ʃʊd] into [ʃud], and “say” [seɪ] into [si]. The reason for this situation is that [oʊ], [u] and [i] are more common and important vowel in Mandarin. Based on the cohort model of Marslen-Wilson, people can identify a word by just giving a partial input (Byrnes & Wasik, 2009). Therefore, words like “novel” and “should” can be easily understand. However, the wrong pronunciation of word “say” is more confusing because the word “see” exists in English.

One final mistake Yuki made is that when she said “listening”, “speaking” and “writing”, she pronounced [n] instead of [ŋ] at the end the words. However, both [n] and [ŋ] exist in Mandarin. So, I believe that it is because that Yuki was growing up in South China, where people have difficulty to pronounce [ŋ] even in Mandarin.

### **Semantics analysis**

The content for semantics analysis contains two materials from my interviewee Yuki. One is a 9-minute recording of a conversation, in which I asked her questions about her English learning background, so it is a kind of formal conversation. The other is a writing sample which is a 34-page undergraduate thesis about translation research. Because of its length, I decide to analyze only two parts of it, including the abstract and the significance of study. Generally speaking, the materials I chose to analyze were a formal oral recording and an academic writing sample. In order to determine the lexical diversity and word choice of her oral and writing sample, I used a text content analysis tool on a website to get the text statistics, and Merriam-Webster Dictionary to confirm whether the words she chose were appropriate.

The words she chose in the oral recording were not very formal and were easy to understand. When we talked about her English background, she used a large number of words related to language learning such as “communicate”, “score”, “interpreting”, “grammars”, “vocabularies” and “translation”, which means she mastered enough vocabulary to maintain a formal conversation. But in some extent, there were some words that she misused. For example, when she expressed her feeling about English, she said that “learning English is a very funny thing”. The word “funny” is not appropriate to describe learning English, because it means causing laughter or it is strange. Better choices are “interesting” and “attractive”. Another example is that she used the phrase “look for” to express she did not want to read an article, since she can use words like “skip”, “ignore” or “skim through”. Besides word choice, according to the data in the table 2, the lexical density of the oral recording is only 31.39%, which means she used a large amount of

repetitive vocabulary when she talked with me. In addition, the word frequency cloud shows that the words she used most frequently are “and”, “just”, “don’t”, “think” and “that”. When she stated her views, she said “I think” frequently, and when she expressed disagreements, she only used “don’t”. Also, she spoke only 60 hard words and the percentage is 12.20%. In the conversation, she often repeated same words or phrases in a sentence.

As for the writing sample, although more advanced words and specialized vocabulary occurred, there were still some inappropriate words. She used “besides” and “meantime” at the beginning of a sentence while the correct ways are “besides the analysis” and “in the meantime” or she can choose other words such as “meanwhile” and “furthermore”. Another case is that she used the word “lucubrate” to express “study deeply”, but this word usually means writing or study especially by night. Therefore, it is really confusing for others to understand. As for lexical density, the percentage is 40.85%, which is higher than speaking. Furthermore, the amount of hard words she used in the writing sample is 60, which is more than that in oral recording. Also, the word frequency cloud indicates that “analysis”, “Chinese”, “hypotaxis”, “parataxis” and “translation” occurred many times. Consequently, we can see that repetitive words in writing sample are almost content words while they are almost grammatical words in oral recording. But some words can still be replaced. For instance, she used “based on” in the abstract three times. She can use phrases such as “depend on”, “place on” and “found on” to enrich her language diversity. What’s more, she used “vital” several times in the writing sample to express importance. Actually, words like “crucial”, “significant”, “important” and “fundamental” can take place of it.

In general, we can know that although the lexical density in writing sample is higher

than oral recording, it is important for Yuki to avoid repetitive words in both speaking and writing. Also, understanding the correct way to use words is necessary. In my opinion, there are two main reasons for low lexical density and inappropriate word choice. One is that in English, a word usually has several synonyms which can be used in different ways. It is difficult to remember them, so she always used the words she was familiar with for many times. The other reason is related to her study habits. Like most Chinese students, she focused on how to expand her vocabulary but ignored how to use words appropriately when learning English. It is necessary to consider both meaning and usage when choosing a word, but she failed to notice how to use a word. Therefore, mistakes occurred when she chose words.

