

ESL In and Out of the Classroom

Honors Thesis

Paige Hanewald

ABSTRACT:

Some people are able to look at language in its entirety, seeing all of its facets—the multiple versions of ourselves expressed in different discourses. Some see it as a tool in communication while, unfortunately, others experience it as a barrier. Wenyang Jiang (2000) declares, “Language and culture makes a living organism: language is flesh, and culture is blood. Without culture, language would be dead; without language, culture would have no shape” (328). Here, Jiang (2000) explains that without language, a culture ceases to exist. Language pumps the blood throughout bodies of culture, but interestingly, their interdependency often goes unnoticed. This issue is prevalent for children and adolescents who do not speak English in the United States. Many students with diverse backgrounds and who are English language learners (ELLs) face insurmountable challenges through their schooling and are often mislabeled as unintelligent or disabled. As a future educator with an English-as-a-Second Language endorsement, I aim to advocate for these students and integrate more effective and inclusive teaching strategies for the ELL population. In this portfolio, I will present and reflect my observations from my 45-hour practicum in Natrona County School District, current research on ELLs and examples of effective teaching methods. Overall my portfolio contains 1) reflective journal entries regarding my observations and correlating research topics, 2) lesson plans I have created or adapted and their evaluations, 3) a reflection on professional development and strategies to support colleagues and improve ELL learning, 4) a report on teacher-family relationships and suggested improvements.

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Paige Hanewald with Dr. Jenna Shim
Educational Studies
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Internship and Research Description

The English as a Second Language (ESL) Internship is the final component towards obtaining an ESL endorsement in the state of Wyoming. The purpose of the classroom-based experience in ESL practicum is to provide students an opportunity to demonstrate competence in the standards associated with the ESL endorsement (See Appendix A.). In addition, it is a hope that the experience will develop an ethic of self-assessment that is critical to all professional educators.

Because the ESL endorsement is an attachment to the Wyoming Professional Teaching License, practicum must be completed in K-12 settings. In addition, because it is a K-12 endorsement, candidates should plan 15-hour “observation” in a setting different from their primary setting (that is, if the main practicum is in an elementary school, then spend 15 hours observing work with second language learners in a middle school or high school setting and vice versa). The practicum requires that the candidate spend a minimum of 45 hours observing and working with English language learners over the span of the 15-week university semester. While observing in the primary setting, the candidate must teach three one-hour lessons using instructional methods and strategies learned from the program. There must be an evaluator, ideally an ESL endorsed teacher, of the practicum experience who will observe and evaluate the three lessons. Given that there are so few ESL endorsed teachers in the state and in the event that this is not possible, the evaluator may be a highly qualified non-ESL teacher. The district person responsible for the English language learner program can also serve this role.

In addition to the classroom-based experience, the internship requires a final portfolio as the summative assessment to the ESL Endorsement Program of the University of Wyoming. The portfolio must include:

- An observation report of the secondary setting
- Three modified or original lesson plans
- Three evaluations and three self-evaluations of lesson plans
- Eight reflective journal entries based on observations in the primary setting
- Three professional development reflections that consider and demonstrate multiple strategies to improve ELL learning in supporting their colleagues help ELL students
- A partnerships and advocacy report on involvement with ELLs' families and communities and suggested improvements in advocating for ELLs and their families

Observation Setting Descriptions and Demographics

According to the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Data Hub, Wyoming had approximately 3,300 English Language Learners (ELLs), or 3.6% of the state student population, registered in schools for the 2013-2014 academic year¹. By the start of the following school year, 287 of these students were in Natrona County School District and 60 of those attended what was North Casper Elementary School,² which is now known as Lincoln Elementary School. Having more ELLs than any other school in the district, I decided to reach out and observe the school's ideologies, teacher practices, and teaching strategies both in English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) service classrooms as well as in mainstream classrooms.

Overall, I completed a total 15 observation hours in four different classroom settings at Lincoln Elementary School including a 4th grade, 5th grade, and two ESL service classrooms. Although the ESL classes were structured for 2-5 students at a time, the two mainstream classrooms contained 16-19 students. Approximately 40-50% of the student populations in these grade level classes were bilingual students. Roughly 50% of the bilingual students received or were currently receiving ESL services. Lincoln Elementary School has 2 certified ESL educators that primarily provide students' ESL support services.

For my primary setting, I observed at Kelly Walsh High School in Natrona County School District, which consists of 1800 enrolled students from grades 9-12. With one certified ESL coordinator, there are 32 English language learners (ELLs) that received language support services in total. 12 of those received some kind of daily service while the remaining 20 get

¹ Migration Policy Institute tabulation of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2014 American Community Survey (for data on children in immigrant families) and the U.S. Department of Education (for ELL data), ED Data Express, SY 2013-14: <http://eddataexpress.ed.gov/data-elements.cfm>.

² Balatsos, N. (2015, May 19). Natrona County schools address growing number of English language learners. *Casper Star Tribune*. Retrieved April 10, 2017, from http://trib.com/news/local/education/natrona-county-schools-address-growing-number-of-english-language-learners/article_0f03a754-ce87-5410-b29f-2b64581a1982.html

consultations based on grades and academic progress. Over the course of 30 hours, I was able to observe 90-minute ESL instruction class to work specifically on English grammar. This class consisted of 8 of those students ranging from WIDA ACCESS levels to 1-4. The rest of my time was dedicated to joining ELLs in mainstream, content area classrooms or pullout sessions in which students are removed from the classroom to receive instruction and guidance from the ESL coordinator on the subject's assignment(s).

Observation Report of Lincoln Elementary School

Observations and Analysis

Generally, there were extremely similar pedagogical practices between the ESL classes and mainstream classes, respectively. ELLs would experience Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) in their mainstream classes and spend 30 minutes for direct ESL vocabulary instruction. Students that have lower levels of English language ability would be accommodated through increased frequency or duration of pull out or individual ESL services, being placed in a bilingual teacher's classroom, or accommodations within the classroom through emphasized vocabulary and SIOP.

ESL Classroom Observations

The first ESL class I observed, out of four 30-minute classes, consisted of four 5th grade boys. They sat around a crescent shaped table where the teacher stood or sat in a central position on the inverted side, which was consistent for all of the ESL classes I observed. As many of them tested at Standards 2-3 on the domains outlined in WIDA's English Language Proficiency Standards, the teacher highly emphasized vocabulary. They spent a small portion of the time focusing on "transfer words" and "column words" which were activities that asked students to listen, write, and repeat various words as well as organize them by similar sounds or pronunciation (i.e. run, fun, done) and write them in a complete sentence. After speaking with the teacher, I learned that she typically introduces students to different word families and review them throughout the week. The students also begin a new story or article each week and create a tri-fold brochure where they outline their predictions, make summaries, etc. They began a new article the day I observed and first made predictions based on the title and illustration of the article. After sharing, the teacher read them aloud and had the students follow along. The teacher

asked the students to summarize what they had read after each paragraph and make markings (underline, star, annotate, etc.) on key ideas.

Although emphasis on vocabulary was evident from the beginning portion of the lesson, the educator made sure students knew certain words as she read them. She would stop after reading a sentence with a certain word, such as tale. She asked her students, *“Is this word ‘tale’ the same as a dog tail? What does this ‘tale’ mean?”* Names were different. She encouraged her students to recognize if the word was a name and told them to sound them out as best as they can. *This is an important skill, she later told me, because if they are caught up in pronouncing names, they will become flustered and lose time during testing.* In addition, she integrated various phrasing in order to activate prior knowledge and background experiences. For example, she said, *“Remember the reading strategies we did last week...”* which related to the predictions, summarizing, and annotations that she was requesting them to make.

These critical thinking strategies continued in the next ESL class, which consisted of two students, one in the 2nd grade and the other in the 3rd grade. They both tested level 3 on their last WIDA ACCESS assessment and used deductive reasoning to point out main ideas, characters, settings, and character interactions based on the story and its pictures. When discussing altogether, the teacher would ask open questions to challenge the students. If they seemed confused or unresponsive after an extended wait time, she would rephrase the question to a yes/no format and scaffold questions until she provided enough scaffolding for her original question. The two students were responsive, as the scaffolding technique bridged different observations to the text.

The two classes described above were very similar to another taught by the other ESL

certified instructor, except they had already started the story. Despite their progress into the story, the educator requested verbal predictions from all four 2nd graders based on the conflict of the story. To redirect the students' attention, she asked them to choose between two separate scenarios: firstly, if the students believed the workers could put the cars back together and, secondly, if the students believed the cars would be the same or different after being rebuilt. In addition, before and after they read a story, students had time to color the illustrations based on the story (i.e. the red stop sign, the yellow taxi, etc.).

Although the majority of the students I saw were fairly considered bilinguals, I had the opportunity to observe a monolingual in the ESL class as well. This student was in the 5th grade and had recently come from a Spanish speaking country. Having no English background, he was substantially disadvantaged compared to his English native peers and consistently worked on letter sounds and vocabulary with an ESL instructor every day. The teacher informed me that he has come a long way, as he was able to read and write words and complete sentences aloud with moderate assistance. Vocabulary

Mainstream Classroom Observations

Due to the consistency between the two classes I observed, I will not illustrate my experiences as in-depth as my individualized ESL classroom experiences but instead will outline the key strategies and pedagogical practices within the classroom as well as refer to specific students in each class. It is important to note that I sat observed upper-elementary classrooms, namely 4th and 5th grade, with the intention of equating my experiences across the range of ages and English language development (ELD) levels.

To set the scene, both classrooms were organized similarly. They both had a traditional layout where students consistently face the front of the classroom with the addition of two

separate crescent-shaped tables for small group-teacher work. The content and language objectives for each content subject (math, language arts, etc.) were written on the board. Posters and vocabulary walls took form along the walls including numerical expressions of the levels of understanding, elements of a narrative, and classroom rules.

The main pedagogical practices in both classrooms was scaffolding and SIOP, or sheltered instruction, as there was a broad range of English proficiency leveled students. I noticed the teacher's frequent use of grouping strategies, increased wait-time, and accommodating speech, including asking questions or words in simpler terms to ensure understanding for all levels of proficiency. For example, teachers would scaffold their students to identify and define key words or words that they did not know such as 'altogether' as a representative for the word and action 'add' in mathematics. Both educators provided supplementary materials and engaging, meaningful activities and constant activation and linking of students' prior experiences or learning. The educators were assertive, clear and precise when giving directions.

Students were constantly using higher order thinking skills through engaging, meaningful activities using supplementary skills. In the 4th grade classroom, students worked in groups to match common idioms to a literal definition. In reading, students worked individually to recall their reading strategies (which were also written on the board) and use them to answer comprehension and analysis questions. Although these activities were significantly more difficult for some ELL students, the educator and I were able to adjust harder vocabulary within the question so that they could understand its purpose as well as provide individual feedback on their inferences.

For some, though, these minor adjustments were inadequate. A monolingual student came from Guatemala three months prior to my visit and could produce very little English. She was strategically placed into this classroom because the teacher was bilingual in English and Spanish and could provide one-on-one clarification or accommodations through her native language. For example, the class wrote short narratives in their journals daily and had to choose one that they would revise, edit, and publish. ELLs were required to write them in English, but this monolingual student was able to write hers in Spanish. The teacher explained to me, *I cannot grade her on her knowledge of the elements of the narrative in English because of her low English language development*. She was right; the language load³ was far too large, but her cognitive ability and understanding could be measured to the 4th grade standards in her native tongue.

Further Analysis and Conclusions

Despite the evident use of SIOP and direct instruction, scaffolding through those instructional methods allowed for all students to build upon their prior knowledge individually and collaboratively. Social interactions were crucial in English language development, as students with lower proficiency would rely on bilingual students to work together to follow directions, gain further comprehension, and produce the results in English. In fact, several times the teacher would pair students according to this dynamic. This would not only allow ELLs to integrate with their peers, but it celebrated their mother tongue and accepted their cultural and linguistic backgrounds⁴.

³ Meyer, L. M. (2000). Barriers to meaningful instruction for English learners. *Theory into Practicum* 39(4), 228-236.

⁴ Cummins, J. (2001) Bilingual Children's Mother Tongue: Why is it important for education? *Sprogforum*, 19, 15-20.

In addition, I found that the scaffolding instruction in these classrooms contained most of, if not all, features outlined by Aaida Walqui⁵ including continuity, contextual support, intersubjectivity, contingency, handover, and flow (166). All of the classrooms that I observed relied on student's ability to decode various literacies and construct a broader vocabulary within those literacies, whether their first language was English or not, just as Walqui recommends. In fact, Walqui suggests,

“Rather than simplifying the tasks or the language, teaching subject matter content to [ELLs] requires amplifying and enriching the linguistic and extralinguistic context [...so ELLs] may construct their understanding on the basis of multiple clues and perspectives encountered in a variety of class activities” (169).

Introducing and adjusting difficult vocabulary into simpler words not only bridged prior knowledge to new knowledge, but also contextualized it. Providing synonyms, distinguishing between homophones, and re-presenting vocabulary or modelling reading strategies built schema and developed metacognition. Although some teachers had bilingual abilities, all teachers had the ability to consider the ELLs in the classrooms and implement these strategies successfully for all of their students.

⁵ Walqui, A. (2006) Scaffolding Instruction for ELLs. *The International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 9(2), 159-180.

Overview of Lesson: In this lesson, students will be learning the organelles within a cell so that they may explain the processes including the structure and function of the cell and cellular differentiation.

- a. **Grade Level/Subject:** 9th grade Science
- b. **Student Level (WIDA Placement):** Level 2
- c. **Lesson Topic:** The Cell
- d. **Objectives**

Content Objectives:

1. Students will be able to identify various organelles within a cell.
2. Students will be able to define the function of various organelles within a cell.

Language Objectives:

1. Students will be able to classify the following content-related vocabulary by matching pictures and icons to their associated label with a partner:
 - a. Nucleus, Nucleolus, Chromosomes/DNA, Golgi Body, Cell Membrane, Ribosomes, Mitochondria, Cell Wall, Chloroplast, Lysosome, Vacuole, Endoplasmic Reticulum, Cytoplasm
2. Students will be able to relate content-related vocabulary features to real-world objects in order to justify the function of the organelles.

e. **Main Resources**

1. Graphic Organizer for note-taking of Informational PowerPoint provided by content area teacher

f. **Supplementary materials**

1. “Let’s Build: A Plant Cell” packet (from Teachers Pay Teachers)
2. BrainPop “Cell Specialization Video”
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BtamH52WsD4>)
3. BrainPop “Build-a-Cell” Online Activity (Plant:
<https://www.brainpop.com/games/buildacellplant/>; Animal:
<https://www.brainpop.com/games/buildacellanimal/>)
4. Mind Map (Appendix A)
5. Scissors, writing utensils, paper, iPad, etc.

g. **Meaningful Activities**

Activate Prior Experiences/Personal Backgrounds

1. Students will watch the “Cell Specialization” BrainPop in order to review basic differences between plant and animal cells.
2. To cover the remaining vocabulary, students will continue practicing their word matching activity from the “Let’s Build a Plant Cell”.
3. Students will review additional vocabulary from their graphic organizer.

Link to New Learning from Prior Learning

4. Through scaffolding methods, students will gain further understanding of the vocabulary at a sufficient pace for them through the connection of prior knowledge and comprehensible input.
5. Questioning techniques and discussing comparisons of organelles to real-world examples i.e. the cell wall is like a door to a house because it controls what comes in and out of a cell.
6. Students will brainstorm ideas of comparisons for each organelle using the Mind Map.

