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A SOCIOCULTURAL APPROACH TO ESL FOR ADULT LEARNERS

by

Whitney Putnam

A portfolio submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

Master of Second Language Teaching

Approved:

Dr. Karin de Jonge-Kannan Major Professor	Dr. Maria-Luisa Spicer-Escalante Committee Member
Dr. Jim Rogers Committee Member	Dr. Bradford Hall Department Head

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, UT

2011

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ABSTRACT

A Sociocultural Approach to ESL for Adult Learners

by

Whitney Putnam, Master of Second Language Teaching

Utah State University, 2011

Major Professor: Dr. Karin de Jonge-Kannan
Department: Languages, Philosophy, and Speech Communications

The following portfolio is a collection of work submitted for the Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) program at Utah State University. Within this portfolio is the author's personal philosophy on effective language teaching written with a college-level ESL classroom in mind. Following the teaching philosophy are different artifacts and reflections, all related to the philosophy on teaching, but separate in topic. The three artifacts demonstrate the author's understanding of the role of language, culture, and literacy in a second language classroom. Also included in this portfolio is an annotated bibliography containing the scholarly works which support the writings here.

(139 pages)

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I would like to recognize several individuals for their support in this program. Thank you to my professors and members of my committee for their input and insight regarding my portfolio. Special thanks to Dr. Jim Rogers for the countless hours spent reviewing drafts and teaching me about being a language teacher. Yes, you were tough. But yes, I needed it. Thank you to Dr. Karin de Jonge-Kannan for welcoming and guiding me through this program. You work tirelessly to ensure that your students are successful and that has meant the world to me. Thank you to Dr. Maria-Luisa Spicer-Escalante for time in and out of class – you care so much about your students.

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT……...……iii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS……..…iv

INTRODUCTION……..……...1

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Apprenticeship of Observation……..……..3

Professional Environment……...……8

Personal Teaching Philosophy……...……9

ARTIFACTS AND REFLECTIONS

Language Strand Artifact……...31

Culture Strand Artifact……...52

Literacy Strand Artifact……..…74

ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION OF TEACHING VIDEO…….....90

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY…….…94

LOOKING FORWARD……125

REFERENCES……..127

INTRODUCTION

This portfolio is a compilation of my work in the Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) Program at Utah State University over the course of two years, 2009-2011. All of the work here began in MSLT classes and has been revised to create this coherent portfolio centered on my personal teaching philosophy. My teaching philosophy contains my thoughts and perspectives on what is effective language teaching. Specifically, I believe that effective language teaching involves a combination of effective and meaningful instruction, managing the dynamics of a language classroom, and creating a positive language learning experience for my students. All of the work included here is grounded in my practice of sociocultural teaching methods and my focus on each student as an individual. The artifacts included here expound on my beliefs and ideas regarding teaching a language sequence, ethnocentrism and language learning, and using authentic literature as an informal assessment of students' reading skills.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

APPRENTICESHIP OF OBSERVATION

I never met an international student in high school. When I began my undergraduate coursework at Utah State University, I was intrigued by the international student population that made up nearly 7% of the student body. Although that number is minimal compared to other higher education institutions in the country, it was monumental compared to my high school and hometown. My freshman and sophomore year I met many international students and took advantage of cultural events put on by the International Student Office. I had the desire to interact with more international students but I was not certain how to take advantage of opportunities to do so. I was unsure of what my peers would think of me and assumed that the international students did not share the same desire to converse with me. The cross-cultural contact, or lack thereof, which I experienced before my time abroad typifies to me the experience of many university students. Many university students, domestic and international, are eager to interact with one another but often don't know how to find the opportunity and are too unsure of peers' opinions. I mention this experience because I learned through it that many students are simply waiting for an opportunity for cross-cultural communication and will be willing to take it if it crosses their path. As a language teacher, I plan to provide international students and domestic students with occasions to interact and learn more about each others' cultures and personalities.

My minimal exposure to the international community in college began my interest in exploring options to study abroad. My sophomore year of college I participated in a volunteer program to teach English in a Chinese kindergarten for six months. The program was coordinated through a non-profit organization and the experience literally

changed my life. Before I left for China I was asked two questions more than any others - if I spoke Chinese and if I had any teaching experience. The answer to both of those questions was no. At the time I had no idea how important languages were to me, nor did I anticipate how much I would love sharing my native language with others.

I began learning Chinese out of my desire to communicate with those around me. I never realized how important communication was to me, but not being able to express myself to those I interacted with began to upset me. Tina li, my dear Chinese friend and teacher, began teaching our group weekly Chinese lessons during which we would cover one chapter in two hours. After two weeks of lessons I started studying the textbook on my own, covering five chapters a week and soaking up the language like a sponge. While my friends were watching countless episodes of American TV shows and longing for peanut butter, I was practicing my Chinese at the local market and going over my notes with the native Chinese teachers over dinner. I found myself fascinated by everything about Mandarin – the sentence structure, tones, characters, calligraphy, lack of cognates – and all I wanted to do was learn more. The fact that I could now actually communicate with other people, or at least show that I was making efforts to do so, was remarkably fulfilling to me and became my constant passion. I vividly remember that passion I felt and I intend to instill that same passion in my students. In my ESL classroom, students will be immersed in the target language and culture and I will provide them with every opportunity I can to foster their language learning.

From the beginning of my Mandarin journey, Tina grounded my language in basics and beginning vocabulary. One aspect of her teaching that I found helpful was that she did not over-complicate our lessons or assignments with more than our brain

could handle. These lessons were the first formal exposure to Chinese for every student in the class so it would have been very easy to be overwhelmed by the complicated transition from English to Mandarin. Tina didn't use the Chinese characters at all and began with simple vocabulary. When we started we couldn't comprehend complex rules of grammar or structure but our minds needed to connect with the words that we used most often – and that is the way Tina structured our lessons. She understood the fact that as adults we already had a label for things and our learning was simply a matter of re-labeling the world around us.

After returning to America and Utah State University, I continued my Chinese studies and began work on a minor in Mandarin. Through further subconscious observation of my first Chinese instructor at USU, I learned more about the role of language teachers. I learned from this first instructor, who was native Chinese, that there is a fine line between teachers helping and hindering the SLA of students. Directions for our assignments, tests, and readings were first given in Chinese and then she would always follow with the English translation. Our professor would repeat everything that she said in both Mandarin and English. Over time I found that I made no attempt to understand the Chinese she was speaking, but would wait until I heard English. This habit in her teaching only hindered my language skills and progression because I wasn't making any effort to understand through use of the target language. I view the role of the native language in the classroom as an enabler, however excessive use will turn the native language into a crutch.

In the USU Chinese courses I took, I was very aware that my language level was significantly lower than that of my classmates. After being frustrated with repeatedly low

test scores I was beginning to believe that I was unintelligent and doubted my abilities and potential. As my grade dropped, so did my passion for learning the language. My instructor recognized my frustration and acted on it. She pulled me aside after class and let me know that she knew I was a good student and believed in me. Hearing this encouragement from my instructor was extremely motivating and after I earned a high score on the next test she was sure to let me know how proud she was. I was relieved to know that my instructor did not view me as unintelligent and recognized the potential I had. Language students are all dealing with establishing their identity in the target language. Language instructors must show high levels of emotional awareness and emotional intelligence or else the psychological security of the student may suffer. I plan to work to recognize the potential of my students and understand the personal and emotional dynamics involved in learning a second or foreign language.

I learned another valuable lesson in language teaching on my first day as a graduate student. As a new graduate instructor in USU's Intensive English Language Institute, I attended the placement testing on the first day of the semester. The room was full of students that all had varying language levels – some spoke hardly any English and others did not need the IELI program at all. The supervising professor was giving instructions to the students on how to fill out their personal information on the test materials. The instructor referred to their last name as their, "family name," which made the instructions much more meaningful for the Asian students who may not be familiar with the western label of, "last name." To demonstrate the name directions the teacher used Michael Jackson as an example. The teacher wrote, "Jackson, Michael," on the board and all of the students immediately understood what they were to do – regardless

of their language level and ability to comprehend. This simple experience taught me so much about language teaching and opened my eyes to the simple things which can be done to improve comprehension and aid the learning of international students studying English. By recognizing the students' background and using an example that the students were all familiar with, this instructor served as a great example of effective language teaching and made me think, "Okay, I could do this."

Learning a second language has had a profound impact on me; the teachers I worked with are the people who made me want to pursue a future in language teaching. My goal as a teacher is to change the lives of my students the way that my life has been changed through learning a second language. Besides developing my interest, my informal apprenticeship of observation has also made me a better teacher. I am excited to take the lessons I have learned from my past and present teachers and apply them to my future career. I look forward to sharing this journey with my own students as I guide them through their discovery of the English language.

PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

My target professional environment is an English as a second or foreign language classroom for adults in the United States. I look forward to the myriad of cultures, opinions, native languages, and personalities I will be exposed to because of the cultural and linguistic diversity of my students. The drive and interest of international students intrigue me and I hope to be involved with an academic English language program on a University campus. The contents of my portfolio are written with this target classroom in mind.

One of the reasons I have chosen to direct my work towards college-age students is because that is when I began learning my second language. I feel that I can relate well to students in this situation and truly identify with their motivation, circumstance, and interests. I enjoy the life on a college campus and think that it naturally supplies countless opportunities for students' identity and linguistic development.

PERSONAL TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Learning a new language is empowering. This is the experience that I had as a language learner and this is the experience that I hope for my students to have. My personal teaching philosophy combines research in the field of second language acquisition and my thoughts on how to be a successful language teacher. I view language teaching as a combination of several aspects which I have organized in to three main themes: effective and meaningful instruction, managing a dynamic language classroom, and creating a positive language learning experience for my students.

Language students come to class to learn how to communicate "and at the same time, by communicating students learn the language" (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). I believe a mixture of the language teaching components I explain in this philosophy will create a language classroom that generates competent and effective communicators. Instruction is a key component of my role as a language teacher and it is my responsibility to facilitate my students' learning through my effective, meaningful, and thoughtful teaching. As the instructor I must provide my students with effective and meaningful instruction so they can accomplish their goal of learning the English language. Managing the dynamics of a language classroom includes balancing the countless components which have potential to interfere with second language acquisition. Being aware of and managing these factors will aid students' learning and help to manage potential distractions. I had a positive experience when I learned my second language and I want to assist in creating a similarly positive experience for my students while they are learning English. Each student learns and functions as an individual, but I believe that I have a large portion of control over the experience they have in my classroom.

Engaging my own personality and creativity will help to create a positive experience for my students and increase their excitement for language learning.

Effective and Meaningful Instruction

As a language instructor, my primary role within a language classroom is to teach. Because instruction is such a large part of my responsibility in teaching, I have chosen to elicit here different techniques and approaches which I consider to contribute to effective and meaningful language teaching. For my language teaching to be effective I must be accomplishing my objectives as a teacher. In general, my teaching objective is to support my students' language learning and facilitate their development as competent and confident communicators. Different activities and days in class will necessitate more specific objectives, but overall, my instruction is about the development of my students' language skills. I view meaningful instruction as tasks and activities which accomplish my teaching objectives while providing the students with as much real-world and in-context exposure as possible. Meaningful tasks will develop my students' language and communication skills simultaneously because I will be teaching them to "do" rather than teaching them only to "understand". By designing meaningful activities which are similar to real-world interaction my students will acquire the language in a more natural way, similar to the way we learn our first language (Krashen, 1981). Although the approaches and techniques mentioned here are not comprehensive, I believe they are all necessary for building competency in the target language. I also chose to highlight the following components because in my teaching I am very interested in and concerned for the individual student. I value what each student brings to my classroom and I also value

what they take away. I want their language learning to be as personalized as possible and I want to see them succeed.

All of the instructional characteristics mentioned here are contingent upon my understanding and confidence in a sociocultural teaching perspective. Among others, two major perspectives on learning exist in the world of second-language acquisition - cognitive and sociocultural. Cognitive theorists believe that language learning is a formal exchange of information in which instructors teach and students learn (Zuengler, 2006). The term, "sage on the stage" (King, 1993), creates a mental picture of a classroom based on cognitive theories. As previously mentioned, I do not consider myself to be the ultimate authority on the English language; neither do I expect my students to learn through one-directional input alone. An example of a cognitive language classroom would be a lecture in which the teacher does all the talking, rules are all explicitly taught, and any practice of independent output from the students is extremely structured. A sociocultural classroom features instructors who function as the, "guide on the side" (King, 1993), where instructors work alongside students while using real-world situations and applications as the class material. The Sociocultural Theory (SCT), in most recent research and used here, is not meant to refer to the work of Vygotsky alone. SCT refers to a broader framework developed by several researchers that involves the social and cultural factors impacting L2 learning and use (Lantolf, 2006). Sociocultural theorists view the participation in everyday linguistic and cultural activities as not just the product of learning, but as the process as well (Lantolf, 2006; Zuengler, 2006). In a sociocultural classroom the communication is occurring in many different directions, the students are speaking in the target language the majority of the time, and the instructor is working

alongside the students in an effort to personalize their learning. I view language teaching as a sociocultural process and I believe that everyday activities in the classroom will not only teach students the English language but also prepare them for life after my class. Tasks and teaching based on SCT are meaningful and will give my instruction the foundation needed to facilitate effective and meaningful student learning.

This concept of ongoing guidance and support provided by the expert to the learner was developed by Lev Vygotsky (1814/1986) and has since been interpreted and labeled in different ways including scaffolding (Bruner, 1985), guided participation (Golbeck, 2009), and cognitive apprenticeship (Collins, 2009). Through guided participation or scaffolding in language teaching, the instructor is meant to function as the, "guide on the side," (King, 1993) assisting the students through the aspects of the course content that are beyond their capacity to learn on their own. As the teacher, my role is to design activities and maintain a classroom which works within my students' Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), so they are continually learning and developing their language skills. ZPD refers to the gap between what students can do on their own and what students can do with the assistance of a more abled other. Teaching within that zone will provide results of progress and language development while avoiding frustration on the part of the students. When teaching or class content is outside of students' ZPD, their learning is no longer comfortable or plausible but is frustrating. Teaching on students' frustration level will not encourage them to stretch as a learner, it may cause students to not respond or not even try (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008). Keeping teaching within the students' ZPD will simultaneously stretch their current knowledge and skills and promote their language development (Echevarria, Vogt, &

Short, 2008; Vygotsky, 1814/1986). I will design my instruction with the SCT and ZPD in mind to continue stretching my students while keeping my classroom focused on the social and cultural factors of language learning.

Because every student within a classroom brings individual knowledge and experiences, background knowledge activities may invoke different responses from each student. As instructors plan activities to bring students' background knowledge forward, a myriad of student responses should be expected (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). The students may not produce exactly what the teacher was expecting but taking the students' backgrounds into consideration will help teachers to account for that difference (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008; Parkinson & Thomas, 2000). A background knowledge activity may draw out different emotions, cultural ties, religious opinions, and memories from each student. A personal example which illustrates this principle is when I was teaching English in China and planned a simply vocabulary activity for my students about their houses. I asked my students to draw a picture of a house and tell the class about what they had drawn. I had no instructional training so this low-level activity didn't contain any specific content-related objectives, but I was still surprised at what I found. I was expecting pictures of small houses with grass, trees, a mom, a dad, a few kids, a dog, and maybe a bike. Instead, as the students explained their drawings they pointed out apartment buildings in the middle of a city, one child with their parents, and their grandmothers. If culture-specific responses are expected, lessons will not go as planned and the instruction will seem tainted by the students' perspectives rather than enriched. The cultural dynamics of a language classroom will be discussed in-depth later

in my philosophy, but remembering my students' backgrounds when attempting to activate their prior knowledge is specific to my instructional practices.

Activating students' prior knowledge of a subject will prepare them for new and likely unfamiliar topics (Bamford & Day, 2004; Grabe, 2009; Shrum & Glissan, 2010; Spada & Lightbown, 2008). A new topic in an L2 classroom brings several new words and concepts along with it. If the students are not adequately prepared by the instructor it is likely they will not be ready to successfully accomplish the task. When beginning a new topic, an activity or demonstration to introduce the subject will give students an opportunity to develop a schema before their consciousness is clouded with new and unfamiliar words. More relevant to lower level language learners, but still advantageous for higher levels (McNamara & Kintsch, 1996), once the students know what channel to set their minds to – advertising, art, business, psychology, sports, etc. – they will develop a frame of reference and be able to learn in a more meaningful way (Grabe, 2009). Activating students' prior knowledge is especially important for adult learners. Adult learners most likely understand the topic of the class and already know the label for the term or concept in their native language. Because of the wealth of background that they have, my role as the language instructor is often to simply help them re-label the world around them in English (Pinker, 2007). Activating adult learners' prior knowledge will help them to make more connections to the discussions in class and make their learning more meaningful.

In addition to developing a frame of reference, I think that activating background knowledge is also important because of the opportunity it gives me to learn more about my students and allow them to learn more about themselves. Learning about and

remembering my students' background knowledge is important to me because I have a very sincere appreciation for all the experiences and knowledge they bring to my class. There is so much personality in a single ESL classroom and I enjoy the abundance of diversity inherent in my target professional environment. I will incorporate their background knowledge in my teaching because I think it only enriches the experience all the students have and helps them to make more connections in their learning.