### **Grammar analysis**

The oral sample I choose for grammar analysis is a casual conversation between my participant Yuki and I, in which we talked about her holiday. As for the writing sample, it is a conclusion part of an undergraduate thesis from Yuki which related to translation. Both the conversation and the writing sample are about 250 words.

In order to understand Yuki's morphological ability, I calculate the LMU of the oral and writing sample. As showed in table 3, the utterances of the conversation are 41, and the morphemes are 279, which indicated that the MLU is about 6.8. It means she mastered some knowledge of morphemes. As for the free morphemes, there were lots of conjunctions, pronouns, auxiliary verbs, articles, and compound words in the conversation. In terms of bound morphemes, she usually used words with suffixes, such as "fantastic", "romantic" and "beautiful". Besides these derivational suffixes, inflectional suffixes also existed in the conversation. For instance, she used words "ate", "went" and "spent" to describe things

happened in the past. All above shows that she had morphological awareness. However, she also made some mistakes. Sometimes, she forgot to add regular past tense suffix “ed” and plural suffix “s” or “es”. In addition, she also ignored irregular past tense. Therefore, she needs to pay close attention to past tense and plural in future’s communication.

With respect to the writing sample, the total utterances are 31 and the morphemes are 352, so the MLU is about 11.4. After analyzing the writing sample, I found that many words which contain two or three morphemes were used in her thesis. For example, “application”, “divergences”, and “parataxis” were in the writing sample, which manifested that she understood how to use affixes, roots, and suffixes correctly. Further, inflectional suffixes such as “patterns”, “origins” and “varied” were common in the writing sample. Nonetheless, I also found some faults. For instance, she used “researches” in the thesis, but actually “research” is a word without plural. What’s more, she used “avoid” as a noun, which should be “avoidance”. Therefore, she needs to focus on plural and the noun usage in the future.

In terms of my participant’s oral sample, the majority of sentences were complete sentences, and the word order was proper. She also spoke both simple and complex sentences. Moreover, she used cohesive devices to connect each sentence. For example, she used “because”, “and” and “but” appropriately in different sentences. Besides these logical linkings, she also used grammatical and lexical linking, such as “it” and “we”. However, there was a word order problem. When she talked about her experience in Xiamen, she said “that it is”, which should be “that is it”. Meanwhile, the sentence structures were very monotonous. The most frequent structure was “subject + link verb + predicative”, which means she used a large number of simple sentences. And the linking devices were almost “and”, which was very repetitive. Further, her fluency was influenced

by the phrase “you know” and the word “um”.

As for the writing sample, all of the sentences were complete sentences and lots of them were compound sentences and containing subordinate clauses, especially attributive clauses, which means the sentence structures were various. More importantly, she used a diversity of logical linking. For example, “hence”, “apart from that” and “furthermore” were used. Although she has mastered grammar well in writing, there are also some problems existing. One is that some sentences were repetitive; the other is that the cohesive devices were also repeated, such as she used “in accordance with” for three times. Generally speaking, she needs to realize the diversity of sentence structures and cohesive devices in speaking and writing.

According to the morphological and syntactic analysis, Yuki has a good awareness of English grammar. As for morphological performance, she had a good sense of affixes, roots, and suffixes, although she omitted past tense, plural or third-person singular. In terms of syntactic performance, she had basic knowledge of sentence structure, word order and linking devices. But she needs to pay attention to the diversity of words and sentences. Interestingly, I found that the grammar performance of writing sample was better than the oral sample. For example, the LMU of the writing part is higher than the conversation, which means the words in writing are more complex than in speaking. In other cases, the sentence structures and linking devices are more various in writing. And oral sample contains much more simple sentences. Therefore, she should do more efforts on grammar rules when speaking English.

### **Pragmatics analysis**

The conversation I choose to analyze is the second interview between my participant



Yuki and I. It was an interview through the internet, in which we talked about her internship and holiday. In the interview, I was the person to begin and close the conversation, and Yuki just simply answered my questions. Meanwhile, because Yuki and I are friends, so the chat was relaxing and comfortable.

To analyze the conversation, I will consider three main context types that can reflect my participant's pragmatic skill, linguistic context, situational context, and social context.

