

天主教輔仁大學英國語文學系學士班畢業成果  
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**English Teaching & Educational Psychology Final Portfolio:  
What I Learned from Teaching English to a Lower Grade  
Student As a Teacher**

SANCTITAS BONITAS

PULCHRITUDO

VERITAS

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Department of English Language and Literature, Fu Jen Catholic University

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What I Learned from Teaching English to a Lower Grade Student As a Teacher

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**Introduction**

As an English major student, the question that I have received very often from the elders is “Are you going to be an English teacher in the future?” To be honest, I am not really sure what I am going to do in my future even though I am already a junior. Being an English teacher was actually one of my dreams when I was little. However, as I grew up, I realized that being a teacher is not as easy as I thought. Therefore, I thought this course might be a great opportunity for me to experience a small pattern of being an English teacher. I believe it is also a good chance for me to get to know more about myself, whether I want to become an English teacher or not.

**Purposes**

In this portfolio, I will include my student Eason’s learning motivation, status, and outcome, as well as how me and my partner designed the courses that are suitable for his English level, by using Harmer’s lesson plan format and Vigotsky’s play theory. The purpose of doing this portfolio is to demonstrate the information that I mentioned above, which can show my student’s learning outcome as well as my learning outcome.

**Situation Explain**

First of all, I am very grateful that Professor Doris Shih offered us the chance to teach in Guo-Tai elementary school, and I was assigned to teach four students that are sixth graders in the very first beginning. However, I got the message from professor, saying that there would be five more lower level students in my classmate Colette's team. Therefore, I was changed to Colette's team to co-teach with her. We should be teaching six lower graders in total; however, only one student showed up since the first week.

I had asked professor and also the Director of Teaching Affairs in Guo-Tai elementary school, but she has meeting every Tuesday morning, which is the time we are teaching the kids. Hence, she was not able to go to find the students who did not show up. Even though me and Colette teach only one student together, it is still a very good opportunity for me to have a different experience.

**About the Student**

Eason, our only student, is a second grader. His English level is low, and he learns slower than the kids at his same age. He is still learning alphabets, but he is able to say a few simple words. He also has special needs; for example, he is afraid of staying in the room where has many of his peers. Therefore, we always needed another classroom to teach Eason instead of staying in the same classroom as other people did. However, he might be distracted by any sound or people walked by and thus lost his attention in class easily. Therefore, to be honest, he was quite a challenge for me since he is a special kid that I have never met before.

## My Student's Learning Motivation (Gardner)

**Mini-Attitude/Motivation Test Battery**  
(Designed by R. C. Gardner, Ph.D.)

The purpose of this part of the questionnaire is to determine your feelings about a number of things. We want you to rate each of the following items in terms of how you feel about it. Each item is followed by a scale that has a label on the left and another on the right, and the numbers 1 to 7 between the two ends. For each item, please circle any one of the numbers from 1 to 7 that best describes you.

1. My motivation to learn English in order to communicate with English speaking people is:  
WEAK \_\_\_1: \_\_\_2: \_\_\_3: \_\_\_4: 5: \_\_\_6: \_\_\_7 STRONG
2. My attitude toward English speaking people is:  
UNFAVOURABLE \_\_\_1: \_\_\_2: 3: \_\_\_4: \_\_\_5: \_\_\_6: \_\_\_7 FAVOURABLE
3. My interest in foreign languages is:  
VERY LOW \_\_\_1: \_\_\_2: \_\_\_3: 4: \_\_\_5: \_\_\_6: \_\_\_7 VERY HIGH
4. My desire to learn English is:  
WEAK \_\_\_1: \_\_\_2: \_\_\_3: 4: \_\_\_5: \_\_\_6: \_\_\_7 STRONG
5. My attitude toward learning English is:  
UNFAVOURABLE \_\_\_1: \_\_\_2: \_\_\_3: 4: \_\_\_5: \_\_\_6: \_\_\_7 FAVOURABLE
6. My attitude toward my English teacher is:  
UNFAVOURABLE \_\_\_1: \_\_\_2: \_\_\_3: \_\_\_4: \_\_\_5: \_\_\_6: 7 FAVOURABLE
7. My motivation to learn English for practical purposes (e.g., to get a good job) is:  
WEAK \_\_\_1: \_\_\_2: 3: \_\_\_4: \_\_\_5: \_\_\_6: \_\_\_7 STRONG
8. I worry about speaking English outside of class:  
VERY LITTLE \_\_\_1: \_\_\_2: \_\_\_3: \_\_\_4: 5: \_\_\_6: \_\_\_7 VERY MUCH
9. My attitude toward my English course is:  
UNFAVOURABLE \_\_\_1: \_\_\_2: \_\_\_3: \_\_\_4: 5: \_\_\_6: \_\_\_7 FAVOURABLE
10. I worry about speaking in my English class:  
VERY LITTLE \_\_\_1: \_\_\_2: 3: \_\_\_4: \_\_\_5: \_\_\_6: \_\_\_7 VERY MUCH
11. My motivation to learn English is:  
VERY LOW \_\_\_1: \_\_\_2: \_\_\_3: \_\_\_4: 5: \_\_\_6: \_\_\_7 VERY HIGH
12. My parents encourage me to learn English:  
VERY LITTLE \_\_\_1: \_\_\_2: \_\_\_3: \_\_\_4: \_\_\_5: \_\_\_6: 7 VERY MUCH

