TBL and Teacher Preparation: Toward a Curriculum for Pre-service Teachers

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English language learners (ELLs) represent a growing demographic in the elementary mainstream classroom of today. Initial teacher education (ITE) programs must prepare teacher candidates for the dual challenge of teaching curriculum content while supporting the development of English language proficiency. Task-based learning (TBL) holds potential for addressing these learner needs. This article describes the curriculum and provides a list of suitable readings and tasks (assignments) for a 3-hour (one full course-equivalent) university course at the pre-service level that bridges theory to practice, and prepares elementary-route teachers to design and implement TBL in the context of the mainstream class setting. By basing the proposed curriculum on TBL, a model is provided for students to learn firsthand how TBL may be implemented in the mainstream.

Les apprenants de l'anglais constituent un groupe démographique croissant dans les salles de classe au primaire. Les programmes de formation initiaux des enseignants doivent préparer les stagiaires pour le double défi que représentent l'enseignement du contenu et le développement de la compétence en anglais chez les élèves. L'enseignement basé sur les tâches (EBT) est susceptible de répondre à ces besoins. Cet article décrit un programme d'étude et offre une liste de lectures et de tâches appropriées pour un cours universitaire complet du premier cycle qui lie la théorie à la pratique et prépare les étudiants à concevoir et mettre en pratique l'EBT dans les classes au primaire. Le programme d'étude proposé fournit donc aux étudiants en pédagogie un modèle de la mise en œuvre de l'EBT en salle de classe.

The mainstream elementary classroom in Canada as well as the United States is increasingly characterized by linguistic diversity, including more English language learners (ELLs) who may have long-term language learning needs. Pre-service teachers must be much better prepared in their initial teacher education (ITE) program to respond to this growing demographic's dual learning needs: curriculum-related content and language (National Council of Teachers of English [NCTE], 2006). To date, relatively little attention has been paid to the essential standards, knowledge, and skills that general education teachers ought to possess in order to provide effective instruction to ELLs placed in their classroom (Crocker & Dibbon, 2008; Lucas, 2011). The instructional mandate of mediating curriculum content knowledge through a language learning lens pertains not only to ELLs, but also to increasing

numbers of children enrolled in immersion and bilingual programs such as French, Spanish, German, Chinese, and Arabic.

Task-based learning (TBL) provides a promising heuristic for attending to both content and language learning needs for young learners. David Nunan, a pioneer in task-based teaching and learning who has had a deep and enduring influence in TBL, posits the following definition of a pedagogical task:

> a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate the form. (Nuna, 2004, p. 3)

Nunan reminds us that language learning requires a context ("a piece of classroom work," in other words, curriculum content), and that the active engagement of the learner in the service of making meaning of content information *through language* lies at the conceptual heart of TBL. As we shall see, this instructional mandate pertains not only to children in elementary classroom settings, but also to pre-service teacher candidates. As they undertake a series of learning tasks structured to support their understanding of how they might, one day, structure learning for their future students they are also learning through language—acquiring the discourse of the professional community relevant to TBL. Modelling TBL in their ITE program is an important strategic move in building capacity for the classroom of their future.

This article advances a curriculum for a pre-service (Bachelor of Education) course designed to enable elementary route teacher candidates to develop the theoretical understandings into language through content (LTC) teaching and TBL, as well as the pedagogical skills necessary to bridge theory and practice. Readily accessible readings (Appendix 1) and assignments/learning tasks for an undergraduate audience are also included.

This article will be of interest to faculty members and instructional staff who work in ITE programs that prepare elementary generalists. However, there are other potential audiences for this work. This includes instructors of ITE students preparing to work in immersion or bilingual settings—programs that are becoming increasingly popular across Canada in a variety of languages such as French, German, Chinese, and Spanish (Bexte, 2011) as well as those working with students interested in "core" second language(s) teaching where the language is taught as a subject, typically in high school or college (Ogilvie & Dunn, 2010). Instructors working in programs for licensing foreign-trained teachers for work in the Canadian context may also find this useful. Finally, in-service elementary school practitioners could also benefit through professional development activities to hone their abilities to operationalize TBL.