Linguistic context refers to what has been said already in the utterance. (Mihalicek & Wilson, 2011). In our conversation, there are some examples of linguistic context. When Yuki talked about her working place, I quickly knew the exact name of the university, because she had told me before. Another example is that when she described her holiday activities in Xiamen, she usually used "we went to" and "we hang out", because in the earlier conversation, she had told me that she spent the holiday with her boyfriend. Therefore, I could understand who she talked about and what "we" referred to.

Another important context type is situational context, which means allowing us to understand some information that has not been mentioned before. For instance, at the beginning of the conversation, Yuki said: "Ok, let's start maybe". She said that because both of us knew that we would have an interview. Therefore, we could understand what she referred to. However, there was an example that she ignored the situational context. When she introduced Zhongshan Road in Xiamen, she said: "it's a famous road just like Nanjing Road in Shanghai". Unfortunately, I did not know that road because I had never been to Shanghai.

As for social context, which focuses on the relationship among speakers. Because Yuki and I are friends, and we were roommates and classmates for the last four years, we

have similar backgrounds and social status. However, because it was an interview, and she was the interviewee, I always asked the questions and she answered them. And she knew that it was unnecessary for her to ask me questions.

Generally speaking, Yuki adhered to the four principles of Grice's Maxims in our conversation, which showed she had pragmatic skills.

As for the maxims of quality, what she said was true and she gave adequate evidence later. For example, when I asked about her internship, she told me that she worked as a teacher in a university and she got benefit from it. Then she described lots of details, such as teaching contents, students' performances, and some challenges. Based on her statement, I could know she was talking the truth and obeyed the maxims of quality.

Another principle is the maxims of relevance, which means focusing on the topics. In terms of our conversation, she focused on the topic all the time. When I asked her questions about her internship and her holiday, she told me many relevant details which were informative. In addition, when I said that I missed her dog, she told me the recent life of it. Therefore, I thought she obeyed the relevance rule.

With respect of the maxims of quantity, Yuki usually gave enough information, so I can understand her. For example, when I asked her some famous places in Xiamen, she not only talked about some places but also described their characteristics. However, sometimes I found that she gave too much information. For instance, when she talked about the food she tasted in Xiamen, she said too much about what kinds of food she liked.

The last principle is the maxims of manner, which emphasizes understandable, brief and orderly. In terms of Yuki, she spoke clearly and orderly at most of the time. When she talked about her internship interview, she used logical linking words such as "firstly", "and",

and “also” to make the information orderly. In addition, she usually used simple words which were understandable. However, I also noticed that she used some obscure words which can make listeners confused. When she expressed her opinion about teaching English, she used the word “funny”, which can be a positive or negative attitude.

As mentioned before, Yuki sometimes broke the quantity rule. It may be the result that we are friends, so she wanted to give me more information. In addition, because we have similar backgrounds, she might suppose that I know a lot about her knowledge. Therefore, she did not notice the situational context. At last, English courses in China pay more attention to reading and grammar, so Chinese students always ignored developing oral English skills. As a result of learning English in China, it is reasonable that her speaking is fluent and sometimes not clearly.

### **Overall Assessment**

According to Language SLA chart, I think my participant’s English proficiency is in level four, which means her English is in high intermediate fluency. General to say, she can express her thoughts completely most of the time except sometimes she forgets some specific words. Further, she is capable of participating in everyday conversations though sometimes she depends on context to understand meanings. But to some extent, she shows good comprehension and can engage in conversations in daily life. In terms of vocabulary, I used an online tool called Test Your Vocab to test her vocabulary. The result shows that she knows about 6,000 words, which is lower than level four. However, I think they are more like daily expressions, so Yuki may not be familiar with. I can see that in her writing sample, she uses expanded vocabulary. In addition, she can have a formal conversation with others and write academic papers. At last, based on her grammar analysis, I believe

Yuki has a good awareness of English grammar. As for morphological performance, she had a good sense of affixes, roots, and suffixes, although she omitted past tense, plural or third-person singular. In terms of syntactic performance, she had basic knowledge of sentence structure, word order and linking devices. But she needs to pay attention to the diversity of words and sentences. Interestingly, I found that the grammar performance of writing sample was better than the oral sample. For example, the LMU of the writing part is higher than the conversation, which means the words in writing are more complex than in speaking. In other cases, the sentence structures and linking devices are more various in writing. And oral sample contains much more simple sentences. Therefore, she should do more efforts on grammar rules when speaking English. To conclude, though she still has some mistakes in English grammar and oral English is not fluent enough, she has already had the majority of language competence. Therefore, I think she is in level four.

