

Reflection of Ms. Peterson's Pedagogical Performance:

When observing you at first Ms. Peterson, I noticed you did not take great care when handling Moises as an ELL student and how you did not go to help him when trying to answer the question. It seemed like you were too occupied teaching the lesson to realize that some students need that extra help and attention to understand and do things. This is something that needs to be worked on for you as a teacher to be able to help clarify activities for Moises and other ELLs before starting so they do not get behind. One good aspect of your teaching was that you did recite things over again multiple times which can help with English proficiency by making sure they understood what was said even if they didn't hear all what was said the first time. On the negative side of that though, even after repeating if students don't understand the question to reword it in a different way. So, for the oral aspect when it comes to discussion I noticed for example, in class that Moises tried to answer but was not understanding that the answer had already been given, and that you were then looking for an explanation of how the class got "40" for the word problem. Due to his lack of English proficiency it was hard for Moises to answer even though he had written down how he had got the answer. So, I suggest rethinking your question strategies and how you word questions so that students like Moises can participate and answer the questions being asked to the whole class. As well, I suggest that seeing if Moises had any work written down on answering the problem instead of assuming that he only knew the answer was "40" due to another student already saying the answer aloud. Additionally, I was interested to see how you reacted to Moises's plea for help, it seemed at first that you did not believe he wanted to actually receive help and do well on the test. Though after he said how important the test was to him, was when I was happy to see you try to put forth an effort to help him. I feel trying to find the bilingual test for Moises even after Principal Rosa declined having any and saying that can't be a study option for him was a great step for you in helping Moises succeed for the test. As well, you were standing as an advocate for the ELL by looking for the tests for Moises even when the school system is more for helping those who are English proficient to succeed especially for the standards test. Unfortunately, for the test you had to take away his dictionary because it is required of you to do so but with better planning and more attention to helping him with his English proficiency the huge reliance on the dictionary could have been avoided. But at the same time, you did show some reassurance to

Moises understood the content and the math concepts based off of his finding the final answer correctly. He was able to solve the math problem after overcoming the language barrier from “blocks” meaning “city blocks” and then finding the English word for cuarenta, meaning forty. He has a minimal English proficiency and would be more around the Beginning and Early Intermediate level of proficiency based off of his ability to recognize and speak a few words and phrases, especially when asking for the test in English after class was finished. Listening, he was able to pick up very little from conversation. Depending more heavily on the other Spanish speaking student, he didn’t engage on any other conversational level other than trying to answer the word problem in which he had to look up in his translation dictionary. His problem in accomplishing academic success is broader in the sense that his exposure and limited English vocabulary itself. He is at the very early stages of understanding English. He is proficient and comfortable in Spanish because that is his home language. But he does not feel completely comfortable speaking English on his own in the classroom unless it is necessary.

The question could have been rephrased from, “How did you get that?” to asking if you could borrow his page and show how he worked the problem out. When Moises was confused about the word problem’s phrasing for “ran 3 blocks” because he interpreted it as physical blocks, such as counting blocks rather than city blocks. Writing the values on the board was a good visual assist towards Moises picking up the values he needed to solve the problem. A physical drawing of a neighborhood layout or map would have helped not only Moises pick up the context of the written scenario, but would also assist the more visual learners in the classroom that have difficulty with interpreting word problems as well. Writing the numbers above the blocks and then emphasizing how you divide the number of blocks to get the rate at which he runs, since it is a division problem.

As previously mentioned, I noticed that Moises was able to discern some of the information from the lesson you were teaching. I believe he was able to find the answer to the math problem because of the way you presented the information. By this I am

referring to how you used the board to set up the important information and give an example of how you take the necessary information from the problem. In regard to this aspect I think that you did well in giving the students a visual and separating the math information from the surrounding scenario information.

While keeping that in mind, I do think that Moises was confused by the use of square blocks instead of neighborhood blocks. I feel it would've been beneficial to the class, especially the ones who are English Language Learning students, to differentiate between the two. Once Moises found the answer, you were very encouraging that he found the answer and showed his work; however, when asking him how got to that point it was very clear that he did not understand what was being asked of him. In this situation, you need to use different techniques to explain what answer you are looking for such. For example, it might be beneficial to the students to work in small groups or with pairs. This may be a beneficial tactic because after you asked Moises a couple of times and he didn't understand the question, the other students laughed at him and this clearly affects his self-esteem. Working in smaller groups would help his ability to feel more comfortable and would allow more time to explain the question being asked. Another option you may consider in that situation is showing the rest of the class on the board how Moises got the answer and then going over a similar problem for the students to get comfortable. In doing this, you are also able to gauge where the students are at before such an important test.

