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**Developing a Teaching Toolbox With  
Experiential Learning Principles**

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EDLG-5698-Independent Professional Project  
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5/01/2024

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## Developing a Teaching “Toolbox” with Experiential Learning Principles

### Introduction

“For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them.”  
-Aristotle

#### **What is *Experiential Learning*?**

Experiential Learning is an approach to education that emphasizes learning through firsthand experiences and reflection. It is all about actively engaging in real-life situations and practically applying knowledge and skills. Instead of just learning from textbooks, experiential learning encourages learners to participate in hands-on activities, problem-solving tasks, and real-world scenarios. It’s a dynamic and interactive way of learning that helps deepen understanding and develop critical thinking skills. Consequently, experiential learning is a highly effective method for both language learners and teachers. Let us unpack how learning by reflection on doing enhances the language classroom through the lens of language teaching.

Once we have recognized what experiential learning is, the next step is to apply it to our lives and careers, such as teaching. In this project, we will go beyond theory to explore the practical applications of *experiential learning* in language teaching.

Meanwhile, I will develop and document a “toolbox” of instructional strategies by field-testing core tools using the *Experiential Learning Cycle* (Kolb). Finally, I will create templates to outline my experiential learning process for developing language teachers of all backgrounds who seek to improve their craft. We will begin by first taking a step back and examining why *experiential learning* is meaningful to me.

### **Why is *experiential learning* meaningful to me?**

Before I knew what *experiential learning meant*, it transformed how I viewed the world by making me a passionate learner. Reading about other cultures and how people from different backgrounds work together, listening to cultural music in addition to world events on the radio, and watching history documentaries have always been hobbies. Yet, it did not occur to me that I could participate in another way of life. I saw society as disconnected - consisting of isolated groups interacting only when necessary. Rather than coming together to learn from each other, I assumed that people separated themselves as much as possible. I had yet to learn about expanding my worldview in an authentic, engaging, and meaningful way. My perspective would soon change...

A significant shift in my understanding of the world occurred when I was in the 4th grade. My parents moved my family from a rural New Hampshire town to where, at the time, it seemed like the most extensive place on the face of the Earth: Philadelphia. Of course, it only felt that way due to my lack of perspective. I vaguely remember asking my parents why the buildings disappeared in the clouds as we crossed a giant bridge downtown. They explained the concepts of skyscrapers before mentioning that

everything would soon be different. We lived in Philly for less than two years, and we moved back to New Hampshire when my father found an assistant principal position. However, that period changed my life by laying a foundation for *experiential learning*.

I was enrolled in a public elementary school in the heart of the city. It was small and tucked between two parks with water fountains and bridges. Across the street and down the block were delicious authentic African, Italian, Jamaican, and Thai restaurants with names I struggled to pronounce. Every Friday afternoon, my mother would pick my sister and me up from school, and then we would enjoy multicultural foods together after a long week. The food was fresh, with amazing aromas and unique flavors. The exposure to these novel encounters ignited my passion for *experiential learning* (and Coconut Curry) at this stage of my life.

There was a tiny playground behind the school with an adjacent basketball hoop that kids would shoot hoops on every day during recess. I recall dribbling on the sideline while watching bigger kids play ball for several weeks before having the courage to get into the action. Imitating spin moves, behind-the-back passes, and between-the-legs crossovers after seeing them live was routine. I was casually dribbling the ball when a tall sixth grader called me over to the court, "Hey, whiteboy! Can you make a jump shot?" I responded with enthusiasm, "Let's find out!"

"Jump in the game; we need one more."

A jolt of excitement hit me as I stepped onto the court. I had never played basketball with a diverse group of players before. Back home in northern New Hampshire, just

about everyone was white. At my new school in Philly, I was one of two or three white kids, but none of that mattered at the moment. Besides, I was focused on having a good time with my new friends and winning.

The game was competitive. The moves I had been practicing were less effective with a quick defender on me, so I did not score. On the last play of the game, however, I drew the defense and then dished it down low for an assist to the tall boy, who laid the ball up and in to win the game. After recess, he spoke to me again, "What's up, bro? Come play hoops with us at the Y on the weekends."

Invite accepted.

I went on to play basketball for an AAU team in the same community due to this encounter. I was a member of the program for three consecutive summers. The team became a family during that time, and we learned many life lessons together. We held each other accountable in positive ways, even when competing in practice for playing time. The coach was an upright leader - he ensured everyone had an opportunity to shine. He set the tone for my teammates and me by teaching us to respect the rules of the game, the opponent, the referees, and most importantly, to respect ourselves. He was our basketball coach, but he was also a life teacher.

We went on road trips, played in tournaments, stayed in the same hotel rooms, ate meals, and joked around between games. We learned about each other's backgrounds and interests. We shared insights and opinions on different subjects, not all related to basketball. For example, I explained to one of my teammates that New

Hampshire is a mountainous state located in New England. In return, he taught me about the inner city and how to stay out of trouble. We even went to the famous Pat's King of Steaks, home of the first cheesesteak. The emphasis wasn't on winning but on building a team culture and coming together. I remember feeling a true camaraderie as we grew closer to one another in the city of brotherly love. It was the experience itself that taught me how to be a good friend and teammate.

One more example of when *experiential learning* expanded my worldview and helped me become a dedicated learner is my experience living in Jordan. Before I share a story from my time in the Hashemite Kingdom, I should note that my passion for *language learning* and *intercultural understanding* brought me to the Middle East. *Experiential learning* enhances both for the same reasons that it develops language teachers: it is based on the idea that people learn best by doing and guides you to get the most out of an experience.

When I arrived at the airport in Amman, the capital of Jordan, for the first time, I could not have been prepared for the inevitable culture shock. Despite having studied Arabic back home in the United States for many years, I needed to figure out what to expect or how to navigate the language barrier. I remember feeling excited and motivated to overcome anything that could prevent me from experiencing another way of life. I would be a sponge - absorbing every sight, sound, smell, conversation, and interaction I encountered. I planned to take it all in and hope for the best. A family friend I had never met picked me up from the airport. His name is Tareq, and he was the best host I could ever ask for. Soon, he would help me become involved in the community,



which was crucial because it put me in the position to jump-start my *experiential learning process*.

One day, after my colloquial Arabic lessons, Tareq drove me to a local sports academy in the Al Rawabi neighborhood of Amman. He told me we would see an old friend of his named Coach Ihab, who needed my help. I had no idea what Tareq was planning, but I trusted him because we had spoken in depth about my goals. He was well aware that I craved an opportunity to expand my horizons. A large gymnasium was bustling with children playing basketball as we entered the building. It was hot, loud, and crowded but surprisingly well organized, with teams of different age groups doing drills on each of the four courts. I noticed that every team had a coach instructing players to dribble, pass, and shoot the ball – every team except for one...

Tareq and I watched the scene unfold for several moments before a large man approached us and gave my host a big hug.

“Abu Hamza! My dear friend. How are you?” the large man asked in Arabic.

Tareq, who goes by the name Abu Hamza to his relatives and closest friends, greeted Coach Ihab and responded in a local dialect that was difficult for me to understand. I could make out just one phrase in particular: “American basketball player who studies Arabic in college.”

Coach Ihab looked at me with a smile. He shook my hand and said, “Welcome to the Jordan Stars, my friend.” I thanked him, and before I could even accept his offer, Coach Ihab had already assigned me to be the coach of his program's youth summer

team. He also introduced me to the kids that day, and their faces lit up as they looked at me with wide eyes like I played in the NBA. I was neither a professional basketball player nor a coach then, but I was not about to turn down my once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I had been waiting for this moment since Philly. From the moment I stepped foot in the gymnasium, I could feel the energy and passion radiating from the young athletes. Despite the language barrier, the universal language of basketball brought us together. We communicated and connected on a level, transcending words from the first day of practice. Coaching this youth basketball team became much more than just teaching them the fundamentals of the game. It became an opportunity to immerse myself in Jordanian culture and to gain a deeper understanding of its people. Through basketball, I witnessed the values of teamwork, perseverance, and respect ingrained in these young players. The respect and sportsmanship demonstrated daily were so different from any experience I had ever had in Philadelphia or Lebanon, NH.

During breaks, we would gather in a circle, sharing stories, laughter, and even some delicious traditional Jordanian snacks. They taught me about their customs, their love for music and dance, and their favorite local dishes. In return, I shared stories about my background, creating a beautiful exchange of experiences and perspectives. Beyond the basketball court, I had the chance to explore the vibrant streets of Amman, visit ancient archaeological sites like Petra, and marvel at the breathtaking beauty of the Dead Sea. But the moments spent with my team truly left an indelible mark on my heart.

Coaching a youth basketball team in Jordan taught me the power of *experiential learning* as a bridge between cultures. It allowed me to break down barriers, challenge

stereotypes, and foster genuine connections with the people of Jordan. This experience, along with my childhood in Philadelphia, opened my eyes to the richness and diversity of our world. It taught me that true understanding and appreciation can only be achieved through firsthand experiences.

We took a team picture, which I value to this day. I then needed to bid farewell to my team and Jordan. To this day, I carry with me memories of a remarkable journey and a newfound appreciation for cultural exchange and the transformative nature of *learning by doing*. Working with children, learning their language, teaching them skills, and enjoying their passion for life impacted me immensely. This experience truly enriched my life in ways I could have never imagined. By the time I returned to the United States, I knew a future in language education would be fulfilling.

## Experiential Learning: A Review of the Literature

**“Tell me, and I forget. Teach me, and I may remember. Involve me, and I learn.” -B. Franklin**

### The Definitions:

Most of the many literary sources I read commenced by defining the terms *learning*, *experience*, and *experiential learning* to initiate a literature review on the concept of Experiential Learning. Before reviewing these essential definitions, I would like to explain what experiential learning is not, based on my research. According to Moon (2001), in conventional teaching, the student is told what to do and when to do it. The instructor is responsible for spoon-feeding the information to the student. Learning generally occurs in a classroom with textbooks (Schwartz, 2018, p.2). The student must take notes, thus causing distraction from actual learning (Entwistle & Entwistle, 1992: Moon, 2001, p.7). The expectation of students is to memorize important facts and dates and then regurgitate truth onto an exam, only to be perhaps forgotten the very next day. Colin Beard writes that experiential learning is not "the mere memorizing of abstract theoretical knowledge, especially if taught by traditional formal methods such as lecturing or reading from textbooks"(Beard & Wilson, 2005, p. 27). Chapman, McPhee, and Proudman caution that "simple participation...does not make something experiential" (Schwartz, 2018, p.1).

