

Dear Ms. Peterson,

Thank you for allowing me to observe your teaching and assist you in making accommodations for Moises, a student in your math class. As the Curriculum Supervisor at our school, it is my job to work collaboratively when situations such as this arise in the classroom, especially when testing season is among us.

Upon first glance, your classroom is full of nonnative English speakers. After seeing the students' interactions before class began, I noticed that a lot of the students presumably speak Spanish, including Moises. The difference with Moises, however, is that his primary language is Spanish, and he is not at a proficient level of English to even communicate freely and openly with his peers. This level of "fluency" or "proficiency" is what we as Curriculum Supervisors refer to as the student's "Academic English Proficiency." In order for Moises to begin to decipher these mathematical word problems like those presented in class, he must first be able to understand the basics of English and reach a level of Academic English Proficiency that is the same, if not similar, to that of his peers that he interacts with daily in the classroom.

There are five stages of language acquisition: Preproduction, Early Production, Speech Emergence, Intermediate Fluency, and Advanced Fluency. In my opinion, I would classify Moises and his stage of language acquisition as being in the Early Production stage, which is stage two of five. In order to fully cater to the needs, strengths, and weaknesses of Moises, it is imperative to know the level of language acquisition that he is currently at. In the Early Production stage, the student has limited comprehension of the English language, produces only one-word or two-word responses when verbalizing, uses key words and familiar phrases when speaking in conversation, and only uses present-tense verbs. As Moises and his family are very new to the United States, he is likely on the bridge between the Preproduction and Early Production stages, depending on the scenario or situation he is presented with in conversation. For many students, math is a foreign language in itself, so it is going to be significantly more difficult for Moises to master the word problems, but I am convinced that he is a motivated, smart student

that will succeed in the classroom once his Academic English Proficiency is improved, and he advances to the higher stages of language acquisition.

At first glance in observing your classroom, one thing that resonated with me was the speed in which instruction is given to your students. It is important to remember to enunciate every word clearly and speak at a slower pace not only for students like Moises who are trying to grapple with the language, but also for native speakers who are trying to process and absorb all of the information being given to them. I think that speaking in a slower and clearer, fully-enunciated tone would greatly benefit Moises' Academic English Proficiency, as well as allow for more processing time when asking questions or giving instructions to the class as a whole.

When assessing your students' knowledge in preparation for the exam, there was a word problem that required students to create proportions and solve to see how long it would take for a boy to run twenty blocks. In observing the class, I noticed that Moises was extremely confused and did not understand the concept of "city blocks" versus "building blocks. Moises asked another student seated next to him, in Spanish, for clarification, and then was able to complete the problem knowing the distinction between bloques (blocks) and calles (city blocks), as referenced in the word problem of the practice test. Moises was the only student in the classroom to accurately set up the proportion and solve to get the answer of forty, but he did not know how to explain how he got the answer, let alone say the word in English. As a student in the Early Production stage of language acquisition, it is unrealistic to expect Moises to be able to explain how he got an answer. He is likely only able to answer yes or no questions, questions that involve choosing between two items or scenarios, and simple who, what, or how many questions. I also noticed that Moises uses a Spanish to English dictionary, which is how he knew that "cuarenta," the Spanish word for forty, was the answer. Having this dictionary handy is visibly useful for Moises, and I believe he should be able to use this as a resource in his classes. As you are probably aware, the ability to take a math test does not mean reading only numbers. Some problems use figures and graphs, others use

words, and each problem has answer choices that may contain English words or phrases to choose from, as well.

Stephen Krashen, a pioneer in K-12 TESOL education, has a hypothesis which is part of his Monitor Model in dealing with interactions and communication with nonnative speakers of English in the classroom. The Input Hypothesis refers to what is known as “comprehensible input” or, what needs to be done, said, written, or drawn in order for a student to understand the content and build upon it. In Moises’ case, he has little to no comprehensible input since he does not understand English. In order to make your input comprehensible, I would recommend using diagrams, explicitly stating what each part of the problem is asking, especially with word problems, and speaking in a clear and slow manner. In the instance that occurred when asking Moises to explain how he arrived at the answer of forty, I would have also used different prompts to allow him to tell how he solved the problem. Instead of asking Moises open-ended questions that require for a lot of English verbiage, ask him short-answer questions such as “Did you set it up like this, or that,” showing him two options and allowing him to show which way he set up the equation. By making your math content comprehensible and acceptable to Moises, he will then be able to slowly but surely build his Academic English Proficiency in math and begin to advance in his conversational abilities with his peers in the classroom, as well. In order for a student to accurately and correctly formulate a response to a question asked of him or her, the input language said by the teacher, in this case, must first be processed fully and made comprehensible in order for the student to formulate a response and provide output in the conversational exchange.

In conclusion, I hope the guidance, feedback, and strategies outlined in this letter have proved useful to you in your classroom and teaching of Moises. One thing that is remarkable is the level of motivation and willingness to learn that he has. Moises’ approaching you after class for help, previous mathematical knowledge, and time spent studying the material are all promising signs that will surely contribute to his success in the classroom if the strategies outlined above are implemented into your classroom pedagogy. I look forward to hearing about Moises’ improvements and academic success

at our next meeting. If you have any questions, or are struggling with a certain student, topic, or classroom lesson, please contact me. I enjoyed observing you and your class and know that you will do all you can to ensure that the needs of Moises are accounted for.

Sincerely,

(Student name)

2 March 2018

Ms. Peterson,

It was the great English poet John Donne who coined the phrase, "No man is an island," and we certainly know this to be true. It takes great humility to ask for help, and so I hope that you understand that while my critiques of your teaching and classroom strategies might be tough to hear, please understand that I hold an enormous amount of respect for you as a teacher and a person. It is our duty as instructors and molders of young minds to be at our best and full potential, and it is my hope that my findings, observations, and suggestions over the next few pages will help you to reach your potential.

First of all, I want to start this by saying that you are a strong and gifted teacher with good intentions, but some of your students are simply falling through the cracks. While much of our school consists of English Language Learners, and all of our classes have at least one student that is learning English as a second language, it seems that one student in particular is suffering in your class. The student I am referring to is Moises, but I believe that we can turn this around and begin working to better both his second language acquisition and his math skills, too. As I said, your intentions are in the right place. When you went to meet with the principal about getting Moises a Spanish version of the test, I was thoroughly disappointed in his decision to skip over Moises and attempt to get him to miss the test. However, that is not what we are here to worry about. You have a determination and drive to meet his needs as best as possible, as evidenced by your attempts to find him math materials in Spanish. This is a great place to start, but we have much work to do.

One of the people that Moises lives with works as a janitor at the school, and in order to make it to work on time, he and Moises arrive at the school several hours before classes even begin. While he waits outside of Jackson Elementary's gates, he peruses his math book. It makes sense that he takes interest in a subject that, for the most part does not require much knowledge of the English language. He also seems to have a natural talent

for math as well. He was the only student that was able to correctly answer your practice problem the other day; his only struggle comes with communicating the answer and how he discerned its solution. In order to truly excel at math like I think he can, like we both think he can, we must find a way to reach his needs as an ELL until he can become more confident and proficient in English.

From what I have observed, Moises gets little to no English exposure in his house, and the only time he can practice speaking English is at school, in front of his classmates. As you, I'm sure, have noticed, he frequently gets teased and singled-out for struggling with English, no doubt diminishing his desire to speak even more so than it might have already been. Even when speaking to you, he only uses English when he must absolutely get a point across to you, as was his intention in saying that taking the math test was important.

I will admit that reaching Moises is demanding on your part, demanding of both your time and energy. As far as his language skills go, based on observation, I believe Moises is in the Early Production phase of his second language acquisition. His responses are limited to the one- or two-word phrases that he can look up in his translation book, and while his comprehension has gotten better, it is still restricted. This indicates that he is probably in his first year in the United States. That being said, his comprehension in math is far ahead of his classmates. Words and problems relating to math seem to interest him, despite him having little to no understanding of the problems in and of themselves. On more than one occasion, I saw Moises ask another Spanish speaking student for clarity. Despite being a somewhat solitary kid, he had no problem reaching out to the girl, who seemed used to being in the role of explaining these misunderstandings. In one such instance, the word block was used in a word problem on the board. He saw block as a base-10 block, when the type of block used in the problem was a city block. Once this confusion was cleared up, Moises solved the problem with ease, but was unable to translate his answer and solution in time. This brings me to my next point.

Your instruction, while typically successful for your English speaking students, is simply not enough for Moises. I understand that it would be difficult for you to go around your principal in order to better supplement Moises, but there are certainly ways for you to help him. Going to someone that does speak Spanish and having them translate the test or other homework assignments would be instrumental in helping him to succeed. And while I can get behind following rules, it seemed altogether unnecessary to take away Moises's translation book. You failed to bring him a test in his native tongue. That is not his fault, and it should not be his concern to deal with. Allowing him, or not allowing him in this case, to use that book is similar to allowing a student with poor eyesight to use his or her glasses/contacts. Your attempts to meet his needs are well-placed and should not be forgotten, but any trust you had gained from him for those attempts was lost in the moment you chose to enforce rules before assisting your student. This profession is about more than following guidelines and rules. We have to be better for the least of our students, and that will help us to reach all of our students.

It is my determination from observing your class as well as Moises and yourself outside the classroom, that several actions should be taken. First, it seems you understand Spanish to some degree. Therefore, you should allow Moises, and others of course, to speak Spanish in the classroom. It does the student no good if they are both unable to listen to or read the problems and cannot respond or speak aloud the problems that they are having. This does not mean that you need to speak Spanish as well. In fact, I believe it would be most beneficial for the students if you allowed them to speak Spanish, but spoke only in English and encouraged them to do work on speaking in English when they felt comfortable enough to do so. Another method that could be both simple and yet very effective would be to avoid using words that have a double meaning, such as the word block like in the example above, or at least explaining them to students struggling with the words.