I was also informed how you tried to find more resources for Moises to use and I appreciate you making that effort. However, I believe you could have went a bit further in your efforts. I am aware that you did not have access to many resources, but I think in this case much more frontloading would've helped your students. I would also like to suggest that you offer before school, after school, or lunch time meetings with your ELL students or students that may be struggling. I think that if the students had gotten more opportunities to practice the work or had more one on one help than they may have had a better chance to succeed. Offering a more personal, one on one interaction could create a

The learning environment in the classroom and school seems focused on the students who come close to proficiency or are already proficient. This specifically shows up when the teacher goes to ask the Spanish teacher for help translating the test. The teacher not only says no, he reminds her they cannot speak to the students in Spanish (their native language). He tells her to focus on the students close to proficiency, like Michelle. During the test, he cannot even use his English to Spanish translating dictionary. He does very well with the numbers only math section, but does not understand the non-math content of the word problems. This shows unfair language-specific bias (Diaz-Rico, 2012). He must verbally ask his teacher, but he is not capable. When prompted to ask questions, he does not because he hardly speaks English. Another girl asks the teacher for help in English and receives immediate assistance. Although the school seems to have some language diversity other than Moises, he and the other students in his class and at recess seem to look down upon and tease those who do not speak English fluently. Although Moises receives ample support from his family, the other children and the school does little to help him.

Moises faces his greatest challenges in comprehending English in reading and writing. He understands mathematics very well, but does not understand words related to reading/writing. He appears above the average in his math knowledge, as he knew the answer "40" when none of the other students seemed to. Although Moises says the answer is 40, he cannot explain how he reached the solution when asked. In the basic English he does understand, some of the translation does not make sense when interpreted. He first thinks of blocks as cube-like objects. When he asks another Spanish speaking student in the class, he learns the blocks refer to distance (city-blocks) rather than objects. With this minor help, he quickly completes the word problem. He does not seem comfortable speaking in English, but shows great motivation to ask his peers (and teacher) for help in Spanish. Moises shows the characteristics of a student in the "Early Production" stages of Second Language Acquisition (limited comprehension, one or two word responses, uses key words). Worrying about English phonology,

cheat, the dictionary does not help him prove his math proficiency beyond contextualizing the math within the English he struggles with). Lastly, questions and guidance for Moises should be prompted by the teacher as he cannot put his questions into English. The questions asked should be mindful of his limited English Proficiency, asking simple “yes” “no” questions to know how to best help him. Moises is a very bright student. These accommodations will not only help him succeed, but with improved English proficiency he may very well lead the class in mathematical ability.

sharing his knowledge with a classmate that does could be effective. This will increase his communicative competence and over time, he will become more comfortable speaking English.

Another strategy is asking Moises what he needs from you. If he needs to be able to use his dictionary to understand the word problems and answer choices, maybe you let him use it until he develops some of the vocabulary that he needs. This could improve his confidence and self-esteem in learning and using the English language. According to the Monitor Model, we want Moises to acquire the language so that he knows the rules and functions of the language, rather than just trying to memorize words, phrases, and rules. There is a natural order to learning the language, so finding out where Moises is at in that process and meeting his needs at that stage would be an effective way to help him acquire the language.

One last strategy that you could use is Moises' classmates. There is a good chance that some of them have similar backgrounds and experiences as Moises, and could possibly help him learn the language. For instance, we know that Moises crossed over the border with his mom, and there may be another student in your class or another class that has had a similar experience to Moises. These students could not only connect with Moises about their experiences and build a friendship, but could also help him start to acquire the language and share with him the ways that were helpful for them to acquire it. The students might also have similar home experiences with their families as Moises where Spanish is spoken in the home, and could possibly help him find ways to practice English outside of school, and still speak Spanish at home. They could help him move

English and Spanish, as well as the comprehension and retention of context, vocab, and practice of math problems.