Initial Teacher Education and TBL in Canada

Across Canada, teacher preparation and licensing for work in the K–12 school system falls within provincial jurisdiction, thus creating somewhat inconsistent curricula for ITE at universities. A variety of program configurations are available, including one- and two-year after-degree programs that generally attract secondary route teacher candidates; five-year (hybrid or integrated) programs allowing for completion of both an undergraduate content focused degree (e.g., history, political science, mathematics, kinesiology) and a BEd degree; or a direct entry four-year BEd degree that may hold more appeal to elementary generalists (Gambhir, Broad, Evans, & Gaskell, 2008). Despite the differences in program duration and focus, there are themes that pervade ITE, regardless of the institutions that offer them. The Association of Canadian Deans of Education (2006, 2013) generally agrees with the elements of appropriate ITE and the favoured pedagogy—in broad strokes, a constructivist approach that emphasizes inquiry—through which course work is offered.

Although the number of ELLs is accelerating quickly in the K–3 settings across Canada, only a few universities offering ITE programs—notably the University of Toronto, the University of British Columbia, and Mount Royal University in Calgary—require any course study in working with linguistic diversity and, specifically, planning for both content and language learning goals in the mainstream setting. Similarly, in the United States, few jurisdictions have this requirement (Menken & Antunez, 2001; Samson & Collins, 2012). Where students are required to participate in pre-service course work, gains are recorded in students' perceptions of their knowledge and skills for working with ELLs (Smith, 2005). Crocker and Dibbon (2008) note a distinct disconnect between the needs for teacher preparation for working with linguistic diversity as reported from the field, and universities' (lack of) response in offering appropriate course work.

Many would argue that this situation is lamentable: there is a distinct pedagogical knowledge related to working with ELLs in the mainstream that all teachers must know. Working with ELLs is not "just good teaching"—it is more. Ironically, ITE students preparing for work in bilingual settings are generally required to take course work in second language learning theory, methods and pedagogy, and practicum work.

The curriculum proposed in this article evolves from an optional course in working with ELLs that I have prepared at the Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary, for a group of elementary route students and implemented with great success. The impact of this work on the learning outcomes of young children, of course, remains to be researched and better understood as these ITE students make their way into their chosen profession.

The TBL curriculum proposed in this article is unlikely to be adopted any time soon as a self-standing, required course in an ITE program. Given the wide range of potential interest in this work noted earlier, however, my

hope would be that elements of this curriculum might find their way into other course work already mandated as stable elements of ITE licensure, such as course work in early language and literacy learning, or in optional course offerings such as my own course. For those fortunate enough to already have a suitable course "on the books," this curriculum would fulfil the requirements of a 3-hour course (one full course equivalent), ideally offered in 3-hour blocks of time over 12–13 weeks (or 4-hour blocks over 9 weeks), to allow for engaging in in-class project work and learning tasks that can model TBL within the context of an ITE course.

Research in TBL

Much of the research in TBL teaching and learning is situated in the English as a foreign language (EFL) learning context where implementation has often been problematic (Butler, 2004; Carless, 2002, 2004). Large class sizes, inadequate thresholds of non-native speaking (NNS) teachers' English language proficiency to conduct TBL within a communicative framework, cultural expectations for more traditional approaches to EFL teaching such as grammar translation, and assessment approaches that focus on paper-and-pencil testing are all mentioned as factors that militate against the success of TBL in these settings.

In the Canadian context, TBL has been promoted in core language courses where the language itself is the content of a credit-bearing course in high school. Ogilvie and Dunn (2010) describe disappointing outcomes from efforts to implement TBL in these settings. These settings would be somewhat analogous to EFL classrooms described in Carless's research (2002) and, indeed, resonate personally as I recall my own beginnings as a junior high French teacher 43 years ago. Large class sizes and the very limited vocabulary of my beginning students, not to mention my own limited proficiency in French, presented significant constraints to what was possible with language use beyond simple word games and rehearsed role plays as production (the third *p* in the presentation, practice, production sequence) activities in a predominantly audio-lingual approach. It would seem that the core language class has advanced only minimally over the ensuing decades from the advent of audio-lingual methods that were *de rigeur* at the time. Our expectations were modest: our goals were to engage our students in learning common lexical chunks, a basic vocabulary, and grammar; to enjoy ourselves; and to develop the confidence to navigate our way with conversational proficiency should we ever actually travel to a French-speaking destination.