According to the motivation test that my student Eason filled out, I can see he is willing to learn English under his parents' encouragement. In addition, he is always on time and sometimes even earlier to have out class. Therefore, I would say he is a very cooperative and energetic kid.

## Theories Used

### 1. Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development

According to Vygotsky's assumption, "play allows children to cognitively 'stretch' themselves" (Ormrod et al. 42). At the age of eight years old, I believe the best way to get Eason's attention is to let him play something he likes to intrigue his interest. Moreover, usually a kid can perform better than we think if that game is something he or she really in to, or the game might also stimulate his potential in English.

Vygotsky's another concept, scaffolding, "can help students accomplish challenging tasks in instructional contexts" (Ormrod et al. 45). I believe by demonstrating correct performance (pronunciation), dividing a complex task into several smaller activities (learn all the alphabets), and asking questions or giving hints that encourage students to think about the task (make sure he really understand what he have learned), Eason will be able to reach his ultimate goal—recognize and read all the alphabets and learn more vocabularies.

### 2. Communicative language teaching

According to Richards and Rodgers, communicative language teaching is one of the methods that is suitable for teaching lower level kids. By using this teaching method, we hope Eason can learn English happily by communicating with us, such as sharing his personal experience or his hobby, so that we can integrate what he likes or what he had experience into his English learning process to make this learning experience more interesting.

## Teaching and Instructional Processes

Down below are the lesson plans we designed for Eason, according to Harmer's lesson plan format.

- Week 1: Get to know the students and let the students do the motivation test.
- Week 3: Midterm week, no class.
- Week 2 and 4
  - ✧ Description of the class: After knowing student's English ability, we decide to use phonics, the way that most kids learn English, to help student to build up a good foundation. We will demonstrate the student how to pronounce the letters by ourselves by adding to the melody to make the lesson more interesting, or we can also use videos that are about phonic to impress the student. Other than just singing the alphabet song, we will also use pictures in the book to pair up with the song, or things that he is interested in or around him.
  - ✧ Aims: Student will be able to pronounce the alphabets or words we have taught him correctly.
  - ✧ Procedure:
    - Step 1. We demonstrate how to pronounce the letter and the word. For example, AAA, /æ/ /æ/ /æ/, A, /æ/, Apple. (and show him the picture of an apple.)
    - Step 2. Let the student try to repeat after us.
    - Step 3. The above steps may repeat several times, and if it does not work well, we might try to use the video to teach phonics.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJSVrq-6-jc> (see Appendix 1)



Step 4. Hopefully if the video has an effective outcome, the student may be able to pronounce the letters and words by singing them.

✧ Comments: It turns out the video works quite well because Eason seems to be able to follow some segments of the video.

- Week 5 and 6

✧ Description of the class: We will try to use videos to intrigue student's interest, so as to teach him some simple words in the video. For example, *Baby Shark*, the song that is popular among kids, would be a perfect choice to teach a second-grade student. (Moreover, the sign of *Baby Shark* is on his pencil case so we decide to use this song.) We believe teaching in such way may help the student memorize the word easier.

✧ Aims: Student will be able to recognize some simple words from the video.