Students that are English proficient are extremely useful and helpful resources to classrooms that lack the majority of the necessary resources to succeed with a large population of ELL students. With these three new strategies I have offered to you for improvement within your classroom and your ability to accommodate ELLs' needs like Moises, I am confident you will see improvement in English proficiency among your students and success among this school. I had a pleasure meeting you and observing your classroom. I was able to take away a lot of critical analysis, and I am eager to see how my feedback and suggestions benefit you and this school in the future. I plan to observe around this time next year again to identify changes, if any, as well as report to you again with suggestions and/or feedback that I have for you.

Thank you again for the opportunity to observe you and your classroom. I look forward to meeting with you again soon. Do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns with this letter or my observation in general.

Sincerely,

(Student name)

Curriculum Supervisor

(Student name)

C&T 331

Dr. Thomas

3/5/2018

Diagnosis and Remediation of Moises

Dear Ms. Peterson,

I appreciate you letting me come to your class and observe your instruction and interaction with your student Moises. Your concern for his academic performance is needed, and I am glad to assist you in your efforts to help Moises succeed. In this letter I will provide you with what I noticed, as well as solutions on how we can work to meet the emotional, social, and instructional needs of Moises as a English Language Learner, ensuring that his comprehension of your content can be displayed and used.

The first thing I noticed upon observing your lesson is that many of your students have an English proficiency that allows for your instruction to be carried out at a fairly fast pace. Many of them seem to follow along and obtain the correct answer. However, this casually-paced language is difficult for students such as Moises to grasp. Even with notes in front of them, an English Language Learner has written English to decipher, as well. Therefore, the pace of instruction and visuals provided within the classroom must be considered in order for your lesson to become accessible for students like Moises. Slowing down, as well, would not be detrimental to other students, for even with fuller English comprehension, students appeared hesitant to explain the process of the word problem. Adjustments for this lesson would offer support for the students in terms of comprehension and comfortability of environment.

Moises is clearly capable, for he displayed his knowledge of mathematical procedures by quickly finding the answer - 40 - and quickly being willing to say so. However, instead of asking in English in front of his peers, consider asking him to show you his work on his paper, rather than verbally explain how he got to his answer. If you still want him to share his work with the rest of the class, he could potentially write it on the board to display his knowledge.

As mentioned previously, Moises is clearly bright, but was unsure of what to do during this activity. As an observer, I would argue that Moises is in the “early production” stage of second language acquisition. He only was able to respond in one or two word responses, so it would seem an insurmountable feat for him to comprehend long, all English, instruction on a practice exam. I noticed that a girl sitting across from Moises had to help clarify what he was supposed to do. However, I believe that you as an instructor can influence how fast Moises moves through these stages of acquisition, and that it would take only a slightly altered instructional approach to accomplish this.

In addition to slowing down your speech during your instruction, you could provide context and visuals to explain English that is more difficult to comprehend “right off the bat.” This, here, is a perfect example of how English is a highly metaphorical language, and it is stocked with idioms, homonyms, homophones, etc. There are many phrases and words that get caught very easily in translation. I noticed that your use of the word “block” was not clarified as city blocks, and it could be mistaken for building blocks, mental blocks, etc. Knowing this, I believe visuals such as a slideshow with simple clip art or even a drawing on the board could help Moises and other English Language Learners comprehend the word problem. To accompany this, you could provide step by

step clarification to work out the problem, as well as paraphrasing parts of the instruction to reach all students.

Another suggestion for helping Moises to not only understand but to improve his English proficiency is through giving him an opportunity to listen into and join conversations. By splitting the class into small groups to work through the word problem and solve it together, Moises would have a chance to hear others' input and practice his conversation skills in English. In a smaller and more intimate dialogue among three or four classmates, he would have more room to experiment with his sentence structure and vocabulary. Additionally, working through it in a group would allow him to see the process on paper and provide a better visual for how to communicate the steps of the problem by what is written on the paper. I believe that this interaction is vital for his efforts towards a fuller English proficiency. With practice speaking to classmates, opposed to in front of the entire class, Moises could more naturally begin to use English and move into the stage of "speech emergence" for second language acquisition, with fuller comprehension and a better ability to demonstrate critical thinking through his language.

I have heard from other staff members that you've shown the ability to go above and beyond for Moises, as you were searching for tests in Spanish for him. This kind of determination to help Moises comprehend is admirable and I believe could be applied by doing these simple things like providing written instruction. Your pedagogical practices are well-intended, but could be improved upon by giving English Language Learners more support in the classroom. I have also heard that your principal has not made an effort to assist you in this endeavor, however within your classroom you could still provide assistance. A way to accomplish this could be by translating exams for English Language Learners in their native language so that everyone has a fair opportunity to do

well. If Spanish is not a language that you are fluent in, then you could seek help from a Spanish instructor at the school and use their insight to help you make the copies of the test understandable. If that does not work, then there are many online programs that translate for free and could be used as well.