No matter what topic is being covered in a language class, comprehensible input from the instructor will help the learning to be successful and the instruction to be effective. Comprehensible input (CI) includes simple tactics language teachers can develop which take a small amount of conscious effort but make a large difference in student learning (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). If instructors do not make a conscious effort to use comprehensible input in their instruction they will only make language learning more challenging than it may already be for some students. There are some ways native speaking teachers use their language that are ancillary to meaning but are habits developed over time that make their speech more natural. Although natural input is important, slightly altering or monitoring certain aspects of my speech will make a large difference in students' comprehension. Monitoring my rate of speech, using less complex vocabulary unless the content demands it, and enunciating clearly are all techniques which make teacher/native-speaker input easier to process (Echevarria, et. al, 2008). Other aspects of comprehensible input include avoiding meta-language in a classroom and providing sufficient wait-time for the students to process the input (Lee & VanPatten, 2003; VanPatten, 2000). All of these simple principles will make it easier for

the students to focus on the content rather than spend excess cognitive energy trying to decipher what is being said (Echevarria, et. al., 2008; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). Specifically in a sociocultural classroom, in which the focus is two-way communication and interaction, comprehensible input is extremely important. In terms of the students' ZPD, a focus on CI will ensure that the communication in the classroom does not cross into my students' frustration zone but stays within their zone of language development. I make a genuine effort to make my verbal and nonverbal communication as easy to understand as possible, while remaining authentic. These principles of comprehensible input make a positive difference in students' comprehension.

A combination of the aforementioned effective teaching characteristics is significant to my teaching. As previously mentioned, I do not consider this a comprehensive explanation of all good instructional practices, but without these components it is impossible to accomplish any of my teaching objectives. My role in the classroom is first and foremost to instruct my students in the English language. By grounding my instruction in sociocultural practices and incorporating principles such as scaffolding, students' background knowledge, and comprehensible input, I will achieve my teaching objectives and my students will be engaged in effective and meaningful learning.

Manage the dynamics of a language classroom

A language classroom has the potential to mean many different things for many different people. Language class can be a magical, intimidating, natural, forced, vulnerable, exciting, humbling, and motivational place. Because of the wide-range of possibilities in a language class, instructors should be prepared to either tap in to or work

through the spectrum of situations they will encounter. With the dynamics of my target classroom in mind, I have taken from the MSLT program some specific aspects of classroom management that will help me in my role as teacher. Although I view instructing as my primary role in the classroom, instruction cannot be effective without paying equal attention to the dynamics of the classroom and how they affect students' learning. In general, managing dynamics refers to taking care of the features of a classroom that may interfere with or distract from learning. There are countless distractions which occur in a classroom. Most classroom dynamics are observable in any context, but those mentioned here are especially prevalent in a language class. These aspects are not all-inclusive but they are especially important to me and I identify with many of them because of my own language learning experience. I learned effective classroom management strategies from some teachers and saw room for improvement when observing others. These classroom dynamics relate to my philosophy in the sense that paying attention to more than my students' scores is important to me. Because of my concern for the individual, it is important to me to remember the dynamics in a language class and the impact they will have on my students' learning. I do not want these factors to negatively affect my students' language development and this section of my philosophy offers my opinions on how to manage them successfully.

One prominent aspect of my target classroom is the fact that it is likely my students' first time in an unfamiliar country. Entering a new country, language, and culture is often accompanied by homesickness, culture shock, confusion, and frustration (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004). In my target classroom, a higher education English program, I will probably be one of the first Americans that my students meet after they

arrive in America. Even in an EFL classroom, I may also be one of the first Americans my students come in contact with. Because of this initial interaction during my students' introduction to American culture, I have the opportunity to be a person who they can come to trust, respect, and confide in if necessary. I think that good language teachers pay attention to the human side of their students – not just the student side. There is a fine line between the separation of classroom and personal relationships, and I understand that. However, I believe that many students need a cultural facilitator to lead them out of their culture-shock slump and into the stage where they can recover and thrive as a new or temporary member of the target culture (Hall, 2005). Culture shock and assimilation have the potential to hinder a student's acquisition of the language (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004) and this is one dynamic that I, as the teacher, will be in a position to affect. If students are left to navigate through the culture shock slump on their own it is likely they will seclude themselves from the target culture and slow their language progress. The danger of target culture seclusion and the importance of acculturation assistance is expanded in my culture artifact. I plan on being observant of my students and do what I can to appropriately guide them through their cultural adjustment. I am referring to culture shock specifically in an ESL context, however if I do end up teaching EFL abroad I believe that cultural awareness and representation plays a large role in the classroom. The role of cultural representation in an EFL context is further discussed in the following section because of the impact it has on the experience of my students.

In any L2 classroom, the importance of the psychological survival of the student cannot be underestimated. Again, this maybe a dynamic which occurs in all classrooms, but I think that it is more salient in a language learning environment. Negative

psychological circumstances can detract from learning and as a language teacher I should be aware and prepared to help my students how I can. I understand I do not have complete control over my students' lives, but there are some things that I can do as the teacher to make them feel comfortable in my classroom and comfortable with language learning. Homesickness and culture shock can account for a large part of students' motivation and is something an instructor of foreign students should be aware of. Making the classroom a safe place – physically and psychologically – will encourage learning and motivation for both students and instructors. When students feel secure in their classroom they will not only learn more but they will also learn better (Horowitz, 1979; Stevick, 1976). Speaking a foreign language takes a great amount of courage and humility and the students' sense of self should be remembered by language instructors in all aspects of the classroom. By being observant, planning active classes, and being a person that students can trust, instructors will be more adept at recognizing when a student is struggling and doing what they can to help. I think that for a language classroom to be successful instructors must exhibit high levels of emotional awareness and emotional intelligence (Hooks, 2010). I plan to use my innate emotional intelligence and awareness in my target classroom to manage the dynamic of my students' psychological survival.

Within any classroom management framework, some form of assessment and evaluation is necessary. I am including assessment in this section of my philosophy because I feel that assessment produces dynamics that often have a negative affective response in students. I also feel that assessment relates to classroom management because if it is not executed correctly, on the part of the instructor, it has the power to

detract from the language learning in major ways. The pressure associated with formal testing often produces emotional and passionate responses from students. These reactions to assessment may interfere with learning if not appropriately handled by the instructor (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). One example of an affective reaction to assessment which inhibited language learning occurred in my senior year of college when I was enrolled in an upper-division Chinese course. This class was to complete my minor in Mandarin but it also fulfilled a depth-education requirement for the University as a whole. Because of this double-credit-fulfillment there were students like me, foreign language students completing their minor, and native Chinese students who were admittedly there for the credit and "easy A". The class was intended to be taught on a foreign language student level but because of the unique situation with the students in her class the teacher was put in a difficult position. All of the American students demanded that the Chinese be given a more difficult test because of the language proficiency and cultural understanding. The Chinese students however maintained that they weren't given easier tests in all of their English speaking classes so it is only fair that the American students were given a test that was beyond their ability. First of all, the hostile dynamic in our classroom altered my opinion of our teacher and made me question her competence. My lack of confidence in my teacher combined with the heated arguments we had in class all distracted from my learning and caused our precious class time to be spent debating test format rather than meaningful language use. My learning was negatively affected because of poor planning in assessment. This experience taught me the importance of structured formal assessment and also ongoing non-formal assessment. If the teacher would have already had a decision about assessment in mind

then the entire situation could have been avoided. Also, if non-formal assessment had been implemented by my teacher, she would have had a better idea of our lack of progress. In addition, my instructor may also have improved the hostile communication in the class. I think that understanding assessment significantly relates to managing classroom dynamics because I experienced unprepared assessment inhibiting my language learning first-hand.

Because assessment is necessary in a language classroom, teachers should carefully plan and execute their methods of assessment before ever beginning class. Non-invasive assessment, also known as non-formal assessment, simply means continual observation, assessment, and evaluation of the students in forms other than a pen and paper test (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996; Parkinson & Thomas, 2000; Shrum & Glissan, 2010). In a sociocultural classroom there are many opportunities for informal assessment because of the focus on communication and interaction. Because students are intended to be communicating with one another and with the instructor for the majority of class time, instructors will have countless opportunities to observe students in this natural interaction. Continually assessing the students' learning and frustration levels will help to ensure that the students are continuing to learn within their ZPD and not being challenged beyond their capacity to still learn. Often formal testing is used as a threat or a way for instructors to demonstrate how little the students know. There is some use for formal assessment however, such as the ability to test a large number of students, requirement of documentation, and the chance for students to assess their own learning and language skills based off of scores received. When formal assessment is necessary, instructors should ensure that it is prepared, fair, valid, and reliable (O'Malley & Pierce,

1996). I know that there will be a place for formal assessment in my target classroom and I plan to handle it as professionally and fairly as possible. In my first week of teaching in the USU IELI program, I was asked to evaluate my students with a test to determine if they had been placed in the right level or not. Basically I was asked to administer a test that was higher than their level to prove to them and the department that they should stay in my class rather than move to the next level. The test added psychological stress to my students which was not helpful that early in the semester. Although I understand the benefits of formal assessment I think that there are other ways, such as a non-invasive assessment, that I could have evaluated my students and their language levels. The assessment I administered created a negative dynamic in my classroom and discouraged many of my students. I plan to use assessment, formal and informal, in ways that assess my students' learning but do not distract from the learning. By being prepared, continually assessing, and testing within my students' ZPD I believe my assessment practices will be effective.

The dynamics of a language classroom have potential to inhibit learning or interrupt the effective instruction that has been prepared. By being aware of these dynamics and thinking ahead as to how I plan to handle them, I believe that I will support my instruction and my students' learning rather than allowing outside forces to interfere. In my teaching I will practice awareness of culture shock, students' psychological security, and proper assessment practices. Managing these dynamics will quiet the static and allow my students to focus more on their language learning.

Create a positive language learning experience

The experience students have in a language class is largely a reflection of the teacher's style, learning perspective, personality, and knowledge. I agree that, "who you are is how you teach," (Kise, 2007) and communicative language teaching involves every aspect of a teacher's person – including personality. Academic or linguistic knowledge is not enough to be perceived as an effective language teacher by students. Students appreciate and respect content knowledge but they also attend to their teachers' physical appearance, psychological makeup, cultural qualities, and social capacity (Brosh, 1996; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). Like psychological security, I know that I am not in complete control of the experience my students have, their attitude accounts for a large portion of their reaction to class activities. However, I believe that I have the talents, creativity, and personality to help my students enjoy what they are doing and learning. Although I think enjoyment is important, it is not the main goal of my teaching. Language learning will of course always be kept in the foreground of my instruction but I believe that I can incorporate activities, authentic cultural examples, and personal insight that will only benefit the education of my students. It is important to me to enjoy my work and in order to enjoy being a language teacher I need to be myself. Incorporating my personality into my language teaching will only make me more effective as a teacher and more respected by my students. If I incorporate my personality in my teaching then I believe my students' language learning experience will remain positive and they will be more successful in their language acquisition (Schulz, 2007).

I am not becoming a teacher to scare my students, nor am I looking to be their best friend, but I do think that a healthy balance between these two extremes will foster a

positive student-teacher relationship that will promote successful learning. Interaction plays a significant role in my SCT-based teaching. The relationship with my students will have a large impact on our interaction and their learning. There are certain characteristics of teachers which are perceived as helpful in creating positive relationships with students. Attunement, relatedness, supportiveness, and gentle discipline are all considered to build a positive and mutually respectful relationship between teacher and student (Reeve, 2006). Besides possessing these characteristics, instructors also need to care about their students both personally and professionally. Natural care is an innate interest in others that takes no effort on the part of the instructor, however ethical care is interest in others that only exists out of obligation of a position or duty (Noddings, 1995a, 1995b). I am a naturally caring individual in any realm so for me, caring for my students and desiring a positive student-teacher relationship is instinctive. Because I care about my students as individuals I believe we will develop healthy relationships and that they will have a positive language learning experience while in my class. My desire for a positive relationship will never interfere with the effectiveness of my teaching or my focus on student education, but will build a relationship with my students that will provide them with a more positive experience.

Being a language teacher is an opportunity to create a world for my students that they may have never experienced before. Language teachers should make their classroom a place where students are learning more than just the words of the target language; because of the connection between language and culture the target culture should be given just as much attention and focus in the classroom. As previously discussed in the *dynamics* section of my philosophy, culture impacts both student

background knowledge and culture shock. I am including culture in this section of my philosophy in regards to introducing my students to the target culture of the classroom. The inextricable link between language and culture must be addressed in effective language teaching and included in the curriculum of the course (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004; Moran, 2001). Language teachers are also culture teachers and as such should incorporate the target culture in every aspect of their teaching possible – curriculum, discipline, assessment, etc. (Schulz, 2007). Teachers may think that they are teaching culture but are in fact only perpetuating stereotypes (Schulz, 2008). In an effort to better address cultural topics or issues, language instructors should educate themselves on not only "big C" culture – pop culture, food, and dress – but should be informed on "small c" culture as well – values, beliefs, and attitudes (Hall, 2005; Schulz, 2008). Culture should be integrated into language teaching as much as possible in an effort to help students to see the inextricable link between the two (Schulz, 2008). As an ESL or EFL teacher I will create a language learning environment that is not only conducive to language study but also representative of the target culture. Second language students need culture instruction to prepare them for the daily cultural encounters they will have outside of the classroom. Incorporating the target culture in my classroom will create a positive environment and language learning experience for my students. If they are interested in learning the language then I believe they are interested in learning the culture as well. Although I do not see myself as the ultimate representative of the American culture, I can act as a facilitator of culture and expose my students to as many cultural activities, perspectives, and values as possible.

Cultural instruction is important for foreign language students (EFL) as well because the language classroom may be as close as they ever get to the target culture. Students without adequate cultural education will never become fully proficient in the target language (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004) so it is the responsibility of the foreign language teacher to provide the students with as much exposure to the target culture as possible. Cultural education and the benefits of culture study combined with language study is a topic further developed in my culture artifact.

Part of the world that language teachers have the opportunity to create for their students is the development of students' target language identity. Identity achievement is a non-linguistic outcome of language learning that instructors should be aware of and be sensitive to (Gao, Zhao, Cheng, Zhou, 2007; Gardner, 1985). Initial stages of target language identity development can take some time and this delay in self-discovery can lead native speakers to perceive language learners as unintelligent rather than what they are – students who don't yet have the language to fully express themselves and their ideas (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). This process is difficult for any language student and takes a lot of patience and determination to work through. Language learners do not always recognize this stage on their own and will have a negative attitude and abandon language study before they work through this stage. This fragile time will have an effect on students' language learning experience and I plan on showing both emotional intelligence and awareness in regards to my students' identity. I want my students to find themselves and I want them to know themselves in English. Getting to know themselves in the target language will improve students' language learning experience and as the instructor I can plan activities that enable my students to

do so. When I was learning Chinese, once I acquired the language to describe myself, my values, my background, and my future, I came to know myself in Chinese and that was a very important part of my language learning experience. As a language teacher I plan to remember my students' identity and help them to develop the language they need to find themselves and their voice in the new world that English will open for them.

Exposing students to authentic literature from the target culture is an effective way to introduce them to authentic culture and authentic use of the language (Bamford & Day, 2004; Grabe, 2009; Parkinson & Thomas, 2000; Shrum & Glisan, 2010) which will inevitably add to the positive experience students have. Authentic literature in the language classroom is also useful as a non-formal assessment tool (Parkinson & Thomas, 2000), and can be defined as literature which was originally written for native speakers – not language learners (Shrum & Glisan, 2010). Authentic cultural examples are important in a sociocultural classroom because of the focus on real-life examples and the use of everyday language in classroom activities. Incorporating literature of all types (short-stories, novels, poems, drama, songs, news, etc.) will provide students with countless examples of authentic and everyday language use in a myriad of contexts. It is difficult and less-effective for me to continually use personal examples of language and culture in my life to illustrate different topics for my students. Giving my students textual examples will show them aspects of the language and culture that I cannot provide them on my own. When reading authentic texts, students enter someone else's world and they assume the subject's thoughts, experiences, and language. In my past teaching experience, students are eager for more authentic texts and enjoy hearing others' voices and using the language they learn. Using literature in my classroom will enhance my

students' language learning experience because their experience will be widened to include aspects of English and English-speaking cultures that they wouldn't become familiar with any other way. I cannot provide my students with the variety of experiences they will encounter in a text through classroom interaction alone. Authentic literature will introduce my students to a world of English speaking much broader than our classroom alone.

The correct selection of authentic literature is very important. To protect and encourage students' psychological security, teachers should find age-appropriate ways to teach the language basics to adult learners. Authentic texts should be selected that don't insult learners' intelligence and feedback can be given which recognizes adult learners' intellect rather than making them feel like a child (Parkinson & Thomas, 2000). The selection of appropriate and authentic materials for class use has a significant impact on students' sense-of-self and identity development.