Emphasis on Vocabulary

7. In addition to the emphasis on vocabulary within the prior experiences, students will be independently labeling a plant cell on BrainPop.
8. Students will be able to use a translator, as necessary, for words that they are unfamiliar with.

h. Thinking Skills

1. Students will recognize and categorize each concept through the word matching and the online activities.
2. Students will design a model and compare organelles of an animal or plant cell to real-life objects to demonstrate their comprehension and knowledge of the functions of its organelles.

i. Interactions

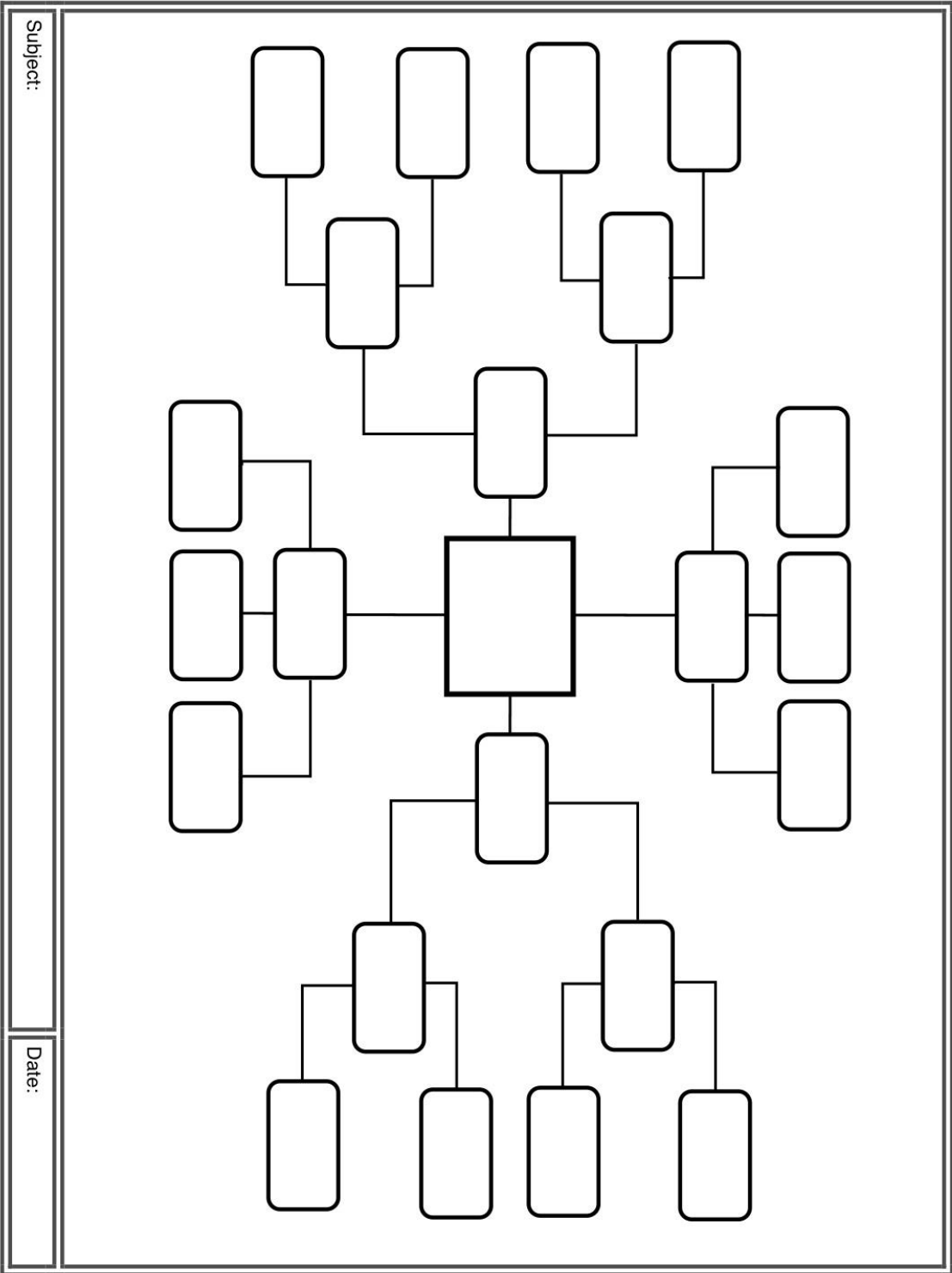
1. Students will work in partners or small groups, depending on the class size, to review vocabulary through matching activity and graphic organizer.
2. Students will individually complete the online activity of labeling the

j. Review and Assessment

1. Formative:
 - i. Questions asked during the vocabulary review will function as constant comprehension monitoring. Some of these cues can be found in the step-by-step procedure. Additional questions will depend on the students' responses and questions.
 - ii. Meaningful activities including the review of their graphic organizer, the matching activity, and online labeling to ensure student engagement and monitor comprehension.
 - iii. Students' design of the concept label as well as their sticky note examples will give insight into their deeper understanding of the term and its meaning(s) (i.e. man vs. man may also be animal vs. animal, etc.)
2. Summative:
 - i. Students will create an animal or plant cell model that compares their organelles to real-life objects. Students will have the choice of doing this in the form of a poster, 3D model, blueprint, PowerPoint, or Glogster.

Lesson Agenda	Step-by-Step
<p>Introduction (10 min.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building Backgrounds - Explanation of lesson objectives 	<p>Before students arrive, I will prepare the BrainPop video.</p> <p>I will gain attention by reading the content and language objectives for today's lesson. Then I would call attention to the video. I will ask the students to pay special attention to the organelles that are explained in the video.</p> <p>After the video, I will ask students what the video was about. Then I will ask students to mark, on their graphic organizer, what organelles were mentioned and explained in the video (<i>Differences between cells, including animal and plant cells; chloroplasts, cell wall, etc.</i>) They will share their thoughts with a partner and then the class.</p>
<p>Direct Teaching (45 min.)</p> <p>Active Engagement</p>	<p>Students will continue practicing vocabulary from their plant cell matching activity from last class. Once they can put all of the components with little to no use of their notes, we will begin reviewing the other main terms from their graphic organizer.</p> <p>Monitor group work to ensure on-task, productive behavior as well as comprehension. Answer questions as needed and make connections with students' prior knowledge. Prepare iPad with online BrainPop activity to build a cell.</p> <p>To practice knowledge of vocabulary, ask students to begin the online activity (plant and animal).</p>
<p>Review/Assess</p>	<p>Once students have completed both online activities successfully, I will provide instruction about the mind-mapping template and how it will prepare them for their cell model. We will fill out 1-2 bubbles of the mind map altogether as practice before working independently.</p> <p>I will monitor the class and help students that may be struggling or ask students to explain what they have so far. At the end of the class, I will have the students refocus onto me so the whole class can review and discuss their comfort with the vocabulary and unit.</p> <p>For homework, they will be asked to complete their mind map with the 13 required vocabulary words and real-world objects.</p>

Appendix A.



Overview of Lesson: In this lesson, students will be researching and learning context of the setting described in the book Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck in order to determine central ideas as well as the author's point of view or purpose (NCSD ELA Curriculum, 12.6).

k. Grade Level/Subject: 10th grade ESL

l. Student Level (WIDA Placement): Level 2-3

m. Lesson Topic: Of Mice and Men Background

n. Objectives

Content Objectives:

1. Students will be able to read, recall, and discuss the historical context of the novella, Of Mice and Men.
2. Students will be able to examine the researched context within the first chapter of the novella.

Language Objectives:

3. Students will be able to highlight and list main ideas or important information from their assigned article and fellow peers' articles.
4. Students will be able to share the main ideas or important information from their assigned article to their peers.
5. Students will be able to connect the researched topics within the first chapter of the book.

o. Main Resources

1. Reading materials (Appendix A)
2. Graphic Organizer for note-taking (Appendix B)
3. Historical Context Video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5063FCAH8mM>)

p. Supplementary materials

1. Individual copies of the book, Of Mice and Men (provided by the KWHS Library)
2. Writing utensils, laptop, etc.

q. Meaningful Activities

Activate Prior Experiences/Personal Backgrounds

1. Students will recall the setting, characters, and happenings from chapter 1 of the book.
2. Students will brainstorm facts, events, or people from the 1930s era with a partner.

Link to New Learning from Prior Learning

3. Students will watch a video linking the events of the first chapter to its historical context of the 1930s.
4. Students will complete a jigsaw activity in which they learn about an aspect of the 1930s era in relation to the book (i.e. The Great Depression, The Dust Bowl, John Steinbeck, and Intellectual Disabilities), which was briefly discussed in the video.

Emphasis on Vocabulary

5. Students will be contextualizing relevant vocabulary through:

- i. Recalling their prior knowledge,
- ii. Observing the meaning of vocabulary within the video and text, and
- iii. Using vocabulary when explaining/interpreting topics to their peers in the jigsaw.

r. Thinking Skills

- 1. Students will identify, retell, and record important information in their own words about their topic through the jigsaw activity and video.
- 2. Students will examine the historical context in relation to the first chapter of the novella in order to discuss its central ideas.
- 3. Students will interpret and question the author’s point of view or purpose using their new contextual knowledge.

s. Interactions

- 1. Students will be addressed as a whole class during questioning about their last class, the book, etc.
- 2. Students will work in partners or small groups, depending on the class size, when brainstorming prior knowledge about the 1930s and for the final portion of the jigsaw activity.
- 3. Students will also work individually during the jigsaw activity when reading and taking notes in their graphic organizer.

t. Review and Assessment

- 1. Formative:
 - i. Questions asked during the jigsaw activity will function as constant comprehension monitoring. Some of these cues can be found in the step-by-step procedure. Additional questions will depend on the students’ responses and questions.
 - ii. The completion of their graphic organizer to ensure student engagement and monitor comprehension.
- 2. Summative:
 - i. As an exit slip, students will be asked to write a minimum of 3 sentences about 1) one topic from the 1930s (as researched and discussed) 2) how that topic relates or is seen in so far in the book, 3) what they believe is the author’s opinion or theme is regarding those topics.

Lesson Agenda	Step-by-Step
<p>Introduction (20 min.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building Backgrounds - Explanation of 	<p>Before students arrive, I will prepare the documentary video and printed materials.</p> <p>I will gain students’ attention and initially ask the class to individually recall what they remember from our last reading of the novella.</p> <p><i>Points to mention:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The characters (name, appearance, etc.)</i> - <i>The setting/time period</i> - <i>The character’s situation</i>

<p>lesson objectives</p>	<p>- <i>The American Dream</i></p> <p>Then I would ask the students to brainstorm what they know about the 1930s with a partner, requesting that they right at least 3 facts, events, or people. If they are having a really hard time with it, they can use their phones to quickly look something up. Then we will discuss as a whole group.</p>
<p>Direct Teaching (45 min.)</p> <p>Active Engagement</p>	<p>Finally, I will introduce the 9-minute video and its relation to the novella.</p> <p>Afterwards, I will ask students what stuck out to them and if they enjoyed the video as a transition into the jigsaw activity, as many of the topics in the video are similar to the topics in the jigsaw.</p> <p>I will explain to them how the jigsaw works: <i>There will be four groups total. Each group/individual (depending on the size) will be assigned one topic about the 1930s they will learn about in a reading I will provide. While reading about the topic, the group/individual must identify and record 5 important/interesting facts about their topic. They must be able to explain their topic to the rest of the groups so that they too may write down the information and complete their graphic organizer. This is important to better understand the context in which <u>Of Mice of Men</u> is written.</i></p> <p>At this time, I will hand out their reading material(s) and a graphic organizer.</p> <p>During the jigsaw activity, I will monitor group/individual work to ensure on-task, productive behavior as well as comprehension. Answer questions as needed and make connections with students’ prior knowledge.</p> <p>After 10-15 minutes, I will ask students to begin sharing their topic to the rest of the class and their peers will note important information on their graphic organizer.</p> <p>After all everyone has presented, I will lead students into a whole class discussion in regards to the context they have learned about and where they see aspects of this context in the book and how that impacts the story. Discussion may expand into central ideas or the author’s opinion about topics researched from the 1930s jigsaw activity.</p>
<p>Review/Assess (10 min.)</p>	<p>Students will be monitored throughout the jigsaw activity, especially to ensure that no student is struggling with vocabulary or the content.</p> <p>Students will be graded on participation through the completion of their graphic organizer and contribution to the topic presentation.</p> <p>As an exit slip, students will be asked to write a minimum of 3 sentences about 1) one topic from the 1930s (as researched and discussed) 2) how that topic relates or is seen in so far in the book, 3) what they believe is the author’s opinion or theme is regarding</p>

Appendix A.

The Great Depression

The Great Depression was a severe worldwide economic depression in the decade preceding World War II. It started in about 1929 and lasted until the late 1930s or early 1940s. It was the longest, most widespread, and deepest depression of the 20th century. The depression started on October 29, 1929, when the stock market crashed and lost an astounding \$30 billion-equivalent to \$377,587,032,770.41 today. This day came to be known as Black Tuesday. From there, it quickly spread to almost every country in the world.



After the initial crash, there was a wave of suicides in the New York's financial district. It is said that the clerks of one hotel even started asking new guests if they needed a room for sleeping or jumping.

Children suffered the most during the Depression. Scholars estimate that nearly 50% of children during the Great Depression did not have adequate food, shelter, or medical care. In the mountain communities of Appalachia, whole families were reduced to eating dandelions and blackberries for their basic diet. Some children were so hungry that they chewed on their own hands. By the 1930s, thousands of schools were operating on reduced hours or were closed down entirely. Some three million children had left school, and at least 200,000 took to riding the rails (jumping on trains and traveling in search of work).

Women also suffered because of the Depression. Discrimination against women was common, both officially and unofficially, because they were seen as taking jobs away from men. During the Great Depression men often abandoned their families in search of work; a 1940 poll revealed that 1.5 million married women were abandoned by their husbands.

The Great Depression had devastating effects in virtually every country, rich and poor. In 1932, half of all workers in Cleveland, Ohio, were jobless. And in Toledo, Ohio, four out of five people were unemployed.

Some economies started to recover by the mid-1930s. However, in many countries the negative effects of the Great Depression lasted until 1941 when the United States prepared to enter into World War II.

The Dust Bowl



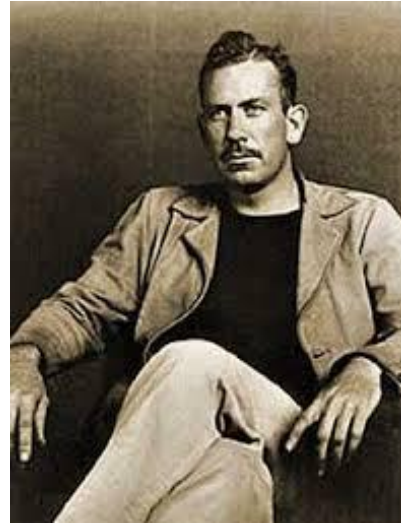
When pioneers headed west in the late 19th century, many settled to farm in the grassy plains and open spaces of the Great Plains. They were prosperous in the decades that followed, but in the 1930s strong winds, drought, and clouds of dust combined to create an environmental disaster that plagued nearly 75 percent of the United States. The era became known as the legendary Dust Bowl.

Between 1925 and 1930, thanks to the invention of mechanized farming equipment, more than 5 million acres of previously unfarmed land was cleared and plowed. The careless removal of virgin topsoil from the Great Plains killed the natural grasses that normally kept the soil in place and trapped moisture.

During the drought of the 1930s, without natural anchors to keep the soil in place, it dried, turned to dust, and blew away eastward and southward in large dark clouds. At times the clouds blackened the sky, reaching all the way to East Coast cities such as New York and Washington, D.C. These immense dust storms—given names such as "Black Blizzards" and "Black Rollers"—often reduced visibility to a few feet. The Dust Bowl affected 100,000,000 acres of land, mostly in Texas and Oklahoma, and adjacent parts of New Mexico, Colorado, and Kansas.

Millions of acres of farmland became useless, and hundreds of thousands of people were forced to leave their homes. Many of these families (often known as "Okies", since so many of them came from Oklahoma) traveled to California and other states, where they found economic conditions only a little better than those they had left. Owning no land, many traveled from farm to farm picking fruit and other crops at starvation wages. Author John Steinbeck later wrote *Of Mice and Men* about such people.

John Steinbeck



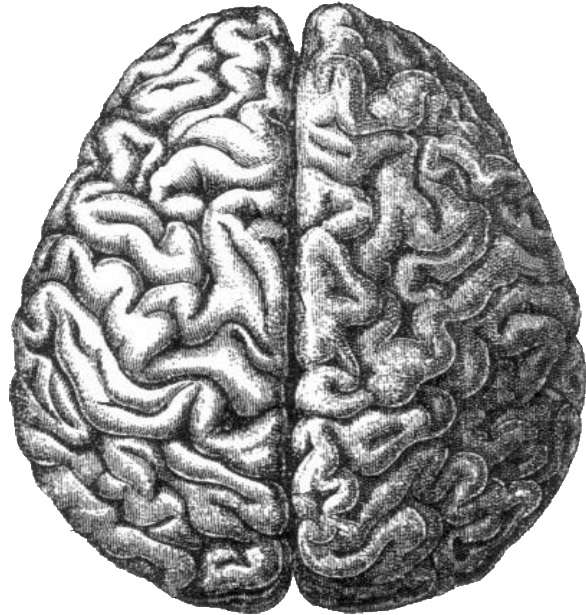
John Steinbeck Jr. was born on February 27, 1902, in Salinas, California- a small rural town that was essentially a frontier settlement set amid some of the world's most fertile land. He spent his summers working on nearby ranches and later with migrant workers on ranches. Because of this he became aware of the harsher aspects of migrant life and the darker side of human nature.