Thank you, Ms. Peterson for allowing me to review your performance towards Moises in class today. I believe that we can use the information I gathered in order to set up Moises for success in the future. He is an intelligent student with enormous potential in mathematics. English Language Learners are just as capable of every other student in class, sometimes they simply need additional support from their caring instructors, such as you.

Sincerely,

(Student name)

(Student name)

HW2

Due: 3/5/18

Ms. Peterson,

After observing your classroom with a focus on your student, Moises, I have a few things that I would like to point out to you about your teaching style and give you some ideas for teaching students who do not speak English as a first language. I noticed that in your classroom, you seem to have multiple students who speak Spanish as well as English, and some students are more proficient in English than others. Moises is a student of yours who seems to be having trouble with his math word problems. The environment of your classroom and schedule seems to be fairly fast paced and intense, especially for a student like Moises, who doesn't seem to know English as well as his classmates. You didn't appear to have much of a relationship with Moises, and that could partially be because of the language barrier, but it really seemed to me that you wanted to help him and that you knew that he was talented when it came to the subject of math.

The biggest challenge for Moises is that he doesn't understand English very well and he relies on his Spanish to English dictionary when he hears words that he doesn't understand, which causes him to learn things slower. Moises seems to be really good at math and he understands all of the numbers, but when it comes to reading and understanding the word problems, he is having trouble because English is not his first language. He doesn't seem to be able to read, speak, listen or write very proficiently in English, which is also something that slows him down in school because it takes longer for him to understand what is going on. To me, it seems that Moises needs extra help not only with learning the language of English, but also in understanding the difference between certain words. There are a lot of unwritten rules in the English language that people don't pick up even if they are proficient in the language, so for students like

Moises, imagine how hard it would be to take a test where none of the words or phrases make sense. During class, there is a portion where they are doing a math problem that involves city blocks, but Moises thinks it is talking about building blocks, and that causes him to not understand the problem, thus not being able to do the math problem, even though he is fully capable to multiplication and division. Because of this language barrier, Moises has to ask his peers questions to clarify certain words in order for him to be able to do the math problems. It seems to me that Moises wants to learn more English, and he even asks to you for help. Considering Moises actually came to you for help, should signal to you that he really wants to learn and that he wants to be successful on the test. Unfortunately, his accent is really thick and his English isn't very strong, which makes it hard for you to communicate with him. I noticed that you spoke a small amount of Spanish to him, but your boss told you that you shouldn't even be doing that. In order to help him, you really need to sit down with him and go line by line so that he can begin to understand the way the problems work and begin to learn new English words. I know that this might take a lot of extra time, but in order to build trust with your students, you need to make time for them.

As for you, I think there are some things that you could do that would help Moises a lot in your classroom. It seems to me that you really want to help him and that you know that he is smart, but you don't exactly know how to help him. First of all, I think you need to really sit down with him and learn what he has having trouble understanding and let him know that if he needs clarification on any words on his homework or during tests that he shouldn't hesitate to ask you. You need to build trust with him and get to know him. If he trusts you and feels like you care about him, then he won't be scared to ask you for help more often. There are more ways for him to be successful in your class other than taking the test in Spanish, but he just needs a lot of support from you. It doesn't seem to me that you are meeting the basic standards of instruction for ESL students in your classroom, but there are things you can do that will really help those students.

I think that in your class, when you are going over practice tests or learning new things, you could really benefit from using more hand signals and drawing pictures on the board. Even when you tell your students to open up to page three, it would help if you actually held up the book and showed them where they need to open to. Talking in simple English and making a lot of hand signals, drawing pictures and using things in your classroom to actually *show* what you are talking about will go a long way with students like Moises who can't understand every word you are saying. In terms of explaining the problems that you are talking about, go slower and make sure that you make it clear what exactly the problem is stating, because as we have established, Moises is proficient in math, but not in English. When he is doing these word problems, he needs a lot of clarification. I also think that when doing homework or practice problems, it could help if you had them split into groups instead of doing each problem as a whole class, they can discuss what they are working on, and that would allow Moises to openly ask questions to clarify the problems. It seemed to stress him out that he had to answer your question in front of the whole class because he isn't proficient in English. It was clear to me that Moises knew exactly how to get the answer to the problem, but he just had trouble explaining how he got the answer in English.

