

Ambassadors for Peace: A Literature and the Arts-Based ESL Classroom Model

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ABSTRACT

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Peacebuilding has become an increasingly significant point of focus in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom due to the fact that English language and therefore, ESL programs, have become significantly more globalized. Consequently, the ESL classroom has become a critical space for intercultural communication among language learners.

In this study, the ESL classroom is considered as a language-learning community where students develop their intercultural skills to become eventual peacebuilders through the medium of storytelling. To accomplish this goal, in the ESL classroom characterized by a literature and the arts-based model, the teacher as facilitator constructs the learning environment so as to build confidence in students as they are empowered to

become autonomous learners.

This model seeks to demonstrate how various modes of storytelling such as folklore and fairytales, scripting and acting, and the analysis of art in the college-level ESL classroom help to preserve and promote the learner's culturally informed sense of selfhood.

Among the principal topics researched in this study are the following: the debate regarding the incorporation of culture in language learning, the role of culture in classroom communication, the integration of the five core components of language learning, known as the 5 Cs, as recommended by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the importance of a student-centered classroom, learner autonomy, and various methods and approaches to language learning and teaching. Focus is placed on engaging a literature and the arts-based curriculum. Included are eleven lessons based on four objectives: Overcoming Stage Fright, Navigating Cultural Misunderstandings, Cultivating Self and Cultural Expression, and Building Relationships.

Finally, this study proposes that in effective language learning, the classroom becomes an empowering, learner-centered community, a social laboratory, in which the teacher as facilitator, organizes interactive, intercultural, communication among the students through a variety of storytelling genres to build confidence and eventually autonomy in the learners and to prepare them to become peacebuilders beyond the classroom in their communities and in their international engagements.

DEDICATION

To the unending support from my loving family, especially to my mother and father, Laurie and Frank Whitehead, for tirelessly reading each draft of this dissertation without complaint.

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Introduction and Review of Literature

Over the last decade, by emphasizing the teaching of culture, the college-level English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom has increasingly become a valuable resource for peacebuilding. However, the teaching of culture is a widely contested concept, one which requires further discussion, as will become subsequently evident in this dissertation. Alongside debates about the teaching of culture, conversations about storytelling as a peacebuilding device have also gained considerable momentum. Combining the two concepts in the college-level ESL classroom helps establish the foundation for a new kind of peacebuilding model, necessary for self-composition in an age of increasing globalization. Storytelling can cultivate a language learning environment in which students build confidence to become intercultural communicators and therefore, eventual peacebuilders.

The ongoing debate regarding the teaching of culture in the second language classroom offers two arguments. One is in support of the teaching of culture and the other argues against the teaching of culture (Yesil and Demiroz 81) (Lange and Paige x). However, there indeed exists another option. That is, in the language classroom, instructors can facilitate intercultural exchange among students and also foster understanding regarding the culture being taught, as opposed to only teaching the culture of the language being taught. As is established in the subsequent chapters, educators can facilitate this intercultural exchange through storytelling and narrative by way of a literature and the arts-based classroom curriculum. Within this learner-centered curriculum, students develop the cultural competence and autonomy necessary to become

globally minded, confident English speaking communicators, with tolerance for a diverse range of community members. Within the student-centered literature and the arts-based college-level ESL classroom, students develop confidence and acceptance for the target language culture as well as the intercultural classroom community culture. In turn, students experience language advancement, classroom community development, and the independence necessary to take a stand in promoting peace. There is, then, an opportunity to use this student-centered, language learning environment to establish peace-oriented dialogue through the globalized and multicultural English language. This dissertation probes various aspects of classroom techniques to ensure that these opportunities can occur in a humanities directed classroom.

Intercultural interaction is a basic component of the student-centered classroom focused on peacebuilding. Peacebuilding has also been a topic of discussion amongst scholars and the education community has placed a great deal of emphasis, more broadly, on students interacting with the material directed toward intercultural interchange, as well as among classmates. This is critical in illuminating a student-centered learning environment, particularly one that endorses the facilitation of culture. In such settings, the teaching of culture weighs heavily on the instruction. Thus, teachers must facilitate student interaction in ways that will help them to survive in English speaking settings, because “In a second-language situation, interaction becomes essential to survival in the new language and culture, and students need help with styles of interaction” (Rivers 5). The word, “survival,” is critical here, as it expresses a dire need for interaction in the classroom community before students enter the world. Therefore, interaction occurs in the classroom depending on the teaching style and approach that the instructor applies. In

other words, initially, interaction is achieved as a direct result of the instructor's guidance, so it is important to realize that it is a "matter of technique or of classroom approach" (Rivers 5). However, eventually interaction "involves imaginative planning with student input" (Rivers 5). That is, in certain cases, students are held accountable for their own learning and have the option to choose how they want to learn, making interaction both instructor led and student applied. This is partly what the literature and the arts-based classroom seeks to achieve. In the classroom, it is up to the instructor to guide students into a cultural exchange with their classmates and with the target language culture.

Furthermore, by interacting with material and messages that are relevant to the student, students are better able to grasp the target language and are more willing to engage in the interaction. In fact, "Students achieve facility in *using* a language when their attention is focused on conveying and receiving authentic messages (that is, messages that contain information of interest to speaker and listener in a situation of importance to both)" (Rivers 4). Hence, "This is *interaction*" (Rivers 4).

One reason peacebuilding becomes an increasingly significant point of focus in the ESL classroom is due to the fact that English language and therefore, ESL programs, have become significantly more globalized. Consequently, the ESL classroom has become a critical space for intercultural exchange around the world, much like storytelling communities that exist throughout literature and the arts. These communities are comprised of individuals from all walks of life, people who come together in a shared space to engage with one another through various creative outlets. These communities, therefore, hold the potential to encourage intercultural understanding and communication.

Literature and the arts communities enact storytelling, both through self-expression and cultural expression, and storytelling has markedly become a function of peacebuilding. Thus, when stories are told through both self-expression and cultural expression in the ESL classroom, they can linguistically and personally help to develop a classroom community, while also potentially encouraging peacebuilding, through the English language in the broader global sphere, as it is so widely spoken.

Across the globe, there exist communities that indeed create a shared global narrative through diverse modes of storytelling such as literature and the arts. For instance, arts communities ranging from those in ancient Greece (Peters 10) to the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale of Japan, have brought together individuals from around the world by encouraging people to communicate with one another through self articulation and cultural expression (Henderson). These kinds of artistic storytelling communities have helped establish a peaceful environment in which individuals can learn about their own cultural identities and how to effectively express those identities with confidence, as they develop intercultural relationships and learn cross-cultural competence from their engagement with other community members. These types of peaceful communities have also been recognized in conflict resolution through their emphasis on storytelling, since storytelling has become an influential topic in the field of peacebuilding, as is alluded to, among many others, by Lederach, Senehi, Jakar and Milofsky, and McKee.

This study suggests that the verbal and artistic exchange found in these communal and public mediums of storytelling can also be used in the college-level ESL classroom, which has expanded across the globe. The ESL classroom is also a place where students

learn the verbally and ideologically influential English language at an impressionable age, as they develop cultural competence and the ability to promote a meaningful peace-oriented dialogue. Therefore, the ultimate objective of this classroom model is for students to form their own conceptual connections between the classroom and the world at large within the framework of storytelling through the genres of literature and the arts. In other words, by engaging in cultural exchange through storytelling genres such as literature and the arts, the ESL classroom can be used as an unconventional peacebuilding mechanism, that mirrors global storytelling communities, where students take what they learn in the classroom into the world. Thus, the ESL classroom offers a communal space for students to engage in self-expression and cultural exchange, both among classmates and with the target language culture, while honing their English language skills, to use the English language as a tool to communicate their evolving cultural understanding.

As such, if cultural understanding is effectively conveyed, when students leave the ESL classroom and enter the global society, they will have had the classroom experience of potentially becoming agents of peace. Thus, an objective of this study is to weave connections between literature and the arts communities, methods of conflict resolution, and the classroom community, as a result of their cultural exchanges in the classroom and in their communities. Consequently, this dissertation demonstrates how the increasingly widespread inclusion of ESL programs in colleges and universities across the globe can serve to develop more effective communication and global peacebuilding in the ESL classroom. Moreover, history has demonstrated the significance of communication and the teaching of culture in the ESL classroom, in that teaching trends consistently return to communicative approaches, while the teaching of culture has

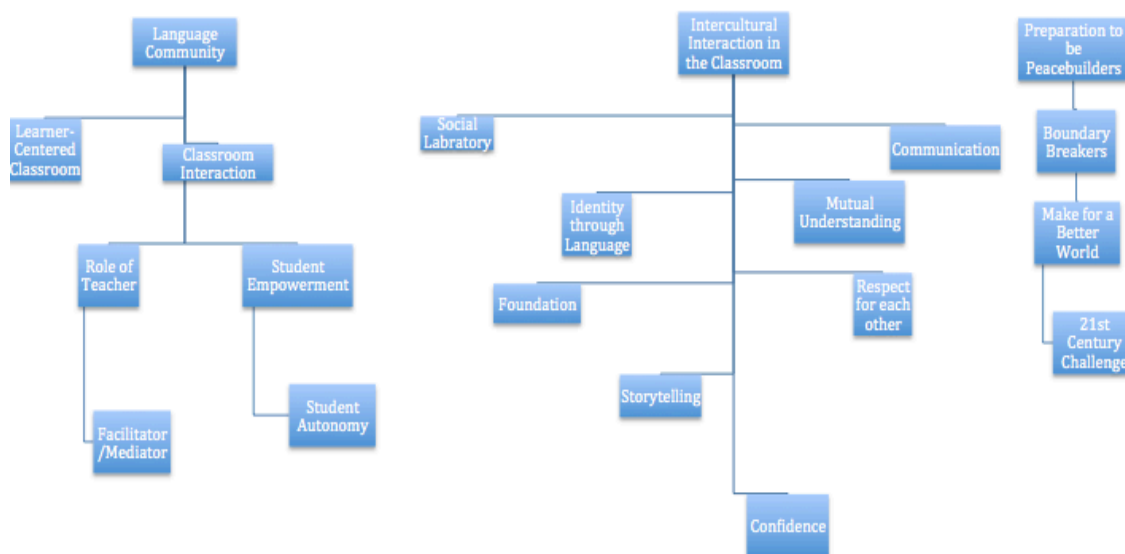
been widely established as a necessary and integrated component of the language classroom. These shifting trends are exhibited by Larsen-Freeman and Brown, and are discussed later in the introduction. Thus, this study examines ESL classrooms at Kean University, Union, NJ, and at its sister school, Wenzhou-Kean University, Wenzhou, China, to establish a communicative and culturally rich curriculum model for instructors and to lend itself to preparing teachers with the tools and support for creating their own peacebuilding curriculum. These classroom examples are supported by Communicative Language Theory, Task-based Language Teaching, the Whole-Person Model, as described by Larsen-Freeman and Brown, and ACTFL's 5 Cs, which endorse a humanities-based, student-centered model of instruction to engage the "seven intelligences" (Larsen-Freeman) in each student. Mirrored by global literature and the arts communities and supported by evidence found in historical trends in language teaching, the literature and the arts-based classroom can teach students to become peace leaders through effective use of the English language by building student autonomy and cultivating communication through cultural competence, to interact peacefully in the world.

The current study offers suggestions for a classroom curriculum based on my experience and role as dean of the English Language Village of Concordia Language Villages, Concordia College, Moorhead, MN, where I facilitate English language instruction and English-centered activities, and by my teaching experience as a teaching assistant for Religion 101: Introduction to World Religions, at Drew University, Madison, NJ, a Liberal Arts University, along with my English teaching experience in Nepal and India, instructing grades K-12, and in China and the U.S., at the college-level.

These curricular suggestions are also endorsed by my own experience as a learner abroad in Italy, where I spent a summer studying Italian language and culture, India, where I studied Urdu and Hindi for a year, Spain, where I lived and participated in private Spanish lessons throughout the summer months, and China, where I am currently studying Mandarin and Chinese culture, and as a BA in Sociology and an M.Litt., with a focus on Global Studies, at Drew University. Prior to my university studies, I also experienced a diverse educational upbringing through standardized public education, private education, and classical education in a magnet school.

While this dissertation recognizes the field of Peace Education, it offers an alternative in developing peace-oriented dialogue in the classroom. This study proposes that in effective language learning, the classroom becomes an empowering, learner-centered community, a social laboratory, in which the teacher as facilitator organizes interactive, intercultural communication among the students through a variety of storytelling genres to build confidence and eventual autonomy in the learners and to prepare them to become peacebuilders beyond the classroom, in their communities, and in their global engagements.

In other words, this study promotes intercultural communication as a means of building relationships by guiding students to understand more deeply their personal identities, and the identities of their classmates and instructor, by sharing stories through dialogue, literature, and the arts. In doing so, students learn from relationships within the learning community so they can break down cultural barriers and enhance their own global leadership qualities as peacebuilders through their study of English.



©Classroom Flow Chart 2019 Kyra Whitehead

Research Questions

Language can be both limiting and empowering. It encompasses our cultural heritage, establishes who we are, and plays a role in determining who we will become. Thus, it is basic to our individual identity. Through the use of oral language and storytelling (literature and the arts), the college-level ESL classroom can function as an unconventional model for peacebuilding. That is, developing a storytelling community in the classroom reflects a connected narrative that beckons to be shared. Now, more than ever, as instructors we have an obligation to encourage and model responsible dialogue in the university and college setting, where interconnections and intellectual stimulation thrive. The college-level ESL classroom, by its nature, encourages students to engage with one another in a common language. It is our responsibility, as instructors, to ensure that English is used for peace-oriented dialogue, understanding, and compromise, to encourage peace as a value in the minds of students, as global citizens, with the intent of

helping to reduce global conflict. It has indeed been shown within the field of peace education that within our minds, “the foundations for peace must be constructed. If we are to be peace makers, then we must learn to be peace thinkers” (Reardon 55). One way that this can be achieved within the minds of students is by facilitating intercultural interaction in the classroom.

To accomplish this goal, this dissertation fully explores the overarching research questions, such as; “How do shifting trends in language teaching and research in learner development support a student-centered, communicative, culturally rich classroom environment, and how does the learner-centered classroom contribute to learner autonomy?,” “What are the ongoing debates around the teaching of culture in the language classroom and how does the facilitation of culture contribute to that discussion?,” “In what ways has the English language become globalized and what are the existing perceptions of its globalization?,” “In what ways does storytelling, through literature and the arts, contribute to community development and cultural exchange?,” “In what ways do the teaching of English and the field of peacebuilding intersect?,” and “What is the relationship between the field of peace education and the creation of a classroom community that facilitates communication for students to become peacebuilders in their own communities?”

In order to answer such questions, the study must be grounded in historical relevance of trends in the teaching of a second language to illuminate ACTFL’s five national standards of language teaching, current debates around the teaching of culture in the ESL classroom, as it relates to peacebuilding and storytelling, and the way in which storytelling genres, peacebuilding, and the ESL classroom can intersect. I have used this

research to contribute my own findings to the field to address the importance of cultural relevance and student interaction through storytelling in the college-level ESL classroom. The primary focus of my research is on ESL instructional methods and the ways in which they have been incorporated in the classroom over the past several decades. In correlation with instructional methods, my research also focuses on culture, communication and community building in the classroom, and how culture is facilitated through storytelling as a means of establishing student autonomy and creating a peacebuilding model in the ESL classroom.

This study compiles historical, cultural, and linguistic scholarship, through an interdisciplinary analysis of research on literature and the arts, including storytelling, language teaching pedagogy, peace and conflict studies, as well as studies on the psychology of learning. The following experts and their contributions to this study are discussed in further detail in the subsequent sections of this introduction, though this dissertation is not limited to those who follow.

There are perhaps a dozen or more scholars who seriously inform the conversation around this topic, as will become subsequently evident in the following review of literature. Primary resources in this study, however, include the professional organization, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), scholarship that endorses the goals of that organization, discussion of the 5 Cs, along with language scholars, H. Douglas Brown and Diane Larsen-Freeman, whose established research supports this study's inclusion of language teaching methods, along with Wilga Rivers who endorses an interactive learning environment, and Linda Darling-Hammond and John Bransford, whose research contributes to the current study's discussion of

culture in the language classroom, especially in terms of the shifting needs of students in the twenty-first century.

The incorporation of culture in the classroom is also reinforced by the well-known Nigerian author, Chinua Achebe, along with cultural experts, David Nunan and Julie Choi, David Block, and Geneva Gay. Finally, the current study's discussion of peacebuilding in its relation to the ESL classroom is grounded in research on peace and conflict experts, David Augsburger, Gary Friedman and Jack Himmelstein, John Lederach, Jessica Senehi, Valarie Jakar and Alison Milofsky, along with peace educator, Betty Reardon. There are, indeed, countless others whose research has contributed to this study and whose work is discussed in further detail throughout this introduction.

Shifting Language Teaching Trends

To establish the foundation of language learning and its most effective strategies, this study provides an overview of its various trends over time. In 2000, Larsen-Freeman published an informational assessment, titled *Teaching and Principles in Language Teaching*, detailing the ongoing shifts and trends in language teaching throughout the past three decades, as a guide for language instructors to determine their own principles and ideologies within their teaching philosophies. Many of these methods are commonly discussed in the field of language acquisition. However, she provides a foundational layout of how and why changes have occurred over the years, to encourage instructors to make their own inferences about best practices by “uncovering” the thoughts that guide their “own actions as a teacher” (Larsen-Freeman 1). Her objective is to promote

awareness as a means of providing instructors with the option to adapt potentially new techniques to their curriculum and to better understand their own teaching philosophies. Her study lends itself to promoting purposeful instruction in the language classroom. I have used this text as a way of providing historical relevance to this dissertation. Moreover, these shifting trends are used in this study to emphasize the ever-changing nature of language teaching, to determine the most effective results, and also to acknowledge the evolution of an interactive, cultural and communication-based classroom environment. Larsen-Freeman's work has also contributed to grounding this study in the "seven intelligences" displayed by students, a concept that she recognizes as theorized by Howard Gardner, who also refers to the seven intelligences as "multiple intelligences," each of which are displayed through various learning styles such as kinesthetic, auditory, and visual, suggesting that multiple learning styles can be developed in learners (Larsen-Freeman 169). Larsen-Freeman's work also contributes to the suggestion that culture and communication can be taught in the ESL classroom through multiple teaching methods, under the umbrella of literature and the arts.

Similarly, Brown highlights theoretical trends in language teaching in his 2014 study on *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. He examines the shift from language teaching as what he calls a "tradition" (15), to language teaching within the past century, taught with a focus on interaction. In other words, language teaching can be divided into two historical paradigms, as it has undergone a gradual transformation from the "traditional" style, or Classical Method, which equates language learning to mental stamina, to more modern language teaching trends, such as those described in Larsen-Freeman's work. Again, Brown's text is used in this study as a way of further solidifying

the shifting trends depicted in Larsen-Freeman's work and how they have highlighted the importance of a community and culture-based language classroom, which can function through literature and the arts.

This shift in trends emphasizes linguists' search for effective language teaching methodologies and also depicts the many ways in which language can be taught. It establishes that there are multiple methods to language teaching and that perhaps, there is no one existing method, which encompasses all of the language learner's needs. These trends suggest then, that an instructor can incorporate a number of qualities from various methodologies and mold them together into a culturally rich classroom environment, as is displayed in this study's curriculum model. The language classroom can be a community space, which anticipates a multitude of interactive functions, grounded by the many existing strategies in the field. This multiplicity of teaching strategies exemplifies the various shifting trends depicted in Brown and Larsen-Freeman's work.

Brown does, however, acknowledge the lingering influence of communicative language teaching, which, as such, grounds itself at the core of language instruction as it has been proven a stable force in the classroom. Brown implies then, that language teaching serves a communicative purpose for the benefit of the whole student, as a means of interacting in authentic contexts. In other words, and according to Brown, authentic language learning is functional and not limited to grammatical competence.

Hence, Brown serves as a valuable resource in understanding the complexities of identity in its interaction with classroom relationships and, therefore, the enhanced need to engage varying learning styles. As such, H. Douglas Brown outlines the "12 Principles of Language Learning/Teaching," that he views as prevalent in the language classroom,

focusing on understanding student learning, communication, community, and interpersonal relationships. Indeed, his thinking endorses the concept that when students feel they are capable of achieving a task, they are more likely to achieve eventual success (Brown, “Principles”). Therefore, this is also connected to his work on student-centered learning, which cultivates student autonomy, thus supporting the current study’s emphasis on building confidence and leadership in the classroom that can be used for peacebuilding. The learner-centered classroom and the autonomous learner are concepts thoroughly researched by a number of scholars including Wenden, Oxford, and Richards, highly esteemed language educators.

The psychology of the student is a concept also endorsed by Charles A. Curran, and studied by Paul La Forge, whose reference to Curran, as the developer of Counseling-Learning in language instruction, also supports the establishment of developing confidence in the students as they work toward developing eventual student autonomy and independence. In other words, La Forge’s work is based on Curran’s Counseling-Learning approach, which endorses the importance of developing confidence in the student. As Curran was originally a psychologist, his Whole-Person Model in its adaptation to language instruction, which eventually developed into Community Language Learning, is grounded in psychological research. This study’s work acknowledges Curran’s belief in the establishment of confidence needed for student autonomy. This means of developing confidence through familiarity is explored by Gholson and Stumpf, who establish the connection between the familiar and unfamiliar, further supporting the acknowledgement and need for culture learning in the building of student autonomy. La Forge works further in the notion of Counseling-Learning and

Community Language Learning. That is, he discusses the twentieth century shift in language teaching as a social process. In reference to Curran, La Forge asserts the importance of the Whole-Person Model for student development, and uses Curran's model in his own classroom providing an example for how the Whole-Person Model can be applied. This, then, depicts the influence of psychology and counseling in language teaching, also understood by Brown. Therefore, La Forge is used in this study to encourage the Whole-Person Model presented by Curran and to support the need for acknowledging the whole person in language instruction. La Forge's study, then, provides the scaffolding for a classroom that seeks to engage students in cultural exchange by first interacting with the cultural notions with which they are familiar to encourage a positive learning environment.

In other words, La Forge models Curran's explanation that throughout the five stages of learning, students must gradually develop confidence in their learning to produce effective outcomes and to eventually reach the level of being independent language learners. In this same way, the literature and the arts-based classroom seeks to encourage cultural exchange and communicative independence. This is achieved through building students' comfort and confidence to share their own cultural identity with which they are familiar, in preparation for learning about their classmates' cultural identities as well as the target language culture.

By the same token, in her 1987 text, *Interactive Language Teaching*, Rivers examines the cognitive benefits of learning language through authentic messages (4). In other words, when students interact with classmates, they engage with relevant ideas and through this interaction, students are better able to utilize the language. Rivers supports

the notion that by interacting in the classroom, students can use their formal language study in natural circumstances, as they are “already engaging in the central activity for which language is used in human relations” (4).

This type of classroom dynamic is what makes the ESL classroom, in particular, a fundamental space for peacebuilding, as it is applicable in human relations and through a widely spoken language. As such, and in order to understand the ways interaction occurs in the language classroom, one must also turn to the *National Standards for Foreign Language Learning—ACTFL*, which solidifies Rivers’ study on interaction. In other words, the five integral components that reflect best practices in language learning are communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities, all of which explain and encourage the interaction that should take place in the language classroom. Best practices also include encouraging self-expression, building a sense of confidence in the students, developing learner autonomy, creating an effective learning environment, and establishing student-centered learning within that environment.

Together, the 5 Cs, established by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), encompass interpersonal communication, cultural relations, making connections through diversity, language and cultural comparisons, and learning how to interact “with cultural competence in order to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world” (National Standards for Foreign Language Learning—ACTFL).

Studies, incorporating the teaching of culture include but are not limited to, those of Nunan and Choi, Yesil and Demiröz, Lange and Paige, Pai, Adler, and Shadiow, and Valdes. These studies all investigate the ongoing debate on the teaching of culture in the

classroom and seek to define “culture.” The debate around teaching culture in the language classroom and the substantial task of defining the term “culture,” are critical components of the current study. In order to discuss the teaching of culture in the second language classroom, one must first determine whether it is currently taught and, if so, whether it is used widely across second language curriculums. Furthermore, the term “culture” is used extensively to describe many components of this study. Therefore, it is critical to establish a well-rounded description of the concept of culture, while also defining the term “culture.”

So, in order to determine how culture can be used most effectively in the second language classroom, this study includes the work of Knutson. In 2006, in a study titled, “Cross-Cultural Awareness for Second/Foreign Language Learners.” Knutson proposed that instructors take a relational approach to culture teaching by encouraging students to understand and interact with cultural identity in the classroom, both that of the target culture and their home culture. As is depicted by the 5 Cs and by Rivers, this is partly how an interactive classroom functions. The interaction derives from a mutual understanding of the “other” and of the self.

In their recent 2017 study on English language teachers’ perceptions of culture teaching, Yesil and Demiröz address the inseparable relationship between language and culture, noting that instructors feel it necessary to “develop students’ communicative abilities to be agents of world peace in today’s multicultural world” (90). The study supports the discussion of each of the 5 Cs and the shifting trends toward a more interactive classroom environment. This area of research also validates the current study’s assertion that by developing students’ communication skills in an interactive,

multicultural ESL classroom setting, students can develop the skills to become ambassadors for peacebuilding in their respective communities. Within this validation, the research also reflects the 5 Cs in their endorsement of this argument.

Language, Culture, and Identity in the Language Classroom

The voices of Sommer, Senehi, Lee and VanPatten, Darling-Hammond and Bransford, Gay, Block, Gass, Brown, and Achebe all come together in conversation from various angles on the overarching subject of culture and identity, and the complexities of both. While the concept of culture is researched from many different angles, and while the term “culture” is used in a variety of different contexts, it has acquired a number of different definitions. As this is the case, it is critical to define what we mean by the term as it is used in this study, while also examining culture as a component of “identity.” Within the storytelling process as well as in the ESL classroom, the concept of identity must also be made clear. As equally daunting a concept as culture, “identity” is made up of numerous definitions and is used in a number of contexts. In Block’s *Second Language Identities*, he combines the discussion of culture, language, and identity into one coherent study (Block). His work lays the groundwork for the current study’s analysis on how the three work together to create peacebuilding.

The use of the term, “culture” and its position in academia have been widely discussed, as is established by Mélodie Sommer’s study, “The Concept of Culture in Media Studies.” She states, “Across different fields of studies, scholars discuss whether to keep, change or altogether discard the concept of culture” (Sommer 2). In fact, some

argue that the construct itself is unsalvageable and that it should be altogether abolished and replaced with another, more concise concept. In other words, it has been argued that “the culture construct is so hopelessly flawed as to require not rehabilitation but exile, replacement by another analytic construct substantively distinct in definition, characterization, and reference” (Brightman 510). This is partly due to the ambiguity of the term, and also as a result of the way in which it has been used.

For instance, it has been argued that referring to a “culture” without speaking directly about individuals within that culture homogenizes all persons into one unbendingly defined notion of their identity. It has been noted for example, “of describing a culture without any reference to the individual except insofar as he is an expression of rigidly defined cultural forms, manifestly produces a distorted picture” (Brightman 515). While these assertions date back to 1933, “culture” has since acquired a multitude of definitions over the years, across a variety of fields.

Sommier highlights some of the many layers of culture, under the umbrella of the “culture” debate itself, in order to illuminate the multiplicity and depth of its functions, stating, “Defining culture remains a difficult exercise, especially because of its multifaceted nature” (1). Therefore, if not properly explained, the term can appear obscure and meaningless or can, more severely, reject individuality and identity altogether. As such, this dissertation provides an in-depth definition and discussion of culture in its relation to identity. These definitions assist in clarifying the discussion among the subsequent chapters and help to position the students as “cultural subjects,” in and outside of the ESL classroom.

Once there is a consensus for the definition of culture for the purpose of this

particular study, we can begin to analyze its use in the classroom. Darling-Hammond and Bransford in their 2005 text, *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World*, address the current critical nature and urgency of culturally-responsive teaching during this day and age. The authors note, “Whereas in previous decades teachers were expected to prepare only a small minority for the most ambitious intellectual work, they are now expected to prepare virtually all students for higher-order thinking and performance skills once reserved for only a few” (Darling-Hammond and Bransford 2). In other words, teachers today are presented with the task of tailoring their classrooms to a broader range of learners. In a classroom, which acknowledges and interacts with culture, we peel apart the many layers of its functionality and use it to share stories for understanding and communication.

While also exploring the numerous definitions of culture, Gay too, approaches the concept from the perspective of language teaching and the need for sharing culture through story. In her section on “The Need for and Nature of Story,” she highlights the works of linguistic and cultural scholars, such as, Dyson and Geneshi, Denman, Bruner, Golblatt, Witherell and Nodding, and Fowler (Gay 2-3). Gass further contributes to the discussion of language. Her work assists in integrating culture and the ESL classroom. Her text partly describes the misunderstandings, which can occur interculturally, without the relevant knowledge of culture, and thus, language. Her discussion of “speech acts” is at the core of her contribution to this study, as she describes the difference in form between speech acts, globally, and the way in which this difference can cause misunderstanding (Gass 243). Rivers then contributes to the current study’s discussion of speech acts in relation to the importance of nonverbal communication, in that it adds

meaning to communication, where language is limited (4). It can be added too, that Lee and VanPatten, in their textbook, *Making Communicative Language Teaching Happen*, establish that culture is a necessary component of learning a language. However, the authors argue that culture learning occurs outside of the classroom (Lee and VanPatten 4,5). This assertion is later refuted in the current study. Overall, these authors' works, together, support the argument that through a communicative classroom setting, including nonverbal communication and speech acts, students enhance their language learning ability.

We must however, also turn to the broader debate about the teaching of culture within the ESL classroom. There is an ongoing debate around the teaching of culture in the language classroom, illustrated by Nunan and Choi; Yesil and Demiröz; Lange and Paige; Pai, Adler, and Shadiow; and Valdes, among other language and cultural scholars and researchers. They acknowledge the ways in which culture is facilitated in the classroom and how it is beneficial. They also refer to the arguments that oppose the teaching of culture.

For example, Yesil and Demiröz discuss the notion of “turning intercultural encounters into intercultural relationships” through the language classroom (81). While, Lange and Paige, for instance, in 2003 discuss the three main reasons for the resistance against teaching culture in the classroom, in that, culture is complex, it is not a language, and it could push students out of their comfort levels in the classroom (x). Hence, this study encourages teachers to examine the reasons more carefully for this rejection of teaching culture in the second language classroom, in order to challenge such arguments and further establish its value and necessity in the ESL classroom. Moreover, this study

informs teachers of the benefits of the teaching of culture in language acquisition, establishing its relevance in language learning within the classroom and in the practical use of language, once students leave the classroom. Hence, it provides teachers with a sample of the cultural groundwork necessary for the teaching of culture in the language classroom, and therefore, for engaging in peacebuilding.

The Intersectionality of Storytelling, Peacebuilding, and the ESL Classroom

In her essay, “How to Tame a Wild Tongue,” the late, well-known scholar and author, Gloria Anzaldúa notes, “If you really want to hurt me talk badly about my language” (345). In other words, when language is challenged, threatened, or insulted, it is as if the entire person and their identity are under attack. Hence, language is personal, and learning a second language, particularly one as dominant as English, has the potential to threaten one’s identity. Therefore, learning English is different from learning the content of courses such as anthropology or astronomy. When an answer is wrong in astronomy, the student may be corrected. However, when something is answered incorrectly in the second language, there can be many connotations that go along with it, as language encompasses personality, perspectives on life, and an individual’s entire identity.

Storytelling, written or verbal, is a matter of keeping alive all that we as individuals and as members of a larger cultural context know and love. It is the retelling or reenacting of the experiences that make up who we are as individuals. By passing our stories on to those around us, we are sharing with others not only a piece of our human

experience, but also a part of what makes up our identity, both as individuals and as citizens. Our identity is that which defines us in some form. It is made up of individual characteristics and traits, a culturally constructed sense of selfhood, and is largely a matter of perspective. By promoting storytelling, ESL educators help to illuminate the multiple identities in the classroom.

In other words, providing a wrong answer to a question in a second language can misrepresent the meaning behind the language, and therefore, in what the speaker believes. Moreover, by providing no answer at all, the speaker leaves it up to the respondent to determine his or her own interpretation of the silence. Therefore, misuse and misunderstandings through language can inflict feelings of shame, anger, and ridicule, or they can simply obfuscate the subject's intent behind his or her words, which can potentially lead to violence. Thus, language is a survival mechanism, which must be used with positive intent.

Thus, both native and second languages contribute in the total composition of identity. ESL instructors in turn have a responsibility to be attuned to their students and who they are beyond their participation in the classroom, as learning a language means learning about people. Students must be viewed as "cultural subjects" who are intimately attached to their native languages. The argument here is that ESL instructors have a great responsibility in our current political climate, particularly in the U.S., as it is the task of the ESL instructor to facilitate an environment in which student identity lives, breathes, and moves through the classroom community.

Moreover, it is important not to miss the obvious, if not elusive fact that English has become the most widespread language throughout the globe. In other words, "one out

of five of the world's population speaks English to some level of competence. Demand from the other four-fifths is increasing" (Graddol 2). As this is the case, there is a certain responsibility in the way in which it is used, and therefore, in the way that it is taught. Hence, Graddol supports the current study's discussion on the hegemony of English and the importance of considering the way in which it is used. The widespread use of English becomes particularly evident in Altbach's 2007 study, "The Imperial Tongue: English as the Dominating Academic Language," in which he refers to English hegemony, particularly within academia.

Altbach's study therefore, informs the notion that as English spreads throughout academia, as do ESL programs, the hegemony of English comes into question. While this might be a valid argument, perhaps there is another perspective to consider: to use the widespread use of English and the expansion of college-level ESL programs as tools for building peace-oriented dialogue among its users. This is supported by well known Nigerian author, Chinua Achebe, who notes, in his essay, "The Writer and His Community," in *Hopes and Impediments*, "On language we are given equally simplistic prescriptions. Abolish the use of English! But after its abolition we remain seriously divided on what to put in its place" (60). This is precisely the issue. In order to communicate interculturally, there is a need for a common language. If we abolish English, what do we put in its place? Similarly, Ahmad supports this integration of a multicultural English language, in "Dohra Ahmad on Rotten English," the introduction to her literary anthology, *Rotten English*, where she refers to using English in a way which highlights and supports different cultural styles of language. The argument made therein, in fact, is that language is very much alive and that it moves through various vernacular

modes. In other words, her work illustrates the many ways in which English is used across the globe and how it has changed and expanded in its diversity through its globalization.

Ahmad notes, in reference to the chapters in her work, “Each attests to the living and organic nature of language, even to the point of showing how it can escape the control of its own creator” (Ahmad, “Rotten English,” 32). English, then, is constantly changing and adapting to time and culture. Hence, rather than attempt to eliminate the widespread use of English altogether, we have the opportunity to use it as a common language for peacebuilding and for bringing recognition to the vast dimensions of culture and identity that live within it. Through these cultural dimensions, it is evident that English is already and will continue to be established in many parts of the world, as ESL programs continue to expand globally.

Furthermore, since English is used across the globe and has become a powerful force for communication, which can be used for a range of different functions from fostering prejudice and hate to promoting peace, English instructors must direct the conversation toward a peaceful dialogue to connect students with the world at large, through creating a human narrative, which acknowledges all other cultures and languages.

Moreover, students at the college-level are particularly capable of becoming influential, especially as globally-minded English speakers, who are already living in a community of intellectuals, capable of spreading their voices to the outside world. Thus, as college-level ESL classrooms continue to expand globally, they present the potential of engaging a wider student population of peace builders. Therefore, community and

connection through the English language begins in the ESL classroom, spreads through the campus community, and travels through the various cultures that make up our world. Through an interdisciplinary, storytelling classroom setting, English instructors have the capability to become mediators through which peace is enabled.