What is meant by *learning*? The Oxford Dictionary defines learning as "the acquisition of knowledge or skills through experience, study, or by being taught." C. Beard (2010) points out that many learning theories are available; however, "one important fact should be noted, which is that experiential learning would appear to be

involved in all of these theories and thus provide a unifying theme" (Beard, 2010, p. 930). Keeton and Tate, in Edward Cell's book, *Learning to Learn from Experience*, note that "the learner is directly in touch with the realities being studied. It is contrasted with learning in which the learner only reads about, talks about, or writes about the realities but never actually comes in contact with them as part of the learning process" (Beard, 2010, p. 17).

What is the definition of *experience*? The Oxford Dictionary defines *experience* as the "practical contact with and observation of facts or events." From the definitions of learning and experience, we can ascertain how valuable experience is to learning. Many scholars may agree that experience is to learning as teaching is to knowledge. Experience, however, can be detrimental to learning. Peter Senge, the founder of *Organizational Learning*, recounts how his young son received a low grade on an art project and consequently became disillusioned and unmotivated. His son never again became interested in art (Beard & Wilson, 2005, p. 23). Painful experiences can either cause the learner to rise above and use the experience as a "moral lesson and character builder" (Beard & Wilson, 2005, p.22) or cause the learner to block the experience altogether as a type of survival mechanism, thus inhibiting growth. Based on this information, we can deduce that the *appropriate* experience is critical for learning.

The definition of experiential learning by Lewis and Williams is "In its simplest form, experiential learning means learning from experience or learning by doing."

(Schwartz, 2018, p.1) A more complex, whole person definition of experiential learning by Colin Beard (2010) is:

- "a sense-making process involving significant experiences that, to varying degrees, act as a source of learning. These experiences actively immerse and reflectively engage, and the inner world of the learner, as a whole person (including physically, bodily, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually) with their intricate outer world of the learning environment (including being and doing - in places, spaces, within social, cultural, political context) to create memorable, rich and effective experience for and of learning" (Beard, 2010, p. 17).

David Kolb defines experiential learning as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984, p. 49). These three definitions are nuanced; therefore, it makes sense that "a common definition amongst writers remains elusive partly because experiential learning has been the subject of many interpretations" (Beard, 2010, P. 14). The definition that best resonates with my project is Patrick Felicia's definition of *experiential learning*; "experiential learning is the process of learning through experience, and is more narrowly defined as "learning through reflection on doing." (Felicia, 2011, p.1003)

### **History at a Glance:**

The history of learning through experience goes back to the beginning of time. For our ancestors to provide food, shelter, and clothes for their families, they had to learn by practicing and then pass that information on to their children through shared experiences. The general concept of experiential learning is ancient. Experiential learning can be traced back to the well-known aphorism by Kong Qiu Confucius: "I hear, I forget; I see, I remember; I do, I understand." (C. Beard, 2010, p.14 ). Around 350 BC, Aristotle wrote in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, "For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them."

Apprenticeships or hands-on learning with the guidance of a mentor can be traced back to the medieval period, 476 until 1453, originating from the custom of upper-class parents sending children away to live with host families. By the end of this time period, apprenticeships were considered acceptable training. Universities from the medieval era included apprenticeships in law, medicine, and painting. In the early 19th century, apprenticeships spread to blue-collar jobs such as plumbing (Mirza-Davies, 2015, pg.1). Throughout the 1960s and 1970, social and educational trends changed. Colleges were looking to entice adult learners towards education; they did this by giving college credit for experience and providing hands-on classes for adult learners. Attending college allowed adults to make positive life changes. (Kolb, 1984, pp. 4-5). Experiential learning became attuned to these changing trends. As an articulated educational approach, experiential learning is contemporary. In the 1970s, David A. Kolb helped develop the modern Experiential Learning Theory, drawing heavily on the work of John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, and Jean Piaget (Dixon et al., 1997, p. 41).

### **Influential Figures in Experiential Learning:**

John Dewey, a prominent American philosopher and educator, developed a comprehensive theory on experiential learning, which continues to influence educational practices today. Dewey emphasized the importance of active, hands-on experiences in the learning process, asserting that genuine learning occurs through interaction with one's environment using one's senses. Central to his theory is "learning by doing," where individuals engage in meaningful activities, reflect on their experiences, and draw insights that inform future actions.

Dewey was an advocate of the "ELT cycle, which includes components of experience, critical reflection, abstract conceptualization, active experimentation and more critical reflection constituting two distinct apprehension-comprehension and intention-extension continuums" (Bhetuwal, 2022, p.823). According to Dewey, experiences that are personally relevant and socially interactive facilitate more profound understanding and skill development. He advocated for an integrated approach to education that connects classroom learning with real-life situations, emphasizing problem-solving, critical thinking, and collaboration. Dewey's theory highlights the dynamic relationship between theory and practice, accentuating the significance of experiential learning in promoting intellectual growth and societal progress. (Yakun, 2022, pp. 2-4; Bhetuwal, 2022, pp. 822-824).

Kurt Lewin, a pioneering social psychology and education figure, proposed an experiential learning theory emphasizing the importance of hands-on, active participation in the learning process. The importance of Lewin's theory is the concept of "action research," where, like Dewey, individuals learn through a cyclical process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. Lewin differed from Dewey's viewpoint in focusing on groups of learners. His approach allows learners to engage directly with their environment, test hypotheses, and gain insights through collective practical experiences with a common goal. Lewin believed meaningful learning occurs when individuals and groups actively engage with real-world situations, make decisions, and reflect on the outcomes. (Yakun, 2022, pp. 4-6; C. Beard, 2005, pp. 27-28).

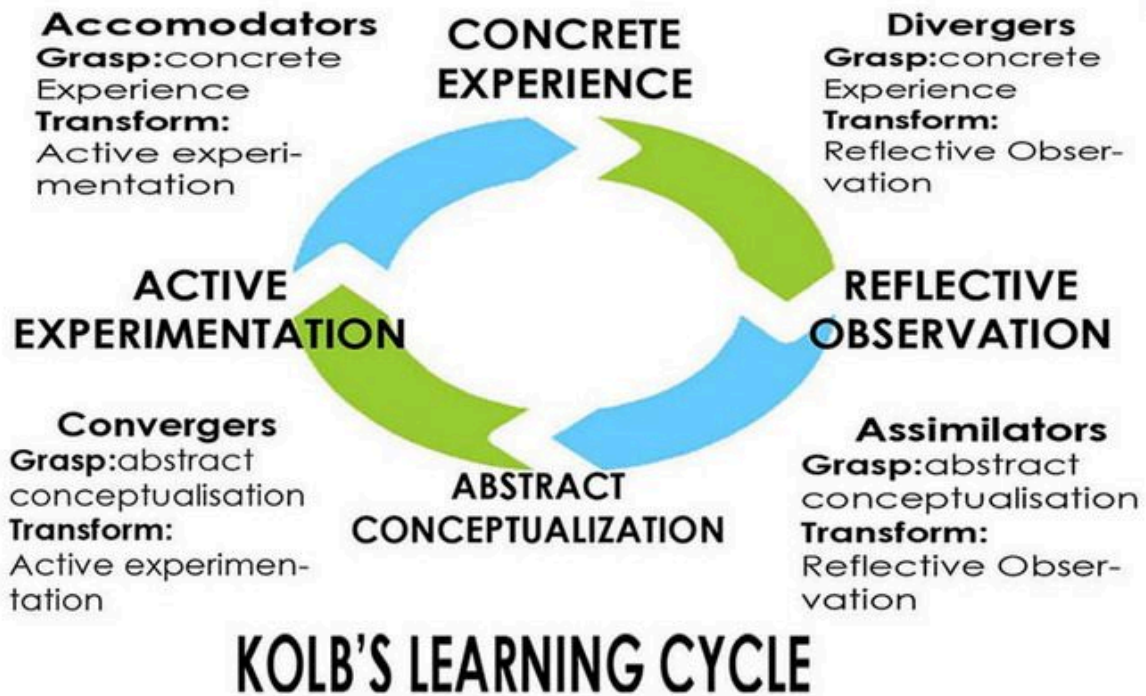
Jean Piaget, a distinguished developmental psychologist, proposed a theory of experiential learning that emphasizes the role of interaction with the environment in



cognitive development. Piaget believed that children actively construct their understanding of the world through exploration, experimentation, and interaction with objects and people in their environment. According to his theory of cognitive development, individuals progress through distinct stages of intellectual growth, each characterized by qualitatively different ways of understanding and interacting with the world. Piaget emphasized the importance of hands-on experiences and concrete operations in the learning process, "they actively construct their own knowledge, schema, assimilation, accommodation, and equilibrium as the development of the cognitive process" (Bhetuwal, K, 2022, p. 825). Through active engagement with their surroundings, learners acquire knowledge and develop critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and a deeper understanding of abstract concepts. Piaget's theory of experiential learning has had a profound impact on education, shaping instructional practices that emphasize hands-on, discovery-based learning approaches to foster intellectual growth and development. (Yakun, 2022, pp. 6-9; Bhetuwal, 2022, pp. 822-824.)

David Kolb's experiential learning theory, often referred to as the experiential learning cycle, is a dynamic process involving the continuous interaction between concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. According to Kolb, individuals learn best when engaging in all four learning cycle stages. In the first stage, individuals have concrete experiences, such as participating in activities or encountering new situations. Next, they reflect on these experiences, analyzing what happened and why. This reflective observation leads to

abstract conceptualization, where individuals develop new theories or ideas based on their reflections. Finally, individuals actively experiment, applying their new understanding in real-world contexts and testing its effectiveness. A learner "can enter the cycle at any time and tend to have strengths in a particular learning stage. Weaker preferences can be strengthened to aid the learner in adapting to various teaching styles" (McCarthy, 2016, p. 96). Through this continual process, learners gain practical knowledge, refine their skills, and develop a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them. Kolb's theory highlights the importance of integrating hands-on experiences and reflective thinking in the learning process, emphasizing that learning is most effective when experiential, repetitive, and adaptable. (Yakun, 2022, pp. 10-12, McCarthy, 2016, pp. 92-96).