From the somewhat brief moments that I have been able to witness of your instruction, I see a great deal of potential, but room for much improvement. Your desire to help your students is what drives you, and we can put that drive into some concrete classroom changes. What might seem like a tedious curriculum or pedagogical change could be the

best change that an ELL student has experienced in a classroom. Simply providing a test with the instructions and questions in Spanish could be all that is necessary to turn a student's whole mindset, and grades, around. Please keep these words in mind, and think about making a few of these changes if you can. Every little bit helps, and it is all to see our students succeed. Best of luck to you in the future.

Sincerely,

(Student name)

Curriculum Supervisor

Jackson Elementary School

Works Cited

Diaz-Rico, Lynne T. "First- and Second-Language Development and Their Relationship to Academic Achievement." *A Course for Teaching English Learners*, Pearson Education, Inc., 2012, pp. 13–46.

(Student name)

Dr. Thomas

C&T 331

HW 2

Diagnosis and Remediation of Moises

Dear Ms. Peterson,

This is a letter in response to my recent observation in your classroom concerning your student Moises. I know you previously had told me your concerns of not meeting his instructional, social, and emotional needs that you as teacher want to provide to him, just as you do with your other students. As a curriculum supervisor it is my goal to help teachers like you understand how to practice content-based instruction well in your classroom so that your English Language Learners have access to their needed content and the development for their English language proficiency continues to blossom. In this letter I have highlighted four key aspects I want you to look into that should help you understand and learn strategies on how to help Moises to succeed.

Overview of the Context:

Overall, after observing the classroom and teaching environment it is clear why you sought my help with Moises. It is apparent that Moises is not as proficient as a couple other Spanish speaking students in the room but there is another student in the same class who I believe is at the same level Moises is. I believe this is why he asks for the girl next to him to clarify when discussing the practice test because he is lacking the proficiency needed to understand classroom discussion and instructions. I believe that Moises is really willing to learn but is stuck due to his lack of understanding English. I could tell this due to his attempt of trying to do well for the upcoming standards test and his willingness to try to answer the math word problem question that you asked in class. From observing, I can tell that the school environment hosts a few kids who are ELL's and that they are not given many resources or opportunities to succeed as the other native English speakers do. This is where Moises I feel stands out from the

other ELL's because he is actually asking for help and wants to do well on the upcoming math standards test. Additionally, I notice you are very overwhelmed when dealing with the ELL's in your classroom, it may be due to the lack of knowledge when dealing with ELL's or the amount of them in your classroom. These are things that can be worked on and does not make you a bad teacher. As a teacher it's important to keep expanding your knowledge even after being out of school yourself.

Observations on Moises Content Knowledge & Language Skills:

When observing Moises I feel the key challenge he is facing is being a beginner in all 4 skill areas in English language proficiency: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. I believe he is a beginner in reading due to the fact he is very reliant it seems on his Spanish to English dictionary especially when it comes to math word problems but, can recognize and understand some words such as, the word "block" in one of the word problems even though it was the wrong kind of block he still recognized the word. When it comes to speaking he is very quiet and does not know much English, again he relies heavily on his dictionary but when he does speak it does come out sounding well. With Spanish though, he knows it very well including grammar and how to use it correctly. For listening, I think he knows some words and phrases but still needs improvement. Writing is one of the things, I did not get to see him do but with regards to his speaking and listening abilities I assume it is not fully developed as well. I feel his problems as well are based in terms of limited vocabulary and syntactic related to mathematical ideas and questions in English. Some other key things I noticed about Moises as well is that Moises looks around the room a lot, but don't be disheartened by this as I feel this is a way for him to think and process information. As well, he likes to work independently but at the same time is not shy and knows when to ask for help understanding things that are going on whether from the girl sitting next to him or from you Ms. Peterson. Overall, he has a good attitude about school and wants to learn and succeed even given his hardships with the language barrier. Even with the language barrier he shows great promise with math and exhibits that he can work normal number problems out very nicely. As well, I feel he is motivated to learn and speak English as he tries finding what he wants to say in his English dictionary.

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 that you were there to answer any questions he did have over the test. This was one positive that you offered to Moises in a stressful time that could help him feel reassured moving forward in the test without his dictionary. Overall, I feel there is much to reflect on as you continue teaching Moises and it is important to continue to look for guidance when in need of help of bettering them. In the next section, I have listed a couple ways to help Moises that I believe might make a better impact on his school.

Recommended Course of Action:

For a course of an action I propose going and setting aside time for Moises whether its during recess or after school to go over things that occurred in class and see what he did or didn't understand in class. After finding out where he is standing in understanding the material, set him up so he can understand the content and help teach him words that can be useful in understanding and performing math. Before the test, he might not be able to know all the words in the word problems but getting him prepared for words that will most likely show up will help him get some of the key information that he needs to read the directions and execute the problem. Another suggestion to support Moises in learning English better is connect the math word problems to real world situations that Moises can understand. With this, he can take his use his well-rounded language knowledge of Spanish and connect it to the same words in English and use them in his future word math problems. As well, I suggest creating groups in class some days so that the groups can work on math assignments together. This will put Moises around more English speakers and help him engage with the language and his fellow students. This theory of the Interactionist Model shows that peers conversing can help maximize the way that ELL's listen and learn about language. As I stated earlier, Moises is not a shy kid and should be able to converse more with his peers and be able to learn from them. My final suggestion to help Moises is to create verbal, written, or physical cues that he can connect to things in math such as, pointing your finger up to indicate raising or having picture cards with the Spanish and English word on it so he can connect his language to English in a visual way.

Hope this can help start you in a better direction with understanding and helping Moises the rest of the time he is in your classroom.

Sincerely, (Student name) (Curriculum Supervisor)

(Student name)

C&T 331

3/4/18

Homework Assignment #2

After observing Ms. Peterson's math class, it is clear that she is not making the content fully accessible for her English language learners. In the case of Moises, she needs to work on creating a classroom environment that can allow him to succeed by using his proficient first language while also working on his English. Ms. Peterson's math class the day that I observed was working on word problems that were given only in English and without any context for Moises and the other ELL students to be able to interpret them. This is just an example of one of the elements of her teaching style that need to be addressed in order to help her students comprehend the content. This is necessary so every student that is as motivated and willing to learn like Moises has a chance to do so.

In Ms. Peterson's class, there are a couple things that jump out as important in regards to how she teaches. I think Ms. Peterson does care about her students that don't speak proficient and wants them to succeed but I just don't think she knows exactly how to do it yet. First, it doesn't feel like she knows how proficient Moises is in English and what he needs to work on. When she asked him how to explain how he got his answer he was unable to say it in English because he is not at that level of proficiency yet. It is also important to note that she did not recognize that the way she was teaching may be difficult for him to understand as well. For example, when she gave a word problem that had to deal with city blocks, Moises interpreted as toy blocks because she did not think about how words like blocks and other homonyms may be confusing for students that are still in the Early Production stage of second language acquisition. I interpreted that Moises was in the Early Production stage of English language acquisition because of the words that he produces when he speaks. He uses familiar phrases such as "test" and numbers to answer questions. As well as answering with yes/no and other one to two word responses. He is also very competent and understands the math problems that are given to him when it is explained to him. What also should be addressed is how she did little to help Moises during the test. Although she did go to the principal and ask for a Spanish version of the test, she did this on the day of the test. This should have been discussed and worked out beforehand. The environment of the school seems to only focus on those students that are proficient in English

already and to just keep moving forward without helping English language learners along the way.

Moises is a very motivated student that is competent in math. Where he struggles is with word problems. He struggles in reading and knows it, he sees word problems as just jumbled letters that make no sense. Moises relies on his peers to help him interpret what Ms. Peterson is teaching. In the case of the city blocks example again, Moises had to lean over to the girl next to him and ask, "Why is he carrying blocks?" And she had to explain that they were talking about city blocks and not toy blocks. He also relies on a Spanish to English translation book to help him communicate and make sense of problems and words that are being used in her classroom. Moises has limited vocabulary and has yet to develop the skills necessary to produce sentence structure. He is very good at speaking Spanish though and speaks it at home with whoever he lives with. Moises pays attention, which makes him a good listener, but since he has trouble understanding what Ms. Peterson is saying he will look off around the room to find context clues to figure out what is going on. When Moises does use English he has a heavy accent and does not seem confident in what he is saying. You know Moises is willing to learn because even though he knows that he will struggle reading the test and has an opportunity to ditch school with a class mate, he still goes to it because it is important to him. All of this is important to note because if Ms. Peterson began to incorporate practices that allow Moises to work on his English and to improve he would.

Regarding Ms. Petersons pedagogical performance, she met Moises second language proficiency needs in some ways. By talking in English and having her students talk in English, it allows students who are working on a second language acquisition to improve. She also seems to allow him to talk to the kids around him in his first language, which helps him with understanding. Where she fails in meeting his needs is in helping him understand what is going on without him needing to go to other students to clarify. Ms. Peterson just writes word problems on the board with the thought that everybody will understand it. She doesn't attempt to use hand motions to explain or learn their language so she can communicate. It also seems like the class is very teacher and student oriented. In that, the teacher will ask the questions and the students will respond with an answer. There doesn't seem to be much partner work or dialogue amongst the students themselves. Something that would help students, especially students like Moises, is through the use of the Interactionist Model. This uses peer conversation to have students work on

their second language acquisition. Having students work out problems with other students, especially those that are bilingual already, can maximize the opportunity for students to hear and enjoy English. Students like Moises should be given as many opportunities as possible to work with speakers of the same native language. It is very important that they know that they create confidence in themselves and build a self-esteem. Having students answer questions out loud in front of the class when they are already not that confident can hurt their esteem and their want to improve their English. Ms. Peterson does try to help Moises in finding a Spanish test by going to the principal and asking for one and then going to search for one herself. But I wouldn't say she went above and beyond the call of duty in terms of getting additional support for Moises.