Storytelling helps students connect to both the instructor and to each other to culturally situate themselves in the classroom. This is critical because the ESL classroom by its very nature, involves intercultural exchange and, therefore, a reinterpretation of the self in light of the encounter with another culture. Therefore, students are not only learning English and Western culture from their instructor, but they are also learning from their peers, and in their learning they are redefining their identity. Moreover, they are learning how to accept and engage with varying individual and cultural perspectives, making the ESL classroom a platform for cultural competence. Thus, we are training these potentially globally-minded students as ambassadors, not only for their own country and all the cultural perspectives that it fosters, but also for the target language culture and the multicultural world, utilizing English as the thread that sews each of these fabrics together.

Clearly, then, the ESL classroom serves several functions. On the surface, it is an environment for learning the English language, but internally, it promotes an understanding of commonality in a diverse community. Establishing this common ground is, of course, critical for developing a communal “safe space” and it also teaches students how to tolerate the “other.” The ESL classroom is an environment for students to learn about, and find ways of relating with, the unfamiliar, to both develop autonomy and to prepare for interaction in a multicultural world. This is particularly relevant in the world

today and has the potential to defuse global conflict through understanding the unfamiliar or otherwise potentially threatening.

While community building is supported in the very nature of the classroom environment, this lays the groundwork for the more challenging task of encouraging students to familiarize themselves with the other cultural and personal perspectives in the classroom. Therefore, ESL, specifically amidst the college campus environment, promotes and encourages peacebuilding at the grassroots level and can be used as a valuable tool for expanding peacebuilding on a global scale. Hence, we have the opportunity to use the ESL classroom as a space for peacebuilding and for integrating assignments, which ask students to communicate with one another and consider other cultures, through the use of storytelling. Friedman and Himmelstein, well-known names in the field of conflict and mediation, endorse the relationship between building connection and developing autonomy.

Therefore, the two support this study's claim that there is a relationship between the learner-centered storytelling ESL classroom and the field of peacebuilding. The concept of developing autonomy through connection and vice versa, particularly under the understandings-based approach, is one widely known in the field of mediation. They note, "in the understanding-based approach, autonomy is fullest in the context of connection, and connection is most honored when it allows and supports autonomy. The mediation principle of *working together* gives the possibility of both" (Friedman and Himmelstein). The ESL classroom is a space where instructors and students can begin using various storytelling genres to understand each other individually.

Therefore, though there is a significant amount of existing writing and theory

done on diverse language classrooms, my work will focus on Chinese and Latin American ESL students, who, in spite of coming from similar geographical contexts, have an abundance of personal and cultural differences to learn from one another. Furthermore, my intention is to highlight the ways in which students, though they come from diverse economic, cultural, and ideological contexts, have much in common as they face related, but diverse, challenges of engaging with a potentially unfamiliar teaching style. The objective of this study is to show how these commonalities can be realized and shared through narrative as an engine for relating.

For the purpose of this study, small-scale cultural differences at the grassroots level of the college campus can be acknowledged within cultures that are either geographically close or connected by language, such as cultures within China and Latin America. Building relationships at this level can be more broadly applied on a global scale, as students are learning how to engage with each other and with their instructor in a classroom that speaks the same language, while sharing both native language and second language, yet exhibiting varying cultural perspectives. Thus, their personal experiences are bound by the common goal of learning English.

This study, then, builds on prior research to analyze multidisciplinary narratives in the ESL classroom as a model for grassroots and global peacebuilding. Thus, it incorporates U.S. and Chinese ESL classroom activities as functions of understanding and sharing identity. One could argue that there is no need to promote peacebuilding in a classroom of only Chinese students or only Latin American students. However, it must be acknowledged that in each ESL classroom, there are individuals from various cultures, who encompass various identities. The purpose of this study is to teach students to

practice peacebuilding in the classroom and to developing peacebuilding skills through cultural understanding, communication, and the development of student autonomy. The objective is for students to then use their English language to become peace builders in the world. Thus, regardless of where the students are from, instructors have the opportunity to teach them structurally, about how to engage in a diverse world and how to pass that knowledge on to others.

English language today is taught for many different reasons. It is taught for the purpose of survival in order to function throughout societies around the world, to communicate when traveling between countries, and for many students studying English, it is a pathway to developing themselves professionally. However, no matter why a person is studying the language, it can help build a sense of appreciation for people of other cultures, which is also particularly relevant in the Chinese ESL classroom, as a way of defusing common stereotypes about China's many provinces. Therefore, the storytelling ESL classroom can help students understand themselves to then open themselves up to another culture.

In support of the ESL classroom as a microcosm for peacebuilding through literature and the arts, this study refers to Reardon, in her 1988 work on *Comprehensive Peace Education*, in which she discusses the notion of preparing for peace, rather than reacting to conflict (42). Reardon seeks to prepare students for peaceful dialogue by practicing it in the formal classroom setting, which is partly what this study seeks to achieve.

Reardon's work presents a number of intersecting qualities, which align with the foundation of the ESL classroom as a model for peacebuilding. While her work focuses

specifically on Peace Education itself, the essence of her study can be applied to the peacebuilding format, which is presented in this study. Reardon discusses the ways in which a student's capacity for peace must be nourished through connection, insight, and creativity (50-51). These are three fundamental components of literature and the arts in the ESL classroom, as byproducts of a culturally rich and communicative classroom. Therefore, Reardon's work supports the current study's claim that the classroom can become a microcosm for peace, by developing, through the use of insight and creative functions, connections among classmates and with their instructor, as well as between the classroom and the world. It is evident then that another of the 5 Cs—connection—is inherent here.

Similarly, in both Lederach's 1995 *Preparing for Peace* and his 1997 *Building Peace*, he too presents foundational qualities of peacebuilding, which support an unconventional peace model through storytelling genres. In his 1995 study, Lederach specifically turns to storytelling as a cultural resource for conflict training, noting several examples of global oral traditions and the wisdom that can be found in the stories themselves and in the community they create.

Throughout his 1997 study, Lederach notes the intimacy of conflict, an important element in understanding the functionality of peacebuilding ("Building Peace"). By the same token, he often refers to "relationship" as a core component to peacebuilding. His work is relevant for the purpose of the current study, as intimacy and relationship are two qualities inherent in the ESL classroom. Moreover, the two components must be understood as equally relevant to peacebuilding in order to merge peacebuilding and ESL into one entity. In support of merging the two, this study includes the work of Barnett,

Kim, O'Donnell, and Sitea, who illustrate the complexity of conflict and assert that as there are many causes of conflict, peacebuilding can also be understood and applied on a broad spectrum. In this study, Lederach returns back to the support of cultural resources, where he refers to traditional arts as a function of peacebuilding ("Building Peace" 95).

Similarly, Augsburger acknowledges the individuality of cultural history and the need to negotiate a "common reality" (Augsburger 11). He notes, "we bring to each situation differing- frequently contrasting- stories and must create together a single shared story with a role for each and for both" (11). Storytelling is a theme interwoven throughout peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Peacebuilding has also been considered in relevance to the ESL classroom, as seen in Jakar and Milofsky's *Bringing Peacebuilding into the English Language Classroom*, where they too engage in the intersectionality of storytelling and ESL (41). However, in their study, the scholars look specifically to conflict-ridden communities as well as Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) workshops for training and preparing instructors to understand and incorporate peacebuilding materials into their classrooms. Therefore, their work provides a framework for the current study and helps to inform the ways in which peacebuilding can be brought to the language classroom. However, the current study also reviews the ways in which peacebuilding can be taken from the classroom and brought into the world.

Storytelling has been established as a function of the peace process, as it is known to encompass culture, in its interconnection with language. In fact, Senehi equates storytelling to language. She notes, in regards to "constructive storytelling,"

Storytelling is language. Encompassing vocabulary, grammar rules, norms of communicative behavior, and narrative forms—language is society’s most complex symbolic system. As such, language encodes the culture of a particular community, including shared understandings of identity, power, history, values, and utopian visions. (Senehi 43)

This is also similar to Achebe’s *Language and the Destiny of Man*, an essay from “Hopes and Impediments,” which reviews the ways in which we have used language to share stories. In other words, language and storytelling, similar to peacebuilding and storytelling, are established as working in tandem with one another.

The “Storytelling genre” serves as an umbrella term that encompasses literature and the arts and their various functions. It is the overarching term that comprises numerous forms of storytelling, including, but not limited to, fairytale and folklore, auto-ethnography, scripting and acting, and art analyses. Storytelling, as Senehi uses it, is restricted to “a sub-type of narration—the relating of narratives in person, orally (or by singing), to an audience of at least one” (44). In other words, the terms “narrative,” “storytelling,” and “storytelling genre”, are interrelated and are, therefore, often used interchangeably in this study.

While storytelling is a sub-category of narration, it is also a term that encompasses other subcategories. This is further informed by Ashliman’s *Folk and Fairytales; A Handbook*, which also describes the relationship between storytelling, culture, and humanity. While I refer here to storytelling as a type of narrative, it also embodies several sub-types, such as fairytale, folklore, scripting, acting, and art analysis,

because each of these forms of narrative tells a story in one way or another. In fact, storytelling is defined by the *Oxford Dictionary* as “The activity of telling or writing stories,” a purpose that each of these subcategories serves. Therefore, throughout this study the terms “storytelling” and “narrative” are often used to describe each of the aforementioned subcategories of storytelling.

By means of each of these creative outlets, narrative in the ESL classroom sets the stage for students to cross cultural, ideological, and linguistic barriers. By presenting students with various outlets for communicating their stories, which construct their identities, students can develop understanding of themselves, their peers, and their instructor. In engaging with narrative, students engage with culture and language in a way that frees them from any predispositions. It allows students to be whomever they choose to be and to explore various learning styles in a classroom setting that by nature, encourages students to adopt a new sense of selfhood. By playing with language through storytelling genres, students have more flexibility to share who they are and where they come from in a non-threatening, non-intrusive way. Since the ESL classroom is inherently interactive, utilizing narrative in various ways at its very core, it is a prominent setting for students to cross cultural barriers without necessarily even realizing it. The instructor, as facilitator, encourages students to create narrative compositions, where they can engage intricacies in language learning as it relates to identity.

Storytelling genres are significant to promoting peacebuilding in the college-level ESL classroom. They are used globally to establish spaces where individuals from all walks of life come together to express their identities and build community. Similarly, the college-level ESL classroom is comprised of individuals from varying geographical

locations and cultural contexts. Hence, students bring with them to the classroom, their own identities, partly made up of their cultural heritage and experiences with culture.

Therefore, the ESL classroom is also a multicultural space, which can build community through storytelling genres, to break down cultural barriers. Storytelling, then, as is displayed in storytelling communities around the world, can help to develop classroom community and establish understanding among students and with their instructor to promote peace. Thus, by teaching students to communicate through storytelling genres and to share their own identities, while learning about their classmates and instructor, instructors can help to construct a peaceful dialogue among students, which they can use in the world once they leave the classroom.

The present study encompasses a broader view of the ways in which literature and the arts can be incorporated into the ESL classroom, in any global setting, as a means of promoting peaceful dialogue in the global community. While research is by no means limited to the aforementioned dialogue on language studies, storytelling, and peacebuilding, these are primary and secondary sources used in support of the current study. Each of these resources blends together in an interrelated perspective on literature and the arts in the ESL classroom.

In reference to the language scholars referred to in this review of literature, among several other voices, chapter one lays the historical and foundational framework for the subsequent chapters, which incorporate the aforementioned scholars and researchers, among other critical studies.

Chapter Overview

The following chapters examine how the college-level ESL classroom can serve as an environment for developing peacebuilding in the classroom in the twenty-first century. By reflecting on literature and the arts-based communities in the classroom, the ESL classroom can facilitate global cultural exchange and peace-oriented English language dialogue, resulting in the development of students engaging as global agents for peace. The chapters are intentionally established in this order as a means of gradually building the foundation for chapter four's integration of English language learning in its relation to peacebuilding. As an integrated whole, its chapters describe the relationship between language learning and community building as they relate to intercultural exchange. The opening chapter of the dissertation includes the introduction, a discussion of the research questions for the study, and a review of the research literature included in the study.

Chapter one explains the terminology used in the subsequent chapters and informs the literature and the arts-based curriculum explicated in chapter two. The chapter reviews the shifting trends in language teaching over the course of the twentieth century, and their influence in the twenty-first century ESL classroom, as a means of displaying the methodological influence in the literature and the arts-based classroom model. As such, the narrative evolves to sift through recognized language trends, such as the Audiolingual Method and the Grammar Translation Method, to then illuminate the outstanding, Communicative Language Theory, Task-based Language Teaching, and the Whole-Person Model. In doing so, the chapter illustrates their collective contribution to a humanities based classroom model of instruction, such as that of the literature and the

arts-based classroom. The chapter also illuminates the necessity of ACTFL's 5 Cs (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Community) in language teaching, to indicate their inclusion and significance in the literature and the arts-based classroom as an integrated whole.

As this is so, chapter one also uses the aforementioned language trends to provide the historical context to validate the incorporation of communication and culture in the classroom. In doing so, the chapter explores the various definitions of "culture" so as to describe its influence on communication and, therefore, community, in the ESL classroom. These definitions also illuminate the ongoing debate around the term "culture" and the teaching of culture in the ESL classroom, which must be recognized, as the term is paramount to this project. As the study describes these influences for the literature and the arts-based classroom, the curriculum explanation in chapter two is grounded in relevance to the field of language acquisition.

Chapter two serves primarily as an explanation and guide for the curriculum through the incorporation of scholarly support of the curriculum models presented in chapter three. Its principal purpose is to help instructors better understand how to deal with intercultural communication and any misunderstandings that may arise from it. In order to explain examples of intercultural interactions, the chapter defines and illuminates the many layers of identity and the varying learning styles of students present in the classroom community. In doing so, it also provides a detailed description of students, both in the Chinese ESL classroom and in the U.S. ESL classroom. In addition, chapter two makes a connection between the functions of identity in the classroom and the many intercultural interactions described in the lessons presented in chapter three. The chapter

also further explains the role of confidence building and student autonomy in the language classroom.

This chapter then presents a philosophy of a literature and the arts-based classroom, with an emphasis on storytelling, which is meant to bridge the intercultural interactions of the students. Finally, chapters one and two, together, then, establish the cultural and linguistic foundation for the curriculum models displayed in chapter three, and the connections made between the learner-centered ESL classroom, storytelling, and peacebuilding, shown in chapter four.

Chapter three describes the college-level ESL classroom setting in China and in the U.S. and presents an array of lessons that represent the curriculum of a learner-centered classroom that focuses on intercultural interactions. It establishes that these activities are suitable for an intermediate to high-intermediate level classroom, as well as for a high-beginner level classroom, and describes the ways in which the classroom prepares students for constructing the skills for critical thinking and critical analysis necessary for the activities.

The chapter displays how literature and the arts can be used in the ESL classroom and provides a classroom model for this peacebuilding method, including instructor guides and explanations for the activities. Within these explanations are integrated classroom experiences from the instructor's perspective, so as to prepare instructors using these curriculum models, for their intercultural interactions, which occur in the classroom. The chapter then acknowledges the criticality of assessment and explains the ways in which assessment is incorporated in a literature and the arts-based curriculum. Furthermore, it echoes the ways in which the curriculum provides the classroom with the

tools for peacebuilding, mentioned later in chapter four. Chapter four, then, describes how storytelling genres through literature and the arts help to develop a peacebuilding model in the classroom.

Chapter four describes the ways in which the literature and the arts-based classroom grows peace-oriented leaders for the global community. It displays this by establishing a range of definitions, which encompass peacebuilding concepts. In sifting through the various definitions, the chapter ultimately ascertains that “peacebuilding,” as it is used in this study, refers to an effort on the “far side of conflict” to reconstruct the foundations of peace and to provide tools for “building on those foundations” (Barnett, Kim, O’Donnell, and Sitea 42).

The chapter, then, explains that the literature and the arts-based model serves as the reconstruction of that foundation. In this case, the foundation is the ESL classroom. The tools provided for building on the foundation are the various storytelling methods incorporated in the classroom. The chapter then goes on to highlight the importance of language and how language and culture are facilitated through the classroom community, established through the storytelling genre. This bridges the connection between storytelling, language learning, and community. The chapter reflects the ways in which storytelling encourages classroom community and cultural exchange. This exchange is shown, also, to assist in developing active listening skills, communication skills, pronunciation skills, interpretation skills, and vocabulary expansion, while further supporting the various learning styles in the classroom and developing student autonomy. Finally, the chapter describes the ways in which storytelling, peacebuilding, and language

learning mirror one another to rebuild a foundation for peace amongst the lives of the English language learners.

Chapter One

Foundations of Culture and Language Teaching

This chapter provides an overview of teaching trends in language teaching over the course of the twentieth century and their influence in the twenty-first century ESL classroom. Included is discussion of the effectiveness of Communicative Language Theory, Task-based Language Teaching, and the Whole-Person Model, when used in combination with one another. This combination can be understood through this chapter's illustration of the humanities as a mirror for an integrated curriculum. It then serves as the foundation for a literature and the arts-based classroom model.

This discussion of the chapter also engages the ongoing debate around the term culture and defines culture as it is used in this study. This definition helps to encourage the teaching of culture, as the language classroom attempts to become an empowering community. As this is so, the chapter establishes the ongoing debate on the teaching of culture in the language classroom and attempts to weaken the resistance against the teaching of culture, by highlighting its benefits for language learning. It also offers the option for the facilitation of intercultural exchange in the classroom, as opposed to simply teaching or not teaching culture. This is ultimately a means of supporting the ESL classroom's facility in producing cultural fluency in a pluralistic global society.

In addition to this discussion, a secondary purpose of this chapter, then, is to describe the position of the 5 Cs, as proposed by ACTFL, as an integrated whole, at the core of effective language instruction, so as to mirror their position in the literature and the arts-based model. This chapter, then, in its illumination of the 5 Cs, Communicative

Language Theory, Task-based Language Theory, and the Whole-Person Model, serves to validate the establishment of a humanities influenced, student-centered, literature and the arts-based classroom model. In its integration of these various teaching methods, this classroom model can motivate students through a variety of learning techniques.

The history of language teaching highlights the shifts in teaching trends over the past several decades. In a review of these historical trends, one observes that various components of language teaching have been taught singularly throughout the years. However, in the 1990s, The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), presented five core components of language teaching, better known as the 5 Cs (communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities), all of which have been defined as integrated, overarching objectives in the language classroom. The 5 Cs, then, are established as necessary in working together with the development of the language skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing, and pronunciation, in an ongoing fashion in the language learning classroom. Despite this assertion, there still exists a somewhat reluctant acceptance of culture as a key component to language learning. By extension, current debates in language teaching still argue that the teaching of culture is a distraction in the language classroom, and should, therefore, be omitted from classroom instruction, as is depicted by Lange and Paige in chapter two. To put it succinctly, these debates, then, argue against ACTFL's 5 Cs initiative, as its components are intended as an integrated whole at the core of language instruction. In other words, "culture" cannot be removed from the 5 Cs, as none of its components are intended to stand alone. In fact, as also noted in chapter two, Dema and Moeller acknowledge that some would still argue to maintain a primary focus on grammar and vocabulary, which has proven ineffective

when used singularly.

This chapter attempts to preserve and promote the integration of the 5 Cs in the language classroom, particularly to highlight the inseparability of culture, and, therefore, the need for community, in the language classroom. So too, it endorses a cooperative and productive learning environment, as well as a communicative style of language learning, focusing on the combination of the 5 Cs, in congruence with historical language teaching trends to illustrate the merit in pre-existing methods of language teaching when combined together. As we continue to search for new innovative ways of teaching, we often return back to old models.

However, by depicting the changing current in language teaching trends, this chapter demonstrates how history repeats itself and how this repetition can be substituted by an integration of the 5 Cs in the second language classroom through storytelling genres, in contrast to continuing to reinvent the wheel. Next, this chapter reviews these shifting trends as a means of portraying the need for continuing to integrate communication and culture in the ESL classroom. Since communication is also interconnected with the other four of the 5 Cs, this further endorses the notion that the 5 Cs must work as a whole at the core of language instruction. Through this integration, it is possible to develop a classroom which functions through peacebuilding, in order to teach students how to properly interact with cultures and individuals from around the world, while effectively honing their English language skills.

In the same way, this chapter also points to the shifting currents in language teaching over time, and how its ever-changing nature from one method to another, has shed light on these five core values, by displaying a need for something more. In doing

so, this chapter points out the progression of historical trends, as a way of noting the concept of integrating the 5 Cs. Though it is difficult to believe in this day and age, the 5 Cs were not always part of the discussion at the core of language instruction. As a result, this chapter further highlights the reality of the current debate on teaching culture in the classroom. The chapter also discusses how the 5 Cs support a classroom methodology that encourages interdisciplinary instruction, incorporating aspects of Charles Curran's Whole-Person Model of communicative language teaching, and how changing demographics of learners has contributed to placing emphasis on teaching culture in the language classroom.

One must note that scholars and instructors are constantly searching for new and innovative ways to increase the level of student engagement in the classroom, which is partly why trends have consistently fluctuated over the years. This, however, can be achieved through a curriculum that supports the multiple learning styles present in a classroom environment. This way, students' learning needs are addressed, while correspondingly increasing their enthusiasm for classroom engagement. Storytelling through literature and the arts offers a peace-oriented, multifaceted teaching method, accessible to these various learning styles, in order to stimulate motivation and confidence, and, therefore, engender language development and peace-oriented dialogue.

As is widely known, students exhibit "multiple intelligences" and the classroom poses the challenge of acknowledging them all, insofar as it is instructionally possible. Regardless of the way students learn, it is estimated that for "25 percent of the population, the mode of instruction does make a difference in their success as learners" (Larsen-Freeman 169). Undoubtedly, thoughtful pedagogy matters. In fact, the

psychologist Howard Gardner has depicted seven “distinct intelligences that can be developed over time” (Larsen-Freeman 169). These intelligences include logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, bodily/kinesthetic, musical/rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and verbal/linguistic. According to Larsen-Freeman, logical learners have a strong ability to reason and work with abstract patterns. They are skilled in activities such as sequential presentations, games, and categorizations. Visual learners have the ability to create mental images and orient themselves in their environment. These learners work well with activities that incorporate videos or drawing. Kinesthetic learners use their bodies for self-expression and problem solving, and enjoy hands-on activities, field trips, and pantomime. Musical learners have the ability to recognize rhythm, pitch and melody, and prefer singing and playing music. Interpersonal students are in tuned with other’s emotions and intentions and are apt to enjoy pair work, project work, and group problem-solving, while intrapersonal learners display self-discipline and the ability to understand themselves. They work well by self-evaluating and journal keeping. Finally, linguistic learners are capable of using language effectively and creatively. They prefer to take notes, tell stories, and engage in debate (Larsen-Freeman 170). Each of these learning styles must be acknowledged and generously integrated in the classroom to achieve optimum learning results.

Instructors often look beyond past research in order to initiate a more effective classroom environment. This can be inconsistent with the teaching profession, itself, as a field of repetition, particularly in the realm of second language teaching in 2018. When we seek ideas for lesson plans or creative activities, we often refer to the internet or consult with other instructors. When we give a lecture, we pass on information gathered

from our professors in college and from research we collect on the subject. Thus, it seems intrinsic that as instructors, we would look to the past teaching trends for guidance on how we can become better.

However, when it comes to language teaching, there are some who would argue that there is a lack of knowledge around the historical trends that help to define our field; therefore, trends continue to be both reinvented under various titles and reused when demonstrated as being ineffective. In other words, "...very few language teachers have even the vaguest sense of history about their profession and are unclear concerning the historical bases of the many methodological options they currently have at their disposal" (Celce-Murcia 3). In short, according to Celce-Murcia, it is uncommon that language teachers are well versed in the historical relevance of the field, thus lacking the knowledge of which methodological options are available to them. Knowing the "story" that comprises the field of language teaching, then, is critical for instructors, in the same way that understanding various cultural perspectives is essential for peacebuilders. In other words, by gathering fundamental information relevant to these fields, based on varying perspectives, instructors and peacebuilders are equipped to make educated decisions on their instructional or methodological strategies.

Regardless, however, we continue to return to many of the same models, even without having any prior knowledge of them, because we innately understand their importance. Yet, something has been missing. The trends that continue to come full circle have until recently been viewed as new initiatives, while researchers spin their wheels to find the best possible methods for the language classroom. However, each trend that has appeared in the history of language teaching holds value in the language classroom and is

necessary for producing a well-rounded and effective learning environment. By looking at the trends in language teaching history, it becomes evident that they are meant to work together in combination with one another and with the integration of the 5 Cs, as proposed by ACTFL, to provide students with an all-inclusive language learning experience.

This chapter continues by briefly reviewing the history of language teaching trends and their evolution from pure translation and audio-lingual methods to the integration of skills, reading, writing and speaking, to current reasons of economics, business, culture, travel, and survival. The chapter then emphasizes the significance of psychology and sociology as both are integrated in language teaching without exception, from audiolingual method to the Whole-Person Model. Language teaching has displayed its relevance throughout history, originally as a measure of status and scholarship, and eventually as a necessity for survival and cultural competence.

Finally, this chapter will consider the contributions and challenges to the implementation of English as a Second Language and its influence across the globe today. In addition, there is displayed an assessment of specific language teaching trends as a mirror for effective ESL classroom pedagogy, encompassed by student-centered learning. These trends primarily include Communicative Language Theory, Task-based Language Teaching, the Whole-Person Model, and the 5 Cs, upon which storytelling and peacebuilding necessarily rely.

For the purpose of this study, it is critical to understand the history of language teaching as it relates to psychology, sociology, culture, and the widespread use of English today. This understanding serves to further support the study's acknowledgment of the

whole student in their learning process, and in the peacebuilding resource present in the expansion of global English. Now, more than ever, instructors have, as I would argue, an obligation to blend various teaching methods and theories in the college-level ESL classroom, with the 5 Cs at the core of instruction, not only as an effective teaching strategy, but also as a medium for encouraging students to learn about their classmates' culture and identity to promote respectful interaction. Before examining these historical trends, however, it is necessary to first define the term, culture, and address the ways in which it is used in this study, that is, as a principal component of intercultural communication that serves as a primary function in explaining the literature and the arts-based model.

The ways in which culture is a focus of the 5 Cs and the ways that “culture” is used to describe classroom pedagogy throughout the study, have distinct understandings. When discussing the 5 Cs, the term, culture, is in reference to the culture of the language being taught. The study also uses the term, however, when referencing the culture of the learner. As such, it is critical to note this distinction, since this study describes the intercultural interactions involving the teacher, the subject, and the students, meaning the interaction between the culture of the language being taught and the cultures of the learners, as well as among students, meaning the interactions among the cultures of the learners.

Teaching and Facilitating Culture in the Language Classroom

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) strongly

endorses the teaching of culture in the language classroom, as outlined in the framework of the integrated methodology of the 5 Cs. Hence, the teaching of culture has already been established under these standards. One of their many articles on the teaching of culture released a statement indicating that it is the duty of language instructors to educate students for a multicultural world. It is stated, “Language and communication are at the heart of the human experience” (“National Standards for Foreign Language Learning—ACTFL”). ACTFL also notes, “The United States must educate students who are linguistically and culturally equipped to communicate successfully in a pluralistic American society and abroad” (“National Standards for Foreign Language Learning—ACTFL”). I would add, however, that this is not limited to the United States classroom and that it is the duty of language teachers across the globe, and particularly ESL instructors at the university level, as university ESL programs continue to expand globally, to prepare students for such a pluralistic world. Again, as is discussed in chapter one, though grammar and vocabulary are important components of the language-learning experience, culture and community are truly at the forefront of language learning. As this is so, “the true content of the foreign language course is not the grammar and the vocabulary of the language, but the cultures expressed through that language” (Dema and Moeller 77). Specifically, when students leave the classroom they are able to use the language in practical situations to express their own identity, with cultural competence for understanding the “other.”

While extensively using the word “culture,” it is important to note that the use of the term is a widely contrasted issue. In another words, one must acknowledge the ongoing debate around the term itself. While I am aware that this term is often

considered weightless and vague, I provide multiple definitions to explain its purpose and validity in this study. These definitions and the use of the term in this study are influenced by a perspective on culture as fluid, and as, “ever changing as opposed to stable” (Sommier 2). “Culture” has been redefined several times, as the term is frequently used across various fields of study, and, unequivocally, encompasses several layers. “Culture is a concept that has been discussed extensively, giving rise to multiple approaches and uses of the term across fields of study”(2). Given the extensively broad nature of the concept of culture with its many subcategories, it would be a severe disservice to this discussion to ignore or downplay this tenet.

Scholars frequently have questioned the use of the term, culture, as it has been both criticized and seen as fashionable, and thus more widely used. As such, the term can become obscure or confusing when used in conversation or in writing if its meaning in context is not fully explained. There are many uses of the term, as well as several different definitions, which range from the all-encompassing “culture” as interchangeable with “nation” or culture as a descriptive term for the many sub-cultures that exist within a nation, including popular culture and ethnicity.

However, agreement has not yet been made on what would be more appropriate in replacing the concept. So, with this in mind there is also a “lack of convergence on how to revise it or what to use instead” (Sommier 2). It can be said, then, that rather than attempting to alter the term itself, it is critical to recognize it as an umbrella term, under which many explanations, definitions, and usages are encompassed. As such, it is also crucial to acknowledge its many definitions and usages across the numerous fields and

conversational dialogue in which it is relevant, and in doing so, to choose an appropriate definition for each study in which it is used.

In a study on second language learning, which leans heavily on the use of the term culture, particularly in a classroom, which promotes cultural dialogue, it is critical to provide varying definitions of the term. Culture can be defined in many different ways and for the purposes of several different studies. For instance, scholars such as Kramsch, whose research focuses on multilingual subjects and on culture in language teaching, Pennycook, who specializes in cultural politics, and Judd, whose research emphasis is on cross-cultural communication, characterize culture in three separate ways.

Judd determines that “Culture can be defined as a system of shared objects, activities and beliefs of a given group of people” (Nunan and Choi 3). As Judd observes culture from a cross-cultural, communicative standpoint, this definition aligns with his field of study, and, therefore, it is specific to his work. In other words, he emphasizes the terms “shared” and “group,” meaning that from his standpoint, culture is the means of exchanging beliefs. As for Kramsch, culture is “The membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, and acting” (Nunan and Choi 3). From here, Kramsch defines culture as validation that an individual is a part of a certain group.

Correspondingly, the term “membership” is critical here. Pennycook adds that culture is “The process by which people make sense of their lives, a process always involved in struggles over meaning and representation” (Nunan and Choi 3). To emphasize, according to Pennycook, culture is a “process” rather than a specific entity. Each of these definitions help to explain the use of the term culture in the second

language classroom. This is to say that in the classroom students exchange beliefs and carry with them their cultural membership and their experiences in the process of acquiring their cultural membership and belief system. Each of these components is to be shared in the ESL learning environment.

Then, and according to the aforementioned definitions of culture, culture is essentially an external component of identity, which is further discussed in this chapter, and the two are, thus, interrelated; however each expresses its own complex multilayered entity. Understanding this notion helps to explain students' personal and cultural experiences, which they bring to the classroom. In reviewing the many disciplines, which incorporate the use of the term, culture, along with many definitions, this study turns to the University of Minnesota's Center for Advanced Research and Language Acquisition, known as CARLA. Two symposia were held at CARLA, in 1991 and 1994, entitled, "Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Culture Learning in the Second Language Curriculum" (Lange and Paige xi). This provided a space for exchanging interdisciplinary notions about the teaching of culture.

These conferences offered "a forum in which to examine the contributions of a variety of fields in the humanities and social sciences to the teaching and learning of culture in the second language classroom" (Lange and Paige xi), which, evidently, was also the beginning of the conversation that led to the selection of "connections" as a value in the 5 Cs. The forum included studies from a number of scholars in various fields in the humanities and social sciences, such as sociolinguistics, intercultural communication, anthropology, textual culture, and second languages, noting how various concepts "could be applied to second language learning and teaching in the context of the high school and

college classroom” (Lange and Paige xii). Therefore, these concepts were presented as a contribution to the teaching of culture in the classroom.

From the sociolinguistic perspective, “students should be helped to understand the native speaker’s communicative intentions, but should not be expected to behave in a native-like manner” (Lange and Paige xii). In other words, sociolinguists suggest that in the teaching of culture, instructors should help students to understand the meaning behind communication, without fully expecting students to adopt native qualities (Lange and Paige xii). The corresponding implications to this study are unambiguous. To rephrase it, in teaching the target language culture, the objective is not to wipe out students’ native cultures, but to help them to understand the culture being taught, by understanding their own culture and their classmates’ cultural associations. As such, culture teaching should focus on developing general sociolinguistic competence and social awareness across cultures” (Lange and Paige xii). This way, students are developing cultural competence without sacrificing any part of their own culture. Thus, the field of intercultural communication can assist instructors in understanding how to conduct cultural exchange in the second language classroom.

While communication can pose misunderstandings in the classroom, as is shown in chapter three, “the “field of intercultural communication can provide guidance for curriculum organizers and classroom teachers in overcoming some of these difficulties” (Lange and Paige xii). As such, intercultural communication can shed light on effective interaction, through a culturally competent classroom setting. This, then, becomes reflective once students leave the classroom and face challenges in the world, as is also demonstrated in chapter three. From the field of intercultural communication we can see

the notion “that communication and culture are interdependent and that the concept of intercultural communication competence can help bridge the conceptual gap between language educators and interculturalists” (Lange and Paige xii). Thus, communication and culture are intertwined as is reflective in the 5 Cs. For this reason, a communicative classroom, which encourages the sharing of culture, assists in bridging this “conceptual gap,” as well.

Finally, the anthropological perspective “advocates for the use of discourse analysis to facilitate an understanding of the subtleties of language and culture” (Lange and Paige xii). As there is much to “read between the lines,” in cultural exchange, the storytelling classroom provides instructors with subtle analysis of language discourse, by observing the way in which students use their developed cultural competence to interact. As such, the classroom models the subtle language and cultural interactions, which occur in the world.

In accordance with multidisciplinary studies of culture in the classroom, our own understanding of culture directly influences our teaching. However, we can approach the teaching of culture from a variety of angles. This could mean simply maintaining the essence and understanding of various fields in the humanities while we encourage students to explore alternative ways of thinking and learning, as is accomplished in the literature and the arts-based ESL classroom.

While each of these aspects of culture stems from its corresponding definitions, language instructors can be deterred from teaching culture in the classroom when presented with the decision of determining which aspects or definitions of culture to use. In other words, “The lack of an overarching definition presents foreign language teachers

with the challenge of determining which components or segments of the target culture should be taught” (Dema and Moeller 77). While I would argue that this is not always the case, as this study determines how they can be combined, it could certainly discourage second language instructors from teaching culture altogether. But, if we expand our thinking about the teaching of culture and what it means, we free up the classroom environment to operate in a way that reflects students’ interactions in their respective societies, as well as in communities beyond the local community. Rather than attempting to teach particular facets of culture or trying to cover all areas of a culture, it is possible to think of culture teaching as facilitating individuality and interaction through relevant cultural experience. Moreover, this experience can be applied to their interactions outside of the classroom.