### **Theoretical framework**

In phonology analysis, I used Markedness Differential Hypothesis. It pointed out that a language learner will have some difficulties in phonology. One is that the areas of the target language which differ from the native language and are more marked than the native language will be difficult. In contrary, if they are not more marked, it will not be difficult. The other is that “the relative degree of difficulty of the areas of difference of the target language which are more marked than the native language will correspond to the relative degree of Markedness” (Eckman, 1977).

In addition to Markedness Differential Hypothesis, cohort model of Marslen-Wilson was also used to explain if there are some phonological problems, people may understand her because they can identify words by knowing partial input. “The onset of a word can

activate a set of lexical candidates which together comprise a cohort which competes for recognition (Alloppenna, Magnuson & Tanenhaus, 1998).” For example, when the word *beast* is presented, other words like *beetle* and *beach* are activated for the recognized cohort. However, if there is a continue speech input, the activation of the word will reduce.

I also used Contrastive Analysis to state that the first language has a negative transfer to the second language. Meanwhile, it can also have a negative transfer to the target language. The negative transfer will produce language interference while positive transfer can improve the second language learning. Therefore, educators and teachers can point out the problems in second language learning and find a way to solve them based on contrast two languages (Lado, 1957). Theo Van Els (1984) also concluded that Contrastive Analysis is helpful to explain and predict the errors which exist in learning the second language by analyzing the differences between L1 and L2.

In order to analyze my participant’s pragmatic skill, I used Grice’s Maxims. As Grice (1975) stated, there are four categories which in accordance with Cooperative Principle. He called these categories Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. The category of Quantity relates to the quantity of information being provided, and it requires to make contribution informative enough while not to be more informative. Under the category of Quality, there are two more specific maxims: do not say what you believe to be false, and do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence. The category of Quantity places a single maxim which requires being relevant. Finally, under the category of Manner, there are various maxims, such as avoid obscurity of expression, avoid ambiguity, be brief, and be orderly.

In order to give my participant recommendations for further improve her English abilities, I suggest her to talk with English native speakers and let them point out her problems according to the Monitor Hypothesis. This hypothesis has very specific hypotheses about the relation between acquisition and learning (Krashen, 1981). There are three conditions for using the monitor: the learner must know the rule, be focused on correctness, and have time to use the monitor.

### **Instruction recommendations**

After analyzing my participant's English abilities, I want to give her some suggestions to further develop her English proficiency. In terms of her phonological skills, there are some recommendations for her. One is that when she learns a new word, she should pay close attention to the word's pronunciation and listen to it as much as possible. She can listen to the audio pronunciation of the words and then read it several times. Another suggestion is that she can listen to some audio materials, such as VOA English and broadcast, sentence by sentence. After listening to it, Yuki can read following the radios and record her own voices. Next, she can make a comparison between the native speaker and herself. In my opinion, It will be much easier for her to tell the differences between her pronunciation and the native speaker. It is a good way to practice the intonation and pronunciation by mimicking native speakers. The last advice is that she can communicate with an English native speaker, and let the person tell her wrong pronunciations. According to the Monitor Hypothesis, it is important to find a person or device that can help language learners to edit their language performance.

As for semantic skills, there are some recommendations to help her improve the ability to choose word correctly. Firstly, dictionaries can be used effectively. She can use both

bilingual and monolingual dictionaries. Bilingual dictionaries can help her have a basic understanding of words' meanings, while monolingual dictionaries can be useful to learn the words' usage. She can also read the sample sentences in the dictionaries to have a deeper understanding of how to use these words. Except for dictionaries, word wheels can be created to show synonyms related to a certain word, which means when she learns a new word, she can write down its synonyms and consider their differences and similarities. Thirdly, using online tools can also help her avoid using repetitive words. Thesaurus.com is a great website for English language learners to learn synonyms and antonyms. She can take advantage of it to expand vocabulary variety.