For students like Moises, it seems that he is new to the English language, and he will get better at it, but it is going to take a little time. More than anything, he needs support from you and he needs to know that you will be willing to help him as much as you can. You need to make time for him and to actually sit down with him and understand what level he is actually at in terms of his English so that you can properly help him. You seem to care about this learning, so you really need to put in the extra time to support him as a student and as a learner of English if you want him to be successful in your class.

You seem to care about your students, but you don't seem to know how to help them. I am sure it is frustrating when your superiors won't allow you to help your students in the way that you want to, but that doesn't mean you have to give up. There are many other things that you can do that will help Moises for the next math test. To

name a few that I have stated; get to know him so that he feels that he has full support from you, go slower in your class and offer to help him outside of class, where there is less pressure for him to talk in front of people. Use hand signals when going over new lessons or problems, and allow your students to work with each other on math problems. If you do these things in your classroom, I think that your English learners will really benefit from it and allow them more room to succeed. I hope you take what I have said into consideration in order to help Moises and other English language learners in your classroom.

Take care,

(Student name)

(Student name) C&T 331

Dr. Thomas

3/5/2018

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Sincerely,

(Student name)

(Student name)

March 4th, 2018

Homework 2

Dr. Thomas

Letter to Ms. Peterson

Dear Ms. Peterson,

After observing your classroom for a few days and walking around the school I have been able to determine a few areas that you could improve upon in the classroom as well as noticing certain things about your school environment. I would like to focus my observation particularly on a student of yours named Moises. It is rather clear that Moises has a low understanding of the English language. In the school you teach, the focus has been apparent that they are focused more upon English language proficiency. I noticed in your conversation with Principal Rosa, that he is worried more about achieving a higher proficiency rate and the students that understand over the students that are struggling like Moises.

Another issue that I noticed within the classroom setting is how Moises and his classmates interacted with one another. In your classroom it is very troubling to witness most of the students laugh at Moises when he is unable to explain the correct answer to the math question. When he is attempting to answer your math question, he is not able to contextualize what you are saying. Moises was able to come up with the answer because he is able understand the concrete visual of the numbers but not the audible questions. He has a difficult time placing words into a sentence and seemingly gets his phrases and words mixed up. If you would add in a visual for Moises so that he would be able to understand what you are asking of him or to point out the correct steps that he made on his paper he might have been able to understand your question.

Additionally, it is important to have his classmates interact with Moises in a positive way. He seems to have one friend towards the back of the classroom that helps Moises to understand your teaching because she is bi-lingual but the rest of his classmates make fun of him for knowing English. Another way to help Moises feel comfortable in this classroom would be to have his friend translate at times to make sure he knows what is going on as well as making his classmates seek to help out Moises instead of poking fun at his low English proficiency.

Moving onto your student Moises and his comprehension level, it seems to be clear that he has certain areas where he excels and others where he struggles. It is quite obvious that he has an easy time understanding mathematics and numbers. He is able to understand because it is a concrete visual for him. In terms of reading, while I observed him during his test day Moises had a difficult time to put the words together and focus on what it was asking. His biggest struggle is English morphology. His listening skills are the same way as reading, although he knows a question is being asked by the inflection of your voice, he only hears about every other word that you're saying. He also had to ask his friend in the back about what you meant when spoke about the city blocks as he got it confused with playing blocks. In terms of speaking the language, from my observation I witnessed that Moises is highly motivated to learn English as he carries his dictionary around with him and ask his friend for help to contextualize your instruction. He still lacks a lot of the skills to speak the language though.

Subsequently there are standards that you as a teacher can look at to better help guide you through helping Moises' and him becoming more proficient in his understanding of the English Language. The standard I am referring to is called the WIDA English Development Standards, within the standard of Mathematics at the fifth grade level I have noticed that Moises is at level 2. In case you are unaware of this standard, level 2 is the emerging level where a student is able to "ask and answer simple Wh- questions related to coordinate planes using word banks and visual support." The reason I have put Moises here is because he was able to get the

answer by using context from his bi-lingual classmate. Once Moises understood the concept of blocks meaning city blocks, he was able to get the answer. As well as that I believe through my observation that Moises is able to comprehend the mathematical knowledge at hand, his struggle is through a real life example that many world problems explore. Because of this he falls underneath level 2 where there is little comprehension of how to dissect a word problem.