Conclusion

My teaching philosophy, as presented here, incorporates SLA research and my thoughts on successful language teaching. There are countless language teaching approaches, techniques, and ideas to consider but these are the ones which I consider significantly beneficial to me and to my students. I have grounded my language teaching strategies in a sociocultural foundation and have included here the aspects of teaching which I believe focus on my individual students' and their learning. As an ESL teacher I intend to successfully develop my students' language skills by providing effective and meaningful instruction, managing the dynamics of a language classroom, and creating a positive language learning experience for my students. Certain topics from my

philosophy will be further developed in my artifacts and reflections to follow and the impact of this philosophy will be seen throughout my portfolio.

ARTIFACTS AND REFLECTIONS

LANGUAGE STRAND ARTIFACT

INTRODUCTION TO THE LANGUAGE ARTIFACT

FORM FOCUSED, COMPREHENSIBLE INSTRUCTION OF ABSTRACT TOPICS

In this artifact, I present a classroom sequence in terms of the separate activities, methods, and strategies used to provide students with effective and meaningful instruction. Lucid Dreaming is the topic of the chapter covered and the students being taught were college level students in an academic English program. This artifact was originally written for the Linguistic Analysis course and has since grown and benefitted from the influence of the MSLT courses I have taken. The influence of my teaching philosophy on this artifact can be seen in the use of student background knowledge, meaningful activities, comprehensible input, and negotiation of meaning. Because my target classroom is an on-campus English program, analyzing effective teaching strategies in this context was extremely beneficial to me.

LANGUAGE ARTIFACT:

FORM FOCUSED, COMPREHENSIBLE INSTRUCTION OF ABSTRACT TOPICS

Teaching a second language is similar to teaching someone to ride a bike. The teacher will usually begin by holding the bike, helping to stabilize the rider. As time goes on the teacher will move to only supporting the rider with one hand on the back of the seat while still running alongside. Eventually the teacher will be able to let go of the bike without the learner noticing and the rider will continue independently. Throughout the activities that teachers of English as a second language have planned for their students, the support provided should be given special consideration. Teachers must give learners the support they need until students are able to reach their goal and communicate on their own.

In this paper, I will describe some of my efforts to provide form-focused instruction and comprehensible input for my students. This will serve as an example of the guidance given to students by the instructor to comprehend a text and develop their language skills. The students in my class are low-intermediate English students with native languages including Arabic, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. The students' ages range from 18 to 45 and the class being taught is Reading, Level 2, a part of Utah State University's Intensive English Language Institute (IELI). Reading 2 is designed to focus on the comprehension of texts with an emphasis on distinguishing main ideas from supporting text, active reading, summarizing, and increasing student vocabulary. The over-arching goal of the course is for the students to improve their reading comprehension and vocabulary at a low-intermediate level of proficiency (USU IELI 1260 Course Description, 2010). Included in the instruction presented in this paper

are reading skills such as summarizing, inferring, developing a graphic organizer, vocabulary development, cross-referencing between two articles, and following discourse signaling.

As a graduate instructor, I taught the sequence outlined here in spring semester 2010. It is adapted from the text, "Quest 2: Reading and Writing" (Hartmann, 2007). This reading is included in the fifth chapter in the textbook and at the time we were six weeks away from the end of the semester. Skills covered in the class so far included (but are not limited to) summarizing main ideas, making connections between readings, using graphic organizers, and identifying definitions in a text. The goal of the section outlined here is different from the past chapters because it is the first abstract concept that a reading has been based on. Rather than simply finding the meanings of unknown terms within the text, like readings in the past, this reading required the students to make inferences to explain the concept and discover the meaning. My specific objective with this reading and the activities outlined here was to focus on activating students' background knowledge, inferring meaning of an abstract concept, and practicing effective pre-reading strategies. I am not teaching a class on dreaming; however, by using dreaming as an example the students will gain reading skills and comprehension which is also accomplishing the overall goal of the course. The topic selected for the purpose of this paper is *lucid dreaming* (Hartmann, 2007, p. 141) and the scaffolding of that concept, as well as the engineering of class activities, will follow.

As previously discussed in my teaching philosophy, my teaching is grounded in the Sociocultural Theory of language learning and I have built the activities of this sequence with that in mind. Sociocultural theorists believe that learning is an active

process requiring participation on the parts of both student and instructor. Participation in everyday activities is the process and product of language learning (Zuengler & Miller, 2006), and instructors are to focus on the social and cultural aspects of the language classroom. It should be understood that when relying on the sociocultural perspective the teacher and student are not the only individuals who will be teaching or learning and they won't necessarily be doing so in traditional roles – teacher teaching and student learning. I view learning as a multi-directional process and because of that I take great value in the lessons I can learn from my students as well as what they can learn from each other. As the "guide on the side" (King, 1993) I will follow the SCT and incorporate interaction and cooperation in my teaching which is seen in many of the activities below.

Building Background Knowledge

A new topic in an L2 classroom brings several new words and concepts along with it. In the case of the sequence presented here, the concept of lucid dreaming itself is likely to be a difficult one for the students to grasp - even if it was explained to the students in their native language. As mentioned in my personal teaching philosophy, activating students' background knowledge on a subject will prepare them for the tasks to come and set them up for more meaningful learning. As the instructor I anticipated the difficulty of understanding lucid dreaming, so I chose to scaffold this concept by leading up to it with an activity based on dreaming in general. Because learners process meaning and main content words in the input before anything else (VanPatten, 2000), it is important for learners to know where the words are coming from – which in this case is the topic of dreaming. Providing my students with a frame of reference will help them to

process the input more effectively and correctly (McNamara & Kintsch, 1996; Spada & Lightbown, 2008).

An activity or demonstration to introduce or preview a new topic will give students an opportunity to build a context for the learning before their consciousness is clouded with the new and unfamiliar words brought with the new subject (Grabe, 2009). There were certain vocabulary words regarding dreaming that I selected to focus on because they were salient in the chapter and understanding these words would greatly aid the students' comprehension. The following previewing activity was designed to highlight the words, "waking life" and "dream world", and activate each student's prior knowledge about dreams.

Previewing

To preview the chapter topic of dreaming, the class completed a task-based activity in dream interpretation. Students were to come to class having read an example of a dream from the textbook for homework (Hartmann, 2007, p. 156), and a list of the main components found in the dream. To aid in the development of this list I read the first five sentences of the dream in class when assigning the homework and we identified the main components together. With the help of the guided participation given the day before, the students were able to successfully finish reading the dream example and compile their own list of the main dream elements for homework. In class I asked the students for the components they identified and we combined the individual lists into a master list on the board. The list compiled included terms such as fox, work, wilderness,

mountains, husband, purse, angry, baby, and freedom - which were all found in the dream example.

Next, the master list remained on the board while the students were given a one-page dream dictionary (adapted from Dream Moods, 2009). Terms in the dream dictionary were defined to help dreamers assign meaning and interpret their own dreams. The instructions given to students were to first circle the terms in the dream dictionary which were listed on the board (main dream components) while working in pairs. After circling the terms students were instructed to follow my example on the board and build a graphic organizer with one side labeled, "waking life," and the other labeled, "dream world" as in Table 1. By converting the information into a graphic organizer the students are doing something with the input they are receiving while demonstrating comprehension and focus, one aspect of successful structured input (VanPatten, 2000).

Using the dream dictionary, the dream, and their own inferences, the students developed a hypothesis of what was occurring in the woman's waking life while she had the dream we read.

Table 1

Dream Interpretation

Waking Life	**Dream World**
Frustrated with herself	Anger
Feels helpless	Baby
Etc.	Etc.

Making meaningful connections

Following this previewing activity, I asked the students if they had ever had a dream that has truly meant something in their own waking life, possibly according to the dream dictionary we used in class. By relating our class topic, dreaming, to the students' personal lives they will be able to make more meaningful connections and also develop their personal lexicon for the topic we are beginning. While leading the class discussion I asked questions that mentioned their "waking life" and "dream world," and continued to establish the distinction between the two. The difference between these two terms will be helpful in the students' comprehending lucid dreaming and the distinction was made clear through the cross-referencing of texts, use of a graphic organizer, and personalization of the short class discussion.

Activating prior knowledge and previewing will not only prepare learners for the topic to be introduced, but will also make comprehension of the readings go smoother. After previewing a topic students will be able to pay more attention to the essential facts of the discourse rather than be distracted by words that they were not ready for (Grabe, 2009). If students are not adequately prepared by the instructor for the new class topic it is likely that they will fall behind, which will negatively affect their motivation for the class. By previewing the topic of dreaming I have prepared the students who have now developed their own lexicon and schema of the terms and concepts that they will encounter in the following chapter. This task-based previewing activity was learner-centered, provided student-to-student interaction, was meaningful, and contained a set of pre-determined steps the students were guided through (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). This task-based activity acted as scaffolding of the chapter content –

dreaming – and the purpose is to prepare the students for the other readings and activities to come.

Inferring Meaning

In order to make meaningful connections, students must infer meaning (VanPatten & Sanz, 1995). After the preview activity involving dream interpretation and the dream dictionary, the students' attention was directed to an in-text advertisement for a, "Home-Study Guide to Lucid Dreaming," (Hartmann, 2007, p. 140) as reprinted below. The advertisement includes a picture of a CD set with the price, benefits, and description of the product.

> Home-Study Guide to Lucid Dreaming. Would you like to remember your dreams, to experience the joy of flying in your nightly dreams? Can you imagine knowing when you are dreaming and becoming a "director" of your dreams? Learn to explore the world of your dreams! Become a lucid dreamer with this 3-month program. $59.00

Students were instructed to scan the article quickly and circle any "clues" which helped them to determine the genre of the piece. As a class we had previous activities regarding reading genres and had come across various examples of advertisements. This previous experience in the semester prepared the students to recognize this piece as an advertisement as well as the pieces of the ad which told them so. By examining the name, picture, and price it is obvious that this advertisement is for a Lucid Dreaming Home-Study Guide CD Set. After determining that this piece is an advertisement, using

the contextual and visual cues, students volunteered the details which they circled as well as what they thought this was an advertisement for. Again the students weren't just reading, but they were *doing something* with what they were reading which aids in comprehension (VanPatten, 2000). This activity helped the students to differentiate between genres, as well as make inferences and recognize this piece as an advertisement.

Pre-Reading Strategies

After determining the genre, the students were instructed to read the advertisement silently while thinking about the answer to the question, "From the ad, what can you guess that lucid dreaming is?" Also while reading, students were to underline the information that aided them in answering the question. The silent reading was a conscious decision on my part so the students were focusing on the meaning rather than being distracted by the out loud pronunciation of each word. When asked to read silently, students' minds can focus on the mental process required to recognize words rather than their pronunciation (Grabe, 2009). Also supporting silent reading is the fact that students' sense of self may be negatively affected by reading aloud due to their pronunciation insecurities (Stevick, 1976). The mental recognition of words does not involve the simple retrieval of a hard copy image stored in the brain, but is a momentary mental re-construction of auditory and visual representations related to the word (Damasio, 1994). Making this simultaneous but subconscious mental recognition and out loud pronunciation happen at the same time is an extremely difficult task for lower-level L2 learners who are still developing their pronunciation in the target language. In a class such as this where speaking is not the main focus I found it better suited for my students to read silently to themselves rather than read aloud with a partner.

Having a reading goal, such as the question I asked prior to reading the advertisement, is a pre-reading strategy which helps readers to prioritize the information they are processing by looking for something specific rather than just reading for general information. When instructors provide students with a specific reading goal, it will not only increase comprehension but also improve reading effectiveness (Grabe, 2009). Prior to reading the lucid dreaming CD advertisement, students were also instructed to underline any facts or words in the advertisement which help them to answer the question. Students were asked to read the selection and also do something with the information they were processing by underlining certain words and phrases. Having a specific reading goal in mind improves reading comprehension and helps students to focus on their reading goals (Ballman & Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; Grabe, 2009; VanPatten, 2000; VanPatten & Uludag, 2011)

Both the pre-reading question and the underlining directions were written on the board. Because the students heard and saw the instructions it is more likely that the directive will not be forgotten and will reach more students than if it was only provided orally. Every word uttered and action used by an instructor must be strategically crafted to satisfy the individual processing needs of the students in the classroom (Lee and VanPatten, 2003; VanPatten, 2000). Some students are more visually oriented; therefore writing instructions on the board and saying them out loud will help them to hear better and make the input more comprehensible (VanPatten, 2000). By using both types of input, visual and aural, I am more likely to satisfy more students' processing needs and my input will be more structured and comprehensible. Also aiding students' overall comprehension was monitoring my speech and ensuring that I was providing the students

with comprehensible input. Especially salient in less experienced teachers, excessive teacher-talk is not considered structured or comprehensible input for students (Lee & VanPatten, 2003; VanPatten, 2000). Teachers must learn how to interact with students at the right time and right place during the reading of a text so their talk helps students rather than detracts from the activity (Grabe, 2009). I believe that one way for beginning teachers to develop this is to practice and make conscious effort and thought regarding when and why they are speaking. The majority of class-time should be filled with student-talk and instructors should monitor themselves to ensure that is the case (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008).

After receiving instructions to read silently and underline certain aspects of the advertisement, students split into pairs. Each pair of students was to compare the features they underlined and answer the question of what lucid dreaming is by inferring from the advertisement. In every paired class activity, I try to assign the students based on their native language and English language abilities. Having students with the same native language, different than the target language, is a dynamic of a language learning classroom that instructors need to be prepared to manage. As explained in my personal teaching philosophy, this is one of many dynamics which have potential to negatively impact learning if not handled appropriately. Because two students with the same native language will often talk in their shared L1 rather than English, I will pair students who have different native languages so the communicative task is more likely to accomplish its goal: English communication and negotiation of meaning between students in the target language. This can be difficult in a class where the majority of students share the same language; however in this class there is enough variation to not pair students with

the same native tongue. Students' English language abilities will also be taken into consideration when pairing because as mentioned previously, learning doesn't require an expert but merely a more able individual. If one student in a pair is more able in the target language than another, they will teach the other while simultaneously working together to accomplish the task given.

When giving the pairs instructions, I specifically told them to use the pieces of the advertisement they underlined to infer a definition of lucid dreaming. In the CD set advertisement there is no definition of lucid dreaming given, only details of what you can do when lucid. Previously in the class we have discussed the meaning of *infer* and how to use discourse details to make inferences. Inferring the definition of lucid dreaming from the advertisement gave students practice at a concept which they have already learned but not yet utilized. Because making inferences is an important reading strategy (Grabe, 2009), it is a feature of reading which I emphasize in my teaching. Salience of certain features in instructor input is helpful with concepts like inferring, which are easy to explain but not very salient in oral language (Spada & Lightbown, 2008). This activity of making an inference from text helps in accomplishing the main goal of the class which is to develop the students' academic reading skills. Inferring a definition, of lucid dreaming in this case, is a reading skill which the students will use in the future, no matter what the topic or genre of the reading.

Negotiation of Meaning

Inferring meaning of a text involves the students' negotiation of meaning (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). In this lesson, pairs worked together to develop their definition of

lucid dreaming and shared their definitions with the class. I compiled a list on the board of the definition pieces and together we determined which of the aspects were the main components of lucid dreaming. After collectively teasing out the definition I wrote our class definition on the board which read, "Lucid Dreaming: Remembering, knowing, and controlling your dreams." Lucid dreaming is a difficult concept to grasp because lucid is a very abstract word. Throughout this activity of inferring the definition from the advertisement, some of the students were using their electronic dictionaries to find a definition for the word *lucid*. *Lucid* is a complex term which does not have a dictionary definition that fits its meaning in the context of *lucid dreaming*, so their attempts to search for the definition did not help their comprehension. Moore (2005) explains that pragmatics is a way of explaining language meaning in context rather than in the plain sense of the words or dictionary definition. We constructed the definition as a class by using context clues and inferences because I knew the students' dictionary attempts would not succeed. This activity may have helped the students to find and understand the definition of *lucid*, but they will also be more adept at constructing definitions in the future because of this experience.

Within our class definition of lucid dreaming– remembering, knowing, and controlling your dreams – *controlling* is the aspect which sets lucid dreams apart from regular nightly dreams. Again to scaffold the concept of lucid dreaming I wanted the students to be able to determine which part of our definition is the most key, rather than just tell them. To help students make the form and function connection (Massi, 2001) between the word *controlling* and what it means in this context, I asked the students which of the lucid dreaming aspects are present in regular nightly dreams as well.

Remembering and knowing your nightly dreams as they are happening are both standard, but to control your dreams is unique for lucid dreaming. Because of the students' already activated background knowledge regarding dreams I knew that they would be able to answer my question regarding controlling dreams, and making this distinction helped to clarify the concept of lucid dreaming.

At this point the students have looked at lucid dreaming on sentence and word levels and will next move to the chapter reading and learn about lucid dreaming on a paragraph level (Massi, 2001; VanPatten, 2000). Presenting the information in this bottom-up approach is just one method to aid the students input processing and negotiation of meaning (Lee & Vanpatten, 2003). In this class they developed their own idea of lucid dreaming before ever reading a definition, and with the skills they learned they will be able to do the same with any challenging discourse or concept they meet in their reading future.