Accordingly, we must attempt to teach the cultural aspects of the target language, as recommended by ACTFL, in order to ground students in the subject and to prepare them for the world outside of the classroom where they will engage their English language in practical usage. Through combining the students’ understanding of their own culture with their learning of the target language culture, they can apply their personal cultural understanding comparatively with the target culture. Nevertheless, by sharing and thinking about their culture, students can better understand the target culture, particularly by finding commonality or familiar cultural examples represented in their own culture. By supporting students’ individuality through the teaching of both the target culture as well as the engagement with the many cultures in the classroom, we are reminded of why we teach culture in the first place, that is, to maintain and highlight individuality in a pluralistic world. Individuality is encouraged in a literature and the arts-

based classroom model, as students are asked to display their personal perspectives of various types of stories, through various modes of storytelling. It is critical that students are presented with this opportunity in order to facilitate cultural exchange in a way that highlights individuality, so as to defuse stereotyping and instill confidence in students.

That being said, it is critical to emphasize that individuals belong to several cultures, which assist in determining individuality and identity. Hence, “as individuals we belong simultaneously to multiple cultures and sub-cultures” (Nunan and Choi 3). Consequently, we are not confined to any one aspect of a culture. There is a common association with culture and nation and an ongoing dialogue about its ambiguity. This does not come as a surprise, as culture cannot simply be defined by a nation or by any single definition, which might diminish one’s individuality.

In reducing culture to that which can be associated, at times, with a particular nation, this assumption can convey a “homogeneous and reduced picture of culture” (Sommier 6). Therefore, culture cannot be thoroughly studied as an all-encompassing national identity. Being that most nations are multicultural, when attempting to define culture by a nation, individuality that exists within the nation is lost. Hence, “studies that use nation as the unit of reference to talk about culture, language and identity tend to homogenize national cultures and therefore, increase chances of being stereotypical instead of deconstructing stereotypes” (Sommier 6). In other words, this incomplete use of the term, culture, reverses the effect of its intention, therefore perpetuating stereotypes rather than deconstructing them.

For the purpose of this particular study, I have chosen to use the more broadly defined notion of culture as a connecting force between all aspects of a society. Since,

“‘culture’ includes tangible and intangible aspects of the society, it binds the members of that community and functions as a ‘glue’” (Yesil and Demiröz 80). These “tangible” and “intangible” aspects can be thought of in terms of the 3 Ps explained by ACTFL’s language educator as products, practices, and perspectives (Alan 27). This definition positions culture as the all-encompassing link that binds a community. The ESL classroom then, is where we have the opportunity to alleviate any hostility or fear of identity coming unglued in the face of second language learning and exposure to a new culture, particularly when learning a global language such as English. The classroom can offer an inherent dynamic in support of peace-oriented dialogue, in that it can encourage student openness to the “other” through engagement with the “other,” as students must translate between self and “other” through that engagement. Teaching and learning, then, must occur in a way that utilizes the classroom’s inherent interactive dynamic, in order to realize the classroom’s potential to contribute to peacebuilding. One can note, then, that the ESL classroom is a place that can encourage students to allow themselves to come unglued, in order to be patched back together with a newly defined sense of selfhood.

This ungluing of self is not meant to compromise the old model, but rather, to enhance it by building on what was already there. For example, in a study undertaken by Yesil and Demiröz, on the place of culture in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, “participants stated that the target language culture should be addressed in a systematic way without overshadowing the locus of native culture” (87). They note that the teacher’s role is to help students understand the target language culture without unintentionally demeaning native cultures. In so doing, students “form a positive understanding about the foreign language and the community in which it is spoken

without denigrating the importance of native culture” (Yesil and Demiröz 88) of the students. Thus, the literature and the arts-based classroom reinforces this concept by encouraging communication through all cultural perspectives in the classroom.

The concept of teaching culture in the language classroom, however, has been refuted, as some would argue that its complexity makes the teaching of culture impractical. For instance, Lee and VanPatten, authors of the textbook, *Making Communicative Language Teaching Happen*, agree that foreign language students need to develop cultural competence in order to communicate appropriately (Lee and VanPatten 4). However, the two suggest that the classroom is not a suitable setting in which this should occur. They note that the “classroom cannot duplicate the multiple cultural contexts that native speakers live and work in on a day-to-day basis” (VanPatten 5). That is, the classroom is a “Fixed context, devoid of native-speaker cultural behavior” (Lee and VanPatten 5). This is not possible, however, as the native-speaker’s cultural behavior is intertwined in the fabric of his or her identity. Moreover, as self-expression is at the core of effective language teaching, and that expression can be encouraged through the literature and the arts-based classroom, then the classroom can in fact, teach students about various types of cultural interactions.

Therefore, the two cannot become separate, whether in the classroom setting or not. The authors then go on to note that the most appropriate way to develop cultural competence is by living in the target language culture. It is stated, “The best way to develop culturally appropriate behavior of any sort is to live and work in the culture in question—and to keep one’s eyes open and ask lots of questions” (Lee and VanPatten 5).

While living in a new culture is certainly a *component* of enhancing language and

intercultural understanding, it is not then, a matter of the “best way to develop culturally appropriate behavior.” Rather, living and working in the culture is one way to enhance cultural understanding. In other words, living in a culture helps to construct a component of the individual’s entire cultural understanding, and, thus, there is an opportunity in the ESL environment to encourage communication in “culturally appropriate ways,” to prepare students for real world engagement, inside and outside of the classroom through their use of English. Therefore, by arguing that a student cannot learn culturally appropriate behavior in the classroom alone, and that a culture is best to be learned in the real world, we are missing a valuable component of the discussion. That is, learning in the classroom and beyond the classroom can work together in the development of the whole person in terms of their language learning, as well as their cultural competence.

We can then turn our gaze back to the humanities-based ESL classroom. In particular when influenced by a combination of the communicative approach, interactive approaches, and the Whole-Person Model, the classroom can serve as a foundation for learning how to engage with individuals from multiple cultures, while learning the language and the target culture. This, then, provides students with practice before embracing the increasingly English-speaking world beyond the classroom. In other words, values from a variety of different language teaching methodologies can be used in combination with one another to promote learning about the culture of the language being taught in the classroom.

As instructors, we may not be able to teach *specific* culturally appropriate behavior, but we can use the classroom to function as a model for how to engage appropriately in other countries, cultures, or in the diverse world within and beyond the

classroom. By learning about new cultures, both of their classmates and English-speaking teacher, students have the opportunity to open themselves up to the notion that there is some merit in other ways of thinking. As such, instructors need to acknowledge that students will not learn everything they need to know about varying cultures in the language classroom, but rather, their awareness and objectivity will be heightened in preparation of interacting in the world beyond the classroom. The engaged and interactive classroom can also suggest to students that there is a continuing need for interaction in order to further their language learning.

However, if students are learning about culture on a global scale, being that the United States is increasingly a multicultural nation, and being that English is, in fact, a global language, then it is critical for students to learn how to effectively and appropriately use the language to connect with and relate to, or at least try to understand, those around them, both within and beyond the borders of the United States. This is particularly relevant in the multicultural classroom of the United States, but also in ESL classrooms across the globe.

Discourse on cross-cultural awareness in the language classroom has progressively become more prominent. However, regardless of this increased awareness of cultural competence in the second language setting, resistance remains against the teaching of culture in the language classroom. As this is unfortunately the case, there is still relevant need for establishing its importance in the language classroom. In other words, “In spite of these prominent studies in the field, there [exists] a great need for additional studies touching upon the intertwined connection between language and culture” (Yesil and Demiröz 80). There is a history of controversy on the subject, as

scholars noted by Valdes' 1986 study, such as Franz Boas, Edward Sapir, Benjamin Lee Whorf, and Harry Hoijer, have sought to establish whether language or culture is more important in communication.

In fact, Valdes' study affirms, "The extent to which language, culture, and thought have influenced one another, and which is the dominant aspect of communication, have been matters of controversy for three quarters of a century" (1). While this argument disregards the possibility that language and culture may be equally significant in communication, more recent debates still persist in seeking the answer. Moreover, the current debate includes multiple reasons for the resistance of culture inclusion in the language classroom. In one sense, culture is complex, and instructors do not know how to approach the teaching of the concept. Additionally, teachers argue that culture distracts from language learning. Finally, it pushes learners outside of their comfort levels. The detailed arguments are as follows:

- (1) Culture is complex and elusive, incorporating as it does, elements such as attitudes, beliefs, ideologies, perceptions, ways of behaving and thinking, and values. These elements cannot be included in language programs in the linear and objective instructional formats that have traditionally been employed.
- (2) Many teachers say: 'Culture is not a language, so why should we have to deal with it and its complexities? It takes away from the needed focus on language and communication.'
- (3) Any discussion of cultural differences could cause language learners to change their own ways of thinking and behaving. In other words, culture takes the learning experience far beyond the realm of comfort, experience, and interest of both teacher and the

learner. (Lange and Paige x)

Each of these arguments deter the teaching of culture in the classroom, and therefore contribute to “the diminished position of culture in the language classroom” (Lange and Paige x). These arguments contradict the perspective of creating a culturally rich language-learning environment and beg several questions. For one, are not these elements already prevalent in the ESL classroom? Should we still be aiming for traditional instructional formats, or should we attempt to incorporate unconventional classroom structures? Can culture truly take away from language and communication and if so, is avoidance the answer? And finally, are we actually pushing students outside of their comfort levels, or in exposing them to the unfamiliar, are we expanding their comfort levels?

While Curran’s Counseling-Learning model encourages the comfort of the student through a positive learning environment, and while I agree with this assertion, it is also possible to create a comfortable classroom environment, which challenges students to access a higher level of language achievement by familiarizing them with new ideas and opinions. Therefore, the debates around the teaching of culture persist, posing a threat to its position in the language classroom. Hence, “the debate about the role of culture in the language classroom refuses to go away; for 50 plus years it has been a topic of discussion in the language education field” (Lange and Paige x); however, through language instruction, that is, teaching of the culture of the language and all it encompasses, especially as presented through ACTFL, its role has been encouraged and endorsed.

For example, “a study conducted [in 2006] by Moore, found that at least 80% of the teachers surveyed indicated they were teaching culture more than half of their instructional time” (Dema and Moeller 77). This statistic provides hope for the position of the teaching of culture in the language classroom.

However, regardless of instructional methods, cultural elements are inevitably embedded in the classroom. In other words, regardless of our conscious efforts to incorporate culture in the classroom, it inevitably exists and influences the interactions, that occur in the classroom. For instance, it is noted, “Even without our being consciously aware of it, culture determines how we think, believe, and behave, and these, in turn, affect how we teach and learn” (Gay 9).

For instance, an ESL instructor from the United States has the opportunity to act as an ambassador for the U.S., representing the country in a positive light. Thus, language education is a practice of representing our social and cultural associations. In fact, in reference to sociocultural theory, “There is no escaping the fact that education is a sociocultural process” (Pai, Adler, and Shadiow 6), which would explain why the theory is still prominently used in classroom methodologies today. Let us illuminate, then, the role of culture in life outside of the classroom, which helps us to understand education on a humanistic level. In other words, “a critical examination of the role of culture in human life is indispensable to the understanding and control of educative processes” (Pai, Adler, and Shadiow 6). Therefore, culture inescapably exists in the fiber of the language classroom, and there is an explanation:

Teachers carry into the classroom their own personal cultural background. They perceive students, all of whom are cultural agents, with their own cultural

perspective. Students likewise come to school with personal cultural backgrounds that influence their perceptions of teachers, other students, and the school itself. Together students and teachers construct, mostly without being conscious of doing it, an environment of meanings enacted in individual and group behaviors, of conflict and accommodation, rejection and acceptance, alienation and withdrawal. (Pai, Adler, and Shadiow xii)

Therefore, through the teaching of culture there is an opportunity to shed light on meanings associated with interaction to ensure that the environment supports comfort and confidence in students. There is no denying the presence of culture in the second language classroom, and its very presence is reason enough to acknowledge and use it for the benefit of the classroom community and communities at large. Each argument against the teaching of culture returns back to the challenge of defining the term, and, hence, not knowing how to apply it in the classroom. Therefore, we turn to yet another perspective of culture teaching in the classroom, as follows:

In a sense, everything in education relates to culture—to its acquisition, its transmission, and its invention. Culture is in us and all around us, just as the air we breathe. In its scope and distribution it is personal, familial, communal, institutional, societal, and global. Yet, culture as a notion is often difficult to grasp. As we learn and use culture in daily life, it becomes habitual. Our habits become for the most part transparent to us. Thus, culture shifts inside and outside our reflective awareness. We do not think much about the structure and characteristics of culture as we use it, just as

we do not think reflectively about any further tool in the midst of its use.

(Gay 10)

Again, we see here how culture and the classroom are inseparable. However, instructors become stuck in defining how to apply it. Though, when teaching the target culture in the classroom and exchanging cultural stories among students and between the teacher and students, these cultural undertones are brought to light. In fact, language has been described as a “vehicle to transmit the ideological system” (Nieto and Zoller Booth 408).

Teachers, then, must evaluate their own cultural perceptions, as well as misconceptions and predispositions before entering the classroom. In other words, “Teachers need to know how to examine their own cultural assumptions to understand how these shape their starting points for practice. They also need to know how to inquire into the backgrounds of their students so that they can connect what they learn to their instructional decision making, in a sense becoming anthropologists who explicitly seek to understand their students’ cultural practices” (Darling-Hammond and Bransford 243). Hence, as noted, teachers can and should make it part of their responsibility to first evaluate and understand their own ideologies, to then understand their students.

The storytelling classroom makes it more accessible to learn about the self and about all classroom members. In other words, it is a self-sustaining system, which makes it easy for the instructor to apply. In understanding the many identities in the classroom, teachers model culturally appropriate behavior and teach students to think beyond their initial judgments, to break down barriers that impede the classroom community.

Therefore, “Teachers’ attitudes and expectations, as well as their knowledge of how to incorporate the cultures, experiences, and needs of their students into their teaching, significantly influence what students learn and the quality of their learning opportunities” (Darling-Hammond and Bransford 243). That being said, the instructor’s cultural competence has as much to do with building classroom community as it does with the effectiveness and quality of their teaching. Hence, this chapter lays the foundation for a classroom curriculum, which incorporates culture, community, and language learning objectives.

The National Standards of Language Teaching: The 5 Cs

English language instruction can be used as a tool for intercultural exchange in the ESL classroom, insofar as it is taught with consideration to all cultures and languages in the classroom. Therefore, through literature and the arts, students are asked to learn English language and the target language culture, while developing an understanding for their classmates’ cultures. For this to be possible, the National Standards of Language Learning presented as the 5 Cs by ACTFL, must be at the core of language instruction.

According to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), which promotes the core of language instruction, there are five national standards. These standards are commonly referred to as “the five Cs,” and focus on Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities, all of which are necessary in a classroom model that seeks to accomplish comprehensive language learning. The explanations of each are as follows:

“Communication” signifies that students “express feeling and emotions, and exchange opinions” (“National Standards for Foreign Language Learning—ACTFL” 1). As such, “students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics” and “present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics” (“National Standards for Foreign Language Learning—ACTFL” 1). Consequently, by communicating with one another, students are able to share their personal and cultural perspectives on topics discussed in the classroom. Moreover, “Cultures” refers to students gaining “knowledge and understanding of other cultures.” It expects that “students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied” (“National Standards for Foreign Language Learning—ACTFL” 1). In addition it is expected that “Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied” (“National Standards for Foreign Language Learning—ACTFL” 1).

In other words, students must communicate with classmates to detect connections in each other’s verbal interchanges. In doing so, students develop understanding of the target language culture, and they can learn to draw connections between the varying perspectives in the classroom and with the target language culture. Additionally, students can also use this understanding as a way of drawing connections between the classroom topics and other disciplines. As a result, students can better understand the culture and lessons being taught.

Regarding the focus on, “Connections,” it is expected that students “connect with other disciplines and acquire information” (“National Standards for Foreign Language

Learning—ACTFL”). As such, “Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language” and “acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its cultures” (“National Standards for Foreign Language Learning—ACTFL” 1). Once students practice drawing connections, they are then prepared to make comparisons, between themselves and their classmates, between the class and the target language culture, as well as between other disciplines and the target language. Thus, “Comparisons” refers to the significance of “insight into the nature of language and culture,” and, therefore, “Students [can] demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own (“National Standards for Foreign Language Learning—ACTFL” 1). Correspondingly, once students understand the connections between cultures in the classroom, they can develop a sense of community. “Communities” represents students’ participation in “multilingual communities at home and around the world” (“National Standards for Foreign Language Learning—ACTFL” 1). As “students use the language both within and beyond the school setting” they, “show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.” (“National Standards for Foreign Language Learning—ACTFL” 1)

Importance of the use of the 5 Cs in Language Teaching

In this study, the five Cs serve to recognize the multiple components of language teaching. Their significance can also be simultaneously highlighted in the literature and

the arts-based ESL classroom. In other words, following the standards of the 5 Cs establishes a foundation for intercultural exchange, which becomes possible by exchanging stories and promoting peace. This can only be accomplished through a student-centered environment. Language cannot be taught effectively by focusing solely on one method or function, as is the case for a classroom that seeks to establish a model for peacebuilding. Rather, each facet of the curriculum serves a different purpose, affirmed by the five Cs, as objectives integrated into the teaching and learning of the language. Language learners are complex, as a result of their societal and cultural upbringing. Therefore, there is a complexity to teaching languages and to encouraging intercultural dialogue that cannot be accomplished through one standard method.

There are many layers that need to be present in English language instruction, which cannot be accomplished by one method. It ultimately is up to the teacher to decide how he or she chooses to engage the classroom, so without the teacher's initiative in creating a supportive classroom environment and classroom community, a productive working environment becomes improbable. Furthermore, the 5 Cs need to be interwoven at the core of instruction. Culture cannot be taught without engaging connection, communication, comparisons, and communities, and none of the 5 Cs can be taught through any one singular method of instruction.

Moreover, once students leave the classroom, they will have acquired the necessary understanding and insight to engage in intercultural communities outside of the classroom. In fact, the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning—ACTFL note, “All linguistic and social knowledge required for effective human-to-human interaction is encompassed” in “knowing how, when and why to say what to whom” (“National

Standards for Foreign Language Learning—ACTFL”). In other words, the 5 Cs help to teach students appropriate communication skills, which they can bring with them into the interconnected, multicultural world of the twenty-first century.

Previously, these five core standards were not used in combination with one another. Classrooms formerly “concentrated on the *how* (grammar) to say *what* (vocabulary), and “while these components of language are indeed crucial, the current organizing principle for foreign language study is communication, which also highlights the *why*, the *whom*, and the *when*” (“National Standards for Foreign Language Learning—ACTFL”). Therefore, communication is at the forefront, and all other components of the 5 Cs function through communication. Therefore, they are most effective as an integrated whole and cannot become integrated through any one single method of instruction.

As this is the case, it is critical to move beyond the simplicity of only focusing on one aspect of language learning, by considering the *whole* student and what that student needs to function and communicate in the world today. While grammar and vocabulary are indeed necessary functions of language learning, “it is the acquisition of the ability to communicate in meaningful and appropriate ways” that is critical to engaging in the global society (“National Standards for Foreign Language Learning—ACTFL”).

Consider for instance, a Chinese student, learning English in the United States. The student may perform exceptionally well in the classroom. However, if one day this student goes to order a burger at McDonald’s and the server asks, “For here or to go?” the student may suddenly draw a blank and realize that English class had not prepared him or her for this situation. The student understands the question and vocabulary that the server

used, but lacks the context behind it and is unable to answer the question. As this situation indicates, effective communication should be the ultimate goal of language learning, when supported by all other components of the 5 Cs. Therefore, the literature and the arts-based classroom teaches communication through the 5 Cs, and with the 5 Cs at its core, it encourages a peace-oriented dialogue, which students can then apply beyond the classroom for practical use.

Integrated Language Learning and Cultural Facilitation

The emergence of the 5 Cs is critical to the discussion of culture, community, and language learning in terms of integrated language learning tasks. The 5 Cs promote an integrated model of teaching, in a classroom environment where learning about cultural aspects of the language being studied thrives. By learning in an environment of integrated tasks, including the focus on communication, community, comparisons, and connections, students develop an integrated understanding of culture related to the language itself. When the language classroom only promotes one style of language teaching such as the classical method or audiolingual method, students do not have the opportunity to connect with and communicate with one another. However, both methods in combination with other forms of language teaching are valuable as they are brought into the classroom together as an integrated whole.

It has been noted that there is an ongoing discussion about the teaching of culture in the language classroom in that, some would argue against the integration of language teaching and culture. As such, “Some language teachers are well aware of the fact that

there exists a continuous interplay between the linguistic and cultural elements of a foreign language. On the other hand, some researchers uphold that English as a lingua-franca should be taught in a culture-free context” (Yesil and Demiröz 83). In other words, while most English language instructors agree that culture and language are inextricably linked in the ESL classroom, there are those who argue that because English is a global language, it is not necessary to combine culture teaching with an English language classroom.

However, the teaching of culture is critical in an English-dominated environment, such as the ESL classroom, so as to eliminate any hostility in the classroom community, and to prevent students from feeling that English is consuming their native languages and cultures. The objective, rather, is to encourage the use of English as a common language for peace, which can be used in many different settings where multiple languages are spoken, and in order to do so, we must acknowledge the existence and importance of other cultures and languages. Therefore, in the English language classroom, reference needs to be made to the cultures of the students as well. As such, it is a matter of finding balance in the classroom, which can then be applied on a global scale. While classrooms around the world are teaching English, we have the opportunity to use it as a common language to promote a peace-oriented dialogue. However, in order to do so, we must give recognition to other cultures and languages in the classroom, so as not to diminish the concept of using English as a medium for peace and understanding among diverse cultural groups.

Furthermore, culture and language cannot be separated from each other, as both are inherently intertwined with one another. Thus, culture teaching is an inextricable

aspect of language teaching and cannot be avoided. In an environment distinctively conducive to culture learning, through the use of English, instructors have the opportunity to teach and learn about the various cultures that make up the ESL classroom, in an effort to use English language learning as an instrument of peacebuilding. This can be done in an integrated language-learning environment.

As opposed to deciding whether or not to teach culture in the classroom, then, it is possible to facilitate cultural exchange through an integrated, learner-centered curriculum, which supports the needs of all learners. This is accomplished through a literature and the arts-based classroom.

Development of Teaching English as a Second Language in the United States

Let us further mold this foundational groundwork by reviewing the history of ESL. In teaching and learning prior to 1960, English as a Second Language (ESL) was not yet a field of study in university programs. That is, as a result of the Vietnam War, for instance, thousands of Southeast Asian refugees were fleeing to the United States. Immigration also increased in Florida, as Cuban citizens were fleeing Cuba during the Cuban Revolution. California also has for decades experienced an influx of immigrants arriving from Mexico. As the United States became more linguistically diverse, English language learning began to serve as a means of survival and was, thus, a necessary medium for communication among individuals from many locations. Accordingly, as a means of communicating in a new cultural environment, speakers of other languages needed English language instruction to adapt to new cultural environments and

understandings, as well as to communicate “within the context of American culture” (Byrd v).

At the same time, in the early 1960s, the teaching of English as a Second Language had been developed in the then newly-established Peace Corps under the administration of President John F. Kennedy. It later became more prominent through the International Refugee Assistance Program, commonly referred to as IRAP, during the administration of President Jimmy Carter. ESL programs were first taught through learning centers in certain states and were later implemented in the community college settings in the United States. Consequently, the programs were eventually introduced into college and university language programs across the world.

However, prior to English language teaching becoming prominent in the U.S., the British Council had promoted the teaching of English world-wide, especially in the British Commonwealth nations. In fact, today, “English is the world’s most widely studied language” (Altbach 3608). The push for American English resulted from the rise of globalization and immigrant populations in the United States. Additionally it is important to note that many international students from around the world attend English-speaking academic institutions. In fact, “The English-speaking academic systems host more than half the world’s international students” (Altbach 3608). Hence, English has become a vital link in our shared human story.

In recent years, international students are acquiring their education in English-speaking countries, while English-speaking academic systems have expanded globally. As such, “Academic programmes offered in English have become widespread in many non-English speaking countries” (Altbach 3608). By extension, universities around the

world are increasingly offering courses taught in English. For instance, “Universities in Europe, Asia, and to some extent Latin America are offering degree programmes in English alongside instruction in native languages” (Altbach 3609). Consequently, the English language continues to expand globally, making the teaching of peace-oriented dialogue in English all the more relevant in today’s global climate.

The Role of the English Language Teaching Globally—Its Hegemony

To further reveal the critical aspect of establishing peace-oriented dialogue through the English language, one must note the vast expansion of English globally and the way in which it has been defined as hegemonic. Outside of the ESL classroom, English has taken on a major role in societies across the globe today, as it has obtained an “official status in more than 70 countries” (Altbach 3608). Moreover, it has consumed many of the mediums through which we communicate. For instance, “English is the main language of books, newspapers, airports and air-traffic control, international business and academic conferences, science technology, diplomacy, sport, international competitions, pop music, and advertising” (Graddol 2).

Following the implementation of globalization as a principal component of the world’s economic systems, the influence of American culture in the teaching of English became more prominent throughout the world. That is, in the twenty-first century, English, has become a dominant language associated with status, similar to Latin in the twentieth century. In fact, critical theorists examine closely, the link between status and the English language, as well as in other dominant languages such as Spanish,

Portuguese, German, French, and Italian. In other words, they note the “status and prestige accorded to certain dominant languages (the languages of the colonizers) and the demonization and devaluation of the so-called uncommon or minority languages (the languages of the colonized)” (Macedo, 2), recognizing this tendency not only in English, but in all dominant languages.

In recent years, English has become the *lingua franca* of much research, along with global business, IT, and several other global fields in the workforce. In China, for instance, IT specialists are expected to know technological vocabulary both in English and Chinese. In fact, some IT specialists speak little English, but are fluent in English computer language. In the IT department at Wenzhou-Kean University, an IT specialist explained that while his spoken English is poor, he can recite lists of technological vocabulary in English. By the same token, programs are offered for content-specific English for Chinese Computer Science majors, who struggle with conversational English, but have memorized extensive lists of English definitions and technical language for their major.

The hegemony of English is prevalent across the board in the field of academia. For instance, in many disciplines, academics are required to conduct research in English. As such, English is the prominent language in most recognized research and scholarship today. In fact, “The English language dominates science, scholarship, and instruction as never before”(Altbach 3608). This is not surprising, as universities and research organizations increasingly operate in English. In other words, universities and research organizations across the globe increasingly engage their work in English and publish in English. To put it another way, “the large majority of the world’s academic web sites and

scientific networks function in English” (Altbach 3608). Hence, many scholars do not receive the opportunity to share their work, unless it is communicated in English.

Consequently, in countries, such as Norway and Korea, where English is not recognized as the national language, academics are encouraged to publish in English (Altbach). For instance, “Norwegian academics who publish in English and in recognised journals are paid fees for their accomplishments” (Altbach 3609). So too, those who “publish in Norwegian are paid less or not at all” (Altbach 3609). As for Korean academics, “the pressure is great to publish in recognised international journals in English” (Altbach 3609). English, then, has begun to consume many other languages and cultures throughout the world, particularly in academia.

Regarding the teaching of English itself, there is an undeniable wealth of opportunity available to those who speak English as a native speaker. Yet, many writers in the field of literature seek to break down the universality of the American and British style of writing and speech common in academia. For some, the preservation of cultural identity is prevalent in their writing and speech. Chinua Achebe, a well-known Nigerian writer and scholar, for instance, does not reject English altogether in his writing, but he does reject its native qualities. Rather, Achebe chooses to combine his African heritage with the English language in his writing. In fact, Achebe is quoted in having written in his essay titled, “The African Writer and the English Language,” that the African writer “should aim at fashioning out an English which is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience” (Franklin 7). This statement mirrors the philosophy of the literature and the arts-based ESL classroom, in that students are learning to construct a dialogue through English, which carries out their unique experience and identity. Thus, in many

cases, and particularly in literature, as Achebe has displayed, this preservation of heritage in language is not lost, as individuals continue to push against an American and British style English.

Moreover, English has been celebrated for the “stunningly unanticipated ways” in which it “has changed as it grew into a global language” (Ahmad 1). In other words, cultures from around the globe leave their mark on the English language. Consequently, this adds color and diversity to its use, creating a phenomenon, which has been widely accepted, across the world. For instance, “Half of the novels that won the Man Booker prize over the past twelve years are in a non-standard English” and the “reading public has been just as approving, eagerly devouring works like Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple* and Junot Diaz’s *Drown*” (Ahmad 1). Therefore, the doors have already begun to open for cultural exchange through the English language. Accordingly, this opening poses an opportunity particularly in the literature and the arts-based ESL classroom, to continue encouraging culture to come alive through spoken and written English dialogue. Moreover, in doing so, the English language becomes a vehicle for cultural exchange, rather than an imposition on cultural values.

Language, and particularly English, is a powerful force, and our educators largely determine how we use it, especially in the ESL classroom. Thus, it is critical that instructors encourage students to maintain their cultural voice in their use of English, so as not to drown out their identity. Moreover, students must be taught to use English in culturally inclusive ways, by acknowledging and respecting their classmates’ cultures to avoid stereotyping, as is often seen in the Chinese ESL classroom. In other words, “the power of language is such that names and other words can often rob characters of their

identities” (Ahmad 5), so we must remain conscious of how we teach it.

Therefore, with consideration of other cultures and their respective speech patterns, it is possible to blend the English language with cultures from around the world. As such, English can be used as a common language without washing out all other cultures in its path if we, particularly in the field of academia at the college-level, continue to promote other cultures in our spoken and written English and encourage our students to do the same. This is a way of counteracting the destructive nature of English hegemony and replacing it with an English that encourages diversified and capacious kinds of cultural exchange.

Communicative Language Teaching

As it has been demonstrated, being that students must use the second language to communicate in their daily lives outside of the classroom, it is not surprising that, communicative competence has been the focus of language researchers for the past three decades, urging for a more widespread implementation of communication teaching in the language classroom. As it is shown, communicative language teaching has prevailed over many other language teaching methods. In fact, “Among the shifting sands of L2 methodology since the late 1970s, one overall catch phrase to describe the prevailing approach to pedagogy has stuck with us: communicative language teaching (CLT)” (Brown, “Principles,” 235). In other words, as language-teaching trends have fluctuated, communicative language teaching has remained constant.

It is also noted that the communicative process is defined as “psychosomatic

communication of a non-verbal order,” and the cultural process includes the learner response to a given situation (La Forge 45). We can say then, that the learner must first comprehend how to culturally communicate and then apply their communication skills in response to a given situation. Hence, the developmental process is complex as it encompasses various stages of language learning in the life of a language learner. Charles Curran, the originator of Counseling-Learning, or the Whole-Person Model in language instruction, titled these five stages of language learning. As Curran was a psychologist looking at the whole person, he established that these five stages would gradually develop students’ confidence in themselves to then build their confidence in articulating the second language. In other words, as students become more confident, they will speak more easily; thus, confidence must be achieved in order to become an independent language learner.

Therefore, Curran established that language instructors should help students to build confidence, because once the student is empowered, he or she can produce the language more readily. The role of the teacher as facilitator, discussed in later chapters, establishes the trust necessary in the classroom to develop that confidence. Classmates, too, contribute greatly to a comfortable and trusting learning environment. In other words, according to Curran, “Teachers and students are both seen in their total abilities, deeply engaged together in the learning process. They are considered to have not only intellectual capabilities, but emotional and somatic reactions as well—all invested in the relationship” (Curran 2). This recognition of relationship is key to building confidence in the classroom community, and thus, in individual students themselves.

The five stages referred to are as follows. The first is known as the “Embryonic Stage,” in which the knower and learner are one. In other words, in this stage, the learner’s language development is entirely dependent on the knower (Curran, “Counseling-Learning, Whole-Person” 130-31). As this is the case, the learner must first acquire the contextual information that he or she will eventually use in the given situation. The second is the “Self-assertion Stage,” where the learner begins to break away from this connection with the knower. In so doing, “they pick up expressions that they have heard and use them as the beginning of their own self-affirmation and independence” (Curran, “Counseling-Learning, Whole-Person” 131). In other words, the learner can begin to apply the learned information to their understanding of communication. The third stage is the “Separate Existence Stage,” where learners begin to communicate directly in the foreign language without the knower (Curran, “Counseling-Learning, Whole-Person” 131-32). In stage four, or the “Reversal Stage,” the learner can speak “freely and complexly *in the foreign language*” as he or she continues to develop an understanding of the language (Curran, “Counseling-Learning, Whole-Person” 137). In so doing, the “counselor directly intervenes in grammatical error, mispronunciation, or where aid in the complex expression is needed” (Curran, “Counseling-Learning, Whole-Person” 137). Finally, in stage five, the “Independent Stage,” the learner communicates in the foreign language independently from the knower. However, the knower may still intervene where necessary (Curran, “Counseling-Learning, Whole Person” 137). Today, communication is highlighted in most language classes, as an understood aspect of language teaching, and this is seen throughout language teaching literature. In fact, “Wherever you look in literature today, you will find

reference to the communicative nature of language classes” (Brown, “Principles,” 236).

That being said, however, while communicative language teaching has become prominent in the world of language learning, it is necessary to thoroughly define the approach, in order to provide reference for instructors to determine best practices.

Therefore, rather than restricting classroom objectives to competence in one function of language teaching, communicative language teaching encourages an interaction between all parts of language instruction. This serves, then, as yet another endorsement of the multiple instructional strategies used in the incorporation of storytelling genres for the establishment of a learner-centered classroom environment.

We can note then, that CLT displays Curran’s Whole-Person Model described in La Forge’s study, by emphasizing the ultimate goal of eventual independence. In other words, in order for the learner to utilize their independence, they must learn effective communication. It has been noted, “Language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes,” and that “Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques” (Brown, “Principles,” 236).

Moreover, in a classroom setting, largely supported by CLT, students practice the English language in often-improvisational ways, in preparation of using their language outside of the classroom. Hence, this is also a principle of the communicative classroom in that, “In the communicative classroom, students ultimately have to use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts” (Brown, “Principles,” 236). It can be noted then, that in the communicative classroom, students have the opportunity to engage in the authentic use of language, in unrehearsed ways, in the same way that they

do in the literature and the arts-based ESL classroom. Thus, the ESL classroom seeks to prepare students for interactive and authentic communication, as does the widely accepted and applied method of CLT.

As CLT is so widely used, it has adopted several varying understandings and applications of its use. Thus, as a result of the varying perspectives of communicative language teaching, Task-based Language Teaching, a variation of CLT, has materialized. In fact, “Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) has emerged as a major focal point of language teaching practice worldwide” (Brown, “Principles,” 237), with a persisting emphasis on classroom interaction. In fact, according to Brown, the profession has “Continued to emphasize classroom interaction, learner-centered teaching, authenticity, and viewing the learner’s own experiences as important contributors to learning” (Brown, “Principles,” 237). Therefore, while definitions have varied and identifying terms have changed, the significance of student interaction and individual experience has endured, which also assists in supporting the current study.

When referring to Task-based learning, it is critical to define the meaning of “task.” The term “task” often refers to an objective or motive, initiated by some identified problem. Specifically, a task is an activity in which “Meaning is primary, there is a problem to solve, a relationship to real-world activities, and an objective that can be assessed in terms of outcome” (Brown, “Principles,” 237). This “relationship to real-world activities” is a critical component of the current study, in that it reflects the objective of promoting peaceful dialogue in the classroom.

Therefore, Task-based classroom activities have the potential of going beyond the classroom and into the real world, as does the classroom, which functions through

storytelling genres. As such, the classroom serves as a space for grappling with real world scenarios, a topic that is discussed further in chapter two. Furthermore, TBLT encourages teachers to focus on communicative factors in their curriculum (Brown, “Principles,” 238). Thus, it has not lost the essence of communication. Therefore, there is a continuing relevance of communication in the language classroom.