<https://edstutia.com/experiential-learning/>

“Professor Colin Beard is recognized as a leading global thinker, writer, and skilled practitioner in Experiential Learning. He has worked with many organizations advising on learning and development, including the Foreign Service Department of the US Government, working on the development of diplomats and ambassadors. He has also advised the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth and Culture in Singapore on educational issues. He has worked with many corporate clients, public bodies, universities, and charities.” (Sheffield-Hallam University, 2024) While Professor Beard did not develop the concepts of experiential learning, his philosophies resonate

with my ideas; therefore, I utilized his theories in formulating my project. Colin Beard's 2010 book, *The Experiential Learning Toolkit*, caught my eye when I first started researching experiential learning because toolkits are akin to toolboxes. Beard's repertoire is for a global audience which includes corporate training, individual and organizational development. Beard explains the six core dimensions of learning in the introduction of his book. He refers to the model as robust; I thought it was especially detailed. Essentially, the six dimensions represent balls that are "juggled" in experiential learning practice (Beard, 2010, pg. 5). Correlated to the six dimensions are six questions that explore learning. These six questions were relevant to reflection and facilitated credibility within Kolb's learning cycle.

### **Transforming Experience into Knowledge:**

Reflection, the second stage of Kolb's learning cycle, was referenced by Jurgen Habermas as the bridge by which "humans process ideas and construct them into knowledge. (Moon, 2001, pg. 2). Habermas's expertise was focused on the different types of knowledge: instrumental knowledge, interpretation knowledge, and knowledge from knowledge. Donald Schon focused on reflection in professional knowledge and its development. Schon "suggests two types of relevant reflection: reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action" (Moon, 2001, p. 3). Reflection-in-action is when the student reflects on actions during the experience. Reflection-on-action occurs post-experience (Schon, 1983). Each type of reflection is essential to memory retention; however, reflection-in-action is individual and spontaneous, while reflection-on-action can be facilitated by a coach, teacher, counselor, or mentor to produce deep learning (Beard,

2005, p. 197). As stated above, Colin Beard supports six questions about the nature of experiential learning. These questions can be asked by either the teacher or the learner "as part of the process of reflection in and on learning" (Beard, 2010, pg. 6) and are interwoven; their purpose is to facilitate a comprehensive reflection.

They are:

1. Where did the learning take place? (learning environment)
2. What kind of learning activities were engaged with? (the what of learning)
3. How were the senses engaged in the experience? (the how of learning)
4. In what way was their emotional engagement? (the heart of learning)
5. How are intelligence and knowledge applied? (the mind of learning)
6. In what way did personal change occur? (the change dimension)

(Beard, 2010, P. 2).

### **The Criticisms:**

Criticism of experiential learning often centers around its perceived lack of structure and consistency in educational settings. One common critique is that experiential learning may not always provide clear learning objectives or outcomes, leading to ambiguity in assessment and evaluation; Kolb "took theorists' ideas out of context and misapplied them to "experiencing and learning by narrowing experience to fit preconceived, institutional categories, and instructional methods" (Seaman, 2008, p. 11). Critics argue that experiential learning activities may only effectively address the intended learning objectives with well-defined goals and criteria for success.

Additionally, some skeptics question the flexibility and reproducibility of experiential learning experiences, particularly in larger educational institutions or online learning environments. They argue that experiential learning activities rely heavily on personal

interactions and hands-on experiences, making it challenging to implement on a broader scale or in virtual settings, "experiential education is preoccupied with individual change and clear sociological analysis" (Seaman, 2008, p.10). Furthermore, critics raise concerns about the potential for bias or subjectivity in the assessment of experiential learning, as evaluations may be based on individual interpretations of the learning process rather than standardized metrics. Another criticism of experiential learning is whether it can keep up with technology and online learning. Colin Beard states, "Even at the advanced levels of mental activities, there are elements with which we can not connect" (Beard & Wilson, 2005, p.35).

Despite being firmly established in education, Kolb's learning cycle has its share of criticism. Miettinen argued that Kolb was selective in Lewin's and Dewey's models and "did not represent all the facts" (Miettinen, 2000, p.60). Miettinen also argues that Kolb does not consider people's habits; "habit traps us into behaving in a particular way without thinking of alternatives" (Miettinen, 2000, p. 68). Miettinen also states the limitations of Kolb's cycle: "It may result in false conclusions, it may not help us understand and explain the change, and it may cause mental laziness and dogmatic thinking" (C. Beard, 2005, p. 37). A learning technologist, Steve Wheeler, argues, "Besides there being very little empirical evidence to support Kolb's model, I also argue that in the digital age, it is now increasingly obsolete. It served its purpose in the 'instructional design' period of e-learning development ...but we have moved on. Kolb's model is anachronistic, belonging to another time" (Wheeler, 2012, pg.1). Jayson Seaman adds, "The pattern of 'experience-reflect-learn,' might be considered an ideology

of experiential learning rather than a philosophy or a theory of experiential learning. In its time, this framework served a useful purpose; however, given changes in knowledge, research methods, participation populations, social trends, and educational goals, it might now be influencing research and practice in unhelpful ways" (Seaman, 2008, p.24).

A common criticism regarding Kolb's reflection stage is that "evidence suggests that conscious reflection may not play as basic a role in experiential learning as previously believed: research in social practice traditions shows how people learn in the experience, not from or after it" (Cole et al., 1997; Engestrom et al., 2003). Miettinen suggests that reflection occurs in isolation and that it is essential for humans to interact with colleagues and the environment to enhance reasoning and draw conclusions (Miettinen, 2000, p. 70). Boud et al. admit that "there are limits to what each of us can achieve unaided, and often the learning process can be considerably accelerated by appropriate support, encouragement, and intervention by others" (Boud et al., 1985, p.36). John Dewey remarked that reflective learning processes are highly complex, and Mark K. Smith, a senior lecturer and head of social work at the University of Edinburgh, building on the complex process of reflection, argued that portraying reflective learning in "neat and precise units is simplistic and problematic" (Wheeler, 2012, p. 1).

### **Recent Studies:**

"Nonetheless, Kolb's contributions cannot be underestimated. Whatever their limitations, by presenting a model of experience in scientific form, he has helped move educational thought from the locus of the instructor back to the learner" (Kelly, 1997,

p.5). The purpose of the article, *Implementing Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle by Linking Real Experience, Case-Based Discussion and Simulation* by M. Wijnen-Meijer et al. (2022) was to prepare medical students for their future by using Kolb's learning cycle to strengthen the learning effect. The outcome of this study found that students benefited from discussions and simulations. Overall, "The described course design, which is designed according to Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, is a valuable addition to existing learning formats in medical education. This method strongly links theory, simulation, training, and clinical practice" (Wijnen-Meijer et al., 2022, p.18). David Kayes, the Department Chair of Management at GWU, concedes that despite extensive criticism, experiential learning theory continues to exercise considerable influence in management, "learning and education... researchers and practitioners alike enlist experiential learning for its explanatory strength and practical significance" (Kayes, 2002, p.27). The article, *Examining the Effects of Reflection Type and Abstraction Order on Content Knowledge and Content Knowledge Retention During Experiential Learning* by Coleman et al. assesses types of reflection. It finds that types of reflection do not affect how a student obtains and retains content knowledge within agricultural education. (Coleman et al., 2020, p.317). Therefore, despite criticisms, proponents of experiential learning argue that when implemented effectively, experiential learning can foster deep engagement, critical thinking, and practical skills development in learners, ultimately enhancing their overall educational experience (Kayes, DC, 2002, p. 12; Seaman, J, 2008, p.8-13).



**Summary:**

This literature review explores the definitions of experience, learning, and experiential learning. It then gives a brief history of experiential learning. The significant contributors to experiential learning, Dewey, Lewin, Piaget, and Kolb, are summarized. Kolb's Learning Cycle, including the second stage of reflection, is explained. The criticisms of experiential learning, Kolb's Learning Cycle, and the means of reflection as a viable part of learning were investigated. This literature review ends with recent studies into medicine, management, and agriculture that support experiential learning.

### **Module 3: Materials Development Project**

#### **What is the purpose of my project?**

The purpose of Module 3 is to create an educational resource that documents my task of implementing the Experiential Learning Cycle (Kolb), and demonstrates how I developed a "toolbox" of effective instructional strategies. I used Kolb's Cycle because it is well-established in education, and best fits my language learning and teaching vision. The strategies, or *core tools* as I refer to them, will be addressed respectively throughout the chapter. I will first state how the Experiential Learning Cycle is foundational to my project. This cycle provided the framework to develop my language teaching skills. In doing so, relevant reflection methods were explored and connections to my learning from the MATESOL program were made.

A reflective structure of developing teaching skills is based on the lived experiences of the individual and, therefore, can be applied in various ways. I selected five core tools to facilitate the learning experiences. I utilized learner-centered techniques that helped me acquire other languages. My objective was to enhance my teaching practice by using these tools and then document the process of reflection. Core tools are versatile because they can be implemented in different learning environments to teach various subjects. I did my best to take advantage of their versatility. For the reflection process, I utilized Colin Beard's six questions based on the six dimensions of learning. The questions spark information from the how, where, and what, as well as the heart and mind of learning.

After I reflected on my lessons, I connected the learning principles cited in *Techniques & Principles in Language Teaching* by Diane Larsen-Freeman and Marti Anderson to the area(s) of my lesson that needed improvement. Abstract Conceptualization, the third stage of Kolb's cycle, systematically plans and builds ideas and theories to solve practical issues and problems. By combining principles with reflection, I added credibility to the third stage of experiential learning. Finally, I used my reflection and the language principles to improve my lesson plans, thus completing the cycle.

Let's explore the project to see my experiential learning in action! Please Note that an explanation to my color scheme can be found in Appendix B.

## Concrete Experience #1

### Core Tool – Total Physical Response (TPR)

#### Learning Objectives:

- Students will be able to understand and follow basic commands in the target language.
- Students will practice physical actions and small tasks.
- Students will learn vocabulary related to actions and movement.
- Students will improve their listening skills by following instructions accurately.
- Students will develop communication skills by giving and following commands.

#### Teaching Objectives:

- The teacher will introduce and model the commands clearly and effectively.
- The teacher will provide demonstrations for each command to ensure understanding.
- The teacher will create a positive and engaging learning environment to encourage student participation.

- The teacher will give opportunities for student-led commands to promote creativity and active learning.
- The teacher will facilitate a reflection and wrap-up session to reinforce learning and provide closure to the lesson.