Previewing the Text

To introduce the chapter reading titled, "Lucid Dreaming" (Hartmann, 2007, p. 141), I chose to specifically highlight the structure and difficult words students will encounter in the text. Previewing a reading with the students will help them to anticipate features of the reading they will come across such as the structure and organization (Chen & Graves, 1995; Grabe, 2009). One specific strategy which instructors can use to preview a text is to question it with the class. Questioning the text includes asking what the text is about, what the general characteristics are, who the text is addressed to, what the main ideas are, and how the text ends (Massi, 2001). After this activity the students

were ready to look at the reading more critically while being aware of the topic, audience, and purpose of the text. As a class, we also noticed discourse signaling aspects present in the reading such as the title, subtitles, and sections of the reading – history and how-to.

It is hard to say which words are difficult for students because a certain word could be difficult for some and not for others. Taking this view of difficult words into account, there were a select few words that I chose to draw attention to as part of our text preview, such as recall, precede, and conscious. Each of these words played an important role in the reading so I wanted to ensure the students' comprehension of them. Previously in the semester we spent some time studying prefixes so I recycled that topic to explain *recall* and *precede*, which helped to connect course content for the students. Previewing these few difficult words made the students begin at a word level before moving to connected discourse, again working from the bottom-up. I chose to work from the bottom-up for the concept of lucid dreaming because of the difficulty I anticipated the students would have. By starting with vocabulary and definitions the students had a foundation of understanding to work from once they began the reading.

Pre-Reading Strategy

Another activity chosen to help the students work on the "Lucid Dreaming" reading from the bottom-up, and to further prepare them for the text, was to answer the question, "what can a dreamer do in lucid dreaming?" Students were instructed to read lines 15-21, transcribed below, and circle any verbs they came across (because the answers to the question, "do," would obviously be verbs.)

> When you become lucid you can **do** anything in your dream. You can **fly** anywhere you **wish**,…**converse** with friends long dead or people unknown to you; you can **see** any place in the world you **choose**, **experience** all levels of positive emotions, **receive** answers to questions…**observe** creative products, and, in general, **use** the full resources of the material stored in your mind. *You can **learn** to become conscious during your dreams.*

After giving the students adequate processing and work time we pointed out all of the verbs as a class. After this activity my goal was that the students would gain even more word-level knowledge regarding the definition of lucid dreaming. None of the verbs that the students circled were necessarily mentioned in our class definition, but they all further developed the concept that dreamers can control their dreams and do anything they wish – even any of the verbs mentioned.

Reading Goal

As part of the homework to be completed by the students before our next class, the students were to read, "Lucid Dreaming," (Hartmann, 2007, p. 141) while asking the question, "How can a person become a lucid dreamer?" Students were instructed to highlight any part of the reading which helped them to answer this question. With this specific reading goal in mind, the students will process with a purpose while searching for the answer, instead of applying their natural approach of reading for general information (Grabe, 2009; VanPatten 2000). This reading question will be answered in the how-to section of the text and a follow-up activity to be carried out the next day.

To scaffold the students' successful answering of the question, we brainstormed as a class words that may answer the question, "how," and where in the text they would find the answer. Because the reading section titled, "Techniques for Developing Lucidity," was already pointed out, the students easily recognized that the answer to the reading question will be found in that section and that an explanation of a technique would answer *how* in this context.

Perspective

A second homework assignment was given which required the students to look at the author's point-of-view. Perspective and point-of-view has been covered previously in our class, but the students have not yet been asked to use the concept as specifically as they were in this assignment. Students were to circle any words or statements in the reading which let them know if the author thought that lucid dreaming was a good or bad idea. This activity involving the interactivity, or communication, between the writer and reader (Massi, 2001) helped students to be aware of the impact the author's opinion can have on the opinion of the reader. Students returned to class the next day with words such as, "reward," "special," and, "good," circled and recognized as having positive connotation. When reviewing the assignment as a class the next day, I asked the students what types of texts could be strongly affected by the author's point-of-view. Involving texts such as newspapers, magazines, and advertisements, our discussion will help students to recognize the influence that authors can have while noticing the positive, negative, or neutral words used.

Form/Function Connection

The last portion of the homework assigned was to circle all of the ellipses in the reading. As a form and function description of ellipses I illustrated their function in text, which is to replace text or information which has been removed from an exact quote. Rather than attempting to explain ellipses with words and meta-language in a hard rule that would only confuse the students, I used an example of the form in communicative context that the students could follow (Spada & Lightbown, 2008). The ellipses example I used was a sentence from a previous reading that I knew the students would recognize. I removed a piece of the sentence and replaced it with ellipses. Recycling the text from an earlier chapter made it easier for the students to follow the point– the function of ellipses – rather than be distracted by words that they are unfamiliar with. Recognizing and following discourse markers like ellipses will help readers to recognize text cohesion while reading, as well as better follow the structure of the text (Grabe, 2009; Massi, 2001).

The three parts of the homework were, like the assignment directions given earlier, both written and spoken in an effort to reach both aural and visual learners (VanPatten, 2000). When giving homework or a test in a class, instructors should use course relevant material rather than work to simply fill their time (Folse, 2004). All of the homework given was a direct reflection of my goal as their reading teacher and of the course goal, which is to develop the students' academic reading skills. For this topic the homework was relevant because my personal teaching goal is to scaffold the students' learning of lucid dreaming by task-based and form-focused instruction.

Post-Reading Follow-Up

After completing the homework, including reading the text, the students returned with the text support of the question, “How can a person become a lucid dreamer,” highlighted in their books as instructed. Within the, “Techniques for Developing Lucidity,” section of the reading the MILD (Mnemonic Induction of Lucid Dreams) technique for becoming a lucid dreamer is explained. The students recognized the technique as steps for becoming a lucid dreamer, and were instructed to organize the steps of the MILD technique into a process-sequence organizer while working in groups of three. I chose this group size because their answers are all coming from the same place and they all should be the same. Although their answers should be the same, working in groups will give students an opportunity to work together in the negotiation of meaning of the text they are working with (Foster, 1998).

Graphic Organizer

When teaching reading skills a graphic organizer greatly supports the students’ understanding of the text and is thus a strategy for increasing reading comprehension (Grabe, 2009). I drew an example on the board of what the students’ process-sequence organizer might look like, which included four blank spaces with arrows between them pointing to the next blank. Once their organizers were completed, the students filled in my example on the board. Taking the information from the text to a graphic organizer was just one more step I chose to use to enhance the students’ understanding of lucid dreaming. Seeing the information presented in a process will likely aid students’ understanding of the fact that lucid dreaming is something that can be practiced and that

there are steps to be followed if someone wanted to do so. Recognizing steps or directions in a reading is a feature of discourse awareness that this activity has helped my students to develop.

In the sequence presented here, the students' capacities to process instruction (VanPatten, 2000), my strategies in providing comprehensible and structured input (Lee & VanPatten, 2003; VanPatten, 2000), and several form-focused and task-based learning activities (Spada & Lightbown, 2008), were all taken into account to accomplish the goal of the class – to develop students' academic reading abilities. Lucid dreaming was the topic of the chapter, and although abstract, the students developed more than just an understanding of their dreams. After completing the activities designed and outlined here, the students in my Reading: Level 2 course should not only have an understanding of lucid dreaming, but also a working knowledge of strategies and processes they can use to tackle difficult concepts they will come across in their future reading.

CULTURE STRAND ARTIFACT

INTRODUCTION TO THE CULTURE ARTIFACT

ETHNOCENTRISM AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

There is an inherent and undisputed link between language and culture which instructors must be prepared to address in their classrooms. In the following artifact I discuss the role of ethnocentrism in language learning and the process of language learners recognizing their own ethnocentrism. This artifact is related to my teaching philosophy because of its focus on the individual learner's cultural journey. I also chose to examine this process because it is most similar to the process that I have gone through in my own language learning. This artifact is specifically meaningful to me in my professional career because of my desire to be aware of my students' psychological, emotional, and personal well-being.

CULTURE ARTIFACT:

ETHNOCENTRISM AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Education is a progressive discovery of our ignorance.

Will Durant (1885-1981) U.S. author and historian.

A number of obvious differences can be found between Chinese and American culture. Among them are the various expectations regarding politeness, or what is or isn't considered courteous. In the USA, the culture expects several expressions of politeness in everyday exchanges. Most requests, interruptions, or comments made by Americans are prefaced with phrases such as, "excuse me," "pardon me," and, "if you don't mind," before proceeding. This use of language is a direct connection to the American culture and the views on politeness held by Americans. In the USA, people assume that as long as they say, "excuse me," or some other form of courtesy they are allowed to behave or state whatever they want. In the Chinese culture there are very few introductory phrases such as these. Courtesy phrases, such as "bu hao yi si (no harm intended)," or "qing wen (excuse me)," exist but are usually viewed as weak or passive rather than polite. In Chinese culture, statements and questions are expressed more directly than in American culture, and politeness in China is shown in actions rather than words. This lack of courtesy statements in the Chinese language may strike an American as inconsiderate or unpolished at first, but in reality it is simply a linguistic difference that can lead to an intercultural misjudgment or misinterpretation. On the other hand, Chinese may initially consider Americans insincere and over-apologetic. Both cultures have

potential to be led to ethnocentric conclusions simply by underestimating the link between language and culture.

The previous examples concern a lack of intercultural understanding because of differences in language. Knowledge of a second or foreign language plays a large role in learners' intercultural misunderstandings and levels of ethnocentrism. When the connection between language and culture is fully appreciated, language students will find their eyes and minds opened to a new world of perspectives, behavior, and culture. The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis explains that the words we use shape and are shaped by our worldviews, thought processes, and lifestyles (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004; Hall, 2005); therefore, the connection between language and culture should not be underestimated. In this paper, the ability to recognize ethnocentrism by learning a second language will be examined through the lens of the Cultural Knowings Framework (Moran, 2001). By knowing about a different culture, knowing how, knowing why, and knowing oneself, language students will develop self and cultural awareness in intercultural exchanges (interaction with native speakers of their target language). This self-awareness and cultural intelligence will enable language students to examine their positionality in their culture and the world as a whole. By learning a second or foreign language, students gain a new lens through which they will be able to recognize their own ethnocentrism and form a personal response to what they see.

High levels of ethnocentrism may impact language students' ability or opportunity to learn the second or foreign language. High levels of culture shock or resistance to acculturation can drive language learners into states of cultural annoyance or even rejection. Viewing the target culture in such a negative light will heighten personal

levels of ethnocentrism and cause the learner to avoid the culture, and consequently the language, at all costs (Hall, 2005). This negative attitude will affect learners' opportunities for target culture interaction which is key in language acquisition. Ethnocentrism also affects language learners' opinion of the target culture because they are constantly comparing it to their native language and culture – which they tend to view as superior. This ethnocentric attitude will cause language learners to not appreciate or respect the target culture which will result in less language progression and acquisition. Language learners should be concerned with monitoring their levels of ethnocentrism because of the impact it will have on their target language development. Language instructors should also be conscious of assessing the cultural learning occurring in their classroom (Schulz, 2007). Working to understand the target culture, through support such as the Cultural Knowings Framework, will help learners to see value in the target culture which will increase both opportunities and abilities to acquire the language.

Ethnocentrism, a nearly universal occurrence, is defined by people viewing their own culture as superior and the one by which all other cultures are measured (Banks, 1993; Howard, 2006). Also associated with ethnocentrism are discriminatory attitudes and behaviors that are either consciously or unconsciously directed toward other cultures (Hammond & Axelrod, 2006). Resulting in a strong level of in-group favoritism, ethnocentrism has the potential for a number of negative consequences in intercultural communication. The source of ethnocentrism is a long-debated topic, but some believe that to be ethnocentric is the natural state for human beings and that "our instinctive reaction is to assume that our culture, our way of life, is the right one, and that all others are not" (Moran, 2001, p. 7). Some cultural researchers believe that ethnocentrism

naturally occurs throughout the world, and that the history of our world, including wars, conquests, and many other cross-cultural clashes, can all be attributed to a high level of ethnocentrism (Bennett, 1993). Because ethnocentrism is considered natural, the acceptance of cultural differences is the exception. Though not natural, it is possible for individuals to overcome these ingrained cultural perspectives and to develop intercultural sensitivity – although doing so requires conscious learning and practice (Bennett, 1993).

Because of the inter-connected nature of language and culture, language learners are bound to learn about the culture of their target language. It is an individual decision as to whether students come to value the target culture of not, but simply learning about another culture will give students that opportunity to decide. As they learn to communicate, language learners are enabled to build relationships, accomplish tasks in the new language, and understand a new set of cultural rules (Moran, 2001). These experiences will bring an awareness of the learners' own level of ethnocentrism and an opportunity for self-evaluation. Language teachers can encourage this self-reflection and development through their classroom activities and interaction with the students. A language teacher is a culture teacher so it is the instructors' responsibility to ensure that students are getting the opportunities necessary to examine their positionality and determine the way they view their culture and those around them (Banks, 1993). Completely overcoming ethnocentrism is unlikely; most people tend to always have a level of in-group favoritism in certain aspects. However, recognizing ethnocentrism and developing self-awareness will lead to greater cultural understanding and will decrease judgments made against other cultures.

Of course, a language learner's level of interaction with the target culture will determine their level of cultural understanding. Students cannot expect to truly value or understand a culture by only studying the language in a classroom, while having no specific or natural interaction with the target culture. For example, comparing Chinese and American courtesy expressions, learning Chinese would only serve as a starting point for learners' cultural journeys. Studying Chinese alone would not provide the cultural insight explained in the example because students would still be examining the discourse through their native English speaking lens. Students' language learning must be combined with intercultural interaction. After learning the language and viewing the courtesy exchanges firsthand (or the perceived lack thereof), students will be educated on the linguistic difference between English and Chinese. By developing this linguistic awareness, cultural understanding will grow and the difference between the two cultures will be viewed as more than right and wrong.

Roberta Kucer, a high school teacher of Spanish and English, said that she teaches languages because, "when you have a sense of the humanity of other people, it's very hard to hurt them" (Moran, 2001, p. 7). An ignorant opinion or lack of cultural education is no excuse for hurting people from other cultures whether it is by thoughts, words, or behavior. By learning a language, students will no longer be culturally ignorant – regarding the culture of the language spoken – because the language will provide them with the window that they need to find value and worth in the target culture rather than make uneducated and stereotypical judgments. Learning a second language will help students to recognize the "humanity" in other cultures.

Language and culture learning occurs in a number of contexts characterized by various factors: foreign or second language, at home, school, or work, number of learners, curriculum, and learning objectives. Each of these will have an impact on the culture taught and learned. Because culture learning through language is a process unique to every learner, "one of the primary tasks for the teacher is to help learners express and respond to their [individual] cultural learning experiences" (Moran, 2001, p. 13). Regardless of how the relationship between language and culture is represented, recent opinions in SLA have held culture as a central component of language learning (O'Brien, 2008). Language teachers should be educated on the process of culture learning and implement an instructional plan in their classroom which consistently articulates and pursues both language and culture learning objectives.

Whether learners' initial contact with the target culture is through learning materials in a foreign language environment or through direct involvement with the people, instructors can use a wide variety of culture teaching approaches. The approach I have chosen to examine is the Cultural Knowings Framework. I chose this model because I see how it reflects the culture learning of myself and my international students and friends in the stages. The four stages – knowing about, knowing how, knowing why, and knowing oneself –guide learners through an experiential culture learning cycle. By following the framework, learners will acquire cultural information, develop cultural behaviors, discover cultural explanations, and articulate personal responses regarding their intercultural relations with the culture to which their target language belongs (Moran, 2001). The stages do not necessarily need to occur in this particular order, which is why the framework can also be thought of as a cycle depending on where

learners choose to begin or end. This framework fully integrates culture into the language learning process and by doing so will thus help students become aware of their own level of ethnocentrism. Following the Cultural Knowings Framework will not only guide learners to an understanding of the target culture, but will also aid them in any future cross-cultural interaction – whether language is involved or not.

Knowing About

"Knowing about" another culture involves education and awareness of the facts, data, practices, and perspectives belonging to the target culture. According to the framework the gathering of cultural information may require some personal study of the definitions of culture terms, culture theories, and culture concepts. The knowledge gained in this stage of the cultural experience could be either culture general or culture specific (Moran, 2001). Knowing about a culture could happen as a step that precedes immersion in the culture and does not necessarily require language skills – unlike the other steps of the Cultural Knowings Framework, in which language is more necessary. This step may or may not be carried out in the target language. Either way, the focus here is the gathering of cultural knowledge.

Intercultural communication courses and trainings are offered throughout the world as a means to educate students about the nature and influence of culture. These classes are not taught for language students only, but are for those interested in being effective intercultural communicators. At Utah State University, several courses are offered on this topic, spanning across disciplines. "Intercultural Communication," for communication majors, "Cross-cultural Perspectives," for intensive English students,

"International Management," for business majors and "Teaching Culture," which is a course for students in the Master of Second Language Teaching program, are only four examples of USU courses with the goal of educating students about culture. The study of intercultural communication includes acquainting students with their own culture as well as culture in general. Topics such as proxemics, chronemics, rituals, acculturation, and culture shock are all covered in an effort to enable students to recognize them in other cultures and in their own. A topic also likely to be covered in this stage of Knowing About is ethnocentrism. Because ethnocentrism is a natural state of mind, some explicit instruction may be necessary in students' acknowledgement of it. Learning about ethnocentrism in this stage will prepare learners to recognize it in the stages to come. Personally, my preferred method to learn of the cultures around me is to learn about myself and the way I view the world. Learners of culture have a tendency to compartmentalize to such a point that in an effort to understand they are simply perpetuating more stereotypes than they had to begin with. I think that learners should take great care in this stage because of the potential for overgeneralization; extending this stage to more than the tourist sites is very important.