✧ Procedure:

Step 1. Review the alphabets in student's textbook.

Step 2. Watch *Baby Shark* which includes simple vocabularies that are suitable for student's level.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XqZsoesa55w> (see Appendix 2)


Step 3. Point out the vocabularies, such as "baby," that can apply to the alphabet "b" that the student is learning.

Step 4. Let the student try to repeat after us, and eventually sing the song together.


✧ Comments: It turns out Eason seems to be shy to sing the song out loud, or maybe he is not really interested in this song. Therefore, we went back to his textbook and kept learning other alphabets.

- Week 7 and 8

- ✧ Description of the class: After weeks of knowing alphabets, it's time to adapt Vygotsky's play theory and game-based learning. We will use games to help him review what he has learnt in the past few weeks.
- ✧ Aims: The student will be able to identify the alphabets by playing different games and list out the sequence of the alphabets.
- ✧ Procedure:

 *ABC Galaxy* (APP game) (see Appendix 3)

- ✓ The rule of this game is that the player (the student) should listen to the pronunciation of the letter and identify the correct one.
- ✓ This game will help the student increase listening ability, impression on the alphabet, and concentration because he has to listen to different pronunciations to identify the letters on the screen correctly, or he may lose the game.

 Bingo (3x3) (see Appendix 4)

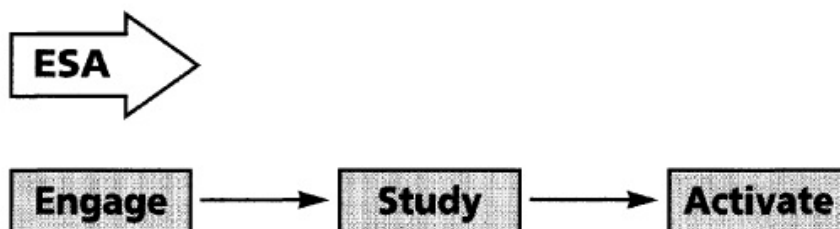
- ✓ Each player (the teachers and the student) should draw a “#” on the paper and fill in the letters (from A to I) randomly.
- ✓ After deciding the sequence of the players, the one on his or her turn should say out the letter and all of the players should put a circle on it after listening to the command. Three circles in a row can form a line.
- ✓ The one who gets more than three lines first wins the game.
- ✓ This game helps the learner get more familiar with the letters he has learnt. In this game, he shall be able to write down and say the letters out on his own, and listen to the pronunciation of each letter.

- ✧ Comments: Playing games is a really good way to boost the student's interest as well as testing his learning outcome, so that we can know how he is doing with the knowledge that we have taught him.
- Week 9 and 10
  - ✧ Description of the class: Christmas is around the corner. The theme arrangement of these two weeks is related to the holiday to let student enjoy English in the vibe of Christmas.
  - ✧ Aims: Student will be able to read the vocabularies on the word cards we made. (see Appendix 5)
  - ✧ Procedure:
    - 🎨 Before the class:
      - ✓ Teachers discussed what words are related to Christmas but easy for the 2nd grade student to learn.
      - ✓ Teachers drew cards with illustrations and wrote down the words about Christmas.
    - 🎨 During the class:
      - ✓ Teachers point to the cards and tell the student how to pronounce them properly.
      - ✓ The student can learn the words related to Christmas by listening to the pronunciation and repeating what the teachers just said.
      - ✓ The student can be more familiar with the letters of these words because he may think how to use the letters to consist a word.
  - ✧ Comments: The process of this lesson has not finish yet because of time limit (30 minutes per class) and the student's slower learning ability.

### Assessing My Student

After ten weeks of knowing and teaching Eason, I really feel his English ability improved quite a lot. Every week when he comes for a new lesson, he forgets what he had learned last week. After noticing that, we told him that to review on his own after class is very important. Although we did not require a formal test or homework, we still hope he can review what he have learned from us so that he will definitely enhance his English level. We are not sure if he really heard us or not, but ever since our reminder, I can feel his gradual progress by memorizing more alphabets, even he still needs time to recall. I also feel he was more concentrated than the first week. In the first week, even he seemed to be looking at the book, but we knew his mind has already went to elsewhere. As time goes by, we can see his progress especially in the aspect of his concentration.