**\*These objectives will guide the teaching and learning process, ensuring that both the teacher and students have clear goals to achieve.**

## **Lesson Plan / Procedure:**

### **1. Warm-up**

Start by having everyone stand up. Then, give simple commands like "Jump!" or "Turn around!" The students should follow the commands and perform the actions.

### **2. Point to the Windows**

Next, say "Point to the windows!" and demonstrate by pointing to the windows in the classroom. The students should follow and point to the windows as well.

### **3. Walk to the Front**

Now, say "Walk to the front of the room!" and demonstrate by walking to the front. The students should imitate and walk to the front of the room too.

### **4. Combining Commands**

To make it slightly more complex, give combined commands like "Stand up and point to the window!" or "Turn around and walk to the back of the room!" The students should listen carefully and perform the actions accordingly.

### **5. Student-led Commands:**

Towards the end of the lesson, let the students take turns giving commands to each other. They can use the actions they've learned and create their own combinations. For example, one student can say "Jump and turn around!" and the other student should follow the command.

### **6. Reflection and Wrap-up:**

After the student-led commands, gather the students in a circle or sit them down. Ask them questions like "What actions did we learn today?" or "Which commands were the

most fun?" Give each student a chance to share their thoughts and experiences.

Then, summarize the key learnings from the lesson: "Today, we learned how to follow simple commands like standing up, jumping, pointing to the windows, turning around, and walking to the front and back of the room. We also practiced combining commands to make them more complex. Great job, everyone!"

Finally, end the lesson on a positive note by praising the students for their efforts.

**\*The reflection and wrap-up section will help the students process what they've learned and reinforce the concepts in their minds.**

## **Reflective Observation #1`**

### **Reflection A (Freewriting)**

The activity went smoothly even though it was my first time facilitating TPR to a group. I have used this tool several times with individuals to help them internalize an action word, but multiple students at the same time was a new challenge. On top of lacking experience, I am still working on leveraging the knowledge funds and experiences, including the language backgrounds of learners, to elevate their learning process. I made sure to prepare a simple yet effective lesson plan for these reasons.

My learners were very patient, cooperative, and relaxed during the lesson. There was minimal confusion, which may be a result of the instructional strategy's clarity. The students were willing to participate, and room for error was reduced for this reason. They were excited to shut their laptops, get out of their seats, and move around to learn English. I did not expect my learners to produce language in any form. Instead, they received and comprehended relevant input with my help. I feel very appreciative that my class engaged with the lesson in a way that allowed me to focus on both their learning and my teaching in real time.

### **Reflection B (The Six Dimensions)**

#### **Where did the learning take place? (Working with the learning environment)**

The learning took place in our ELL classroom. It is important to note that this is a safe space for our students in the sense that they are aware it is OK to make mistakes there.

### **What kind of learning activities were engaged with? (the 'what' of learning)**

Total Physical Response is a learning activity that involves using physical movements to reinforce language comprehension. It is a method where learners respond to commands or instructions through actions. For example, when I said, "Stand up" I simultaneously stood up and then students followed my lead. It was a fun and interactive way to engage my learners and help them improve their listening comprehension skills.

### **How were the senses engaged in the experience? (the 'how' of learning)**

The senses were engaged through a combination of auditory, visual, and kinesthetic experiences. My learners listened to me give spoken commands, observed my gestures and movements, and then physically responded by performing actions. By engaging the body and senses, TPR helped my learners connect words with actions, making it easier for them to understand and remember vocabulary and instructions.

### **In what way was there emotional engagement? (the 'heart' in learning)**

My learners and I experienced a range of positive emotions during the experience. Excitement, joy, and a sense of accomplishment spread around the room when the activity tapped into their natural inclination to move and interact. This fostered an immersive learning environment that gradually became learner-centered throughout the lesson. Finally, seeing my students actively participating and making progress brought a sense of fulfillment and pride to my teaching practice.

### **How were intelligence and knowledge applied? (the 'mind' of learning)**

Intelligence and knowledge were applied both before and during the lesson in a couple of ways. First, as the teacher, I used my knowledge of the language and TPR techniques (such as modeling) to design and deliver an effective lesson. Notably, my understanding of learners' English proficiencies enabled me to choose appropriate vocabulary and gestures to help learners engage with the content. Furthermore, when I was observing students' progress, I had to know when and how to use targeted feedback to support their language development. When one learner mispronounced the word "jump," I made sure to politely correct them by saying, "Good try! Remember, it is 'jump,' not 'joomp.' Try saying it with a shorter 'u' sound." I then had the class act out the word knowing that they understood its meaning and pronunciation.

### **In what way did personal change occur? (the change dimension)**

Personal change occurred for my learners in two major ways from the TPR experience. First, my learners became confident in using the language as they engaged and succeeded in the activity. For example, during the lesson's later stages, I gave the students an opportunity to issue their own commands. I was pleased that they produced novel commands by combining phrases they had internalized throughout the session.

One learner who rarely speaks in class said, "Stand up, point to the window, and walk to the back of the room." Moreover, I know her classmates comprehended her because they listened and then followed the commands.

There was a social aspect to the lesson that helped foster connections and friendships among learners. I noticed that by giving them opportunities to collaborate, not only was there a boost in communication but learners were supporting each other in the language learning process. They had fun together and were actively engaged in the lesson – a truly synergistic experience.

### **Abstract Conceptualization #1**

As I alluded to earlier, I need to improve at exploiting the language resources of my learners in an effort to develop and challenge them. Striking a balance between language tasks that are neither too simple nor too complex is the goal. According to TPR principles, one way to do this is by eliciting "flexibility in understanding novel combinations of target language chunks" (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013, p.108). Going forward, commanding *original tasks* after the basic ones, such as "jump to the side of the room," or "put your hands up and wiggle your fingers" will create language flexibility in the lesson. Students must eventually be able to comprehend and produce more than the exact instructions issued by the teacher during a TPR session. They will remain motivated and continue learning the target language to this extent.

### **Active Experimentation #1**

**I created a plan to address my lack of facilitating original commands...**

**1. Start with the basics:**

- Begin by introducing and practicing basic TPR commands like "stand up," "sit down," "jump," "clap," and "walk."
- Make sure your learners understand and can perform these commands accurately.

## **2. Tap into their language resources:**

- Once your learners are comfortable with the basic commands, start incorporating their own language resources into the TPR activities.
- Ask them to suggest additional actions or movements that they know in English. This will give them a chance to showcase their knowledge and feel more engaged in the process.

## **3. Introduce target language chunks:**

- Gradually introduce target language chunks that you want your learners to understand and use.
- For example, if you want to teach the phrase "touch your nose," demonstrate the action and say the phrase. Then, have your learners repeat the action and the phrase.
- Write target words and phrases on the whiteboard for learners to see.

## **4. Get creative with combinations:**

- Once your learners are familiar with the target language chunks, challenge them to create novel combinations.
- Instead of just saying "touch your nose," you can say "touch your nose and wiggle your fingers."
- Encourage your learners to listen carefully and perform the actions accordingly.

## **5. Empower learners to command tasks:**

- As your learners become more confident, give them opportunities to command original tasks to their peers.



- Encourage them to come up with their own TPR commands using the target language chunks. This will help develop their understanding and production of the language in a fun and interactive way.

#### **6. Provide feedback and support:**

- Throughout the TPR activities, provide feedback and support to your learners.
- Correct any pronunciation or comprehension errors gently, and encourage them to ask questions if they need clarification.
- Celebrate their progress and offer positive reinforcement to boost their confidence.

#### **Final note:**

In the future, I will continue to incorporate TPR activities into my lessons and provide regular opportunities for learners to engage in TPR tasks. With time and practice, they'll be able to comprehend and produce more than just the exact instructions issued during a TPR session. I will keep working on my ability to connect meaning to action words and phrases using the technique. Adding this tool to my toolbox is imperative.

**RECYCLE**

## **Concrete Experience #2**

### **Core Tool – Language Experience Approach**

#### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Enhance the English language learner's speaking skills by expressing personal experiences orally.
2. Improve the learner's reading skills by practicing reading the written story aloud.
3. Enhance comprehension skills by engaging in discussions about the shared story.
4. Connect the target language to pertinent images thereby boosting meaning making ability.
5. Foster confidence in using English through the language experience approach.

**Teaching Objectives:**

1. Facilitate the dictation process, ensuring accurate transcription of the learner's personal experience.
2. Provide guidance and support as the learner practices reading the story aloud.
3. Engage in meaningful discussions about the story to promote comprehension and critical thinking.
4. Offer constructive feedback on pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary usage.
5. Create a positive and encouraging environment that motivates the learner to actively participate.

**Materials:**

- Pen and paper to capture the story
- Internet access for searching and finding images
- A computer or device with presentation software to create the slideshow

**Lesson Plan / Procedure:**

**1. Warm-up:**

Start by asking the learner to talk about their favorite childhood memory briefly. This will help them get into the mindset of sharing their experiences.

**2. Dictation Activity:**

Ask the learner to dictate their chosen childhood experience to you. Make sure to provide clear instructions on how to dictate, such as speaking slowly and clearly.

**3. Transcribe:**

As the learner dictates, record their words verbatim on a sheet of paper.

**4. Review and Clarify:**

After the dictation, go through the recorded story together. Clarify any vocabulary or grammar questions your learner may have. Encourage them to ask questions and provide explanations as needed.

### **5. Reading and Rereading:**

Have the learner read and reread their story aloud to you. This will help them practice their pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension.

### **6. Image Search:**

Together with the learner, search the internet for images that represent different parts of their story. Look for visuals that can help enhance the understanding and engagement of the story.

### **7. Create a Slideshow:**

Use the selected images to create a slideshow presentation. Arrange the pictures in the order that matches the sequence of the story.

### **8. Retelling with Pictures:**

Have your learner retell the story again, this time using only the pictures in the slideshow. Encourage them to describe each image and connect it to the corresponding part of their story.

## **Reflective Observation #2**

### **Reflection A (Freewriting):**

My second concrete experience represents yet another first for me in terms of the core tool applied, yet I witnessed considerable growth on the part of the individual I was working with. I am satisfied by how the learner responded in a positive way. The *Language Experience Approach* made the lesson's content relevant to him, so he was engaged in his own learning process.

Before diving into the details of the experience through *The Six Dimensions* (Beard, 2010, pg. 5), it is worth mentioning that my learner was clearly unaccustomed to learner centered techniques. He seemed surprised and excited when I asked him to tell me a story from his childhood, as if no teacher had ever tapped into his funds of knowledge. He appreciated my investment in learning about his background, and then connecting it to the lesson. Lastly, working 1 on 1 with the student for as long as needed was essential to implement this technique.