Knowing about culture does not necessarily require language study, but the level of understanding will be much greater if students learn the language along with the culture, given the intertwined nature of the two. Languages have words for certain types of behavior and customs which are inherent to the target culture. Individuals who study Mandarin will have a greater acquaintance with the concept of saving face because of the terms they will learn in Chinese that don't exist in English. Culture-general learning, such as an intercultural communication course, would teach students about this term but

the language study will provide students the native-like perspective needed to understand topics so different from their own culture. Culture-general learning combined with the culture-specific learning in the language classroom will provide students with greater insight and understanding of many cultural concepts.

When language students are learning cultural information, the role of the instructor is to act as a source, resource, arbiter, or elicitor on the subject (Moran, 2001). As a source, instructors incorporate their own experiences regarding culture or the target culture through classroom activities. An instructor acts as a resource by pointing students to other places to find cultural information. As arbiters, instructors evaluate learners' comprehension of the information as well as monitor the information that the students are studying. There is a distinct line between fact and inference in culture studying, and instructors should constantly monitor to ensure that the students are not learning over-generalized stereotypes. As elicitors, instructors encourage discussion within the class regarding the subject (Moran, 2001). As the instructor I can incorporate activities about culture in my teaching which will elicit discussions and cultural education.

"Knowing about" a culture reduces ethnocentrism because it provides learners with a factual explanation of cultural behaviors, customs, or perspectives rather than letting the learner rely on stereotypes. While L2 proficiency is not necessary in this step of the cycle, it does provide culture learners with additional insight. International students may be alarmed by North American standards for space and distance when they first arrive in the country – depending of course on their native culture. The misunderstanding which may occur could include an ethnocentric assumption that Americans do not like them or that Americans are distant and insincere. However if

students gained a culture-general education and knew the concept of proxemics and cultural expectations, they would recognize their own culture's standards of space as simply contrasting with the USA standards. Ethnocentric judgments and misunderstandings can be avoided by students being educated on cultural information on a general level. With knowledge of culture-general topics, learners are more likely to understand rather than assume, as well as learn more about their own culture through the process.

Knowing How

The next step in the Cultural Knowings Framework is "knowing how" which regards how to behave, act, speak, stand, look, and do things in the everyday life in the target culture (Moran, 2001). These cultural practices are invaluable for language students learning to be successful communicators. Not "knowing how" in a different culture has potential to lead to offense or lack of respect between cross-cultural communicators. Knowing how to interact in the target language and culture is also a cornerstone of the SCT approach. Every culture has its own do's and don'ts, and being educated on them will help students of culture and language.

An example of the importance of knowing how to behave in the target culture is the significance of the sole of people's feet in the Middle East and South Asia. Former member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Bill Richardson, is known around the political community as an inventive and successful cross-cultural negotiator. In the 1990's, Richardson negotiated the release of many detained Americans including two American contractors held by Saddam Hussein in Iraq. Before the release of the

contractors, a lack of "knowing how" almost ended the negotiations. When Richardson met with Saddam Hussein he was planning on employing his typically laid back, personable, and comfortable style with the Iraqi leader. At the beginning of their conversation Richardson leaned back in his chair and crossed his foot over his knee, which led to Hussein immediately rising without a single comment and abruptly leaving the room. Richardson, very confused, spoke with Hussein's men who explained that showing the sole of one's foot to another person while conversing is an extremely disrespectful and demeaning action throughout most of the Middle East (Hall, 2005). Richardson did not speak Arabic, but this cross-cultural misunderstanding occurred because he did not "know how" – not because of his language incompetency. Richardson is not the only person at fault in this scenario, Hussein's lack of cultural understanding and ethnocentric attitude led him to react the way he did. Hussein could have had some respect for the fact that not everyone has the same perception of the world as he did, but because this event occurred in Iraq, Richardson provides an example of not "knowing how" regarding the target culture.

The potential for offense or misunderstanding is reason enough to study cultural practices, but employing cultural practices in language study will heighten students' level and rate of language acquisition. The theory of Linguistic Relativity, also known as the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, conveys the notion that language shapes a person's perception of the world (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004; Slobin, 2003). Linguistic relativity is one more reason that students of culture should be students of language as well. By learning a language, students learn the words that another culture uses to describe and categorize the world. After becoming familiar with both the language and cultural perceptions of

the target culture, students will begin to understand why they behave, act, talk, stand, and do things the way they do. Some of these connections will be made through communication and interaction with native members of the culture, while other links will occur as implicit observations on the part of the learner. The concept involving the sole of one's feet does not have a word in English, Richardson's native language, but is known in Arabic as, "استهزاء, (estephza)." Estephza can be directly translated into English as, "mock," or, "slam," but the concept and what it represents is lost in translation. The full value of the word can only be found within the Arabic language and culture where it is a very common term. It is likely that every Arabic speaker is familiar with this term because of the attention the culture places on the behavior. In the previous example, if Richardson had studied Arabic he most likely would have learned the word describing his offensive action. According to the Theory of Linguistic Relativity, if he knew the language he would have been aware of the Arab perception of the world and had an understanding of their view of mockery and disrespect. Learning a language teaches more than just words, because it provides students with a deeper cultural understanding than they could have had without it.

Learning how to express oneself in another language and culture requires instructors who act as both a model and a coach. As a model, instructors show the students certain natural behaviors themselves or provide resources with examples of how learners can and should express themselves – movies, music, TV, conversation aids, etc. While modeling different cultural behaviors, instructors should guide or correct students as they are involved in communication (Moran, 2001). Because "knowing how" requires a great deal of practice, instructors should provide students with verbal and non-verbal

opportunities to express themselves in the target language and culture. One approach instructors could employ in their language classroom is using drama and role plays as a forum for students to practice natural cultural behaviors. Instructors could use drama, role-plays, and field experiences to encourage speech and interaction similar to the target culture (Moran, 2001). Drama is a valuable asset in learning how to behave in the target language and culture because in drama, "one needs to use the body not only to produce appropriate language but also to express emotion and ideas through gesture, posture, and facial expression" (Wagener, 2002). Students could practice both verbal and non-verbal aspects of the target language through drama activities. Instructors should take advantage of the low-stakes interaction and practice which drama provides the students.

"Knowing how" will help students recognize ethnocentrism because of the deeper understanding they will have of their own cultural practices as well as those of the target culture. By learning another culture's language and practices, students will have an explanation of why people from other cultures behave the way they do. This stage will not only act as a window to the target culture but also as a mirror in which students can view their own culture. The view provided by this stage of the cultural experience will provide an explanation for behavior rather than allowing students to rely on stereotypes and ethnocentric judgments.

Knowing Why

The third stage in the Cultural Knowings Framework is "knowing why." This stage is the most "intellectually demanding" in the cultural experience because it requires learners to make sense of the cultural perspectives in the new culture while using their

own culture as a constant reference (Moran, 2001). The previous stages in the framework – "knowing about" and "knowing how," – aid in cross-cultural comparison but "knowing why" requires learners to demonstrate their ability to make cultural explanations regarding their own culture and the target culture. It is natural for learners to explain what they see from an etic perspective – as an outsider, but to make accurate cultural explanations they must learn in this stage to understand and explain culture from an insider's view – the emic perspective (Moran, 2001). I believe in the importance of this stage because without it students will always be examining the target language and cultural through their own lens. By looking at the target culture through the eyes of natives and comparing it to the students' native culture, students will be in a position to examine their positionality in the world.

A current example of using the emic perspective to understand a culture is Greg Mortenson – a native English speaker of Minnesota descent and resident of Montana – who spends half of each year travelling through Pakistan and Afghanistan. By immersing himself in these Asian cultures he has learned the local languages and built strong relationships with many of the people there. After a humble start, Mortensen is now the co-founder of the nonprofit Central Asia Institute, and has been working for the last 15 years to promote peace and education in Afghanistan and Pakistan. To date Mortenson has built over 131 schools, provided education to over 58,000 children, including 44,000 girls, and has learned both Arabic and some of the local dialects of the native peoples. Mortenson's efforts have not gone unnoticed by peace supporters and the press. Due to his acquaintance and familiarity with Central Asia languages and cultures, his efforts have also been noticed by the US military. Admiral Mike Mullen, US Military Chairman

Joint Chief of Staff, has advised senior military commanders to read Mortenson's book, "Three Cups of Tea" (2006), because of all that they will learn about interacting with the people in Central Asia. Mortensen has grown to know the people there so well, and so successfully, that Mullen has also asked him to provide cultural training for the US military before they are deployed to the area (Central Asia Institute, 2009). Mortensen employs a communication and respect-based style with the people and elders in Afghanistan and Pakistan that has proven successful in the negotiations and agreements for his schools. Because he has become familiar with their language and culture and "knows why" regarding the differences between his culture and theirs (Howard, 2006), he has become an international expert on Central Asian culture. By using an emic perspective of the people in Central Asia, Mortensen has mastered the language and been able to articulate cultural explanations of the people there – on their terms, on his terms, and by comparing the two. Mortensen has moved past the stages of, "knowing about," and, "knowing how," by delving deep into the target culture and his own to, "know why."

Understanding the perceptions, beliefs, values, and attitudes of a culture and people will be strengthened by the learning of their language. Because Greg Mortensen learned the language of the people of Central Asia they were more open to communicating with him and reciprocated the respect which his language study showed them. Learning the language opened countless doors for Mortensen because of the inherent connection of the language to the culture. Learners can be closer to the culture through the verbal and non-verbal interaction language study will provide. Everything learned through the other stages of the Cultural Knowings Framework is applied here

when learners make cultural explanations of their own culture, and of the target culture's perceptions of the world.

"Knowing why" is a stage in the Cultural Knowings Framework in which instructors should act as both a guide and a co-researcher. As a guide, teachers should ask questions and encourage student negotiation of meaning rather than simply providing the answers for them. Students should leave a culture class with thoughts and questions of their own that will further their culture learning outside of the classroom. Instructors can guide students in this learning by encouraging them to hypothesize, infer, explain, generalize, and justify regarding the target culture. An attitude of openness should be included in the class to further this stage of the cultural experience, and instructors should be careful not to make students think that there is only one right answer. As a co-researcher, the teacher engages in the cultural learning with the students. Typically after learners have developed target culture explanations and understandings of their own, instructors can offer what they have found through their research and own experience. Although instructors' views should be shared, the aim is not to persuade students to feel the same – students' personal opinions should be accepted and valued. To guide students through "knowing why"– and every stage of the framework – instructors should have studied, learned, experienced, and researched enough on their own to have made it to this stage as well (Howard, 2006; Moran, 2001).

Ethnocentrism will be uncovered even more through this stage of the framework because students' understanding of culture will be greater. By forming cultural explanations, students are encouraged to use their research and experience rather than stereotypes and judgments in their intercultural encounters (Howard, 2006). This process

may be implicit or explicit, but is likely a more personal stage because of the cultural comparisons and personal connection being made to the target culture. By recognizing the ethnocentric attitudes that they hold – whatever level they may be – learners will be able to self-monitor their views and respond accordingly in the next stage of the framework.

Knowing Oneself

The last stage in the Cultural Knowings Framework is "knowing oneself." "Knowing oneself" includes awareness of the individual learner's values, opinions, feelings, questions, reactions, thoughts, and ideas. When learners know themselves and their own worldview, they will act in the world as more culturally aware, both consciously and unconsciously. Within this stage in the framework learners should exhibit reactions to cultural topics, reflect on their personal reaction, and examine their own beliefs outside of a specific cultural context. The stages within the framework do not necessarily occur in the order presented here and could occur simultaneously, but learners typically reach, "knowing oneself," once they have been through the experience and learning of the other stages (Moran, 2001). This stage in the framework is where learners will recognize their own ethnocentrism and make decisions on how to proceed in their own lives.

To provide an example of this stage, I turn to myself and my own cultural experience. Throughout the past few years I have studied culture in general, learned how my own and how other cultures behave, and explored the perspectives of different cultures. I have also developed self-awareness regarding my own opinions and reactions

– while studying language all the while. I know that I have not reached the end of my culture study because it is an ongoing process, but I do think that I have worked through each of the stages of this process and am qualified to teach culture to my students. Before travelling to China I was extremely ignorant to the values, beliefs, and cultural explanations of Chinese people. I began learning more about Chinese people after living there for nearly a month, but I was still basing all of my perceptions of Chinese people on my ethnocentric attitude. It wasn't until I began studying Mandarin that I came to recognize the true value of the people around me and the respect that I have for the way they conduct their lives. Prior to this experience my attitude of the Chinese people, although not negative, came from stereotypes, jokes, and media representations I had heard and seen all my life. As I continued my language study, my appreciation for the Chinese people only grew and my self-awareness increased. By learning Mandarin I learned about the Chinese culture. My simultaneous study of the culture and language allowed me to recognize my own ethnocentrism and evaluate my attitudes, perceptions, and behavior. Because I studied the language, the way I viewed my positionality in the world changed. I don't laugh at Asian jokes the same way I used to and I respond differently to cultural assumptions that my American peers make about fellow Chinese students. I have examined my attitudes and ethnocentrism since I began learning Chinese more than I ever did before. My language study has made me a more culturally aware individual and I plan to continue both my study and attitudes for the rest of my life.

In this stage, "knowing oneself," the instructor should act as a listener, witness, and co-learner with the students. As listeners, instructors should monitor the students' reactions and create a secure classroom environment in which they can feel safe to share

their responses. Instructors may have to temporarily and consciously suspend their own world view to hear the views which students are sharing. As witness, the instructor should respond to the students' words by simply stating what they are seeing and hearing. No questions should be formed - as witnesses instructors should only make statements regarding the students' words and interpret what the student is expressing. As co-learners, instructors should share their own culture learning process as well as learn from their students' comments and reactions (Moran, 2001).

"Knowing oneself" is the most helpful stage in the framework for recognizing ethnocentrism. If students have experienced all the elements of culture and language to make it to this point, they should have a working understanding of ethnocentrism. Learners' eyes will be opened to the value of the target culture in ways that only language study can offer. Because learners will see the value in another culture they will develop self-awareness of ethnocentrism and cultural assumption. In this stage, because students should be examining their own values and beliefs, they are enabled to evaluate their personal level of ethnocentrism. The other stages in the cultural experience will develop students' ability to recognize ethnocentrism, but in this final stage of the framework they can examine and evaluate what they would prefer to do about their inherent and natural ethnocentric attitudes. This stage is important because it is a point where learners can choose to either maintain negative attitudes about the target culture, or more likely identify with and appreciate the target culture and members of it.

Conclusion

Because ethnocentrism is humanity's natural state of mind, students who undergo language and culture learning will be faced with the opportunity to not only recognize their own ethnocentrism but evaluate and modify their attitudes how they see fit. Language and culture have a deep tie which helps language students' learning and also furthers their understanding of the culture and world around them. Learning a language means learning a culture and the two cannot be separated. As previously discussed, language learning can provide explanation of behavior, understanding of values, and mutual respect between the language learner and native members of the target culture. Among the many methods for teaching culture in a language classroom is the Cultural Knowings Framework which has been examined in this paper. By, "knowing about," "knowing how," "knowing why," and, "knowing oneself," students of language and culture will be acquainted with their own culture and other cultures and will be able to recognize and monitor their own level of ethnocentrism. The perspective gained through understanding a language will enable language students to re-examine their positionality and determine how to proceed in their future same culture and cross-culture interactions.

LITERACY STRAND ARTIFACT

INTRODUCTION TO THE LITERACY ARTIFACT

AUTHENTIC LITERATURE AND INFORMAL ASSESSMENT

In the following artifact I examine the use of authentic literature in the second language classroom and its' potential uses for informal assessment. Literature can provide instructors with countless opportunities to assess their students learning. As discussed in my philosophy, I believe in the individual learning and experience of each of my students. Informal assessment through the use of literature will provide me with the opportunities and information needed to evaluate my students' language development and proficiency. In this artifact I also describe the informal assessment uses of several different genres of text. Through examining these different types of literature I learned about their uses in the classroom and their potential for assessment. I plan to use informal assessment practices and authentic literature in my target classroom and this artifact opened my eyes to the many ways to do so.

LITERACY ARTIFACT:

AUTHENTIC LITERATURE AND INFORMAL ASSESSMENT

Reading is an essential aspect of any language classroom. There are several different ways instructors can incorporate reading in their teaching, one of which is through the use of authentic literature. Whether literature is the main text of a course or is supplemental to a textbook or other course materials, students will benefit from the cultural and educational aspects of authentic literature in their language learning and reading development. The cultural benefits of authentic literature in the language classroom have already been discussed at length in my teaching philosophy. Another benefit of using authentic literature, to be discussed in this artifact, is the use of literature as a non-invasive assessment tool of students' language and reading development.