Steinbeck achieved his first critical success with the novel *Tortilla Flat* (1935), which won the California Commonwealth Club's Gold Medal. He then began to write a series of "California novels" and Dust Bowl fiction- stories about common people during the Great Depression. These included *Of Mice and Men* and *The Grapes of Wrath*. *Of Mice and Men* tells of the dreams of a pair of migrant laborers working the California soil.

The Grapes of Wrath would be considered by many to be his finest work. It won the Pulitzer Prize in 1940. However, the success of the novel was not free of controversy. Steinbeck's political views, negative portrayal of aspects of capitalism, and sympathy for the plight of workers led to a backlash against the author- especially close to home. Claiming that the book was both obscene and misrepresenting conditions in the county, one school board banned the book from the county's publicly funded schools and libraries in August 1939. This ban lasted until January 1941, but Steinbeck's books would continue to spark debate and still do today. In fact, *Of Mice and Men* is one of the most often-banned books in U.S. history.

In 1962, Steinbeck won the Nobel Prize for literature for his "realistic and imaginative writing, combining as it does sympathetic humor and keen social perception." On the day of the announcement when he was asked by a reporter at a press conference if he thought he deserved the Nobel, he said: "Frankly, no."

Intellectual Disability



Mental retardation is defined by a low level of intellectual functioning combined with major difficulties in daily living skills. One of the 2 main characters in the novella *Of Mice and Men* exhibits behaviors to suggest that he may have moderate MR.

People with moderate MR have a very low IQ and it is unlikely that their academic skills will ever go past a second grade level. They can perform self-care with some supervision. They may have trouble socially due to their inability to recognize social norms. Most people with moderate MR can perform limited work as adults and function well with supervision but need help when placed under abnormal stress.

Historically, people with intellectual disabilities or MR were treated very poorly. In the 18th and 19th centuries, people with MR were placed in asylums. They were removed from their families (usually in infancy) and housed in large professional institutions. Some of these institutions educated patients but most only provided basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter. Conditions were often very poor.

During the 1920s, society believed that people with MR were morally degenerate. This led to the forced sterilization and illegalization of marriage in most of the world and was later used by Hitler as rationale for the mass murder of mentally challenged individuals during the Holocaust.

The segregation of people with developmental disabilities wasn't widely questioned until around 1969, when a shift in policy and practice recognized the human needs of people with MR and provided the same basic human rights as for the rest of the population. This change resulted in the passing in the U.S. of the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act in 1980.

Appendix B.

topic: definition:	topic: definition:
At least 5 interesting facts about the topic:	At least 5 interesting facts about the topic:
topic: definition:	topic: definition:
At least 5 interesting facts about the topic:	At least 5 interesting facts about the topic:

Overview of Lesson: In this lesson, students will be researching an ancient Greek or Roman person, monster, god, goddess, or place to eventually write an informative research paper while citing specific textual evidence (NCSD ELA Curriculum, 12.7).

u. Grade Level/Subject: 10th grade Language Arts

v. Student Level (WIDA Placement): Level 2-3

w. Lesson Topic: Informative Essay Writing on Poseidon - Researching and Citing Credible Sources

x. Objectives

Content Objectives:

1. Student will be able to gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively.
2. Student will be able to integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different formats in order to address Poseidon's role in Ancient Greek Culture.

Language Objectives:

6. Student will be able to locate books and articles using the KWHS library and database resources.
7. Student will be able to scan books and articles in order to find relevant and credible sources of information.
8. Student will be able to underline details and generate notes from relevant and credible sources that can be used as textual evidence.
9. Student will be able to produce accurate MLA formatted citations.
10. Student will be able to sequence details, explanations and notes to form a cohesive essay outline.

y. Main Resources

1. Book: *Poseidon: Earth Shaker* by George O'Connor
2. His Research Notes
3. Simple Graphic Organizer for Essay (Appendix A)

z. Supplementary materials

1. KWHS Library Online Database: (<http://gowyld.net>)
 - i. Sources found on online database!
2. Writing utensils, laptop, paper, etc.

aa. Meaningful Activities

Activate Prior Experiences/Personal Backgrounds

1. Turn and talk: student will recall facts known about Poseidon with a partner.

Link to New Learning from Prior Learning

1. Student, who has found and read a comic book about Poseidon, will re-scan and summarize it, taking additional notes when necessary.

Emphasis on Vocabulary

2. Vocabulary will be emphasized through self-selection and contextualizing as it is based on the students' understanding when scanning and reading through texts.

Strategies include:

- i. Direct explanation
- ii. Using visuals
- iii. Direct translation

bb. Thinking Skills

1. Students will find and evaluate sources to be accurate and credible and will record important information in his own words from various texts.
2. Students will find relevant, supportive details from sources in order to formulate his final essay.

cc. Interactions

1. Because this student is working one-on-one with myself, the interactions will be individualized direct instruction or independent work.

dd. Review and Assessment

1. Formative:
 - i. Questions asked throughout the lesson will function as constant comprehension monitoring. Some of these cues can be found in the step-by-step procedure. Additional questions will depend on the students' responses and questions, especially in terms of vocabulary and finding relevant sources.
 - ii. The completion of their note-taking and the graphic organizer will measure their comprehension and progress for their final research paper.
 - iii. Students will be graded by their mainstream teacher for turning in a thesis statement, cited quotations, and cited sources as he has distributed a timeline for essay parts to be submitted (see Appendix B.).
2. Summative:
 - i. The final project for the mainstream class is a research paper that will be graded according to the rubric found in Appendix C.

Lesson Agenda	Step-by-Step
<p>Introduction (10 min.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building Backgrounds - Explanation of lesson objectives 	<p>Before the student arrives, I will prepare the printed materials.</p> <p>I will gain the student's attention and initially ask him to recall facts about Poseidon; specifically questioning towards the books he has recently read for this unit (<i>The Odyssey</i> and <i>Poseidon: Earth Shaker</i>).</p> <p>Then I would explain to him what the plan was for today:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Review the book: take notes, find quotations</i> 2. <i>Build on the outline graphic organizer</i> 3. <i>Find online sources: take notes, find quotations</i>

<p>Direct Teaching (40 min.)</p> <p>Active Engagement</p>	<p>Using direct instruction, I will aide the student as necessary for comprehension, procedural knowledge, and vocabulary. We will review the book and begin filling out the graphic organizer for the essay.</p>
<p>Review/Assess (10 min.)</p>	<p>Students will be monitored throughout the lesson, especially to ensure that the student is struggling with vocabulary or the content.</p> <p>The completion of the graphic organizer with this source, with at least one point and one cited quotation, will be assessed, as this is a step necessary to begin the writing process.</p>

Appendix A.

<p><u>Poseidon's Family History</u></p>	<p><u>Description of Poseidon</u></p>
<p><u>Theme from Book:</u></p>	

Greek Mythology Research Paper Guidelines

Topic and Resources:

- Select an ancient Greek or Roman person, monster, god, goddess, or place on which to write an informative research paper. Essential Question: **What purpose did the personality or place you have chosen serve for the ancient culture of Greece?**
Topic: (5 points-Due 3-15)
- Develop a **thesis statement**. Refer to the thesis examples on the next page of this document for help.
Thesis Statement: (5 points-Due 3-17)
- Using **one printed source** of Kelly Walsh's library, please choose any story from Greek or Roman mythology. Read the myth and take informative notes. Use this story as one supporting example of your paper's topic.
Works Cited Entry: (3 points-Due 3-20)
- Find at least **two other credible sources** from the resources available through the Kelly Walsh Library resource database.
Works Cited Entries: (7 points-Due 3-20)
- Include a **minimum of three quotes** but a maximum of five. No paragraph may be completely composed of an excerpt. Enclose excerpts in quotes. Set off longer excerpts using alternative marginal and typing sizes. **Include your citations.**
Three Quotes with Citations: (5 points-Due 3-22)
- This paper has a five-paragraph minimum. Please include the **thesis statement** in your introduction, tie each paragraph to the thesis statement, and conclude with finality as well as cohesiveness. Be sure to incorporate appropriate transitions! Adhere to the six-plus-one traits of writing guidelines. **Credit sources properly!** Include a **Works Cited page**. **Use MLA format!** Any form of plagiarism will result in a zero score.
As with your novel review, a **template** is provided later in this document. **Use it!**
Participate in a conference with Mr. Howery to earn the Rough Draft grade.
Rough Draft: (25 points-Due 4-04)
- After conferencing with Mr. Howery, please cross-reference your paper with the rubric at the end of this document. Then revise, proofread, and publish this assignment on the turnitin.com website. Verbal instructions will be provided later, and the necessary code is on the next page. Submit your completed assignment to turnitin.com by **Monday, April 14th**. The final copy is worth 100

Freshman Language Arts Research Paper Grading Criteria

Final Grade: %

*Submission to Turnitin.com (4 points)	+4
Paragraphs: (10 points)	+10
3-5 Quotes: (10 points)	+10
Proper Citations: (10 points)	+10
Works Cited Page (10 points)	+10
Six-Traits +1 of Writing (x2=56 points)	+56
Purpose/Voice (4-1)	4
Organization (4-1)	4
Idea Development (4-1)	4
Sentences (4-1)	4
Word Choice (4-1)	4
Conventions (4-1)	4
Appearance (+1) (4-1)	4

Paige Hanewald STUDENT TEACHER

School: Kelly Walsh HS

Date: 3/6/17

Evaluator: _____

Grade/Class: ~~9th~~ - Biology
10th

Title of lesson: The Cell

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Well-constructed lesson plan for: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SIOP <input type="checkbox"/> Bilingual <input type="checkbox"/> ESL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Materials ready <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficient routines <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Appropriate appearance <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unit and placement of lesson in the unit: Cell functions beginning of unit - Day 3	<u>Competencies</u> 1. Student Rapport and Classroom Environment 2. Curricular and Instructional Planning Skills 3. Diverse and Appropriate Teaching 4. Student Motivation, Involvement and Conduct 5. Presentation (including comprehensible speech) 6. Presentation Skills 7. Student Diagnosis and Assessment 8. Cognitive Engagement of Teaching 9. Affective Engagement of Teaching 10. Capacity to Teach Diverse Students 11. Professional Behavior
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<u>Questions</u> What would you do next for Daniel to help him remember the function?	<u>Kudos</u> - Scaffolding questions → "point to", yes/no questions, allowing notes to help answer questions, giving answer choices - Good use of supplementary material - matching game, video, mind map, Graphic Organizers - Connecting to prior knowledge (mom's purse & cell phone) - repeating vocab words when not pronounced correctly
<u>Suggestions</u> • Because he talks so fast on Brainpop, I often stop for clarification a few times. • As a review, I would take away his G.O. to see what organelles he remembers on his own, then allow him to use notes * Now I see you did that (⬇)	<u>Concerns</u>

STUDENT TEACHER

School: Kelly Walsh

Date: _____

Evaluator: Annie Boulanger

Grade/Class: 10-12 ESL

Title of lesson: Of Mice & Men

<p><input type="checkbox"/> Well-constructed lesson plan for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SIOP<input type="checkbox"/> Bilingual<input type="checkbox"/> ESL <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Materials ready</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficient routines</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Appropriate appearance</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unit and placement of lesson in the unit:</p> <p><u>beginning Of Mice & Men</u></p>	<p><u>Competencies</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Student Rapport and Classroom Environment2. Curricular and Instructional Planning Skills3. Diverse and Appropriate Teaching4. Student Motivation, Involvement and Conduct5. Presentation (including comprehensible speech)6. Presentation Skills7. Student Diagnosis and Assessment8. Cognitive Engagement of Teaching9. Affective Engagement of Teaching10. Capacity to Teach Diverse Students11. Professional Behavior
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<p><u>Questions</u></p> <p>How could you make sure they are engaging with the video?</p>	<p><u>Kudos</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Using interactive strategy - jigsaw- Spending time to develop background knowledge before starting the novel
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<p><u>Suggestions</u></p> <p>Maybe start with some images to discuss from this time period. They are a quiet group so its hard to get them going w/ discussion.</p>	<p><u>Concerns</u></p>
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STUDENT TEACHER

School: Kelly Walsh

Date: 3/24/17

Evaluator: Annie Boulanger

Grade/Class: 9th English

Title of lesson: Greek God Research Paper

<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Well-constructed lesson plan for:</p> <p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SIOP</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Bilingual</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> ESL</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Materials ready</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficient routines</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Appropriate appearance</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unit and placement of lesson in the unit:</p> <p> <u>Greek God Research</u></p> <p> <u>Paper</u></p>	<p><u>Competencies</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student Rapport and Classroom Environment 2. Curricular and Instructional Planning Skills 3. Diverse and Appropriate Teaching 4. Student Motivation, Involvement and Conduct 5. Presentation (including comprehensible speech) 6. Presentation Skills 7. Student Diagnosis and Assessment 8. Cognitive Engagement of Teaching 9. Affective Engagement of Teaching 10. Capacity to Teach Diverse Students 11. Professional Behavior
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<p><u>Questions</u></p> <p>When you have a group of EL's that range in writing abilities, how do you differentiate for that?</p>	<p><u>Kudos</u></p> <p>- Using comic to research the Greek god - increasing understanding with visuals</p> <p>Providing graphic organizer for notetaking</p>
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<p><u>Suggestions</u></p> <p>When he is stuck on a question, scaffold the question - change it to a yes/no or give options for answers</p> <p>- Scaffold writing with closed sentences or sentence starters</p>	<p><u>Concerns</u></p>
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Lesson 1 Self-Evaluation

Lesson Context

As the third day in this unit, the ELL student, John⁶ was falling quite behind. The teacher allowed students to work together on this project, which permitted John to abandon his own learning and simply follow his partner's ideas and understandings. The ESL educator decided that this option would not be best for John's education and decided to remove him from the classroom to work on the assignment individually, with her additional attention and guidance.

Although John had completed the cell graphic organizer, which outlined each cell organelle, organelle function, and a picture of the organelle, he confronted all four barriers that Meyer (2000) discusses. John had never learned about the anatomy of a cell in his previous schooling, nor could he truly grasp the cultural load of the comparisons. For example, the teacher compared the nucleus to the school's main office and the nucleolus to the principal's office. John, only having been in the United States public school system for a year, may not quite understand these culturally relevant references. Additionally, while each organelle was already unfamiliar vocabulary words, their definitions and images were substantial language and learning loads⁷ due to the fact that they were largely culture-reduced. Thus the content was incomprehensible and required far more time for understanding than the teacher arranged for the entirety of the class. That being said, despite the final project of the unit that was soon due, emphasis on the content vocabulary took first priority.

Evaluation

Overall, this lesson was focused on the need for review and reinforcement of the vocabulary words and adequately did so. Because we could not rely on John's native language to

⁶ Student's name has been modified for confidentiality.

⁷ Meyer, L. M. (2000). Barriers to meaningful instruction for English learners. *Theory into Practicum* 39(4), 228-236.

translate the complex biological terms, I implemented direct instruction in order to acquire the academic language. The direct method was appropriate and went well, as required John to recognize the image of each organelle and review its basic function, or definition. Using supplementary materials such as the paper diagrams and definitions in conjunction with his graphic organizer helped John learn the definitions in simpler terms and then in the academic terms required for the unit. Still, even with basic words, or “Tier 1 words”⁸, further explanation was required. For example, the function of the chloroplast is to convert energy into food for the plant cell. John did not originally know that “energy”, in this case, was synonymous for “sunlight” so this had to be explicitly noted. By first allowing John to use his notes and diagram when matching labels to organelles, he was able to review the vocabulary. Constant activation of his prior experiences and background knowledge was crucial in his comprehension of the function of the organelles, which is why I frequently related the organelles to real-world objects such as the purse and cell phone. His memory and understanding of these were tested when he could no longer use the notes.

A couple of things that were difficult or did not go well was finding simple and adequate resources and maintaining higher order thinking skills. Though I did find various supplementary materials for the lesson, none of resources contained all of the organelles that the unit covered and some were so specific that it contained additional features of some organelles. Therefore, some vocabulary contained little to no introduction whereas others contained so much detail, specifically on the online diagram, that it interrupted the learning process trying to direct the student to relevant information. Although higher order thinking skills occurred during student learning, maintaining them proved to be far more difficult than expected due to the load of the

⁸ August, D., Carlo, M., Dressler C., & Snow, C. (2005). The Critical Role of Vocabulary Development for English language learners. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 20*(1), 50-57.

vocabulary. John was able to make great connections between a few organelles and a real-world object, but the lack of comprehension of vocabulary proved to be too large of a barrier. In retrospect, I wouldn't say that this turn of events was necessarily negative or in need of improvement; rather, I hadn't expected that the student needed more time for vocabulary.