Learning a second language for the purposes of engaging in the academic demands of school curriculum, and to compete with competent native speakers of that language represents a challenge of an entirely different magnitude. Whether the children are immigrants or the children of immigrants, or youngsters enrolled in bilingual or immersion programs, learning language and content information is a gradual, protracted learning process that re-

quires ongoing and shifting support as, especially, the vocabulary demands of engaging with curriculum accelerates with each year of educational advancement. This alone is a key understanding of an ITE program in Canada.

The research in TBL/LTC in the context of ELLs in the Canadian elementary mainstream class setting is underdeveloped (Roessingh, 2014), perhaps as a consequence of ITE that does not make TBL salient as an instructional consideration in mainstream settings where inquiry, discovery, and project work are more prevalent within the tradition of a constructivist framework for teaching and learning. TBL, however, aligns with sociocultural theories of learning in the tradition of Vygotsky (1978), and can provide structure and focus for both language learning and content goals that may be lacking from the open-endedness of inquiry (Mayer, 2004; Roessingh, 2014).

The Potential of TBL in the Elementary Classroom

As noted above, there is a well-developed body of research, stretching over three decades, on the possibilities of TBL in second language learning (Bygate, n.d.; Crookes & Long, 1987; Ellis, 2000; Nunan, 2004; Skehan, 1996, 2003). The bulk of this work involves an adult learner profile, most often in EFL contexts and low proficiency levels.

In the elementary settings, TBL has long been championed by Gibbons (2002, 2003, 2009). The underlying principles of TBL align with sociocultural theories of learning that emphasize negotiation of meaning, problem solving, and the crucial support of a teacher or a more competent peer in the "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1978) with scaffolded supports to facilitate growth toward independent achievement. It becomes clear that in order to make progress the learners must be actively engaged in manipulating and transforming linguistic and cognitive information in the service of achieving some purposeful, authentic-like communicative and increasingly academically complex, demanding goal. I choose the term *authentic-like* deliberately to highlight the idea that task design involves distinct pedagogical intent: learning occurs when teachers structure work that is goal-oriented, and has relevance and potential to transfer to the real world. The classroom needs to be a safe environment for taking risks, making mistakes, receiving focused feedback: the real world may be far less forgiving.

TBL has evolved over time to recognize the importance of a more process-oriented approach to task design, including the need for *linked tasks* that permit building background knowledge, working across modalities, and providing multiple exposures and practice opportunities for new vocabulary and content information. Gibbons (2009) advocates for a culminating task that involves the production of an artefact of the students' learning completely independently (e.g., a brochure, a postcard, a letter).

Advances in information communication technology (ICT) offer exciting new opportunities to advance our students' learning by promoting independent and extended time on task long after the last class bell rings.

Well-designed learning tasks can engage our students and potentially accelerate their learning through judicious use of ICT applications (Roessingh, 2014).

Task-based learning requires a context. Within the elementary class setting, the mainstream curriculum provides this context. For students in ITE, the challenges of orchestrating all of these demands is immense: they must become acquainted with the mainstream curriculum and teaching approaches, including TBL that produce tangible outcomes in literacy and content-area learning. As they themselves learn through well-designed tasks, however, a strong beginning to understanding TBL and its implementation within the frame of the elementary curriculum requirements is possible. Future research in elementary classroom settings is necessary to provide evidence of the efficacy of TBL.

Learning Needs of Students in ITE

A large body of research evidence indicates that well-prepared teachers make a significant impact on the learning outcomes of children in their classrooms (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002; Hattie, 2003, 2005). There is little specificity in the literature, however, on what ITE for improving outcomes among ELLs should consist of, other than broad principles for integrating language and content (Calderón, n.d.; Crandall, n.d.) or a list of topics and general principles (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2008; NCTE, 2006). While the literature presents a range of "strategies that work"—using visual representations and direct and explicit teaching of vocabulary (Biemiller, 2001), for example—a quest for a coherent syllabus/curriculum suitable for an ITE context garners little success.