## Reflection B (The Six Dimensions):

### Where did the learning take place? (Working with the learning environment)

The learning took place in our ELL classroom. There was only one learner present for this session, which allowed me to cater the activity to his needs and ensure that he stayed on task the entire time.

### What kind of learning activities were engaged with? (the 'what' of learning)

To facilitate the Language Experience Approach, I had my student share a personal experience while I wrote it down word for word. Following his dictation, I had him read the story silently to ensure that I captured all the main ideas. Next, we discussed the story and edited it together to fix any grammatical errors and add supporting details. Then, I had my student reread his story out loud several times while I provided targeted feedback. Finally, we searched the internet for images that represent the ideas from his story and created a slideshow with the pictures. For these reasons, I would assert that the learning activity engaged with had many features that offered both the learner and teacher opportunities to progress.

### How were the senses engaged in the experience? (the 'how' of learning)

The senses were engaged in various ways. The learner listened attentively to my instructions and feedback throughout the lesson. Additionally, the student used his speaking skills to communicate ideas, while I actively listened to his words and responded accordingly. Visual aids were also used to enhance understanding and provide further opportunities for language use.

### In what way was there emotional engagement? (the 'heart' in learning)

Emotional engagement occurred in many ways. The most prominent way that emotions were engaged was through a personal connection to the lesson's content. By connecting language learning to my learner's life experience, he felt a sense of ownership and emotional investment in the learning process. For example, my student reflected on a story from his childhood that reminded him of a meaningful moment which created a sentimental feeling. He became nostalgic when telling a part of the story about his mom preparing a lychee for him and his sister to eat together. Exploring his emotions in English allowed him to express thoughts and feelings in a new language.

### **How were intelligence and knowledge applied? (the 'mind' of learning)**

From my perspective as the teacher, intelligence and knowledge came into play in several ways. First, my understanding of the instructional strategy (core tool) helped me design the activity to fit the needs of my student. Notably, I drew on my knowledge of his emotions, speaking skills, and reading proficiency to create a supportive learning environment where he felt comfortable producing language that was appropriate for his level.

Additionally, personalizing the learning content required an understanding of the student's background. Knowing that he tends to refer to experiences from his home country, I figured that he would enjoy telling a story about his life before immigrating to America. Accordingly, I selected the Language Experience Approach as a tool to connect nostalgia with his learning process. Incorporating elements of nostalgia into the learning experience helped me facilitate a more engaging and meaningful connection to language.

### **In what way did personal change occur? (the change dimension)**

I noticed my learner began to see his own progress throughout the lesson. Not only did he start using more complex sentence structures in his writing, but he also exhibited enthusiasm while sharing his experience in the target language. During the activity, he began confidently incorporating these sentence structures into his speech when retelling the story. For the first time, he actively participated which is a sign that he is beginning to take ownership and pride in his language development.

### **Abstract Conceptualization #2**

The Language Experience approach, which applies the principles of Whole Learning (WL), affords the student an opportunity to process language from the top down, meaning that the learner attempts to understand the gist of the overall text before working on the linguistic forms (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013, p. 141). My delivery of the lesson fell short due to my difficulty in transcribing the learners' exact words. My inability to capture his story verbatim meant that my student was not able to take ownership of the language he produced. To remain true to the approach, I need to help my learners make meaning of their own words before we work on syntax.

I did not write about it in my initial reflections, but utilizing a recorder would have been a great idea. Aside from transcribing the story being easier and more accurate, hearing one's own voice and language can be a valuable tool for improvement. Incorporating the

recording device in the future is a must. For now, let's examine a specific plan of action to improve my delivery of LEA lessons.

## **Active Experimentation #2**

**Here is a simple yet effective plan to improve my facilitation of the language experience approach:**

### **1. Introduce the language experience approach:**

- Explain to your learner what the language experience approach is all about.
- Emphasize that it focuses on their own experiences and helps them develop their language skills through personal stories.

### **2. Choose a childhood experience:**

- Encourage your learner to think of a memorable experience from their childhood that they would like to share. It could be a fun adventure, a special event, or a significant moment.

### **3. Explain the recording device:**

- Introduce the idea of using a recording device to capture their exact words when they share their childhood experience.
- Explain that this will help them take ownership of their language and provide an opportunity for reflection and improvement.

### **4. Model the process:**

- Show your learner how to use the recording device by recording yourself sharing a personal experience. This will give them an example to follow and help them understand the process.

### **5. Guide the storytelling:**

- Ask your learner to share their childhood experience in the target language.
- Encourage them to speak naturally and use the vocabulary and grammar they have learned. Remind them to speak clearly and at a pace they are comfortable with.

## **6. Record the storytelling:**

- Use the recording device to capture your learner's words as they share their childhood experience.
- Make sure to explain that this recording will be for their personal use and won't be shared without their permission.

## **7. Transcribe and review:**

- Transcribe the recorded storytelling session, capturing the exact words and phrases your learner used.
- Review the transcription together, highlighting areas where they did well and areas for improvement.

## **8. Practice reading and speaking:**

- Use the transcription as a resource for reading and speaking practice.
- Have your learner read the transcribed story aloud, focusing on pronunciation and fluency.
- Encourage them to make any necessary corrections or improvements as they go.

**9. Reflect and set goals:** Engage in a conversation with your learner about their experience with the language experience approach and the recording device. Ask them to reflect on their progress and set goals for future storytelling sessions.

**10. Repeat the process:** Encourage your learner to choose and share more childhood experiences using the recording device. Repeat the steps regularly to provide ongoing opportunities for practice, improvement, and language ownership.

## **Final note:**

By incorporating the recording device into the language experience approach, learners will have a valuable tool to capture their own language and track progress over time. I intend on utilizing this technique in future lessons to help my students gain skill and take ownership of their words. They will have the opportunity to learn by working on the language that they produce. I, on the other hand, develop my teaching by facilitating meaningful story-telling practice and constructively critiquing writing.

**RECYCLE**

## Concrete Experience #3

### Core Tool: Cooperative Learning (Jigsaw Reading)

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Develop reading comprehension skills by understanding the main ideas and details about the four seasons in New England.
2. Enhance vocabulary and language usage related to seasonal changes.
3. Improve oral communication skills through active participation in group discussions and sharing of ideas.

#### Teaching Objectives:

1. Facilitate cooperative learning by assigning specific roles to each group member.
2. Provide simplified reading materials and visuals to support comprehension for learners at different proficiency levels.
3. Facilitate a small group discussion using sentence frames and prompts to encourage participation and build oral communication skills.

#### Materials:

- Short texts or articles on a specific topic (one per student)
- Discussion Frames
- Papers and pencils for note taking
- Index cards

#### Procedure:

##### 1. Introduction (10 –15 minutes)

- Introduce the topic of the reading activity and explain the purpose of the jigsaw method
- Give each student a different short text related to the topic
- Instruct the students to read their texts individually and take notes on the main ideas and key details



## **2. Jigsaw Reading (20 minutes)**

- After students have read their texts individually, have students come together to share their findings with the group
- Facilitate a group discussion where students can share main ideas and key details by implementing the following discussion frames:

### **Questions:**

- “What did you learn?”
- “What was important in your reading?”
- “What did you find surprising?”
- “Can you give an example from the reading?”
- “Why is this information useful?”

### **Statements:**

- “I learned that ...”
- “One important thing I found is ...”
- “In my reading, there was an example of...”
- “One key point I took away from my reading is ...”
- “I was surprised to learn that ...”
- “I found it interesting in my reading that ...”
- “I want to learn more about ...”
- Encourage active listening, asking questions, and contributing to the group discussion

## **3. Reflective Writing and Wrap Up (10 minutes)**

- Set aside the last ten minutes of class to have students reflect on what they learned
- Provide students with post it notes where they can write a brief reflection on what they learned from their peers

- Encourage them to be specific about what they learned and provide examples to support their reflections
- Collect the index cards at the end of the activity to review and summarize the main points discussed
- Provide feedback and praise students for their efforts in working collaboratively

## Reflection #3

### Reflection A (Freewriting)

Implementing a cooperative learning approach was mutually beneficial and rewarding. The reason for this was not because of the interaction between my learners and me. The students had opportunities to share their findings from the various texts with each other, which allowed them to work on both their receptive and productive skills. On top of the collaborative element, this tool excels at sparking communication and language practice.

I used a Jigsaw activity to make each learner an “expert” on one of the four seasons in New England. Then, they came together to share their knowledge with the group. At this point, I encouraged the learners to ask the discussion questions on the back of their readings to get started. They listened and began to talk about what they had just read. Occasionally they even began to discuss the ideas from the readings without scaffolding. The discussion frames, however, were essential to spark conversation by providing prompts to help participants express their thoughts and opinions. For example, one student asked: “What was important in your reading?” to another student who responded: “One thing I found is that the weather starts to get warm in the spring.” A different student then added that: “That is why people are spending more time outdoors this month.”

A conversation about what people like to do outdoors in the springtime erupted. Although I did not plan for this to happen, it was instrumental because the students were using the target language to share what they had found from their readings. When the discussion eventually became unproductive, I swiftly redirected the focus of my learners back on the frames to engage them. In this way, I was a facilitator of meaningful English practice rather than a traditional teacher of grammar rules.

## **Reflection B (The Six Dimensions)**

### **Where did the learning take place? (Working with the learning environment)**

The learning took place in the ELL classroom. As previously noted, this is a very helpful space for my students because they do not feel pressure to speak fluent English. Moreover, the emotional barrier that hinders language learning, known as an affective filter, is lowered significantly. Language learning is promoted, and I was able to hone in on student needs and language acquisition.

### **What kind of learning activities were engaged with? (the 'what' of learning)**

The main learning activities were text analysis, whole-class sharing, and group discussion. If there were more participants, additional elements could be incorporated into the lesson, such as expert groups and presentation preparation. With only four students and limited time to deliver the lesson, I found the Jigsaw learning activities that I did implement to be sufficient.

### **In the text analysis phase students were instructed to**

### **How were the senses engaged in the experience? (the 'how' of learning)**

The auditory and visual senses were engaged, but the cognitive sense enabled the learners to process and make sense of the information they heard and read. As my students analyzed and applied knowledge gained from the Jigsaw activity, I actively listened to be able to guide the conversation. There was a healthy amount of thought-provoking discussion, which means that the senses were constantly being engaged.