In fact, there were many things that I hadn't expected or that I was surprised by. For example, I did not expect to remove a student from the mainstream classroom and teach a modified lesson one-on-one. Obviously, these circumstances weren't ideal. If possible, I would have very much preferred to collaborate with the biology teacher about the unit and its lesson plans in order to prevent some of the struggles John was now facing. Nevertheless, I was able to accommodate the lesson in some ways so that John could eventually earn the points of the final project. I was also surprised how difficult it was to contextualize the vocabulary, even comparisons such as the mailroom or a refrigerator. I would make these suggestions in order to aid in John's bridging process but realized that the cultural load was still beyond his reach. What's more, I was surprised with my own content knowledge about cell organelles and their functions. I found that I did not have a sufficient fund of knowledge to distinguish the nucleus and the nucleolus, let alone how to explain the difference to John.

So as a result, thoroughly researching the organelles during the preparation phase of the lesson plan would be one of many improvements for this lesson. In addition, if I were to teach this lesson again, I would somehow incorporate flashcards rather than spending so much time on the matching activities. This could bring more focus to retaining each organelle's function and could also be personalized so that they are simplistic, but include all of the required vocabulary words. Also, in order to brainstorm different analogies for the organelles as household items, I would incorporate visuals, such as pictures of houses and rooms, in order to help John

brainstorm ideas. This could be done in conjunction with the flashcards where, for each flash card, the student could sift through pictures until he found one has a similar function.

Lesson 2 Self-Evaluation

Lesson Context

The ESL certified teacher has one class period every day with a total of 8 ELLs. Four of these students have moved to the United States within the last two years. Their WIDA placements range between 1 and 3. The other four students act as “aids” to the teacher and have a WIDA placement ranging between 4 and 6. Due to the full-scale of levels in this class, students generally are separated into these two groups and follow separate schedules. This lesson was formed for the levels 4-6 group of students who were able to choose any historical fiction book to read and analyze for this lesson unit. They unanimously chose Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck. When the day for my lesson came, there were originally only two students present in class. The ESL teacher reached out to two other students, who had recently exited the WIDA program and were being monitored in their first year, to help. The purpose of this lesson was to establish the context of the book and its time period, so that they better understood the themes that would later be discussed in the unit.

Evaluation

Overall, I think the lesson was successful in terms of providing contextual information about the historical setting in the book. The students were engaged in the video, the articles, and the jigsaw activity. The students were familiar and comfortable with each other, which definitely helped them actively participate in discussion. Reviewing the book was a crucial part of the lesson for multiple reasons. First, half the students had not read it because they joined this class unexpectedly. Second, the other half of the students hadn't read it in about a week, so their memory of the book was extremely tested.

In general, I think the lesson was appropriate for the students' WIDA levels. Though the video made connections specifically between the 1930s era and Of Mice and Men, it would have

been more beneficial to the students if they had a worksheet or anticipation guide to help them catch key elements. The idea of “key elements” was a huge portion of this lesson, especially during the jigsaw activity. The articles’ language was comprehensible, although somewhat challenging. The young lady who had the intellectual disability article struggled the most because the vocabulary was so large, but with a little more time and guidance, she was able to highlight key elements from the article. When certain facts glazed over a main idea, the ESL teacher and I directly inquired about the facts to analyze the information a step further to initiate higher order thinking skills and make connections with their knowledge. On a different note, most of the students didn’t have the funds of knowledge about the novella to make many connections to the text simply because they hadn’t read it that much. In truth, much of the connections made from the articles to the book were made from scaffolding and leading questions, which encouraged community involvement and supports a constructivist method of pedagogy⁹.

In fact, this lesson was influenced by Au’s framework, namely the instruction portion, because it relied so heavily on student interactions and schema building. In the jigsaw activity, students were expected to “teach” their peers. When I was monitoring their individual work, I would notice incomplete or vague sentences continuously asked, *How will you explain this to your peers? Why is this important?* When each student would explain their topic, they would be asked to put the sentence into their own words. I wanted to make sure that they weren’t just copying the article, that they were building knowledge. This is how I implemented Au’s idea of constructivist model of instruction. Au supposes,

⁹ Au, K. H. (1992). The schooling of students of diverse backgrounds. *Literacy instruction in multicultural settings*. Fort Worth: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.

“...constructivist approaches will be more effective because they involve a genuine dialogue between student and teacher (both oral and written, they emphasize reasoning and higher-level thinking skills, and they encourage students to set their own goals and to collaborate with other students.” (17)

My focus relied on genuine dialogue and student interactions while exercising literacy skills across all four domains (listening, reading, writing, and speaking). Through the genuine interactions that took place, students were able to bring in their own cultural experiences and bridged between prior and new knowledge. For example, one student talked about his cousin who had an intellectual disability and was able to relate him to one of the characters in the book. From there, students used higher order thinking skills in order to write a complete sentence, making a connection between the book and one of the topics they learned about in the lesson.

While I don't think that anything went terribly, I definitely have some improvements in mind. Something that didn't go as well as I had expected was activating their prior knowledge about the 1930s. I had assumed that they had learned about this time period in history, so rather than the video drawing more attention to specifics of the 1930s, it was more an introduction for them. This is not to say that it was bad, I just wonder if the students could have brainstormed more things about the Great Depression if done so through a lower-demanding manner such as through a partner activity, anticipation guide, etc. After looking at my mentor teacher's suggestions, I could have shown some images to discuss from this time period or even got them up and moving with a gallery walk. For the final review, I could have them write their sentence on a sticky note and place it by the most relevant photo. Truly, the biggest thing I would have done is increase interactions, especially in the sense that they get up and moving.

Yet, despite all of the improvements I could have made to the lesson, I learned a lot about student-student and student-teacher interactions that may take place in an ESL classroom. This was the only lesson I was able to teach to multiple students and I think they exercised a plethora

of literacy skills, which is important within any lesson. These students watched a video, read an article, took notes, and taught their peers. Moreover, the students learned an important step in reading a novel: the context or background information.

Lesson 3 Self-Evaluation

Lesson Context

Murphy* is one of the three students that moved from Ukraine at the start of the spring semester. Like his peers, he was adopted into an English-only, middle class home. His Language Arts class recently read the ancient Greek epic *The Odyssey*. Because of the extremely heavy language load, reading this story with the class was highly disadvantageous for Murphy. Rather than keeping him in the classroom, the ESL teacher worked with him individually and found resources such as an online comic book version of the epic poem, background knowledge of the main characters and Greek gods found in the poem, etc. before reading *The Odyssey*.

As a unit assignment, the mainstream teacher wanted the students to conduct research on an ancient Greek god or figure and write an informational essay on the figure and its impact on ancient Greek culture using three sources. Murphy chose Poseidon. He and the ESL teacher found a graphic novel as a first source that told stories about Poseidon including how the god came to be the ruler of the sea, some of his children, and his rivalry with Zeus. Half of this story was read and reviewed by Murphy and the ESL teacher while his mother read the rest to him the night before my lesson. Knowing that he hadn't taken notes of the portion that was read to him at home, the ESL teacher and I thought it necessary to review the book and work on constructing an outline for his research paper. Hence, this lesson revolved around acquiring quotations/evidence, sources, and constructing an outline.

Lesson Evaluation

The hardest part of this lesson was taking a direction in accordance to the assignment while considering where Murphy was at in that direction. After I put together this lesson plan, I immediately worried about its short length, its lack of detail, and how unprepared I felt. It was all up in the air! Although I had read the book, planned the lesson, and even did my own research in

preparation for looking up articles on the library database, I wasn't sure what to expect. For all I knew, Murphy could have forgotten the contents of the comic book or have no idea what to write about. I had so many questions like: what should be done by the end of this lesson or what we were supposed to be taking out of this first source. The assignment was so broad; I was unsure how to incorporate the sources into the teacher's purpose of the paper.

Fortunately, during the lesson the ESL teacher and I came up with an idea that would provide direction to the lesson no matter what. Knowing that reviewing his first source, the comic book, was absolutely necessary, we arranged a graphic organizer that took what we had gone over and reviewed already and made them topics for his essay. This is where the essay topics come in. For example, a description of Poseidon, Poseidon's family history, a theme from the comic book, and an additional topic of his choice permitted Murphy to use to notes he took from his research and empowered him to think of another addition to his paper. In the long run, this also helps his scope of research for when he is looking for two other relevant sources.

That being said, reviewing the story and using the graphic organizer went really well with the lesson because it allowed Murphy to monitor and increase his comprehension of the story and his Greek god. Though he understood the literal meaning of the words and pictures within the comic book, he missed a few connections that went into a larger theme. After reviewing it individually, he started to take note of some of the themes: Poseidon's kids are always monsters, Poseidon is lonely because he is ruler of the sea, Poseidon's destiny is to stay in the sea, etc. The graphic organizer was catered to his notes and knowledge of Poseidon and was organized chronologically so he can easily transfer them into a paper. I was impressed by his ability to recall certain moments in the book that he thought supported his evidence, which showed me he was engaging in higher order thinking skills.

Although the original unit lesson plan was very broad in topic and very specific in requirements, modifying for Murphy's WIDA ACCESS placement level and finding appropriate resources and materials was possible. The school library had graphic novels that pertained to this assignment, which increased visuals and increased comprehension. Graphic organizers could be easily found to organize information in the format required by the mainstream teacher, though in this lesson we used a simpler graphic organizer for Murphy's level. Throughout the lesson I adopted strategies for questioning and instructions such as changing the format of the question to a yes/no question, instructing him to point to a part in the book that would support his opinion, etc. Some ways I would have liked to help modify would be to have a visual instruction packet or lectured tutorial about looking for sources on the school's online database, though I am not positive if this happened or not and we did not get that far in the lesson I taught or during my observations.

In fact, the lack of information I knew about this lesson surprised me the most for this lesson. Although I had the unit plan and the requirements for the assignment at hand, I felt completely out of the loop in terms of the expectations, context, and modifications made in the mainstream setting. Something we have gone over in the ESL program here at the University of Wyoming is the importance of backward design in order to modify lesson plans for ELLs and students of diverse backgrounds, but this didn't occur here. Consequently, I faced a lot of uncertainty when preparing and implementing this lesson. Had the lesson been my own, I could have redesigned it to fit appropriately; however, this lesson was not created by a teacher with substantial ESL training or consideration. Thus, I was surprised at the lack of collaboration between the ESL and mainstream teacher. That being said, I learned the importance of communication and collaboration in order to appeal to the best interest of the students. Even though, we

accomplished important steps in this assignment and for Murphy's learning, I felt as though I was consistently reacting to the lesson rather than proactively thinking for the student. In turn I was faced with a question of how to work with my colleagues and implement upstream thinking, a topic of which I will further examine my professional development reflection.

In addition to working with my colleagues, I also learned about the importance of teacher-parent cooperation and communication. It is important to note that Murphy was very behind in terms of deadlines for certain tasks, or checkmarks, of this research assignment. In order for us to move at an acceptable pace, he needed to finish the book and be ready to discuss it in time for this lesson. Thus, the ESL teacher immediately reached out to Murphy's mother and asked if she would be able to work with him on this story that night. Apparently, Murphy's parents and the ESL teacher had a very close relationship and talked often. I immediately thought of how vital this was for Murphy's education. Baker (2011) declares, "Where parents are given power and status in the partial determination of their children's schooling, the empowerment of minority communities and children may result" but when they "are kept relatively powerless, inferiority and lack of school progress may result. The growth of paired reading schemes is evidence of the power of a parent-teacher partnership" (406)¹⁰. Although Murphy's family is not within the minority community in Natrona County, the inclusion of parents in academic literacy practices constructs a strong partnership between the parents and teachers, which not only increases academic progress, but also creates a stronghold for when a student must be refocused on school assignments. I will explore this relationship more thoroughly in my partnership and advocacy report.

¹⁰ Baker, C. (2011). *Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism. 5th edition. Bilingual Education & Bilingualism* Multilingual Matters.

Entry 1 – Use of L1 in Second Language Acquisition

In the ESL program, I learned that the Wyoming State Code 8-6-101 establishes English as the official language of Wyoming, the law permits the use of other languages for the various reasons such as “[providing] instruction designed to aid students with limited English proficiency so they can make a timely transition to the use of the English language in public schools” (U.S. English Inc., 2015) because mother tongue proficiency has several positive effects on second language acquisition. Learning languages interdependently means using languages together to build knowledge. The interdependence of the two languages represents underlying foundations of knowledge that enable students to transfer conceptual elements, metacognitive and metalinguistic strategies, pragmatic aspects of language use, specific linguistic elements, and phonological awareness (Cummins, 2005¹¹). With more lexicon, conceptual knowledge, and processing skills in their L1, students are able to more transfer to their L2, and vice versa, more effectively. Research also shows that when the L1 is encouraged and is efficiently incorporated, students perform better at the majority school language and this instructional time does not hurt their development in the target language. Therefore, the mother tongue a resource waiting to be put to use (Cummins, 2000¹²; Phillipson, 1993¹³). It is illogical, when looking at the research, for students’ primary language be excluded from schools, as if they are easily disposable. With this in mind, I was eager to see how students’ first language, or L1, was used and supported in my primary setting.

¹¹ Cummins, J. (2005). A Proposal for Action: Strategies for Recognizing Heritage Language Competence as a Learning Resource within the Mainstream Classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 89(4), 585–592. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3588628>

¹² Cummins, J. (2000) *Language, Power and Pedagogy: Bilingual Children in the Crossfire*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters

¹³ Phillipson, R. (1993). *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, England, United Kingdom.

Of my 30-hour practicum, most of my time was spent with three students from orphanages in the Ukraine. Two went to the same orphanage and were given substantial primary and secondary education and were placed in mainstream, grade level classes. One went to another orphanage and appeared to have retained or received less education in certain subjects, especially in mathematics. Despite their fluent Ukrainian and Russian linguistic abilities as well as their content knowledge in those languages, all the students struggled in school due to their limited vocabulary in the English language. All three of these students shared a 10th grade Language Arts class in which the class was studying figurative language in the book *Night* by Elie Wiesel in order to write a literary analysis essay arguing how certain figurative language conveys a specific theme in the novel. Throughout this assignment, I witnessed five separate uses of students' native languages, some of which were promising practices and significantly beneficial to the students' learning processes while others inhibited or interfered.

Although the ESL instructor built all three students up for reading *Night* by reading a simpler book and discussing the Holocaust, the book still had a heavy language load. To help, the ESL teacher found an audiobook version that they would play while following along in the book. The students would begin class in Language Arts and would then be pulled out once students could begin independent work until they finished the book. The ESL teacher would pause after difficult words, figurative language, and after a couple of pages for clarification, discussion and summarization. A common use of the students L1 was direct translation through Google Translate. Because their funds of knowledge are quite extensive in their native language, this aided in making conceptual connections between the languages. Cummins (2001) summarizes this phenomenon concisely when he uses the example of telling time. He explains,

“Pupils who know how to tell the time in their mother tongue understand the concept of telling time. In order to tell time in the second language, they do not need to relearn the concept of telling time; they simply need to acquire new labels or ‘surface structures’ for an intellectual skill they have already learned” (18).

By simply providing an English label for a concept, the students are able to not only make connections and retain the vocabulary more efficiently but also expand conceptual knowledge through transferring literacy skills across languages. As an example, another use of L1 I observed was through one student who found the book *Night* online in Russian. He was allowed to read during any other free time in class and at home in preparation for the class. Even though it required more work, the student had found his yearning goad (Meyer, 2000)¹⁴ through this book, which motivated him to overcome the barrier of the language load. Consequently, obtained a deeper understanding of its events, themes, and figurative language. The teacher praised this student and looked to him for participation when the other two students are withdrawn or do not have an answer. What’s more, the ESL teacher would ask the student to explain what is happening or his share his inferences to his peers in their native language for when the learning load was too heavy. He would transfer the content and concepts across English to Russian and further dialogue would usually ensue in either English or Russian. He exercised literacy skills such as reading, summarization, analysis, and discussion. Therefore, encouraging the use of the students L1 expanded their vocabulary, connected concepts and ideas across their native language and target language, and practiced various literacy skills.