The communicative and Task-based classrooms are environments in which students can practice their use of language, but also their representation of their identity as well as their receptivity to their classmates’ identity. In both classrooms students are expected to engage in “functional use of language for meaningful purposes,” meaning that culture learning plays a significant role in this setting.

Moreover, communicative language teaching assists in teaching students to use their knowledge from the classroom with intent and understanding in the global society, both in their speech and in their actions. As this is the case, “This approach endeavors to provide the students with the necessary qualifications that would help them communicate in an intercultural setting” (Yesil and Demiröz 81), in order to perpetuate peace-oriented dialogue. It encourages students to communicate with one another in the classroom to develop skills needed to interact in various other settings.

Shifting Trends in Language Teaching

While it is evident that interaction, communication, and the teaching of culture are critical components in the language classroom, language was not always taught as a way of communicating, and culture teaching in the language classroom did not become

relatively widespread until the twenty-first century. In fact, language teaching was originally a means of developing intellectual stamina. Early on, in the Western world for instance, language learning focused on the study of Latin and Greek as a way of honing memorization skills. Latin was taught using the Classical Method, which emphasizes a focus on grammar and vocabulary, and more specifically, on “Grammatical rules, memorization of vocabulary and grammatical forms, translation of texts, and performances of written exercises” (Brown, “Principles,” 15). Thus, the classical method lacks the interactive component.

Eventually, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, other languages were implemented in education, though, initially, Latin was challenged and essentially overturned by the Protestant Reformation. In fact, “It was only the Protestant reformation led by Martin Luther, combined with a growing sense of national identity, that challenged and then displaced Latin with national languages” (Altbach 3608). However, though Latin was replaced, the Classical Method remained prominent, which meant that still, little attention was paid to the oral or communicative use of language.

In the late nineteenth century, the Classical Method eventually became known as the Grammar Translation Method, which essentially encompasses the same pedagogy. It utilized memorization and translation as its primary objectives, with little to no emphasis on language learning usage outside of the classroom. Shockingly, given all of the aforementioned evidence to the benefits of communication and the teaching of culture in the language classroom, this methodology remains prominent in the language classroom today (Brown, “Principles,” 15). This partly explains the urgent nature of the current

study, in exposing instructors to the various other methods, which exist in language teaching, while providing a classroom model that encompasses these alternatives.

As the current study displays, language methods are not always in direct contrast to one another. Learning trends have gone through several shifts over the past century, often “With each new method breaking from the old, but at the same time taking with it some of the positive aspects of the previous paradigm” (Brown, “Principles,” 17). The Audiolingual Method for instance, while still widely incorporated in classrooms today, became popular in the 1960s, and similar to The Direct Method, encouraged students to only communicate in the target language. However, in Audiolingual Method, students were taught through a series of drills and repetition for the purpose of learning grammar. Techniques include Dialog Memorization, Backward Build-up (Expansion drill, Repetition Drill, Chain Drill, Single-slot Substitution Drill, Multiple-slot Substitution Drill, Transformation Drill, Question-and-answer Drill, Use of Minimal Pairs, Complete Dialog, and Grammar Games (Larsen-Freeman 45-47). Moreover, if a student made a mistake, the student was corrected, as the instructor expects a specific response. While the direct method also significantly emphasizes question-and-answer activities, it utilizes realia and other visual resources as opposed to a heavy focus on drilling.

Comparative features can also be found in many other approaches and methods, such as Caleb Gattegno’s The Silent Way, which emerged in 1963 and shares similar principles with the “Cognitive Approach,” though one did not derive from the other. As such, The Silent Way suggests, “teaching should be subordinated to learning” (Larsen-Freeman 51-52). In other words, through this approach, teaching should be subservient to learning, in that the student takes responsibility for his or her own learning. Therefore, as

a student-centered approach, The Silent Way encourages students to use their own authority to practice pronunciation. The teacher's role in the classroom is to signal and utilize body-language cues to guide students to correct pronunciation. As a result, students were expected to build autonomy and learn to work with their classmates to achieve a set goal (Larsen-Freeman 51-69).

One then, can draw a connection between The Silent Way and The Cognitive Approach, where learners are also expected to take ownership of their learning. Moreover, one can also relate this expectation to Curran's whole-person objective of eventual independence, which I will review further in the following section on psychology in language education. Hence, one may note the emphasis on psychology in language teaching trends, as it indeed assists in informing interactions as well as best practices in the language classroom. For instance, following the aforementioned expansion of Audiolingual Method, cognitive psychology's "cognitive code" of language, became popular.

While still focusing on grammar, the "cognitive code" suggests that rather than merely concentrating on repetition and memorization, classrooms should have a "metacognitive focus" (Brown, "Principles," 17). In other words, according to psychologists, "language acquisition must be a procedure whereby people use their own thinking process, or cognition, to discover the rules of the language they are acquiring" (Larsen-Freeman 51). Therefore, again, as we have seen in The Silent Way and the Cognitive Approach, in many ways, there is a significant responsibility on the learner for language acquisition. However, for some, the cognitive code brought classroom methodology full circle, back to grammar translation, until the field of psychology began

to play a larger role in the language classroom toward the end of the twentieth century (Brown, “Principles,” 17).

For instance, in accordance with the psychological emphasis on language learning, Caleb Gattegno and Georgei Lozanov, originator of *Suggestopedia*, (a method that encourages the breakdown of psychological barriers), believed that by breaking down psychological blockades, students are able to learn at a faster rate (Larsen-Freeman 72). As it is so, with the increasing focus on the psychology of language learning, it is no wonder that the direct method gained momentum in the language classroom. The Direct Method seeks to utilize language learning communicatively, which requires an acknowledgement of the psychology that exists within communication.

Thus, in contrast to the Grammar Translation Method, the Direct Method was established in the early 1990s. The Direct Method encourages strict use of only the target language to communicate with the classroom community. Again, an emphasis on language communication can be observed. There is much debate around the benefits of the Direct Method as opposed to the Grammar Translation Method. However, institutions today more commonly aim for a direct approach, due to its emphasis on communication. In fact, “Since the Grammar-Translation Method was not very effective in preparing students to use the target language communicatively, the Direct Method became popular” (Diane Larsen-Freeman 23). In other words, communication is widely acknowledged as serving a profound function in the language-learning classroom, particularly as it prepares students for survival in the world. This is a notion, then, that specifically applies to the ESL classroom as it is so widely spoken around the world.

Also introduced in the late twentieth century, the Total Physical Response (TPR) Method has entered the spotlight of language teaching, which also approaches language teaching and learning from a psychological standpoint. In fact, “the Total Physical Response Method was developed in order to reduce the stress people feel when studying foreign languages” and was based, therefore, on “the way children learn their native languages,” thus incorporating “the use of commands to direct behavior” (Larsen-Freeman 116-118). Likewise, in this approach, students also reach eventual independence once the direct behavior has been repeated and, therefore, strengthened. Thus, TPR establishes independent language use, in the same way that a child eventually communicates in his or her native language.

Therefore, psychology in its relation to communication has helped to weave a common thread in many of the approaches used today. The eventual ability to communicate is the ultimate goal in many of today’s language learning and teaching approaches, and, therefore, it is critical that it be applied in the classroom. This understanding is also founded in the psychology of language learning.

The Emergence of Psychology in Language Education

While psychology and language studies have been intertwined for decades, particularly due to the work of Piaget and Vygotsky, constructivism has only recently become of significant interest in the language classroom. In the past, linguistic, psychological, and sociological ideologies were separate disciplines devoid of one another. Constructivism however, integrates “Linguistic, psychological, and sociological

paradigms, in contrast to the professional chasms that often divided those disciplines in the previous century,” while placing emphasis on social interaction (Brown, “Principles,” 12). In other words, the focal point of language studies has shifted yet again, from an emphasis on memorization and translational methods, to a focus on the benefits of social interaction through an interdisciplinary framework. In fact, constructivist research primarily focuses on “individuals engaged in social practices...on a collaborative group, [or] on a global community” (Brown, “Principles,” 12). Hence, again, we see how psychology is interwoven in the development of community in the language classroom.

Charles A. Curran, as has been referenced, utilized his original work as a psychologist to apply his knowledge and understanding of Counseling-Learning to what is known as Community Language Learning in its reference to language teaching. As his work recognizes and encourages the development of the whole student, it is also referred to as the Whole-Person Model of Language Learning. This Community Language Learning or the Whole-Person Model, emerged in language learning as a result of the benefits shown from applying Counseling-Learning educational awareness to groups engaged in learning a second language (Curran 1). In other words, when Counseling-Learning is applied to groups learning a second language, “a very special kind of community-involvement results” (Curran 1). This community development within the classroom, then, supports the learner-centered environment encouraged in this study.

In an environment of acceptance, where students feel that they belong in the classroom community, they are better able to focus on the task of language learning with the comfort and confidence to do so effectively and to, hence, grow as an English language communicator. This sense of belonging and excitement for the language

learning process is one endorsed by Curran himself. He notes that within the environment produced by Community Language Learning, “The student never feels isolated and alone but rather always senses the strong reassurance, help and positive regard of everyone else. In an almost literal sense, he or she feels everyone is ‘pulling’ for them and so is delighted by even their minimal successes” (Curran 1). Curran’s work, then, highlights the critical aspect of building a positive classroom community in the advancement of language learning acquisition.

Based on La Forge’s work in Japan, he discusses Community Language Learning in reference to Japanese learners. In his discussion, Curran’s work is further illuminated. La Forge explains that Community Language Learning “takes its principle from the more general Counseling-Learning approach developed by Charles A. Curran,” the originator of the Whole-Person Model of Learning (89). In his work, La Forge refers to Curran as having “discovered that adults often feel threatened by a new learning situation” and by “the change inherent in learning” as well as “by the fear that they will appear foolish” (89). Therefore, according to this understanding, teachers should act as “language counselors,” encouraging students to “use the target language communicatively (Larsen-Freeman 89). Hence, the literature and the arts-based ESL classroom encourages the development of community through communication and interaction as a means of supporting the learner to develop confidence in themselves and in their use of the English language.

By encouraging students to share their own cultural values in the classroom, they are communicating through a medium in which they are familiar. Moreover, while adults feel “threatened by a new learning situation,” this also poses the potential for feeling

threatened by learning a new language, and particularly English. Additionally, when there is a lack of support in the classroom, this may increase the “fear that they will appear foolish.” Thus, through various storytelling genres, students can listen to one another, and support each other’s various personal and cultural ideologies to encourage each other in learning the target language and culture. Additionally, by learning about one another’s cultural understandings, it helps students to understand cultural misunderstandings as well. Therefore, this assists in defusing conflict situations and, thus, feelings of foolishness brought on by cultural misunderstandings.

As it has been documented, then, Curran’s Whole-Person Model maintains that creating a positive learning environment in the second language classroom enhances language learning and that the role of the teacher is to support the students rather than reprimand them for making mistakes. In this fusion of counseling and education, Curran refers to the teacher or parent as counselor or supporter in the learning process. The instructor, then, acts as a guide in the students’ eventual independence. Curran’s principal notion is to guide students to this point, first by addressing the group in the native language, which is then modeled by the counselor or teacher in the target language.

Students use this pattern as a means of supportive group interaction and eventually begin expressing themselves solely in the target language, removing the native language all together. Students analyze their use of the target language and use the language in front of the teacher or counselor, eventually exhibiting appropriate social use of the target language, finally using their language to counsel other group members. At this stage, Curran then recommends that the teacher supports the student, should the student need direction; however, the student should have by now reached independence

(La Forge 47-48). We see here, then, that there is constant community support within this learning environment, which is precisely how the community functions. Again, the notion of community is a significant point of reference for language learning.

Moreover, La Forge notes, “Perhaps the most significant feature of twentieth century intellectual development has been the way in which language has been reinterpreted as a social process” (1). As it is so, communication shines through once again, reflecting its importance in the ESL classroom. This reinterpretation of language has been researched throughout the twentieth century and is commonly referred to in the field of counseling psychology as the *whole person process*. La Forge explains that the process is made up of a number of elements including the learner’s focus on the “cognitive task, i.e., the *educational process*,” noting, “the goal must be a mutual one which is acquired through the *interpersonal process* of a group or community” (2). In other words, the classroom must work as a whole to achieve the common goal of acquiring the language, which, as is elaborated on in subsequent chapters, also assists in building classroom community and developing relationships. He further notes that the *developmental process*, the *communicative process*, and the *cultural process* each play a role in defining the whole-person process (La Forge 2).

This study turns specifically to the emergence of *Social Constructivism* and its popularity over the course of recent years. Social Constructivism “Emphasizes the importance of social interaction and cooperative learning in ultimate attainment” (Brown 12). As such, students obtain more positive results through cooperative learning. Therefore, classroom communal engagement benefits language-learning results, while

providing students with the necessary experience in engaging with and working with a community to meet a common goal.

Brown explains that while learning is broadly defined as “Acquiring knowledge of a subject or a skill by study, experience, or instruction,” Educational Psychology, defines learning as “A change in an individual caused by experience” (Brown, “Principles,” 8). Therefore, according to the psychological definition, if the student is learning, then he or she is expected to change in some way. As such, further discussion of the learners’ changing and shifting identity takes place in chapter two. Furthermore, teaching can be defined as a role of guidance for students to attain their language learning goals. In other words, teaching is defined as, “Showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, giving instructions, guiding in the study of something, providing with knowledge, causing to know or understand” (Brown, “Principles,” 8). Thus, chapter two is also supported by this definition, as the instructor is referred to as the facilitator, and acknowledges the shifting role that he or she embodies in the classroom.

Over time, the field of psychology has become integral in understanding communicative relationships in the classroom. In fact, “Since the early 1970s, the symbiotic relationship of theoretical disciplines and teaching methodology has continued to manifest itself” (Brown, “Principles,” 17). In other words, researchers have found a valuable relationship between theoretical disciplines, such as theoretical psychology, and teaching methodology. Through their inherently interrelated nature, the two have coalesced, and the field of psychology has noticed an increasing awareness of the value in communicative activities in the classroom. To put it another way, the field of psychology “...has witnessed a growing interest in interpersonal relationships, the value

of group work, and the use of numerous cooperative strategies for attaining desired goals” (Brown, “Principles,” 17), making the current study all the more relevant, as it seeks to develop interpersonal relationships in the classroom.

Thus, in response to growing interest and research in group dynamics, “The language teaching profession has mirrored these theoretical trends with approaches and techniques” that have expanded the use of psychological theory in language classrooms. As such, instructors have “stressed the importance of self-efficacy, construction of identity, students cooperatively learning together, developing individual strategies for constructing meaning, and above all of focusing on the communicative process in language learning” (Brown, “Principles,” 17). It can be noted, then, that now more than ever, the acknowledgement of identity in empowering the learner is pertinent and essential in developing productive group dynamics in the classroom. The psychology of language learning, then, certifies that identity be facilitated in an interactive, student-centered environment, qualities presented in an integration of the aforementioned instructional strategies.

Sociology and Language

By the 1990s, sociocultural theory appeared in the field of language acquisition and was based heavily on the work of developmental psychologist, Vygotsky, who found that all of the factors that influence us in our interactions with others are socially constructed. In other words, “According to sociocultural theory, our linguistic, cognitive, and social development as members of a community is socially constructed” (Shrum and

Glisan 23). Therefore, one must acknowledge students' social upbringing, as it is in direct correlation with linguistic, cognitive, and social development, three components which the ESL classroom encompasses.

Furthermore, Wertsch states development is “inherently linked to the cultural, institutional and historical settings in which it occurs” (Wertsch 203). Thus, Shrum and Glisan note, “In this view, learning and development are as much social processes as cognitive processes...” (Shrum and Glisan 23). As such, it is reasonable to note that social and cultural understanding in the language classroom, prepares students for the outside world, while also supporting their cognitive development. Therefore, sociocultural theory in language learning can be summarized by noting, “That language learning is a social process rather than one that occurs within the individual...” (Shrum and Glisan 24). Therefore, according to Shrum and Glisan, social interaction and communication in the language classroom are crucial in the student's progress as a language learner. This, then, endorses the necessity of a strong, interactive classroom community, a concept further explained by Stephen Krashen and Noam Chomsky.

Contributions of Stephen Krashen and Noam Chomsky

Prior to the 1990s, the behaviorist understanding of language learning, borrowed from the field of psychology contributed to theories of language learning (VanPatten and Williams 17). Hence, according to behaviorism, “all learning—including language learning—is seen as the acquisition of a new behavior. The environment is the most important factor in learning” (VanPatten and Williams 19). In other words, according to

behaviorist theory, a language student not only acquires a new language, but also a new behavior, and the environment in which the learning takes place is critical in the process of doing so. Therefore, instructors must create an environment that facilitates positive reinforcement. This can be achieved in the development of a positive classroom community, which communicates through cultural understanding. Thus, “learning consists of developing responses to environmental stimuli. If these responses receive positive reinforcement, they will be repeated” (VanPatten and Williams 19). As such, if students receive positive reinforcement, they will continue forging forward in their learning. However, “If the responses receive punishment (in the case of language learning, error correction), they will be abandoned” (VanPatten and Williams 19). Therefore, according to behaviorism, error correction in language learning will produce negative results.

However, upon the recognition of several flaws in behaviorism’s application to language learning, multiple theories began to arise, one of which has remained prominent today, known as the Monitor Theory of Stephen Krashen, which, along with the structural-behaviorist approach had a significant influence on second language acquisition and teaching (VanPatten and Williams 17).

Thus, Monitor Theory attempts to explain a “Variety of phenomena in language learning, ranging from the effect of age on SLA to the apparently uneven effects of instruction,” and is connected with Chomsky’s theory of language from the 1960s, “Which states that humans are uniquely endowed with a specific faculty for language acquisition” (VanPatten and Williams 24). Furthermore, the theory emphasizes that the “Driving force behind any kind of acquisition is the comprehension of meaningful

messages and the interaction of the linguistic information in those messages with the innate language acquisition faculty” (VanPatten and Williams 25). Therefore, according to Krashen, when the information that students receive is both relevant and meaningful to their lives, acquisition becomes more natural in their already innate ability to comprehend and acquire language. Hence, when students engage in a cultural exchange, specifically in the reassuring classroom environment described by Curran, it has positive effects on their language acquisition.

Chomsky also divided language learners’ competence into two components: *underlying competence* and the *individual’s performance* (Hadley 3). In other words, a student may perform differently than they are perhaps capable of. Thus, building students’ confidence is critical in developing their performance. Later, Campbell and Wales extended Chomsky’s theory, noting, “the degree to which a person’s production or understanding of the language is appropriate to the context in which it takes place is even more important than grammaticality” (Hadley 3). Thus, through storytelling in the ESL classroom, students learn language through the context of culture, developing their cultural competence while simultaneously honing their English skills, in order to take this integrated understanding into the world. Moreover, there was a switch from focus on “grammatical competence,” which Campbell and Wales labeled in reference to Chomsky’s view, to “communicative competence,” which they named as their own. (Hadley 3). Again, communicative competence has taken center stage, and by teaching communicative competence through cultural competence students learn how to engage in culturally appropriate ways.

The Humanities Model

For a better understanding of what an ideal literature and the arts-based ESL classroom might look like, we can turn to Liberal Arts education, which provides a mirror for an integrated ESL classroom. It seeks to encompass the whole person and can serve as a model for the language classroom. The humanities model, as a means of developing integrated curricula, is valuable to providing a model of what contemporary ESL classrooms should look like, because it pulls in universal themes that allow students to express themselves and their identities to break down any personal or cultural barriers in the classroom. The 5 Cs can thrive in such a classroom that acknowledges the whole person. Therefore, by combining an interdisciplinary method of teaching through literature and the arts, inspired by the humanities, together with principles instilled by various teaching theories and methodologies, such as Communicative Language Theory, Task-based Language Teaching, and the Whole-Person Model, the ESL classroom has the potential to become a culture-focused learning environment.

Conclusion

Each aspect of language teaching, through its historical and current methods, theories, and objectives helps to clarify what we know of language teaching today. Several layers of language learning and teaching are interwoven into second language classrooms throughout the world, and in order to fully understand our profession, it is critical to engage with past and present experiences in language teaching.

As discussed in this chapter, while language trends have shifted over time and have emerged from and in opposition of one another, the five Cs provide an effective framework for language instruction, with communication and culture at the forefront.

Current trends in globalization support the relevance of an integrated second language classroom environment, as projected by the curriculum of the 5 Cs across the language teaching profession. By combining each facet of the 5 Cs and by learning how to communicate in an intercultural setting such as the second language classroom, students are able to improve their language development and form relationships by sharing parts of their identities with classmates.

Communicative Language Theory, Task-based Language Teaching, the Whole-Person Model, and the integration of the 5 Cs at their core, cumulatively support the use of the humanities-based model of employing narrative in its various forms and encourage a well-rounded, student-centered classroom environment. In this environment, students become autonomous learners, building confidence in their cultural understandings and in their English language communication. It is for this reason that the teaching and learning of culture thrive in the literature and the arts-based ESL environment and should be used to the advantage of the whole student and to the global English-speaking community at large.

The power of English is something to be taken seriously, and while it has become a dominant language across the world, as instructors, we have the opportunity to change the way that it is used to communicate. This change begins in the college-level ESL classroom and through the individual, both instructor and student, as cultural

ambassadors. Therefore, chapter two depicts the ways in which culture and identity interact in the classroom.

Chapter Two

Curriculum, Culture, and Identity

This chapter continues to emphasize the need for a clear understanding of the term culture in its many functions, and hence, provides a layered definition of identity, as the two are plainly interconnected. This definition serves to highlight the importance of acknowledging culture and identity through storytelling in the ESL classroom, as a means of establishing confidence in students through the recognition of individuality.

In doing so, the chapter illustrates how a classroom model that acknowledges identity and, therefore, individuality, effectively supports the development of student autonomy. Even more, the chapter uses this multilayered discussion of identity to assist in establishing the intercultural interactions shown in the literature and the arts-based method modeled in chapter three. The model lessons that can be used as part of a curriculum focus on peacebuilding are explained in the present chapter and are grounded in the scholarship presented in chapter one. Henceforth, in this dissertation, when speaking of curriculum, it refers to the model lessons. The purpose of this explanation is to prepare instructors to utilize the classroom models in chapter three. This emphasis on identity in the ESL classroom, specifically, is also engaged in recognition of the diverse contexts in which English is spoken, which will become subsequently evident.

Individuals are learning English in colleges and universities across the world making up diverse ESL classroom settings of students who speak varying native dialects and languages, and coming from a broad range of cultural backgrounds. Therefore, every ESL classroom is unique in its interaction with culture. There is a negotiation that occurs

in each classroom. Students are asked to put English at the forefront of their communication as they engage with the target language culture and with students from varying cultural backgrounds. Therefore, the classroom must acknowledge students' unique cultural associations, as part of their identities, so as not to threaten their identities. Culture, identity, and communication are strongly interconnected, as culture assists in determining the many components of identity and communication, as examined in this chapter. As a result, it will become apparent that each of these components is responsible for promoting a peace-oriented dialogue.

Thus, with English language learning as the primary objective of this study, it poses the question, "Why is the college-level ESL classroom relevant for peacebuilding?" In one sense, as English has become a dominant language around the world, and particularly in academia, students must learn how to use it to communicate globally. But many students in the college-level ESL classroom are also learning English for professional development, both in their home countries and also abroad. Consequently, many students studying English already live in primarily English speaking countries, where they will use the language practically.

In like manner, as discussed in chapter one, English has become a global language, in academia, in global workforces, and in many countries around the world. For that reason it becomes relevant to consider that students in the ESL classroom may feel resistant toward learning the English language, as its dominance poses the potential for the diminishment of other languages and cultures.

On the other hand, however, students are under pressure, professionally, to learn English and will, thus, likely use English in the global society and in their respective

workforces. Therefore, it is critical that instructors defuse any potential hostility toward the English language before students leave the classroom and enter the world, so as to perpetuate peace-oriented dialogue through its use. That is to say, if students are resistant to the language it could affect their relationship negatively with their instructor and, therefore, negatively influence their language development.

However, with the understanding that our students are learning English through the interaction of each individual's own identities, for a purpose that expands beyond the classroom, students have greater incentive to become fully engaged with learning the language and communicating with their classmates and teacher, as cultural subjects. Similarly, students can use their understanding of their own cultures in the classroom as a way of relating to and opening themselves up to learning about the culture of the language being taught. This produces a more effective and productive classroom environment where students are open to learning because they are interacting with what is familiar to them, as discussed in chapter one. To make this possible, familiarity is interwoven in the classroom, encouraging a stimulating and interactive environment for learning.

Accordingly, students must consider their own cultural values in order to embrace learned aspects of a new culture, as intercultural learning is ineffective without a primary understanding of one's own culture and the way in which it influences their interactions in the classroom. In other words, "Inter-cultural learning, based on the principle that students cannot learn about values of another culture (C2) without considering those of their own (C1), requires relinquishing coverage of content" (Knutson 592). Therefore, in order for students to engage in intercultural exchange, the class framework must

encompass the exchange. As such, the learning of language content is not interrupted or diminished, by culture learning. By sharing stories with one another, through various storytelling genres, students have the opportunity to engage with their own experience and learn about their own identities, while also accepting and embracing the culture and identity of the *other*.

By telling their story as a means of shifting their perspective, students are better able to articulate and understand those parts of their identities with which they best identify, thus making them better able to understand their classmates and instructor. It is a way of recognizing the self as *other* as well. Inversely, when a peer lends an ear to listen to another's personal story, that part of one's identity, that which makes one who he or she is, helps to open each individual up to listen to the stories of the other. The same natural tendency can be applied to students in the ESL classroom in order to build classroom community, promote communication, and ultimately to improve classroom management and an understanding of knowing and comprehending whom the "other" is.

This cross-cultural dialogue compels individuals to make a personal decision about who they are and who they choose to be. Certainly, students need to examine themselves for a deeper self-understanding. It is anticipated that individuals will make their own decisions about culture on some level, as we, to a certain degree, have a choice concerning the way in which we define ourselves. Of course, in many cases, the individual does not have the option to choose, and certain cultural values are understood as a communal expectation, by the communities in which they find themselves, including religious and national communities.

The language classroom, however, provides students with the choice of adopting

cultural aspects of their fellow students and of the language being taught. In fact, ESL classrooms offer an excellent opportunity to think more deeply about personal identity through experience with culture, while students learn about their classmates' cultures and about the culture of the English language. Hence, once students leave the classroom, they can take this understanding with them into global English-speaking countries to communicate in an intercultural setting.

For this reason, this study turns to The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) to determine the ways in which the teaching of culture, both of the target language culture and of students' intercultural exchange, benefits language learners and the global society. Moreover, to fully establish the discussion of the ways in which storytelling can support a culturally competent classroom, it is necessary to further define the term.

Defining Storytelling

Storytelling, in a general sense, has been described as language and as narrative. As a form of narrative, stories convey something that happened, something that is currently happening, or something conceived of. In other words, "Narratives may relate events or be explicitly fictional" (Senehi 43). As it is so, they can be used as entertainment to bring people together, to escape from reality, or to connect with individuals who may have similarities in their story. However, though we define them as such, "narratives are not pure fact or pure fiction" (Senehi 43).

Additionally, stories are often based on some form of truth, and people connect

with stories because they reflect something of relevance to them, whether the story is categorized as technically fiction or nonfiction. There is no such thing as a purely fictional story, because truth and some sense of reality in narrative are how we relate to the story itself. In other words, “A fictional narrative may be used to persuasively express an idea that the narrative sees as true” (Senehi 43). However, these truths can also lay hidden throughout the fictional narrative as details or descriptions and can appear in many other forms that inexplicitly leave hints for the reader or listener. This is part of what makes stories relevant to people. Hence, “stories create a holistic approach to thinking and understanding in which people are invited to mingle with the characters as a device of interacting with their own realities” (Lereach, “Preparing Peace” 82). Students can find connections and comparisons between their own stories and the stories with which they engage. Stories are personal to the individuals engaging with them and can, thus, provide a linkage between the familiar and unfamiliar, creating a bridge between cultures.

This bridge can be created in a number of ways, however, as there are a variety of ways to tell a story. In other words, stories are not always told in a literary sense and can be communicated in a variety of ways. Storytelling can occur through song, film, dance, drama, or written and spoken word, as discussed in this document. Therefore, for the purpose of this dissertation, storytelling can be understood as any means of sharing and communicating individual perspective or experience in a fictional or nonfictional way.

Explanation of a Literature and the Arts Curriculum Model

A culturally responsive curriculum asks of instructors, a willingness to understand the cultural implications, which operate in the classroom, while understanding the learner's needs. Hence, "a teacher needs to be prepared to be a 'cultural broker' who 'thoroughly understands different cultural systems, is able to interpret cultural symbols from one frame of reference to another, can mediate cultural incompatibilities, and knows how to build bridges or establish linkages across cultures that facilitate the instructional process'" (Darling-Hammond and Bransford 224). In other words, the instructor is essentially a cultural mediator, while facilitating the classroom environment, and must be prepared for the various cultural interactions, which occur in the classroom. This is particularly relevant in the ESL classroom where various cultures are interacting through the English language.

Students' English language learning can also be affected, both by cultural misunderstandings of their learning styles and needs and by cultural misunderstandings among their peers or instructor. Moreover, students are being taught a language that currently carries with it negative connotations and can induce feelings of personal and cultural vulnerability. As this is the case, students must first become comfortable in an intercultural environment, in order to establish trust and confidence within the community, by interacting and sharing their own perspectives with their classmates. This then enhances the learning of the target language culture, by expanding students understanding of their community.

In order to ensure a well-rounded experience for students and to establish comfort in the classroom, students must learn about each other's cultures, both in U.S. ESL

classrooms as well as in Chinese ESL classrooms, because of the wide range of cultural diversity, which exists within each of these classrooms. For instance, as there is significant cultural diversity among Spanish-speaking students, it is important for Spanish-speaking ESL students to understand their classmates' cultural behavior in order to effectively engage with and communicate with one another in the English language classroom. The same holds true for the Chinese ESL classroom, as China is, in fact, a diverse society of individuals coming together from a wide range of cultural contexts. Rather than explicitly teaching students about the diverse range of cultures in the classroom, the instructor can facilitate activities that bring awareness to the general concept of cultural diversity, as well as activities that invoke cultural exchange among students.

Students must also learn the culture of the language being taught, so as to form a better understanding of how to use the language effectively and constructively, both within and outside of the classroom. This way, students gain trust and confidence in their peers, in their practical use of the language, and in their ability to use the language in culturally appropriate ways. While this study focuses primarily on English as the language being taught, this same concept is true for the learning of all other languages.

In New Jersey for instance, where there are numerous languages spoken among students in public and private schools, it is necessary to teach students about the importance of cultural understanding when learning a language, because students are immersed in a diverse cultural environment where they need to know how to navigate various cultural perspectives. This understanding of the target language culture can be applied to a wider cultural understanding of their peers within their educational

community and outside of that community. This is a concept also correlated with the NJ standards for the teaching of languages today. In other words, by teaching students who are learning Spanish about the diversity that occurs in Spanish-speaking countries, students can then apply that knowledge to their Spanish-speaking peers, and also to those who speak other languages, acknowledging that with each language comes its own cultural implications and many times, its own cultural diversity within that language.

In Wenzhou, China, for example, Wenzhouhua, *or Wenzhounese*, and Putonghua, *or Mandarin*, are both widely spoken languages. In order to fully understand Mandarin as it is spoken in Wenzhou and to become a part of the Mandarin-speaking, Wenzhou community, it is necessary to learn both the historical culture of Mandarin and also the culture of Wenzhou. In a discussion with my Chinese teacher, he explained that by learning the language itself, particularly in *pinyin*, (without learning the Chinese characters), learners lose a great deal of communicative value in their language learning. In other words, by only learning to speak Mandarin, without learning the Chinese characters and the cultural implications, relating to them, communication is limited.

In order to break through the cultural blockade and truly create language and cultural connections, the learner must develop the cultural competence to understand the many subtle references within the language. As Mandarin is not a highly descriptive language, much of the communication that occurs within Mandarin is implied and can be rather ambiguous without knowledge of such cultural implications. That is, Mandarin speakers need to acquire an understanding of those implications in order to effectively communicate. This partly corresponds with learning the characters, but is also learned by interacting with the community and by gaining the historical relevance of the language in

order to do so.

By understanding the cultural implications that coincide with a language, or even by understanding the mere concept that these cultural implications exist, can help students and instructors to better understand the classroom community. Instructors create this environment for understanding by establishing lessons that acknowledge the multiple cultural perspectives within the classroom, the community at large, and the world. By combining cultural acknowledgement with the acknowledgement of the various learning styles in the classroom, instructors create an environment of trust, established for building confidence in students.

As this is so, prior to entering the classroom, and when developing curriculum, instructors must be prepared to engage in a culturally diverse classroom environment and predetermine how these linkages will be made. In the very least, instructors can prepare themselves for interactions that may occur in the classroom and activities which would help to instill positive interaction, with attention to the learner. An instructor's cultural groundwork has as much to do with class preparation as his or her lesson plans. This could mean simply researching the cultures that could exist in the classroom or speaking to community members and other instructors to gain insight on their experience, as the classroom model in chapter three seeks to accomplish.

Insofar as the instructor takes on the role of mediator, he or she must acquire "the knowledge and skills needed to negotiate subcultures" (Gholson and Stumpf 78). Hence, the instructor must also be prepared to interact in the classroom according to the various cultures present. Keeping in mind the necessary objectives for the course, the instructor must maintain his or her role as language instructor and facilitator. As facilitator, the

instructor encourages student-centered learning by guiding, rather than instructing or determining, classroom interactions. In order to effectively achieve this, the facilitator must develop a curriculum that establishes and meets course objectives and program outcomes, while recognizing and understanding the varying perspectives in the classroom. In other words, “Culturally responsive teachers need to know how to develop a curriculum that takes into account the understanding and perspectives of different groups while also attending to the development of higher-level cognitive skills” (Darling-Hammond and Bransford 251). That is, it is the responsibility of an instructor to create a curriculum that addresses students’ cognitive skills, while taking into account all of the cultural perspectives that make up each individual and the classroom community as a whole, as well as the content of the subject being taught, especially important in the language classroom. In doing so, the instructor or facilitator, simultaneously encourages culturally mindful, student-centered interactions, which help to establish learner identity and cooperative autonomy among learners.

By giving the students a certain degree of autonomy in the process of learning the language, students are able to build confidence in their learning abilities to become autonomous learners and speakers of the language. The instructor, then, in order to establish a setting for students to develop their autonomy, has to act as facilitator, allowing the students to take charge of their language learning. This way, the instructor encourages students to step into the foreground of the classroom community, having already laid the groundwork for a learner-centered setting. In other words, the facilitator establishes what is going to take place in the classroom. Within this setting, the lessons are organized so that students have to take responsibility for their learning and

performance, based on what the teacher has already set up. Therefore, the teacher has created an environment where the notions of a learner-centered classroom, learner autonomy, teacher as facilitator, and the creation of a positive learning environment are consistently intertwined.

This integration is beneficial, as each of these notions work efficiently in tandem with one another. In other words, the instructor must establish a positive learning environment in order for students to build trust in the instructor and in the rest of the classroom community. Learner-centered approaches simultaneously encourage this positive environment, by building students' confidence in the ownership of their learning, while also encouraging students to develop a sense of autonomy. In other words, learner autonomy can be formed through learner-centered approaches. In fact, this relationship grew increasingly recognized over the last half of the twentieth century, in that "the educational profession began to emphasize the value of learner autonomy in the form of learner centered approaches" (Brown, "Principles," 122). These approaches have been known to include, "discovery learning, problem-posing, group work, cooperative learning, and selecting certain goals for individual pursuit" (Brown, "Principles," 122). Meanwhile, a learner-centered classroom is most effectively coordinated with students' needs and abilities in mind.