As mentioned in grammar analysis, Yuki has already mastered some knowledge of grammar. Therefore, I can just recommend her to pay more attention to sentence structure and tense in speaking while be careful about the diversity of sentence structure in writing. One suggestion is that she can find some topics online and practice talking about them. Then she can record what she says and find if there are some grammar mistakes. After realizing these problems, she can write down these mistakes and be careful about them for the next time. The other advice is that she can extract long and difficult sentences when reading English books, then analyze their structure and use similar structures in her own writing. I believe that reading more English materials to increase the language input can let her have a good awareness of English grammar. In addition, because her major is translation, I believe doing more translation practice can also be helpful.

In order to further develop her pragmatic skills and oral English, Yuki can pay more attention to how native speakers speak, such as listening to radios, watching TV shows, and chatting with native speakers. And then she needs to observe and imitate the way they

talk and expressions they use. Besides noticing native speakers, she can also organize her language before speaking and do more exercises.

### **Critical reflection**

After doing the case study, I have been learned a lot about linguistic knowledge and research methods. In terms of linguistic knowledge, I have a deeper understanding of phonology, semantics, grammar, and pragmatics. I also become more familiar with linguistic theories and use them to analyze authentic cases. With respect to research methods, I know how to do a case study, how to collect effective samples and data, and how to use them to support my points.

In addition, I also find that it gives me some instructional plans about teaching in the future. At first, I have learned how to assess students' English proficiency. It can help me have a general understanding of my students. Secondly, analyzing my participant's English abilities can help me know how to find the strength and weakness of students' English learning. I can know which part they master perfectly, and which part they are not good at. Based on knowing their advantages, I can encourage them and let them realize their benefits. Meanwhile, I can give students instructional recommendations on how to do better in their weak parts. Generally speaking, this case study not only lets me a deeper understanding of the contents I have learned from the class but also gives me instructions on my future work with English learners.



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## Appendix

Table. 1

Words	mistake	correct
<u>th</u> ink, <u>th</u> ing, <u>no</u> thing, som <u>eth</u> ing, <u>th</u> ought	Between [θ] and [s]	[θ]
<u>th</u> e, <u>th</u> em, <u>th</u> is	Between [ð] and [z]	[ð]
first <u>t</u> , just <u>t</u>	add [ə] at the end	[t]
and <u>d</u> , distract <u>e</u> d, mind <u>d</u> , understand <u>d</u> , bored <u>d</u> , prepar <u>e</u> d	[t]	[d]
is <u>s</u> , use <u>s</u> , thes <u>e</u>	[s]	[z]
solv <u>e</u> , brav <u>e</u>	[f]	[v]
centr <u>a</u> l, mall <u>l</u>	[ɹ]	[l]
nov <u>e</u> l	[oʊ]	[ɑ]
sh <u>o</u> uld	[u]	[ʊ]
s <u>a</u> y	[i]	[e]
discuss <u>ing</u> , writ <u>ing</u> , read <u>ing</u> , list <u>en</u> ing,	[ŋ]	[ŋ]

Table 2

	Oral recording	Writing sample
Total Word Count	567	492

Total Unique Words	178	201
Hard Words	23 (4.06%)	60 (12.02%)
Lexical Density	31.39%	40.85%