Strategies that Ms. Peterson should work on should focus on getting Moises as many chances as possible during the class to work on his English while still allowing him to use his native language. One strategy that she could use is through the use of repetition in her classroom. Having students repeat phrases and definitions so they can become familiar and comfortable with using the second language. The emphasis on Semiotics is also important especially in math where signs and symbols are used regularly. Semiotics says that second-language acquisition can be using these signs, symbols, and icons to create meanings across cultures and languages. Especially in math where symbols are used regularly and could be used to help Moises to acquire English. Lastly, Ms. Peterson could work on making her content and lessons more accessible for her students by giving them multiple means in which to interpret the information and problems. Using things like simplifying instruction and word problems so there isn't as much writing that needs to be translated. She could also make use something as simple as hand motions to help students understand what she is saying better.

Overall Ms. Peterson needs to work more on making the content material more accessible for Moises and students like him who are still working on their English language proficiency. And creating a classroom environment that focuses on improving everyone's knowledge of the content and not just those that speak English.

(Student name)

Dr. Thomas

C&T 331

3/5/18

Ms. Peterson,

Assignment 2

Thank you so much for allowing me to sit in on your classroom earlier this week! I know the testing period can be very stressful on all of our students, but it seems as though most of your class handled it quite well! I did notice that one of our new students, Moises understood the problem and he was able to get the answer, but had difficulty articulating that. There was another student that was sitting next to him that was able to translate a bit for him, but he otherwise looked very lost in general instruction. I hope to help provide some clarity as an outside perspective on what I have witnessed and learned in order to help you as much as I am able!

The situation of the other students laughing at Moises could have been diffused because it did not emotionally encourage Moises to continue to participate and/or attempt to understand the concepts. By threatening one student to lose his recess, it made a small example of the consequences the students could have faced by treating Moises this way. However, addressing the whole class and creating a mode for empathy and a teaching moment for how Moises feels when the rest of the class laughs at him could greatly improve the students' relationships with Moises. The current environment is physically structured to engender conversation and collaboration, but considering the fact that Moises is not directly paired with another student who speaks the same language, but also understands English hinders his conversation between his peers and expressing his understanding of classroom language and basic interpersonal communication skills as well as build relationships with his fellow classmates.

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 cuarentra, 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 more broad 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 regards 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 less pressured situation to where Moises or any other students would feel more comfortable in asking speaking out and asking questions.

In addressing the fluctuating levels of of English language proficiency between students, I would like to recommend that you use this to your advantage and create informal activities for students to work with one another. In my personal experience, being around native Spanish speakers with English as their second language allowed me to learn different patterns and tendencies through repetition of words and being able to request a translation in a friendly environment. You could plan a group activity cutting parts of a word problem and having students work with one another to put them in a grammatically correct order at different points throughout your class. For example, divide students based off their English proficiency level and mixing students whose comprehension of the English language is high with those whose is low. In a learning environment in which students have the chance to socialize with one it will not only help their comprehension of a second

language but as well as create comradery which will reduce bullying. The fact that students would become more comfortable with one another also will lead to students participating in formal learning between student and teacher interactions and not shut down like Enrique did when he answered your question.

A formal activity you could use to help English language learning students is to frontload a unit plan by focusing on basic mathematical terms that will be constantly used throughout the unit. This way English language learning students will be able to jump from a beginning level to a early intermediate level of English proficiency within one class period. I would suggest giving them an example of a universal personal experience in order for them to associate the units content with memories. The use of everyday math such as the division of material such as food or the telling of time can be the start and break down of the terms used for each application. I advice using a Spanish dictionary, not to encourage the use of Spanish but for your own personal use in order to break down each term. Using pictorial images when trying to translate the word is also more beneficial than attempting to translate it based off the definition of the term or rephrasing of words. The recommended time consumption of this activity should take up about sixty percent of the class and then the other forty percent could be an interactive, informal group activity.

With all of this in mind, I want to thank you again for allowing me to observe your classroom and for your willingness to be open for any suggestions to make the classroom better for your students now and in the future! I know that you have been working diligently with all of your students and I hope you are able to use these ideas to help benefit them. Please let me know if there is anything that you would like to discuss or if you have any questions.

You are doing a tremendous job, Ms. Peterson. I wish you all the best.

Respectfully,

Your Observation Team

Diagnosis and Remediation of Moises

(Student name)

University of Kansas

March 5, 2018

Ms. Pederson,

I write to you to address the needs and concerns of one of the students in your math class, who is an English Language Learner, Moises. Thank you for expressing your concern for the student and asking your Curriculum Supervisor to observe and provide an analysis of the situation; it is clear that you care for all of the students within your classroom. This observation is necessary in order to get an informed idea of Moises' progress, not only in his grades, but also in his Academic English Proficiency. In this letter, I will address Moises' progress and needs in four skill areas: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. While it seems that some aspects of the classroom environment have helped Moises to achieve progress, there are many things we must alter in order to provide him with an environment suitable for learning English.

First, the school has a policy of speaking only English with the students, rather than other languages. Because of this, a challenge in communication will likely occur between Moises and you, as the instructor. While tests used to be administered in Spanish, the school has since changed that policy and asks all students to test in English. These, unfortunately, are all rules that you will have to abide by. However, there are still many options we can take in order to show Moises that he is cared for and is placed on the correct path to success. Second, as the instructor, you are responsible for dozens of students per day. While students learn at different speeds, you have the duty to meet students at their current level of proficiency in order to help them develop it. In your class with Moises, you have at least one other student that speaks Spanish, the language that Moises is speaking throughout my observation to his family, other students, and you based on the vocabulary I have observed, with terms such as "calles", for "streets", and "hoy", for "today". This other student, or students, could be an excellent resource to Moises. Third, let us focus on the student. Moises is a bright individual who has a clear competency in math. He came to the correct answer in the math problem on the board, but needed a Spanish-English Dictionary to translate his answer. He seems to be very proficient in his mathematical ability, but his listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills seem to need improvement.

Next, we will address the key challenges the Moises seems to be encountering as a newcomer in English and US schools. Moises is incredibly talented in math; he is an independent worker who can come to the answer quickly and correctly. While numbers in digit form are the same across English and Spanish, Moises comes to a crossroads when it comes to translating. First, we will discuss his listening skills. Moises very actively listens and does not get easily distracted; however, it seems as if he has difficulty following the pace of the speaking. He frequently looks around the classroom, as if to find some sort of context clues for what you are discussing. It seems he may be at the Early Intermediate level for listening according to the CELDT Levels and Associated Proficiency Descriptor (Diaz-Rico, p. 51). Second, we will discuss speaking. Moises rarely speaks in English, unless he is prompted to do so. When asked to explain his answer, he repeats the word, forty, over and over again instead of providing a complete sentence about how he performed those functions. He typically resorts to speaking English, even to people who primarily speak English, such as you, Ms. Pederson. For speaking, I would also put him in the Early Intermediate stage, as he is making attempts to expand his vocabulary, even if he only speaks in short words or phrases now (Diaz-Rico, p. 51). Third, his reading skills seem to be lacking. Based on his performance, it seems that he possesses basic competency in reading based on his ability to read and pronounce words, such as “forty” correctly; however, his pace in the classroom suggests that he may have great difficulty in reading more than just a couple words. For this, I would suggest he is probably in the Beginning stage for being able to recognize a few words (Diaz-Rico, p. 51). Fourth, Moises’ writing skills seem to be struggling in some senses. While he is able to express what he needs, such as saying “Need test in english”, we must see that his grammar is slightly askewed. Because of this example, I would suggest he is in the Early Intermediate Stage of writing for his ability to produce a simple sentence to express a point (Diaz-Rico, p. 51).

I would suggest that Moises most likely struggles most with phonology in reading difficulties, as he seems to be confused often. Moises appears to be motivated in his learning, but not as much in English. He does not take many opportunities to try to speak

in English, suggesting that he is likely uncomfortable and unmotivated to attempt it. He seems to work well with peers who also speak Spanish, but the students who do not speak Spanish with him seem to not understand Moises well.

Ms. Pederson, after observing your class, there are a few observations I made that may contribute to Moises struggles in the class, as well as some ways in which you are helping. First, by placing a student near him who also speaks Spanish as well as English well, you help to bridge the language gap and give Moises the opportunity to clarify ideas. However, you did not show significant efforts to bridge this gap with your own behavior. After Moises had responded to the math question with the correct answer, he was unable to explain how he came to that answer. Instead of offering a clarified version of your question to him or asking the other student to translate it for him, you proceeded to ask him the same question several times over, likely making him feel more uncomfortable and unmotivated to respond in English. In addition, the pace in which you speak in your class seems to be suitable for most of your class; however, to an English Language Learner like Moises, it would be very difficult to understand everything you are saying. Last, when Moises came to you asking for a translated test, you did not respond well to letting him know that you would work on it or encourage him in any way that you will help, but rather told him that it was not important. This is a difficult subject because he views this test as very important, and by not trying to help Moises right away or giving him hope that you will fix it, you walked away once the bell rang. There are small adaptations like these that will help Moises better succeed in class and in learning English.

Finally, we will discuss the recommended course of action for you as an instructor to help Moises. The first simple changes would be to slow down your speech and enunciate well to give him clear indications of what you are saying. Next, continue to put a student near him that would be willing to help translate and clarify questions he may have. While teachers are not allowed to speak in Spanish, the students may be willing to help him succeed and give help special attention. Third, I recommend you use words that do not have double meanings in English if at all possible. This could be a great challenge

to Moises. In terms of preparing for the upcoming test, I suggest you perform these things: Because it is clear that the test must be administered in English, I suggest you first see if Moises would be willing to meet occasionally to complete specific additional assignments teach him basic test-taking skills, such as reading directions and selecting the important information out of the text. Second, I think Moises would benefit from a reading tutor, perhaps receiving help from another student or a Spanish teacher in the school that may help him improve in reading. Third, I suggest that Moises is given additional time to complete the testing. We are aware that he is capable of doing the math, but he may need more time to process the questions that are being asked.