Furthermore, within Moises' life, I don't believe he is around English speaking adults outside of school. One thing that would benefit your relationship with Moises and himself in the classroom is to better understand his situation at home. If you were able to speak with his family about helping his English proficiency at home, it would benefit both of you in the classroom. Additionally, I think it would benefit your instruction of Moises if you understand how important his succeeding in school is to himself and his family. As I observed, his brother is a custodian in the school and his father is a plumber, his family has seemed to place a high level of importance on his education and him doing well. When he spoke with you after school, you seemed a tad dismissive towards the level of importance he was putting on the test. By understanding how high his motivation is to succeed, it could help how you instruct him with his learning of English. One thing I will give you credit on is attempting to find a way for Moises to take the test in Spanish. As a teacher in the school, you knew there were Spanish test that had been taken there before and dug deep into storage to look for one so Moises would feel more comfortable and have a better chance of doing well on the test.

On top of you trying to find Moises a test in Spanish for Moises, there are many more concrete things that you can do to better help him in his learning. I suggest using the Behaviorism method. Within the behaviorism method it has three parts to it, audiolingualism, direct teaching/mastery learning, and total physical response(TPR). The Audiolingual method of language learners is to have an emphasis on oral practice such as pattern drills of specific grammatical forms. For example, when pointing at the addition sign, said what it is. This may sound very

repetitive but when it comes to Moises and his development of the English language, any form of support is useful. The second part to this method is direct teaching/mastery learning where there is explicit instructional objectives for students and it will then promote the learning of facts, sequenced steps, or rules. This is done through the support of reading programs and outside help that you can be apart of in helping Moises not only in the classroom but also to help his development growth outside of the classroom. An advantage that will be for you when using this approach is it will help Moises get a better understanding of word recognition and low-level comprehension skills will increase. The repetition and support for you as the teacher will immensely help Moises grow as a student and it will help blossom a better relationship between the both of you that will entail help him grow as an individual. Lastly, the use of Total Physical Response(TPR) will help Moises get a better understanding of word comprehension through oral communication. For example if you were to say the word “stand” while standing up and “sit” while sitting down, and have the students follow along and it will immensely help his English proficiency to grow.

I want to say thank you for letting me come in and observe your classroom. I can tell that you do care about Moises and want to see him exceed like all of your other students, but I feel you don't have the resources and information to do so. I hope you take this observations and recommendations critically and use them to better help Moises into improving his English proficiency and for other English Language Learner's that come into your path as a teacher.

Best of luck with your future endeavors,

(Student name)

(Student name)

C&T 331

3/1/2018

Assignment 2

Dear Ms. Peterson,

I am writing this letter to you today in order to discuss a student of yours, Moises, and how he has been progressing in your classroom. In my opinion, the most important part of being a teacher is having the ability to develop positive student-teacher relationships. These relationships are the foundation of an encouraging and effective classroom environment and without them, motivating and managing students would be nearly impossible. When it comes to Moises, I think it is important to note that he comes from another country, and that having English as a second language is having a huge impact on his learning. Part of building student-teacher relationships is taking the time to learn about your student's lives outside of the classroom. It is important to know that Moises comes from a household that does not speak any English, and that is having a major impact on his ability to pick up on the language.

There are four skill areas to academic English language proficiency; listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Moises clearly is struggling in every one of these categories. When you are teaching, Moises can only pick out a few key words or phrases, and often times comes up with answers which are wrong because he can't understand you. When he is reading word problems, the sentences often make no sense to him, and he is unable to decipher what is being asked of him. Based off of these observations, it is very clear that Moises requires extra care and

attention in order to succeed. He is clearly a bright kid with a bright future, but that future is threatened if he is unable to succeed in the classroom.

Every teacher needs to take the time to ensure that their classrooms are supporting, welcoming, and encouraging environments for their students. Especially for students at such a young age, when they are extremely vulnerable, classrooms need to be spaces where students feel like they can succeed. Part of that is making sure each and every one of your students has the resources to succeed. Moises, for example, needs access to a variety of things. When taking the math test, you refused to allow him access to a Spanish-English dictionary. Since the questions were word problems, Moises clearly struggled and was unable to keep up with his English speaking classmates. As someone who is at such a distinct disadvantage, he needs your help and support. In my opinion, one of the ways you could reach out to help him would be by learning basic Spanish so you are able to communicate at least somewhat. Also, make sure he has access to those Spanish-English dictionaries and anything else that could help him as he tries to catch up to his classmates.