Autonomous learners will "actively participate in their own autonomous learning process" (Brown, "Principles," 124). As such, the instructor's job is to establish the appropriate environment in the classroom for this autonomous learning process and to then facilitate the activities that take place within that classroom setting. Autonomous learners are also expected to "control various aspects of their learning for accomplishing

specific goals” and to “regulate their cognitive and affective states” (Brown, “Principles,” 124), each of which coincide with a learner-centered classroom, facilitated by the instructor. By taking control of their learning, students become intrinsically motivated to accomplish tasks, while simultaneously forming “positive beliefs about themselves” (Brown, “Principles,” 124). This confidence simultaneously encourages language development, while also helping the instructor or facilitator to establish a positive learning environment.

Students are then able to “use strategies to move from conscious knowledge to automatic procedural knowledge” (Brown, “Principles,” 124), further enhancing each of their language skills. This way, students can “select appropriate strategies for widely differing purposes and contexts” (Brown, “Principles,” 124), further benefiting the way in which they establish their practical use of the language. Autonomous students can also “make the connection between strategy use and outcomes” (Brown, “Principles,” 124), by which they are able to choose appropriate language strategies to apply to a variety of situations. This can also support their practical use of the language for effective communication and for completing a task successfully, which correspondingly builds students’ confidence in their learning abilities and application of the language.

The instructor as facilitator is the coordinator of this positive learning environment, ensuring that the classroom setting is arranged for the development of confidence and student autonomy. Each of these notions benefit one another in the development of confident, independent students, who are able to use their language learning for practical applications.

The role of teacher as facilitator, then, is to develop a class where students build

trust in the instructor as well as in their classmates, while simultaneously building the confidence to express themselves, both in the classroom and beyond the classroom. By doing so, once students have confidence in their language ability, they will be more inclined to speak up and use their language progressively outside of the classroom. This also encompasses one of the 5 Cs presented by ACTFL, “community.” In establishing confidence and trust within the classroom, a classroom community is formed, which can encourage trust and relationship building outside of the classroom.

In order to develop an all-encompassing curriculum that creates connections for students, through the teaching of the target culture in combination with students’ personal cultural experiences, as well as the experiences of individuals discussed in the classroom, of whom they have never met, it is useful if teachers have an interdisciplinary background of knowledge. In other words, “teachers need to have wide-range knowledge of the subject matter content, so that they can construct a curriculum that includes multiple representations addressing the prior experiences of different groups of students” (Darling-Hammond and Bransford 251). Therefore this curriculum seeks to incorporate the multiple experiences represented in the classroom through a variety of activities, which acknowledge the subject of ESL through identity, culture, community, and the development of the English language.

Moreover, teaching is also in the way material is presented, and for this study, the material is presented through the use of literature and the arts for the benefit of the teaching of culture. As it is well known, different students have different strengths and styles of learning. Some students are auditory learners, some visual, some kinesthetic, and in some cases students exhibit all three learning styles (Larsen-Freeman). This

curriculum allows all students to exhibit their strengths, engage with familiar learning styles that can be attributed to their own cultures, such as enhancing memorization skills through the memorization of acting out story scripts, and to, thus, feel confident in their learning, as is further discussed in chapter four.

Facilitating assignments that reflect this variety of learning styles also assists in encouraging students to become aware of what learning strategies work best for them. As awareness is closely related to the development of student autonomy, it is important to note that learning through a variety of strategies can support learners to establish this awareness. It is noted that, “Closely linked to the concept of autonomy is the demand on learners to become aware of their own process of learning” (Brown, “Principles,” 123). In fact, autonomy, awareness, and action are expected to interweave with one another. In order for students to take action on their learning, in this case, by using their language for peaceful dialogue, they must first develop awareness and autonomy. Allowing students to experiment with various learning strategies supports student autonomy and awareness, and, therefore, encourages positive learning.

In order to assist the instructor in developing this classroom “familiarity,” the model of instruction presented in chapter three provides the instructor with much of the cultural and learning engagement groundwork that is necessary. Thus, this approach includes materials that encourage cultural exchange and various modes of learning. In other words, the instructor can be thought of as cultural facilitator and mediator, thus, guiding the class to engage various learning styles and also mediating classroom exchange to ensure that students are interacting through positive and productive dialogue. Hence, as facilitator, the instructor acts as a guide, thus leading students to their own

independent learning. The instructor as facilitator sets the classroom objectives and ensures that those objectives are met. The instructor as mediator, however, observes the classroom's productivity and becomes involved if there is a cultural misunderstanding. Therefore, it is possible for instructors to take on both roles at the same time.

Hence, if the instructor is to act as facilitator and cultural mediator, he or she is asking that students empower themselves to interact and become communicative in the classroom. This is partly what suggests the need for instilling confidence in students in order for students to use their English language to communicate effectively, and a strong supportive community encourages this. Therefore, the instructor facilitates the classroom community to then also take on the role of classroom and cultural mediator, once students have established sufficient autonomy to communicate in the classroom.

One must note, that many second language learners are reserved by their fear of using the language. In fact it has been noted that, "Because of language anxiety, many potentially excellent L2 learners are naturally inhibited" (Oxford 2). In other words, students, even when perfectly capable of communicating in English, will not attempt it for fear of misusing their English in front of others. However, a strong classroom community supports learners to overcome language anxiety. In fact, "they combat inhibition by using positive self-talk, by extensive use of practicing in private, and by putting themselves in situations where they have to participate communicatively" (Oxford 2). Therefore, this is a student-centered model of learning, which establishes community.

Moreover, in the learner or student-centered classroom, curriculum supports the needs of various learning styles through various approaches such as "discovery learning,

problem-posing, group work, cooperative learning, and selecting certain goals for individual pursuit” (Brown, “Principles,” 122). A learner-centered curriculum acknowledges that students have a variety of learning needs and preferences. By presenting students with activities that allow them to explore the various learning styles, they can identify their own needs while also enhancing their ability to learn in a variety of ways.

Furthermore, the learner-centered classroom is based on the notion that students are “self-directed, responsible decision makers” (Richards 23). Thus, in their exploration of various learning styles, this can be realized by the students. This theory becomes evident in the classroom model in chapter three, through group activities, which facilitate interactive cultural dialogue in various forms, as well as individual, contemplative assignments.

Additionally, the model provides explanations and examples of various literature and the arts-based classroom experiences, many of which are inspired by coursework at Drew University, personal experiences as a learner abroad, and as dean of Concordia Language Villages’ English Language Program. The purpose of the curriculum model is to assist the instructor in predicting challenges in classroom management. Thus, the model prepares instructors by offering experiences and activities in developing a classroom community and confidence by building relationships, assisting students in overcoming stage fright, navigating cultural misunderstandings, and cultivating appropriate personal and cultural forms of expression. Additionally, each of these categories helps to facilitate cultural exchange, communication, community, and mediation in the classroom. They essentially work to instill in students the tools for

peacebuilding through this student-centered classroom model, which encourages and encompasses student autonomy.

Let us turn then, to an explanation of the autonomous learner, as this student leads in his or her own learning process, guided by the instructor. The learner should be able to “select appropriate strategies for widely differing purposes and contexts” (Brown, “Principles,” 124). This can also mean that students are able to determine the appropriate use of language for appropriate contexts. Moreover, students “Actively participate in their own autonomous learning process” (Brown, “Principles,” 124), and can, thus, engage in independent decision-making. Additionally, the autonomous student “forms positive beliefs about themselves” (Brown, “Principles,” 124), often facilitated by classmates and instructor. As such, it is up to the instructor to instill confidence in students by providing a student-centered curriculum.

This is a concept also considered in Brown’s “12 Principles of Language Learning.” For Brown, “confidence” is particularly significant to achieving language success and, therefore, enhancing student autonomy. It is stated, then, “The eventual success that learners attain in a task is partially a factor of their belief that they indeed are fully capable of accomplishing the task” (Brown, “English Teaching” 13). It can be noted, then, that if students build confidence in their language acquisition, they can eventually build the autonomy for becoming global peacekeepers. In other words, instructors can help “learners to see that raising their awareness of styles and strategies aids them in the authentic use of language ‘out there’” (Brown, “Principles,” 137). Students can then apply their language learning to the world outside of the classroom.

The instructor's role, then, as cultural facilitator and classroom mediator is inherent in the class model. This model assists, then, in preparing the instructor as cultural mediator, in the same way that a conflict resolution mediator prepares for a potential conflict situation. However, much of this process must occur in the classroom, as it is a learning experience for all class members, including the instructor. To put it another way, one, indeed, cannot predict all challenges or situations, which may arise in the classroom. Moreover, being that every class has its own course objectives and necessary curriculum outcomes, this is a model that can be applied to the ESL classroom in addition to other classroom objectives. In other words, these are suggested activities and experiences for enhancing cultural exchange and English language learning.

Identity

Identity, as has been mentioned, encompasses culture in all of its complexity. Thus, the concept of identity is a necessary component of this study as it establishes the complexities of the classroom community, and, therefore, assists in explaining the interactions that occur in the classroom. Moreover, understanding identity helps us to understand how students interact with the target language culture and with the various cultures in the classroom. Therefore, it assists in conceptually situating students' position in the global society. As such, in the text, *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*, in the chapter, *Language, Culture, and Identity*, Brown begins with a case study of a man named Robert, who discusses the many facets of his identity in a representation of the complexity of identity as a whole:

“Who am I?” echoed Robert, in response to a question about his cultural identity. “I have no idea, really. With my parents (U.S. State Department officers) I lived in five different countries in the 18 years before I went to college in Southern California. I was exposed to Serbo-Croatian (Belgrade) and Arabic (Kuwait) in my younger years, then acquired Korean (Pusan) and Japanese (Osaka). And of course, English!”... “I don’t know how to describe my identity. I’m sort of American now, at the age of 41, but for years since my early college days I felt culturally homeless.” (174)

As is depicted in Robert’s response, this is a loaded question, of course, as “who we are” is composed of many different components and circumstances. Therefore, when asking oneself, “Who am I?” one must also consider the question of community. As Chinua Achebe asks, “Who is my community?” (59). Though, Achebe is referring to the difficulties in determining or establishing community. He uses the hypothetical example, “If I write novels in a country in which most citizens are illiterate, who then is my community?” (59). Hence, community is a large part of what defines identity. Many communities are chosen, reflecting a fraction of who we are or perhaps who we hope to be. However, we are also born into communities, of which we have no control.

Similar to culture, identity is complex and has acquired several different definitions and interpretations. However, according to Li, “research on identity issues in English-as-a-second-language contexts has just gathered momentum in the last two decades” (23). Considering the multilayered nature of identity, I will first broadly define the term and then explain my interpretation of the role of identity in the context of the

Chinese ESL classroom, the American ESL classroom, and in describing the instructor in both, as it is relevant to this study. In its broadest sense, David Block includes the multiple layers of the individual in his understanding of identity.

Block describes these layers as “Socially constructed, self-conscious, ongoing narratives that individuals perform, interpret, and project in dress, bodily movements, actions and language” (32). Therefore, identity is ever changing over time or by circumstance, which brings further complexity to its definition. He notes, “Identities are about negotiating new subject positions at the crossroads of the past, present and future. Individuals are shaped by their sociohistories but they also shape their sociohistories as life goes on” (32). In other words, identity is not stagnant; it is an evolving force that is influenced by environment and individual preference.

For the purpose of this study, it is critical to understand the sociohistory of student and instructor, because it sheds light on how they understand their identities at a given time, specifically when they are in the classroom, and how their sociohistories may be shaped or altered by the classroom. Furthermore, how this can affect the student or teacher’s progress in the course and as a global citizen must be given consideration, as well. Block also expresses the various power relations that help to define identity, such as economic, cultural, and social factors that both “Facilitate and constrain interactions with others in the different communities of practice with which individuals engage in their lifetimes” (32). In combination with the aforementioned, demographics such as “ethnicity, race, nationality, migration, gender, social class and language” (32) also help to seal together this single multilayered definition of identity.

As the many aspects of narrative can certainly be applied to multiple research

projects and fields of study, I focus primarily on culture as describing from where a part of student identity derives.

U.S. ESL Classroom Identity

Culture is a critical component of identity and, therefore, it is necessary to elaborate on the ways in which identity functions in the ESL classroom as a means of explaining cultural interactions, both among students' native cultures, as well as between students' native cultures and the target language culture. "Identity" is as complex a term as "culture" and requires considerable attention in this study, as a primary element in understanding the way in which students interact with the target culture and how they understand themselves, their classmates, and their teacher.

In fact, in the storytelling classroom model, students interact by sharing parts of their identity with classmates and may even engage in more personal stories. For instance, "Advanced students might also share personal examples of critical incidents or cultural problems encountered during a cultural exchange or study abroad program" (Knutson 604). This is valuable, particularly for students joining ESL programs in colleges in the United States, as it also highlights the personal component of learning a second language and the common narrative between classmates. It also allows the instructor the opportunity to engage with the challenges that students face abroad, and, perhaps, discuss ways in which he or she relates to those challenges, hence further developing classroom community. In fact, there is a collective focus among interested researchers "on the difficulties and barriers non-native speakers of English experience in

their reconstruction of a new identity in a culturally divergent, English-speaking country”(Li 23). Language, and our ability to use it accurately, influences our interactions with others and how others view learners.

While it is a devastating truth, language, and specifically English, has become a means of survival particularly in the United States and, therefore, ESL students in the U.S. must have the necessary tools for communicating in a culturally diverse environment. In other words, students are learning English and interacting with cultural diversity in the classroom to ensure that their own language, along with the many other diverse languages spoken in the United States, continue to have voice. This way, students acknowledge an understanding for their classmates and communities and still have the opportunity to be heard, as to maintain peaceful dialogue.

Learning English goes deeper than knowing how to solve an algebraic equation, as it helps to make up our identity. If a student answers something wrong on an algebra exam, perhaps that student needs to study, or potentially algebra simply isn't their subject; however misusing or not knowing a language can have other connotations and can effect safety and general well-being, which is why learning culture in the ESL classroom is a critical component to learning English.

In the United States for instance, we increasingly encounter countless cases of assault and harassment toward immigrants and threats to their identities, specifically those who speak little or no English, and, in many cases, aggressors report having felt threatened by the victim's inability to communicate. In other words, they experienced an internal threat to their identity for the fear that it may somehow be compromised by a new language and cultural upbringing, and in every language, where identity feels

threatened, conflict occurs.

Since students studying ESL in the United States have a common, shared experience in dealing with cultural barriers both extreme and mundane, along with the “reconstruction of a new identity,” they have the opportunity to use that common struggle to build community with one another and set an example for other English speakers across the U.S., both American citizens and otherwise, whether they are ESL students or not. When students talk about some of the difficulties they face and share stories of difficult cultural exchanges during their time in the U.S., they have the opportunity to bond over a common enemy. This way, if nothing else, they now have two concrete ways of relating, both through English, as well as through their mutual understanding of what it feels like to live and learn in a foreign culture, and how that can influence, or perhaps even threaten, one’s identity or physical safety. This exchange, however, is not limited to the U.S. ESL classroom.

Chinese ESL Classroom Identity

In China, there are also a multitude of cultural identities and cultures within the country, much like what a student will encounter in the U.S. For instance, “The substantial variations in natural resources and geographic conditions across various Chinese regions, combined with a number of large-scale migrations throughout Chinese history, have resulted in a multitude of local cultures in China, each with its own distinctive characteristics in dialect, customs, social norms, and codes of ethics” (Gao and Long 247). As it is noted, China encompasses a multitude of cultures, with each

individual defined by his or her own identity. Hence, there is a vast range of diversity throughout China's 56 nations, as varying provinces and ethnic groups speak their own languages and foster varying cultural values. That being said, students join ESL classrooms from provinces around China, each of which is known for its prominent features, such as economic status, cuisine, or specific dialect. In fact, provincial dialect is the "proxy for local culture" (Gao and Long 248). In other words, dialect distinguishes many of the cultures in China. Moreover, "clear regional attributes are embodied by the many different dialects of China" (Gong, Chow, and Ahlstrom 221). Therefore, there is also a direct correlation between dialect and personal relationships. In other words, "Dialect has long been recognized as a basis for establishing personal relationships..." (Gong, Chow, and Ahlstrom 221). This is not only true for China, but in various countries throughout the world. However, it is critical to develop learner identity in the Chinese ESL classroom, in order to establish its expansive and potentially overlooked spectrum of diversity. This way, learners can understand and share their own identities, while also understanding their classmates' identities, so as to develop mutual respect for the differing provinces around China, as a means of establishing relationships.

Culture is preserved in language and can be altered by accent or dialect, as noted by the comments of Chinua Achebe. For some, language determines cultural upbringing, as well as community. In Karnataka, India for instance, students have the option to attend Kannada medium schools, where they are surrounded only by the language and the respective culture that goes along with it. A friend from India explained her difficulty in choosing whether to send her children to learn Kannada or to learn English, because she knew it would mean a difference in lifestyle. Since culture is so deeply embedded in

language, it often also determines community and with whom and what we surround ourselves. This becomes evident in the ESL classroom in China, as students often gravitate to one another, based on the various provinces from which they come. In some cases, students reject classmates with whom they are not as comfortable, based on their local culture, a phenomenon that will be further discussed in chapter three. Thus, there are many identities and layers of identity functioning in the Chinese ESL classroom, and each layer carries with it a different result or consequence within the classroom community.

For instance, learning pronunciation can be influenced by native dialect, in that some students may have more trouble than others in pronouncing certain words. Hence, “Different language groups often vary in terms of which English sounds they find difficult to pronounce” (Tubbs iv). In other words, students’ native dialects affect the way they learn and influence the challenges that they face, and as an ESL instructor in China, it is critical to know about these challenges in order to properly address the problem. Not to mention, “English language instruction in China is often teacher centered, with the instructor lecturing and students taking notes. Most classes do not focus on communicative skills” (Tubbs iv). Therefore, students may not be accustomed to the ESL teaching styles presented in the classroom. Thus, instructors must bring cultural knowledge into the classroom, or must at least be prepared for a multicultural setting, while recognizing each student as an individual, who brings to the table, his or her own identity variations, based on regional culture, encompassed by language.

Teacher Identity in U.S. and Chinese ESL Classroom

While much confusion can arise from determining the many aspects of our identity and essentially attempting to determine who we are while trying to learn about others in the classroom, instructors go through this restructuring of identity, as well. For example, “There are also authors recounting their own encounters with cultural clashes and identity confusions” (Li 23-4). This is not surprising, particularly for ESL instructors from the United States, living and teaching abroad, but also upon their return to teach in the United States. By living abroad, they not only become a part of a greater community of expatriates, adding to their already complex identity, but they also then bring that new addition to their identity back with them to the United States.

Therefore, instructors from the United States who teach abroad, specifically in China, for the purpose of this study, carry with them their own identity or identities, and then return to the U.S. having acquired new components to their preexisting structure of selfhood, which can certainly pose confusion. As for non-native English speakers teaching ESL in the U.S. and abroad, there exists a separate experience in which identity thickens. There are, of course, instructors from China teaching ESL in China, ESL in the U.S., or both. In some cases, particularly for ESL instructors abroad, an instructor may be from, for example, Australia, having lived and taught in nine other countries, traveling back and forth, teaching between the U.S and China, not to mention the aforementioned instructor as mediator, adding to this blend of identity. The components of an instructor’s identity are endless, and they come with the stories and experiences that we bring to the classroom. The same goes for students and individuals across the globe. Identity shifts

between moments and across contexts and communities, and the instructor has the opportunity to set an example of acceptance toward new components of identity and can encourage students to do the same.

Therefore, the educator can pose as a model for sharing identity in the ESL classroom. In other words, “By sharing pieces of our stories, we raise the notion that stories and personal experiences matter. We as educators, must reflect on who we are and what stories we want to share with our colleagues and students” (Jakar and Milofsky 43). Of course, there needs to be some filter for the stories we tell, and we want to ensure that we are giving students a real and credible understanding of who we are as “cultural subjects” without saying too much. It is critical that our stories be true to who we are and honest without revealing too much about our personal selves, as a means of building trust to establish a safe classroom environment.

Thus, “Sharing stories builds trust and contributes to understanding, allowing our students to see the humanity within us and inviting them, as well as ourselves, to see the humanity within others” (Jakar and Milofsky 43). Hence, stories help us to see the humanity in others, thus instilling moral value in the classroom curriculum. If students do not trust or believe the stories we tell, however, we could risk losing not only the sense of classroom community, but also the students’ ability to see the humanity in the *other*.

There exists the notion of “sociocultural consciousness” which, “enables teachers to realize that the worldview they may have grown up with is not universal but is greatly influenced by their life experiences and aspects of their cultural, gender, race, ethnicity, and social-class background” (Darling-Hammond and Bransford 253). A sociocultural consciousness, then, asks that teachers explore and evaluate who we are and what

experiences we bring to the classroom, as a way of understanding our own identity as well as students' individuality and identity. In doing so, instructors are better able to manage a classroom experience that is more beneficial to the student.

In fact, individuals are better able to interact when they first understand themselves. Hence, teachers are better able to interact with students when they first “develop self-knowledge, in particular, an awareness of themselves as cultural beings as well as an awareness of the ways their culture shapes their views” (Darling-Hammond and Bransford 253). Moreover, this is a critical component for effectively communicating with the class and acknowledging one's own identity both in and outside of the classroom.

Management of Cultural Interactions in the Classroom

In applying the aforementioned course materials, it is necessary to consider why these various storytelling methods are used. It is critical to consider the ways in which students can relate to the material, and, therefore, how they might respond to the material, as a means of enhancing classroom management. Hence, “Research shows that effective classroom management starts with the creation of curriculum that is meaningful to students and with teaching that is engaging and motivating” (Darling-Hammond and Bransford 37), and the way to provide students with this type of classroom experience is by incorporating material that is relevant to their current, past, and future experiences.

Furthermore, for purposes of classroom management, it is necessary to provide students the opportunity for communication and interaction. Thus, “Classroom

management is further strengthened by the creation of learning communities that give students the opportunity to work together productively and to learn in a psychologically safe environment” (Darling-Hammond and Bransford 37). In other words, when students feel comfortable in their environment and are engaging respectfully and considerately with peers, students work together productively, therefore, strengthening the instructor’s classroom management.

Consequently, students have to feel comfortable to be accepted and to participate in their classroom environment and interaction, particularly when being taught something as personal as language. However, I would argue that it is crucial for the development of the student, to expand their comfort zone once they have gained considerable confidence and stability within the classroom community as a “familiar” space, as is elaborated on in chapter four. Therefore, this is somewhat reflective of Curran’s theory, as is explained in chapter one, in that students reach eventual independence through positive reinforcement.

Moreover, values students learn, through a safe classroom environment, can be applied to real-life situations. In other words, these values “are essential for later life and for the society as a whole” (Darling-Hammond and Bransford 38). Thus, a classroom environment can be safe while also challenging students to think outside of their traditional learning experience. Hence, by learning these values through students’ interactions with a person or culture that may be new to them, students are challenged in an environment that encourages peaceful interaction.

Classroom management embodies the entire classroom and all of its functions. It is not limited to “arranging desks, awarding good behavior and choosing consequences for misconduct” (Darling-Hammond and Bransford 327). On the contrary, classroom

management encompasses classroom relationships, organizing curriculum that students can relate to, and facilitating communication and a productive working environment among the classroom community. It is a matter of making decisions and instilling in students moral values and character development for meaningful interaction. (Darling-Hammond and Bransford 327). That is, one can affirm that instruction seeks to encourage the integration and expansion of the whole person.

Instructors have a significant influence on student motivation and have the ability to alter student participation in the classroom depending on the curriculum that they provide. In fact, “Research demonstrates that children are motivated to learn when they have confidence in their abilities” (Darling-Hammond and Bransford 333), and confidence in the classroom commonly strikes when students find familiarity in the subject, whether in primary school or college. Moreover, when considering ESL as the subject in focus, it is critical to note that students must find commonality between their language and culture and the cultural undertones of English, while also finding commonality with classmates. When instruction itself becomes a cultural bridge for students to relate to their own culture, both structurally and content-wise, they retain the material more efficiently, leading to enhanced student outcomes.

In reference to a study by Lee, regarding “the effects of using the African American tradition of scaffolding for teaching skills in literacy interpretation to African American students,” Darling-Hammond and Bransford note, “She found that when teachers incorporated this cultural knowledge into instruction, the students provided longer and more sophisticated comments on the texts” (244). This does not come as a surprise, as students are responding to what they know best. In another study by Au,

“when teachers incorporated participation structures into their lessons that were similar to ‘talk story’ in Hawaiian culture, the reading achievement of Hawaiian second-grade children significantly increased” (Darling-Hammond and Bransford 244). Again, students were presented with material with which they were familiar, building confidence in their response. Therefore, cultural relevance is not exclusive to college-age ESL students, as it influences student outcomes across all ages of instruction.

Furthermore, if not properly expounded upon, cultural misunderstandings can often work against students. For instance, Chinese students are often hesitant to use the first person perspective in their writing, and traditionally, their essays are structured differently than how they are taught to write in ESL composition courses. For example, among Chinese learners, they commonly write their thesis last. This can pose a problem in the classroom, as students may possess the writing skills necessary to complete the assignment, but simultaneously lack an understanding of the expectations of writing an effective essay in English, which must be addressed in a class of developing writing skills for an English-speaking audience.

It is critical to note that there are multiple implications of teaching English in various and distinct cultural locations. Students’ written and spoken English is informed by their own cultural affiliations and understandings of spoken and written language patterns, as well as of cultural context. This can vary according to the setting and to the group of students in question, as students from China use a different writing structure than students from Argentina. Moreover, the meaning behind students’ writing is informed by their varying cultural backgrounds, hence, a student from China may understand a text differently than a student from Argentina according to cultural

normality. Additionally, in an ESL classroom of students from varying cultural affiliations, it is critical that students understand their classmates' perspectives and the diversity in the classroom, as some students may interpret the target language differently than others.

In his study on classroom and culture, Fan Shen of Marquette University, recalls his own experience learning English in the English composition classroom. He notes, "Starting with the first English paper I wrote, I found that learning to compose in English is not an isolated classroom activity, but a social and cultural experience" (Shen 459). As such, Shen's experience is similar to the implications of the current study, in that the classroom and the world are linked. Shen continues to relay his understanding, stating, "The rules of English composition encapsulate values that are absent in, or sometimes contradictory to, the values of other societies (in my case, China)" (460). As a result, "learning the rules of English composition is, to a certain extent, learning the values of Anglo American society" (Shen 460). Shen depicts the cultural values interwoven in language and suggests the way in which those values can become contradictory when confronted with a new language. In doing so, Shen found that he had to "reprogram" his mind (Shen 460). In China, modesty is highly valued, so referencing oneself or even accepting a compliment with "thank you" can appear boastful or distasteful to a Chinese audience, and more severely, the word "I," itself, has political connotations.

Shen explains that on numerous occasions, his English writing instructors told him "Just write what *you* think" (460), a notion common to Western-influenced writing courses, noting a distinct cultural difference between instruction in the U.S. and China. Shen goes on to say that while the instruction appeared simple and beneficial, to him it

was confusing and unclear, leaving him hesitant to proceed, as he and his instructor attached different meaning to the word “I.” For Shen, “The word ‘I’ has often been identified with another ‘bad’ word, ‘individualism,’ which has become a synonym for selfishness in China” (460). Meanwhile, this instruction, in the Western sense, is influenced by individualism as a positive characteristic.

However, in China, “I” can indicate selfishness and can even embody negative political connotations. In other words, “Both political pressure and literary tradition require that ‘I’ be somewhat hidden or buried in writings and speeches; presenting the ‘self’ too obviously would give people the impression of being disrespectful of the Communist Party in political writings and boastful in scholarly writings” (Shen 460). It must be acknowledged, then, that not all cultures values autonomy, and that the concept of the autonomous learner is one, which has, as a result, been met with dispute.

Autonomous learning, in other words, is said to have “obvious origins in European and North American traditions of individualism” (Brown, “Principles,” 122), making it, for some, less than desirable in the global setting.

However, if incorporated into lessons with respect to the learner’s cultural customs, by establishing the diversity among identities in the classroom, learner autonomy can actually assist in the expression of identity, by encouraging the confidence to speak up. Through this expression, instructors can also learn how to more effectively engage with their students. In Shen’s case for instance, if the instructor does not understand the cultural significance of “I,” or is at least not aware that there may be cultural misunderstandings such as this in the classroom, it may have appeared then, that

Shen was either unwilling to cooperate or incapable of completing a requirement for the class.

As this is the case, upbringing can significantly alter the way in which communication is understood. Sociocultural upbringing plays a major role in student participation, as students have varying expectations and definitions of participation according to their cultural upbringing (Darling-Hammond and Bransford). In other words, it is important for teachers and students to understand the cultural reasons for students' responses to the target culture, so as to know when the student needs further guidance. In another instance, the authors refer to Philips in a study observing that students from the Warm Springs Indian Reservation were accustomed to different participation structures than were used in their school. Students were hesitant to participate in classroom discussions, because "At home, parents rarely engaged in questioning of their children as a mode of teaching, and verbalization between adults and children was relatively infrequent" (Darling-Hammond and Bransford 244). Hence, students did not have the relevant experience to engage in this sort of instruction. Similarly, the authors look to Heath who "found that the patterns of interactions between adults and children were quite different at home and at school for African American children in Trackton" (Darling-Hammond and Bransford 244). This was because their "parents did not generally ask them stylized 'known answer' questions of the sort common in school (for example, 'What color is the leaf?' 'Who sat on a tuffet?'" (Darling-Hammond and Bransford 244).

As a result, students found that since these were obvious questions, they did not warrant a response (Darling-Hammond and Bransford 244). Hence, students likely

appeared disinterested in the question, and perhaps they were. However, their disinterest likely stemmed from a lack of cultural reference. Therefore, if the teacher lacks intercultural understanding of his or her students, cultural misunderstandings can turn into behavioral misconceptions.

For instance, when I, as a teacher, ask a student to line up for an activity and that student remains seated, it is my job to figure out why. Did the student misunderstand? Is he or she being difficult, or is the student's reaction simply a product of his or her educational upbringing? How do group dynamics themselves differ? Perhaps this student has never been asked to work in groups before or stand up and engage in classroom activities. These are all important cultural components to the ESL classroom, which an instructor must understand, or in the very least, consider.

While students learning English in China are surrounded by their own culture and language, they are also adapting to a foreign language and culture, and the same goes for students learning English in the United States, as well as for instructors. I have been a learner myself, in a foreign environment, when I studied abroad in Hyderabad, India and Venice, Italy, and have experienced what it feels like to be an outsider while trying to navigate an entirely new educational system and language. Thus, I have experienced being a learner in a foreign location and have developed a new understanding for what it means to study in a foreign location and how that affects a student and his or her learning environment. However, if we are able to develop a challenging, yet safe, space within the classroom, where cultural differences are acknowledged and where students feel they can express themselves freely, cultural barriers begin to disappear. These types of cultural experiences are prominent in ESL students' experiences throughout their academic

career, at all ages, as part of their upbringings and in many cases, cannot be altogether ignored or removed from the individual, nor should they be. In fact, much can be gained from these diverse ways of learning, in the development of an individual.

In China, educational competition is prominent. I asked students to compare and contrast a traditional Chinese classroom with an American-influenced, English class. Students reported that they are better able to learn and focus in a classroom setting that incorporates various teaching methods, rather than the strictly lecture-based curriculum to which they are accustomed. While it would seem that students would prefer a familiar learning environment, and while in many cases students would prefer a lecture-based classroom, it is not surprising that students are better able to focus in an ESL classroom, which stimulates a variety of learning styles. Particularly when learning a second language, students need to interact with the material in order to put it to practical use.

This is not to say, however, that lecturing should be altogether omitted. On the contrary, instructors have the opportunity to integrate various means of instruction with the sorts of instruction or learning styles to which students are accustomed, as a means of engaging the whole student. As such, lectures can be used for listening comprehension or as a means of teaching students proper presentation skills and note-taking strategies. Moreover, the instructor must provide context for the lesson in an introduction or explanation, which would constitute lecturing. Each of these uses of lecture-based instruction can work cooperatively with an interactive classroom, in which students listen to the instructor and engage with the material. Furthermore, many ESL students are familiar with the memorization tactics used particularly in Asian institutions, which are beneficial to learning and retaining information, but can be made more effective when

used in combination with a Western-style ESL classroom.

Students in India, for instance, memorize textbooks of information to complete hand-written standardized tests, while Chinese students are expected to memorize complex Chinese proverbs before they even understand the meaning behind them. In China, having learned complex memorization skills at such a young age, students convey a remarkable ability to retain information in the college classroom.

While this method of memorization has beneficial functions for the brain and for retaining information, students are often unfamiliar with the Western style of a communicative and collaborative classroom environment, a necessary component of the ESL classroom, which can be highlighted in making this cultural comparison with students. Therefore, by combining methods of memorization with a Western-style learning environment, students utilize their own skills while also engaging various brain functions necessary for learning in the ESL classroom. In conversation with my Chinese teacher, he told me that it is easy for him to memorize complex information, and that he believes it is a result of memorization techniques used in school.

Therefore, it is critical for instructors to attain the cultural understanding necessary to manage a productive and supportive classroom environment. This gives students the best possible opportunity to work to their full potential by providing them with every opportunity and the tools to do so. Again, however, if the instructor refers to this study as a model for the ways in which they can facilitate a culturally competent classroom, then they can, in the very least, use this as their cultural groundwork, bringing awareness and sensitivity to their teaching.

However, this is not entirely sufficient, as “In the classrooms of culturally

responsive teachers, the methods of instruction and assessment, the curriculum, and the classroom climate work together to support the academic achievement of all students” (Darling-Hammond 245). Thus, the objective is for instructors to be culturally sensitive and responsive to the students so that the language can first be acquired, therefore supporting the student learning. Being culturally responsive helps to construct a learning community in which the language and its culture can best be taught. Clearly, it becomes critical for the purpose of this project, in a culturally competent, interpersonal environment, that the instructor understands fully the many layers of identity, even if only through this study.

Classroom Community and Communication

Language makes up a part of an individual’s identity along with many other factors, including cultural exposure and cultural upbringing. In fact, “A view of language as integral to identity has particular significance in a bilingual or multilingual environment”(Knutson 602). In a multicultural ESL setting, then, English is one aspect of identity to which everyone in the class can relate, along with, for instance, their shared communal identity as college students and as a part of the larger bilingual, or in some cases, multilingual community. Recognizing and finding this common ground is part of what breaks down any resistance to the parts of classmates’ identities that may be unfamiliar, as students communicate through English and learn about one another.

Once students gain an understanding for who their instructor is and of who their classmates are, as individuals and as representatives of their cultural characteristics,

through the use of narrative, the learning environment enhances. In other words, we create a more productive classroom community, where students can focus on language learning from a cultural perspective. Students break out of their shells in familiar environments, so when each individual shares their story and what makes them who they are, they each create their own safety zone amidst those of their fellow classmates, to then engage with the “unfamiliar.”

This feeling of safety and confidence is then used to understand and engage with the unfamiliar, or perhaps otherwise unsafe, making the unfamiliar comfortable, as well. Hence, this way, students never actually feel uncomfortable while engaging with the unfamiliar. In other words, storytelling genres present students with familiar cultural topics to then find comfort in the unfamiliar, thus, supporting their language development and encouraging cultural exchange.

That being said, it is important to also acknowledge the native language or languages that are inherent in the ESL classroom, as well. “As language instructors are well aware, learners’ attitudes toward a second or foreign culture may range from fear, hostility, and resistance, on one end of the spectrum, to attraction or even unquestioning fascination, on the other” (Knutson 593). The notion behind narrative in the ESL classroom, is to foster that sense of attraction and fascination. In fact, “Studies investigating the factors that influence an individual’s response to dissimilarity have demonstrated that engaging in interaction increases attraction to dissimilar others” (Knutson 601). Therefore, when students engage in an interactive and communicative literature and the arts-based classroom, their attraction to the unfamiliar identities in the classroom increases.