The Association of Canadian Deans of Education (2006) articulates three domains of knowledge that ITE programs must address: content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and practical knowledge (see Figure 1).
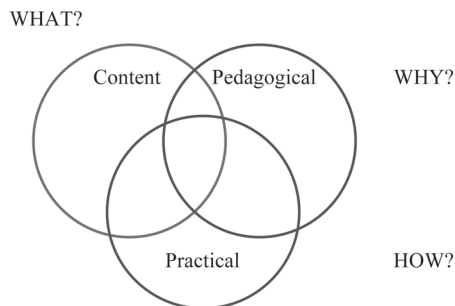

Figure 1: Three domains of knowledge in ITE

The domain of content knowledge is often assumed by way of the undergraduate studies of teacher candidates. Provincial curriculum documents stipulate the academic content knowledge mandated at each grade level: elementary route ITE students are expected to be able to manage and mediate this level of content information to young leaners. In the K–3 years, children are still in the early stages of literacy and language development, and content knowledge is not predominant in the curriculum. Content information rapidly becomes the central focus of studies in grades 4–6, a pivotal point in children's learning as the shift from learning to read to reading to learn occurs (Chall & Jacobs, 2003). Again, however, the content is not considered problematic for teachers of students of this age.

More emphasis is placed on the domain of pedagogical knowledge—the theoretical underpinnings—and its application to practice (i.e., practicum experiences in the field). This, therefore, becomes the focus of the ITE coursework proposed in this article. Following the principles of andragogy articulated by Stage, Muller, Kinzie, and Simmons (1998) and van Huizen, van Oers, and Wubbels (2005) the course is organized around projects and enabling tasks (Roessingh & Chambers, 2011). Sociocultural theories of learning that emphasize collaboration, making meaning (hence, focusing on the language/vocabulary needed to make sense of information related to pedagogy—in its own way an "additional language" for ITE students), and learning by doing, for example, are by and large equally relevant to ITE students in a university setting as they are with ELLs in mainstream classrooms. Engaging in their own learning in this manner models for ITE teacher candidates how TBL may be implemented in their future elementary school classrooms.

In the following sections, a snapshot of the ITE course is provided with suggestions for in-class learning tasks. A reference list of readings suitable to a bachelor level is available in Appendix A. These readings have been chosen with an undergraduate audience in mind: most are hyperlinked, thus readily available. A single textbook suitable for the goals outlined in this article was not identified. The Internet in any case provides current and useful materials that can readily be updated.

A short description of three assignments/projects is included: two of them to be completed individually and the third as a group effort. The article concludes with some reflections on the quality of the students' work in my class, a synthesis of students' comments taken from the course evaluations, and suggestions for their in-service needs as they move into the teaching profession. Their entry-level understandings and skills are just that: those who stay in the profession are likely to have decades ahead during which engagement with action research projects and an array of professional learning opportunities including the pursuit of master's-level work in working with ELLs, will come.

The Course at a Glance

Figure 2 provides an overview of the ITE course for elementary teachers working with ELLs in the mainstream, and for the students who will work in bilingual-immersion settings.

Weekly topics	Enabling tasks/key concepts	Readings (selected)
1. "The myths…"	K-W-L task: Group work. McLaughlin's 5 myths → class discussion.	McLaughlin (1992)
	Jigsaw task: Goldenberg's article.	Goldenberg (2008)
	Instructor-led discussion and link to "the myths."	
2. BICS-CALP	Communicative vs. academic language proficiency: sorting task.	Roessingh (2006)
		Hart & Risley (2003)
	Early language learning	Biemiller (2003)
	What makes a task "difficult"?	
3. Content information and language learning … a look at curriculum	Know your "stuff" Your "stuff" and language learning: Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3 vocabulary.	Ministry websites and curriculum documents August, Carlo, Dressler, & Snow (2005) Pikulski & Templeton (2003)
4. What makes a good task?	Frayer model task Task design	Nunan (2004) Skehan (2003)
5. Language through content (LTC): Storybook reading	Targeting words to teach. What makes a good question? QARs.	Reading Rockets website: http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/question_answer_relationship Raphael (1982) Collins (2010)
6. Literacy through language	Linked tasks: hear it, say it, see it, write it. Providing for multiple exposures.	Roessingh (2011) Stahl (2003)
7. Academic vocabulary, academic discussions	Providing rich input from informational texts (the newspaper). Tier 2 words.	Schleppegrell (2012)
8. Thematic teaching: Integrating linked tasks through content	Design a task-based template of 10 lessons. Ideas for technology integration	www.Esllearningbydesign.com Roessingh (2014)
9. Strut your stuff	Group presentations.	