Table 3 MLU of the conversation

Total words	253
Utterances	41
morphemes	279
MLU	6.8

Table 4 MLU of the writing sample

Total words	252
Utterances	31
morphemes	352
MLU	11.4

## Language Acquisition Chart

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
OFFICIAL NAME	Preproduction	Early Production	Low Intermediate	High Intermediate Fluency	Advanced Fluency
OTHER NAMES	Newcomer Emergent Speaker Silent Period Stage	Emergent/Beginner One-Two Word Social Language Stage	Short Phrases/Simple Sentences Social Language Stage	Bridging Academic Language Stage	Exitable Fluency Academic Language Stage
DEFINITION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students not ready to actively produce language</li> <li>Listening and responding in non-verbal ways to show understanding</li> <li>Adjusting to U.S. culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students can attend to hands-on demonstrations with more understanding</li> <li>May initiate conversation by pointing or using single words</li> <li>Very limited comprehension/vocabulary</li> <li>Adjusting to U.S. culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students begin speaking in short phrases and simple sentences</li> <li>Many mistakes in grammar, word order, word usage</li> <li>Limited comprehension and vocabulary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students can communicate thoughts more completely, can participate in every day conversations without highly contextualized support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students have advanced skills in cognitive/academic language</li> </ul>
VOCABULARY	0-500 receptive word vocabulary	Up to 1000 receptive word vocabulary	Up to 7,000 receptive/active word vocabulary	Up to 12,000 receptive/active word vocabulary	Beyond 12,000 receptive/active word vocabulary
STUDENT BEHAVIORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Depends heavily on context</li> <li>Has minimal receptive vocabulary</li> <li>Comprehends key words only</li> <li>Indicates comprehension physically (points, draws, gestures, etc.)</li> <li>May not produce speech</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Depends heavily on context</li> <li>Produces words in isolation</li> <li>Verbalizes key words</li> <li>Responds with one/two word answer or short phrases</li> <li>Indicates comprehension physically</li> <li>Mispronunciation/grammar errors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Depends heavily on context</li> <li>Produces whole sentences</li> <li>Makes some pronunciation and basic grammatical errors, but is understood</li> <li>Demonstrates comprehension by responding orally and in written form (charts, graphs, diagrams)</li> <li>Hears smaller elements of speech</li> <li>Functions on a social level</li> <li>Uses limited vocabulary</li> <li>Initiates conversation &amp; questions</li> <li>Shows good comprehension (given rich context)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Depends on context</li> <li>Engage in and produce connected narrative (discourse)</li> <li>Shows good comprehension</li> <li>Uses expanded vocabulary</li> <li>Makes complex grammatical errors</li> <li>Functions somewhat on an academic level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Functions on an academic level age/grade peers</li> <li>Maintains two-way conversation</li> <li>Uses more complex grammatical structures</li> <li>Demonstrates comprehension in decontextualized situations</li> <li>Uses enriched vocabulary</li> </ul>
ABLE TO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observe, locate, label, match, show, classify, categorize</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name, recall, draw, list, record, point out, underline, organize</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tell, describe, restate, compare, question, map, dramatize</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Imagine, create, appraise, contrast, predict, express, report, estimate, evaluate, explain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relate, infer, hypothesize, outline, revise, suppose, verify, rewrite, justify, critique, summarize, illustrate, judge, demonstrate</li> </ul>
TEACHING STRATEGIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use manipulatives, visuals, realia, props, games</li> <li>Create climate of acceptance/respect that supports acculturation</li> <li>Use cooperative learning groups</li> <li>Require physical response to check comprehension</li> <li>Display print to support oral language</li> <li>Model activities for students</li> <li>Use hands-on activities</li> <li>Use bilingual students as peer helpers</li> <li>Adjust rate of speech to enhance comprehension</li> <li>Ask yes/no questions</li> <li>Ask students to show/point/draw</li> <li>Teach content area vocabulary/terminology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue Stage I Strategies PLUS</li> <li>Simplify language – not content</li> <li>Lessons designed to motivate students to talk</li> <li>Ask students questions that require one/two word responses: who?, what?, which one?, how many?</li> <li>Lessons expand vocabulary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue Stages I &amp; II Strategies PLUS</li> <li>List and review instructions step by step</li> <li>Build on students' prior knowledge</li> <li>Incorporate more reading and writing</li> <li>Engage students in producing language: describing, retelling, comparing, contrasting, summarizing, graphs, charts, diagrams, creating, rebus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue Stages I-III Strategies PLUS</li> <li>Have students brainstorm, list, web, use graphic organizers</li> <li>Ask questions soliciting opinions, judgment, explanation (more why and how questions)</li> <li>Introduce figurative language</li> <li>Develop more academic language (oral and written)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue Stages I-IV Strategies PLUS</li> <li>Incorporate note-taking skills, skills, &amp; test-taking skills</li> <li>Demonstrate how to verify answers (oral and written)</li> <li>Expand figurative language (idioms)</li> </ul>
RELATIVE TIMELINE FOR EACH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION STAGE	0-6 Months in U.S. School	6 Months-1 Year in U.S. School	1-3 Years in U.S. School	3-5 Years in U.S. School	5-7 Years in U.S. School