### **In what way was there emotional engagement? (the 'heart' in learning)**

By incorporating a Jigsaw reading activity, my students felt a sense of belonging and collaboration within the small group. This fostered a positive and supportive learning environment, and feelings of motivation and accomplishment were evoked. One example was when a quiet student who does not usually speak in class decided to ask a question after she had responded to a question herself. She asked the same question, but a positive emotional connection to the language had been made.

### **How were intelligence and knowledge applied? (the 'mind' of learning)**

Students used their intelligence and knowledge in several ways during the Jigsaw reading activity. Firstly, they employed their critical thinking skills to analyze the

assigned texts. This involved actively engaging with the material, identifying key ideas, and making connections between different pieces of information. Furthermore, learners drew upon their existing knowledge to comprehend the text. They used vocabulary, grammar, and reading strategies to decode unfamiliar words, understand sentences, and grasp the overall meaning. One example of a learner using their intellect and knowledge was when we were discussing various summer activities in New England. A different student had just encountered the phrase “relaxing on the sandy shores,” and did not understand the meaning of the word ‘shores.’ An experienced student chimed in by saying “think about the word ‘sandy.’ Where is there a lot of sand?” The student thought for a moment before interjecting “Oh! Of course. Relaxing on the beach!” Problem solved.

I, on the other hand, used my intelligence and knowledge in different ways. Besides selecting appropriate texts that matched the learners’ language proficiency levels and learning goals, I had to apply knowledge of language learning strategies to properly scaffold the lesson. Creating discussion frames and sentence starters was essential to a fruitful group discussion, but being able to facilitate meaningful interactions between individuals was the key to a truly cooperative learning experience.

### **In what way did personal change occur? (the change dimension)**

The core tool that I applied to this lesson transformed my learners by encouraging them to collaborate and communicate as they worked together to understand and share information. During this process, the students actively listened to each other, asked clarifying questions, and provided explanations. Their confidence was boosted because they were able to express ideas in English that were previously a struggle. When one student was presenting her findings about the winter season in New England, she said, “Drinking hot chocolate is a tradition in the winter.” Another student then asked, “What is a tradition?” Without hesitation, the student who made the statement responded by saying that a tradition is “something people do over and over again because it is special to them.” At this point I noticed that the more my learners collaborate and communicate in the target language, the greater the motivation and confidence they experience.

### **Abstract Conceptualization #3**

Based on my reflections, the element from the lesson that I will focus on improving is target language production, “not just as the object of study, but as a vehicle for classroom communication”(Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013, p.120). Although I provided the learners with discussion frames, they did not have the language to sustain a conversation. Therefore, the discussion was stagnant at times. To remedy this, I will put a priority on building my learners’ conversational skills. I will pre-teach functional

language, such as phrases for making suggestions, asking for clarification, or expressing opinions. I will also incorporate vocabulary and expressions related to the lesson's topic for communication to thrive.

### **Active Experimentation #3**

**To solve the communication problem described above, here's a plan:**

#### **1. Pre-teaching functional language:**

- Introduce and practice phrases for describing weather conditions in each season, such as "It's sunny," "It's snowing," "It's raining," etc.
- Teach conversational phrases for expressing preferences, such as "I love the fall because..." or "I prefer the summer because..."
- Provide sentence frames for making comparisons, like "The winter is colder than the spring."
- Distribute handouts for learners to refer to during the discussion stage

#### **2. Incorporating vocabulary and expressions:**

- Introduce relevant vocabulary words for each season, such as "leaves," "snow," "flowers," "beach," etc.
- Teach idiomatic expressions related to the seasons, like "spring cleaning," "summer vacation," "fall foliage," or "winter wonderland"
- Encourage learners to use these words and expressions in their conversations about the seasons

#### **3. Jigsaw Activity:**

- Have learners discuss and describe the characteristics, activities, and weather associated with their assigned season using modified discussion frames
- Encourage the use of functional language and vocabulary learned in the pre-teaching stage by having learners refer back to their handouts
- Actively listen; provide feedback and guidance during discussions, focusing on accuracy and fluency

#### **4. Authentic materials:**

- Incorporate authentic materials like pictures, videos, or additional articles about the four seasons in New England
- Use these materials to spark discussions and engage learners in conversations about their experiences or preferences related to each season

**Final Note:**

By following this plan, I can help my English Language Learners develop the language skills needed to sustain conversations about the four seasons in New England. The next time I implement this core tool, I will consider how the language production of my learners impacts the conversational element of a cooperative learning experience. Going forward, pre-teaching functional language will be instrumental to evoking a meaningful group discussion.

**RECYCLE**

**Concrete Experience #4**

**Core Tool: Task – Based Language Teaching**

**Learning Objectives:**

**1. Improve writing fluency and accuracy**

- Encourage students to write their postcards using correct grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structures.
- Provide feedback and guidance to help students improve their writing skills.

**2. Develop communication skills**

- Encourage students to express their thoughts and experiences clearly and effectively in writing.
- Provide opportunities for students to share and discuss their postcards with their classmates, promoting communication and collaboration.

**3. Enhance cultural understanding**

- Encourage students to reflect on their high school experiences and how they may differ from those of others.
- Foster a sense of empathy and respect for different perspectives and cultures through the sharing and discussion of postcards.

**Teaching Objectives:**

**1. Develop writing skills**

- Teach your English Language Learners how to structure a postcard.
- Provide sentence frames and language models to help them express their thoughts effectively.

## **2. Enhance vocabulary and language usage**

- Introduce relevant vocabulary and expressions related to high school memories.
- Encourage students to use descriptive language and express emotions in their postcards.

## **3. Foster reflection and discussion**

- Facilitate a discussion about the content of the postcards.
- Encourage students to reflect on their favorite high school memories and share them with their classmates.

### **Materials:**

- Postcards
- Sentence Frames
- Whiteboard and marker

### **Procedure:**

#### **1. Introduction (2 minutes)**

- Greet the students and introduce the concept of postcards
- Explain that they will be writing postcards to share their experiences at Concord High School (CHS)

#### **2. Pre-Writing Discussion (5 minutes)**

- Engage the students in a brief discussion about their favorite places at CHS
- Brainstorm a list of descriptive words and phrases related to these places
- Write the words and phrases up on the board for the class to see

#### **3. Pre-Task Activity (10 minutes)**

- Distribute sentence frames
- Instruct students to fill in the frames using the vocabulary and images provided
- Help learners create complete sentences using their own words

#### **4. Writing Time (15 minutes)**

- Explain the task: Imagine writing a postcard to a friend or family member back home, sharing an experience at CHS
- Allow students to work individually
- Encourage them to incorporate descriptive language, vocabulary, and grammar they've acquired from the sentence frames

**5. Sharing and Discussion (10 minutes)**

- Have students share their postcards with the class
- They can either read their postcards aloud or display them for others to see
- Encourage the class to listen actively and provide positive feedback

**6. Reflection and Discussion (10 minutes)**

- Facilitate a discussion about what they've learned from each other's postcards
- Encourage students to ask questions and share their thoughts about the school
- Thank the learners for participating and working hard, and then wrap up the lesson by letting them know they can keep or send their postcards

**Reflection #4****A (Freewriting)**

The first thing I noticed during this experience was that the learners were excited when I introduced the idea of writing postcards. We agreed to take a break from working on homework to complete a task. Two very bright students participated, both of which were willing to engage. I told them to think about their favorite places at high school and then give me some words and phrases to describe these locations. I wrote the responses up on the board for the class to see and apply to the next stage of the lesson.

**Library**

- Resourceful
- Quiet
- Productive

**ELL Classroom**

- Safe
- "Learning opportunities"
- Fun

**\*The two students selected different topics.**

After a brief conversation about the subject of the postcards, I distributed sentence frames to enhance the writing process. They got to work right away filling in



the spaces with vocabulary words and descriptive language related to school. I could see that the frames were beneficial when the students were progressing through the handout. In fact, only one question was asked the entire time: “Who should I write to?” Once the students were ready, we shifted gears to the peak of the lesson - writing a postcard. I had to balance the learner’s planning and writing time, but luckily it was a breeze thanks to their self-directedness.

My goal was to get the learners writing in their own words about meaningful content. To make this happen, I facilitated language by first calling to mind relevant ideas and then scaffolding written and verbal production. At the same time, I refrained from dominating the lesson via the learners completing the task on their own. Let’s analyze the learning that took place during this experience.

## **B. (Six Dimensions)**

### **Where did the learning take place? (Working with the learning environment)**

The learning took place in our ELL Classroom. As previously mentioned, only two students were present for the lesson. This enabled me to focus on more advanced language structures, phrases, and vocabulary.

### **What kind of learning activities were engaged with? (the ‘what’ of learning)**

Learning activities we engaged with included a pre-task assignment to help learners brainstorm ideas for their postcards, sentence frames to enhance writing, and a discussion to reflect on what students had learned from each other. Although the lesson primarily focused on developing writing skills, the verbal exchange of thoughts and ideas after the task seemed effortless for the learners. The students were primed to communicate post-task, and I was not going to stop them.

### **How were the senses engaged in the experience? (the ‘how’ of learning)**

The visual, tactile, and auditory senses were engaged during the lesson. Visually, learners observed the colorful pictures on the postcards that I supplied, causing them to be interested. Additionally, students used their visual sense to read and analyze the descriptive words and sentence frames provided. When writing the postcard, the learners used their sense of touch to feel the texture of the postcard and to manipulate a pencil. Lastly, everybody involved in the lesson, including myself, engaged the auditory sense by listening to instructions, responses, explanations, and examples. We had discussions in which we listened to each other’s ideas and provided input. Creating a

multi-sensory learning experience that promotes active engagement is critical to Task-Based Language Teaching.

### **In what way was there emotional engagement? (the 'heart' in learning)**

One of my major takeaways from this experience was how the students felt emotionally engaged as they reflected on their favorite places and experiences. Positive memories and a sense of nostalgia were evoked throughout the lesson. I recall sharing an example story about the classroom in which I delivered my first lesson as a spur for their writing process. As a side note, modeling the task is certainly worthy of consideration for teachers.