Figure 2. Task-based syllabus: Schedule of weekly activities/readings

Learning Tasks and Assignments for the ITE Students

An array for learning tasks can be used within the structure of the 3- (or 4-) hour class allotment. This is a large block of time to keep students engaged and focused, but allows for a more process-oriented approach. It is important to build in-class work that maximizes the potential of the group resources and group dynamic to advance the learning of the class as a whole. The following list of research-based group tasks offers a starting point and models for the ITE students' TBL that can readily be applied in their future classrooms with young learners.

K-W-L (Carr & Ogle, 1987). This task asks students to activate and access prior knowledge (Know), to generate questions (Want to know), and to reflect on their learning (Learn). It is usually used as a prereading task, and can be completed individually or in pairs/small groups.

Jigsaw tasks (Nation, 2000, p. 44). A jigsaw is an information gap task where different members of a group have information they must share with the other members in order to understand or solve a problem. A long article, such as Goldenberg (2008) in Week 1, lends itself to this type of task.

Word sorts (Vacca & Vacca, 1995). Word sorts help students understand the properties of concept information by placing words into categories. This is an effective way of manipulating the construct of BICS-CALP (Cummins, 1982) in Week 2 of the curriculum: ask students to place words/tasks into each of the four quadrants of the model (e.g., attending a cooking class, following a simple recipe, interpreting a poem). Figure 3 illustrates how this task might work in an ITE class. Again, have students work in groups, sorting the tasks/activities into the four categories, and then follow through with a class discussion on how they made their decisions.
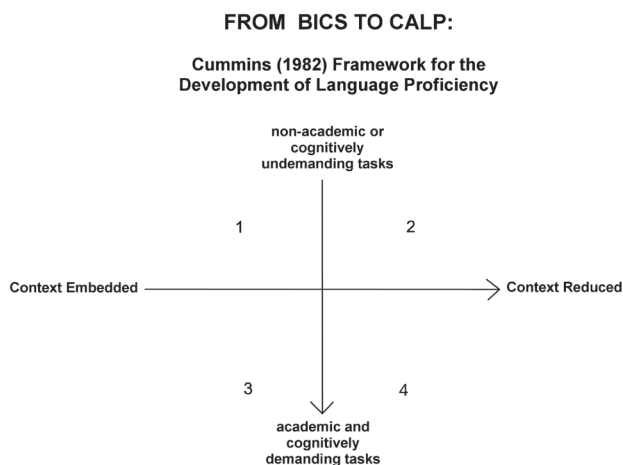
FROM BICS TO CALP:

**Cummins (1982) Framework for the
Development of Language Proficiency**

non-academic or
cognitively
undemanding tasks

1   2

Context Embedded ⟶ Context Reduced

3   4

academic and
cognitively
demanding tasks

Figure 3: BICS-CALP sorting task for an ITE class

Frayer model (Frayer, Fredrick, & Klausmeier, 1969). The Frayer Model is a graphic organizer used for word analysis and vocabulary building by manipulating key features of an identified core concept and refining its meaning. The four-square model prompts students to think about and describe the meaning of a word or concept (e.g., "learning task") by providing examples, offering non-examples, describing its essential characteristics, and finally generating a definition for the term. Figure 4 illustrates the implementation of a Frayer model task in my course (see Week 4) but it is readily applied in any learning setting (K–12 and into postsecondary). Lively discussion is promoted when this task is completed in small groups.
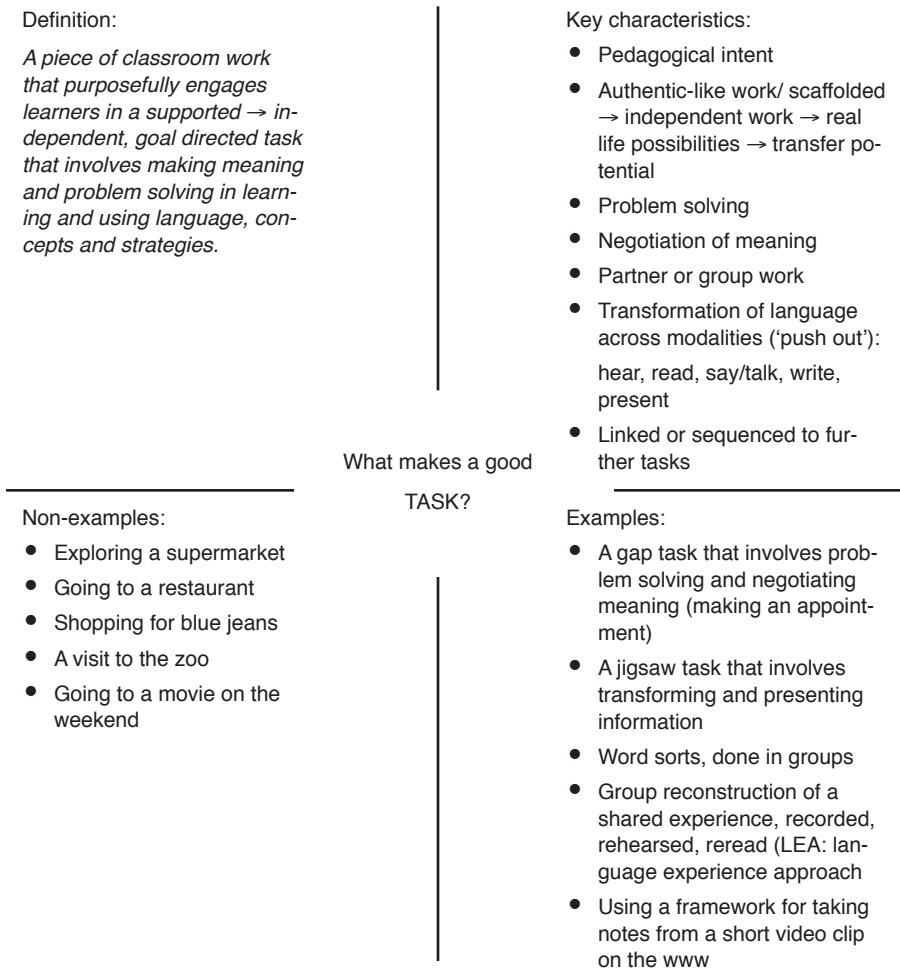
Definition: *A piece of classroom work that purposefully engages learners in a supported → independent, goal directed task that involves making meaning and problem solving in learning and using language, concepts and strategies.*	**Key characteristics:** • Pedagogical intent • Authentic-like work/ scaffolded → independent work → real life possibilities → transfer potential • Problem solving • Negotiation of meaning • Partner or group work • Transformation of language across modalities ('push out'): hear, read, say/talk, write, present • Linked or sequenced to further tasks
Non-examples: • Exploring a supermarket • Going to a restaurant • Shopping for blue jeans • A visit to the zoo • Going to a movie on the weekend	**Examples:** • A gap task that involves problem solving and negotiating meaning (making an appointment) • A jigsaw task that involves transforming and presenting information • Word sorts, done in groups • Group reconstruction of a shared experience, recorded, rehearsed, reread (LEA: language experience approach • Using a framework for taking notes from a short video clip on the www

What makes a good TASK?

Figure 4: Frayer Model: What makes a good task?

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Project work (Helle, Tynjala, & Olkinuora, 2006; Roessingh & Chambers, 2011). Projects are large, linked pieces of work that require students to demonstrate their understanding of the underlying theoretical framing as they apply this to the practicalities of preparing for the classroom. An example of a project could be creating task cards and linking them into a thematic plan that reflects a principled stance.

This course might involve three assignments/projects:

1. *Individual work.* Develop a statement reflecting your initial (untutored) beliefs as an outcome of the "myths and misconceptions" task and your subsequent reading of research and theory. Make explicit reference to Goldenberg (2008) and at least two additional readings that synthesize the extant literature on second language learning among young children. (30%)
2. *Individual work.* Design three linked learning tasks for children relating to vocabulary development through story book reading, or reading informational text (e.g., a newspaper article) to them. Include any materials you will need to work with the children (e.g., pictures, flashcards, puzzles, graphic organizers). You are encouraged to think of information and communication technology (ICT) applications to engage youngsters in authentic work. In your reflection of your work, cite the research that has informed your decision making. (30%)
3. *Group work.* Design a thematic template for a unit of work that encompasses 10 lessons. The template (LearningByDesign) and a sample thematic plan is provided for you (Appendix B). You may complete this either online (www.esllearningbydesign.com) or by paper and pencil. Your work will be marked according to the checklist that reflects features of thematic development that are research-based and support strong language learning (Appendix C). In your accompanying reflection, note the features of your template that give it integrity and robustness, and how it will support language learning through engagement with well-designed tasks. (40%)