Nevertheless, there were a few cases in which students’ L1 interfered with student learning. Two common occurrences I saw in my primary setting were side conversations and insults between students. No educator in the school understood or spoke Russian or Ukrainian,

¹⁴ Meyer, L. (2000). Barriers to meaningful instruction for English learners. *Theory Into Practice*, 39, 228–236.

but it was easy to notice when the students were speaking distractedly or arguing. In general, these instances are rather common among all students, English-speaking or not; however, in order to notice them in another language required additional awareness and contextual information. Had I not known that there was a rivalry between two of the students based on the hierarchy of orphanage schools they attended, I wouldn't have known that one would insult the other's intelligence. Had I been unaware of the culture within their orphanages, especially the acceptance of aggression and fighting in schools, I would not have been able to pick up on certain cues in their tones. Despite the fact that the teacher or I did not understand what the students were saying, it became easier to recognize the signs of distraction and conflict. Once recognized, it was fairly easy refocus their attention onto the assignment or lesson at hand.

Despite these minor interferences, the ESL teacher never condemned the students for using their L1 in the academic setting partly because this setting allows them to practice their native languages. Knowing that these students were adopted into English-speaking family and that Russian or Ukrainian is not a course offered in the school, their only use of their native language is with each other at school and during their free time. Some of them have relatives or siblings that they communicate with back in the Ukraine and some will keep up-to-date with current news via online, but their language community is restricted to themselves. Unfortunately, it is likely that they will lose a substantial amount, if not all, of their native language abilities within 2-3 years (Cummins, 2001)¹⁵. Therefore, the teacher promotes their L1 through the instructional methods listed above, inquiring about their language and culture, as well as contributing affirmative messages about the value of their linguistic abilities in order to prevent language loss.

¹⁵ Cummins, J. (2001). Bilingual children's mother tongue: Why is it important for education? *Sprog Forum, NR. 19*, 15-20.

That being said, I recognized the importance of students' L1 in their second language acquisition processes and learned methods of including them in the academic setting. Even though students may get distracted or speak inappropriately, the value of their L1 as a learning tool and as their identity remains. It would be more beneficial for the students if their content area instructors would also support their native language in the classroom, which is an improvement I recommend to prevent these students' language loss.

Entry 2 – Identity: The Relationship Between Culture and Language

One of the most insightful quotations I came across during my time in the ESL program was written by Wenying Jiang (2000)¹⁶, who describes the inseparability of culture and language through the extended metaphor, “Language and culture make a living organism: language is flesh, and culture is blood. Without culture, language would be dead; without language, culture would have no shape” (328). Here, Jiang (2000) transforms language and culture into tangible items to express that without language, a culture ceases to exist. Language pumps the blood throughout bodies of culture, but interestingly, their interdependency often goes unnoticed when it comes to approaching students of diverse backgrounds. All too frequently, schools disable their English learners (ELs) by stripping them of their culture through the dominant language and, in turn, dominant culture. The dominance of one culture conveys certain messages that either avoid, ignore, or condemn those who are not a part of it. Though I never saw explicit messages that set ELLs from their peers, I did notice implicit instances that arguably disregarded their identities and culture.

Before I illustrate these instances, I must first refer to Cummins (2001)¹⁷, who asserts, “When the message, implicit or explicit, communicated to children in the school is ‘Leave your language and culture at the schoolhouse door’, children also leave a central party of who they are-their identities-at the schoolhouse door” (19). Here, Cummins (2001) mentions implicit messages because they are easily overlooked because they are so embedded into the dominant culture that they appear absolute. In Spanish, there are generally two words for “language” but they cannot be used interchangeably because “lengua” refers to the system of language whereas

¹⁶ Jiang, W. (2000). The relationship between culture and language. *ELT Journal*, 54(4), 328-334. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/85514342?accountid=14793>

¹⁷ Cummins, J. (2001). Bilingual children’s mother tongue: Why is it important for education? *Sprog Forum*, NR. 19, 15-20.

“lenguaje” is the ability to communicate through a system or systems. English, Spanish, French—these are lenguas; however, lenguaje are types of discourses within a lengua. If we think of English as the language, then all of the discourses as the culture. According to Gee (1989), discourses are acquired just as second language and can be highly exclusive when analyzed. Take, for example, the consequences of the storybook reading used in Gee’s (1989) article:

“Notice, then, how the very form and structure of the language, and the linguistic devices used, carry an ideological message. In mastering this aspect of this Discourse, the little girl has unconsciously ‘swallowed whole,’ ingested, a whole system of thought, embedded in the very linguistic devices she uses” (336).

Gee (1989) urges his readers to recognize the ideological message embedded in the storybook’s discourse and recognize that, though the little girl may not realize it, she has “ingested” this perspective. Gee affirms that discourse is inherently ideological because it contains a set of values and perspectives (338). Each utterance, word, and sentence takes hold within one or more discourses and carries ideological baggage. For clarification, “It is sometimes helpful to say that individuals do not speak and act, but that historically and socially defined discourses speak to each other through individuals” (Gee, 339). That being said, every statement within a school represents ideological values and beliefs that individuals may not even know they carry. For example, a teacher could tell a female student to “act like a lady” without being fully aware of the ideological baggage that statement contains. The teacher may use what she has learned to be a common expression with the intention of asking the student to be well mannered, while the ideology of this discourse is that being well mannered is strictly a trait of women, which leads to the ideologies relating gender roles and expectations. Additionally, the teacher’s discourse

consists of the cultural assumption that ladylike is equivalent to being well mannered to the young girl she is talking to, when in fact, due to the young girl's discourse, she believes that to be ladylike is equivalent to being submissive, obedient, and inferior. Thus, language and culture are inseparable and, further, a discourse can be very exclusive and convey an implicit message of the overarching ideology in juxtaposition to an opposing perspective.

One example of this that I saw during my practicum was when a teacher approached the ESL teacher and me one afternoon. She asked the ESL teacher to come in and help an ELL student in art class because he would not work start his project. Little did she know that the reason he had not started the project was that he was not sure where to start. In the Ukraine, the school environment he experienced was quite the opposite than the democratic, student-oriented he experienced in Natrona County School District. His curriculum in his native country consisted of directly copying facts from a textbook or from the teacher into a notebook. There was no such thing as student choice, which made it significantly harder for him to brainstorm. You see, her discourse was exclusive in the way that she approached the project. Through her discourse, as an educator, she believed that she gave her students freedom and guidance. Based on the ideology of her student-centered discourse, the teacher had assumed the ELL was refusing to do his work when he really just did not fit into the same fundamental culture. Thus, the teacher unintentionally disregarded and condemned this student to a colleague because he did not fit into the mainstream school philosophy.

To be clear, I do not intend to say that this educator is a terrible teacher and should never work with students again. I included this observation because of its importance in education. While I do believe this teacher should have communicated with the student one-on-one, I understand the difficulty of individualizing instruction. It is so easy to disable students because

of an outside culture that we do not understand, let alone one to which we are unaware. It is through discourses and the ideologies, or culture, behind them that exclude them in schools. When ELL students struggle in their classes and even begin to fail, an immediate thought is that there is something wrong in their lives (McDermott & Varenne, 1995)¹⁸. *They have a hard home life. They are less intelligent. They just do not want to do the work.* McDermott considers that “American education has numerous made-to-order general categories for describing children in trouble, for example: deprived, different, disadvantaged, at-risk, disabled...” for students who are “culturally different” (331). What if we were to reconsider these labels? What if, instead of saying that an ELL did not want to do their art project, we look inward and evaluate if there is something we are missing? As educators, it is our job to find gaps in our student’s knowledge...should it not also be our job to find ours?

In the end, the ESL teacher explained the context of the EL’s prior schooling and explained that it would help him if a set of options were given to narrow down his thinking. Yet, from this small moment, I saw just how hard it would be to recognize ELL’s struggles during their integration into the US school system. Though it may not always be blatant, ELs are often taught to avoid their native language, are unable to connect with the mainstream curriculum and peers, and are marginalized in the academic setting because their backgrounds do not align with the mainstream. While we, as educators, must first take the “difference approach” (McDermott & Varenne, 1995) in which we identify different cultures while recognizing their value, we must go beyond this shallow recognition and adapt our instruction for this student. While I may not agree with copying what an authoritative figure defines as truth, as this student was required to do, it would be unfair of me to disregard the knowledge that the student obtained from the instructional

¹⁸ McDermott, R., & Varenne, H. (1995). Culture as disability. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 26, 324-348.

method. In addition to valuing the different culture, it is also necessary that I am constantly adapting my instructional methods for the best interest of all students.

Entry 3 – Political, Sociocultural, and Psychological Influences

Something that has resonated from my experience in the ESL, or TESOL, program at the University of Wyoming are the various factors which pertain to students learning English as a second language. Though I did not have much experience with state or national assessments, I recognized various social expectations and attitudes embedded into the education system that disregarded the ELLs and how to meet their needs, which derives from state and national policies. Of approximately 1800 students, with a caseload of 32 students, one certified teacher and her assistant was working to ensure that each of these students was receiving appropriate and beneficial services as well as succeeding in their courses. 12 students received daily service, which consisted of additional instruction or guidance in classes or on specific assignments. The other 20 would receive a consult based on their grades and progress across the year. During my observation, I quickly learned that ESL education and training among staff was inadequate or absent altogether. My observations were representative of the sociocultural, psychological, and political influences at work.

Despite current efforts of advocates for ELLs, their current position in our society is one that is neglected, ignored, or avoided. In fact, the attitudes I witnessed reminded me of Mr. Brown from Yoom's (2007)¹⁹ research. Although teachers were implementing student-centered democratic teaching methodologies, they didn't assume full responsibility for having ELLs and, in turn, were unaware of their needs unless they asked for help. There was little collaboration between the majority mainstream teachers and the ESL teacher, which caused the ESL teacher to work harder trying to understand the content, find accommodative materials, and make modifications as necessary. What's more, the teacher and the assistant would have to

¹⁹ Yoom, B. (2007). Offering or limiting opportunities: Teachers' roles and approaches to English-language learners' participation in literacy activities" *The Reading Teacher*, 61(3), 216-225.

strategically divide their time in order to attend certain students' classes and help them. Would it not make more sense for all educators to be informed of ESL strategies and methods? Would it not be logical to expect educators to be aware of most effective instructional methods? A simple answer would be yes, but teachers were very hesitant and defensive to this change. Many of them worried about their workload, believing that an ELL's behavior or proficiency would be too difficult to handle. Teachers that already had an ELL asked the ESL teacher questions that should have been directed towards the student, such as brainstorming ideas for a project. By removing the student from the chain of communication, many teachers were looking over the student's needs in their classroom.

As an explanation for these types of occurrences, Auerbach (1993)²⁰ discusses historical pedagogical practices that have simply become "commonsense" or "natural" although their implementations were, at least initially, politically strategic for the growth of the English language. In other words, she explains that we have institutionally perpetuated this capitalist attitude because they are deeply rooted in our psyche. She refers to Phillipson (1993)²¹, who outlines the historical tenets of English language teaching:

- English is best taught monolingually.
- The ideal teacher of English is a native speaker.
- The earlier English is taught, the better the results.
- The more English is taught, the better the results.
- If other languages are used too much, standards of English will drop. (185).

²⁰ Auerbach, E. R. (1993). Reexamining English only in the ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly*, 27(1), 9-32. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/58241808?accountid=14793>

²¹ Phillipson, R. (1993). *Linguistic imperialism* Oxford University Press, Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP, England, United Kingdom.

Auerbach continues to explain how she conducted an experiment and affirmed that these tenets underlie attitudes of ESL educators in the U.S. As it turns out, they assigned negative value to what they called, “lapses” into students’ L1. That is to say, that regardless of education and research, educators feel uncomfortable going against these tenets. This evidence supports the behavior I observed in mainstream classrooms. For example, content area teachers wouldn’t utilize translation resources or encourage L1. Nevertheless, what we subconsciously consider to be natural is not necessarily correct. Take, for example, the Wyoming State Code 8-6-101²² mandates English as the official state language. Although the U.S. English organization makes an effort to explain that this policy stands for the support of the Official English Movement and not the term “English-Only” and claims that their legislation does not, “affect the diversity of languages spoken in the home, foreign languages learned in classrooms, mottoes, Native American languages, and the like” (Official English: Not “English Only”, U.S. English Inc. 2015²³), research says otherwise because of the attitudes that stem from these exclusive policies. While English must be learned in order to be successful, (i.e. obtain a driver’s license, apply for jobs, and communicate with native speakers), this legislation derives from historical tenets that have been disputed and evidently creates a “monolingual versus bilingual” culture.

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act is a national policy that attempts to increase student academic achievement; however, this policy a direct the contributor to the heightening disparities of ELLs in schools because it only promotes use of the English language and disperses more negativity towards their heritage. The NCLB Act enforces standardized testing to measure accountability, testing, teacher quality, and scientifically based research. These provisions are especially controversial due to its high stakes, federal involvement, limited

²² U.S. English Inc. (2015). *Legislation: Wyoming State Code 8-6-101*. Retrieved from <http://www.usenglish.org/view/363>

²³ U.S. English Inc. (2015). *Official English: Not “English Only”* Retrieved from <http://www.usenglish.org/view/11>

content areas (Rosenbusch, 2005) as well as its potential biases to socioeconomic statuses, innate ability, and one-approach-fits-all approach (Abedi, Hofstetter, Lord, 2004)²⁴. What's more, the consequences are even more significantly impactful on ELLs. Negative attitudes make their situation tenuous, as ELLs' scores are required by law to be taken in as representation of accountability and performance. In other words, teachers worry about their reputation because it is largely based on average test scores of standardized assessments. ELLs receive the same test that their English-native peers do and are pressured throughout the year to acquire the academic language in time for the testing period, which puts additional stress on educators, students and causes focus on English-immersion education than bilingual education (Cummins, 2005)²⁵.

As a final note, sociocultural, psychological, and political factors must all be considered interdependently. By looking at them independent of each other, one could miss that the sociocultural and psychological results are quite contradictory to other political goals. Cummins (2005) notes, "we are faced with the bizarre scenario of schools successfully transforming fluent speakers of foreign languages into monolingual English speakers, at the same times as they struggle, largely unsuccessfully, to transform English monolingual students into foreign language speakers" (586). Multilingual children have the ability to excel in and contribute to a growing global community. The United States is already behind, according to Franceschini (2011)²⁶ who announces that the European Union promotes two languages in addition to the primary language, promoting more sensibility towards diversity and more evidence is collected (345). Whereas in

²⁴ Abedi, J., Hofstetter, C. H., & Lord, C. (2004). Assessment accommodations for English language learners: Implications for policy-based empirical research. *Review of Educational Research [H.W. Wilson - EDUC]*, 74(1), 1.

²⁵ Cummins, J. (2005). A Proposal for Action: Strategies for Recognizing Heritage Language Competence as a Learning Resource within the Mainstream Classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 89(4), 585–592. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3588628>

²⁶ Franceschini, R. (2011). Multilingualism and multicompetence: A conceptual view. *The Modern Language Journal*, 95(3), 344-355. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4781.2011.01202.x

the United States, Macedo (2000)²⁷ brings up the point that often, those who advocate against bilingual education programs, which are more effective of producing bilingual speakers, are also the ones who emphasize their support for foreign language education to promote linguistic diversity and multilingualism (16). We are a walking, talking paradox. Therefore, the solution is to reconstruct each factor as it relies on the other and work towards inclusivity as a cohesive education system. If there are negative sociocultural and psychological effects caused by political ideologies, ideologies must change. With this change, more, if not all, teachers will be able to support all students of diverse backgrounds rather than depending on one certified instructor to divide their limited time and cater to students' needs separately.

²⁷ Macedo, D. (2000). The colonialism of the English only movement. *Educational Researcher*, 29(3), 15-24. doi:10.2307/1176913

Entry 4 – Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Reinforced

As described in my last reflection, one of the solutions to ensuring the success of ELLs is to go beyond the step of recognizing cultural differences but respecting them to the point of adapting to those cultural differences. A method of doing so would be constructing culturally relevant pedagogy. Ladson-Billings (2006)²⁸ who coined the term defined cultural relevant pedagogy, examined analyses of cultural deficits, or cultural disadvantage explanation and sought to defining a theoretical model that addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate” (469). By the midpoint of my reflections, the theme of advocacy for English language learners because of the importance of their native language, the suffering of their identity in schools, as well as the political factors around them that infect the sociocultural relations around them and eventually their psyche is evident. Despite my ability to articulate disadvantages and flaws within current policies, procedures, and practices across political and educational fields, I cannot help but have some doubts. Throughout all of my courses in the ESL program, my peers and I have endlessly regurgitated the topic of cultural relevant pedagogy; however, its practicality is much more difficult in reality than in my original vision of teaching. Therefore, in this reflection, I will outline the need for and the basis of culturally relevant pedagogy, share my experiences with the pedagogy in mind, and respond to the doubts I had from my experiences.