Ms. Pederson, I hope that this letter helps to explain the situation occurring in your classroom and provides helpful strategies to aid Moises' learning. I am available to discuss any other concerns you may have; as for now, my observations have been addressed and I firmly believe that Moises will achieve great success if you make these modifications and accommodations in your classroom. Thank you for your concern and for reaching out about your students..

Sincerely,

(Student name)

Curriculum Supervisor

References

Diaz-Rico, L. T. (2012). *A course for teaching english learners* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.

(Student name)

C&T 331

Thomas

26 February 2018

Dear Mrs. Peterson,

It was a pleasure, as always, to be welcomed into your math class for the routine observational session this past week. These routine observations are only one of the important ways in which our school district may continue to uniform classes across the board and ensure the needs of each student is being met. As you are well aware Mrs. Peterson, collectively our students exhibit a wide and varying range of English Language Proficiency, so we as a school board are determined to include English Learning as a lens in which to view and improve all curricular activities for our students. Aside from this, the observation of your class is particularly necessary due to the impending standardized assessment for this grade level. Students over the course of several weeks and months have been preparing with the help of teachers such as yourself to represent our district with their ability to deduce answers from complex math equations and written-word equations suitable for their grade level. In order to help current and future students meet their educational goals, I must deliver my feedback from the session last week, and I hope you will use any constructive criticism or praise as the resource I'd like to think of it as to be self-reflective and ever-improving as an instructor and mentor.

Because of the vantage point I had in the classroom, I took particular care in assessing one pupil more than the others—although I tried to dedicate a fair amount of observation to many students. Moises, as you know, is new to our school district—and upon my looking in to his records, has yet to take a standardized test of any kind. Therefore, the impending standardized test would be his first. From what I could ascertain from Moises' file, he is currently at a low level of English Proficiency, but beyond a

few confused looks and questions uttered to a friend sitting nearby, one wouldn't be able to tell, for he seems to excel in mathematics. This makes perfect sense however, because numbers and mathematical theories do not differ between native and second languages. In fact, during the point in class in which you asked Moises to explain how he arrived at an answer of "40 minutes" to a word problem, Moises had the correct answer before any student that I could see, he was merely unable to communicate that to you in English, and did not communicate that to you in his native language perhaps because he knew you would not understand him (in the same regard he likely seldom understands you). How could that be, though? How could he be gifted in one subject area, but struggle so obviously in another? From what I can see through observation alone, I could only conjecture to think that Moises would excel in ELP (English Language Proficiency) if the school board allowed students who are learning English as a second language to speak in their native language when needed for communication. Cutting students off completely from their native language seems extreme, and while I do not believe the school board to be intentionally disadvantaging any students, I believe that rule ought to be up for revision, and have petitioned Mr. Rosa, the Principal on the matter as of late. In any event, for Moises, it seems the primary comprehension of English comes from following what his classmates are doing, and listening with intense focus—however, he seems to severely lack the confidence in his ability to speak English at this time.

Mrs. Peterson, first I must commend you on your patience with your students. Some teachers I have the pleasure of observing are averse to the idea of patience even with watchful eyes about, but you seemed cool and composed the entire session, and I thank you for that. Students will always respond better to someone that does not imply that they are a burden. I noticed that during instruction, you spoke rather quickly, and took little pause in between housekeeping announcements and the actual content itself. I also noticed upon your interactions with Moises and Joe, that you failed to take into consideration Moises' lack of confidence with speaking English at this time, and you did not address or

challenge Joe's unkind and inaccurate comment about the level of Moises' intelligence. I appreciate you assessing Moises' work that he had on the paper rather than assuming he was simply repeating the word "forty"; however, more could have been done there, and I will get into how that would look momentarily.

Since observing this, I have heard rumors that you were in search of one of the older standardized tests that were written in Spanish, to provide for Moises. While I missed the interaction, and do not know if this was your idea or Moises, I must simply say it is a step in the right direction as far as fair accessibility is concerned. Had you been able to locate the test prior to giving up, I would have cautioned you to find someone of High Bilingual Proficiency to ensure that it is up to date with the test that is being given in English.

In an effort to keep our wonderful teachers self-reflective, I must offer you this piece of advice first: imagine for a moment if you went to work (the school) one day and everyone around you was speaking a language you cannot understand, write in, or speak—and all you knew was how to communicate in English. Imagine if you were fully expected to complete all classes that day and do it the same day in and day out and be scored on your ability and performance. This ought to provide you with a sense of how Moises and students like Moises may feel every day. Use this reflective exercise when addressing students who are ELLs (English Language Learners) and you will find yourself more sympathetic and willing to erode those barriers. Tangibly, I think you could improve vastly with students who are still gaining skills with the English Language by speaking in a slower-paced, and calmer tone of voice. Due to the wide variety of proficiency levels, slowing your pace will allow students who are struggling with the listening involved in learning a second language to better distinguish between words and phrases. A calmer tone is more esthetic to the learning ear, and the words you say can be latched on to better, so if it takes a student a few extra moments to understand a phrase, they will not quickly forget it. Going back to your interaction with Moises about the word problem, instead of asking him,

“Can you tell us how you got 40?” in an effort to explain to the class the process, give Moises the credit he deserves for having solved the problem, by taking the scratch sheet of paper he used and using it as a visual to explain for him. Start with, “Ok class, as you can see from Moises showing his work, Moises knew that. . .” and go from there. At the end of the explanation (still given in a slow, inviting tone so all can follow along) thank Moises for his help, and congratulate him for getting it done correctly. My last bit of advice is to remember that all ELLs (English Language Learners) start at a novice level of proficiency, a level that is inevitable but temporary, and making small adjustments to each interaction can make a difference in how temporary that level is, and the student’s self-esteem through the difficult process.

As always Mrs. Peterson, I want to thank you for the hard work you do and commend you on your willingness to improve yourself and your method of instruction in an effort to help our students. Know that any additional efforts and changes will not go unnoticed by me, or by your students.

Respectfully Yours,

(Student name)

Curriculum Supervisor

(Student name)

Dr. Thomas

C&T 331

3/5/18

Assignment 2

Ms. Peterson,

Thank you so much for allowing me to sit in on your classroom earlier this week! I know the testing period can be very stressful on all of our students, but it seems as though most of your class handled it quite well! I did notice that one of our new students, Moises understood the problem and he was able to get the answer, but had difficulty articulating that. There was another student that was sitting next to him that was able to translate a bit for him, but he otherwise looked very lost in general instruction. I hope to help provide some clarity as an outside perspective on what I have witnessed and learned in order to help you as much as I am able!

The situation of the other students laughing at Moises could have been diffused because it did not emotionally encourage Moises to continue to participate and/or attempt to understand the concepts. By threatening one student to lose his recess, it made a small example of the consequences the students could have faced by treating Moises this way. However, addressing the whole class and creating a mode for empathy and a teaching moment for how Moises feels when the rest of the class laughs at him could greatly improve the students' relationships with Moises. The current environment is physically structured to engender conversation and collaboration, but considering the fact that Moises is not directly paired with another student who speaks the same language, but also understands English hinders his conversation between his peers and expressing his understanding of classroom language and basic interpersonal communication skills as well as build relationships with his fellow classmates.

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

less pressured situation to where Moises or any other students would feel more comfortable in asking speaking out and asking questions.

In addressing the fluctuating levels of English language proficiency between students, I would like to recommend that you use this to your advantage and create informal activities for students to work with one another. In my personal experience, being around native Spanish speakers with English as their second language allowed me to learn different patterns and tendencies through repetition of words and being able to request a translation in a friendly environment. You could plan a group activity cutting parts of a word problem and having students work with one another to put them in a grammatically correct order at different points throughout your class. For example, divide students based off their English proficiency level and mixing students whose comprehension of the English language is high with those whose is low. In a learning environment in which students have the chance to socialize with one it will not only help their comprehension of a second language but as well as create comradery which will reduce bullying. The fact that students would become more comfortable with one another also will lead to students participating in formal learning between student and teacher interactions and not shut down like Enrique did when he answered your question.

A formal activity you could use to help English language learning students is to frontload a unit plan by focusing on basic mathematical terms that will be constantly used throughout the unit. This way English language learning students will be able to jump from a beginning level to an early intermediate level of English proficiency within one class period. I would suggest giving them an example of a universal personal experience in order for them to associate the units content with memories. The use of everyday math such as the division of material such as food or the telling of time can be the start and break down of the terms used for each application. I advise using a Spanish dictionary, not to encourage the use of Spanish but for your own personal use in order to break down each term. Using pictorial images when trying to translate the word is also more beneficial than attempting to translate it based off the definition of the term or rephrasing of words. The recommended time consumption of this activity should take up about sixty

percent of the class and then the other forty percent could be an interactive, informal group activity.

With all of this in mind, I want to thank you again for allowing me to observe your classroom and for your willingness to be open for any suggestions to make the classroom better for your students now and in the future! I know that you have been working diligently with all of your students and I hope you are able to use these ideas to help benefit them. Please let me know if there is anything that you would like to discuss or if you have any questions.

You are doing a tremendous job, Ms. Peterson. I wish you all the best.

Respectfully,

Your Observation Team

(Student name)

C&T 331

Dr. Thomas

3/4/18

HW 2: Immersion

Dear Mrs. Peterson,

I first off want to thank you for allowing me to come into your class to assess the environment and the way you teach Moises. I want to discuss the problem in the classroom that is leading to the disconnection between Moises and the material in class. One of the obvious problems' Moises is having in class is that he cannot respond to the written math problems. Moises is very intelligent and can use some context clues to answer some questions, like the question in the beginning of class. He could do the math on paper, but it took him a longer time to address what the problem was actually asking him to solve. One of the problems you as a teacher are having is that your instructions often leaves Moises out to dry, because he is still a first language learner and heavily relies on his native language to communicate and respond he is left out of the class. Even when you went to the principle for help you were met with hostility, because he could not speak English he should not take the test and just stay content with being in the back of the class and behind. This is a greater problem than just a letter can address. It is the job of the school and the teaching staff to supply Moises with all the necessary tools to learn and feel wanted in school, and I'm suggesting that you and the staff need to sit down and discuss the environment you are promoting. When a student who can do the work, but needs some assistance is thrown to the side what message are you sending the student and the community as a whole? Not one that promotes learning and community well being.