Writing about their favorite places and experiences in high school allowed my students to express their personal identity and share meaningful aspects of their lives. They had the chance to share unique perspectives, interests, and memories. This self-expression conjured up a sense of pride and authenticity as they communicated their thoughts and feelings. For example, one student wrote about how the ELL Classroom makes her feel safe and provides plenty of "learning opportunities," which is why she is proud to be an English Language Learner. I made sure that she received positive feedback and recognition for her effort.

### **How were intelligence and knowledge applied? (the 'mind' of learning)**

Intelligence and knowledge were applied in different ways to enhance the overall experience. Let's first discuss the teacher's role because I had to utilize my knowledge of language learning and the instructional strategy itself to design the lesson. To adapt my lesson to the needs, language proficiencies, learning styles, and strengths of my learners, I had to make informed decisions on how to scaffold the task. One decision I made in the moment was to release scaffolding from the sentence frames. The learners were more advanced than I had anticipated, and they were capable of forming all the basic frames on the front side. I had them flip to the backside of the handout and go to work on the advanced frames.

The learners used their intelligence to comprehend task instructions, plan their writing, and make decisions about the content they wanted to include. They drew on experiences from their favorite places in high school to select relevant details and then express their thoughts in a coherent way. One example was when a learner communicated to the small group *why* he chose to write about the library as his favorite place. He recounted a memory from the beginning of the school year when his soccer team held their biweekly meetings there. He told us, "I like to get work done in the library

because it is quiet, but I love the library because it is where my team comes together.” I thanked him for sharing his experience with the group.

### **In what way did personal change occur? (the change dimension)**

Through the task, learners had the opportunity to practice their language skills. Language development is the primary way that personal change occurred, but confidence building was the key. Successfully completing a task-based activity, such as writing a postcard, boosted my learners’ faith in themselves that they can acquire language. Improved communication in the final discussion was a byproduct of the heightened sense of self-trust. As they witnessed their own progress and received constructive feedback throughout the lesson, my learners gained confidence in their writing skills and overall language proficiency.

### **Abstract Conceptualization:**

My reflections on implementing a task-based language teaching tool helped me understand that the design of my task needs to be meaningful and relevant to engage the learners. However, I also learned that an easy task, or perhaps a task with too much scaffolding, is counterproductive to the teaching and learning outcomes of the lesson. In finding theoretical support for task-based language teaching, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers have cited the work of John Dewey (1913), who emphasized the need for experience, relevance, and ‘intelligent effort’ for effective learning (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013, p. ). Just like teachers, learners are actively engaged in constructing their own knowledge through experience and problem-solving.

### **Active Experimentation #4**

**Here is a plan to ensure the use of ‘intelligent effort’ from my learners the next time I apply this core tool:**

- 1. Task Introduction:** Begin by introducing the task to the learners. Explain that they will be writing a postcard about their learning experiences in high school. Emphasize that they should reflect on their language learning journey and share their thoughts and feelings about it.
- 2. Pre-Writing Discussion:** Engage the learners in a group discussion about their high school language learning experiences. Encourage them to share their challenges,

successes, and memorable moments. This will help activate their prior knowledge and generate ideas for their postcards.

**3. Task Instructions:** Clearly explain the task requirements and expectations.

Emphasize that learners should use advanced language skills, such as complex sentence structures, varied vocabulary, and appropriate grammar. Provide a sample postcard to serve as a model and guide for their writing.

**4. Planning Phase:** Allocate some time for learners to plan their postcards. Encourage them to brainstorm ideas, create an outline, and organize their thoughts. Remind them to consider the structure of a postcard, including the greeting, body, and closing.

**5. Writing Phase:** Once the planning is complete, allow learners to start writing their postcards. Remind them to focus on expressing their learning experiences, using descriptive language, and showcasing their skills. Encourage them to edit their work as they go.

**6. Peer Feedback:** After the writing phase, pair learners up for peer feedback. Instruct them to exchange their postcards and provide constructive feedback to each other. This will promote collaboration and help learners refine their writing skills.

**7. Reflection and Sharing:** Wrap up the activity by giving learners an opportunity to reflect on their writing experience. Ask them to share what they enjoyed about the task and what they learned from it. Provide time for a few volunteers to share their postcards with the whole class, fostering a supportive and encouraging environment.

**Final note:**

There are many ways in which the task can be modified to meet the strengths of learners, but I decided to shift the topic of the lesson to a slightly more challenging one. The key is to understand the backgrounds of the individuals you designed the lesson for so that pivotal considerations are made in the planning process. To be prepared to facilitate task-based language teaching to advanced students, I will have to select a task that challenges my learners to utilize critical thinking skills and solve a real-world problem.

**RECYCLE**

## Concrete Experience #5

### Core Tool: Authentic Materials

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Language acquisition: Improve English language skills, including listening, reading, and pronunciation through exposure to authentic song lyrics.
2. Vocabulary expansion: Learn and understand new vocabulary words from the song lyrics, reinforcing their meanings.
3. Comprehension and interpretation: Develop the ability to comprehend and interpret the meaning of the song lyrics, as well as discuss and express personal opinions about the message of the song.

#### Teaching Objectives:

1. Engage students: Create a positive and engaging learning environment through the use of music, promoting active participation and interest in the lesson.
2. Facilitate language practice: Provide opportunities for students to practice listening, reading, and pronunciation skills through the song lyrics and related activities.
3. Foster discussion and critical thinking: Encourage students to engage in meaningful discussions, express their thoughts, and analyze the message of the song.

#### Materials:

- A device to play the song "One Love" by Bob Marley
- Printed copies of the song lyrics for each student. Make sure they are clear and easy to read
- Worksheet with blanks for fill-in-the-blank listening activity
- Whiteboard and markers for writing down vocabulary words and brainstorming ideas during the group discussion

#### Lesson Procedure:

##### 1. Introduce the song

Play a short clip of the song and ask students if they recognize it. Discuss the artist, Bob Marley, and the genre of reggae music.

##### 2. Pre-teach vocabulary

Provide a list of key vocabulary words from the song lyrics. Discuss the meanings and pronunciation of each word to ensure understanding.

### 3. Read the lyrics

Hand out printed copies of the song lyrics to the students. Read the lyrics aloud together, emphasizing pronunciation and meaning. Encourage students to follow along and highlight any unfamiliar words.

### 4. Comprehension questions

Ask students comprehension questions about the lyrics to check their understanding. For example, "What is the main message of the song?" or "What does 'one love' mean?"

### 5. Fill in the blanks

Create a worksheet with some missing words from the lyrics. Have students listen to the song again and fill in the blanks with the correct words. This will help reinforce vocabulary and listening skills.

### 6. Group discussion

Divide students into small groups and have them discuss the meaning of the song and how it relates to their own lives. Encourage them to share their thoughts and opinions.

### 7. Sing along

Finally, play the full song and encourage students to sing along. This will help improve their pronunciation and fluency.

## Reflection #5

### A. (Freewriting):

Authentic Materials were engaged from the moment my students entered the classroom. As I greeted them, they noticed that Reggae music sung in English was playing in the background. Their curiosity jumped instantly.

"I know this song!"

"What are we doing today?"

"Are we going to listen to Reggae?"

Knowing about music preferences from previous conversations, I figured that they would be interested. While introducing the song, it was apparent that all three participants recognized it. Having captured their attention, it was time to read the lyrics of the song aloud.

The lesson unfolded as planned, with the exception of the discussion which was unexpectedly high-yielding. We were able to uncover a variety of messages behind the lyrics. For instance, one learner pointed out how the artist of the song was calling for peace through helping others in the struggle, when he sang that “Have pity on those whose chances grow thinner.” The input from the authentic materials seemed to inspire output in the form of the target language.

The effort put forth by the learners was consistent and focused. It was apparent that the content of the lesson was very meaningful to them. My job was simply to leverage the impact that the music had on my learners to afford language development and comprehension practice. Let’s unpack the learning that took place and then examine how to build on this experience.

## **B. (Six Dimensions):**

### **Where did the learning take place? (Working with the learning environment)**

Once again, the learning took place in our ELL Classroom, where I typically tutor students and deliver lessons at school. Three learners were present, and they consisted of three different levels according to their English proficiency scores (beginner, intermediate, and advanced). Working with a mixed-ability group of language learners is an interesting challenge, but it can also be advantageous for all parties involved.

### **What kind of learning activities were engaged with? (the ‘what’ of learning)**

Speaking, reading, listening, and writing activities were engaged. They were dealt with to different degrees, but nevertheless I am pleased that all four skills were incorporated into the lesson. Learning activities were implemented together at times, such as when students were asked to listen to the song and simultaneously write in corresponding lyrics. Overall, this core tool has the capacity to facilitate a breadth of language items and communicative interactions.

### **How were the senses engaged in the experience? (the ‘how’ of learning)**

The auditory and visual senses are the primary senses that were engaged during this experience. By listening to the song itself, my learners were able to hear the lyrics and focus on the singer's voice, melody, and rhythm. Furthermore, while reading the lyrics of “One Love,” my learners visually processed the words on the page and then analyzed the meaning and structure of the song.

### **In what way was there emotional engagement? (the 'heart' in learning)**

Emotional engagement occurred due to a connection to the lyrics and personal experiences. The lyrics of the song carry messages of unity, love, and hope. As my learners listened to, read, and discussed the lyrics, they connected with the positive vibrations and messages of the song. It was apparent that the themes resonated with my learners on a personal level. During the class discussion, I observed the learner's engagement and participation. They were actively sharing their thoughts and personal experiences related to the song, indicating to me that they connected to the emotions.

### **How were intelligence and knowledge applied? (the 'mind' of learning)**

My learners and I applied intelligence and knowledge in the following ways. The learners comprehended the meaning of the lyrics and analyzed the messages conveyed in the song. They utilized their knowledge of vocabulary, which we reviewed prior to listening, and cultural context to interpret the lyrics. Additionally, they made connections by drawing upon their own life experiences to relate to the lyrics and engage in a meaningful discussion. Through this lesson, learners gained insights into the cultural and political significance of the song and its artist, Bob Marley. They learned about the impact of reggae music and its role in promoting social justice and unity, expanding their cultural understanding.

I applied knowledge by providing relevant background information throughout the lesson, guiding learners to analyze the lyrics, explaining figurative language and cultural references present in the song, and facilitating a discussion about its purpose. One specific example was when I asked the learners, "What do you think Bob Marley's purpose was in writing this song?" This prompted learners to critically analyze the lyrics and express their interpretations of the song's meaning. Significantly, I distributed the learners' tasks as equitably as possible, recognizing that certain learners are more advanced than others. By actively engaging the learners and guiding the discussion, I created a space for them to explore the deeper meaning behind the song and develop their own insights.