My experience with culturally relevant pedagogy began a couple of years into my undergraduate education. I found a study on the perceptions, practices, and coherence in an

²⁸ Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). Yes, but how do we do it? Practicing culturally relevant pedagogy. In J. Landsman & C. W. Lewis (Eds.), *White teachers/diverse classrooms: A guide to building inclusive schools, promoting high expectations and eliminating racism* (pp. 29–42). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishers.

undergraduate, elementary teacher preparation program (Assaf, Garza & Battle, 2010)²⁹, it was found that many of the teachers voiced the importance of preparing teachers for cultural and linguistic diversity. They had optimistic perspectives towards diversity and building on students' ethnic and linguistic variances; however, they still miss the bigger picture of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2006) and cultural sensitivity. I had similar experiences in my primary setting. Even though teachers were well aware of ELLs, they often disregarded their backgrounds due to their assumption that their instructional methods were adequate or that the ESL instructor will guide them. I would not have been surprised to hear similar comments that one teacher stated in the study: "Good teaching is good teaching and learning how to manage student behavior and student learning—that's all you have to do" (Assaf, Garza & Battle, 2010, 126). This statement is a paradox in its own phrasing and is the indisputable epitome of hypocrisy within the general classroom. "Good teaching" cannot be summarized into three matters nor can it blatantly exclude the students themselves. Merely generalizing teaching and learning as if it is not catered to individuals does a disservice to students collectively and undermines the time required for curriculum planning. What is unfortunate is this how I feel many of the mainstream teachers view ELLs in their classrooms.

Naturally, I became extremely frustrated when teachers would ignore the consequences or implications of their curricular choices. In one Language Arts class, the teacher decided to read and analyze *The Odyssey* simply because he appreciated the epic poem's contents. There was little to no relevance to the students, let alone to students learning English as a second language. Ladson-Billings (2006) deduces that the root of this issue is not that we, teachers, do not know what to do instructionally, is that they neglect the fact that the issue is socially

²⁹ Assaf, L. C., Garza, R., & Battle, J. (2010). Multicultural Teacher Education: Examining the Perceptions, Practices, and Coherence in One Teacher Preparation Program. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 37(2), 115-135.

embedded in how we think “—about the social contexts, about the students, about the curriculum, and about instruction” (30). The basis of culturally relevant pedagogy deconstructs the ideology of a meritocratic education system and acknowledges the asymmetrical relationship between minority students and society. She declares that culturally relevant teachers work to prepare their students to combat such inequities through competences and critical awareness. Rather than holding a sympathetic stance at their students’ circumstances, these teachers firmly stand in one of “informed empathy” (31), demolish the mainstream curriculum, and reconstruct an inclusive curriculum that works to fill in gaps as students critically analyze it. She explains that, “curriculum is a cultural artifact” rather than, “an ideologically neutral document” (32). Choosing this text solely out of preference neglects the interest and culture of the teacher’s students, but especially undermines ELL’s cultural background and success. Thus it became a task for the ESL instructor and I to work with the ELL individually. In the end, I ultimately realized that my frustrations were not that I had to adapt and modifying particular aspects of content area units and lessons, but that teachers commonly fail to create their own cultural relevant pedagogy in the classroom. Consequently, I lapsed into a deep sense of doubt regarding curriculum and pedagogy practice that Ladson-Billings (2006) proposed. Were teachers unaware of some students unmet needs? If so, was culturally relevant pedagogy even possible? How should the theory be implemented?

As a result, I began researching the implementation and effectiveness of Ladson-Billings’ (2014)³⁰ culturally relevant pedagogy when I came across her most recent article regarding her own theory. I was relieved to read of her dissatisfaction with the ways in which educators “seem stuck in very limited and superficial notions of culture” (77). She explains,

³⁰ Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0: A.k.a. the remix. *Harvard Educational Review*, 84(1), 74.

“As I continued to visit classrooms, I could see teachers who had good intentions . . . and wanted to embrace culturally relevant pedagogy. They expressed strong beliefs in the academic efficacy of their students. They search for cultural examples and analogues as they taught prescribed curricula. However, they rarely pushed students to consider critical perspectives on policies and practices that may have direct impact on their lives and communities” (78).

Upon reading this, I was thrilled that her observations were similar to mine. Despite teacher’s best intentions and attempts, they were missing the point. When students could read *The Odyssey*, they did not analyze themes or characters, which made it completely irrelevant to students’ lives. The research paper that followed was based on a Greek God and their significance to Greek culture. In essence, students were merely fed information rather than critically analyze their own surroundings. For example, students could compare characters from *The Odyssey* to people or populations that impact the world around them, such as Odysseus and his other soldiers and current war relations or refugee crises.

In the end, Ladson-Billings (2006; 2014) restored my hope by revealing that the secret of culturally relevant pedagogy is to “link principles of learning with deep understanding of (and appreciation for) culture” (77). Despite my doubts and questions regarding the implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy, I realized that the theory was not implemented at all. The majority of the teachers I observed think that good teaching is good teaching. They are working through the motions of their own culture rather than exploring it and their students’. These same teachers will defend their current curriculum because of the stress on standardized testing, but, even in this day and era, where “state-mandated high-stakes testing” forces teachers to succumb to “mundane content and skills-focused curricula”, teachers can take on the “dual responsibility of

external performance assessments as well as community-and student-driven learning” (Ladson-Billings, 2014, 83). We as educators must reexamine how we think in order to ensure that students are critically examining the content that is taught. This is crucial to the success of ELLs and their peers because they learn how to actively analyze and voice inequities or opinions embedded in society together.

Entry 5 – Bilingualism in a Monolingual-Driven Society

I am a firm believer in the human right of maintaining and developing one's home language but I do not deny that the acquisition of the English language is a direct factor of one's success in the United States. I do not wish to repeat my previous journal entry regarding current policies and sociocultural influences that negatively affect ELLs; instead, I want to emphasize the positive effects of bilingualism, when achieved. Despite the current conditions within many school systems that typically result in the loss of ELL's native culture and language, some students are able to overcome these obstacles and develop multiple cultures and languages as a part of their identity. To reiterate Cummins' (2005)³¹ observation, "we are faced with the bizarre scenario of schools successfully transforming fluent speakers of foreign languages into monolingual English speakers, at the same time as they struggle, largely unsuccessfully, to transform English monolingual students into foreign language speakers" (586). Despite my 8+ years spent trying to acquire fluency in the Spanish language, four of which were secondary and the remaining postsecondary, my language abilities are still limited and my affective filter is paralyzingly high, unless completely immersed in a Spanish-only environment. Yet, the bilingual students I encountered during my ESL practicum proficiently practiced various languages with confidence. In this reflection, I will describe the abilities and advantages of bilingual students in the face of monolingual within my primary setting as a defense for societal bi-/multilingualism. Although there is limited research on the behavioral, cognitive, and neuropsychological effects of bilingualism, there is sufficient research to provide reason for additional research.

³¹ Cummins, J. (2005). A Proposal for Action: Strategies for Recognizing Heritage Language Competence as a Learning Resource within the Mainstream Classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 89(4), 585–592. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3588628>

According to Bialystok's (2009)³² research, bilinguals control a smaller vocabulary in each language in comparison to monolinguals though the reasoning is unclear. However, bilinguals have higher conflict resolution and executive control. Even as children, bilinguals perform better than monolingual children with metalinguistic tasks that required controlled attention and inhibition and solve problems that contain conflicting or misleading cues. While monolinguals perform better with tasks based on knowledge of grammar than their bilingual peers, the patterns of better conflict resolution through bilinguals' performance directly correlates a higher amount of executive control. Meaning, bilinguals have more control in processes such as inhibitions, task switching or cognitive flexibility, and updating information within the working memory (5-6). While bilinguals generally have more limited lexicon retrieval, the other aspects of their cognitive function are advantageous to their monolingual peers as they have higher mean scores on these tests.

While keeping in mind that the 30 hours that I spent in my primary setting does not equate to the amount of research put into these topics, I found myself amazed by the bilingual students' cognitive flexibility, task switching, and self-control. Students would be deeply engaged in analyzing a text and could immediately switch to another topic, like prom. At first, I thought they were just distracted, but when asked a question about the text, they could answer it immediately. These bilingual students could also adapt to new situations effortlessly. The Ukrainian students would be constantly pulled away from class to work on something else or on the task individually because mainstream instruction was inadequate and they would run with it. Halfway during a lesson, the ESL instructor and I would realize another approach would be appropriate and so we would switch gears. Though monolingual students can adapt to situations

³² Bialystok, E. (2009). Bilingualism: The good, the bad, and the indifferent. *Cambridge University Press*, 12(1), 3-11

too, I had never experienced it so seamlessly. For my final lesson, I had an individual Language Arts lesson with a student. He did not have a high level of speaking or reading in English and he was having a rough day that day so I was nervous about videotaping him during our lesson, especially since many of the words with Greek names. Yet, he had very little inhibitions during the lesson. He would sound words and names out and ask help when needed. He focused on the lesson despite his bad day. Thus, all of my experiences support the research described above.

On the contrary, I recognize that the limited research in these studies could prevent in defining whether these effects are, in fact, advantageous. Some studies conflict with advantages, disadvantages, and indifferences between monolinguals and bilinguals such as the findings previously discussed. Adesope, Lavin, Thompson, & Ungerleider, (2010)³³ performed research over the course of 63 studies to examine the cognitive correlates of bilingualism and the measure of said benefits. They found that bilinguals outperformed monolinguals in both metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness. Adesope, Lavin, Thompson, & Ungerleider, (2010) also inferred that skills developed from acquiring and managing multiple languages give bilinguals insight into the abstract features of language as well as give them an enhanced ability to control their attention in order to such develop abstract and symbolic representations and to solve problems. Therefore, the implications from extensive studies confirm that bilingualism is associated with several cognitive benefits.

In addition, studies show that multilingualism has effects beyond cognitive tasks, including increased compassion, open-mindedness, and tolerance (Dewaele & Stavans, 2013)³⁴.

³³ Adesope, O. O., Lavin, T., Thompson, T., & Ungerleider, C. (2010). A systematic review and meta-analysis of the cognitive correlates of bilingualism. *Review of Educational Research*, 80, 207–245. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3102/0034654310368803>

³⁴ Dewaele, J., & Wei, L. (2013). Is multilingualism linked to a higher tolerance of ambiguity? *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 16(1), 231-240. doi:10.1017/S1366728912000570

Dewaele & Wei (2013) investigated the link between multilingualism and the personality trait “Tolerance of Ambiguity” (TA) among over 2000 mono-, bi-, and multilinguals. TA has been used for many decades in psychology fields as a property of cultures, organizations and individuals. “A person with low tolerance of ambiguity experiences stress, reacts prematurely, and avoids ambiguous stimuli” whereas a person with high TA “perceives ambiguous situations/stimuli as desirable, challenging, and interesting and neither denies nor distorts their complexity of incongruity” (Furnham & Ribchester, 1995)³⁵. Thus, TA has been associated with authoritarianism and dogmatism (Furnham & Ribchester, 1995) while also considered a positive characteristic in language learning because the ambiguity of not only learning another language, but the unfamiliarity of the language in and of itself (Ely, 1995; Baran-Lucarz, 2012)³⁶. Dewaele & Wei (2012) ultimately found that participants in their study who knew two or more languages scored substantially higher levels of TA than those who knew one language.

Why, then, is bilingualism not appropriately promoted, encouraged, or celebrated in the United States society? Eisenchlas, Schalley, & Guillemin (2015)³⁷ asserts,

“...there is a pervasive assumption, in the Western world at least, that monolingualism is the norm and bi/multilingualism is the exception. The proliferation of books and articles on the advantages of bi/multilingualism can be seen as evidence that the normative monolingualism assumption is alive and well” (153).

³⁵ Furnham, A., & Ribchester, T. (1995). Tolerance of ambiguity: A review of the concept, its measurement and applications. *Current Psychology, 14* (3), 179–199.

³⁶ Ely, C. (1995) Tolerance of ambiguity and the teaching of ESL. In J. M. Reid (ed.), *Learning styles in the ESL/EFL classroom*, pp. 216–217. New York: Heinle & Heinle.; Baran-Lucarz, M. (2012). Ego boundaries and attainments in FL pronunciation. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching, 2* (1), 45–66.

³⁷ Eisenchlas, S. A., Schalley, A. C., & Guillemin, D. (2015). Multilingualism and literacy: Attitudes and policies. *International Journal of Multilingualism, 12*(2), 151-161. doi:10.1080/14790718.2015.1009371

In total, I came across approximately 11 students who were bilingual during my observations, though there were many more I had not met. Over half of those twelve were bilingual in Spanish and English, with Spanish as their native or home language. Another three were the students from Ukraine who spoke Ukrainian and Russian proficiently and learned the languages simultaneously. Now they were acquiring English. Yet, multilingualism has been a presence in the majority, if not all, of the students' lives. They are required and given incentive to take foreign language courses. They are told about the importance of multilingualism in the globalized market. They have friends who speak multiple languages. As I have discussed before, languages are not politically or socially equal and consequently, languages are lost and so are the cultures with which they are intricately intertwined. I am hopeful, however, that bi/multilingualism will spread beyond the current books and articles and into the minds of people that read them. I suspect with time, globalization and migration will affirm multilingualism as the new norm.

Entry 6 – Literacy and Instruction

Throughout my observations, the notion of literacy and instructional methods to help students acquire it challenged me relentlessly. From the research I was exposed to during my ESL methods courses, the only thoughtful definition of literacy I have is from Gee (1989)³⁸ who claims, “Literacy is control of secondary uses of language (i.e. uses of language in secondary discourses)” (9). This definition is relevant where discourses are “a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or ‘social network’” (Gee, 15). Thus, to acquire literacy is to acquire the appropriate discourse in a particular setting. Further, literacy includes the ability to identify and interpret messages, or discourses. To be able to examine and criticize discourses from such sources is to have control of the discourse that which Gee refers to as “meta-knowledge” or “meta-discourse” (18) and goes beyond literacy. That said, students are learning, to some degree, meta-knowledge from their literacy in various discourses. The struggle, then, is that ELL students do not necessarily have literacy in discourses referred to at school because they do not acquire those in their home setting. Therefore, teachers must practice a variety of instructional methods that promote students’ development in literacy in dominant discourses as well as expand those discourses to include others.

According to Coleman and Goldenberg (2011)³⁹ found over the course of 25 years’ worth of research that the foundation of an effective English literacy program is very similar for both ELLs and native English speakers. Most challenges arise when reading requires higher levels of

³⁸ Gee, J. P. (1989). Literacy, discourse, and linguistics: Introduction and what is literacy? *Journal of Education*, 171(1), 5-25.

³⁹ Coleman, R., & Goldenberg, C. (2011) Promoting literacy development. *The Education Digest*, 76(6), 14-18. Retrieved from <http://libproxy.uwyo.edu/login/?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/848640920?accountid=14793>

language skills, such as those that are context-reduced or academically complex (15). This is why Coleman and Goldenberg (2011) emphasize ELs' content knowledge and content vocabulary as the vehicle for literacy development as well as explicit instruction. Fortunately, the teachers that I observed utilized instructional methods that were explicit. For example, many adopted sheltered instruction observation protocol (SIOP) as an inclusive strategy to all students. SIOP, or sheltered instruction, includes six components including preparation, scaffolding, integration of processes or strategies, interactions, application, and assessment to ensure adequate instruction for all students. I also created my lessons based on these components as well. Sheltered instruction requires modeling, scaffolding, comprehensible input and consolidation of learning. SIOP is interactive so that students it challenges students cognitively and linguistically through practicing and applying various domains of language, discourses, and literacies. What's more, SIOP gives the teacher leniency to make adequate modifications for ELLs such as visuals, additional practice, repetition, or scaffolding strategies like Coleman and Goldenberg (2011) suggest.