### ESA Procedural Charts



#### *ESA Straight Arrows sequence*

Eason is a rather slow learner; thus, we decide to use the straight arrows sequence to teach him instead of patchwork or boomerang sequence which may need higher level. We hope to evoke his interest in English by singing songs and playing videos, and then he shall be focus on learning the alphabets and words, and finally he can use the words he learned to play games.

## Discussion and Reflections

Teaching English to Eason, a lower grade student, is quite a challenge for me. I met stubborn kids before, but I have never met kids that cannot concentrate on what I am saying and he does it not purposely. I guess this is how he is. He just cannot help it. Therefore, this is the challenge that may interrupt our class. To be honest, even finish whole the classes, I still don't think we completely solve his concentration problem. I believe we did help him improve a little, but not much. If we have more time, I think we can come up with more interesting idea to grab his attention, and let him learn English happily but not filled with pressure.

What is more, finish teaching these ten classes, I have a better understanding of what is it like to be a teacher. In fact, I have the experience of getting along with kids in an English summer camp as a teacher assistant. What I had to do is basically look after the kids and assist them with any problem in the camp, no matter physically, mentally or academically. In that experience, I thought I understand young kids pretty well because I met various kinds of kids in the camp. However, in this precious experience of actually teaching English to a student, I got to know there are even more different kids who have their special situations or personalities. Through this experience, I have a deeper feeling of the various unknown in the world. There are always things or people you never know. Therefore, this is a valuable chance for me to have this kind of opportunity to go to an elementary school as a teacher to teach what I major in, and that feels really great and let me have a sense of accomplishment. To be honest, although it was quite tiring to get up two hours earlier before going to Guo-Tai every Tuesday (since I live in Taoyuan and I need 1 hour to get ready and another 1 hour to get to school), I think it is very worthy to do so.

**Conclusion**

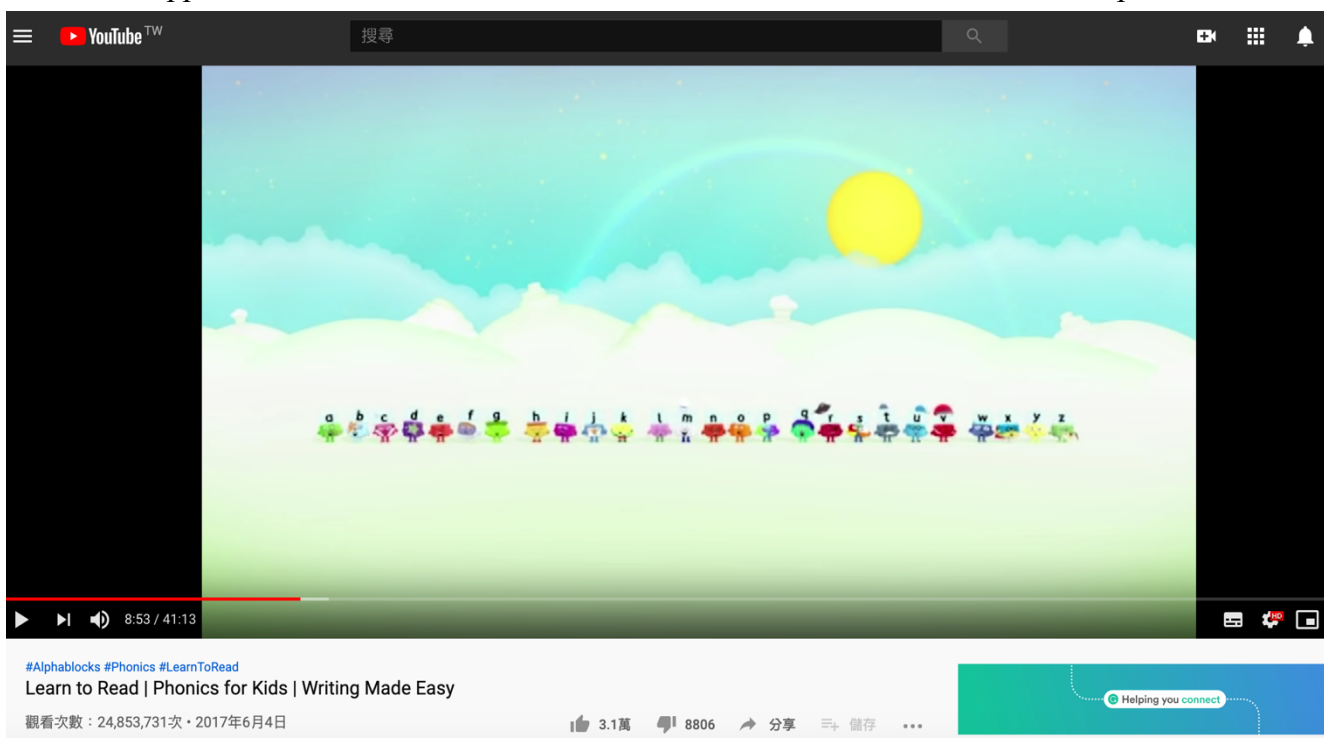
What I learned from teaching English to a lower grade student as a teacher in Guo-Tai elementary school is patience and persistence. A lower grade student who is still learning alphabets like Eason needs more of our patience to him, in terms of repeatedly teaching him alphabets, or dealing with his often absentminded. I believe if I were really a teacher, I might need to teach the same materials several times regardless of what kind of students, and that also needs patience to teach the same thing over and over again. Moreover, persistence is also what I learned from this experience. I have to insist on waking up earlier every Tuesday so that I can be on time to teach in Guo-Tai elementary school. Persistence also applies to me and Colette prepared the materials and lessons for Eason every week. All in all, although I do have the experience of teaching kids English, but that was different from teaching in Guo-Tai. Teaching in Guo-Tai elementary school is a more formal experience for me, and it also makes me feel like I was playing the role of some kind of intern teacher in elementary school, which is why this is a very special experience for me.

