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**English Teaching & Educational Psychology Final Portfolio:
Activity Design for Elementary Higher Grade Students:
Experiences from Guo-Tai Elementary School**

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from Guo-Tai Elementary School

Final Project Portfolio

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Introduction

Wanting to become a teacher in the future, it is a good opportunity for me to take this course and participate in the Guo-Tai elementary school service-learning project. Through teaching the students from elementary school, I learned how to put the theories that we learned in class into practical drills. Also, when teaching in the elementary school, we, my partner and I, learned how to deal with the students' issues, classroom management, more. During the process, I really felt that there were many things needed to be acquired for me, a "student teacher" in the classroom. In general, I thought the purpose of this service-learning project is to let us who want to be a teacher in the future had the experience.

Purpose

This portfolio will show my experience in Guo-Tai elementary school, especially focused on the classroom management and the activity design. These two elements can influence the efficiency of the teaching and learning process a lot; therefore, they are what I spent more time on designing the course in Guo-Tai service-learning.

Participants

My students were all sixth-grade in elementary school. There were three girls and seven boys in my class. For the boys in my class, they were hard to concentrate on the teacher and the lessons. Comparing with the boys, the girls were more willing to learn and pay attention to the teacher. Based on the motivation survey, which we translated R. C. Gardner's motivation test into Chinese and distributed to the students in the first class, their motivations were not low. Most of them chose 6 or 7 out of 7 points (see Appendix A). However, I found that some of them were not interested in our lesson. The reason I was thinking is that they did not take the survey seriously. From my description of the class, it

shows that classroom management and how to design an eye-catching lesson are the main focus for my partner and I.

Teaching and Instructional Processes

The theme-based lessons introduced the names of places and how to give direction in English. At the beginning, I showed the flashcards with the pictures of the places to the students, asking the students what they could see on the flashcards. I gave the students a chance to guess the pronunciation of the words. After that, I showed the words and pronounced the words. I even let the students take the turn to pronounce the words one by one, and I would correct their errors immediately. After letting the students get familiar with the words, I delivered the activity worksheets (see Appendix B1). On the worksheets, students were expected to find out the words taught previously in the maze of the random letters. The words were provided in case some students might not memorize the spelling of the words. Through this activity, the students could complete the task on their own and compete with other peers at the same time. When we were doing this activity, some students keep saying they could not find out the words. Thus, I gave them some hints, telling them other students had found out the other words in order to increase their confidence and the sense of competitiveness. During this activity, I got to know that make students busy in class was one of the ways to increase the students' learning motivation and be more willing to engage in the lesson.

One week later, to continue the same learning atmosphere as last class, I had the warm-up with reviewing the words taught last week by going through the flashcards. I also asked the students read out loud the vocabulary to make sure that the students had acquired those words. After making sure the students can pronounce the words, I started the second part of this lesson with the flashcards on which the phrases about giving direction. The teaching part

was the same as last week, and the activity was also designed to evaluate the students' learning. During the activity, one volunteered student went on stage, and I told that student the destination and the starting point on the worksheet (see Appendix B2). The student had to use the phrases to give directions to the rest of the students without acting out; the rest of the students should look at the map on the worksheet and find out the answers according to the directions. Both the student answering the correct answer and the student giving direction can get the point as rewards. We did this activity three times in order to give more students the chances to practice their oral ability.

Theories Used

There were two theories that I was using to design these two lesson plans. One was task-based learning methods, and the other one was operant conditioning. According to the theory, task-based learning methods expected the students to learn the knowledge through complete the tasks in class, and the role of teachers was to design the tasks and assist the students to solve the problems which they encountered during the process. Therefore, I applied the task-based learning method to design the learning activities. I usually had the activity session after the presentation or demonstration, and those activities were based on the task-based learning method. The task was to let the students practice the speaking and solve the problems. According to "Improving 10th Graders' English Communicative Competence through the Implementation of the Task-Based Learning Approach," Ana Carolina Buitrago Campo emphasizes the significance of the themes of the lessons, stating that the background knowledge of the students, grammar and vocabulary, play an important role when the students get into the further phrase (101). Therefore, I chose the topic on names of places and giving the directions which was related to the students' daily life or might be their previous experience. As for the reward system, it is the application of operant conditioning. According

to “The Use of Skinnerian Teaching Machines and Programmed Instruction in the United States,” Martha Casas points out that how the behavioral reinforcement on the students can increase the students’ confidence when learning (8). As a consequence, I always gave the points to the students who answer my question correctly.