After observing your classroom for a while, it is clear that you care about your students and have a passion for teaching. You clearly went out of your way to try and help Moises and it is obvious that you want him to succeed. With that being said, the execution of your pedagogical philosophy could use some work. Like I said earlier, the most important part of teaching is the student-teacher relationship. Part of that is understanding the learning styles and abilities of each and every one of your students. Once you've done this, you are able to evaluate and decide the resources they need in order to be successful. While nobody is doubting your dedication to teaching, there are ways in which you can improve your performance and better assist students like Moises.

According to the U.S Department of State, there are six different levels of language proficiency; 0-No practical proficiency, 1-Elementary proficiency, 2-limited working proficiency, 3-minimum professional proficiency, 4-Full professional proficiency, and 5-native proficiency. In order to be successful in his higher education and in the workplace when he leaves school, Moises needs to one day reach at least full professional proficiency. That won't happen though if he is unable to build a solid foundation. If he isn't given the resources he needs to succeed in your class, he will fail and continue to fall behind, leaving him at risk to dropping out. As a teacher, you took on the enormous responsibility of having a major role in students' lives and it is up to you to make sure that Moises is successful not just in your class, but all of his ones that follow.

(Student name)

March 5, 2018

Diagnosis and Remediation of Moises

After observing Ms. Peterson's class and her interactions with Moises I have gained insight into the needs of Moises in the classroom context. Moises is a newcomer to the United States and is most likely coming from Mexico according to the flashback he has about crossing the border with his mother. From what I have observed Moises speaks only Spanish outside of the classroom. His interactions with other students in class and on the playground are completely in Spanish. He also speaks Spanish in his home but it is not clear if other members of his household speak English. Moises displays clear proficiency in his first language (Spanish). This is important to note when deciding how to best help Moises with his English Acquisition. While Moises is at home, it is stated that the math test will be his first test in the United States. This supports the notion that Moises is very new to the United States. This drastically contrasts with Ms. Peterson's class which is taught completely in English. Ms. Peterson does write some of her instruction on the board but much of it is spoken. Most of the other students in the class seem to be proficient in English or at least are able to understand Ms. Peterson's instruction. However, Moises befriends another student who seems to struggle with English. This student tells Moises he will not take the math test and invites Moises to skip school with him. Moises choosing to stay and take the test implies he values learning and wants to succeed in school. Moises is motivated to learn and often studies outside of school. He stays after class to ask Ms. Peterson for additional assistance and seems frustrated when she does not provide that assistance. Moises' desire to learn and succeed will be an important factor to note.

Ms. Peterson makes attempts to find a test written in Spanish for Moises but is quickly told the school does not allow this. All of the school staff communicates in English and the principal explicitly says the teachers are not allowed to speak to students in Spanish. This needs to be addressed as it could become problematic for students like

Moises. Being able to use his first language when needed would allow Moises to express his ideas instead of being completely silent. In addition, not being able to communicate at all will only hurt Moises's confidence while learning English. The principal expresses to Ms. Peterson that she should not be concerned about the students who are not proficient in English. Instead she is told to focus on the students who she knows will do well. This school environment is clearly not supportive of English Language Learners such as Moises.

Moises seems to be experiencing social and academic struggles as a newcomer. From my observations, Moises key challenge is lack of English proficiency and knowledge. He struggles in both BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills) which can be seen on the playground and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) which can be seen in Ms. Peterson's class. Although his knowledge of the math content is proficient. Moises is able to solve math problems that other students were not able to and demonstrates his understanding of mathematics. It is important to note Moises challenges do not stem from the math content but his lack of academic English proficiency in math. Moises is able to listen and comprehend some of what Ms. Peterson says, although he is confused by some of her instruction and vocabulary. He asks his classmates for clarity on certain vocabulary words and instructions on the practice test. When reading, Moises is able to identify key terms and phrases but struggles with sentence structure and some vocabulary. This is shown when he is attempting to read the test questions and all of the words mix together. Moises demonstrates some ability to write in English by giving Ms. Peterson a note. However, he does not show signs of grade-appropriate writing skills. Moises almost never speaks in English and when asked a question struggles to answer in English. He is able to communicate simple phrases but lacks sentence structure and knowledge of grammar. In terms of English Language Proficiency standards Moises appears to be in level one for most skills according to these observations.