Nonetheless, I would like to clarify that these findings do not reinforce the "Good teaching is simply good teaching" ideology that does more harm than it does good. One way of measuring the quality of meaningful instruction as well as academic proficiency is through the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), which are highly concentrated on literacy skills. Therefore, literacy skills are currently the most vital skills for students to acquire. As Goldenberg (2014)⁴⁰ mentions,

"One of the most important findings of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth was the effects of reading instruction on ELs' reading

⁴⁰ Goldenberg, C. (2014). Unlocking the research on English learners: What we know – and don't yet know – about effective instruction. *Education Digest*, 79(6), 36-46.

comprehension were uneven and often nonexistent...[which contrasts] with English-proficient students, for whom reading instruction helps improve reading comprehension” (38-39).

Therefore, studies indicate that instructional conversations had negative or no overall effect on ELLs’ story comprehension when their English language skills were lower. ELs require different strategies than the blanket pedagogy of “good teaching”. There are multiple ways that teachers ignore ELL students’ needs during literacy activities. Yoon (2007)⁴¹ provides a great example in her research article. This example takes form of Mr. Brown whom “rarely played an active role to assist ELLs’ participation in the classroom” and “seldom called on them to share their experiences or ideas in a whole-group discussion” (218-19). Instead, he was constantly drawing on popular topics in American culture like American football and television shows as well as the Sunday paper, to make his teaching relevant to students’ lives. These topics were the dominant discourse and fit well for the majority of his students, but his two ELL students were consistently disengaged and passive participants when they really just could not understand the discourse because they had not acquired it outside of school. Therefore, while Mr. Brown was referring to the dominant discourse, he neglected to provide meaningful instruction to his ELLs and, consequently, marginalized them.

Mr. Brown should have spoken directly to the students in order to determine what experiences or references would be familiar so that they could engage in the literacy development activities. Goldenberg (2014) admits that studies, “...find that building on students’ experiences and using material with familiar content can facilitate ELs’ literacy development and

⁴¹ Yoon, B. (2007). Offering or limiting opportunities: Teachers’ roles and approaches to English-language learners’ participation in literacy activities. *The Reading Teacher*, 61(3), 216-225. Retrieved from <http://www.jstore.org/stable/20204576>.

reading comprehension” and suggests that teachers “acquire the necessary background knowledge” before reading unfamiliar content (41). One way in which the ESL instructor modified a unit and lesson for low level ELLs in the 10th grade English Language Arts course in my primary setting was to implement sheltered instruction in which they acquired background knowledge so that the material of the curriculum became familiar. Their class was reading *Night* by Elie Wiesel and analyzing the figurative language. To better comprehend the content and context, the ESL instructor found a similar autobiographical book with a lower Lexile level. They first read and discussed themes and events in this book before reading *Night* in order to gain knowledge about the Holocaust, autobiographies, and particular vocabulary.

Regardless of the successful examples of sheltered instruction previously discussed, there is no “right” instruction. In fact, Goldenberg (2014) explains that there is very little evidence that supports SIOP as a strategy that helps students to overcome challenged in learning advanced literacy skills in academic content areas (40) nor has it yet to demonstrate more than a modest effect on student learning (41). Fortunately are actually endless instructional methods and programs that, when implemented correctly, benefit all students including ELLs such as Success for all, Direct Instruction, vocabulary instruction programs, Reading Recovery which an English tutoring program, cooperative learning and phonics instruction programs. Some teaching models, such as Project Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) or Quality Teaching for English Learners, have never been evaluated (Goldenberg, 2014). Ultimately, until there is more research that is informative and contains tangible evidence on the advantages and disadvantages of instructional methods for ELLs and their English-speaking peers, ESL instructors have to manipulate instruction on a case-by-case basis. For that reason, my struggle in determining how to help my students acquire literacy across dominant and other secondary discourses shall persist.

Entry 7 – Assessments and the Accommodations that Follow

My entire practicum experience was oriented around the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards in preparation for the Proficiency Assessments for Wyoming Students (PAWS). The purpose of PAWS is to “foster program improvement at the school, district, and state levels in support of the teaching and learning that takes place in Wyoming public classrooms and meets all of the attendant requirements of the federal accountability law” (Wyoming Department of Education, 2016)⁴². Since its official statewide implementation in 2005-2006, PAWS is now used to measure individual student achievement against the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards for grades 3-8 in reading, math, and grades 4 and 8 in science. PAWS allows for over 30 accommodations under various categories including visual presentation accommodations, tactile presentation accommodations, auditory presentation accommodations, response accommodations, setting accommodations, testing administration accommodations, and timing and scheduling accommodations (Wyoming Department of Education, 2016)⁴³. Although I did not observe any PAWS testing during my practicum, I will reflect on observations regarding assessments and ELLs during my practicum, status of accommodations that ELLs are typically given, and further propose suggestions based such reflections.

Before I dive into the dark abyss of assessments and ELLs, I first want to provide some contextual information regarding assessment requirements. Prior the establishment of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2001),⁴⁴ the majority of states

⁴² Wyoming Department of Education. (2016). *PAWS*. Retrieved from: <https://edu.wyoming.gov/educators/state-assessment/paws/>

⁴³ Wyoming Department of Education. (2016). *PAWS: Accommodations*. Retrieved from: https://edu.wyoming.gov/downloads/assessments/PAWS_Accommodations_Manual.pdf

⁴⁴ U.S. Department of Education. (2001). *Language instruction for limited-English-proficient and immigrant students* (Title III of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, PL 107-110). Washington, DC: Author.

would have exempted students who had been in the United States or in the ESL/bilingual program for fewer than three years from state-level assessments due to fear of low scores (Li & Zhang, 2004)⁴⁵. This was the case of Mei, a recent Chinese immigrant, who was just over 12 years old when she was enrolled into elementary school due to her limited English. Her parents spoke little English and her home language was Mandarin Chinese. Since her arrival, Mei had been intentionally left out of the high-stake state and local assessment systems apart from her English placement test, which was never followed by intervention or long-term progress plans. (Li & Zhang, 2004). Fortunately, the NCLB Act mandated that all children participate in statewide assessments unless they have not attended schools under a full academic year. This legislation also states these assessments must provide for those with limited English proficiency. Therefore, the NCLB Act was a major breakthrough in terms of holding school accountable for a minority demographic in their school. It was the intention of this legislation that students like Mei would no longer slip through the cracks of the education system.

Despite its intent, however, the legislation has led to much controversy in terms of assessment and accommodations. Critics worry that annual high-stakes standardized testing robs teachers' creative and instructional time and that students' education either watered down or centers around taking a test rather than authentic learning (Abedi, Hofstetter, & Lord, 2004)⁴⁶. In a sense, I would agree. The majority of concerns regarding ELLs in my primary setting was there PAWS test scores and obtaining PAWS test proficiency. This concern dictated teacher attitudes, teacher curriculum and seemingly defining measurements of ELLs' academic intelligence.

⁴⁵ Li, X., & Zhang, M. (2004). Why Mei still cannot read and what can be done. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 48(2), 92-101. doi:10.1598/JAAL.48.2.1

⁴⁶ Abedi, J., Hofstetter, C. H., & Lord, C. (2004). Assessment accommodations for English language learners: Implications for policy-based empirical research. *Review of Educational Research [H. W. Wilson – EDUC]*, 74(1), 1-28.

Shohamy (2011)⁴⁷ voices that tests “are not only viewed anymore as naïve measurement tools, but also as powerful devices contextualized within broad social, political, and economic realities” (420) to which second language learners are inevitably doomed. Studies indicate that there is a correlation between the linguistic complexity and demands of individual test items and the performance gap between ELLs and English-proficient students. In other words, reducing the impact of language factors on content-based assessments can make assessments more fair (Abedi et al., 2011). Shohamy (2011) and other researchers have learned the prolonged time it can take to second language learners, especially immigrants who have little exposure to the target language, to acquire the same academic level of a native speaker. Yet, about a year after integration into the school system, these students are expected to score proficient, thus causing fear among educators and school administrators. Though unintended, the NCLB Act increased assimilative, monolingual attitudes as a solution for academic proficiency in ELLs. Therefore, current legislation allows for accommodations so long as they equalize the test for the students by removing sources of difficulties that do not affect the intent of the test measurement.

In terms of deciding among accommodations that are most appropriate, there are four main considerations: effectiveness, validity, differential impact, and feasibility. For an accommodation to be effective, it should improve the performance of ELLs through lowering the test’s language load; however, in order to be valid, the accommodation should not affect the scores of the other students. If this were the case, the accommodation may not be addressing the needs of the intended student group. Moreover, the accommodation will have differential impact. Due to students’ backgrounds, no accommodation is a one-fit-for-all strategy. Abedi et al. (2011)

⁴⁷ Shohamy, E. (2011). Assessing multilingual competencies: Adopting construct valid assessment policies. *The Modern Language Journal*, 95(3), 418-429. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4781.2011.01210.x

warns us against “blanket statements about general effectiveness or lack of effectiveness of a particular form of accommodation for all English language learners” (16). Finally, the accommodation must be logistically feasible in order to be considered and implemented. Certain accommodations are more expensive or have limited resources that affect its practicality (Abedi, et al., 2011).

Overall, past research has confirmed a few attributes of proposed accommodations, some of which that are permitted in PAWS. One instance is that translating test items from English into students’ L1 does not seem to be effective when students has studied and received instruction of the content in English. Out of all the accommodations allowed for PAWS testing, this is not one of them, which is probably good as its results appear inconclusive and have a high risk of translating words or phrases incorrectly across languages. Another accommodation that is not provided by PAWs is the reduction of low-frequency vocabulary and complex sentence structures, even though this has shown to narrow the performance gap between ELLs and their English-native peers. Thus, this accommodation strategy appears to be effective and valid, as it does not appear to affect other students. One other accommodation that is not provided by PAWS are customized dictionaries, though they are generally more effective and valid in contrast to commercial dictionaries. In fact, no dictionaries are allowed during PAWS testing, most likely because it may directly give an answer to a test question. Extra time, though it is the most common accommodation and is supported by PAWS, may not always be effective. One approved accommodation by PAWS that I found interesting was auditory presentation accommodations in which teachers can read and reread questions or directions because of the risk of the teacher providing unintentional cues through voice, rate of reading, body language. In fact, I found it particularly interesting that the most effective and valid accommodation strategies

such as simplifying test items' language and customized dictionaries. The thirty-some accommodations seem quite arbitrary after observing in my practicum and doing research. This arbitrariness led to a further reflection of the ideologies behind the current assessment practices. I knew from my courses in the ESL program that the tensions arising from these high-stakes standardized tests affect the sociocultural and psychological environment for ELLs. In addition, despite the policies, ELLs are still disadvantaged as they are tested on the level in which they can express conceptual knowledge through their limited language abilities. Shohamy (2011) noticed these inequities too but rather than focusing on the accommodations that could help level the playing field, she points out the ideological framework that makes the field uneven in the first place. She declares, "Although dynamic, diverse, and constructive discussions of multilingual teaching and learning are currently taking place within the language education field, the phenomenon is completely overlooked in the assessment field that continues to view language as a monolingual, homogenous and often still native-like construct" (419). She is exactly right. Although I have been an advocate for ELLs using their native language in the acquisition of their L2, a promoter bilingualism, and condemner of the ideologies that stain our political system, I completely missed that very ideology in assessment. Instead, I focused on the accommodations that, no matter how hard they are investigated, will be inconclusive due to the variety of circumstances that factor into them. Focusing on accommodations are a reactive, futile approach to the problem. Test accommodations imply that students' L1 is only temporary. The prestige still surrounds the English language; the deciding factor of intelligence must be in the English language.

Instead, concentration of ESL educators and advocates should be devoting their time to multilingual assessment just as they do for multilingual pedagogy. Shohamy (2011) has two

suggestions for multilingual assessment. One proposal consists of the integration of all languages within the assessment. For example, language x is used for reading, language y is used for writing, and language z is used for discussions. While this would not necessarily be feasible to a monolingual classroom, it is possible to explore this idea further, at least its implementation within bilingual or dual-immersion schools. On the other hand, assessments can accept the integration of bilingual language within question responses. Re-examining current assessment systems are vital in making mutual change and actually constructing a level playing field in the education system.

Entry 8 – No More Excuses, Working Together as Educators

Reexamining my previous reflections, I recognize that some of the topics I discuss such as huge changes within the ideological, political, sociocultural frameworks of our current society may seem unattainable. On the contrary, these changes are necessary so how can they not be attainable? In a system that is broken, it is up to advocates, such as myself, to fill cracks as best as possible so that ELLs do not fall through them. Yet, some cracks are too big to fill on our own. Per the 2015 American Community Survey (ACS)⁴⁸, of the 301 million people over the age of 5 in the United States, 40% of them speak English less than “very well”. Of the approximate 53.8 million school children within the ages 5-17 in the United States, 11.9 million, or 18.4%, speak a language other than English at home. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data⁴⁹, the average reading scores for non-ELL 4th- and 8th-grade students were higher than the scores in comparison to their ELL peers. These gaps are not measurably different from the achievement gaps since the year 2000. As the most rapid growing student population in US schools, indirect evidence such as consistent poor academic achievement that is typically assessed with standardized achievement tests like the one above, suggests that ELLs have the highest risk of dropping out of school than any other student group (Sheng, Z., Sheng, Y., & Anderson, 2011)⁵⁰. These students need our help; yet, the ESL coordinator at my primary setting was the only one actively standing up for ELL students and advocating for their success. As the only person who had received extensive training in second language acquisition, she faces various challenges with her colleagues and administration.

⁴⁸ U.S. Census Bureau. (2015). *Language spoken at home: 2015 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates*. Retrieved from: https://factfinder.census.gov/rest/dnldController/deliver?_ts=511465098552

⁴⁹ National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) *English Language Learners*. Retrieved from: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/indicator_CGF/COE_CGF_2013_05.pdf

⁵⁰ Sheng, Z., Sheng, Y., Anderson, C. J. (2011) Dropping out of school among ELL students: Implications to schools and teacher education. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues, and Ideas*, 84(3), 98-103.

One of the first, and consistent, challenges the ESL instructor has with her a colleagues and supervisors was the lack of training and resources within the school and its district. Though she had an assistant, who may have received some unofficial ESL training, the ESL coordinator was the only one with an ESL endorsement and had undergone extensive language acquisition education. This created a multitude of problems, namely managing the caseload. As the ESL coordinator, she had to ensure that each students' language needs were being met, oversee any accommodations or modifications on lessons or assessments, and maintain student success. If other teacher's had received more training on ESL instruction, the work would not be so exhaustive. In 30 hours, I noticed the number of lesson plans that she modified, the number of students she was rushing to check on throughout the day, the specific one-on-one attention she would give various students throughout the week to work on certain assignments, and more. With more trained teachers, the mainstream content area teachers could modify lessons so that students' needs could be met in the classroom, rather than merely relying on the ESL coordinator would not have to constantly pull students out into the hall to work on the assignments for that day.

Peculiarly, this conflict resembles to the education factors that failed Mei's language acquisition in the way that lack of training left mainstream teachers feeling unprepared to teach ELLs. One teacher in Li and Zhang's (2004)⁵¹ study said, "I like Mei a lot, but I don't know how to help her..." (95), which relates to some of the conversations I had or overheard between mainstream teachers and occasionally with the ESL coordinator. The emphasis was on not knowing how to teach an ELL student. One Language Arts teacher mentioned how difficult it was for him to even implement the little training he did have with his certain content area. He

⁵¹ Li, X., & Zhang, M. (2004). Why Mei still cannot read and what can be done. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 48(2), 92-101. doi:10.1598/JAAL.48.2.1

asked, “How am I supposed to teach someone English Language Arts when they can’t speak English?” which implied that he simply didn’t know where to start. It was evident that the lack of training impacted teachers’ use of instructional methods and selection of materials. Unlike Mei, the ELL students were assigned responsibilities and tasks in main classrooms but the materials were too difficult, too incomprehensive, or too context-reduced for the students to keep up with the fast pace of the class. A biology teacher decided to simply pair students up, including her ELL student, to create a cell function model. She thought the interaction would be beneficial for the ELL because he would have the content explained to him by a peer; however, she overlooked the fact that the student did not grasp the components of the project, let alone the content vocabulary of which it required. The ELL student was sitting there, while his partner did all the work so that he could get a good grade.