Using literature in a language classroom will provide students with authentic material to improve their reading skills and will also provide instructors with opportunities to informally assess their students' learning. In this artifact I will first examine the role of assessment in the classroom in general, followed by a description of informal assessment, and end with a breakdown of different authentic text genres and their potential for reading assessment. I believe in the effectiveness and practicality of non-formal assessment and the awareness it will give me of each of my students' reading needs. Incorporating authentic literature and literature activities in my curriculum will give me more than a test score to assess my students' reading skills (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996; Schulz, 2007).

Assessment Overview

In every type of classroom there is a need for assessment of some kind, but language classes are especially dependent on assessment given the need to determine students' proficiency or competence in the target language. No matter what the type of language program, assessment in some form must occur and instructors must decide what they believe to be the most effective, accurate, and fair system to assess their students. Assessment means gauging whether the material presented by the instructor has been learned by the students (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). Often by the end of the semester, there is a gap so large between what was taught and what was learned that the objectives of the class have not been met. After the end-of-semester test is administered instructors may be faced with disappointing evidence that their students did not learn as much or as well as they had expected. By the time instructors recognize this gap in an end-of-semester test it is too late to remedy the situation and students may abandon their language study, or move on without being prepared (Angelo & Cross, 2000). If instructors are hoping to find their students at a certain point when the class is through, they should prepare assessment strategies to ensure that happens (Brew, 1995). Various assessment methods can be used to ensure that course objectives are being met. Formal and informal assessment both have use for accomplishing curriculum objectives, but instructors must decide which assessment practices they find to be the most effective.

Formal assessment is the most familiar form of classroom assessment and is commonly thought of as a pen and paper test. In formal assessment, students are asked to respond to items and questions successively, without feedback or intervention from the instructor, and will receive their score (typically a percentage grade) sometime in the

future – when they are most likely already studying for a different test (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2002). The perceived credibility of formal assessment can be seen in the national curriculum tests recently implemented in US grade schools as well as the certification programs in adult education (Parkinson & Thomas, 2000).

Instructors should be aware of the potential advantages and disadvantages of formal testing and determine the place of formal assessment in the classroom. Some positive aspects of formal assessment include the possibility for mass-distribution, easy correcting, and the systematic nature of the method. Formal assessment is also an opportunity for students to visually and mathematically recognize their performance and progress. Some negative aspects of formal assessment are shown when testing is used by instructors to exercise their power and control over students (Green, Johnson, Kim, & Pope, 2006). Formal testing often merely acts as a way for instructors to prove how little students know and can bring unwanted pressure, stress, and worry into the classroom.

Learning a second language is already laden with apprehension, as discussed in my teaching philosophy, and over-inundating students with formal assessment will only bring unnecessary worry and discomfort. Another disadvantage of formal assessment is that it may encourage ineffective study habits in students. If it is not to be tested then students are likely to ignore the material and spend their time on the information to be tested. What will be tested may be uselessly memorized and regurgitated by students on the test only to be forgotten as soon as they walk out the door (Yu & Suen, 2005). I believe that there is a place for formal assessment in the language classroom if handled appropriately.

When conducting assessment in the classroom instructors should also take into consideration the native culture of their students and the assessment expectations included in that culture. Without an understanding of how culture, experience, and context have influenced students in the past it is difficult for language teachers to make decisions regarding their students' assessment and instruction (Darling-Hammond, 2000; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). An example of the importance of students' past assessment experience is found in the, "education fever," currently spread throughout China. The Chinese education system is designed around tests and students are conditioned to be successful on tests beginning in grade school. 补课 (bu ke), test coaching, is very common in China. Extra hours of tutoring and coaching are spent to teach students strategies to answer questions correctly without even necessarily knowing the material (Yu & Suen, 2005). Given Chinese students' trained test taking skills, instructors should take this in to account when determining how to assess their students. If Chinese students are only given a formal test then odds are they will use their test-taking training more than content knowledge. Instructors should be aware of the test taking backgrounds of their students and should plan assessment in a way that will be most effective for the students' learning.

Non-Invasive Assessment

A second method of assessment in the classroom is non-invasive or non-formal assessment, which can be defined as evaluating student progress or collecting information from students without them perceiving it as a test (Elbow, 1993; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996; Parkinson & Thomas, 2000). Combined with applied knowledge activities, creativity, student participation, and instructor observation, non-invasive assessment can

be an effective and lower-stakes method for evaluating student improvement or lack thereof (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996; Parkinson & Thomas, 2000). All classroom activities should be structured, but informal assessment activities are designed specifically to give instructors the information they are looking for regarding students' comprehension, development, or skills. Each informal assessment task should be designed to elicit certain information from the students – information that the instructors will use to evaluate the students and the instruction. Non-invasive assessment ensures that instructors are continually monitoring student learning throughout the semester. Because informal assessment occurs without the students perceiving it as a test, instructors will be able to observe the students in natural interaction and language production without the pressure of a formal exam. By evaluating students more often and in more natural circumstances, instructors will be able to see student performance for what it really is when students are under less stress and simply talking or working naturally (Parkinson & Thomas, 2000). Although students' reading comprehension or skills development is difficult to assess, informal assessment activities will show instructors the information they need about their students' progress. Specific activities and informal assessment ideas will be discussed further in the authentic literature section.

Formal assessment provides a narrow scope of the students' ability, but non-invasive assessment helps instructors to see and hear more from each student because of the wide range of activities which can be designed. Instructors will receive more information about their students than a score; they will observe their students interacting, communicating, and producing the language independently. Informal testing requires the instructor to plan activities around the course content which will encourage students to

prove their knowledge or ability without perceiving the situation as a test. If instructors are clear in their objectives and plan appropriately, they will receive the information and performance from their students that they are looking for.

Non-formal assessment fits into my sociocultural-based classroom because of the individual student attention and awareness it can provide. If instructors continually plan activities to monitor student learning, students will be receiving continuous feedback. Students will be continually aware of their progression, providing them with a better idea of their status in the class and more self-confidence (Parkinson & Thomas, 2000) – which is important in language learning. The low-stakes atmosphere which non-invasive assessment provides will promote learning and participation (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996) and provide instructors with the information they need to continually improve the course for the students and for themselves.

One negative aspect of non-invasive assessment is the lack of formality in the method. Non-invasive assessment does not always include something being turned in because the instructors may be collecting information through observation or interaction alone. Because of the lack of documentation or "paper-trail" in non-invasive assessment, instructors should include documentation in their activities as often as possible. Another potential negative of non-invasive assessment is that if it is not handled appropriately students may feel that they are being evaluated constantly and can never be themselves. Instructors should be careful to not be constantly taking notes and making comments on students' interaction, but should allow them to work and interact freely and naturally (Parkinson & Thomas, 2000).

There are several things within a classroom which can and should be assessed – including the students, the instructor, and the curriculum (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008; Parkinson & Thomas, 2000; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). Non-invasive assessment practices will continually provide instructors with feedback about these different aspects of their classroom and instructors can use this information to improve the students' experience. By assessing different parts of the classroom, instructors will be able to, "avoid the temptation to assess only the learners, and in particular to blame all 'failures' on learner inadequacies" (Parkinson & Thomas, 2000, p. 141). Assessing multiple aspects of the class will provide a more balanced and effective classroom atmosphere in which the instructor is continually striving to better his/her teaching. Any assessment should be used by the instructors to determine how effective their teaching has been, as well as find ways they can alter their class to make it a better experience for the students (Angelo & Cross, 2000). I plan on using assessment to help me direct my teaching to best fit my students. Non-invasive assessment activities will ensure that I am continually receiving information to improve my classroom because I will be continually assessing the learning and teaching. If an informal assessment shows me that my students do not comprehend a concept or topic then I will know to try a different instructional strategy or activity to improve their understanding and make my teaching more effective.

Authentic Literature Use

Language is the medium with which literature is created (Parkinson & Thomas, 2000) and because of that, literature is a great resource for language students. Instructors can choose from several genres of authentic literature to design the curriculum of their course. Authentic texts are any text written for native speakers (Shrum & Glisan, 2010),

as opposed to the often watered-down or simplified texts that are published for language learners. There is a place in the classroom for texts written for language learners, however I value exposing my students to the cultural content and authentic language use in authentic literature. Exposing students to authentic texts in the language classroom is valuable because the readings included in ESL textbooks are not usually authentic – they are typically simplified for language learners. Authentic poetry, short stories, novels, dramas, and song lyrics will all display the target language in a creative and authentic way that will provide students a view of the language in its most natural form. Each different genre of literature has its own niche in the language classroom and will provide different opportunities for instructors to assess students' learning.

Authentic literature is a great tool for implementing non-invasive assessment activities. Each genre of authentic literature lends itself to different activities to be used for informal assessment. While using authentic literature students will be developing their reading skills and instructors will have countless opportunities to assess their students' learning. Poetry, short stories, novels, drama, and song lyrics are five specific genres which provide valuable reading material and act as a resource for activity design. These five genres will be examined here and various ideas and activities for informal assessment will be explained.

Poetry is a useful genre in a second language classroom because of its organization, repetition, rhyming, and length. Poems explore the writers' concerns, life experiences, observations, and feelings, and allow readers to create their own interpretation (Collie & Slater, 1996). Because meaning in poetry is often culturally constructed, instructors can guide their students through the pieces so that they can

construct meanings of their own as well as recognize the values of the target culture. Teaching poetry may require both patience and time because of the requirement for interpretation (Collie & Slater, 1996). Group activities may be helpful for students' understanding of poetry, but students should still be encouraged to develop their own response to the piece. Because of the opportunity for personal responses to poetry, instructors can plan activities to encourage personal opinions and will be able to assess whether the students are understanding their reading. Non-invasive assessments using poetry could be group discussions, drawing pictures of what the poem is really about, or decoding metaphors. Through these activities instructors will know of the students' comprehension level and because of the typically short length of poems they will most likely only take one class period or less (Collie & Slater, 1996). I never had a significant appreciation for poetry in my education, but I think that is because of the way it was taught to me. I believe that selecting poetry that is appropriate to both my students' language level and interests, planning creative activities about the poems, and using the activities to assess my students' learning will be effective in my classroom. I have already attempted some poetry activities with language learners which were couched in authentic assessment and designed to be relevant to their level and interests. I have seen my students enjoy the use of poetry from another culture in my classroom.

A second literary genre which lends itself to informal assessment activities is short stories. Short stories are valuable in a language classroom because of the precise language used, the typically sequential style, the short length, and the socially constructed meanings usually included (Collie & Slater, 1996). Included in short stories are settings, characters, conflict, and resolution which will provide students with a captivating reading

to follow and finish, without taking too long to read. The gratification of students finishing an entire story in the target language will positively affect their self-confidence and encourage them to read more. A variety of short stories will provide students with a myriad of topics and subjects to become acquainted with which will add to their cultural education as well (Collie & Slater, 1996). Fairy tales, myths, fables, folk tales, children's book, nursery rhymes, and children's novels are all considered short stories and will interest students enough to read them, without having to embark on a full-fledged novel (McNicholls, 2006). After students have read the texts, instructors can provide non-invasive assessment activities to gauge comprehension. Activities such as comparing characters, writing a new ending, and acting out parts of the story could be used to assess the students' understanding of the text because of the text-specific knowledge necessary to complete the activities (Bamford & Day, 2004). I enjoy using short stories in the language classroom because of the reading practice it provides students while still remaining within their ZPD because of the shorter length. Many short stories, like novels, are translated into different languages so my students may already be familiar with them from their native language and culture. Because of the many different components of short stories, there will be several opportunities for instructors to non-formally assess their students' learning.

Another valuable literature genre which provides students with an extensive reading opportunity is novels. Novels, although lengthy, allow students to develop a relationship with the characters and author, provide opportunities for in-depth reflection, and acquaint students with a certain writing style (Maxim, 2006). When students are constantly jumping from one non-connected reading to the next they have no chance to

connect with the style or vocabulary. Longer texts allow students to, "develop a greater sense of context…[and they] provide students with the information necessary to override their limited L2 proficiency" (Maxim, 2006, p. 21). The recurring vocabulary, characters, scenes, and themes will supersede language deficiencies in the students because of the repetition of those elements inherent in a longer text. Novels provide countless opportunities for non-invasive assessment. Because progress in the book could be mistaken for language or reading skill development, informal assessment activities will show instructors whether their students are comprehending the novel. Literature circles could be used to promote student-to-student communication about a novel, while student journaling requires students to document their personal response to the book they are reading. Both of these informal assessment activities would require text-specific knowledge of the students, and instructors would be able to assess whether their students are simply progressing in the book or progressing in their language as well.

Drama and plays also provide great opportunities for students to practice the target language whether they are reading a script or participating in a role-play as actors. The comfortable and effective distraction which drama provides language learners creates a low-stakes atmosphere in which they forget that they are learning and will simply play a role (Wagner, 2002). Using drama in the classroom will simultaneously provide instructor opportunities for non-formal assessment and develop students' oral language, reading, and writing (Wagner, 2002). The focus of drama activities is getting students to talk, understand, or respond to dialogue, and the low-stakes environment which drama provides will make students feel comfortable enough to do so. Beginner-level L2 learners may feel that they are always playing a role as they are trying on other people's

words and making them their own. But when students participate in a drama of any kind they will no longer be playing the role of themselves but of someone else which will ease most apprehension (Wagner, 2002). As a non-invasive assessment activity, drama, plays, and skits will provide instructors with the information they need from the students to monitor their proficiency development. I enjoy incorporating drama in my teaching and my students seem to enjoy it as well. As I have observed my students using the target language in a persona other than their own I have seen their new confidence and willingness to include inflection, emotion, and nonverbal communication accompanying their "lines". For students who do not participate in other non-invasive assessment activities as willingly, drama provides a forum in which they must speak but are not necessarily generating their output on their own. Although apprehensive students are reading a script for an informal assessment activity, through drama they are practicing the pragmatics of the language while showing their instructor what they have learned from the literature.

The last literary genre to be mentioned as a tool for informal assessment is music lyrics. Music itself is not considered literature, but the lyrics of music can be used as a text to be accompanied by the music. Most students thrive in the positive learning environment which music invites and tend to be more willing to communicate and participate in classroom activities (Paquette & Rieg, 2008). Besides the low-stakes environment music and lyrics create, they are also a beautiful window to the target culture for language students. Students will appreciate the breath of fresh air which music brings to the classroom and will also learn from the words included in the lyrics. Non-invasive assessment activities involving music can be used to teach the students

about cultural constructs of meaning and cultural ideas about countless topics – both past and present. Music used in the classroom does not have to be recent; there are many songs from the past that speak specifically to aspects of American history or culture that the students may not be familiar with. Finding historical writings at an ESL level maybe be difficult, but the simple language included in song lyrics can tell the story and do so in a comprehensible way. For example, explaining the cultural and historical implications and attitudes about the Vietnam War may be a difficult task for language teachers. "Revolution," a song written by the Beatles in the 1960's uses strong language to explain their feelings about the war which echo the feelings and attitudes of many Americans at the time. Using a song like this as a supplement to other required classroom texts, then assessing students' understanding of the topics being covered can create a positive environment and add to learning. Students appreciate the cultural relevance of music, and informal assessment activities involving lyrics will allow me opportunities to assess their comprehension. Music activities can take a long or short amount of time in the class, but either way the length of the lyrics and repetition of some words or phrases make music an approachable genre for language students. In my opinion, music is especially relevant to my target classroom because of the age of the majority of my students. Students in my target classroom are typically interested in American pop culture because of the commonality it provides between them and their American peers. In my experience, because students are excited to hear and learn a song in English they are also more willing to contribute to class discussions or participate in the non-formal assessment activities I have planned.

Multiple literary genres and countless resources are available to instructors to use for non-invasive assessment in their classroom. Assessment is necessary in language classes given the nature of the educational setting. As the instructor I must be assessing my students' language proficiency and how they are progressing in my class. Assessment can be handled in different ways, formal and informal, and instructors should decide which assessment method is most effective for the context of their class. Non-invasive assessment will provide students with a positive and low-stakes environment in which their interaction and learning will be as natural and low-pressure as possible. Literature can help to create this environment and is a wonderful medium to introduce the students to the culture, values, attitudes, style, and words of the target language. I want my students to have a positive language learning experience, as mentioned in my philosophy, and I think that incorporating authentic literature in the ways described here will add to that experience. By using literature and non-invasive assessment in language classes students will develop language skills and enjoy the authentic literature they're exposed to while instructors are able to continually assess their students' proficiency and language development.

ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION OF TEACHING VIDEO

ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION OF TEACHING VIDEO

My personal reflection on my teaching comes from a combination of two different videos – one teaching my MSLT peers and one teaching reading in my target classroom. Both teaching videos helped me learn about my strengths and weaknesses as a language instructor. I will not explain the sequence of my lessons, given the fact that I am pulling from two separate teaching sessions, rather will focus on the positive and negative aspects of my teaching and how I did and did not rely on my personal teaching philosophy. This was a beneficial exercise for me in seeing my personal connection between theory and practice, and I have learned many lessons from this experience for my future teaching career.