To solve some of these issues I would like to make changes physically and socially in the classroom to promote a better learning environment that takes a

interactionist model¹ approach to learning. So the students like Moises have the best chance to learn and develop communication skills that will help them moving forward. I also believe that having better classroom management and activities that boost Moises's self esteem would actually quicken Moises's ability to learn and be proficient in a second language.

Moises' challenges are not only reading English, but also responding in English. As we saw in the video every time Moises started reading a written math problem the words and letters would scramble across the page. When he did get an answer correct he was not able to tell you how he came to that answer. Moises knowledge of math was up to the standard of that grade level, and we can see this in his work and how he was able to simplify the first problem in the video to come to the answer. His academic language proficiency in listening was very limited, because Moises was able to pick out a few words the teacher was saying. When it comes to speaking his ability is very limited if not nonexistent, because he cannot actually speak English. In reading, Moises cannot interpret and evaluate written language, and writing in terms of the math class he is able to write number so he is proficient in math only if it requires him to read and write numbers and symbols. Based on the beginning of the video when Moises was trying to listen to what you were saying, your words kept floating together, and this implies that he has some trouble with English phonology and morphology. He problems are also steaming from his limited vocabulary and reading ability when addressing mathematical problems. Moises was hesitant to respond to you in English in class, but the motivation to learn how to read the problems was there. Although he did ask for the test in Spanish he at least wants to try and participate in class. In class he was reliant on the girl next to him to explain some of the problems you were discussing in class, and this shows he does work well with others and is able to accept help from his peers.

You are meeting the content knowledge needs, because you are teaching math skills and using real world problems to make the problems more relatable to the students. All the other needs Moises has like, the lack of multiple ways of

¹ Diaz-Rico, Lynne T. *A Course for Teaching English Learners* . Second ed.
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representing problems, and providing the text in multiple formats and in different languages is however being overlooked. When I think of going beyond “the call of duty” in terms of support I referred to the video of Ms. Segura. Ms. Segura provided problems in small doses so that the students were not overwhelmed with written problems. She structured her class with heterogeneous groups² to provide the communicative support that is needed for students that are just learning a new language. This grouping allowed students who only can speak their native language to participate in a group that some students are able to speak English. Like Ms. Segura I already mentioned that you did use real world problems to make the material relatable to the students. When I observed the way you tried to help Moises in class I was a little put off that you only expect him to communicate in English, especially when you knew he struggled with even basic levels of communication. Moises was barely able to use BICS(basis intrapersonal communication skills) to answer or respond to you, so I’m confused as to how you expect him to succeed in class or even be motivated to keep trying to learn English. On a “basics” level of support, in my mind you failed to even provide a small amount of support for Moises.

Firstly to address and assist in the development of English language listening skills a better focus on your part on phonemic awareness³ would help greatly. By slowing down when you talk and properly sounding the words out Moises has a better opportunity of grasping what you are trying to ask. Using oral and written clues or semiotics⁴ to represent problems in math could also assist Moises in drawing connections between his native language and English. I believe cooperative learning⁵ would also benefit Moises greatly, and by repositioning the room and arranging the desks so that Moises can work with a partner like the girl next to him

²Diaz-Rico, Lynne T. *A Course for Teaching English Learners* . Second ed.
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³ Diaz-Rico, Lynne T. *A Course for Teaching English Learners* . Second ed.
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⁴ Diaz-Rico, Lynne T. *A Course for Teaching English Learners* . Second ed.
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⁵ Diaz-Rico, Lynne T. *A Course for Teaching English Learners* . Second ed.
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would help him learn English and have the confidence to answer questions in class, especially when he already asks her for help in class anyways. By using symbols and physical representations to help demonstrate and answer math problems Moises will have a better opportunity to meet the demands of the next test. Also rearranging the classroom so that native language speakers like Moises have the chance to work with and learn from English speakers would positively affect his ability to learn and be proficient in the English language. On a more personal level you as the teacher should reach out to Moises's family and see if you and the family could work out a time or some resource for Moises to come and get extra help in reading, writing , and speaking English. If you and his parents are aware that he is falling behind at least you are able to actively address the problem.

Best,

(Student name)

(Student name)

Dr. Thomas

C&T 331

3/5/18

Assignment 2

Ms. Peterson,

Thank you so much for allowing me to sit in on your classroom earlier this week! I know the testing period can be very stressful on all of our students, but it seems as though most of your class handled it quite well! I did notice that one of our new students, Moises understood the problem and he was able to get the answer, but had difficulty articulating that. There was another student that was sitting next to him that was able to translate a bit for him, but he otherwise looked very lost in general instruction. I hope to help provide some clarity as an outside perspective on what I have witnessed and learned in order to help you as much as I am able!

The situation of the other students laughing at Moises could have been diffused because it did not emotionally encourage Moises to continue to participate and/or attempt to understand the concepts. By threatening one student to lose his recess, it made a small example of the consequences the students could have faced by treating Moises this way. However, addressing the whole class and creating a mode for empathy and a teaching moment for how Moises feels when the rest of the class laughs at him could greatly improve the students' relationships with Moises. The current environment is physically structured to engender conversation and collaboration, but considering the fact that Moises is not directly paired with another student who speaks the same language, but also understands English hinders his conversation between his peers and expressing his

understanding of classroom language and basic interpersonal communication skills as well as build relationships with his fellow classmates.

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 more broad 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 regards 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 less pressured situation to where Moises or any other students would feel more comfortable in asking speaking out and asking questions.

In addressing the fluctuating levels of English language proficiency between students, I would like to recommend that you use this to your advantage and create informal activities for students to work with one another. In my personal experience, being around native Spanish speakers with English as their second language allowed me to learn different patterns and tendencies through repetition of words and being able to request a translation in a friendly environment. You could plan a group activity cutting parts of a word problem and having students work with one another to put them in a grammatically correct order at different points throughout your class. For example, divide students based off their English proficiency level and mixing students whose comprehension of the English language is high with those whose is low. In a learning environment in which students have the chance to socialize with one it will not only help their comprehension of a second language but as well as create comradery which will reduce bullying. The fact that students would become more comfortable with one another also will lead to students participating in formal learning between student and teacher interactions and not shut down like Enrique did when he answered your question.

A formal activity you could use to help English language learning students is to frontload a unit plan by focusing on basic mathematical terms that will be constantly used throughout the unit. This way English language learning students will be able to jump from a beginning level to an early intermediate level of English proficiency within one class period. I would suggest giving them an example of a universal personal experience in order for them to associate the unit's content with memories. The use of everyday math such as the division of material such as food or the telling of time can be the start and break down of the terms used for each application. I advise using a Spanish dictionary, not to encourage the use of Spanish but for your own personal use in order to break down each term. Using pictorial images when trying to translate the word is also more

beneficial than attempting to translate it based off the definition of the term or rephrasing of words. The recommended time consumption of this activity should take up about sixty percent of the class and then the other forty percent could be an interactive, informal group activity.

With all of this in mind, I want to thank you again for allowing me to observe your classroom and for your willingness to be open for any suggestions to make the classroom better for your students now and in the future! I know that you have been working diligently with all of your students and I hope you are able to use these ideas to help benefit them. Please let me know if there is anything that you would like to discuss or if you have any questions.

You are doing a tremendous job, Ms. Peterson. I wish you all the best.

Respectfully,

Your Observation Team

(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)

Dr. Thomas

C&T 331

5 March 2018

Diagnosis and Remediation of Moises

Ms. Peterson, I enjoyed coming and observing your class last week and seeing you interact with your students. It seems you are a master of your content area and have accomplished a great deal over the semester. I am writing you to provide you with feedback from my observation and suggestions on how to improve your pedagogy.

As you are aware majority of the students at your school are English Language Learners (ELLs). The school district and I want to ensure that every student is prepared to the best of their ability for the assessments this spring. I noted in researching the school that the past year the school had five percent of students achieve English Language Proficiency (ELP). It is my duty to assistance you and your colleagues to improve your understanding of English Language Learners needs and give you ideas to enhance your teaching of English Language Learners. I hope that you will use any constructive criticism, feedback, or praise I have to assist you in preparing your students for the world.

While I was observing your class, I focused in on one student, in particular, Moises. I noticed while you were giving instruction he was talking to other classmates. At first, I thought this might be regular classroom banter but since my viewpoint in the classroom allowed I realized he was asking questions about your instruction. At the time you were talking about a math problem that dealt with street blocks, it seemed that Moises thought you were referencing building blocks and needed clarification from his neighbor. However, I did notice that he was one of the first students to have the math problem complete and correct without any assistance. Nonetheless, when you asked if he could tell the class how he came to his conclusion, he wasn't able to respond because he seems to be in the second of Language Acquisition. The second stage is known as Early Production which means he has limited comprehension of English and uses keywords or familiar phrases. This was demonstrated by saying "40" in response to your question of how he found the answer. Moises has an excellent understanding of mathematics but as I'm sure you know the language barrier can prevent him from excelling in your class. He doesn't seem to comprehend even what you write on the whiteboard very well; I noticed looks

around the classroom for clues as to what you might be referencing. He often seeks his Spanish translation book as a guide especially when trying to answer questions in front of the class. This explains that Moises is not comfortable using English which is why he may have a difficult time in your class even though he is excellent at math.