Such communication techniques not only help to promote classroom community, but also engage a more productive learning environment. This way, students are more open-minded to learning about a new culture, without feeling as though they have to give up any part of their own cultural identities. Knutson discusses this concept of “altered cultural personality and identity” (593), and that it often occurs as a result of a student studying abroad or learning a second language in the ESL classroom. However, if students do not feel that they have to “alter” their own identity, but rather learn about and adopt parts of a new cultural identity, then any fear of losing part of themselves can be replaced by a feeling of gaining chosen attributes from another identity. This way, through the exchange of narrative as a way of learning from and teaching the other, some of that initial hostility or resistance, can be supplemented by curiosity and acceptance. Therefore, rather than “altering” cultural identity, how do we preserve native identity, while embracing the new?

As noted, people tend to feel hostile, fearful, and resistant when a concept is unfamiliar. It has the potential for danger, because the outcome is unknown. What is more familiar than our own personal stories? Stories are how we connect with, relate to, and communicate with one another. When we share our own stories, acknowledge that they exist and that they will not be replaced by some foreign concept. In doing so, we can alleviate any tension deriving from the fear of their disappearance. Moreover, stories create community and foster communication. As such, “Research also suggests that a strong link exists between social and academic performance and that being in a strong classroom community affects academic achievement” (Darling-Hammond and Bransford 336).

Chapter Three

Curricular Aspects of a Literature and the Arts-Based Classroom Model

The current chapter provides examples grounded in student-centered and humanities-based learning, for the ways in which literature and the arts support varying cultural perspectives and learning styles, as well as encouraging community and supporting peace-oriented dialogue. Through these examples, this chapter emphasizes the importance of self-expression, as it is correlated with language learning and cultural facilitation. In fact, the model lessons and classroom interactions displayed in this chapter are meant to convey the ways in which these three concepts are interrelated, in that, through self-expression, students gain the confidence to become autonomous learners, while also learning about the other cultures and identities expressed in this interactive learning environment.

The lessons contained in this chapter reflect lessons that were part of the curriculum I taught at levels ranging from high-beginner to intermediate and high-intermediate level ESL classes. The Academic Oral Discourse I 0303 and Academic Written Discourse I 0305 ESL classes discussed were held at Wenzhou-Kean University, in Wenzhou, China, and are intermediate to high-intermediate level classes. The Conversation I 0103 and Beginning Writing I 0105 classes discussed were held at Kean University, in Union, New Jersey and were high-beginner level classes. The projected course outcomes for Academic Oral Discourse I 0303 indicate that students will develop fluency, communication skills, and expanded English vocabulary. The Academic Written

Discourse I 0305 course outcomes anticipate advancement in reading, writing, critical thinking, and vocabulary development through learned skills, strategies, and language practice. The projected course outcomes for Conversation I 0103, high beginning level conversational ESL, indicate that students will be able to engage in basic conversational English in social, academic, and work related environments. Reading and Writing I 0105, high beginning level ESL reading and writing, on the other hand, anticipates that students will engage in reading texts related to college-level topics, and will be able to write personal responses to reading passages.

I have spent the last two years working for Kean University, U.S.A, and Wenzhou-Kean University, China. I currently teach ESL at Wenzhou-Kean University. My classes are filled with a diverse selection of students including active learners, visual learners, auditory learners, hearing-impaired learners, and students from various provinces throughout China. I am from the East Coast of the United States. Thus as a class, we are constantly learning from one another and exchanging information about where we come from, though this takes time and is a gradual process of self-discovery throughout the semester. While I cannot provide a first hand perspective of what it is like to attend an ESL class as a student in the United States or China, I can paint a picture of my perspective as an ESL instructor in China and as an instructor in the United States, witnessing first-hand, the experiences that students face.

Wenzhou-Kean University (WKU) is a Chinese-American run institution, established in Wenzhou, China's mountainous region of the Zhejiang Province. The campus comprises approximately 500 acres, though its facilities continue to expand. Kean University is located in the metropolitan area of Union, New Jersey, along the

Elizabeth River, extending over approximately 180 acres.

Kean University, NJ, established Wenzhou-Kean University in China in 2011, making Kean the only public U.S. University to open a full campus in China. Wenzhou-Kean University is cooperatively run by both the Chinese administration of Wenzhou-Kean and by the Kean U.S. administration. The school is represented by both American and Chinese flags, which can be seen upon entering the campus.

Professors from Kean University and from other predominantly English-speaking countries instruct classes at WKU. Enrollment is open to students throughout China and surrounding countries, and the University also provides a study abroad opportunity for students from Kean University U.S.A., making for a diverse campus environment, comprised of students and instructors from all over the world. Just over 800 students attend WKU.

WKU offers a number of majors, including English, Computer Science, Graphic Design, Finance, Accounting, Marketing, Global Business, and Architecture. Students successfully completing their studies earn degrees from Kean University. All students have the option to choose an English name and are required to complete coursework under the English Immersion Program, in preparation of their major coursework, taught solely in English, and for prospective employment opportunities after graduation. WKU prepares students for graduate school and the workforce to function as global citizens once they leave campus. All students are required to study basic English courses in their first year of study and are required to continue the study of English in later years.

Everything that I have taught my students, both at Wenzhou-Kean University and at Kean University, has been inspired by my own coursework at Drew University, a

liberal arts institution in Madison, NJ, through personal experience as a learner abroad, and through my role as Dean of Concordia Language Villages' English Language program, which brings middle to high school students together from around the world to learn English in preparation for attending college in the United States. To help incorporate the notions behind these classroom activities, a variety of my own experiences are integrated throughout the curriculum model.

As part of my regular curriculum design, I have allowed students freedom to explore what works best for them through various creative outlets within storytelling genres. This brings us together as a classroom community and encourages understanding among the students and the vastly different cultures from which they come, while capturing a glimpse into many other cultures around the world.

By encouraging this cultural exchange within the classroom, through language learning techniques, students develop their English language, as a sharpened tool to use for peace-oriented interactions. The misuse of language, the fear of using language inaccurately, and a lack of cultural competence each have the potential to ignite conflict. However, if students are able to confidently articulate English, supported by cultural relevance, and if they become well-versed in their own cultural and self-expression, then they can avoid misunderstandings, defend themselves and others from misunderstandings, diffuse conflict, and prepare to become global leaders, workers, or cultural ambassadors.

By communicating with one another and familiarizing ourselves with cultural understanding, students are able to draw connections between the classroom and the world at large. As such, this type of instruction is valuable to students because it is

relevant to their lives outside of the classroom as well, while also encouraging language practice in their daily lives, a matter with which language instructors frequently grapple. According to Darling-Hammond and Bransford, “good teachers must be truly present in the classroom, deeply engaged with their students and their subjects, and able to weave an intricate web of connections among themselves, their subjects, and their students, so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves” (13). This is particularly relevant in a classroom environment that seeks to teach students to create connections among themselves and between the classroom and the world, and this is precisely what I hope to achieve in my ESL classroom.

In an interdisciplinary literature and the arts-based classroom, we encourage students to weave a world of connections for themselves, where culture and community develop deeper meaning and become defined by relationship, through communication and comparisons. In this chapter, I depict the avenues to cultural and self-expression through a student-centered method, along with the themes that reflect common cultural misconceptions that occur in the classroom. These observations are intended to encourage ways of establishing relationship in the classroom, while recognizing the inhibitors of intercultural connection and communication.

In this classroom environment, students engage in a number of literature and the arts-based activities, as is displayed in the activity descriptions and models, which follow. Among the following activities, students have written poetry, letters, songs, film scripts, creative fiction and nonfiction. They have acted, sung, danced, and listened to Irish folktales, and have shared stories and learned about other cultures and lifestyles, as learning a second language means learning about people’s concerns, attitudes, feelings,

and challenges. The pursuit of second language learning can contribute toward efficiently navigating a global lifestyle, and the ESL classroom can serve as a way in which students can share their stories, experiences, and future concerns, to partly determine the diversity that can be expected of that lifestyle.

In the classroom, students explore their own individual ideas, and by providing them with the opportunity to explore those ideas, they are able to build vocabulary around their own emotions, as well as those of their classmates. Language is emotionally relative. Therefore, when students tap into things that they are excited about, it helps conversation flow, and makes learning the language more exciting as well. Students are able to broaden their vocabulary and strengthen and normalize their emotional everyday language. At the primary, college, and adult level, in any country or area of focus, students need academic stimulants to remain engaged in a stress-free environment, engaging interdisciplinary lessons based on literature and the arts in their language learning classes.

However, in language lessons, not every interaction is the same. As such, “It is reasonable to expect that motivation in culture learning and receptivity to a culture and its speakers will vary according to situation” (Knutson 593). However, if instructors present the material in a way that encourages students to experiment with new ways of thinking and learning, by engaging self and cultural expression, then it is equally possible that those varying classroom circumstances will encourage students to integrate new ways of thinking. Students, then, begin to establish this independence only once they have established a sense of comfort in the classroom.

As is the case for most second language classrooms, “Students can find

themselves in any number of different learning situations—interacting with an instructor individually or in class, writing a composition, performing a skit in front of classmates, or asking questions of a native speaker in a classroom interview—each of which could call forth different attitudes” (Knutson 594). Thus, depending on the activity, a student may have varying responses to different lessons. However, as long as these activities expose students to varying cultural norms, while allowing them to share aspects of their own cultural identity, then we are not asking students to do anything to compromise their own sense of selfhood. Instead, we are asking them to share and consider the stories of their instructor, their classmates, and of other cultural concepts, which may influence their storytelling. These influences include the aforementioned language patterns and cultural context behind their understanding of language, as well as personal and creative interpretations of stories.

For instance, In Katchen’s study of English major students in a Taiwan university, she encourages descriptive storytelling in the classroom through what she calls, “imaginary music videos,” using recordings of classical and folk music to elicit students’ creativity in talking about music. Her classroom objectives include “(1) practice in preparing reports in English; (2) practice in speaking English in front of a group; (3) expansion of sensitivity toward and ability to talk about aural stimuli; and (4) expansion of cultural awareness” (Katchen 4). Therefore, Katchen integrates an unconventional method of language instruction with applicable language learning outcomes, as is also displayed in the classroom model in chapter three.

In other cases, culture teaching has been approached in a number of ways, including, “the use of authentic materials (Galloway, 1985; Omaggio, 1986), culture

capsules (Taylor & Sorenson, 1961), culture clusters (Meade & Morain, 1973), culture assimilators (Fiedler, Mitchell, & Triandis, 1971), incorporation of proverbs, music, songs, celebrations of festivals (Hendon, 1980), and finally, study-abroad programs” (Dema and Moeller 80). As it is shown, application of culture teaching in the language classroom has been widely explored. Similarly, I attempt to encourage storytelling employing various aspects of literature and the arts, by incorporating a diverse curriculum, which sets the stage for self-expression and creativity. To put it another way, this method of instruction encourages individuality in an increasingly English-speaking world, so as to ensure that identity is not lost.

Moreover, engagement with culture, teaches one about the “self.” In other words, “Studying another people’s values and practices tells us something about our own” (Knutson 595). Therefore, even if students are merely relating on the fact that they are mutually gaining a better understanding of their own culture, it can be conducive to their relating to one another and to opening them up to attempting to learn about their classmates. This is a phenomenon also observed in conflict resolution, as parties work to achieve a shared goal. So, while students are learning and engaging with cultural norms different from their own, they are gaining a better understanding of their own culture and how their cultural norms interact with those of their classmates. This way, they can define parts of their identities and show where they fit as a classroom member, while simultaneously learning how to accept their classmates and instructor for their “culturally conditioned behaviors” (Knutson 598). Moreover, in order to understand others, one must understand the self. Hence, “awareness to self is a necessary corollary to awareness of others” (Knutson 598). As such, understanding one’s own identity in the classroom is an

important factor to developing cross-cultural awareness. Thus, “Cross-cultural awareness involves uncovering and understanding one’s own culturally conditioned behavior and thinking, as well as the patterns of others. Hence, the process involves not only perceiving the similarities and differences in other cultures but also recognizing the givens of the native culture” (Knutson 141). In other words, the “self” can be understood through learning about the “other,” and vice versa.

In the ESL classroom, misunderstandings are apt to occur, particularly when students and instructors are interacting and sharing parts of their own identities, which can perpetuate feelings of discomfort toward the learned culture, or even when students share similar sociocultural backgrounds or other intricate parts of their identities. In fact, similarity is also known to cause conflict comparable to the conflicts that arise between siblings. This is known as in-group conflict, as opposed to out-group conflict, which would refer to dissimilarity in culture and identity (Coser 67). Regardless of the type of conflict, Knutson suggests that these cultural barriers can be better understood when they are “acknowledged in the classroom rather than displaced or repressed.” (594). Thus, utilizing narrative in the ESL classroom is a means of shedding light on these cultural misunderstandings, acknowledging that they exist, and using them to better understand each other and the vast cultural differences that inevitably correlate with that understanding and make up who we are. As such, conflict in the classroom can also serve as a means of communication.

That being said, it is critical for educators to model effective narratives for students. If the classroom is to act as a community, then students need to feel somehow connected to the instructor’s and classmates’ stories and ideologies. This way, the

classroom works together as a whole, to honor diverse perspectives and to encourage language learning and communication in a somewhat familiar classroom environment. As it is shown, instructors have an obligation to interact in the classroom community, as well. As such, “For instructors, the challenge is to understand and acknowledge learner attitudes that are foreign to us and to understand and reveal ourselves to our students as cultural subjects, explaining our own personal history of cross-cultural learning experiences and evolving attitude toward other cultures” (Knutson 605). In order to understand foreign or “unfamiliar” attitudes, students and the instructor must work together in the classroom environment.

Every individual has personal experiences that they bring to the classroom, and, therefore, personal experience can influence individuals’ attitudes toward other cultures. Therefore, stories, which determine identity and explain cultural understanding of the “self” and of others, should be shared in the ESL classroom, so as to increase awareness of other students as well as of the instructor. In doing so, students inevitably, if only subconsciously, recognize the instructor and classmates as cultural subjects and as individuals with stories to tell, which compose who he or she is.

While the concept of culture in the second language classroom has recently gained momentum, the conversation is still prevalent. “Although teachers have begun to incorporate more culture in the lesson, the major concern that remains is finding effective ways for integrating culture and language that prepare the learners to communicate and collaborate effectively in the [twenty-first century]” (Dema and Moeller 77). Thus, instructors are still seeking effective ways to incorporate culture teaching in the classroom. Therefore, the models of lessons included in this chapter are examples used to

facilitate cultural understanding in the ESL classroom through their various means of communication, indicating challenges faced in the classroom, effectiveness of culture and community, and cultural perspectives on teaching ESL in the U.S. and China.

Setting up the Classroom for Storytelling

Storytelling through literature and the arts reflects expressive traditions from around the world, and “A community’s expressive traditions encode a body of shared knowledge to which persons are intellectually and emotionally—even morally—committed” (Senehi 48). Therefore, lessons based on literature and the arts can reflect expressive traditions of individuals, as well as an individual’s identity—intellectually, emotionally, and morally. When those traditions are shared within social or cultural groups, participants are allowed a glimpse into part of what makes each individual who they are. However, individuality in the ESL classroom does not stop there, as the objective is to blend individuality with the classroom community. As such, we also see how students interpret and interact with information to illuminate their various learning strengths, through storytelling genres, such as scripting, acting, and art analysis.

Once students participate in their own storytelling, they open themselves up to learning about stories both from their peers and from their peers’ cultural viewpoints. “Cultural viewpoints” refer to the individual’s viewpoint on “various issues and patterns of behavior and interaction, as well as to familiarization with cultural products of many kinds, ranging from implements of daily life to paintings or literature” (Knutson 595-96). As such, an interdisciplinary approach to teaching is nearly a prerequisite for

understanding culture in the classroom.

Our stories can be shared in a number of ways, so sometimes students may not recognize that they are engaging in storytelling. In some cases, students are not talking about themselves at all, but instead sharing a viewpoint on a particular matter or art form. Students tell stories to and with one another. Sometimes students engage with, observe, listen to, or read stories, each of which promote analytical writing and conversation, paraphrasing and communication skills, public speaking, and overall confidence and understanding among students. Conversational involvement, in fact, “is a hallmark of familiarity. Informal conversation is the communicative glue that establishes and maintains close relationships in many communities” (Ochs and Capps 8). In other words, communication through informal conversation helps to bind relationships together. Therefore, when culture in the language classroom is presented as informal classroom discussion, it promotes familiarity and relationship among classmates.

Through the examples of possible lessons, this chapter demonstrates challenges faced in the ESL classroom, as well as positive learning outcomes for students, to display the ways in which instructors can facilitate an ESL classroom model for peacebuilding. The model is intended to assist in supporting instructors in the facilitation of culture and communication, to offer insight into various activities, and to inspire instructors’ own ideas for cultivating peace in the ESL classroom. Within these activities learner autonomy is encouraged through communication, community building, intercultural exchange, and mediation. In other words, this chapter provides the structural framework for an unconventional model of peacebuilding facilitated through the ESL classroom.

In the following lessons, the curriculum model includes explanations of various

activities and their outcomes in the classroom, and for the reader's reference, sample instructor guides are included to correspond with the activities. Many of these activities can be stacked with corresponding activities of the instructor's choice, as those that follow are suggestions to be incorporated or altered for the use of any college-level ESL classroom. These lessons incorporate four major objectives (1) Overcoming Stage Fright, (2) Cultural Misunderstandings, (3) Cultivating Self and Cultural Expression, and (4) Building Relationships.

In my experience, many of these activities are appropriately suited for intermediate to high-intermediate level students, as many of the activities incorporate critical thinking and critical analysis. However, some of the activities are certainly appropriate for and can be adjusted to suit beginner levels as well. Particularly at the college-level, most students come in with a certain level of English already mastered. Therefore, I have also found that beginner level students at the college-level can be introduced to and are able to engage critical thinking skills, such as finding the purpose of a text, understanding the perspective of an author or story, and discussing implications related to various mediums such as film, art, or music. Students at the intermediate, high-intermediate, beginner, and high-beginner level classes, then, have the capability of forming world views, establishing perspectives, and finding purpose in a lesson or activity.

Our classes often begin with a short video clip that introduces the topic, after which I often ask students a short list of critical thinking questions having to do with the class topic. Students are usually given one to two minutes to discuss the question with a partner. Then we discuss their answers as a class. This encourages students to speak in

front of their peers. These questions also encourage a more thought-provoking analysis of the reading. This also helps students to make connections between the reading and their own experiences, which assists them in thinking more deeply about the subject.

I also provide lessons based on communication skills and body language, to encourage the incorporation of these skills in interactive activities.

For instance, in preparation of presentations, students brainstormed ideas of what effective and ineffective communication skills might look like. They then watched segments of speeches and determined effective and ineffective presentation and communication skills by discussing, as a class, what they thought the presenter could improve upon. Rather than correcting students' presentation skills, this serves as a way of teaching and reminding students of what to avoid or aim for when presenting.

I have also asked students to prepare a speech introduction to share with the class, to then determine the ways that their body language could have been improved. This is also an effective way for classmates to provide positive feedback for one another. There are a number of ways in which this classroom model can be woven into various courses, as these are merely select strategies, which have proven effective in my own classes.

Several of the following activities have been incorporated into both my Chinese and U.S. classrooms. While these examples are from various classroom experiences to exhibit the way in which they can be used in multiple college-level ESL settings, the intention is for them to be integrated as part of the classroom curriculum. While all of these activities are geared toward English language development, they can be used simultaneously to work toward a model for peacebuilding, both by building a community in the ESL classroom that can be mirrored in the global setting, and also as a way of

establishing cultural competence. Therefore the following curriculum is presented as a literature and the arts-based model, intended to guide instructors in the teaching of culture in the ESL classroom.

The curriculum displayed in this chapter is inspired by the Communicative Language Theory, Task-based Language Teaching, the Whole-Person Model, and the 5 Cs, which support a humanities-based, student-centered model of instruction. These activities encourage positive reinforcement of the autonomous learner, communication skills, cultural competence, cultural comparisons, and the development of a community in which students can draw connections between the target language and the global setting, as well as between the target language culture and the cultures represented within the classroom.

The curriculum integrates contemplative assignments, meaning assignments, which encourage a deeper reflection of an activity. This may mean simply allowing students the time to reflect on an interactive task after its completion by writing or communicating their ideas with classmates. Students also utilize their classroom interaction as a means of brainstorming written assignments. Together the students experience an equal and accommodating classroom environment conducive to learning, which provides them the opportunity to experiment with various theories and methods, as well as the “seven intelligences” of Howard Gardner, as discussed previously by Larsen-Freeman. Such resources have contributed in building the foundation for my own teaching philosophy, which encompasses an interdisciplinary approach through literature and the arts, depicted in the examples that follow.

Objective 1.**Overcoming Stage Fright**

Encouraging students to overcome “stage fright” can simultaneously assist in building confidence in students to encourage communication. When students feel confident to express their ideas and their own stories, they can become agents of peace-oriented dialogue.

Several of my students in China have expressed that one of their largest obstacles to learning English and engaging in English in their daily lives, is the lack of confidence from which they suffer, as they try to speak it. In a classroom that encourages students to become agents of peace, it is critical to develop their confidence, both as a way of establishing classroom community and supporting their English language development, but also to encourage students to use the language outside of the classroom as a means of developing relationships and breaking down barriers. Building students’ confidence in the classroom encourages their language learning and can help to prepare them for global leadership.

Thus, in a classroom where everyone is participating and utilizing their creativity to share their own personal story through activities that engage each part of their brain and cultural affiliations, the environment not only creates a distraction from their nervousness but also puts everyone on a level playing field, where, as Curran suggests, they can feel comfortable in the intermediate stages of their language development. In this way, students can find their voices in the classroom, while learning and interacting as a team to build classroom community, rather than competing with one another, apart

from when the activity calls for friendly competition. Moreover, this interactive classroom setting lays the foundation for a communicative classroom environment, which promotes effective use of the English language, by providing students with the opportunity to engage in dialogue that can be used outside of the classroom. The writing exercises and introspective assignments within the interactive curriculum, however, encourage students to consider the world outside of the classroom and establish the language, which they will use in conversation.

As is the case for most ESL classes, we spend the first day going over expectations for the semester, making introductions, and getting to know each other. They start telling their own stories from the first day. At the beginning of each of my courses, I have students recall their oldest memory. This loosens the class up and prepares everyone for an interactive environment. We talk about memory and how memories are solidified when we retell them, and how another student's memory might trigger one of our own memories. This becomes a reminder of the importance of sharing and passing on stories, as a means of keeping them alive and preserving the most personal part of our human experience. I like to explain to students why we as humans feel the need to tell stories. I often explain that for one, stories connect human experience. I explain that, in this way, they help us to develop empathy and understand other people.

During my first class at WKU, many students were reluctant to engage with their classmates. Students gradually began interacting with each other over the course of the following two weeks. However, one of my students, whom we will call Richard, appeared distant and was not engaging with his classmates.

I began maneuvering the materials to discover more profound ways to reach

students on an individual level and to encourage them to share their own stories with the class. This began with an activity where we spoke about the importance of physical cues in learning a second language.

Students watched a scene from a Charlie Chaplin silent film and were asked to apply language phrases to what they thought the actors might say if they were speaking. In groups, students then wrote skits for an imaginary scene that was to follow. Students performed their scene for the class using only body language and their classmates were instructed to guess what the performers might be talking about. When an action was unclear, performers attempted acting it out in another way to help classmates guess. This taught the class to communicate beyond the limits of spoken language and also encouraged them to engage with one another to discover what the others might be thinking, while enjoying themselves in the process. Richard became more enthusiastic during this activity than I had seen him all semester.

Upon witnessing Richard's enthusiasm and realizing that he was simply nervous about speaking out loud, I continued to incorporate activities that involved the strong engagement of body language, in addition to the rest of our course content. For example, as a component of our Oral Academic Discourse unit on marketing, which focused on listening and note-taking strategies, academic discussion strategies, and presentation strategies, I included an exercise on presentation skills where students were asked to display body language while describing a topic of their interest, as a way of practicing their presentation skills. We compared strong body language versus poor body language, and students guessed which performances were intended to be strong and which were intentionally weak. Richard was able to display his communicative strengths in other

ways, simultaneously building his confidence in his spoken English and in his relationships with classmates. Though it took time, by the end of the semester, Richard was fully engaged with the classroom community and had begun speaking with more confidence in English. This activity will typically appeal to kinesthetic learners, as students use their bodies to convey a message.

Lesson One: Oral Presentation Skills Development with Storytelling

Instructor's Guide: Silent Film—Oral Academic Discourse—Intermediate to High-Intermediate Level: Wenzhou-Kean University, China

Objective: To instruct students in the effective use of body language to develop academic oral presentation skills as they explain the story of a scene in a silent film.

Articulated Outcome: Students will be able to display effective use of body language to support oral communication.

Storytelling Component: Assignment to prepare a story that students imagine may have occurred in the silent film.

Duration: Approximately 45 minutes

Materials: Charlie Chaplin film scene from YouTube.

Step 1: Watch the following “barber scene,” from the Charlie Chaplin film, *The Great Dictator*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zmsCRNINNQ> (7:52) (Accessed on June 6, 2018)

Step 2: Students guess what the actors are saying. Discuss topics of conversation as a class. (10 minutes)

Step 3: Separate students into groups of three and instruct them to create a skit for an imaginary scene that would follow the first. (10 minutes)

Step 4: Students act out their scenes and class guesses what they might be talking about. (15 minutes)

Step 5: Students prepare the story that accompanies the skit to be shared during the following class.

Objective 2.

Navigating Cultural Misunderstandings

Cultural misunderstandings teach students and instructors about the multifaceted nature of language and, therefore, of cultural exchange. Thus, students can learn from the stories shared in the classroom, to not only normalize cultural misunderstandings, but

also to understand the complexity of language.

Cultural misunderstandings can cause fear, hate, abuse, and even violence, and can result in alienation and oppression. Thus, as students establish cultural competence in the ESL classroom, they are also establishing a voice for leadership to protect themselves and others from cultural misunderstandings. While the examples noted in this section are harmless, they are in preparation of the more severe circumstances, which occur globally.

After having taught him in Spring 2018, a Chinese student reached out to me in reference to a summer study abroad program that he was attending in the United States. He was sitting at a restaurant in Portland, Maine and realized that he did not know how to tip. He asked me the appropriate tip for a cup of coffee, and whether he was required to give a tip in places like Starbuck's when ordering at the register. He informed me that during his last visit to a coffee shop, he paid for his coffee then handed cash to the cashier as a tip. According to the student, the cashier seemed confused and hesitant at first. He told the student that the money he gave was enough to cover the cost of his coffee, not realizing that the student was attempting to tip him. When the student explained that the cash was a tip, the cashier instructed the student to put the cash in the tip jar.

Similarly, Byrd refers to an ESL student living in the United States, who went to buy cereal at a grocery store. He bought a box with a cat on it that looked like the appropriate shape. The student couldn't figure out why the cereal tasted so bad and later learned that he had been eating cat food (vi). If the student obtained the cultural relevance for shopping in the grocery store, conceivably this situation could have been avoided. In other words, perhaps the grocery store is organized differently than the way in which this student was accustomed. In China, for example, I often find myself wandering around the

grocery store, to find what I am looking for, as certain items are often categorized differently than I would anticipate and in some cases, there are multiple sections for the same type of product. For instance, in a search for a specific brand of olive oil in Walmart, it was not until I searched through a third olive oil section, on the other side of the store, that I found the item for which I was searching.

Moreover, the United States also has a large selection of product brands, thus, it is understandable to assume that a box of cat food, which resembles the cereal in a different section, could simply be another type of cereal, placed in a different part of the store.

While the cat food case is a bit more extreme than the Starbucks scenario, both instances serve as a reminder that students need cultural references to accompany language learning. While my student knew the appropriate language for asking me about the tip and for ordering in the restaurant, he was not yet oriented to his cultural surroundings, and, therefore, was unable to engage in a real-life situation because of a lack of cultural awareness.

I often share stories of cultural misunderstandings with students to give them perspective and encourage questions. I tell them about my own cultural misunderstandings, which they usually find amusing. Students appreciate the humor in many of the stories, which often leads to the retelling of their own misunderstandings. It opens students up to feel that they can share some potentially embarrassing recollections and to learn from their instructor and fellow classmates. Each of these opportunities provides a storytelling incident, which helps to diffuse cultural misunderstandings.

I share with students an example of my arrival in Wenzhou and the disorientation of navigating a new country. I use a simple example of attempting to buy shampoo and

conditioner and, instead, purchasing body wash, only later to discover that the shampoo bottle opens on the opposite end, which is how to distinguish between the two. I talk about the smoothie shop on campus, where student workers make juices and smoothies for students and staff. I explain that there are often cultural misunderstandings in my orders. In the United States, for instance, I might ask to mix pineapple and mango without question. However, at the smoothie stand, if I request a combination of both, the staff explains that it's bad for my health and that they cannot mix the two. For instance, when I asked the student workers to blend grape and pineapple, they gave me a look of confusion and explained that if I mix the two, it will give me a bad stomach ache. The idea of mixing the two fruits is a foreign concept to the students, and the notion that it would hurt my stomach was something that I could not understand. We were able to communicate, but our understanding of the conversation was vastly different.

These sorts of stories often inspire questions and conversation about cultural norms in the United States. For instance, during the semester a student asked why do Americans always ask, "How are you?" In China, rather than asking, "How are you?" the greeting is more often, depending on the time of day, *nǐ chī le ma*, have you eaten? Thus acknowledging care for the individual's well-being. She went on to say that it seems silly, because "How are you?" would indicate that something is wrong and that you are expressing concern. In the student's perspective, Americans use the phrase fleetingly and without meaning. However, in the West, it is considered polite to ask someone how they are, and to ask if someone has eaten would imply that you might want to take them to lunch.

In a discussion about healthy habits and obesity rates, when asked which country

has the highest obesity rates, all students in each of my classes guessed the United States, which inspired a student's comment, "Western people do not use the Eastern style toilet, because they are too fat." They were shocked to discover the U.S. is actually eighteenth on a list of countries with the highest obesity rates in the world. Hence, the dialogue shared in an ESL classroom lends itself to engaging with questions and understandings of differing cultural norms, setting the tone for a multicultural learning environment.

In light of these cultural exchanges, in one of our writing warm-ups, we watched an interview about the creator of "Humans of New York" and his inspiration for his work. Afterward, students were asked to view the "Humans of New York" website and write a story about one of the people in the photographs. They then compared their imagined story with the actual story connected to the photograph. Afterward, in pairs, students used two stories from the website to create a skit for the class, telling their own versions of the interviews. Many students were surprised at the inaccuracies of some of their assumptions, while the rest expected their stories to differ from the pictures. Normally, visual, logical, or interpersonal learners will likely be drawn to this activity. Visual learners will work well with the presented images, while logical learners might reason through their story ideas. The interpersonal students, on the other hand, will likely connect intuitively with the subjects and their stories.

Lesson Two: “Humans of New York”

Instructor’s Guide: “Humans of New York,” Writing Warm-up—Written Academic Discourse—Intermediate to High-Intermediate Level: Wenzhou-Kean University, China

Objective: To engage comparative and contrastive analyses of a narrative to better understand the narrator.

Articulated Outcome: Students will be able to articulate similarities and differences between the stories that they have read and their own perceived stories of the narrators.

Storytelling Component: Students create their own stories and engage with the stories found in *Humans of New York*.

Duration: Approximately 45 Minutes

Materials: Paper, YouTube

Step 1: Watch the following interview about the creator of “Humans of New York,” entitled, “This is the Human Behind ‘Humans of New York’”:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bcm6kwWv09o> (3:10) (Accessed on August 10,

2018)

Step 2: Instruct students to scroll through the “Humans of New York” website and write a story about one of the people in the photographs. (15 minutes)

Step 3: Have students compare their imaginary story to the actual story linked to the photograph. (10 minutes)

Step 4: Divide students into pairs. Have them choose two photographs from the website and develop a skit based on an imagined interaction between the two subjects. (15 minutes)

The subsequent activity in the WKU classroom was inspired by an experience at the Concordia English Language Village, in Moorehead, MN. During the summer, students, or “villagers,” as we refer to them, ages 14-18, join our program from countries across the globe. Villagers experience life on a college campus in an American community, as most join the program in anticipation of eventually attending college in the United States. Students are exposed to local Minnesotan culture. We attend local shows, such as plays and musicals, and explore art exhibits and farmers’ markets.

During the week, villagers attend ESL classes, as they would in a college setting. However, in between classes we share in events and activities geared toward establishing this diverse community of English learners. While we are ultimately teaching the target

language and culture, there is an equal exchange between the target language culture and each of the cultures represented in the community. Villagers share their own cultural experiences, stories, music, and activities from their home countries, as well, and are excited to hear stories from their peers and to learn about Minnesota.

In 2017, the village was comprised of learners from China, Russia, Mexico, and France. During an activity, early on in the program, students sat together describing their home countries. As each person shared his or her story, their peers became more comfortable to share their own stories. After everyone spoke, we marked each country on a large map. Afterward, villagers considered what it would be like to visit their peers. Everyone then chose one country to talk about, imagining that they were there for a visit. Students shared stories as if they had spent a day touring Paris or walking the Great Wall. Some shared less elaborate imaginary experiences of walking around a city in Russia with their friend or going shopping in Mexico, many of which were quite entertaining, particularly to those from the chosen country. This activity served the learning community by helping to integrate the group.

Similarly, at WKU, in an activity geared toward presentation skills and using English creatively to brainstorm spontaneously, students were asked to create an advertisement for a place to which they would hope to travel, including everything they thought they knew about the destination. Students then researched the country and found five facts that they didn't know to add to their advertisement. Students came up with a sales pitch explaining why we should visit that country. Then, everyone chose one country to "visit," writing an imaginary journal entry about a day in his or her travels.

By applying the Concordia activity to the WKU classroom, the journals added a

personal component to their research, making their findings more interactive. In many cases, students were surprised by what they found and, in some cases, noted that there were similarities with the country of their choice and China. For instance, one student observed that Italian culture and Chinese culture are similar, in that extended meals and family time are a priority. This inspired my own curiosity of whether the connection is related to Italian, Marco Polo, who traveled to China in the 1200s, bringing to Italy, food and other cultural ideas. I noted this potential connection to students, which inspired them to continue searching for various links between China and other countries around the world.

This activity would mostly appeal to intrapersonal, visual, logical, interpersonal, verbal, and kinesthetic students. Intrapersonal students will work well with the journal component of this activity, while visual students will enjoy creating the advertisements and viewing those of their classmates. Logical students will likely reason through the explanation of their advertisement, while interpersonal students will work well in the group environment. Verbal students will enjoy presenting their advertisement, while kinesthetic students will work well with the creation of their advertisement.

Lesson Three: Oral Presentation Skills—Travel Commentary

Instructor's Guide: Travel Advertisement—Oral Academic Discourse—Intermediate to High-Intermediate Level: Wenzhou-Kean University, China

Objective: A. To develop effective presentation skills.

B. To expand the use of English vocabulary to assist students in more creatively presenting their arguments.

C. To share a personal interest in a story on a travel topic.

Articulated Outcome: Students will demonstrate effective presentation skills.

Storytelling Component: Preparation of travel commentary.

Duration: This assignment will take two days to give students time to research at home.