Rubric to Assess My Students

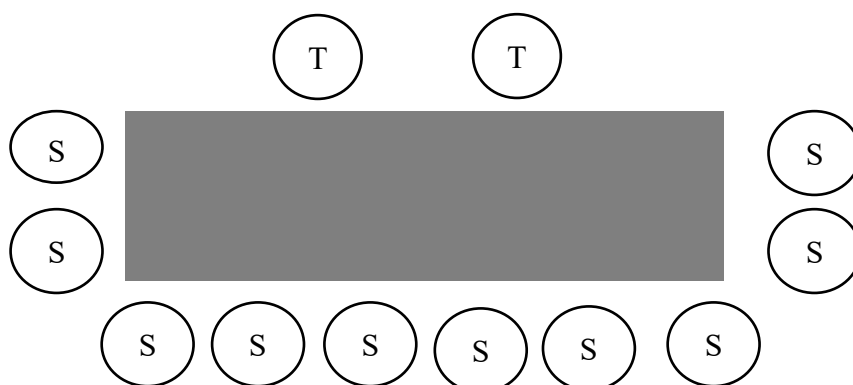
	3 (100 points)	2 (80 points)	1 (60 points)
Student identifies words			
Student matches definition			
Student uses in context			

ESA Procedural Charts

Engage	At first, I tended to have the daily conversation with them and briefly talked about the theme of the lesson to catch their attention.
Study	Students were asked to focus on the pronunciation of the vocabularies and phrases.
Activate	The task activities, both words maze and finding the destination, let the students use the language in study part. For words maze, it let the student to get familiar with the spelling of the vocabularies. For the finding

	the destination, the students practiced the pronunciation of the phrases and applied them into context.
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Seating Chart



We did not ask the students to sit on the assigned seat, so they always sat randomly. Basically, the one who came first could choose his/her seat first. Despite of the fact that they could sit whichever seats they wanted, my partner and I have the classroom seating set up as a big circle. Therefore, they could see the teachers clearly, and the teachers could take care every student as well.

Discussion and Reflections

After teaching at Guo-Tai elementary school, I found that it was important to have the well-designed lesson plan for both teachers and students. From the teachers perspective, my partner and I, only if we had an attractive activity, the students were willing to pay attention to our lessons and engaged in the task. From the students perspective, as long as the teacher were saying something they can understand and were interested in, they were willing to participate in the class. My partner and I had tried many times and many different ways to design the activities during this once per week lesson in three monthes. Actually, we spent

two to three times of classes to figure out which method best suits our students. The lesson plans that I cited in this portfolio were the best two ones which resonated with more students' participation. Hence, my partner and I both agreed that the more active or excited the activity was, the more participation there was in class. As a consequence, we tended to design the activities that needed the students to work in a group or compete with each other. Fortunately, we gain some positive feedbacks which were the atmosphere of competition among the students in these two lessons.

Conclusion

Doing the service learning at the elementary school is a practical and useful experience for me. As the educator, it is more significant to apply the theories into the lessons and observe the feedback from the students. Although not all of the theories are effective in the learning process due to the differences of the students, it is also interesting and meaningful for the teacher to figure it out. The sense of the achievement for the teacher always come from the students' participation.

Works Cited

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Appendix A

學生學習動機調查 Motivation Survey

1. 為了能和外國人溝通我想要學英文 In order to communicate with foreigners, I want to learn English.

Weak (薄弱) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (強烈) Strong

2. 我對外國人的印象 My impression of foreigners

Don't like (沒有好感) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (有好感) very like

3. 我對英文的興趣 My interest in English

Weak (薄弱) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (強烈) Strong

4. 我想要學習中文 I want to learn English.