### Works Cited

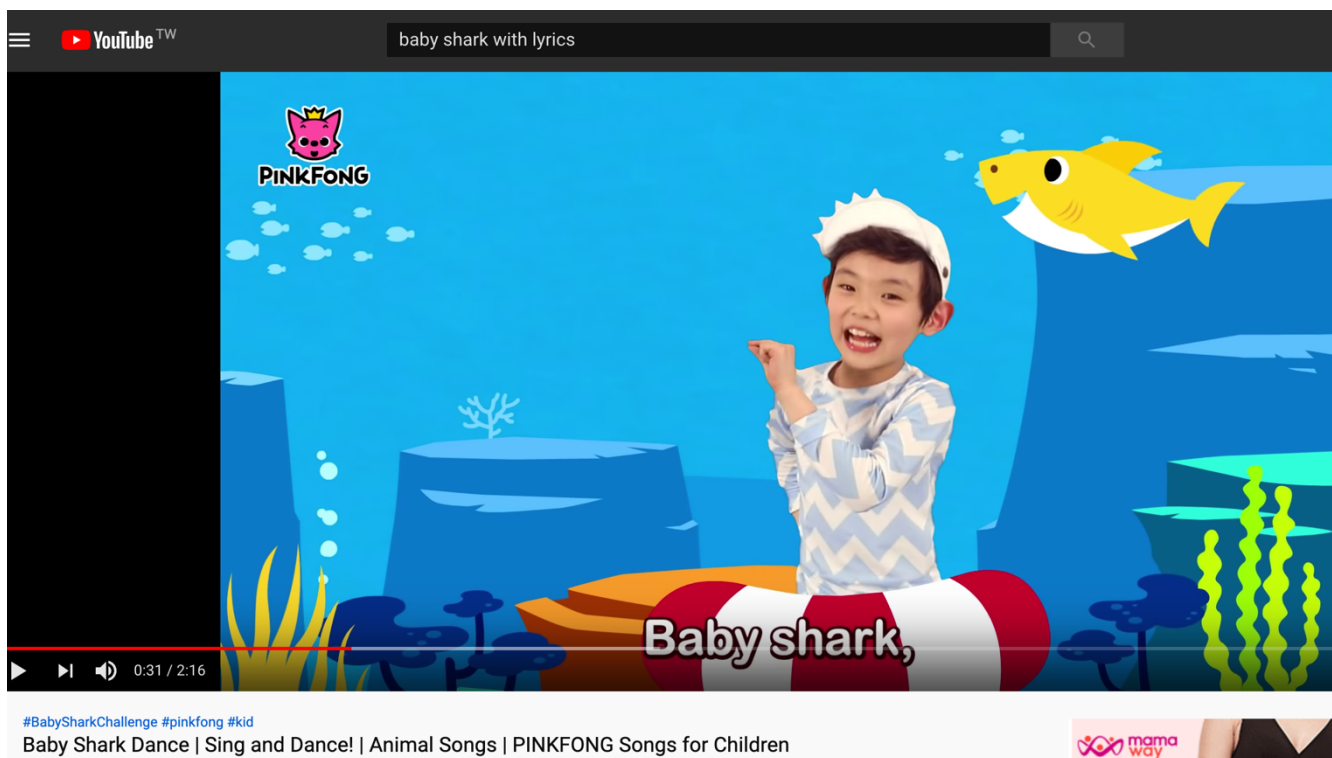
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### Appendices