After watching my teaching videos I learned that one of my strengths in teaching is my ability to plan meaningful activities for my students. I received a lot of feedback from my students that they appreciated the personal, cultural, and linguistic content in my lesson and felt that they learned more than words alone. I think that I supported the students' making connections to what they were learning and allowed them the processing time necessary to make the lesson more personal. I believe that my teaching videos demonstrate my knowledge of what students are interested in and how to appeal to those interests in my teaching. I am not too distant in age from my students so I can identify the pop culture they will appreciate and the aspects of American culture they will find interesting. By providing my students with relevant, interesting, and meaningful material, I believe that their learning will be more successful and they will enjoy being in my class – which is something I observed after watching my videos. I am concerned

about my relevance to my students as I age and recognize the significant effort it will take to stay connected with the interests and hobbies of their generation.

Another strength I displayed is professionalism. I realize that professionalism is an aspect of teaching which is viewed differently by every culture, but based on student feedback and after watching my video I believe that I have a an appropriate balance between professionalism and familiarity in my teaching. I try to provide effective instruction while simultaneously building a relationship with my students, and I saw that balance in my teaching videos. My undergraduate degree was in communication and public speaking so my presence in front of a group is something that I am very conscious of. I feel that my overall presence in a classroom encourages my students to respect and appreciate me which is important to me in my teaching. As explained in my teaching philosophy, I want my students to have a positive language learning experience and I think the classroom atmosphere my personality creates will accomplish that.

Although my lessons and activities are entertaining and meaningful, they must be goal-oriented and productive as well. I know that one of my weaknesses as a teacher is not always keeping a clear objective in mind because I am so interested in making my class content exciting for the students. In my teaching videos the students used target language to produce what I was looking for, but that objective wasn't necessarily clear to them. It is important to me in my personal teaching philosophy to be prepared and provide effective instruction, and I know that teaching objectives are a large part of that. I believe this is an aspect of my teaching that I can improve upon with little conscious effort and it will make a large difference in my teaching and in my students' experience.

One element of my teaching that I need to continually monitor is my use of slang and filler-words. I think that as a native speaker of the target language this is part of language teaching that I will continually work on throughout my career. I noticed only a small amount of slang in my teaching videos, but it can still be improved upon and it is important to me to monitor. In my public speaking training I have become conscious of the use of filler-words and slang. In addition to slang and filler-words I recognized that I also need to monitor my non-verbal communication. I did not find my non-verbal communication distracting, but I do plan on continuing to improve this aspect of my teaching and provide my students with the comprehensible input necessary for successful learning.

Lastly, this experience reminded me of how much I enjoy language teaching. I think that one of my strengths as a teacher is the fact that I love teaching English and find very few things more fulfilling than helping my students to communicate. I know that passion for teaching will continue in my career and will make me a better teacher. As I mentioned in my teaching philosophy, my passion in teaching is very important to me and it is something that I do not want to lose. Teaching and then watching the videos gave me great satisfaction and fulfillment and makes me even more excited to continue my career as a language teacher.

From watching the teaching videos, I learned about my strengths and weaknesses as an instructor and what I need to do to either magnify or minimize those aspects of my teaching. I enjoyed the opportunity and know that I can use this to better my teaching in the future.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION TO THE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

In this compilation, I discuss the scholarly books and articles which have played a large role in my development as a language teacher. The sources included in my annotated bibliography have been organized by theme in relation to my personal teaching philosophy – instruction, dynamics, and experience. All of the following annotations come from my experience in the MSLT program and I thank the instructors who introduced me to these engaging texts.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Effective and Meaningful Instruction

Brown, J. D., Rogers, T. S. (2002). *Doing second language research.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Summary

This text is a fairly comprehensive guide to research in the field of second language teaching. The authors cover several different types of research – both qualitative and quantitative – and provide the readers with examples, research vocabulary explanations, and exercises to practice the research methods being taught. Within the qualitative research types, the authors describe in detail case study research, introspective research, and classroom research. The quantitative research types described are descriptive statistics research, correlation research, and quasi-experimental research. This text is not meant for seasoned researchers – although it would probably benefit their work – it is designed for beginning researchers and students to familiarize themselves with the terminology and practices of research in the field.

Reaction

I read this book in my fourth semester in the program and I wish that I would have read it earlier. I was somewhat familiar with research articles and practices from my undergraduate education but I found the description of language research very applicable to my work and relevant to my degree. Not only were we reading countless research articles, but we were also writing a research project of our own. This text helped

me to better follow what I was reading and develop what I was writing. I gained familiarity with the articles I was reading in class and more than anything this text helped me to be more critical of what I was reading. In regards to my teaching philosophy, I think that this text has made me more critical in my reading and will help me in my future studies in the field. I plan to continue studying and learning after I graduate and this book prepared me to do so – whether formally or on my own.

Darling-Hammond, L., & Snyder, J. (2000). Authentic assessment of teaching in context. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 16*(5-6), 523-545. doi:10.1016/S0742-051X(00)00015-9

Summary

In this article the instructors examine several different teacher education programs and teacher trainings through the use of authentic assessment. So much time is devoted to assessing students but the authors explained that it was necessary to research the assessment and evaluation of teachers and curriculum as well. Authentic assessment is characterized as assessment through more comprehensive means such as portfolios, presentations, exhibitions or cases. The authors found that encouraging or requiring teachers to engage in authentic assessment of their own practices improved their teaching and self-assessment while teaching.

Reaction

I thought this article was interesting because of my desire to continue my education after I am finished being a student. I had several teachers throughout my education - primary school to higher education – that seemed to have stopped learning

and were merely using the same teaching practices year after year. I don't want to be such a teacher because I think that would be doing a disservice to both me and my students. In my teaching philosophy I explain my desire to provide my students with both effective and meaningful instruction. I think that continuing my education and training after I finish the MSLT program will add to the level of instruction that I am capable of providing and cause me to continue to improve as an instructor.

Echevarria, J., Vogt, M. E., & Short, D. J. (2008). *Making content comprehensible for English learners: The SIOP model*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

Summary

The SIOP model (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) was designed for teachers of ESL students – whether strictly ESL or mainstream in any grade level. The model uses sheltered instruction and specifically spells out the components needed for effective language teaching. Each chapter provides an anecdotal example of why the component is important, rationale for the component, explanation of the concept features, teaching scenarios, discussion of the lessons, and discussion questions. Some of the main aspects of the SIOP model include lesson preparation, building background knowledge, comprehensible input, classroom interaction, and assessment. This model is well known for instructing teachers without an ESL background in how to be effective ESL teachers.

Reaction

None of the concepts mentioned in the SIOP are specifically ground-breaking, but the combination of all the aspects together provides one of the most comprehensive ESL teaching methods I've ever seen. This book played a very large role in my teaching

philosophy because of the overall explanation of language teaching. I plan on being a strictly ESL teacher without having any native English students in my classroom, but these principles still apply to me and my teaching. Sheltered instruction is not as prevalent on the university level, however I plan on using this protocol to guide my teaching.

Grabe, W. (2009). *Reading in a second language: Moving from theory to practice*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Summary

This book explains to the L2 teacher several specific processes and strategies required for effective reading teaching in the classroom. For teachers reading courses, as well as those covering all aspects of language learning, Grabe writes that an attention to reading will make a positive difference on the students' reading abilities. Grabe focuses specifically on the importance of knowing the reader's purpose for reading, motivation for learning the language, and strategies for absorbing the information. Also included in the book are a variety of reading activities which can be used to supplement the course content.

Reaction

I found this book particularly helpful to me because I taught reading in the Intensive English Language Institute at USU throughout my time in the MSLT program. Without any specific background in reading teaching I initially found it difficult to plan activities that focused on reading rather than speaking, listening, or writing. The

strategies and activities explained in the text helped me as an instructor to understand the importance of making reading goals clear to the students – skimming, scanning, reading for learning, reading to integrate, etc. Knowing that different types of reading require different processes in our brains helps me as a reading teacher to better prepare my students for their assignments as well as assign homework or activities to also accomplish the goals related to our reading purpose.

King, A. (1993). From sage on the stage to guide on the side. *College Teaching, 41,* 30-37.

Summary

The point of this entire article is reflected in the title. Alison King provides ideas, examples, and teaching advice all based on the idea of the instructor moving from, "the sage on the stage," to the, "guide on the side." This article isn't necessarily grounded in the sociocultural perspective because it doesn't point to the use of real life experiences. Neither is it specifically about language teaching. However, is does reflect the instructor support and scaffolding aspect of the sociocultural learning theories. King is writing for college teaching in general and provides great ideas to help instructors move to the side and provide students with the support and active learning that they need.

Reaction

The article is not about language teaching specifically but is very useful for anyone that may end up teaching adults, especially on a university level. The adage, "sage on the stage or guide on the side," has already aided me in my teaching and

increased my emphasis on active learning and guided participation. As my teaching philosophy explained I plan on maintaining a sociocultural classroom and ground my teaching in the SCT. "Guide on the side," epitomizes the way I view my future classroom.

Pinker, S. (2007). *The language instinct: How the mind creates language.* New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.

Summary

In this easy-to-read book, Pinker shows the reader the mental processes which occur in language acquisition. All of the examples used are concrete and easy to relate to. Several different language acquisition topics are discussed including the forming of new languages, where words come from, and the importance of the critical period for language learning. Pinker looks specifically at the creation of new languages in terms of how they are created, how they are passed down, and when they are not considered a new language anymore. The author also discusses the critical period and the capacity of the human mind to learn languages.

Reaction

This text is a great place for MSLT students to begin. Pinker is very easy to follow and provides beginning language teachers with a great background on brain functions regarding language acquisition. It is easy to teach someone new words, but learning about and applying the functions of the brain will make language teachers more effective. Reading Pinker will open beginning language teacher's eyes to so many more

aspects of language learning and will in the end benefit teachers and students. I included this reference here because of its relation to my instruction. I view language learning as a sociocultural process but I found this book interesting regarding the processes of the brain when learning a language. Pinker does not claim that language learning is an entirely cognitive process, he merely examines the cognitive processes which take place.

Shrum, J. L., & Glisan, E. W. (2010). *Teacher's handbook: Contextualized language instruction.* Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Summary

The *Teacher's Handbook* is a useful resource for any language teacher and is definitely a text that I will hold on to for a long time. Several topics are covered as they relate to language teaching directly such as the role of technology, standards, culture, grammar, and interaction. The authors begin each chapter with opportunities to reflect on the chapter topics to come, as well as case studies and tasks spread throughout. The tasks in the book require readers to a myriad of things; search ACTFL standards online, design lesson plans, brainstorm ways to use literature in the classroom, etc. The case studies offered in the book show the chapter topics in context and provide readers with opportunities to see the text content being used in a classroom.

Reaction

This book was our text for LING 6400 and I found it extremely helpful in my development as a teacher. Most of the topics covered in this text were not

groundbreaking for me, but they were explained clearly and made to seem easy to implement in my target classroom. I specifically enjoyed the introduction to the field of linguistics and the community sense of all of the national/international organizations which were described. I felt like this book was very practical and helped me to recognize the seemingly endless aspects of effective language teaching which I was so far having a difficult time remembering.

Spada, N., & Lightbown, P. M. (2008). Form-focused instruction: Isolated or integrated? TESOL Quarterly, 42(2), 181-207.

Summary

In this article Spada and Lightbown discuss the difference between several different types of instruction and specifically the benefits of form-focused instruction (FFI). Several factors which play a role in FFI are discussed such as L1 influence, salience in the input, rule complexity, and language learning aptitude. Spada and Lightbown conclude that all types of teaching are helpful and play different roles in language teaching. However, the addition of integrated FFI is considered increase students' automaticity in the target language.

Reaction

This article was difficult for me to apply to my teaching at first, only because of the heavy linguistic basis and use of terms that I was not initially familiar with. After completing the program and gaining some teaching experience I have found that many

aspects of form-focused instruction have become second nature to me in my teaching. Although there is a lot of information included, the instruction, theories, and techniques presented in this article are extremely helpful and very easy to do. In my opinion making difficult aspects of the target language easier for students to understand, as well as anticipating those difficulties, are two signs of a great language teacher. The end goal of a language class should be to teach students to, "do," something and that goal can be achieved through FFI. This article fits in to my teaching philosophy regarding effective and meaningful instruction because of the focus on the student and effective teaching techniques. My language artifact which outlines a teaching sequence in a reading class was also largely based on this article.

VanPatten, B. (2000). Processing instruction as form-meaning connections: Issues in theory and research. In J. Lee, & A. Valdman (Eds.). (2000). *Form and meaning: multiple perspectives* (pp. 43-68). Boston, MA.: Heinle & Heinle.

Summary

Processing instruction refers to the instruction provided by the teacher being received by the student. VanPatten highlights the specific things which language teachers can do to make the processing of their instruction easier on students. First VanPatten explains the importance of comprehensible input for students, which must be meaning-bearing and also somehow comprehensible. Structured input is another main tenet of the article which can be defined as providing planned and organized input for students in a comprehensible way. According to VanPatten structured input takes

presenting one thing at a time, keeping meaning in focus, moving from sentence to discourse, learners doing something with the input, using oral and written input, and keeping the learners' processing strategies in mind. All of these aspects of processing instruction are meant to make listening easier on the students' minds and more structured on the part of the instructor.

Reaction

As a beginning language teacher this is one aspect of my teaching which I must continually work on. If input is not comprehensible then it will not only make things hard on the students but hard on the instructor as well. These tenets of structured input are easy to follow and with time will become second-nature rather than a list to be checked off. Also mentioned in the article, is after observation VanPatten noticed that beginning teachers spent more time talking than more experienced teachers, and there input wasn't always comprehensible. VanPatten's concept of presenting one thing at a time and doing so in a structured manner will help beginning teachers to spend less time talking and more time helping the students to, "do."

Zuengler, J., & Miller, E. R. (2006). Cognitive and sociocultural perspectives: Two parallel SLA worlds? *TESOL Quarterly*, *40*, 35-57.

Summary

There are two perspectives on how second language acquisition occurs which are explained and contrasted in this article – cognitive and sociocultural. The cognitive perspective dominated the SLA world for many years and has only recently (past 15

years) been diverted from by sociocultural theorists. Zuengler and Miller explain that the cognitive perspective views language learning as an entirely internalized cognitive process which involves a teacher teaching and students listening. The sociocultural perspective however views real-life application and experiences as fundamental to learning, not ancillary, and believes that these experiences are both the process and the product of learning a language.

Reaction

I read this article during my first few weeks in the program and it immensely aided my understanding of the terms and perspectives we were discussing in class. Besides just helping my understanding, this article helped me to determine my own perspective on language learning. Without personally defining how learning occurs, a language teacher will not be effective in their teaching. Defining a personal learning perspective helps teachers to determine class structure and teaching style, and must be done before graduating from the MSLT program. I agree with the sociocultural theory and intend to design my teaching around sociocultural practices. As mentioned in my teaching philosophy, I view learning as a communicative and interaction-based process and I learned that perspective mainly from this article.

Manage the Dynamics of a Language Classroom

Caldas, S. J. (2007). Changing bilingual self-perceptions from early adolescence to early adulthood: Empirical evidence from a mixed-methods case study. *Applied Linguistics*, *29*(2), 290-311. doi:10.1093/applin/amm020

Summary

In this article the author actually performs an ethnographic, mixed-methods study of his own children and their journey from early adolescence to early adulthood as bilingual language learners. The family lives for half of the year in New Orleans where the author's three children are all enrolled in French classes. Some of the children are in higher levels that others, but they each study the language and deal with the social implications of doing so. The students feel that they are ostracized among their peers in Louisiana because of their language ability. In the summer the author's family moves to Montreal where the children all become second-language learners and accomplish as much French study as they can. In Montreal the children are constantly speaking French and striving to improve their language abilities so that they can fit in there with their French-speaking peers. Although the children experience and express great anxiety and embarrassment over their bilingualism in adolescence, the author found that when each of them matured they were more than grateful that they spoke a second language and they each went on to learn a third or fourth language as well.

Reaction

I found this article fascinating. I feel that this article relates to my desire to manage the dynamics of a language classroom because of the effect that adolescent identity development and peer opinion may have on my students' learning. My students' psychological security is of great importance to me and I think that this is an aspect of teaching that I can keep in mind and incorporate in my planning. If I know that my students are embarrassed or experiencing great peer pressure outside of the classroom I can work to make our classroom a safe area and give them as much opportunity to practice the target language as possible.

DeCapua, A., & Wintergerst, A. C. (2004). *Crossing cultures in the language classroom*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Summary

This text is another very practical resource for language teachers and describes effective ways to teach culture. Culture and language are inseparable concepts so they should both be included in language instruction. The book is organized in chapters that begin with an anecdote that demonstrates the concepts within the chapter. Next, the authors cover the theory of different intercultural communication topics followed by a practice section that outlines experiential activities which reinforce the topics from the chapter. At the end of each chapter the authors include an annotated bibliography which points readers to other resources on the chapter topic.

Reaction

I enjoyed this book because I actually have a lot of interest in teaching an intercultural communication course – to either native or foreign students. The topics covered here are the general topics covered in most intercultural communication texts, but the layout of the chapters is so helpful for teachers. I love the activities that are included on each topic to give instructors ideas on how to make the concepts more meaningful to the students. Because of the focus on skills and strategies in the lower level intensive English classes I think that it is hard to remember to specifically teach culture concepts. This book provides a lot of practical ideas teachers can use to incorporate culture no matter what the topic of the class. In terms of managing the dynamics of a language classroom I felt like this text enabled me to better manage all of the cultural dynamics inherent to an ESL classroom.