Weak (薄弱) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (強烈) Strong

5. 我對學習英文的印象 My impression of learning English

Don't like (沒有好感) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (有好感) very like

6. 我對我現在英文老師的印象 My impression of my current English teacher

Don't like (沒有好感) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (有好感) very like

Appendix B

1. Worksheets for Lesson Plan 1

Driving 開車

Police office 警察局 Fire station 消防局 Gas station 加油站 Restaurant 餐廳 Supermarket 超市 Post office 郵局 Bakery 麵包店 Bank 銀行

B	A	E	R	Q	R	A	K	B	R	A	U	H	U	K	V	I	L
G	A	S	S	T	A	T	I	O	N	C	T	I	Z	D	W	P	P
V	S	K	B	F	M	E	E	K	F	B	G	S	L	Y	J	H	A
U	G	C	E	D	E	C	P	K	B	M	M	L	X	K	M	L	P
W	H	T	X	R	T	R	F	I	R	E	S	T	A	T	I	O	N
X	S	O	Q	Q	Y	O	O	N	F	A	E	J	Y	J	S	N	O
R	I	S	A	X	G	I	J	B	P	W	M	Q	R	T	D	G	O
Y	S	L	T	N	A	R	U	A	T	S	E	R	O	V	K	I	N
J	F	C	Z	G	U	P	E	N	L	V	E	F	E	C	J	Z	D
Q	K	N	Q	F	B	W	D	K	D	T	F	N	F	P	E	H	C
O	P	O	L	I	C	E	O	F	F	I	C	E	O	S	U	L	M
G	H	P	K	M	Y	Z	X	Z	C	J	Y	U	T	Z	B	S	Y
H	X	V	N	R	W	H	W	E	V	I	U	I	N	G	T	M	A

2. Worksheet for Lesson Plan 2



Appendix C

Lesson Plans (using Harmer's format)

Lesson Plan 1	Time
<p>Description of class</p> <p>Low level; 10 students</p> <p>Students are noisy and hard to focus on the teacher. They have the low motivation on learning through the textual materials.</p>	
<p>Aims</p> <p>(For teacher)</p> <p>To increase the students' learning motivation.</p> <p>To correct the students' pronunciation.</p> <p>To let the students to acquire some vocabulary about driving</p> <p>(For students)</p> <p>To know how to pronounce the vocabulary</p> <p>Can understand the meaning and how to use the vocabulary and phrases</p> <p>Can apply the vocabulary and phrases in the daily conversation</p>	
<p>Procedure</p> <p>1. Teacher has the warm-up daily conversation with the students.</p>	2''
<p>2. Teacher uses the flashcards to show the picture of the vocabulary. At the same time, teacher teaches the students how to pronounce the vocabulary, and let the student take turn to read out loud. On the flashcards, there is the Chinese translation to help the students understanding the exact meanings.</p>	10''
<p>3. Activity: this activity is designed to help the students getting familiar with the spelling of the vocabulary. Teacher prepared the words maze in advance, and the students need to find out the vocabulary in the random letters. The vocabularies are given on the worksheet as the clues.</p>	18''
<p>Comments</p> <p>The class time might not be enough for the students to memorize all the vocabulary.</p> <p>It might be difficult for the students to pay attention to the lesson and the activity.</p>	

Lesson Plan 2	Time
<p>Description of class Low level; 10 students Students are noisy and hard to focus on the teacher. They have the low motivation on learning through the textual materials.</p>	
<p>Aims (For teacher) To increase the students' learning motivation. To correct the students' pronunciation. To let the students to acquire some vocabulary about driving (For students) To know how to pronounce the vocabulary Can understand the meaning and how to use the vocabulary and phrases Can apply the vocabulary and phrases in the daily conversation</p>	
<p>Procedure 1. To recap the vocabulary which were taught last time.</p>	5"
<p>2. Teacher uses the flashcards to show the phrases (about direction), and let the students repeat after teacher. Let the students read out loud one by one in order to make sure the students can pronounce those phrases.</p>	10"
<p>3. Activity: this activity is designed to help the students getting familiar with the meanings of the directions and the pronunciation. Teacher will ask one student to know where is the destination, and the student have to use the phrases we learned to describe to his/her peers. The assigned student and the one who answers correctly can get the point as the reward.</p>	15"
<p>Comments The class time might not be enough for the students to memorize the pronunciation of the phrase, so teacher might have to give them some clues. Students might not be able to follow the directions from their peers, so teacher might have to repeat the directions for the students.</p>	

Appendix D

Certificate from Guo-Tai Elementary School



Appendix E

Photos at The Guo-Tai Elementary School