### **In what way did personal change occur? (the change dimension)**

Through engaging with authentic materials like songs, learners had the opportunity to improve their listening comprehension, vocabulary, and pronunciation. By enthusiastically participating in discussions and analyzing the lyrics, they enhanced their language skills and became more confident in their English abilities. Moreover, personal growth occurred when learners connected with the enlightened messages of



the song. They self-reflected based on these themes, evoking a deeper understanding of themselves and others.

Finally, implementing this core tool led to personal growth in a number of ways for me. By designing a lesson that incorporates authentic materials, my knowledge base surrounding the subject matter was expanded and my expertise in lesson preparation was enhanced. In addition, facilitating discussions about the purpose of the song and analyzing its themes encouraged me to reflect on my own beliefs, values, and teaching practices. Specifically, I considered the role of empathy in language education. I thought to myself: “the more empathy I have for my students, the better I will understand their needs and be able to provide meaningful opportunities for them to learn.”

### Abstract Conceptualization #5

As predicted, I will now utilize the above reflections to conceptualize a scope for development, and then connect experience to principles of language teaching. The fundamental way in which my implementation of authentic materials, communicative language teaching, and content-based instruction can be improved upon is by keeping the focus on functional language. “It is not so important that the materials be genuine as it is that they be used authentically, with a communicative intent.” (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013, p. 126) Based on this postulate in conjunction with my experience, it is essential that the language items involved in my lessons are practical. To expand their vocabulary and overall ability to communicate, I must strive to incorporate meaningful language that is both relevant and helpful to the learner.

### Active Experimentation #5

**Let's modify the lesson plan to ensure practical language is incorporated when analyzing song lyrics with Multi-Language Learners:**

- 1. Choose a relevant song:** Select a song in the target language that is both interesting to your learners and contains practical language. Consider songs with clear and relatable themes, such as daily life or emotions. Songs that tell a story the student will find interesting may be effective as well.

**2. Pre-teach key vocabulary:** Before listening to the song, introduce and explain any unfamiliar vocabulary or expressions that appear in the lyrics. This will help learners understand the meaning of the song and engage with it more effectively.

**3. Listen to the song:** Play the song for your learners, encouraging them to actively listen and follow along with the lyrics. This will help them familiarize themselves with the pronunciation and rhythm of the language.

**4. Read and analyze the lyrics:** Provide a printed copy of the song's lyrics to each learner. Have them read through the lyrics individually or in pairs. Ask them to identify any words or phrases they find interesting or challenging.

**5. Discuss the meaning:** Engage the learners in a group discussion about the meaning of the lyrics. Encourage them to share their interpretations, emotions evoked by the song, and any connections they make to their own lives or experiences.

**6. Language analysis:** Guide the learners in analyzing the language used in the lyrics. Encourage them to identify specific vocabulary, grammar structures, and expressions that they find practical and relevant to everyday communication.

**7. Practice using the language:** Provide opportunities for learners to practice using the practical language from the lyrics. This can include role-playing, creating dialogues, or writing short paragraphs using the newly acquired language.

**8. Reflect and review:** Wrap up the lesson by reflecting on the learners' experience with the song and the language analysis. Discuss how the practical language from the lyrics can be applied in real-life situations. Review any language points that emerged during the discussion and provide additional practice or clarification if needed.

**Final note:**

By incorporating practical language into the lesson, learners will not only engage with the authentic material but also gain valuable language skills that they can use in real-life contexts. The fact that my learners had a positive experience and actually enjoyed the lesson is at the forefront of their learning process. For this reason, I know that there will be more opportunities to develop my implementation of this core tool.

**Module 3 Summary:**

Learning through experience is omnipresent, yet this capstone aims to consciously apply experiential learning principles to language teaching, record the process, and then create a plan for improvement. I taught five lessons to English Language Learners by creating lesson plans featuring five core tools. I then had two styles in which I reflected on each of these experiences: intuitive and systematic. The former was a free-flowing, spontaneous thought process recorded in a journal following the experience. The systematic approach was more methodical, and I used Collin Beard's six reflective questions to analyze the outcomes of the experience. Based on my thoughts and responses from the reflection stage, I identified room for improvement and successful approaches. I examined how to adjust the unproductive aspects of lessons by connecting theory to practice. Finally, I formulated a plan to apply what I learned from the experience to the next lesson.

The hope I have for this project is that developing language teachers use it as a reliable resource to guide them through the beginning stages of their careers in education. I intend for my work to propel those who view it in a trajectory to reach their goals by gaining knowledge through experience. *Developing a Teaching "Toolbox" with Experiential Learning Principles* focuses on how I designed my learning experience, but ideally it encourages others to do the same.

▣ **Experiential Learning Template**

**Click on the above link to access a template that outlines my developmental process, or see Appendix A**



**Conclusion:**

Experiential learning has always been a prevalent mode of learning and teaching. Many prominent educators, psychologists, and philosophers have contributed to its theoretical underpinnings. David Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle has been thoroughly analyzed in the literature and, despite criticism, continues to be well respected in language education. I chose to focus on the principles relevant to my project and then develop a teaching "toolbox" based on both theory and practice. Undertaking five iterations of the Experiential Learning Cycle comprised the foundation. Each one afforded me invaluable experience that I otherwise would not have been able to obtain. The foundational insights emerged in my reflections, conceptualizations, and experimentations. The core tools were crucial because they facilitated concrete learning experiences. In other words, they were both a vehicle for developing a repertoire of language teaching methods and engaging in Experiential Learning. Lastly, the principles linked to these approaches were instrumental in furthering my understanding of becoming an effective language teacher.

Moving forward, I am committed to using experiential learning to develop my teaching practice further. Experiential learning has proven to help engage and empower my development as a language teacher. The next step is actively applying my newfound knowledge of core tools and related principles. I am excited to explore new ways to incorporate experiential learning into my teaching repertoire and witness its positive impact on my students' language learning journey. With each new experience, I will continue to refine and grow as a language teacher, ensuring that my students receive the most effective and meaningful learning opportunities.

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## Appendix A

### Template

# Applying Experiential Learning

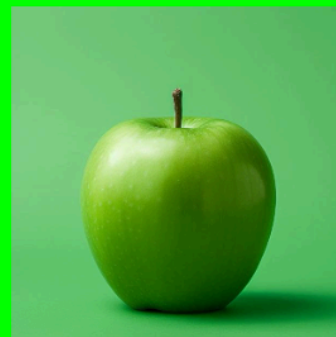
*"In learning you will teach, and in teaching, you will learn."  
-Phil Collins*

KJ Matte

## Purpose

The reason that I created this project was ultimately to improve my teaching practice and that of others, but I also aim to spark discourse on the intentional and meaningful application of experiential learning principles. Here are the objectives of my template:

- Facilitate Reflection
- Connect Theory to Practice
- Promote Growth and Improvement



## Facilitating Reflection



The template encourages you to reflect on your teaching experience at different stages of the Experiential Learning Cycle (David Kolb). By providing specific slides for each stage, it helps guide your reflection process, promotes deep thinking, and develops instructional strategies.

## Connect Theory and Practice

The template supports you in making connections between the theoretical aspects of language teaching and your practical experiences and techniques in the classroom. It prompts you to identify flaws in your core tools and seek solutions through research and literature.

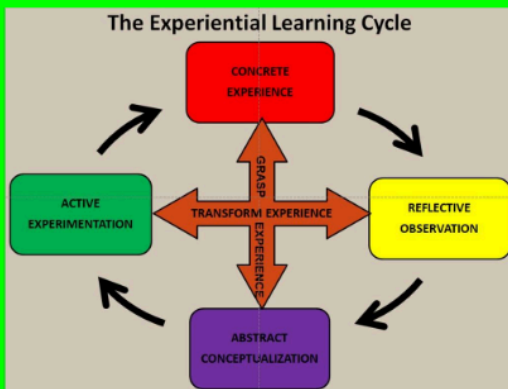


## Promote Growth and Improvement

The template aims to enhance your teaching practice by applying your learnings from the previous stages to create a new and improved lesson plan. It encourages you to consider the needs of your learners and make adjustments based on your experiences and reflections.



## The Foundation



The Experiential Learning Cycle is a multidimensional learning process whereby effective learning occurs through a constant cycle of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation.

Let's explore how to apply it!

## Concrete Experience

- Describe the lesson plan you created, including materials, learning outcomes, and lesson procedures.

**Examples of materials:** sentence frames, index cards, musical lyrics

**Examples of learning outcomes:** Students read a paragraph and then discuss it in the target language

- Explain the instructional strategy or method you used as your "core tool."

**Example:** Task-Based Language-Teaching (TBLT), Language Experience Approach (LEA), Total Physical Response (TPR)

- Share any highlights or key moments from delivering the lesson.



## Focused Reflection

- Write your first reflection on the lesson, which is based on your immediate reaction.

- Make sure the reflection is intuitive and targets your instinct about how the lesson unfolded.

- Think about the needs of learners and whether or not they were met.

- Share any insights or realizations you had during this reflection.



## Focused Reflection (Continued)

- For your second reflection, answer reflective questions that help you think deeply about your experience. I recommend the questions based on the six dimensions of experiential learning from *Colin Beard's Teaching Toolbox*.
- Your reflection should be systematic and methodical.
- Share any specific findings or conclusions you drew from this reflection.



## Abstract Conceptualization

- Address the flaws you identified in the implementation of your core tools
- Research literature on the language teaching technique that you employed during the experience
- Read about how other teachers implemented the core tool and find solutions
- Highlight any connections you made between theory and practice



## Active Experimentation

### Application:

- Apply your learning from the previous stages to create a new and improved lesson plan
- Discuss how this plan meets the needs of your language learners
- Share any specific adjustments you will make based on your experience and reflections



## Conclusion

- Summarize the key takeaways from your experiential learning journey
- Express excitement about the development of your teaching practice



## Contact Info

Please contact me with any questions or comments about my project. I truly appreciate your time.

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## Appendix B - Color Scheme Explanation

The color green represents a *concrete experience*.

The color blue represents *reflection*.

The color purple represents *abstract conceptualization*.

The color red represents *active experimentation*.

The word **RECYCLE** uses all the colors to represent the experiential learning cycle.

The neon green background in the slideshow is my signature color for presentations.

Thank you for viewing my project.