Materials: Poster paper, markers

Day 1

Duration: 30 minutes

Step 1: Begin the activity by talking about places students might like to visit. Ask where they have already been, where they would like to go, and why they want to go there. Give students time to think about this and talk with the person next to them. Students then share their commentary as a class. (10-15 minutes)

Step 2: Instruct students to create an advertisement about a country that they hope to visit. The advertisement must include drawings or images and descriptive terms. (20 minutes)

Step 3: For homework: Students research the country of their choice and add five new facts that they did not know to their advertisement.

Day 2

Duration: 30 minutes

Step 1: Students create a sales pitch for why his or her classmates should visit the country including his or her interest in the country as part of his or her storytelling component. (15 minutes)

Step 2: Everyone chooses one of the presented countries to visit and writes an imaginary journal entry about a day in that country from his or her perspective. (15 minutes)

At the beginning of the semester in one of my classes at WKU, a student was not responding well to the material. He seemed disinterested and disengaged. One day after

class I pulled him aside and asked if he was having difficulty understanding the course content. He explained that he understood it clearly, but that he is not used to an interactive classroom environment, and that it is difficult for him to work in groups. We spoke about his high school classes and the challenges he faces at an American-style university. I explained that the course would include plenty of contemplative, individual warm-up assignments, which allow for time to consider a concept before interacting, and encouraged him to also try to interact with his classmates as inspiration for his writing and individual work.

This inspired an activity comparing a Chinese classroom from their high schools to the American style of education they receive at WKU. In groups, students were asked to brainstorm the challenges they face along with the advantages of studying in a Western-style institution. They were asked to draw comparisons between the two and to create a video depicting a day in their life on campus. Videos included the difficulties of writing essays and homework assignments in their second language, communicating with instructors, and strictly using English in their classes.

Among the advantages were learning about their instructors and where they come from, learning to communicate more fluently in English, and engaging in classroom activities far different from their typical Chinese classroom experience. After hearing about other students' challenges, along with their enthusiasm for the program, my concerned student gradually began to settle into the classroom experience. By midway through the semester, he had become more outgoing and willing to become comfortable with an interactive environment, which was once unfamiliar.

Objective 3.

Cultivating Self and Cultural Expression

By practicing self and cultural expression in the classroom, students have the opportunity to share their identities with their classmates, and in doing so, they acquire the necessary experience for sharing their identities with the global environment, thus encouraging cultural understanding in the communities in which they immerse themselves. Moreover, while encouraging self and cultural expression, it is also the job of the instructor or facilitator to act as mediator, as described in chapter two, in ensuring that the classroom dialogue is productive in establishing cultural and self-understanding.

Students, even at the intermediate and high-intermediate levels often struggle with pronunciation. At Kean University, USA, in an activity on practicing syllables and pronunciation, I projected on the white board, the song “Piano Man,” by American singer-songwriter, Billy Joel. I first asked students about their favorite songs from their own countries. Some students sang parts of songs; others listed several, while a few students chimed in with excitement about the songs mentioned with which they were familiar.

I then explained to students that Billy Joel is a well-known singer in the U.S. and that the song is fairly common. As the song played, I paused it frequently between lyrics to model the next phrase. Each time the song paused I sang the subsequent verse, while clapping the number of syllables. Students repeated the model. Once we sang through the entire song, I restarted the video from the beginning. This time, as the song progressed,

students sang through each verse, clapping the syllables. Students interacted well with this activity and were excited to learn an American song. After the activity, I assigned students the homework assignment of counting the syllables in one of their favorite songs. I then asked students to prepare a part of their chosen song, including their syllable count, to present in our next class. They also were asked as a subsequent activity to prepare a story of a song that is one of their favorites.

This activity was inspired by Concordia, from an event, which our group of English language learners attended in 2017. Concordia Language Villages as a whole is a large community of approximately 11,900 language learners and 1,300 teachers from around the world, who essentially come together in a camp-like environment during the summer. The villages were established through Concordia College, and while the English Language village is located at the college, itself, many of the other villages are located in Bemidji, MN, approximately two hours away. Every year, the Bemidji villages host an “International Day,” where all of the communities come together in cultural exchange. Each year, every village prepares a song and dance from their village’s target language culture. Songs are performed in Chinese, Arabic, Spanish, German, French, English, Danish, Finnish, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Portuguese, Russian, and Swedish. Every village has the opportunity to share their culture with the crowd.

Part of the intention of the activity at Kean University was to create the same intercultural atmosphere in the classroom, where students would feel comfortable sharing a part of their of cultures, while learning about American culture. This activity largely appeals to rhythmic learners, who will likely have an easier time hearing and understanding the number of syllables. Kinesthetic learners will also respond well to

using their hands to count the syllables.

I have also incorporated the counting syllables activity, described later on, in beginner level tutoring sessions, where students focused primarily on pronunciation skills. In this case, we simply learned part of the song and went through the lyrics at a slower pace. The museum activity also works well for teaching descriptive vocabulary or simply encouraging students to describe what they see. Where possible, by removing the critical thinking and analysis component from any of these activities, some of their more basic characteristics can be applied to lower level classes.

Lesson Four: Oral Presentation Skills

Instructor's Guide: Singing and Syllable Counting—Conversation I—High-Beginner

Level: Kean University, USA

Objective: To enhance pronunciation through counting syllables.

Articulated Outcome: Students will be able to count the syllables in the song lyrics to enable them to engage English pronunciation and intonation more accurately.

Storytelling Component: Students tell the story of a favorite song.

Duration: This activity will take two days for preparation and presentation.

Materials: YouTube

Day 1

Step 1: Discuss with students their favorite songs from their own cultures. (5-10 minutes)

Step 2: Pull up the song, "Piano Man," by Billy Joel, with lyrics, using the following link:

Billy Joel- Piano Man (Lyrics) www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_g7fPjVxvg
(5:40) (Accessed on September 10, 2018)

Step 3: Stop the song before each verse to model clapping the syllables along with the lyrics. Students repeat. (15 minutes)

Step 4: Play the song all the way through (or until the class is ready to stop). Students clap the syllables and sing along. (5:40)

Step 5: Homework- Ask students to choose their favorite song from their own culture, sing along and count the syllables. Ask students to then prepare a part of the song to sing and clap the syllables in the next class. (5 minutes)

Day 2

Step 1: Students present their song to the class. (15 minutes)

Step 2: Students tell the story of their favorite song to their classmates.

During the Fall 2016 semester at Kean University, USA, with my native Spanish-speaking students, in a lesson on discovering and playing with accents, I invited a friend and storyteller from Ireland to join our class and share with students famous folktales from his upbringing. He brought pictures and props to bring the stories to life and engaged students in the storytelling by asking questions and at times including their names in the plot. Students enthusiastically immersed themselves in the tales, setting the tone for self-expression. After the many stories were told, students asked questions and viewed a map of Ireland for geographical reference. Following this activity, students were asked to research and present a folktale or fairytale from their own culture.

Being that students were from various Latin American countries, there were a variety of tales to share, and in many cases, students learned stories about their own countries that they had not yet heard. Furthermore, in some cases, we recognized similar themes between their stories and Irish folklore. For instance, a student from Mexico shared the tale of *La Llorona*, or “The Weeping Woman,” who is said to have drowned her sons in a river. According to the tale, she now haunts the surrounding land, where she can be heard crying for her children. Consequently, due to Spanish influence, the tale is also commonly told in South Texas and throughout California. Similarly, in the Irish tale, “The Banshee,” a woman mourns the death of a family member, wailing for her loss. In both cases, if a passerby is unfortunate enough to hear the cries, then bad luck or even death will be inflicted upon them. Students became enthralled in the similarities, which led to a retelling of a number of other famous tales from Latin America, where they found common threads relating to Ireland, encouraging them to think about the similarities that exist between their countries’ stories and other stories shared around the

world. Hence, again, we witnessed this cross-cultural link between countries, which could otherwise seem alien to one another on the surface.

This activity will appeal to students with stronger interpersonal skills, as well as to linguistic learners, as students interact with and compare stories with their partners. Linguistic learners will enjoy the verbal storytelling aspect of this activity, while interpersonal learners will have an easier time connecting with their partner's tale.

Lesson Five: Folk and Fairytales

Instructor's Guide: Folk and Fairytales—Conversation I—High-Beginner Level, Kean University, USA

Objective: To enhance listening, speaking, and comparative analysis skills.

Articulated Outcome: Students will be able to engage their listening and speaking skills more effectively.

Storytelling Component: Students share and compare folk and fairytales from their respective cultures.

Duration: Approximately 65 Minutes (though this activity can be divided into two lessons).

Materials: props that correspond with the stories.

Step 1: There are two options for the first part of this lesson. (15-20 minutes)

A. Instructors can invite a guest storyteller to share stories from any culture.

B. Instructors can compile folk and fairytales to share with the class

(for this, props are encouraged).

Step 2: Instruct students to research folk and fairytales from their respective home countries or provinces. This can be done as classwork or as a homework assignment. (15 minutes)

Step 3: Students write a two-paragraph summary of their researched folk or fairytale and attach a corresponding image that describes the tale. (If this is done in class, students can pull images up on their phones or computers). (15 minutes)

Step 4: Pair students together with a partner from another country or province. Ask students to share their chosen folk or fairytale. Instruct students to try to draw similarities between their chosen tales. (10 minutes)

Step 5: Call on pairs to stand in front of the room and retell their partner's chosen tale. The pair then explains any similarities that they have found in their discussion of the tales. (10 minutes)

As we know, in order to make a story emotionally appealing, it has to have some truth to it. The reader or listener has to be able to relate in some capacity or the audience is lost. So when we interact with narrative and storytelling in the ESL classroom,

particularly for the purpose of building community and learning about one another and about other countries across the globe, there needs to be some level of vulnerability.

During my time at Drew University I took a course entitled, “Writing to Heal.” We were asked to write letters to our future selves, revealing personal trials and hopes for the future. The instructor asked us to seek advice through the letter and ask questions to our future selves, as if writing a letter to someone older and wiser.

I was personally moved by the assignment, and it has resonated with me ever since. Thus, last semester, Spring 2018, I asked my Chinese students to do the same. I promised to keep the letters safe and confidential and told students that I would only read them with their permission. Most students asked that I read their letters, and I explained that I would return them at the end of the semester so they would have the opportunity to see how their stories might change, both on a personal level as individuals and also through their development of English language.

Students took the assignment seriously and made a genuine effort to imagine what their future selves might look like. They asked questions about whether their English had developed, whether they were still seeking the same career, and even considered more personal questions. They wrote narratives and projected stories about their future, and in turn, painted an image and provided me with a better understanding of who they were.

This is a largely intrapersonal activity, as students engage in self-evaluation by determining which areas of their lives require advising. Students also reflect on their hopes for future endeavors, embodying characteristics of an intrapersonal learner.

Lesson Six: Letters to Self

Instructor's Guide: Letters to Self, Writing Activity—Written Academic Discourse-Intermediate to High-Intermediate Level, Wenzhou-Kean University, China

Objective: To demonstrate self-expression and to build a cooperative and trustworthy, student to teacher relationship to build confidence in students.

Articulated Outcome: Students will be able to effectively communicate their hopes for the future through their writing to confidently express themselves in English.

Storytelling Component: Students share a story of their personal aspirations.

Duration: Approximately 30 Minutes

Materials: Paper and pen

Step 1: Ask students to take out a piece of paper and a pen. Explain that you will be asking them to imagine that they are writing a letter to someone older and wiser. Explain that only with their permission will you read their letters. (2 minutes)

Step 2: Ask students to first brainstorm questions that they would hope to ask their future selves. (5 minutes)

Step 2: On another sheet of paper, ask students to write a letter to their future selves

seeking advice. In the letter, ask students to include the questions that they brainstormed. (15 minutes)

Step 3: Ask students if anyone would like to share their letter. (The instructor can also prepare his or her own letter to share with students). (10 minutes)

Step 4: Students submit their letters to the instructor. The instructor reads the letters with the students' permission and hands the letter back to students at the end of the semester. If students have granted the instructor permission, he or she can write written comments on the letters before handing them back.

In one of our earlier classes of the semester, I brought students to Kean's Civil Rights Arts Museum and asked them to take time to walk around and come up with their own interpretations of the work. I asked what they saw in the images. They vaguely described some of the paintings based on their perceptions. I asked them to take out their notebooks and pens and sit with a piece that interested them. The assignment was a writing exercise to practice critical thinking and analysis skills, in alignment with institutional course objectives and outcomes, where each student created a story about the work based on their interpretation.

Students sat silently and took their time with the story, analyzing the image. They then shared their stories with the class, making for a rich classroom discussion. We later researched the artwork and found that one or two of their imagined stories intersected with the reality of the story behind the artwork, allowing them to think about the images

and their stories in a more profound way. For others, cultural confusion and language obstacles arose in their observation of some of the paintings or photographs, as students asked me to clarify descriptive language for various aspects of the images, which in turn, helped to build their vocabulary.

This is largely a kinesthetic activity; however, it can also apply to the interpersonal and linguistic student. Kinesthetic students will enjoy learning outside of the classroom, while interpersonal learners will have an easier time connecting with the images. Linguistic students on the other hand, will work well in conveying their conceived story.

In order to ensure that students are prepared to participate in these lessons, it is necessary to further strengthen their critical thinking and analytical skills, as well as their oral and written communication skills. Among many of these lessons for instance, I have incorporated critical thinking, analysis, and communication in my teaching. In both 0303 and 0305, a segment of each class is text related, in that we go over critical thinking questions in the book or analyze a reading. Our texts incorporate various articles for each unit, with corresponding critical thinking questions. However, I also provide supplemental reading and critical thinking questions to encourage further discussion.

Lesson Seven: Critical Thinking Skills

Instructor's Guide: Kean University Civil Rights Arts Museum—Reading and Writing

I—High-Beginner Level: Kean University, USA

Objective: To develop critical thinking, analytical, and interpretation skills when evaluating a piece of artwork.

Articulated Outcome: Students will demonstrate their ability to analyze and interpret, from their own perspective, their chosen painting.

Storytelling Component: Students write a story about a piece of artwork in the museum and share their stories as a class.

Duration: This activity will require two days, including a trip to a museum.

Materials: Paper

Day 1

Amount of time for activity (not including travel time): 45 minutes

Step 1: Inform students that you will be taking them to an art museum and that they will need to bring pens and paper.

Step 2: Bring students to the museum and ask them to walk around and choose a painting that speaks to them. (20 minutes)

Step 3: Students stand or sit with the painting and write a story based on what they see. Be sure that they include the title of the piece. (20-25 minutes)

Day 2

Amount of time for activity: 40 minutes

Step 1: Instruct students to share their stories with the class and describe the artwork at which they were looking. (30 minutes)

Step 2: Research some of the artwork as a class to determine what the piece is about. (20 minutes)

I eventually realized that this activity was driven by a course I had taken at Drew, where we would paint and read about artwork, but also present and write about our experience with the process. Combining the two, both creative and written interpretation, particularly in story form, opened a new world of opportunity for communication. In this case, it was enlightening to hear students explain their viewpoints in a language almost completely new to them, as I witnessed their world expanding.

In a unit on Art Movements at WKU, in preparation of a summary and response assignment, students watched the film, *Frida*, a depiction of the life of Frida Kahlo during the Mexican Revolution. Prior to watching the film, students were given a question worksheet to fill out during the viewing. Afterward, we discussed students' responses to the film and the influence of art in Frida's world and throughout Mexico. We viewed images of her work and analyzed how we thought she felt during her creative process. Later, we compared our ideas to analyses of her work. Students entered the unit knowing little about her work and eventually claimed feeling compassion for Frida and her story, along with a newfound understanding of Mexican culture. Students then read Frida's biography and wrote summaries and response papers in reference to it. This is largely a visual, but also interpersonal and intrapersonal activity. The video will likely intrigue visual students, while interpersonal students will have an easier time connecting with Frida's life, and intrapersonal students will likely enjoy note-taking.

Lesson Eight: Writing Skills Development

Instructor's Guide: Frida Kahlo Film Assignment: Art Movements—Written Academic Discourse—Intermediate to High-Intermediate Level: Wenzhou-Kean University, China

Objective: To write a cohesive summary and response to a selected text.

Articulated Outcome: Students will be able to write a cohesive summary and response on Frida Kahlo's autobiography.

Storytelling Component: Students will reflect on an aspect of the life of Frida Kahlo to share with classmates.

Duration: This activity will take 3 days for prep, film, and discussion.

Materials: Art Movements Worksheet, Frida Kahlo autobiography, and the film, *Frida*.

Day 1

Step 1: Complete Art Movements Worksheet. (15 minutes)

Step 2: Explain to students that the class will be writing a summary and response on Frida Kahlo's autobiography. Explain that the film, *Frida*, is intended to assist them in their response and understanding of her life.

Step 3: Hand out Frida Kahlo's autobiography for students to read together as a class and again for homework along with the list of discussion questions. (10 minutes)

Step 4: Go over the list of discussion questions (See Discussion Question Worksheet- instructors can choose to omit/ change questions based on language level) for them to answer during the film in the following class. Remind students to bring their discussion questions to the following class. (10 minutes)

Day 2

Step 1: Explain that the film is 2 hours and 5 minutes long and that it will take two class periods to finish. Explain to students that they will need to answer the discussion questions as they watch the film. Begin watching the film for the entire class period.

(1 hour and 15 minutes)

Step 2: Remind students that they will finish the film in the following class and to bring their completed discussion questions to class.

Day 3

Step 1: Finish watching the film. (50 minutes)

Step 2: Review discussion questions as a class at the end of the film. (15 minutes)

Step 3: Assign a summary and response for homework in which students will prepare a commentary on one aspect of Frida Kahlo's life that they wish to share with students.

(5-10 minutes)

The topic of body image arises often in Chinese ESL classes. Students joke about skin tone and weight gain, and often use terms such as “beautiful,” “ugly,” or “fat” to

describe their classmates and instructors. While for students this is all in good fun, the classroom can perpetuate stereotypes and feelings of insecurity. In China, it is a common belief that dark skin is a sign of bad luck and that people must be thin to be considered attractive.

In considering more deeply the concept of preconceived notions, I was reminded of a personal experience while studying abroad in India. Two other American women and I became good friends with a group of three men from Iraq, bonding over our shared experience of living abroad. However, one of the friends seemed unapproachable and reserved at first. He later shared that it was because he had never personally known anyone from the U.S. and that all he did know of Americans was violence and destruction. He explained that at first he was hesitant to get to know us and, frankly, disinterested in the idea. The three of them often received news of a bombing or death of a friend, and shared with us heart-wrenching stories about their lives “back home.” Until then, I had never known these stories so intimately, and they had never met anyone from the U.S. Throughout the year, the friend who was initially reluctant to speak with us, taught me Arabic and I helped him with his English. He began inviting his friends, who were also studying in India, and asked if I would teach them English in exchange for Arabic. Our worlds intersected in our own language learning community, where we understood the value of sharing in something as imperative as communication.

Therefore, with this memory in mind, in an activity based on image and preconceived ideas, to encourage conversational dialogue, students watched a Coca-Cola advertisement, which aims to remove labels. Coca-Cola asked six strangers to sit together around a table in a dark room. In the video, the participants share stories about

themselves and their hobbies. When the lights come on, they are shocked to discover that the people sitting around them do not match their perceived image of them.

Students were equally surprised to find that the participants were not who they expected, and it provided them with a different perspective on their predisposed notions. Students were then instructed to create a list of some of the things that people would not know about them upon their first meeting. After collecting the lists, I shuffled them and handed each one out to a different student. Students walked around the room and guessed who wrote their assigned list. We then shared some of them with the class. This activity is largely interpersonal, auditory, visual, and verbal centered. Interpersonal and verbal students will likely find it easier to connect with and communicate with classmates during this activity, while the video will appeal to visual and auditory learners.

Lesson Nine: Conversational Development

Instructor's Guide: "Who am I?"—Oral Academic Discourse—Intermediate to High-Intermediate Level: Wenzhou-Kean University, China

Objective: To facilitate conversational dialogue on the use of global English.

Articulated Outcome: Students will be able to support their opinions and interact with students in the class, regarding their respective opinions.

Storytelling Component: Sharing aspects of themselves that may not be known to others.

Duration: Approximately 45 minutes

Materials: Paper, YouTube

Step 1: Show the following YouTube video, entitled, “Coca-Cola – Remove Labels

(KindFeed): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZo5dWWKSos> (2:47)

(Accessed on September 10, 2018).

Step 2: Instruct students to create a list of 10 facts that people would not know about them upon a first meeting. (10 minutes)

Step 3: Collect the lists, shuffle, and hand the lists back to different classmates.

Students walk around and guess who wrote their assigned list. (20 minutes)

Step 4: Have some students share their lists with the class. (10 minutes)

Step 5: Have students prepare a story about themselves that includes an aspect of their life or personality that others may not know about them to share with the group.

Objective 4.**Building Relationships**

When building relationships in the classroom with individuals from various cultural backgrounds, with their own stories to share, students are learning how to respectfully interact with individuals from all walks of life. In building relationships, students are assisting in developing classroom community, while understanding their classmates' and instructor's identities. In doing so, they are also learning about and representing their own identity, as is discussed in chapter two.

Once students have developed the confidence for self-expression and have, thus, begun to break down cultural misunderstandings in the classroom, both between the target language culture and themselves, and also among themselves and their classmates, they have helped build the foundation for establishing relationships. After students build relationships with their classmates and instructor, through multiple layers of cultural interaction, they can develop a newfound understanding of the integration of various cultures within the classroom and can bring that understanding with them into the global community.

During Fall 2017 semester at WKU, when attempting to group students together for a presentation, a student whom we will call "Jessica," refused to work with her classmate, "Michael." I moved Michael to a different group; however he was visibly embarrassed by Jessica's outright refusal to work with him. After class I pulled Michael aside to see if he was all right. While attempting to hide his embarrassment, he offhandedly noted that he didn't know Jessica well. His reaction indicated that there was

more to this incident. From my perspective, it appeared that Jessica had likely rejected Michael as a reaction to class or social status.

There was no further interaction between Jessica and Michael, and I did not directly follow up on the incident, as Michael appeared to prefer that it be forgotten. However, while I often choose groups myself, as the semester went on, in response to the incident, I took note of the interactions in the classroom. At times I asked students about their home province and began to notice that many students gravitated to other students from the same province, whether they knew each other before the class or not.

For this reason, later in the semester, students were asked to prepare a video depicting their province or hometown in China and the kinds of things they do on a daily basis, including the types of food they eat and the various activities in which they engage with friends. Students created a list of their home provinces. I asked the class what they knew about each location and what their hometown was known for. Students laughed and provided many examples of varying provinces around China.

According to students, Sichuan people for instance, “love spicy food,” and Anhui, Jiangxi, Yunnan, along with several other provinces are considered “very poor.” After watching the videos I asked students if they were surprised by anything they saw. Many responded that they were not particularly surprised. However, a number of students reported having learned about new sites and restaurants to visit, and seemed excited by the prospect of experiencing provinces outside of their own. While several students have traveled around China, many reported having only traveled to one or two provinces, prior to joining WKU, and some noted that they have only truly experienced their own hometown.

In another activity, to encourage community understanding, with an objective on listening, speaking, and summarizing, students were asked to interview three WKU professors. They were assigned to record the interview and write a story about one of the professors. Students then presented their stories and recordings to the class. Students were enthusiastic about this assignment and eager to share their findings with the class. In one interview, a student learned that her chosen professor was also a poet, as he offered to read his work. He spoke about his passion for poetry and about the venues where he has read. In other cases, professors shared stories about their hometowns and about their experiences living in China and traveling the world. Many of the instructors at WKU have long lists of travel experiences; therefore, this served as an opportunity for students to learn about other cultures that they have yet to experience. This activity generally appeals to rhythmic, interpersonal, and verbal students. As rhythmic students have an easier time recognizing tone, they appreciate the listening comprehension and pronunciation component of this activity. Interpersonal and verbal students will enjoy communicating with professors and classmates.

Lesson Ten: Listening and Writing Skills

Instructor's Guide: Interviews—Oral Academic Discourse—Intermediate to High-Intermediate Level: Wenzhou-Kean University, China

Objective: To teach active listening, speaking, pronunciation, and summarizing through student conducted faculty interviews.

Articulated Outcome: Students will be able to produce a relevant, short story based on their faculty interviews, focused on the interviewee's biography.

Storytelling Component: Students share their stories based on the interviews that they conducted with the professors.

Duration: Students have one week to complete the assignment.

Materials: Students will need their cell phones to record interviews.

Day 1

Step 1: Instruct students to interview three professors of their choice. With permission, students record all three interviews to decide which to write their story about.

Step 2: Students write a short, one page story about themselves that relates to any aspect of one of their interviews.

Day 2

Step 1: Students share their chosen interview and story with the class. (30 minutes)

Each semester we begin with a series of activities geared toward establishing a productive and effective social environment in the classroom. In an activity focused on the inclusion of target vocabulary and utilizing English for creativity, students viewed a series of photographs and described each image in full sentences using the target vocabulary. As a class, we discussed what they saw, and students were asked to brainstorm story ideas for each image, which I recorded on the white board. This allowed students to express themselves and their creative perspectives. They then chose from the list of story topics and wrote a story based on another student's perspective, connecting their ideas and bridging similarities or differences in their thinking. Students shared their stories with the class, encouraging an expressive classroom environment where students began feeling more comfortable with myself, their classmates, and with the material. This activity will appeal to visual, verbal, and interpersonal learners. Visual learners are attracted to the photographs, while verbal and interpersonal students will be more inclined to want to present.

Lesson Eleven: Storytelling and Writing Skills

Instructor's Guide: Describing Photographs—Reading and Writing I—High-Beginner Level, Kean University, USA

Objective: To develop and expand the use of descriptive adjectives so as to assist students in engaging descriptive explanations creatively in English.

Articulated Outcome: Students will be able to write a story based on one of their

classmate's story topics by focusing on creative descriptions that will enhance the understanding and depth of their story topics.

Storytelling Component: Sharing stories of impressions of photographs.

Duration: Approximately 60 minutes

Materials: Photographs in PowerPoint.

Step 1: Students view the series of photographs and describe the images using the target vocabulary. (15 minutes)

Step 2: Students brainstorm story ideas for each image. Record ideas on the white board. (10 minutes)

Step 3: Students write a story based on one of their classmate's story topics. (20 minutes)

Step 4: Students share their story with the class. (15 minutes)

Assessment

In any classroom setting, lessons and curriculum are motivated by course outcomes, as assessment is a critical component to measuring those outcomes. In order to engage that assessment, there are two categories to consider. The first is formative assessment, which is ongoing throughout the course, in order to monitor individual

achievement. In other words, formative assessment is conducted on a daily basis in the class. The other is summative assessment, which indicates the outcome of the learning of the student. Summative assessment can occur after a unit, at the midterm, or at the end of the semester. Both summative and formative assessments are considered in relation to course outcomes, in that the instructor determines how his or her outcomes have been accomplished.

Formative assessment and summative assessment have gained momentum in language classrooms today as considerable attention is being placed on the accomplishment of outcomes. In the past, summative assessment was the primary means of evaluating language progress. In other words, significant emphasis was put on assessing the student at the midterm or at the end of the course, as opposed to putting equal value on tracking students' progress throughout the course. In fact, Brown writes of the "...increased emphasis on ongoing assessment of students' performance as a course progresses...." (Brown, "English Teaching" 17). In other words, methods of assessment in language teaching are expanding, alongside this increased emphasis of assessing students' progress throughout the course, as opposed to merely focusing on the end result. In this way, instructors have the opportunity to reevaluate their methods of instruction, so as to then reformulate the course in order to meet the needs of students' progress.

As this is so, there is now increased balance between formative and summative assessment in the classroom, in order to gauge students' progress and evaluate that progress both as the semester progresses, and once a unit or semester is completed. In fact, Brown notes, "The notion that evaluation must be confined to summative, end-of-

term or end-of-unit tests alone is vanishing” (Brown, “English Teaching” 17). Thus, there is increased awareness on the achievement of outcomes as well as the importance and value of assessing students’ progress throughout the term.

It is critical that assessment reflects outcomes set forth in the syllabus at the beginning of the semester. Within this literature and the arts-based curriculum, then, there is a strong emphasis on both formative and summative assessment, in order to ensure that course outcomes along with students’ learning needs, are being met. Thus, formative and summative assessment tracks students’ progress throughout the aforementioned model lessons, in order to determine ways of altering course material to best suit the Academic Oral Discourse I 0303, Academic Written Discourse I 0305, Conversation I 0103, and Beginning Writing I 0105, projected course outcomes. These lessons, in turn, can also assist in providing tools for assessment.

In other words, I conduct ongoing formative assessment continuously in the classroom by listening to and observing the students’ communication through these activities. As such, I have the opportunity to witness the ways in which students’ language skills are progressing and can also recognize and evaluate their language limitations, without discouraging the learning process nor necessarily making it known that I am evaluating that process. In so doing, the formative assessment is less likely to impede students’ confidence.

These lessons also allow for the opportunity to evaluate each individual student based on his or her learning preference and performance. In other words, a variety of students have the opportunity to display their learning strengths and areas of comfort through various means of communication, in order to determine whether their overall

language skills are at all hindered by lack of progress.

By encouraging students to engage in discussion about what they read, write, watch, or listen to, I am able to monitor their progress in listening, speaking, pronunciation, reading, and writing. This can also occur when inviting guest speakers to interact with students. In such instances, I can evaluate students' progress and determine their level of confidence, by also observing their interactions with individuals from outside the classroom community. Both techniques, hence, help to illuminate areas of confidence or discomfort to evaluate those which require attention on the part of each individual student. Examining discussion is also particularly useful in evaluating critical thinking skills, both in support of students' conversational and written English.

When students engage in discussion, the instructor has the opportunity to determine whether they are able to evaluate and make connections between the reading or film and the topic at large, or perhaps between the topic and their personal lives. This helps to highlight areas in need of strengthening skills of critical thinking and analysis while also assisting the instructor in understanding students' writing abilities. For instance, when students are able to articulate and display their critical thinking and analysis skills orally, instructors are better able to identify the issue, if students are not incorporating critical thinking or analysis in their writing. In other words, in some cases, perhaps it is easier for a student to express him or herself orally, than it is through his or her writing. Therefore, while students may possess strong critical thinking and analysis skills, they may have an easier time doing so orally, rather than through their written English, or vice versa.

By reading students' writing and evaluating students' writing skills as the

semester progresses, it is also possible to find that students are advancing in their critical thinking and analysis skills, but are, perhaps, less confident in their oral communication skills to orally display their progress. Moreover, in assessing critical thinking and analysis skills through students' writing, it is possible to find which areas of their written English, require further attention.

Moreover, for all courses including Academic Oral Discourse I 0303, Academic Written Discourse I 0305, Conversation I 0103, and Beginning Writing I 0105, when each unit is complete, students prepare practice group or individual presentations for the summative assessment component. Students also conduct longer midterm presentations based on their choice of any unit covered in the first half of the semester, as well as final presentations based on any unit covered throughout the entire semester. Students choose their topics based on any unit on which they have not previously presented.

For Academic Written Discourse I 0305 and Beginning Writing I 0105, students complete take-home summary and responses after the completion of each unit. Students also complete in-class summary and responses for their midterm as well as a final summary and response at the end of the semester. The midterms are geared toward the units completed throughout the first half of the semester, while the finals can relate to any material covered throughout the semester. These serve as forms of summative assessment.

As formative assessment occurs throughout these courses, it helps to indicate that the desired outcomes have not always been successfully accomplished. For instance, there have been cases where a student's progress has been monitored throughout the semester, and while the student seems to be progressing in an area of his or her language

acquisition, that progress may not be evident in the summative assessment. As this can occur for a number of reasons, including test anxiety, it is, in some cases, unavoidable.

There have also been occasions, where I have underestimated a students' language progress, only to later find that he or she performed exceptionally well on a midterm presentation or final. These cases can be particularly challenging, in that if a student displays little effort in the class, it can be difficult to decipher whether he or she is disinterested due to, perhaps, lack of challenge, or is, in fact, falling behind. The difficulty is that in the case of disinterest, the instructor may need to seek alternatives to challenge the student. However, if this seemingly disinterested student is, in fact, falling behind, then that student would need extra attention in a different regard. In this case, the student may need to attend office hours for extra help or may require a lower-level of reading material. In either scenario, however, spending extra time with a "disinterested" student can assist in determining what that student needs in order to enhance his or her language learning experience.

Through the evaluation of a disinterested student, there exists also a valuable opportunity to evaluate instructional effectiveness. Perhaps the student has fallen behind or is not engaging due to an instructional oversight or an ineffective activity. In other words, in assessing students' progress, instructors can also assess their own teaching, to then determine a more successful approach. While formative and summative assessment measure students' accomplishment, they also measure the teacher's accomplishment in effectively instructing the students.

There is also the common occurrence of students wanting to appear confident in expressing themselves as a means of displaying competence in front of their peers, while,

in reality, they may be in need of additional guidance. This can certainly pose a further challenge in terms of assessment. However, this circumstance can be shared among students at all language levels, and it often essentially circles back to the importance of establishing a strong classroom community, yet another component of the instructor's responsibility.

In my experience, the more confidence students have in their classroom community, the stronger will be their performance in their language development. Therefore, when students display that confidence, it is easier to assess their progress in the course. While assessment is merely one facet amongst the intricacies of language teaching, it is imperative to evaluate the achievement of outcomes and student progress. Thus, it requires careful attention in its close-knit relationship with those intricacies.

Conclusion

Humanities-based education supports diverse styles of teaching and learning. It is through a variety of styles of education along with Communicative Language Theory, Task-based Language Teaching, the Whole-Person Model, and the integration of the 5 Cs, creating a learner-centered approach, that I have witnessed my own classroom come to life in a valuable exchange of individual experiences and cultures. While students face challenges in the ESL classroom, both individually and culturally, there is often something to be learned or gained from the interaction, for students as well as instructors. Each of the aforementioned lessons or activities contribute to developing a classroom dynamic, which engages all of the seven intelligences and teaches students how to

interact with other lifestyles in and outside of the classroom.

In many cases, these lessons or activities provide students with a new perspective on their classmates and instructors. While instructors are obligated to meet course outcomes and curriculum standards, these activities are meant to provide instructors with supplemental ideas to weave together a classroom culture, which can promote peace-oriented dialogue. The ESL classroom is an ideal environment for promoting and generating cultural awareness because students and teachers have the opportunity to engage with and learn from a culture different from their own, in the very intimate context of learning a new language.

Students and teachers in the ESL classroom are peacebuilders for their home country, region, or town. Therefore, this multidisciplinary task of storytelling in the classroom, such as the aforementioned folklore and fairytales, auto-ethnography, scripting and acting, and art analyses, serves to cultivate the autonomous learner and exchange personal and cultural experience to practice their second language skills. Thus, by promoting this style of education, we can encourage more teachers to use this method of instruction, and the more diverse instructors we have, the more ideas we have to exchange. In my experience, the results are reflected in the progress and enthusiasm of students, along with a rich cultural exchange, and this is something that should be shared. This literature and the arts-inspired learning environment is not without limitations, however, as is acknowledged in the assessment portion of this chapter.

The chapter reviews both formative and summative assessment, as both are integrated in a literature and the arts-based curriculum as a means of highlighting learners' needs. The chapter displays examples through the lessons of ways in which

assessment is implemented in the curriculum, through observation of student learning, while monitoring their pronunciation, speaking, and listening skills. This also can occur when evaluating students' writing through the classroom task of summary and response or other reading and writing tasks. In so doing, students' progress can be addressed.

As noted in this chapter, while assessment is critical for determining students' progress, we also conduct assessment to establish the effectiveness of the instruction. In other words, assessment indeed measures students' achievement; however, it must be recognized that it is also a useful tool for assessing teacher accomplishment. Without this recognition, assessment can become a one-sided evaluation of students' progress, which ignores the instructional influence on students' learning. As it is so, assessment is an evaluation of the instructor as well, and it is necessary to take this into consideration when assessing students' progress to ensure their development in any course as well as teacher effectiveness in the course.