Appendix 1. This is the screenshot of the video that we used to teach Eason phonics.



Appendix 2. This is the screenshot of *Baby Shark* that we show Eason, hoping he can learn the simple words in the video.





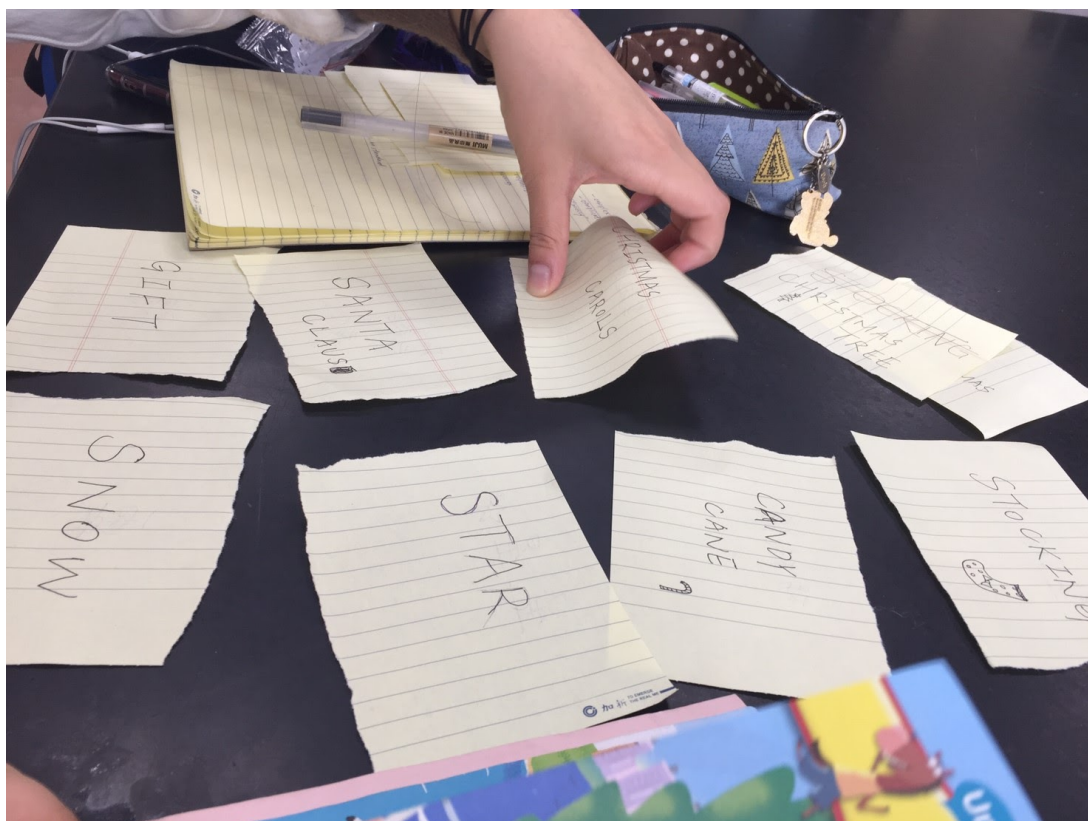
Appendix 3. This is the picture of Eason playing *ABC Galaxy*.



Appendix 4. This is the picture we play Bingo with Eason.



Appendix 5. This is the word cards we made to teach Eason some Christmas related vocabularies.



Appendix 6. This is the picture that we used his textbook as material to have class.



Appendix 7. This is the certificate of teaching English in Guo-Tai elementary school.