Hooks, B. (2010). *Teaching critical thinking: Practical wisdom*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Summary

This book is written by Bell Hooks, who is an acclaimed educator and cultural critic. Hooks describes her own experience in education and the cultural insensitivity of many that she came in contact with. The main premise of the text is a series of short essays on topics most educators face regarding diversity, culture, and critical thinking. Hooks received the ideas for the different chapters from students and colleagues whom she came in contact with. Topics range from using humor in education, to tears in the classroom and how to address these dynamics.

Reaction

I thoroughly enjoyed this text because of the up-front nature and perspective Hooks takes on all of the issues discussed. I read this book for one of the elective courses in the MSLT program so it is not specific to language learners. However, I found the dialogue extremely relevant to my work as a language teaching and felt that the topics covered were very applicable to my teaching. In regards to managing the dynamics of a language classroom, as mentioned in my teaching philosophy, each chapter in this text is a different dynamic that I believe instructors should be prepared to manage. All of the topics covered have potential to interfere with students' learning and being aware and educated will make me a more successful instructor.

MacKinnon, D., & Manathunga, C. (2003). Going global with assessment: What to do when the dominant culture's literacy drives assessment. *Higher Education Research and Development, 22*(2), 131-144. doi: 10.1080/0729436032000083599

Summary

The authors examine here the role of cultural influence on assessment. Everything we do is tainted by the lens with which we do it and assessment is not void of that. When language learning students are living in the target culture they are subject to not only the culture learning but also learning of the educational system. Assessment practices are very culture-specific so when foreign students are assessed it is done so in the target language and in the target culture's assessment norms. The authors examined the assessment practices in Australian universities and how those practices affected the

international students taking the exams. What the authors found is that testing in a culture other than the students' own developed interpersonal and intercultural skills among the students.

Reaction

I found this article interesting because of the implications for the students here in my future classes. I don't think that most people view test-taking as part of our culture but the practices and strategies for taking test are extremely culture-specific. As a language instructor I can remember the implications of culture-specific testing and do my best to make my expectations clear to my students. I don't think that instructors need to change their assessment practices, but simply making their students aware and explaining assessment plans beforehand will make a large difference for foreign students. I think that this is another dynamic of assessment which has great potential to impact my students' learning. I can be aware of this dynamic and do my best to make students comfortable or familiar with my assessment expectations so that the assessment practices themselves do not interfere with my students' learning.

Miller, J. M. (2000). Language use, identity, and social interaction: Migrant students in Australia. *Research on Language & Social Interaction*, *33*(1), 69-100. doi:10.1207/S15327973RLSI3301_3

Summary

In this article Miller examines mainly Asian migrant students in Australia and the social and educational implications of their circumstance. One interesting dynamic

Miller points out is the difference between Australian-born Asian students and migrant students – whose biggest difference from their peers is their language ability. The Australian-born Asian students are considered a "mate" and identify as an Australian before an Asian. The Asian migrant students admittedly alienate themselves and spend as much time as possible surrounded by the other migrant students whom they feel most comfortable with. The negative dynamics created in the high school because of these attitudes are mainly attributed to language differences. Miller concludes in her article that language use plays the largest role in the construction of social identity – specifically in adolescence.

Reaction

I enjoyed this article because of the explanation it offered of a circumstance which I have witnessed several times. I think that this happens in every age of school – primary to college – and proves the link between language and identity to the extent that language is more valued in identity achievement than ethnicity. I found this very interesting because of the cultural implications that it will have in my classroom. I believe it is important to be educated on the social dynamics that language learners are being subjected to because of the impact they will have on their language learning.

Moran, P. R. (2001). *Teaching culture: Perspectives in practice.* Boston, MA: Thomson, Heinle.

Summary

Moran discusses several different issues related to culture in the language classroom in this text. The book includes several different topics which should be remembered by language instructors while teaching students from different cultures; including models of acculturation, cultural benefits of language learning, and the effects of language learning on ethnocentrism. The fact that students eyes, minds, and hearts will be opened to the target culture is demonstrated the different levels of understanding included in the book. This book is a helpful text for instructors, a resource for language learners, and a great guide for anyone interested in being a more effective cross-cultural communicator.

Reaction

I really appreciate the thoughts and ideas used in this text. Obviously the link between culture and language is strong and I think that as a language instructor this relationship cannot be ignored. By learning more about the target culture the students will not only learn the language but also learn of the people – which only helps in language learning. By incorporating culture in language teaching the students language will progress, their personal ethnocentrism will be reduced, and they will develop a love for the target culture. This text was the main source for my culture artifact in this portfolio, and I found it a useful and practical guide to intercultural communication.

Parkinson, B., & Thomas, H. R. (2000). *Teaching literature in a second language.* Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press.

Summary

By explaining the use of literature in a second language classroom, this article also explains non-invasive assessment and how instructors can incorporate it in their teaching. Non-invasive assessment is collecting information about student's learning without them perceiving it as a test. Because of the negative atmosphere and learning habits that tests often bring, non-invasive assessment promotes a low-stakes atmosphere in which students are engaged in activities which showcase their natural language abilities – rather than what they have crammed for. Literature provides countless opportunities for non-invasive assessment in a language classroom and can be used by instructors to develop these methods in their classroom.

Reaction

As I mentioned in my philosophy and literacy artifact, literature has many uses in the language classroom. I enjoyed this article very much and am very interested in the benefits and drawbacks of non-invasive, or non-formal, assessment through the use of authentic literature. I do not appreciate the environment that formal testing typically creates and I think that non-formal assessment is a great tool to change the evaluation of student progress to a positive experience. Literature is useful and helps to create many opportunities for non-formal assessment and I also appreciate the variety that it brings to the language classroom. This text is included in the dynamics section of my philosophy because of the dynamics that assessment can create in the classroom. This text also

played an obviously large role in my literature artifact based on the use of authentic literature and informal assessment in my target classroom.

Reagan, T. (2000). *Non-Western educational traditions: Alternative approaches to educational thought and practice.* Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Summary

In this text the author initially lays a theoretical groundwork for the dichotomy of the West and "the rest." Reagan posits that the terms, mentalities, stereotypes, and misconceptions between western and non-western societies are mainly based on high levels of ethnocentricity. The main body of this text is used to explain different cultures and their approaches to educational thoughts and practices. The author examines the educational systems in Africa, Mesoamerica, Native America, China/Confucianism, Hinduism, Rom, and Islam. Each culture is explained in terms of their educational systems and allows the reader, likely western, to draw comparisons between the west and the non-west.

Reaction

I enjoyed this text because of the number of cultures that I was introduced to. There are several peoples mentioned in this book that I was not very familiar with, but I feel like I am more prepared to teach students from all over the world because of what I have learned. I do think that readers need to be careful when reading this book because it

is very easy to over-generalize in an attempt to understand. Because language instructors want to understand more about the cultures they are teaching I think it is possible to compartmentalize so much that we return to stereotypes in an effort to understand. I have a sincere desire to understand my students' needs and cultural expectations and I felt that this text was helpful in doing that.

Stevick, E. W. (1976). Teaching English as an alien language. In: J. F. Fanselow, & R. H. Crymes, (Eds.). *On TESOL '76*, (pp. 227-233) Washington D. C.

Summary

This article, written by Earl Stevick and published in the *TESOL Quarterly* in 1976, mainly focuses on the psychological needs of students in an L2 classroom. Stevick writes from the perspective of the student using statements in the first person and explains many psychological and emotional needs that he – the student – requires. The article is obviously ground in the sociocultural perspective of language learning while focusing on the students' security and incorporating communicative activities. Explained are the student's psychological boundaries, general strategies for reducing alienation in the classroom, and a charge on the reader to only implement suggestions if it fits in to their personal commitment and teaching style.

Reaction

Personally, I felt that this article added a new light to the idea of remembering the student in your teaching and brought up some key points regarding the student's sense of self and security. Learning a new language requires students to step outside of their

comfort zone and try something new every day. This is a difficult enough task on its own and Stevick states that language teachers should, "focus their attention first and foremost on this side of [the student], rather than on [their] native language habits, or on [their] language aptitude score, or on the quality of [their] performance in class." Students affective reactions to language learning can have a negative impact on their studies if they are not managed appropriately. As the instructor I can pay attention to this side of my students and ensure that it does not interfere with their learning.

Suarez, D. (2002). The paradox of linguistic hegemony and the maintenance of Spanish as a heritage language in the United States. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *23*(6), 512-530. doi:10.1080/01434630208666483

Summary

This article is an ethnographic study of Hispanic families living in a small community in upstate New York. The author studied the families and wrote this study on their perceptions of the paradox of linguistic hegemony. Linguistic hegemony is the power of one language shown over a less common or minority language in such a way that the minority language is viewed as less-valued and subordinate. The paradox is referring to the fact that for speakers of the less common language to be respected or listened to, they must succumb to the hegemony and learn the ways (typically language and customs) of the majority language or culture. Most of the Hispanic families in the study were completely bilingual and some even spoke English in their homes among their families. Suarez concluded that most of the majority language speakers – Spanish

speakers in this study – succumbed to the pressures of linguistic hegemony and lost a portion of their own culture, language, and identity in doing so.

Reaction

I did not mention the influence of this article in my teaching philosophy, but this has had a large influence on my perception of diversity, culture, and language learning at large. Linguistic hegemony is an aspect of language learning and teaching which I had not before considered and I think it is imperative that language teachers are aware of the implications. I hope to be conscious of my students' heritage and language learning views. I don't think that I would like to teach English to someone who is viewing my efforts as hegemonic, but I'm sure that I will come across such attitudes at some point in my career. I am not becoming an English teacher in an effort to push my language and culture on others. I hope to help my students achieve their goals and I hope that they view my class in a similar way. I think that HLL or linguistic hegemony influence could be a dynamic in my classroom which has a negative effect on my students' learning if I am not aware of it and prepared to manage it effectively.

Create a Positive Language Learning Experience

Bamford, J., & Day, R. R. (2004). *Extensive reading activities for teaching language.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Summary

This book contains a collection of more than 100 activities designed for teachers to teach language through extensive reading. The activities included have been used and evaluated by the teachers who submitted them and they come from classrooms all over the world. None of the activities are age specific and most of them are appropriate for any level. Each activity clearly outlines the level, objectives, preparation, and procedure needed for the activity and also includes tips, ideas for extension, and comments from teachers who have used it before. The entire book is geared towards extensive reading and is designed to be used by teachers of general language classes as well as specific grammar, listening, speaking, reading, and writing courses.

Reaction

The activities and anecdotes included in this book are so easy to follow and very easy to implement into my own language classroom. University intensive English programs are typically structured to not include extensive reading; rather the classes are usually jumping from one topic to the next. I think that there is a place for this book in a content-based class but I also think that the activities here help teachers to design their own curriculum based on an extended text. If the class is strictly content-based and teachers are not able to introduce a longer text that they have chosen, the ideas in this book can also be used with smaller activities and smaller texts. I used several of these

activities in my class last year and they were all helpful and added more variety to my classroom. Rather than just focusing on reading, these activities helped me to incorporate the other important language skills needed in a balanced classroom.

Dodson, S. L. (2002). The educational potential of drama for ESL. In G. Brauer (Ed.), *Body and language: Intercultural learning through drama* (pp. 161-179). Westport, CT: Ablex Publishing.

Summary

In this article the author provides a description of a new drama class that Dodson started in an IEP program and what it taught the students. Dodson first makes a case for using drama in language teaching and explains the benefits of having students participate in more than language drills. The meaningful application that drama brings will give students an authentic feeling to their language. They will be able to use utterances other than their own, giving them practice in authentic discourse, topic changing etiquette, wait time, and conversation starters. In Dodson's class she had six students total who she taught about American drama. They read plays, visited theatres, practiced pronunciation in class, and for their final project they performed a play for their IEP peers. All of the students responded positively to the experience and explained the drama class improved not only their English but their self-confidence as well.

Reaction

I love this article and I think that it is a great example of incorporating variety in teaching. The application that drama brings for students is very valuable and I agree in the benefits that it will give students. After reading this article I decided to attempt a

small drama activity in my IELI reading class. They students worked together very well and once they performed their skits they all had a deeper understanding of the concepts and developed a relationship with one another as well. I felt that the students were more comfortable because they were using words they wrote but they were pretending to be someone else. I think that drama and other creative activities are part of creating a positive language learning experience for my students. All of the positive aspects of using activities like this will aid their learning and also make it more entertaining.

Haley, M. H. (2001). Understanding learner-centered instruction from the perspective of multiple intelligences. *Foreign Language Annals, 34*(4), 355-367.

Summary

This text is a summary of a research study conducted on the Multiple Intelligences (MI) Theory and its effect in a language classroom. MI believes that there are eight different intelligences that people may have which can be accessed through a variety of teaching styles and approaches. Instructors from several different states worked together by using a myriad of instructional methods, sharing lesson-plans, and documenting their experience. After the study was through the instructors expressed that they felt their teaching had become more learner-centered and they were happier with their classroom. An unexpected affective response was that they students all reported that they felt happier in the class as well because of the variety, flexibility, and options that came with their teachers using different strategies.

Reaction

I know that there are different opinions in the language teaching world regarding the validity of MI theory. I would like to see more research on this topic because I find a lot of value in the use of creativity in teaching – especially in the language classroom. As this research explains, not only does creativity bring interest to a classroom but there are different people and different learning styles that are accessed through variety in teaching. By being creative in the classroom I think that instructors and students will be happier and language learning will be more effective. As highlighted in my philosophy, it is important to me to create a positive language learning experience for my students and appealing to their learning styles is a large part of that.

Krashen, S. (2004). The case for narrow reading. *Language Magazine, 3*(5), 17-79.

Summary

In a typical beginning L2 reading class the students are taken from topic to topic without spending much time learning the content of the reading. Teachers typically focus on the forms of the language incorporated in the reading and then move on to whatever is next. Language students usually are not assigned any lengthy or authentic texts until later levels in their study. Krashen explains that this method is rather backwards and is inhibiting students' natural progression and comprehension of reading. Because of the value that narrow and extended reading has for beginning language students, according to Krashen, students should be guided through narrow reading. Narrow reading is reading several books by one author or about a single topic of interest. Several tips are provided

to help students with their L2 reading, and instructors can implement many of these ideas in to their classes.

Reaction

Like extended and authentic reading, I also agree with narrow reading. I have found that when my students are reading multiple readings on the same topic their comprehension is better and their language improves more than when we are jumping from one topic to the next. I think that narrow reading is also better for the instructor because it gives you time to really get in to a topic and develop it for the students. I think that narrow reading will help students to have a positive experience in my classroom because they will become fairly familiar with a certain topic or style and appreciate the opportunity.

Maxim, H. H. (2006). A study into the feasibility and effects of reading extended authentic discourse in the beginning German language classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, *90*(1), 20-35.

Summary

This text is a summary of research conducted on extensive reading in a German classroom. The reading makes a case for the value of extensive vs. narrow reading, followed by the description of the research. Extensive reading is described in this text as the reading of longer texts that are culturally authentic – written for native speakers, not language learners. In the research described here they began two groups in the first four weeks of the semester by following the same syllabus and both working from the class

textbook. For the last ten weeks of the course one group finished by working with the textbook only and the others read an authentic German romance novel in and out of class. Both groups finished the semester with the same examinations, and the group who read the novel did as good as or better than the students who used only the textbook. The most notable difference between the two groups was the high content interest from those reading the novel.

Reaction

I know that this reading does not cover my personal target classroom, but I think that the concept can be applied to any language class. Extensive reading is of interest to me because I think that both the students and instructors enjoy it more and the language benefits for the students are huge. I don't like jumping from text to text any more than the students do. If reading a culturally authentic novel will produce the same results as a textbook then I think that both the students and I would choose an extended text as a viable option for class.

LOOKING FORWARD

LOOKING FORWARD

Throughout this program I have taken numerous classes, learned from insightful professors, and been introduced to various approaches in my work as a language instructor. After graduation I will no longer be a student at the university but I must remember the importance of continuing my studies within the field of second language acquisition. Similar to professionals in any field, I should strive to stay up-to-date and well-researched on all of my practices in the classroom. If I do not continue to learn of recent research or current teaching methods I will be doing a disservice to myself, my employer, and most importantly my students. As I mature, gain more experience, and continue my studies, my instruction in the classroom will inevitably evolve. My development as a teacher will affect my students' learning and the quality of instruction they receive.

I chose to begin the MSLT program because I wanted a degree that would guarantee me experience abroad and continued cross-cultural interaction. I have studied in this program for two years and I am confident that this degree will help me to accomplish exactly what I hoped it would. Following graduation I am hoping to find a position teaching in either a Chinese public or private university. I am hoping to have a job solidified by graduation and leave the country in August. After returning from China I hope to find a position teaching in a university academic English program, but if my professional path diverts from language teaching I would also be interested in study abroad, international student affairs, or cultural consulting. A PhD is not on the immediate horizon, but I do have some interest in continuing my studies in language and cross-cultural communication.

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