*Artifact 4 Photos for school observation*













*Artifact 5 Unit plan in Writing Pathways and Instruction Project*

### Agenda

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentor text 1 (<i>William's Doll</i>): summarize different views (whole class)</li> <li>• Mentor text 2 (<i>Hey, little ant</i>): how to persuade (group work)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using notebooks to collect ideas</li> <li>• Choosing topics</li> <li>• Small group discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debate</li> <li>• Mini-lesson: thesis statement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing strategy: TREE</li> <li>• Teacher's model of TREE</li> <li>• Group activity for memorize TREE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write the first draft of argument writing</li> <li>• One to one instruction</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini-lesson: transitional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate the teacher's</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer evaluation:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final version due</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• posting students'</li> </ul>

	words <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Words practice</li> <li>• Continue drafting</li> </ul>	demonstration text with whole class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue drafting</li> </ul>	using checklist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Author's chair</li> <li>• Revise draft</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conferencing with students individually</li> </ul>	writings on the bulletin board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evaluate 3-5 writings with the whole class</li> </ul>
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### Launching activities

In this unit, day 1 and day 2 are launching days. In day 1, the teacher will introduce the argument writing, especially its structure and purpose, while in day 2, the teacher will encourage students to choose topics that they are interested in and help them establish authentic audience—their classmates and teachers. Their final compositions will be posted on a bulletin board outside the classroom.

#### **Day 1 Launch: the structure and purpose of argument writing (Appendix page 1-7)**

*Principle 4 and 9: using mentor texts & Setting specific product goals.*

1. Use the Toulmin Model of Argument (Toulmin, 1958) (Appendix page 1) to introduce what is argument writing, its characteristics, and purpose.
2. Show the Basic Argument Schema (Reznitskaya, Anderson, Kuo, & Li-Jen, 2007) (Appendix page 2) to students, and help them to understand the structure of argument writing.
3. Discussion questions for students: what is the main characteristics of argument writing? what are important elements to write a good one?
4. Read aloud *William's Doll* (Appendix page 3-5) to the whole class. After reading the story, students should highlight important dialogues that express different points of views.

5. After first reading, students can read again silently.
6. When finish reading, discuss each character's view with the teacher, and the teacher write them on the whiteboard.
7. Hand out article *Hey, little ant* (Appendix page 6-7). Dividing students into small groups and asking them to answer questions at the end of the story.
8. Ask each group to write a small passage to persuade the student let the ant g free.
9. Show each group's passage. Ending questions: what is the purpose of argument writing? how to make your own writing convincing?

**Day 2 Launch: choosing topics and discussion (Appendix page 2).**

*Principle 6& 7: Offering students opportunities to choose topics & Teaching writing with voice.*

1. Use notebooks to record their thoughts of following questions: what is the most important thing you want others to know? Why it is important? How can you make others believe you? It there any different opinions from others?
2. Discuss students' responses and sharing the teacher's answer. Telling students their responses might be their topics in writing.
3. Pass out the Basic Argument Schema (Reznitskaya, Anderson, Kuo, & Li-Jen, 2007) (Appendix page 2) to students, and ask them to write down their responses according it.
4. Dividing students into small groups to share their ideas and topics. Discussing why their topic is important, why it is interesting, and their own opinions of each topic. Students can record others' opinions on their notebooks.
5. Whole class discussion: What is the greatest idea you have heard from classmates? what's

your opinion about it? How about your topic? Do you have reasons to support your ideas?

6. Homework: deeply think your topic and get more information by interviewing others or seeking on the Internet.

### References

Toulmin, S. (1958). *The uses of argument*. Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen\\_Toulmin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_Toulmin)

Reznitskaya, A., Anderson, R. C., Kuo, & Li-Jen. (2007). Teaching and learning argumentation. *Elementary School Journal*, 107(5), 339-472.