In order to provide an equitable experience for each of your students here are some ways in which I believe you meet Moises' needs in the classroom and suggest you build upon, in addition to suggestions for improvement. First, take time to explain the language of the math problems in more detail. As mentioned before Moises seemed to be confused about words that most English Language Proficiency students wouldn't have issues. So, taking the time to clarify certain aspects of the word problem would be beneficial for someone who is still in the second stage of Language Acquisition. I know this may seem trivial, but you must look at your teaching through the eyes of English Language Learners. If the word has another meaning, then a student who isn't considered English Language Proficiency will have trouble deciphering the meaning. Taking the time to reflect on what the question is asking is vital for students who are still in stage two of Language Acquisition. Second, I noticed when you asked Moises how he came to the answer of the math problem you looked at his work and knew he did it correctly, which it is important to recognize students when they achieve something on their own. However, when you asked how he came to that conclusion, he wasn't able to tell you in English. Instead of finding out a way to have Moises show the class how he found the answer you instead repeated your question. I would advise that you show the class the work Moises did on the overhead projector or even asking him demonstrate his work on the whiteboard. This way you save him the embarrassment of not being able to communicate with you and his classmates properly. Third, I would suggest you speak slower when you address the class. A slower and calmer tone allows the students the opportunity to understand what you are trying to teach especially students who are in the Early Production of Language Acquisition. I know you have a class who are all at a different level when it comes to Language Acquisition, but I encourage you to take these suggestions into account when you are teaching. Fourth, I would implore you to take work of your students more seriously. I saw your interaction with Moises as the end of class and was disappointed most of your interaction you seemed preoccupied. In future situations I wish to see more interaction on your part.

I believe you have the ability to achieve these goals and help your students succeed. It is important to remember that you need to look at your teaching through the lens of English Language Learners. For them to accomplish the tasks you set in front of them, it is vital that they understand what the question is asking. Always give students opportunities to show their work and make sure they feel valued. It is important to remember that these students are just beginning to understand the complexities of the English language.

Thank you for letting me observe your classroom, I commend you for taking advice and your inclination to change the way you teach in your classroom.

Best regards,

(Student

name)

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,

morphology, and syntax are issues to address further on in language development when he currently does not even understand the basic vocabulary needed. One issue is that the teacher asks him questions that require “Speech Emergence” or a later stage of acquisition (an example being when the teacher asks Moises to explain how he got the answer or telling him to ask her for what he needs help with). Moises is only capable of basic responses, much less putting together a question.

Pedagogically, many practices need to improve to meet Moises’ needs. For an easy start, view the video on Ms. Segura’s class (<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/math-for-newcomers-ousd#>). Ample hand gestures and writing basic instructions on the board greatly helps students not proficient in English. Additionally, explaining the non-math content of word problems will help Moises understand the problems. He needs the teacher to help him with these clarifications unprompted, as he struggles with English too much to ask the questions he has. He should also be allowed to use his translating dictionary to help him with math test word problems. Although Ms. Peterson goes above and beyond by going to the Spanish teacher and looking for Spanish tests in the storage room, many basic accommodations will help him both succeed in class and learn the language more than translated tests. Prompting Moises with questions at his proficiency level and allowing him to explain how he reached solutions by showing his work on the board will help him better communicate what he knows. Moises’ brilliance shows through his math work, but his struggles with the English language hurt him across all fields if he does not receive the support he needs.

Leading up to the next test, Moises needs many more accommodations. Replicating Ms. Segura’s methods of using hand gestures and drawings will help him understand the next unit better, as well as begin to develop and understand English vocabulary. Another step should include explaining the non-math vocabulary to Moises so that he can apply the content knowledge he does know. Additionally, he should be allowed to use his translator dictionary for the test (unless he’s writing notes in it to

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.

(Student name)

Assignment 2 Dr.

Thomas

5 March 2018

Letter to Ms. Peterson

Dear Ms. Peterson,

After observing your interactions with Moises, his home life, and playground experiences, I have some suggestions for helping him be successful in the classroom. I believe that you were right to come to me for an observation, because Moises is obviously struggling with his English Language Acquisition and Proficiency. Moises speaks Spanish in his home and when he is on the playground with his peers it is clear that he still prefers to speak Spanish with them as well. He is struggling not only with speaking English, but also listening and reading. The elements that need to be addressed are some of the vocabulary terms that are used in the classroom, specifically in the math word problems that are presented, and the interactions with Moises.

Because of the school environment where many students speak Spanish as their first language but are encouraged to only speak English, it is going to be hard for Moises to initially adapt to the environment. There are going to be a lot of misunderstandings and misperceptions until he fully understands the language, and this will take time. The school does not allow him to take tests in Spanish, so it is clear that his score may not reflect his actual intelligence. You, as the teacher, are trying to provide Moises with tools

to use, but I think we could take this one step further to increase the rate at which Moises acquires his second language.

Moises is clearly good at math. He understands the concepts and can do the computations. I think that the key challenge Moises is facing is how he is being immersed in the language. He is not yet proficient in any of the 4 skill areas. He struggles with listening, reading, and speaking English. He seems to write simple sentences well, but it is possible that it might take him a while to form a more complex sentence in English when he is writing. I would say that his proficiency is Early Intermediate. He can produce words and phrases, recognize them in print and match words to pictures, and respond to a writing prompt with a simple sentence. I know this because I saw him say simple sentences in English, connect the word “blocks” to the blocks in the classroom, and write you a simple note about needing the test in Spanish.

I think that Moises’ setbacks with English are over the broad spectrum of language. He has a limited vocabulary and struggles to form sentences beyond some simple sentences that could apply to a broad range of situations and subjects. He does not seem to be comfortable using English, but I do think that he is motivated to learn English so that he can participate in the class discussions and understand his classmates better. He is using his classmates as resources to translate so that he can begin to understand English, and is motivated by their understanding. I think his peers can definitely be a tool in his acquisition of the language, as they can help him understand in and out of the classroom.

As the teacher, I can see that your effort is there to support Moises, but there are a few key things missing that would really help him build his proficiency and understand in the classroom. I do not think that his needs are being met in the classroom. I can see that he is motivated to learn and is proficient at math, but there are a few misunderstandings of words that could hold him back. For example, when the problem said “blocks” we assume that everyone knows we are talking about city blocks, but Moises thought we were talking about building blocks. So, taking the time to explain what kind of blocks the problem was referring to could have been helpful for Moises. I think that trying to find the test in Spanish for Moises could have been helpful at this stage in his acquisition, and since you could not find one, maybe asking if he could use his dictionary on the test would have been a relevant next step.

Just by observing Moises’ time in the classroom, you can see that his needs are not being met. He is misunderstanding most of the vocabulary and there are no supports in place to help him understand, other than his classmates translating the English into Spanish for him. Expecting him to completely stop speaking Spanish and immediately know English is unrealistic. These transitions take time, so making sure that he has support in the classroom to make this huge transition is important.

You asked Moises how he got 40, and he struggled to answer and explain his thinking. The following are some strategies that you might use to help Moises answer this question. One strategy is to talk to Moises in English, but let him explain his thinking in Spanish. This could help him work on his listening skills, while letting him fully process the math content that you want him to learn. If you do not speak Spanish, possibly

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

through the stages of language acquisition more smoothly, find ways to express himself, and build his self-esteem when using the language. ‘

Overall, there is work to be done in order to help Moises be successful in school. We have to find out more specifically what his needs are and then actively help meet those needs in order for him to successfully acquire the language. This is a process that is going to take time and energy from both parties, but I think that we can see success if we continue to work with Moises each day on his English.

(Student name)
Curriculum Supervisor

(Student name)
C&T 331
3/04/2018

Diagnosis and Remediation of Moises

This video is about a Spanish fifth grader, Moises, who attended the first math exam in a U.S. school after he immigrated to the United States. Due to his limited English comprehension, he has encountered a range of difficulties and confusion when preparing and taking the math exam. His math teacher, Ms. Peterson, also did not find a suitable approach to help him overcome these difficulties. Thus, the boy was helpless in the face of mathematics exam questions in English. This video is very thought-provoking and leads to reflection. As a teacher, I have thought a lot about this. First of all, in our class, we will have all kinds of students, and they will come to the class with different experiences, learning styles, interests, preferences, and needs. In particular, the number of ELLs has increased more than any other time period. As a teacher committed to content-based instructional practices, Ms. Peterson's immediate role should be to make her math content accessible to Moises, and also to build Moises' academic English proficiency in math, the ability to talk about math functions and forms.

From the video, we can see that Moises is a very love learning child. He reviewed and prepared for the math exam while eating breakfast in the morning. He came to school early, immediately sat on the ground, took out the math book and studied. He actively answered questions raised by the teacher in the simulation test. Although he knew clearly that his English was very limited, he was still trying hard to express his own thoughts. After the practice test, he wrote a note to his math teacher asking for math test in Spanish. At the end he did not give up and escaped from the math exam like his friend. Although he did not get the enough help from his teacher, he participated in the math test.

During the exam, he finished the first few questions quickly without any trouble since these questions only involved numbers and math arithmetic operations. Once he worked on the word problems, contextual mathematical problems, he got lost. He took out his Spanish-English translation dictionary and thought that it would be helpful to use the dictionary as usual. However, Ms. Peterson said he was not allowed to use the dictionary in the exam. Moises was helpless, looking out the window. The sun is bright, but he laughed helplessly. We can see that Moises loves learning. He had tried every means to get involved to study, and he wanted to take a good test of the exam. He did not give up, and dared to face his own learning difficulties and challenges. It is simple that he just wants to learn.

In addition, we can observe that Moises lives in a very warm family environment. In the morning of the exam, his family wished him to eat more food to ensure that he had adequate nutrition and energy to deal with the math test. Although all family members were speaking Spanish, they concerned about and actively supported Moises's studies, which is very important for the education of child. As teachers, we really feel happy, because the cooperation of the family is the prerequisite for the student success.

Now let's take a look at Moises's math teacher, Ms. Peterson. There is nothing wrong with her as a qualified math teacher, from her teaching and learning attitudes toward Moises. First of all, in order to let the students succeed in mathematics, she lead the classmates to do a practice test. When she was asked to take math test in Spanish by Moises, she comforted Moises and persuaded him to say "This test is not important." She then sought a Spanish-speaking colleague to help translate the word math problems. While this request was not granted, Ms. Peterson tried to find the previous mathematics test paper in Spanish, but did not. On the day of the math test, she told Moises that he could not use the translation dictionary, and if he had questions he could ask her. We can see that Ms. Peterson also struggled to help Moises do math test. However, none of

her methods seems to be effectively implemented. Assuming if these methods were achieved, what would be the result? If there were teachers to help translate, or test paper in Spanish, Moises should have been able to do well in the math test.