Another useful assignment/task would be to have students do some assessment work in speaking and writing. Several provinces, including Alberta and Ontario, have developed ESL benchmarks for K–12, and provided various relevant documents and samples of student work. Have the ITE students practice benchmarking samples of student work. They can compare their analysis to the samples posted on the ministry website. In Alberta, all teachers are expected to be familiar with the ESL benchmarks. Elementary mainstream practitioners are generally the ones who identify the need for ESL support. As this is related to funding and differentiated programming, the importance of introducing assessment and the idea of benchmarking student work cannot be overstated. In other jurisdictions, such an expectation is equally important for all practitioners in K–12 settings.

Reflections on Student Work

From the perspective of having been the course instructor as well as having been a long-time ESL practitioner, I can highlight several themes related to student involvement in the course and the quality of their work.

To begin, class attendance is often one of the first indicators of student engagement in any class. In this class, student attendance was near-perfect for the entire semester. Many students commented that this was the one class they found most valuable and enjoyed the most. They especially valued the connection between research and theory and the opportunity to engage in project work, supported by the enabling in-class tasks. Of particular note, students commented on the course evaluation that they began to feel like "real teachers" and immersed themselves fully in the work of planning for their future in the classroom. This insight aligns with those reported by Smith (2005).

The quality of their planning of the thematic templates was impressive for an under-graduate level class. Topics included "The bunny problem: One bunny too many," "The penguin plunge: Coming soon to the Calgary zoo," "The Olympic games," "Waste in our world," and "Wildlife of the rainforest." Several groups made good attempts at cross-curricular integration, making room for learning math and science concepts drawn from the relevant curriculum documents. All groups identified a children's book as the launch for their work, supplementing this with materials they made and for which they designed learning tasks: puzzles, games, activity sheets, work with pictures, and so on that would focus on vocabulary development. The checklist (Appendix C) as well as a sample completed thematic template provided a scaffold for their ongoing work. The process was begun in class time, thus ensuring that all of the groups were on track. The fact that the students' first intensive practicum would begin after the completion of this course gave them confidence that they could succeed in planning meaningful work for children. Most students were already acquainted with their practicum site and partnering teacher, and felt that they would likely make immediate use of their work in this course.

Students commented on the ease, accessibility, and interest of the readings selected and made available for them. Of particular note is Hart and Risley's (2003) article highlighting the importance of massive amounts of comprehensible yet challenging input that children must have to develop a large and rich vocabulary. Both quantity of input, including multiple exposures, and quality of adult-child interaction around language registered among the students as key to their thinking as they planned their thematic work. Hence the idea of learning by design.

Concluding Comments

One undergraduate-level course constitutes only an introduction to the theory, research, and practice of how task-based learning can be implemented

in the context of the elementary mainstream classroom, immersion and bi-lingual settings, or core language classes. Many of these students will want to continue their professional development as in-service teachers through an array of opportunities available. Survey data from in-service teachers (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2010) reveal that teachers value professional development that supports school improvement goals, is evidence-informed and research-based, and involves collaborative work such as unit planning. Many teachers are drawn to participate in graduate-level work: course-based or thesis-based routes are generally available across Canada, increasingly online.

TESL Canada may partner with provincial jurisdictions such as teachers' organizations (e.g., Alberta Teachers' Association; TESLSaskatchewan), provincial ministries of education, and major school boards (e.g., Vancouver School Board, Toronto District School Board, Calgary Board of Education) to encourage universities to address the learning needs of ELLs at the pre-service level. It is inconsistent for research and theory in second language learning to be a requirement for teachers working in other second languages such as French, Spanish, German, yet only optional for elementary generalist teachers who are even more likely to be faced with the exigencies of planning for ELLs. All teachers need this academic background.