Moises displays challenges with the morphology of words when reading the word problems in math class. He also struggles with limited vocabulary and syntax of mathematical ideas in English. He struggles to form sentences and make sense of long

sentences but is able to identify some words within a sentence. As I stated before, Moises shows interest in learning and is motivated to excel in school. He is often studying outside of class and uses his classmates as a resource to clarify vocabulary used by Ms. Peterson. Moises relies on his peers to help him make sense of the instruction given in class. He is confident and sticks up for himself when teased on the playground. However, he does not demonstrate that confidence when speaking in English. When asked to answer questions in English Moises becomes uncomfortable. Allowing him to answer in Spanish would enable him to show what he knows and help build his confidence.

Ms. Peterson's pedagogical performance with Moises had some strengths as well as areas with room for improvement. Ms. Peterson's math content is accessible for Moises and he demonstrates understanding for the math concepts. By writing the math problem on the board, Moises is able to identify what numbers must be used and the steps it takes to solve the problem. Where Ms. Peterson falls short is in building Moises academic English Proficiency when discussing the problem. Ms. Peterson fails to make the language accessible to Moises level of understanding. While she knows he has grasped the mathematical concepts she neglects to realize how many skills go into explaining the solution to the class. She repeats the same questions and does not provide context for the problems presented. Although she attempts to find a test written in English she does not provide Moises with any other supports to take the test with. Ms. Peterson does not allow Moises to use a dictionary for translations which would have allowed him to make sense of the questions. She only provides verbal instruction and does not incorporate written or physical cues. She fails to provide Moises with any resources to support him in taking the exam and does not adapt her instruction in any way.

In order to assist Moises in successfully acquiring the academic English skills he needs to succeed in her math class Ms. Peterson can implement strategies such as cooperative learning/group work, allowing the use of L1, and pre-teaching difficult vocabulary. Moises has already shown he excels when he is able to depend on his peers

explanation. This is where I would suggest you take his work that he did on his paper and show the class how he did it. Because you can see on the paper how he did it, you are certain that it was him that did the work, and didn't just guess or cheat. But you as a teacher can take his written work and show the class how he did it. This helps teach the class, but more importantly you are giving Moises a live example of how you would verbally explain the work in a problem.

I can sense that you mean well as a teacher. A lot of your efforts unfortunately are being lost within the language barrier between you and Moises. He speaks to you in another language and you respond in English. Each of you communicate on different levels and the other is not able to understand. I am glad to say that I witnessed you speak very clearly and slowly even though it is in another language. It is very important to enunciate your words and make sure that you are thinking about what words need to be clearly said. I do agree as well that you go above and beyond in the area of making sure that Moises might have an opportunity to take the test in Spanish. I noticed that you were looking in the old bilingual closet for any tests that could be translated to Spanish. Unfortunately I overheard your principal saying that there is no available Spanish exam, and also that the school is worried about proficiency numbers dropping with test scores. This is where I would urge you to weigh the options. To speak up and to state that every student is important when it comes to test taking or to stay quiet and only push the achieving students.

It is difficult to make choices on behalf of choosing your battles when it comes to defending students, but that is what teachers have to deal with almost daily. Students can tell when their teachers support them, as well as they can tell when they don't fight all the way on their behalf. I understand that it is not always easy, but it's rewarding to see students achieve due to the effort that you have placed on them. When given a situation such as the one that Moises gave you by asking for the test in Spanish, there you needed to see your options and choose what to intentionally do.

This is the most difficult part of any letter to give to a teacher, the constructive criticism. Everything I write it to intentionally stretch you and show you how to become a better teacher when given difficult situations such as this. Do not take this as hurtful or mean, but instead as an opportunity to progress in your teaching.

Students want to feel as though they are valued in the classroom, even it means involving other people. Now I understand that you have an immense amount of responsibilities when it comes from the assignments required from you as a teacher. I

the classroom more student-centered. By assigning students in several groups and having them discuss stories and the math problems behind them, students would feel more comfortable talking with their peers rather than talking to the teacher in front of the whole class. When students are grouping, you may want to allow them to communicate in their native languages if necessary since students like Moises would not be capable to talk as much English as his peers. You as the teacher could take a walk to see their processes and give feedbacks on time. I hope my suggestions will be helpful for you to review.

Best,