However, what about the next test? "Not important"? Looking for translation? Looking for Spanish papers? The key to really solving the problem is that the teacher should help the students like Moises to improve their English comprehensive skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing.

If I were Ms. Peterson, I would adopt some strategies to help Moises so that he can understand the word problems in English, and express his thoughts in English. Through the practices, Moises can not only learn the knowledge of the subject, and also develop and improve his English proficiency. This is what we need to do as a teacher. Take Ms. Peterson's math problem as an example: "*The boy took 6 minutes to run 3 blocks. How long will he take to run 20 blocks?*" In this case, language and concepts of subject are both problems for ELL's. How do we help our ELL's students unpack the technical phrases to let them be able to understand the problems?

Obviously, Moises had no problem with mathematical knowledge about this subject, but he faced the greatest difficulty in English. He was the only one in the class who could figure out the problem correctly, however, he could not express his problem solving in English. Thus, first of all, I would focus on the English words and mathematical terms of the problem, to help students understand the problem in English. The body of language is the difficult part for Moises. There are the two meanings of *a work block*: a *toy block* and a *city block*. I would simply illustrate these *two blocks* on the board, and point out the math problem that uses the *city block*. Perhaps, to further strengthen the understanding and usage of the word, ask the students to give examples of how many *blocks* from your home to the school, what *toy blocks* you have, etc. Next, we have to figure it out: *the boy took 6 minutes to run 3 blocks. How many minutes does it take to*

run one block? At this point, I would write $6/3 = 2$ on the board to explain the pronunciation and meaning of the mathematical operator: + - * / =. To help students understand *6 divided by 3 equals 2*. I would require ELL students to represent the problem and solution in English. Next step is to analyze *how long it takes to run 20 blocks*. We would study *times* and *multiplication* in math. Students will be able to calculate that *20 by 2 equals 40 minutes*. When this question is finished, in order to check whether the students really understand, I would give a similar problem for group practice in class. I would assign Moises to a group with bilingual students who speak both Spanish and English as helpers, and encourage students learn from each other. I would continue to check the progress of the group discussion, collect the feedback from students, and give timely help and answer questions. While groups report their learning, I would give Moises a little time to express himself.

Moises is very positive and motivated on learning. Through continuous positive encouragement, I believe his English will progress rapidly. Moises has certain English skills. For instance, he can understand that the teacher said to turn to the third page of the book. In the hallway, he can communicate with Ms. Peterson in English. Moises just needs to constantly learn and improve on his English, and the teacher can help him daily while teaching different content subjects.

Well, in our everyday teaching, it is vital that we adopt appropriate teaching strategies to help our ELL's English proficiency. In our classroom, we may speak slowly and clearly because we want each of our students to understand what we are saying. It's crucial for ELL's to feel able to communicate effectively with us. When we speak, we may use shorter sentences, present tense of words, and easier synonyms which can help EL'ls easily understand the meaning of our saying. For unknown concepts, we may provide direct experience, for instance: demonstrations, examples, manipulatives, and physical expression which can directly show students what the unknown concepts are.

Also, repetition plays a huge role for our ELL's to learn language. We may take any opportunities to model the language we want students to use, and provide samples of student work. We may use think-aloud and think-pair-shares when asking questions, and give students enough time to process the question. For a group study, place ELL's into a group which has bilingual students as helpers, and allow ELL's to use their native language when needed. And always encourage students to use dictionary and notes for help.

Through years of study and help, I firmly believe that Moises will correctly understand and answer the teacher's questions, and also be able to work on word math problems. Let us work together, and let ELL students send their own inner smile, as brilliant as the sun outside the window.

Reference:

Immersion, retrieved from <http://www.snagfilms.com/films/title/immersion>

Ms. Peterson,

First and foremost, I would like to preface that the notes and suggestions I have made within this letter to you are merely forms of critical feedback and resources for you to use in the future. As the curriculum supervisor, it is my role to observe and provide teachers with my observation and reflection on the ways in which you all teach and possible ways to better understand or implement “content-based instruction” within classrooms with a specific focus on English language learners. My recent observation within your classroom focused primarily on the students, yourself, and the overall environment. This observation was necessary because there was an obvious disconnect between some of the students and the content in general posed on the upcoming standardized test, as well as the method of instruction in which one of the students (Moises) was unable to perform at his best due to his lack of English proficiency. This is not to say that more than just Moises was struggling, but I am able to use him as an example because I focused in on him and his experience inside and outside of your classroom.

Although you held decent composure at the front of the room, you seemed rushed reviewing general material that would be on the exam, which works against students that need slow, clear speech when trying to comprehend something. While the majority of the class was able to work through the practice test, Moises was stuck simply reading the problems and identifying main parts to break down. It is also notable that the proficiency levels are very low for ELL’s in this school and the talk has been “better that these students don’t take the exam.” All that I mentioned above I must address in order to improve the environment of your classroom and the school, the attitude and English proficiency of all students, and the improvement and progress of students on standardized tests as well as classroom content skills in general. My suggestions in ways to improve the outcomes of mentioned subjects above will be explained in greater detail in the following paragraphs.

As I stated before, my initial observation focused on Moises within your math classroom. I was able to see his obvious disconnect with your teaching style and speed, as well as his inability to retain or comprehend the content or context of the math given his limited English proficiency. I believe a key challenge of his is the inability to communicate his thoughts, feelings, or personal processes of things in terms of school. A good example to reflect this is when he was able to digest the math problem you asked the class and came up with an answer, raising his hand, and told you “Forty” many times (and after looking up the translation in his dictionary), but he was unable to explain his methodology for that answer to the class. Within a single period of your math class, I was able to see the severe restrictions in his schoolwork due to his lack of English proficiency. According to the English language proficiency standards and what I was able to observe through his skills and work, I don’t believe he could pass any standards at the moment, which is both a reflection of the teacher and school, as well as the student.

Moises was unable to understand or read the entire problem, but he was able to break apart some of the key numbers and parts in order to solve it. He was not able to comprehend what you asked or said completely because you were speaking with anxiety and a little too fast for him to understand and process. His writing was limited to just numbers from what I saw, and his speaking was strictly Spanish to classmates. Given my limited time observing the class and Moises, I believe that challenges exist on every front of language with newcomers, especially at Moises’ stage. It interested me to see him communicate with other Spanish-speaking classmates in order to get different modes of instruction or help when he didn’t understand, but he also used his native language with classmates because he feels most comfortable speaking it. He was able to communicate his misunderstandings to fellow classmates in Spanish and they were able to redirect him in Spanish, but they also weren’t blatantly giving him the answers; instead, they were encouraging him. The purpose of ESL/ELL students is to make them proficient in two languages and allow them to use both appropriately and respectively in school and life to better their skills and abilities as humans and workers. With differentiated instruction and

new ideas, major improvement is to be made as a school community and within your classroom, to which I am eager and available to help.

Ms. Peterson, I was so interested to see you teach these kids math in your classroom full of racially diverse students, to which a majority of your classroom community speaks Spanish. I inferred it that you don't speak Spanish given that there was no bilingual instruction and you told Moises in the hallway on the way to the test that it was "Not importante" for him, but he proceeded to tell you that it was in fact very important for him. It is very understandable that there is a disconnect between non-bilingual or TESOL teachers and newcomers in the school. Your pedagogical performance with Moises does not meet his needs or the standards for his content knowledge. It was obvious at times you went the extra mile to provide extra assistance for him, such as looking for past exams that were available in Spanish for students, as well as discussing with a superior the alternative of translating it for him so he would do better on the exam. There was no way to indicate retention or comprehension with Moises because you and him were not able to communicate thoughts, concerns, or even questions. There is dismissal of his inabilities or struggles with the content and understand, and this often leads to belittlement from classmates.

Although you went these routes to potentially provide extra assistance for Moises to succeed, it was hindered and then stopped within the classroom and by other faculty. In circumstances like these where multiple students are aspiring English language proficiency, strategies within content-based instruction are extremely useful and beneficial to both the students and the teachers. There is no blame to be given to a single individual; it's merely a collaboration of poor planning and lack-of resources, preparation and effort from the school community and faculty. This base-failure circumstance makes sense for your inability to single-handedly reach and accommodate each student that needed assistance, which is understandable and debilitating at the same time as his or her instructor. I admire your persistence to find resources for a single student to succeed,

Moises, but also have resources or suggestions to help you accommodate the greater good of your students in circumstances like these in the future. I have no doubts that you have the passion, credibility, and patience to teach these children. As I saw in my observation, you have a yearning to help students succeed, you have a balance of what can be done even if limitations exist, and you also have courage to think outside of the box. Though the base in which you have to go off of within the school set by administration or so rather is black and white, I know there are ways in which you can alter instruction to best assist your students, especially ELLs.