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Appendix A
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Appendix B
Thematic Overview: Engage learners in a series of tasks that will enable them to complete a mini project on an exotic pet

Theme Title: If I had a million dollars I would buy you an exotic pet …
Target Group: Grades 4–6
Broad Goals: Develop academic vocabulary and skills through engaging tasks within the context of found treasures, exotic pets

Core Objectives		
Strategies • Brainstorming/webbing • Pair work • Note taking • Identifying key vocabulary	*Language* • *Vocabulary:* mystery, treasure, descriptive vocabulary • *Grammar:* modals (I would ..). • *Functions:* describe, explain, summarize, synthesize, paraphrase, reference	*Concepts* • A million dollars.. • Exotic pet • Digital literacy: newspaper online • Google: • A good website? *Curricular targets* • Use keyboarding skills • Work co-operatively in groups • Organize ideas and information into short paragraphs
Material & Content • Websites and YouTube clips • http://consumerist.com/2014/02/26/couple-goes-for-a-hike-finds-10-million-cache-of-gold-coins/ • Task cards • Flash cards • Teacher prepared crossword • Graphic organizers • Sentence frames/template for paragraph writing	*Lesson Name & Overview* 1. Intro: Newspaper clipping: Couple goes for hike, finds $10 million hoard. 2. Story retelling task. Remembering details. 3. Building BK: Making predictions and inferences. How did the money get there? 4. Recycling vocabulary: Crossword puzzle using flash cards as a scaffold. Pair work. 5. If I had a million dollars … song. Brainstorming. 6. I would buy you an exotic pet: Pictures and descriptive vocabulary. 7. Online reading/web search. graphic organizer task, note taking task. Recording sources of information. 8. Scaffolded writing task: My exotic pet, synthesizing information. References to sources of information. 9. Paragraph frames: writing. 10. Presenting my project. White flamingo. Flying squirrel.	
Learning tasks and enabling activities: • Accessing and selecting websites: conducting a Google search • Recording sources of information/references • Completing a crossword puzzle • Making notes, synthesizing information • Identifying names of exotic pets • Completing a mini project on an exotic pet: physical characteristics, habitat, life cycle, diet/feeding habits, interesting facts	*Assessment strategies* Completion of visual organizer, task cards, scaffolded activities, crossword puzzle, accuracy in completing the mini-project and presenting their work.	

Appendix C
Checklist for Developing a Thematic Template

"Balanced and on the light side … it's got to fly!" (from principles of aeronautical design)

Holistically viewed, the plan reflects a strong sense of internal integrity:
- Each piece supports all of the other 4. The plan reflects good integration and strong interconnections.
- Each piece reflects the level of rigor suggested by the target learning group: internal consistency and reinforcement from within the plan.
- Taken holistically, there is a sense of balance, practicality, possibility for implementing this plan … modesty, simplicity, functionality.
- The plan suggest structure and strength, but is not overly rigid … flexible for both yourself and a colleague who might want to modify this plan.
- It provides a great snapshot and makes me think "I could do this!" and "My learners will get what they need from this."

Piece 1: Language/Concepts/Strategies … the core objectives:
- The design (Piece 1) is not too "heavy" … This piece is "the driver" so it needs to be on "the lean side" in order to provide for deep learning.
- It gives me a good sense of what is intentional about this teaching and learning plan.
- This piece reflects the explicit curriculum … this becomes embedded in the other pieces.

Piece 2: Materials:
- This piece provides an interesting context for my plan. There is a good variety of authentic/authentic-like materials at the level that will support Piece 1.
- This piece suggests task design and learning/intellectual engagements that will advance my plan.
- Materials control the input, they must support task design, they must be at the comprehensible input (+1) level.

Piece 3: Lesson sequence:
- There is early provision for accessing/assessing/activating background knowledge.
- There is provision for direct teaching of the core objectives.
- There is provision for building background knowledge through good sequencing of connected tasks, scaffolding.
- There is provision for recycling to reinforce and practice the core curricular objectives.
- There is provision for creative uses of language/concepts/strategies. ways of extending and re-contextualizing the core.
- The activities suggest good task potential.
- The names of the lessons reflect a good sense of building/unfolding/sequencing.

Piece 4: Task design:
- Tasks reflect the intention "to work" (manipulate and transform) the core objectives through well-integrated engagements with the materials across modalities; hear/see/say/write.
- There is an array of tasks that require problem solving, negotiation of meaning, collaboration.
- Tasks attempt to reflect real-life uses of the language/concepts/strategies. They are authentic-like (authentic but modified/structured/scaffolded to make learning possible).

Piece 5: Assessment:
- Assessment is linked to ongoing instruction (Piece 3).
- Learning tasks can become assessment tasks, but need to be at the independent level.
- Possibilities for student self-assessment (e.g. checklists or rubrics).
- Assessment strategies are broad-based.

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