Thus, I would overall make similar recommendations as Li and Zhang (2004) made for Mei’s educators. By making themselves aware of current effective programs and instructional methods, they may be able to assist their students and each other in their ELLs’ education. Many of them use a variety of teaching and learning strategies such as modeling, visual aides and graphic organizers, but I do not think they realize the importance for highlighting students native language support or incorporating multicultural content. No teacher would use a translator to help an ELL define a vocabulary word; they were simply expected to fill out the English-only graphic organizer. In addition, these teachers should put in effort into researching other materials appropriate for ELLs’ reading levels and interests to help activate prior knowledge and build schema. A Language Arts class was working on a research paper with the use of three sources and brought relevant books from the library to his classroom for students to examine. Thanks to the ESL coordinator, was able to find a variety of graphic novels for an ELL with a reading level

of 2 in the library, the ELL student had a book source. Though the content area teachers may not have much ESL training under their belt, they are capable of seeking out information to help them attain education on the topic.

In fact, one observation that deeply troubled me was the fact that the content area teachers, who would complain about insufficient training and resources, would ignore a glaringly visible resource right in front of them: the ESL coordinator. During my practicum, there was one teacher who shared her unit plans with the ESL instructor prior to beginning them so that they could discuss any gaps or challenges that may arise as well as cooperative strategies to implement together. Some teachers would share their assignments via “Google docs” after the assignment had already been presented and distributed to the students. This caused a more reactive relationship between the two teachers. Some teachers would provide lesson or assignment details via paper copy after ELLs had already begun struggling with it and requested additional help. This caused a very divided, reactive relationship between the two teachers.

Moreover, the lack of collaboration between the teachers affected more than the relationship between the teachers; it also affected the students. On one hand, ELLs are experience further isolation because, like Mei, the students are typically removed from the classroom and taught elsewhere (Li & Zhang, 2004) despite the fact that they are only meant to spend one 90-minute period in an ESL-specific class. On the other hand, content area teachers recognized and identified their ESL students as an obstacle or an outsider, which is perceived through the other students. Townsend and Fu (2001)⁵² note,

“Rather than only focusing on the texts students read and write, we need to pay more attention to the students: what they know, what they can do, what they want to know, and

⁵² Townsend, J., & D. Fu. (2001). Paw’s story: A Laotian refugee’s lonely entry into American literacy. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 45(2), 104-112.

how we can take advantage of classroom diversity...we can't expect our language newcomers to be the only ones to open to new cultural perspectives" (113).

By not putting forth the effort to adjust mainstream instruction, research or obtain training on language acquisition, or working with the ESL program present in the school, teachers are sending a message. They are saying that tradition is more important than the student. The message conveys that the majority is more important than the minority. The message is that ELLs do not matter. Throughout the ESL program, our educator has informed us to prepare ourselves for resistance and hesitation from our colleagues, administrators, students, and families. Colleagues and administrators can be rooted in traditions or can simply be ignorant to ELLs' struggles; however, it is crucial that the best interests of all students, including ELLs are being taken into consideration.

By the end of my practicum, I realized that ESL educators could be just as marginalized as their students in the school. Again, I recognize that some of the topics I discuss in this portfolio are unorthodox and even naïve...but against what standard? The standard we do have is insufficient. The education system as we have it now is restrictive. The obstacles that ELLs and students from diverse backgrounds face are unjustified. All teachers should be advocates for ELLs to combat their high probability of dropping out of school and working together is the only way to do that.

Session 1 – Motivation and ELLs

When it comes to motivation, I immediately think about Marco*⁵³ from my practicum. Marco spoke English and Spanish proficiently, but was failing all of his classes. With two weeks left in the quarter, the school vice principal initiated a meeting where his mother, who was a Spanish monolingual, and all of his teachers could work together and determine a plan of action. In total, there were four content area teachers, the ESL instructor and I, the student, the student's mother, and a translator. At this meeting, each teacher shared Marco's behavior in class, his current grade, and what must be done in order to improve the grade. The teacher and Marco unanimously agreed that Marco understood the material in his classes; the problem was that he just didn't want to do the work. Regardless of his teachers' and mother's pleas, Marco just brushed it off. *I'll get it done, don't worry*, he would say. His response didn't relieve them because of his lack of motivation remained. Without a doubt, Marco would either avoid his schoolwork fail the semester or

One absolute necessity in student learning is motivation; at least that's how Dixie Brackman phrased it in her presentation at the Annual Wyoming ESL Conference. As a current ESL educator in Albany County School District, Dixie expressed her fascination with motivation and its vital role in education. Although I gained an extensive knowledge about motivation theory and theorists through my collegiate program, I had very limited knowledge of what fueled motivation. I could not explain what made some people motivated and others not. I could not contribute to the discussion about Marco and how to inspire motivation for schoolwork unless through basic extrinsic means like verbal affirmations, negative or positive consequences, etc. However, if I could go back in time, I know exactly what I would do differently.

⁵³ Student's name changed for confidentiality

In contrast to trying to persuade Marco to complete his work, I would work with my colleagues to approach Marco's basic desires. Dr. Steven Reiss (2010)⁵⁴ defines basic desires as “fundamental psychological impulses that define [one's] personality” and identified sixteen basic desires that initiate motivation. Of these desires include power, independence, curiosity, acceptance, order, saving, honor, idealism, social contact, family, status, vengeance, romance, eating, physical activity, and tranquility. Although basic desires never exist in isolation, being able to highlight the strongest desires can give insight into one's motivators. In turn, this insight can be capitalized in order to increase one's performance drive. In other words, Marco could have a weak desire for tranquility but really strong desires for family, independence, and honor. Peace of mind of not having to worry about summer school would not be an effective method of motivating Marco to do his work; however, including his parents and allowing him to make a schedule to stick to would aid in his attainment of honor. Thus, emphasis on these topics would motivate him and he would more likely to stay motivated throughout the rest of the year.

Thanks to Dixie's presentation, I discovered the influence of desire and I changed my approach to student motivation. She explained Zoltán Dornyi's (2001)⁵⁵ motivational teaching practice, which explicitly instructs how to initiate and maintain motivation. Knowing what fuels individual students' motivation is the key to keeping them motivated in school. Teachers eventually come to learn their students' motivations through the course of the school year; but imagine the rate of student engagement and learning if those motivational factors were known from the beginning. By passing along this information to my fellow teachers, they will be able to access a strong strategy to fuel students' motivation, rather than reacting to student's lack of motivation. This is especially important for ELLs that must overcome more obstacles than native

⁵⁴ Reiss, S. (2010) *The meaning of basic desire* (PDF document). Retrieved from Reiss Profile website: <http://www.reissprofile.eu/basicdesire>

⁵⁵ *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom*. (2001). Ed. Zoltan Dornyei. Cambridge University Press.

English students, as knowing their desires would provide awareness and understanding of the individual students' culture and personality that they may not learn otherwise.

Session 2 – Making Connections

A few of my peers and I attended a breakout session presented by Mary Bowker and Beth Eastman that described a new program at Jackson Hole High School in Teton County School District. The “Spanish Heritage and Native Speaker” program focused on native Spanish speakers within the school community. Out of 672 students in the high school, 80% were Latino and/or Hispanic. 26% of these students families request Spanish communication and 9% are active English learners (ELs) or monitor students. The program was created in order to meet the outstanding needs for students to use their L1 not only to maintain students’ L1 knowledge, but to further their L2 acquisition, improve value and pride in Hispanic heritage, culture, and language in the school and increase upper levels of Spanish for advanced foreign language placement. Despite these advantages to the program in and of itself, I found its key objectives quite fascinating, as they were oriented around making connections to student knowledge, family, and Hispanic culture to provide opportunities for professional collaboration, family engagement, and language building that teachers can embrace.

The first and foremost connection that Bowker and Eastman promoted was between students and their prior knowledge. This step is not new for teachers of English native students or ELLs, yet they emphasized topics and lessons happening in other classes. For example, if students were learning the elements of a narrative in their Language Arts course, Bowker and Eastman would create a unit with the same purpose. Students had prior knowledge about the concepts and were able to transfer and process that knowledge in their native language. This required Bowker and Eastman to communicate with teachers both inside and outside of their department, but was very beneficial for their mutual students. Not only did this strategy reinforce

students' prior knowledge and current learning, but also added depth, practicality, and value to their L1.

Nevertheless, Bowker warned us about are overlooking personal assumptions and biases when it came to determining prior knowledge. Bowker admitted that, at the start of the program, she frequently assumed students already had knowledge regarding holidays, traditions, and customs within their traditional Hispanic culture. This was rarely the case, she informed us. For many of these students, they were unable to really discuss these topics with their parents, grandparents, or guardians because of the language barrier.

As a matter of fact, this program combat the language barrier between ELLs and their family members through connecting student's academic learning to their home life. Many lessons or discussion required students to ask about familial customs, beliefs, and traditions as well as connect through sharing stories and experiences. One discussion required students to ask their families about home remedies their family has heard of or do. Another assignment required them to interview someone they knew to be hardworking, which were typically within the immediate family. Through this program, academics not only became a relevant part in students' and their families' lives, but actually sparked genuine conversations and culturally engaging experiences at home.

Finally, Bowker and Eastman described units they taught that were deeply embedded in Hispanic culture. Rather than merely watching an informational video about Día de los Muertes, Day of the Dead, the students made legitimate ofriendas, or alters, in honor of passed away family members. On the days of celebration, the students hosted an open house with food for people to share a cultural experience. These lessons were far more authentically tied to the students' culture and allowed them to feel connected to their heritage while learning about the

customs and traditions. What's more, these events or projects broke barriers down between cultures within the high school and helped make a more inclusive atmosphere.

From this presentation, the major takeaways were the connections that can be made in order to further language acquisition while contributing to students' cultural identity and family inclusivity. Although this program is set aside for an entire ethnicity due to the demographics of the school, the strategies Bowker and Eastman implemented in order to make these connections can be made across mainstream classes as well. If teachers can collaborate and communicate ways to work off of each other's curriculum, overall conceptual knowledge can be transferred and built upon from class to class. If teacher's incorporated students' home life into school assignments, chasms between school and home life will lessen. Thus, students and their families will be more engaged and cooperative throughout their academic experiences. Finally, by authentically learning and celebrating students' individual and collective cultures through events and projects, the school will become more inclusive and united. Though this program is applied to Spanish heritage and native speakers, its fundamental purpose is applicable to all students, especially ELLs.

Session 3 – Bridging the Ignorance Gap

For the final educational presentation, my fellow pre-service ESL teachers and I attended Matthew Parsons' "Bridging the Ignorance Gap through Acculturation and Adaptation," where we gained an understanding of our own communal identities in relation to immigrants and refugees. Parsons began the presentation by asking us to define culture and ignorance, respectively. The audience constructed a loose definition that culture was a set of common beliefs, customs, traditions that persists generations of people while ignorance means the lack of knowledge or awareness of different cultures. While cultures may unite us, the ignorance created within cultures can divide us. Nevertheless, before we could examine the world or even country at large, we must examine ourselves.

Therefore, the first activity during the presentation was defining our culture. The goal was to specifically our own personal culture, not our parents' or friends' culture but our very own. Parsons then distributed sheets to create a six-sided cube and explained the theme for each side: environment, food, important ideas, values, or beliefs, arts, family life and celebrations, and clothing and shelter. For each theme, we would draw objects, symbols, and representations that embodied our individual culture. Even though most of us in the audience were from Wyoming, our cultures differed in countless ways because of our personal experiences. Although cultures can be very common, no one has the exact same culture as another because various things affect everyone in a variety of ways.

Being able to identify the factors that shape us permits us to analyze our dispositions and biases, especially towards cultures within our classrooms, schools, and communities. This is highly applicable to ELLs because they are generally marginalized from the mainstream culture of schools. One example I heard over the course of the conference was an anecdote about a

school administrator attempting to increase family engagement. When asked about strategies that she had implemented in order to reach out, she mentioned that the school offered ESL courses so that they could better communicate with the teacher. Even though there were a handful of bilingual teachers and over 80% of the school population consisted of Hispanic students, parent teacher conferences were only given in English. The woman to whom she was conversing with suggested that the teachers undergo some Spanish language education and see if this raised parent interest and attendance. The lady had not even considered using Spanish language with Spanish-speaking families because she was so acculturated into the English-speaking, mainstream culture and traditional method of English parent-teacher communication. Without meaning to be, she was ignorant of others' culture. Without recognizing one's personal biases and biases held by the school, this fact could easily be ignored and ELLs and minority communities would suffer. Therefore, this activity was relevant to all educators in the school.

Logically, this situation would be similar for immigrants and refugees upon entering the United States, let alone the U.S. education system. Most of the mainstream culture knows only what their eyes have been opened to within their culture. Therefore, teachers must model self-reflection and evaluation in order to act as a cultural broker for these students and their families, then this practice will pass onto students, parents, administrators, and so on. With this in mind, I will always make sure to encourage and employ reflective and evaluative processes on my students, my colleagues, and myself. The cube that Parsons used would be a great introductory method of these reflective practices; however, the key is to maintain self-reflection and awareness through a multitude of strategies. From this presentation, I am confident that all students' needs may be acknowledged and met through this objective and the ignorance gap between cultures will lessen with time.

Partnership and Advocacy Report

As I learned from Dr. Lorena Mancilla's presentation at the Annual ESL Conference this April, family engagement is not only crucial to the success and equity of English language learners (ELLs), but a lawful right for students and their families. Though there is not an absolute definition for the term "family engagement" but it generally aims towards a cohesive partnership between educators and students' families to support student learning and success. Regardless of how each student's family engages in their child's education, Mancilla emphasized that the relationship between educators and families must be ongoing, mutual, built on trust and respect, and focused on student learning and achievement.⁵⁶ These attributes have been defined by experts in this field and within the federal educational policy, but the definition remains broad enough so that it may be catered to various school communities.

One of the ways which I witnesses family engagement during my practicum was through an at-risk meeting for a 9th grade bilingual student, Marco*. This student spoke English and Spanish proficiently, but was failing all of his classes. With two weeks remaining in the quarter, the school vice principal initiated a meeting where his mother, who was a Spanish monolingual, and all of his teachers could determine a plan of action. In total, there were four content area teachers, the ESL instructor and I, the student, the student's mother, and a translator. This was not the first meeting that took place for this student this quarter, but the student was not initially present. Instead, the teachers and Marco's mother looked at his current grades and academic standing and determined that he was just highly unmotivated to do his schoolwork both in and outside of class. At this meeting, teachers and his mother were able to voice their concerns directly to Marco in the same room.

*Student's name has been changed in order to maintain confidentiality.

⁵⁶ Mancilla, L., Catro, M., Blair, A., Stravinski, R., Kemp, J., Cortada, J., & DeGracia, J. (2015) *Focus on Family Engagement*. Retrieved from: <https://www.wida.us/get.aspx?id=1861>

From my understanding, Marco's parents practiced family engagement nontraditionally, as his father worked out of town for long periods of time and his mother worked throughout the day. Getting everyone, with the exception of the father, was a large success. The group identified the student's need, which was completing various assignments to heighten his grades before the end of the quarter. If he didn't, he would have to attend summer school. It was difficult for his mother to help him with his homework and make sure that he is staying on top of it because of her work hours and her limited English abilities. Fortunately, educators were able to share the after school resources that Marco could attend in order to get his work done such as the literacy center and tutor center. His mother immediately created a schedule with him and his teachers and thanked all of his educators for looking out for her child's best interests.

Overall, it was heartwarming to see a breakthrough of barriers between educators and Marco's mother. Despite the language barrier, they were able to voice concerns and share their perspectives. The meeting provided a space for his mother's voice to be heard, which is extremely important because, many minority families feel intimidated or excluded from their child's education⁵⁷. Because Marco is a recent student at this school, this relationship has been barely built but will be ongoing. Something to note was the lack of discussion based on Marco's language performance, as this was repeatedly stressed during Mancilla's presentation. Because Marco's test scores are so high in all of his classes, the educators inferred that his lack of motivation was the cause of his low grades. The ESL instructor did not go over the child's history or their current level of English language proficiency but she did offer language services in the sense that she would daily consult with him regarding his workload.

⁵⁷ Baquedano-López, P., Alexander, R., & Hernandez, S. (2013). Equity Issues in Parental and Community Involvement in Schools: What Teacher Educators Need to Know. *Review of Research in Education*, 37, 149-182. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.libproxy.uwyo.edu/stable/24641960>

That being said, learning to inform students' language learning progress to parents is a key element in successful family engagement within the ELL community. Depending on the family's English proficiency, history and experiences in the United States and the education system, as well as the family's desires, several aspects must be thoroughly explained to ensure transparency. Without this transparency, a healthy relationship between the educators and the family will not exist and cultural discontinuity⁵⁸ between parties will occur.

⁵⁸ Au, K. H. (1992). The schooling of students of diverse backgrounds: An overview; An expanded definition of literacy. *In Literacy instruction in multicultural settings*, 1-34.

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