Albeit, math is a tricky subject to incorporate characteristics of another language into outside of English. There are a multitude of pedagogical strategies in which students and teachers can benefit greatly from such skills, methods, and strategies. Considering the test is over, I want you to know these are suggestions for upcoming exams and current/future ELLs in your math classes in order to help them succeed in class and standardized testing. My first method of suggestion for you would be the grammar-translation method. Although this generally applies to phrases or sentences in totality and the mechanical skill of translating them for memory, the same could apply for single words or phrases in mathematical vocabulary. This is useful to know the context of certain words within a word problem or that a single word could have multiple meanings. My second suggestion to implement is the scaffolding process. This utilizes a mimicking technique where the students follow after the teacher whom demonstrates how to solve a problem, and then he/she steps to the side allowing the students to try it themselves whilst still being there for assistance if needed. With the continual practice of such word problems or mathematical problems in general, ELLs may feel more comfortable finding the parts of the problem to look for as well as how to set up to solve their answer. My third and final suggestion is to strategically plan or integrate bilingual support within the your classroom among the students. This simply means that what you may not be able to convey to Moises, someone else can in their native language. This allows them to work on both

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

Diagnosis and Remediation of Moises

Dear Ms. Peterson,

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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

to clarify vocabulary. When preparing the class for the test, Ms. Peterson could put them in groups and allow them to work through problems. This would allow Moises to receive assistance with English comprehension and he could assist other students with the math concepts. Group work provides a place for students to practice language with their peers in a low-risk, more personal setting. Moises would have the ability to practice both BICS and CALP in this setting and improve the relationships with his peers. Allowing these groups to speak in both English and Spanish would also improve the understanding of all of the students in the groups. While Ms. Peterson should continue to teach in English, giving Moises the opportunity to speak in his first language will allow him to feel like he can contribute to the class without being embarrassed. Ms. Peterson can tell Moises to provide responses in his first language when he does not have the proficiency to answer in English. In addition, allowing Moises to have resources such as a dictionary will enable him to become more comfortable with the vocabulary used in mathematics. The final pedagogical strategy I would suggest is to pre-teach vocabulary that is anticipated to be difficult for Moises. If Ms. Peterson is going to use a particular term or topic in a problem she should ensure Moises is familiar with the meaning before the test. She should allow Moises to review the material before the class so he has an opportunity to study the language and define any words he is not familiar with. By giving him the chance to preview the material, he will be more likely to understand the mathematical language within a question. This will empower him to study the language and work towards proficiency. Just by implementing these three things, Ms. Peterson can influence how successfully and quickly Moises moves through the stages of second language acquisition.

Dear Ms. Peterson,

I am writing this letter to follow up on the evaluation that I did on your teaching and the dynamic of your classroom. In this letter I will touch on points where you are doing well, but also where you need to improve when it comes to teaching your class and especially students like Moises. I first off want to thank you for all that you do as a teacher, because we both know, it's not an easy job.

When arriving at the school I first noticed it's academic level. The school seems to be in an area that hosts a number of students that could be speaking another language at home besides Spanish. My first impressions were that some students might find comfort in speaking in their own native language because it could be more comfortable for them. I spoke with Principle Rosa about the types of students that there are here and he explained to me that there are some that English is their second language. He assured me that he himself speaks Spanish, so this helps from students getting away with saying things that others might not understand, but he also clarified that the professors and himself are not supposed to speak to the students in Spanish.

Now the reason for my observation is because you have had concerns about teaching your students, specifically Moises. Now, obviously there is a language barrier between you and Moises, and something needs to happen for him to progress in the classroom. I noticed certain words that first language English speakers might take for granted and fail to explain to students that might not understand. These words could be what makes it or breaks it for a student to move forward in answering a simple math problem. For example, when you were teaching about how many blocks a person walked I could see that there was confusion on Moises' face and he then asked a colleague for help. I believe he was confused about the phrasing of "they walked a number of BLOCKS". A word as simple as blocks would need extra explanation to a student like Moises, because that can easily be confused with building blocks. I wouldn't spend much time on explaining, but atleast check that students understand.

Now even if he might not fully understand the problem, Moises is very intelligent. I can sense that he is able to grasp the problem and do the work if he can see the numbers visually. In your classroom he was able to get the correct answer of forty even with the confusion of how many "blocks" they walked in the problem. Asking him how he got the response is great, but after a couple times, you should try and notice why he is not able to explain why. The language barrier makes it hard for him to give the

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

could not tell what kind of exam you were giving in your class, but due to the covered up posters, and what I overheard you and the principle talking I assume that it could have been the State Assessment that students are required to take. Moises comes from a family that their first language is not English and he most likely has not taken an exam like this before. I would have probably made sure prior to the exam by a few weeks see if there are any tutors within the school and see if they could have worked with Moises one on one. If that is not possible you always have the option to communicate with the parents. It is very beneficial that you have a principle that is fluent in Spanish, that way if you are unsure the parents would not understand the email you can send a translated version. In communicating with the parents about the exam you make them aware of your concerns and have them help you. You can even see if your principle would translate a practice version in Spanish for Moises to work on and compare to the English version. He can figure out key terms that are important and already work on their meanings prior to exam day.

Moises knows how to do math, he is very smart, it's his English that he is struggling with. Once you as a teacher remove that barrier he is able to really progress in class. I noticed there are other students in the classroom that can translate for him. Once his colleague translated to him what the word "block" signifies in the problem, he was then able to do the problem without hesitation. I suggest to do partnered practice testing before the exam and to have the students help each other with understanding the work.

As you can see Ms. Peterson, there are few things that you can do to help Moises on the day of the exam, but there are a variety of teaching methods that can very much help a student like Moises succeed if done days or week before exam day. Your job is make sure students feel prepared the day of the exam without having to give out extra assistance when it's time for the exam. You are doing very well as a teacher, but with these suggestions, I can assure you that not only can most of your students succeed, but all of your students can.

Sincerely,

(Student name)

(Student name)

Dr. Thomas

C&T 331

4 March 2018

A Letter to Ms. Peterson

Dear Ms. Peterson,

Having observed a couple of days, I'm glad to write this letter to you and I hope it will be helpful. The student, Moises, as a newcomer with limited academic English proficiency, struggles in a full English immersion school. The math class is taught in full English, while Moises struggles to understand the learning materials both in audio and written forms. There are three important aspects of teaching and learning: the teacher, the learner, and the learning environment. I've seen that as a math teacher, you tried to be supportive and helpful to Moises as you were trying to get a Spanish test for him. I also like your attitude towards students typically Moises when you talked nicely to him. However, there are things that you definitely could have done better such as making content more accessible to students like Moises. Moises is the student I primarily observed. Moises is absolutely talented in math as he could quickly figure out the "boy running blocks" answer even with so limited English proficiency. He is also a faithful student as he refused to skip the test even though he knew he was not going to do well due to his limited English proficiency, while he was having trouble to understand instructions and articulate his opinions. In terms of English learning environment, Moises primarily speaks Spanish outside of classroom, and rarely talks to his English-speaking peers. As far as I can see, classroom is where Moises receives most input of English, and he often misses instructions as he receives them. The learning environment is not so friendly to Moises, he is often mocked by his peers that makes him rather afraid of speaking English. In conclusion, the three aspects of teaching and learning are both not so positive to Moises.

On the one hand, Moises is definitely skilled in mathematics. He would be able to solve the math problem in several seconds once he understood what the problem was

about, and like you said, as long as the test was in Spanish, he would totally ace it. On the other hand, Moises is a newcomer to English, as well as the U.S. educational system. He was about to take his first math test in the U.S. According to the day's class, Moises' listening skill is at novice low level that he could hardly understand the math story by sole listening to it. Through my whole observation, the only sentence he spoke in English was that simple phrase "can you help me?" and he couldn't explain how he got 40 for that math problem. It's likely that Moises' speaking is at novice low level as well. His reading is slightly better than his listening and speaking, as he could understand what the story was roughly about, but not so accurately since he misinterpreted the boy ran with blocks instead of the boy ran city blocks. I have not seen Moises' writing skill, but by combining what I have seen so far, both Moises' basic interpersonal communication skills and his cognitive academic language proficiency are very limited, at near the early production stage, and those limitations have distracted him significantly from learning. I believe that the most challenging part is neither in terms of English phonology nor morphology, but in terms of vocabulary and syntax. Since Moises wouldn't know enough vocabulary or how to organize and make sentences to explain the answer, his articulations of "forty" and "can you help me" are relatively clear, and he was able to read that past tense of "run". I think that Moises does not feel comfortable using English as there are some students make fun of him while he is speaking English. He is silent when facing these laughers, and he tends to seek for help from peers in Spanish rather than English.

I want to talk about the teacher perspective and give reflection based on my observation of your pedagogical performance as well. One thing I want to mention is that your instruction is contextualized, that is, with connections to real life situations. I believe that you are also a responsible teacher that concern for newcomers like Moises as I noticed you have talked to Moises patiently, you have tried the best you could to find a Spanish version of test for Moises, and you have tried to comfort Moises by telling him the test was not important. I appreciate your attempt to give Moises some additional supports, although I would say you meet Moises' emotional needs but still have space to

improve to meet his instructional needs. Believe it or not, your subconscious fast pacing of speech and lack of visual demonstration have made the content much harder to access for students like Moises, and you should have noticed what was going on in the classroom, as Moises showed his confusing face and his inquiry of the math problem in Spanish. You may want to teach Moises that he could say “I don’t know how I get the answer” or “I don’t know how to explain”, so that Moises wouldn’t be scared and kept silence. Another solution would be letting Moises explain how he got the answer in Spanish, therefore, having a classmate that both knows Spanish and has a higher English proficiency to translate it in English. Besides these, I think you’ll probably want to make the classroom atmosphere friendlier by regulating a few students’ behavior and build Moises’ self-esteem so that he’d be comfortable to speak in English more often. Plus, I think you could utilize more dynamic teaching strategies rather than a teacher centered classroom.

Here are some recommended actions I can offer. First of all, I think making gestures while giving out instructions helps a lot when you have students with poor listening comprehension. It gives them visual aids and helps them comprehend easier. For example, the boy running blocks problem could be easily demonstrated in a series of hand gestures. Secondly, I want to talk about the principles of behaviorism in second language acquisition. It is important to repeat words and to give positive feedback when students do correctly. When dealing with Moises, you may want to repeat some important words of the math problem that students should focus on and make necessary clarification such as using alternative words that have the same meanings, so that next time, students like Moises would be able to know what some keywords are to pay attention and what are some extra unnecessary information that could temporally be ignored. Thirdly, I believe that you should understand your students’ progress and provide instructions just a little beyond their competence as described in Krashen’s input hypothesis, for instance, you could slow down your rate of speech. In addition, according to Krashen’s affective-filter theory, a friendly learning environment is essential for second language acquisition. I believe that group learning should help this out by making

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,