### Class Activities

#### Day 3 Debate (Appendix page 8)

*Principle 8: Using culturally responsive instruction.*

1. Pass out T-chart (appendix page 8) for students and explain how to do a debate. Give students three options of the topic, which are related to their lives:
  - Should school have dress codes?
  - Should students do homework?
  - Should animals be used to test new products?

They can choose one as the debate topic for the whole class.

2. Divide students into two groups, one is cons, the other is pros. According to their own knowledge, they shall share their opinions with their team members, and write down them on the T-chart.
3. Students begin the debate. They show their opinions, give reasons, support their reasons and do a conclusion.

#### Day 4 Teaching writing strategy

*Principle 2 & 3: Focusing on Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) Instruction & Encouraging collaborative writing.*

1. After giving students background knowledge of argument writing, the teacher can introduce the strategic mnemonic to students. As for me, I will choose TREE strategy.

When they write an argument, it should include:

T: a clear Topic sentence.

R: Reasons (three or more).

E: Explanations where they say more about the reasons.

E: An Ending where they wrap it up right.

2. The teacher shows students how it works by writing a small passage on the whiteboard, it includes topic sentence, three reasons, details to support reasons, and an ending conclude the topic.
3. Group activity to memorize TREE: the first student in the small group come up with a topic, the second students give a reason, the third students explain the reason, and the last students conclude their topic. Sharing their works to the whole class.

### **Day 5 One to one instruction**

*Principle 5: Creating a pleasant and motivating writing environment.*

Students begin to work on their first drafts. The teacher will go around to see each student, and give instruction to students individually. This instruction focuses on help students make a clear structure and use evidences.

### **Day 7 Demonstration texts**

*Principle 4: using mentor texts.*

Since students have begun their first draft, I will show them the teacher's

demonstration text. First, I will read aloud the text to students. Then we will illustrate the text together and let students analyze why it is a good example. At last, I will show the rubric to students and let them know how to write a good one.

After we analyze the teacher's sample together, students can analyze student's demonstration text in small groups. They will use the rubric to grade this one and give reasons. They can also give some "nudges" for the student.

### **Day 8 Peer evaluation and author's chair (Appendix page 10-12)**

*Principle 3: Encouraging collaborative writing.*

Students use "opinion writing checklist" to evaluate other students' compositions. After they evaluate others' writings, they should discuss with their classmates, try to give instruction to others. students who get higher evaluation can share his writing skills in small groups, and teach others as a tutor.

After peer evaluation, we can invite several students to organize author's chair. They will introduce their topics, how they organize their compositions, and their writing processes.

### **Day 9 Conference**

*Principle 10: Providing individualized and informative feedback*

The teacher meets with individual children to discuss their writing strategies and progress. In terms of different students, the teacher can give individually feedback and additional materials to help students improve their writing.

### **Mini-lessons**

#### **Day 3 Thesis statement**

Helping students know more about argument writing topic.

Introduce what is a thesis statement: a sentence that explicitly identifies the purpose of the paper or previews its main ideas.

**1. A thesis take a stand rather than announcing a subject.**

Announcement: the thesis of the paper is the ways to protect animals.

Thesis: it is important to find ways to protect animals.

**2. A thesis is the main idea, not the title.**

Title: a kind girl

Thesis: Jane is a warm-hearted girl because she always participates in volunteer activities.

**3. A thesis statement is narrow, rather than broad.**

Broad: global warming is harmful.

Narrow: global warming will lead to extreme weather, which can cause damage to human's life.

**Remember this: claim + reason = thesis**

Idea comes from: [http://msmcclure.com/?page\\_id=6539](http://msmcclure.com/?page_id=6539)

**Day 6 Transitional Words (Appendix page 9)**

In order to help students use transition words better, I will conclude some useful words and phrase with students.

1. Divide transitional words into five categories: start, alike, different, continue, and end.

Then ask students to think together about different words that belong to each category.

2. Word match: give students some words. Divide students in small groups and they should put words into correct categories.

start		Next, in conclusion, then, meanwhile, to begin with, for example, in the end, another example, in the beginning, but, so you can see, finally, meanwhile, in addition, second
alike		
different		
continue		
end		

3. Give student the handout of transitional words summarized by the teacher (Appendix page 9).
4. Ask students to use each category's words to make sentences.

*Artifact 6 practicum video*