Chapter Four

The Intersectionality of Storytelling, Peacebuilding, and the Classroom

At the heart of writing this dissertation while continuing my teaching in China, I took a break to spend a Saturday with my painting teacher, Mr. Yuan. While we communicate through my broken Mandarin and his exclamation and repetition of my frequently used English vocabulary, such, as “beautiful!” or “noodles!” we somehow find a way to laugh whole-heartedly and understand one another at the same time. Frequently, one of the other students will hesitantly approach me to offer translation assistance, often insisting that his or her English is far worse than is ever actually the case.

On that Saturday, I decided to put my dissertation aside and fill my mind with art. When I arrived at his studio, he greeted me with a warm and excited handshake, as is his usual custom when friends arrive. In his ever lighthearted and childlike grace, he swept me across the floor by my hand, exclaiming, “tea, tea, tea!” (another of his favorite English words), and to the tea table we went! As we sat, legs folded into pretzels, as he always insists, he shuffled through his art books next to us, pulling out the one for which he had been looking. He swiftly scanned through the pages and opened to one that illustrated an image of a flower in a vase. He pointed to the image and began speaking in Mandarin.

One of the other students chimed in and said, “Mr. Yuan says that all of the students will paint a picture to put in a book.” Mr. Yuan continued his dialogue about the painting, pointing to the student, asking her to ensure that I understood. As he spoke, the

student explained that together, vase and flower, create the Chinese word, *huāpíng*, which in English, is simply, vase. She then went on to say that *huāpíng*, is very similar to the Chinese word, *héping*, or *peace*.

Before I left the studio later that day, he shuffled through his art supplies scattered around the room and handed me a stack of paper and a painting brush, along with the book that he had been describing. When I arrived at my apartment, I rushed straight to my art room (once a spare bedroom, now consumed by paints and calligraphy) and opened to the page that he so eagerly wanted me to see. I began copying the image with his brush on the paper that he had given me, for what felt like minutes, but turned out to be hours, as I find is often the case in the creative process.

I knew that he intended for me to return the next weekend with a completed copy of the image. When I brought my completed painting to his studio, he excitedly took it out of my hands and brought it to his art table in the center of the room. He laid the painting down and picked up a *máobǐ*, or writing brush, often used for calligraphy. He scribed a beautiful compilation of Chinese characters down one side of the painting. On the other side of the vase, he painted a flower next to mine and wrote my name above his. It was not until a few weeks later, as I had been consumed by my writing, before I returned to the studio, painting in hand to ask a student to translate what he had written on the left side of the vase. The student explained that the artfully written characters were written as a poem, describing the peace he felt between China and America.

This was so profound in my writing process and in its striking relation to the topic, that when I left the studio that day, I ran home to journal the experience with the hope that it would find its way into my dissertation. I've brought my journal to the studio

ever since.

In the previous chapters, this dissertation has considered some ways in which the ESL classroom serves as a platform for self-expression and cultural exchange, while engaging each of the “seven intelligences,” described in chapter one, in reference to psychologist, Howard Gardner (Larsen-Freeman 169). The seven intelligences inform this study’s discussion of the variety of learning styles in the classroom. They also endorse the value in utilizing an interdisciplinary classroom model, to encourage cultural interaction. In addition, the historical trends in language teaching have been highlighted in support of a literature and the arts-based classroom, which encourages community, cultural exchange, and communication.

Moreover, the study has depicted the critical nature of understanding the many facets of culture and identity in a classroom model, which seeks to establish cultural competence through communication and classroom community, particularly through the medium of the potentially threatening English language. The objective for previously establishing information about culture, identity, and the ESL classroom, is for these factors to be used as a reference point for the current chapter.

The previous chapter has provided examples of the literature and the arts-based, student-centered classroom experiences, through the building of relationships, assisting students in overcoming stage fright, navigating cultural misunderstandings, and cultivating self and cultural expression, while developing student autonomy. The classroom models, then, are intended as examples for illustrating that through storytelling genres, the classroom model can simultaneously serve as a model for peacebuilding. In doing so, the notion of autonomy and the learner-centered classroom become critical in

the discussion of this chapter.

While storytelling has proven beneficial to cultural exchange and community building, it has also been recognized in the field of conflict resolution as productive to peacebuilding. With this in mind, this chapter reviews the qualities present in literature and the arts-based global storytelling communities, conflict resolution, and the literature and the arts-based ESL classroom. In the literature and the arts-based ESL classroom, teachers are not explicitly teaching conflict resolution skills or specific conflict resolution strategies, but are, instead, instilling their ideals, in order to suggest an alternative peacebuilding method. Promoting storytelling through literature and the arts in the ESL classroom, is intended as a contribution to the field of peacebuilding, by emulating the results of storytelling communities around the world.

The ESL classroom has the potential of creating an environment for an unconventional peacebuilding method, which not only supports constructive teaching and learning, but also prepares students for the world outside of the classroom. There is no predetermined focus for this method of peacebuilding, and it does not conform to established modes in the field of conflict resolution. Instead, the literature and the arts-based ESL classroom model offers an alternative to the way we view peacebuilding. It suggests that rather than focus on conflict and on traditional methods of peacebuilding, ESL teachers can prepare our students for peace-oriented dialogue, using the English language as a medium for peace, whether students live in conflict-ridden territories or not.

In Betty Reardon's work on peace education, she describes Costa Rica's University for Peace, noting their motto, "If you want peace, prepare for peace" (42). The

university, therefore, endorses the “*human potential for peace*” (Tuso and Flaherty), which suggests that humans have the innate ability to act peacefully. Thus, ESL instructors can prepare students with the tools they need to engage their capacity for peacebuilding. By teaching students to practice peace-oriented dialogue, we are preparing them as ambassadors for peace outside of the classroom. However, I am suggesting that peacebuilding can occur in a classroom setting that does not necessarily foster peace education, *per se*, but that encourages peace through mutual understanding, particularly when communicating through the dominant language of English.

Humans as a species have an innate need to tell stories, and they have been doing it for centuries through various narrative mediums. Storytelling is encapsulated throughout literature and the arts, as stories are told through literature and through an assortment of creative outlets. Stories serve as a means of survival. They teach us about ourselves and about who we want to be, and most importantly, they teach us about each other, bringing humanity together across borders and boundaries. They remind us that we are not so dissimilar from those we call “stranger” or even “enemy.” A story can save a life, build a relationship, or build awareness to provide us some insight into a life otherwise unacquainted. Stories allow us to travel through time and learn from our past to change our future. As such, stories can serve as an escape to relieve individuals from their current situation or act as a medium for relating. To others, hearing stories can also inspire individuals to share more intimate stories, allowing them to express themselves or even to seek shelter in what they hear.

Therefore, telling stories through literature and the arts not only allows for a release, but also encourages and represents the aforementioned 5 Cs of language

teaching: community, culture, connection, comparisons, and communication, along with Communicative Language Theory, Task-based Language Teaching, and Curran's Whole-Person Model. These factors are integrated into storytelling in a number of ways. The 5 Cs are at the core of storytelling as they share the same principles. Storytelling brings together communities and encourages intercultural exchange by providing a medium for communication.

This, then, results in the bridging of connections and comparisons between cultures. Communicative Language Theory can also be understood through storytelling, as both encourage interaction among participants. Similarly, Task-based Language Teaching can be achieved through literature and the arts, as students share stories through meaningful tasks. In general terms, storytelling creates an atmosphere of community and acceptance, two critical components of Curran's Whole-Person Model. In combining these language teaching methods and theories with a literature and the arts-based model of teaching, peace can be learned and understood in the ESL classroom, as each of these factors are also at the foundation of peacebuilding. Hence, establishing communication, cultural competence, and community through storytelling in the classroom, creates a natural current between the learning of the English language and peacebuilding.

Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution

Peace scholars and researchers have displayed significant and increased interest in storytelling as a tool for conflict resolution. Lederach, for instance, discusses the role of storytelling as a "window into how people understand and work with conflict"

(“Preparing Peace” 78), referring to various cultural settings, such as Somalia and other countries in Africa. Thus, storytelling provides an avenue to peacebuilding by offering perspectives on conflict. In Somalia, for instance, oral poetry is used as a means of conflict resolution among the country’s people. Hence, “drawing wisdom and oratory skills is both a revered art and a conflict-resolution tool” (Lederach, “Preparing Peace,” 78). Storytelling as a means of peacebuilding and conflict resolution has gained significant momentum over the years and has brought communities together across the globe.

In fact, these aforementioned stories are shared in various cultural settings to maintain close-knit communities and bind people together, in many cases as a way of preventing or diminishing conflict. As this is the case, communities must be negotiated, much like the aforementioned negotiation that occurs in the classroom, as all individuals bring with them, their own individual stories. In other words, “Conflict is a crisis that forces us to recognize explicitly that we live with multiple realities and must negotiate a common reality; that we bring to each situation differing—frequently contrasting—stories and must create together a single shared story with a role for each and for both” (Augsburger 11). It is, therefore, possible to negotiate a common reality while maintaining individuality. Moreover, in conflict, individuals are often striving for the same objective, which is what causes and perpetuates the conflict. In its broadest terms, conflict can be defined as “a visible sign of human energy; it is the evidence of human urgency; it is the result of competitive striving for the same goals, rights, and resources” (Augsburger 18), perpetuated by avoidance and alienation. Conflict is, therefore, complex, functioning through “uniquely human dimensions” (Lederach, “Building

Peace” 23). In other words, the multiple layers of identity and interaction make conflict a challenging concept to untangle.

This echoes back to peace activists, Robi Damelin and Bassam Aramin, who spoke at Drew University in 2014. Robi is an Israeli whose son was shot and killed by a Palestinian in 2002. Similarly, Bassam’s ten-year-old daughter was fatally shot by Israeli police in 2007. The two managed to find commonality in their stories and in their loss, and use that common thread to travel the world speaking about peace. This not only is a profound endorsement of the power of sharing stories, but it also establishes the intimacy of conflict and the way in which that intimacy can be used. Finding the commonality in conflict is what can defuse it.

In other words, by looking beyond conflicting viewpoints and understanding one another on a human and more vulnerable level, it is possible to find that common interests or specific goals intersect. For instance, when two parties are in conflict over a plot of land, the opposing parties share the same interest. They each want to own the land. In acknowledging this, rather than the conflict itself, it opens up the conversation for a mutual agreement. In Robi and Bassam’s case, rather than viewing the other as the enemy, they were able to see beyond the overarching conflict and reflect, instead, on their mutual loss and similar pain that they shared as a result. This way, they were able to use their common loss to progressively act against the conflict itself, rather than acting out against each other.

As it is so, when we recognize the individuality and intimacy of conflict, we can see the value in building relationships before conflict emerges. It has been noted, “the conceptual paradigm and praxis for peacebuilding must shift significantly away from the

traditional framework and activities that make up its diplomacy” (Lederach, “Building Peace” 24). In other words, the field of peacebuilding requires a new, unconventional approach. Moreover, there is a refocusing on building relationships. Hence, “paradigmatic shift is articulated in the movement away from a concern with the resolution of issues and toward a frame of reference that focuses on the restoration and rebuilding of relationships” (Lederach, “Building Peace,” 24).

I would add that building relationships is applicable, even in areas and between cultures, that are not necessarily experiencing conflict, and that this is particularly relevant and necessary now, during a fragile time in our political history, where we need to work toward the prevention and mediation of conflict on an individual level, particularly in community spaces, such as the ESL classroom. Hence, this suggests the notion of “relationship.” However, relationships can both cause and defuse conflict. In other words, “First and foremost is the perhaps self-evident but oft-neglected notion that *relationship* is the basis of both conflict and its long-term solution” (Lederach, “Building Peace” 26). Therefore, relationships are deeply entangled in the conflicts, which they both reduce and provoke.

In the learner-centered ESL classroom, there is an opportunity to build relationships and create a universal narrative—a single shared story, which we can all understand and which acknowledges all voices in the classroom. Comenius, one of the first European educators to write about peace education in the seventeenth century, recognized;

the road to peace was through universally shared knowledge. This approach to peace assumes that an understanding of others and shared

values will overcome hostilities that lead to conflict. The ultimate goal of education was a world in which men and women would live in harmony with acceptance of diverse cultures. (Harris 12)

Therefore, the way in which we establish and facilitate relationships can alter their outcomes, and a positive outcome occurs through mutual understanding. Thus, educating students at an influential age is critical in developing mutual understanding for building positive relationships. “Stories are a means of socializing and educating youth in all societies. Information necessary for survival and making society has to be able to be understood and communicated by all members of the community” (Senehi 44). For immigrants or foreign students living in the United States, stories are particularly relevant because they provide necessary information for survival in a new community.

It is also critical for students both in the U.S. and China to learn how to engage with stories from a new culture or community, both in support of their role as a student in a multicultural classroom, but also as an advocate for peace and understanding when they leave the classroom environment and enter the world. In other words, “foreign language study would give a person the key to another cultural milieu, which would lead to an understanding of other people and life styles” (Yesil and Demiröz 91). While ESL students have already learned about stories and ways of socializing in their home country or province, some are now presented with the challenge of learning new stories to settle into a second home, both within the classroom and outside the community, in the college setting and in the country at large.

Thus, I would add that the only way to gain universally shared knowledge and to

accept other cultures, or even individuals within our own culture, is by sharing our stories through various mediums. Similar to the UNICEF funded, “‘Circus for Peace,’ built on traditional arts, music, and drama, which targeted and incorporated children at the village level in conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities” (Lederach, “Building Peace,” 95), the ESL classroom can prepare an environment for peace through literature and the arts, in a community of students who are learning to interact with one another and with the community at large. It is a good place to grapple with issues of identity in a productive way, which has a wider application, in creating a learning environment that will be projected into the community. Conflict and identity often go hand in hand, and, thus, we approach issues of identity before allowing them to escalate once students leave the classroom and are interacting in outside communities.

According to Senehi, four critical elements compose the foundations of peace. In other words, “The cornerstones of peace are understood to be power balance, mutual recognition, critical awareness, and sometimes acts of resistance” (Senehi 45), particularly when issues of identity are concerned. Moreover, each of these qualities can be understood and maintained through negotiation. Peace cannot occur without some level of negotiation, which can bring up feelings of resistance or can enflame conflict, if identity feels threatened. I’ve mentioned in chapter two, that where identity feels threatened, conflict occurs. In other words;

When in the course of a relationship between parties, an event occurs that is perceived as invalidating the core sense of identity, the party or parties perceiving invalidation experience threat. Invalidation of the group’s core constructs is threatening because it destroys meaning and the ability to

predict events. The intensity of a conflict will be particularly high in the case where identities (or construct systems) of two (or more) parties invalidate each other. This appears to be the case in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Many members of both parties believe that their own existence is threatened by the mere existence of the other.” (Northrup 68)

As ESL instructors, this invalidation of identity is precisely what we aim to avoid, particularly in an interactive classroom, which seeks to encourage and validate varying intercultural perspectives. Hence, the objective is not to replace the cultures and identities in the room, but to develop a peace model through the use of English, which encourages that all students work with one another, voicing their perspectives, to create a productive learning environment. By so doing, we convey the message that identity will not cease to exist by learning about a new culture. If teachers can accomplish this in the ESL classroom, where people want to learn English, or, at the least, are exposed to English, then it can be used elsewhere.

Having arrived at a multifaceted understanding of conflict, it is also important to address the varying definitions of peacebuilding, and how it changes according to circumstance. For instance, “Because there are multiple contributing causes of conflict, almost any international assistance effort that addresses any perceived or real grievance can arguably be called ‘peacebuilding’” (Barnett, Kim, O’Donnell, and Sitea 44). Hence, peacebuilding can occur in unsuspecting contexts. As a result, “Although peacebuilding is generically defined as external interventions that are designed to prevent the eruption or return of armed conflict, there are critical differences among actors regarding its

conceptualization and operationalization” (Barnett, Kim, O’Donnell, and Sitea, 36).

Therefore, peacebuilding has acquired a number of different definitions and functions according to its relevance to any given situation.

For instance, “In early 2000 the Brahimi Report on Peacekeeping Reform further refined the definition of peacebuilding: ‘activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war’” (Barnett, Kim, O’Donnell, and Sitea 42). Here, we have a far more general definition of peacebuilding, which can be applied to a broader context. With the understanding of the many different implications of peacebuilding, the term itself casts a wider net.

This particular study explores peacebuilding activities on the far side of conflict, as this definition suggests, in order to provide such tools for building peace-oriented dialogue in the classroom as a method toward peacebuilding. In the case of the literature and the arts-based classroom, the curriculum, itself, is the reconstruction of peace, while the stories told through various forms of literature and the arts are the tools to help peace break through the classroom walls and grow into the global community. This begins by recognizing the power of language and the way in which it is used.

The Power of Language

Language is a powerful force, which can be used for conflict or for peace. In other words, the way we use and, therefore, interpret language can have profound effects for the benefit or diminishment of humanity. For instance, “Consider the Bible and the

Declaration of Independence; both of these documents center on respecting other people” (Fisher and Sharp 21). In other words, the Bible and the Declaration of Independence were each created to establish a common, peaceful understanding among humanity. However, the language in both documents is often manipulated and misrepresented, and more severe circumstances can lead to extremism (Fisher and Sharp 21-22).

Therefore, one must treat language as a vehicle for transmitting peaceful dialogue. Hence, Chinua Achebe provides a quote from W.H. Auden in an interview by the *New York Times*, where Auden says, “As a poet—not as a citizen—there is only one political duty, and that is to defend one’s language from corruption. And that is particularly serious now. It’s being so quickly corrupted. When it is corrupted people lose faith in what they hear, and this leads to violence” (134). In other words, the corruption of language can lead to corruption of the people who speak it.

Hence, it is our duty as ESL instructors to ensure that we are contending misuse and corruption of the English language, to encourage students to use English mindfully, in a way that reflects their engagement in the ESL classroom, once they leave the classroom environment. While this notion should certainly apply to any profession, we have a unique opportunity in the ESL classroom, where we interact with a force as personal and as powerful as language, in a classroom community comprised of a unique assortment of students, who are expected to work together to meet a common goal and then carry that work with them into global communities.

Moreover, being that English, specifically, is an influential language, which has spread across the world, it is critical that we encourage students to use it in a respectful and tolerant way. Thus, “Understanding the present attempt to champion English in world

affairs cannot be reduced simply to issues of language, but rests on a full comprehension of the ideological elements that generate and sustain linguistic, cultural, and racial discrimination” (Macedo 13). To put it another way, teachers must guide students in avoiding cultural discrimination, misrepresentation, and misunderstanding through the development of communication and intercultural competence.

Additionally, teachers must also ensure that students do not misinterpret the meaning of the instructor’s language, as language encompasses greater meaning than the stringing together of words to create dialogue. Thus, there is, of course, meaning encompassed in dialogue, as well. Hence, “The set of behaviors we call ‘language’ is a subset of meaningful behaviors that help to define a culture” (Hooker 4-5). In other words, language is meaningful, and, therefore, must be used with intent and established understanding of its meaning, particularly in a language classroom. Therefore, in teaching ESL, we are passing on a delicate tool, which can be used as a weapon or as an agent for peace.

Language is a means of navigating cultural and societal exchange. In *Language and the Destiny of Man*, among Achebe’s collection of essays in *Hopes and Impediments*, he discusses the “value of language in facilitating the affairs and transactions of society...” (129). As such, Achebe highlights language as a medium and goes on to discuss the importance of how we use language. Of course, language is the tool through which we convey information and express our opinions, hopes, and demands; however, it is multifaceted in its nature. The way we express language involves silent physical cues and cultural undertones, and the way we use language is both personal and social. Language is a particular force, which must be used with attention to detail, particularly in

our choice of words, keeping in mind its many layers. Achebe refers to various African societies and their notions about the power of language, or as he describes, “language and the potency of words” (130). Among a variety of creation myths, Achebe discusses the powerful creation myth among the Wapaganwa people of Tanzania, which states:

The sky was large, white, and very clear. It was empty; there were no stars and no moon; only a tree stood in the air and there was wind. This tree fed on the atmosphere and ants lived on it. Wind, tree, ants, and atmosphere were controlled by the power of the Word, but the Word was not something that could be seen. It was a force that enabled one thing to create another.

(Achebe 130)

Achebe includes this creation myth to depict one of the many cultural beliefs in the power of the word. In his claim that language efficiently facilitates societal affairs when used clearly and effectively, this myth is used as an illustration to describe the ways in which society hinges on effective language use. In other words, according to this illustration, everything centers on the power of the word and, therefore, in the efficient and effective use of language. In the case of the Wapaganwa people, language is so powerful that it is a driving force through which all life is coordinated and understood. In order to establish effective use of language, however, cultural implications must be made clear, so as not to diminish the meaning or message of the word. Otherwise, communication can only go so far, thereby, resulting in misunderstanding. If the language is misunderstood, then its purpose is defeated, resulting in ineffective and inefficient use of language.

Myths such as this can also be used to help understand the way in which a culture views communication. This understanding can, thereby, assist in facilitating communication efficiently. Achebe explains, however, that while cultures in Africa and elsewhere have moved away from this particular depiction of language, similar qualities and traces of this perspective can be found globally (Achebe 130). This also helps us to understand the ways in which stories travel and weave a connecting thread throughout the globe, as is shown in the folklore activity described in chapter three. As stories travel, beliefs about language and communication can travel with them. Since each is closely related, there is value in learning about another's culture, through their stories, to then understand the language and communication, which correlate. There may also be found, more similarities than anticipated.

To illustrate an example of the way in which stories can travel, Achebe also reflects on Jerome Rothenberg's, *Shaking the Pumpkin*, which includes a traditional Eskimo poem, "Magic Words," sharing similar qualities with the creation myth of the Wapaganwa people. Part of the poem reads as follows:

That was the time when words were like magic

The human mind had mysterious powers.

A word spoken by chance

might have strange consequences.

It would suddenly come alive

and what people wanted to happen could happen—

all you had to do was say it. (131)

This poem, along with the creation myth, also shares in the message that words can cause a chain reaction. They can promote healing and harmony, or they can create destruction, even annihilation. In any sense, words have consequences and can alter circumstances. This is part of what makes language so influential, the mere fact that all we have to do is say it. How language is used is up to each individual, and once a word or phrase escapes our lips, it is set free into the world to do as it will, which is why it is critical to teach the cultural context necessary for understanding language.

For instance, much of our interlanguage or intercultural exchange can partly be understood through what is referred to in second language acquisition as “speech acts.” While speech acts encompass various subcategories in interlanguage communication, “Speech acts can be thought of as functions of language, such as complaining, thanking, apologizing, refusing, requesting, and inviting” (Gass 242). It is not necessarily the speech acts themselves that are of concern to this study but, rather, the way they are applied interculturally.

In other words, “The *form* used in specific speech acts varies from culture to culture” (Gass 243). Gass provides an example of an interaction between a native speaker of Hebrew and a native English speaker. The English speaker is upset because his classmate did not return his book. The English speaker explains that he needed it to prepare for class. His classmate responds, “I have nothing to say.” To the English speaker, this response could come across as rude or thoughtless, however, to his classmate’s understanding, this meant, “I have no excuses” (Gass 245). As it is shown, language can be easily and commonly misunderstood without the proper cultural

relevance. Speech acts help to compose language, so it is important to understand the cultural relevance behind commonly used phrases.

Thus, in order to work together and develop classroom community, students must understand speech acts, as well as nonverbal communication, which exist beyond spoken language. In other words, nonverbal cues add “aspects of meaning beyond the language” (Rivers 4). Particularly in a multicultural ESL classroom, we must, in other words, consider the ways in which culture influences interaction and communication. Consider Indian cultural cues for instance. In India, as a way of indicating that the individual is in agreement with the other, he or she may nod his or her head from side to side. This head nod may also simply mean, “Yes” or “I understand.” However, to an individual unfamiliar with this nonverbal cue, it could seem confusing, and in some cases even frustrating, as the communication may seem unclear or indirect.

As mentioned in chapter two, it has been the case where immigrants in the U.S. have been tormented and put in physically vulnerable positions, because they were unable to communicate their language, or were perhaps communicating in nonverbal cues, which the aggressor did not understand, or did not care to understand. Hence, Achebe, in his essay, “Language and the Destiny of Man,” reminds readers that while it is difficult to imagine life without language, as language itself is so valuable to man, it is not a trait with which we are born. Integrated in this discussion, Achebe portrays life before two people were able to communicate through spoken language. He writes;

Let us imagine a very simple incident in those days. A man strays into a rock shelter without knowing that another is there finishing a meal in the dark interior. The first hint our newcomer gets to this fact is a loose rock hurled at

his head. In a different kind of situation which we shall call (with all kinds of guilty reservations) *human*, that confrontation might have been resolved less destructively by the simple question: What do you want? Or even an angry: Get out of here! (Achebe 128)

The situation we have in the U.S. is much like that of our distant ancestors. The aggressor views the “newcomer” or non-English-speaking immigrant as a threat or imposition to his or her identity, and without a common language or productive means of negotiation, violence ensues. However, if both parties are able to understand the cultural components behind communication, then language can, at least for the sake of survival, be supplemented by cultural competence. In other words, both parties would be able to understand one another beyond the functions of a common spoken language.

Hence, it has been stated, “We cannot underestimate the importance of nonverbal communication in second language learning and in conversational analysis” (Brown, “Principles,” 235). Cultural competence, then, through the understanding of language in all of its complexity, is a means of survival and connection, particularly where linguistic proficiency is absent. In other words, it is critical to attain “Knowledge of all the varying nonverbal semantics of the second culture, and an ability to both send and receive non-verbal signals unambiguously” (Brown, “Principles,” 235). Moreover, this suggests that it is not only the responsibility of the ESL learner to facilitate cultural competence outside of the classroom. The native English speaker must be receptive to communication, as well. Therefore, ESL students are provided with the language and cultural tools to lead native English speakers in communicating peacefully, by setting an example.

Therefore, in considering the interaction between native English speakers and ESL students, we must also consider the definition of community and its relevance to the broader term, 'culture,' as it encompasses the space in which students and individuals come together across the world.

Global Community

Community is a space for engaging in a neutral dialogue; therefore, when we consider community in broader terms, it is essential to pose the question, "what constitutes community and how is it situated?" First, there is an issue of membership, that is, how one becomes a member of a particular culture or religious affiliation. Community helps us to understand our world, our culture, and our own personal lives and how they are structured. We can think of it in terms of clubs, sports, community at the state level or national level. It can mean living with friends in a dorm or sharing a religious belief.

Hence, we must ask whether that element is chosen or not chosen and whether it is meaningful or functional. Furthermore, if something goes wrong in that community, each member shares in that experience. As such, if there is a common goal for the community, then each member shares in that as well. Therefore, there is a certain expectation as a member of a community. However, in some cases, perhaps members aren't concerned with the system at all. Therefore, within any community, it still takes effort to find that middle ground. So, while on the outside, the community looks unified, it does not necessarily mean that all of its members share the same beliefs or status.

While a classroom of all Spanish speakers or all Chinese speakers may look

unified, each of those individuals comes from a different set of personal and communal or cultural beliefs and understandings. As such, instructors can direct students to use the target language as a medium for relating with their classmates on a number of levels through the use of storytelling. Instructors are facilitators in defusing prejudices, and just as students are ambassadors for peace, teachers are ambassadors for global cultural understanding, particularly at the college-level. Again, considering the classroom and campus environment as a community, with likeminded and diverse personalities, characteristics, and physical appearances, it is an invaluable setting for students to communicate on an individual level, through the shared communal goal of becoming global English speakers for peace. While instructors provide students with a space for engaging in appropriate discourse, it is up to the student to participate. However,

As some teachers are not well-equipped with the cultural, pluralistic and discourse elements of the language, they refrain from incorporating cultural sides and skip these elements. However, they observed the rise in motivation level of students when the subjects appeal to them and they find a relation or similarity with their own cultural elements (Yesil and Demiröz 91).

Therefore, in witnessing this increased interest in the subject matter when students are exposed to their own cultural elements, teachers would likely see improved language results. Thus, one would think that student motivation would also motivate instructors to incorporate more cultural elements in the classroom. As is indicated in chapter two, the literature and the arts-based classroom examples depicted in chapter three assist instructors in understanding how to apply cultural elements to the classroom, whether or

not the teacher is fluent in cultural discourse, though the latter is, indeed, preferred.

By giving students the opportunity to talk about their own cultural experience and individual stories, through literature and the arts, they are leaving it up to the students to become teachers of what they are already experts in—themselves. Students are motivated when talking about their own culture because it is a part of what makes them who they are. Therefore, the teacher already has a room full of cultural experts and can share his or her personal cultural experience to both facilitate and add to the discussion, rather than merely relaying a message. As this is the case, students are held accountable as autonomous learners, and are, therefore, equipped to develop the leadership skills that they will take with them outside of the classroom, as is later discussed in this chapter. This way, students continue facilitating the discussion outside of the classroom, as their role in the classroom is to act as teachers of their own cultural and personal experiences.

Storytelling Characteristics in the ESL Classroom

Stories bring individuals together from all cultural backgrounds, and, as is depicted in this chapter, have provided a medium for communication and community building across the globe. As is displayed in its widespread presence around the world, storytelling provides comfort and is relatable and accessible. As such, storytelling genres are applicable in the teaching of culture in the ESL classroom, in establishing community and assisting in providing a means of communication through these characteristics, therefore, enhancing language development and the environment for language learning.

Stories have been told for centuries throughout the globe and, therefore, have

acquired a number of various outlets including the aforementioned narrative storytelling, folklore and fairytale, myth, scripting, acting, and artwork, and storytelling refers to sharing individuality by representing one's outlook on the world through these various outlets. In fact, “‘Tell me a story’ are magic words in all cultures,” (Ashliman 1), as storytelling is part of what establishes our humanity.

Hence, every individual and society can relate to storytelling. In other words, “Storytelling is a universal human activity. Every known society on earth, at every point of recorded history, has told stories; some as oral history, some as part of religious rituals, some for instruction, and some for pure entertainment” (Ashliman1). Therefore, storytelling encourages students to relate to one another and to their instructor, as each individual can, in some way or another, relate to the common human affinity for stories. Thus, “Every people has a body of myths or sacred tales received from its antiquity. They are supernatural stories which man created to explain the problems and mysteries of life and death—his attempt to make sense of the bewildering complexity of existence” (Achebe 134). Hence, we have a deep-rooted, human need to make sense of life, and we attempt this through storytelling.

Many ancient stories encompass messages intended to bind communities. In fact, it is noted, “There is much to praise in the message of ancient tales. Many of the values that then held families and communities together in a hostile world, enabling them not only to survive but sometimes to thrive and prosper, seem timeless in their merit...” (Ashliman 4). In other words, traditional stories can encompass and help to explain our moral understandings. These understandings are deeply connected to identity, and, therefore, students can relate in a way that establishes familiarity in the classroom.

In other words, stories help to facilitate classroom communication and interaction through a medium in which students relate and, therefore, feel comfortable to explore features of the second language. Consequently, stories provide students with a sense of ownership. This way, students have “opportunities to recognize and offer their own understandings of how they believe their cultures can be bridged with the new culture” (Gholson and Stumpf 79). Hence, in acquiring this cultural awareness, students can better understand the aforementioned language functions, which often otherwise become misunderstood.

In an interdisciplinary study on folklore and language in the ESL classroom, researchers concluded that the classroom model “evolved into a balanced instructional strategy that built cultural skills of observation, analysis (of self and cultures), detailed oral description, and the written word” (Gholson and Stumpf 79). Therefore, the study depicted the significant benefits of storytelling in the development of language. Thus, features of the storytelling classroom model have been tested and have displayed relevant language learning benefits.

For instance, active listening and communication skills, two significant components of the language learning process, can be strengthened through storytelling. When listening to a story or engaging in storytelling, particularly for the purpose of an intended outcome, students are more inclined to practice their active listening skills in order to gather specific information. Since an intended outcome must be gained from the storytelling, students will likely listen or participate carefully to meet that objective. Often, storytelling also engages the learners in a way that peaks their attention, so as to inspire active listening.

When sharing stories, students also practice their communication skills by utilizing effective body language and keeping their classmates' engaged as well. In combination with one another, active listening and communication skills can also further contribute to the development of student autonomy. Students can use their listening and communication skills to express themselves more comfortably and learn how to apply their English in practical situations.

This, then, can foster in students a sense of security and confidence in their language communication abilities, after having practiced applying them in a trusted environment. Moreover, when a student knows that his or her classmates are actively listening and exchanging in communication, that student will likely feel that he or she is a part of a community, which supports his or her learning process. In a sense, this is a validation of the students' language acquisition, thereby validating the student's ability to communicate and establish themselves in the classroom community. This further supports the sense of community and confidence necessary to develop learner autonomy.

Storytelling also enhances learner autonomy in a number of other ways. When students have the opportunity to share part of their identity and culture, it empowers them to become motivated and to actively participate in their own learning process. Motivation is a significant contributor in establishing learner autonomy. When the learning process motivates students, it contributes to developing the sense of empowerment necessary to take responsibility for one's own learning. In other words, students begin to "take charge of their own learning" (Brown, "Principles," 122), a critical component for developing eventual independence.

Students also strengthen and develop interpretive strategies by analyzing the story

behind a piece of artwork, by watching a play, or by reading a fable. When asked to describe an image, for instance, students have the opportunity to note the visual aspects of what they see in the image, while also considering a potential message that the piece is trying to send. This strengthening of interpretation skills is similarly explained in ACTFL's *Language Educator*, vol. 8, no. 2. The author explains that by reading fables as a class, students develop vocabulary, pronunciation skills, and interpretive strategies. According to the author, one way that this can be accomplished is by first asking students to guess the personalities of the characters they will read about (Schrambach 42). Students can do this while incorporating learned adjectives into their descriptions. Another way is by asking students to guess the meaning of terms from the reading that they don't understand, using context clues.

In this way, students are learning vocabulary and pronunciation while also strengthening their interpretation skills. There are, of course, a number of other ways that storytelling can help to develop these skills, as well. For example, students engage in scripting and acting to practice their vocabulary and pronunciation, while also honing their interpretation skills when critiquing or answering questions about a script or skit. This simultaneously strengthens students' aforementioned communication skills and active listening strategies, as well. When students are watching a skit for the purpose of critiquing it or being able to answer specific questions, they must actively engage in the performance to be able to do so. When acting and performing a skit for the class, students must also be able to communicate the information in a way that engages their audience and effectively conveys their script.

In fact, reading, writing, listening, speaking, and pronunciation can all be

encompassed by storytelling genres. Students utilize and strengthen these skills in a literature and the arts-based classroom by reading stories, writing their own stories, listening to stories through the various storytelling mediums, speaking about the stories through the different mediums, and by practicing their pronunciation in the process of spoken word.

While different storytelling lessons may focus on different language development objectives, students may simultaneously utilize a number of other language skills in the process, such as reading, writing, listening, speaking, and pronunciation skills. Moreover, by utilizing these various storytelling methods, the multiple learning styles in the classroom can also be recognized. Instructors may begin to realize students' learning strengths, to better understand how to help individual students grow in their language development.

Concurrently, literature and the arts provides students with the opportunity to utilize their learning strengths, while also encouraging them to become familiar with the learning styles to which they are not necessarily accustomed. This way, students can begin to expand and develop their multiple intelligences, while still utilizing their learning strengths. In doing so, the development of autonomy can be further supported, by encouraging confidence in the students. This confidence can stem from students' opportunity to display learning strengths, as well as from the development of other learning strengths or "intelligences."

As this is so, when utilizing various modes of storytelling, each student has the opportunity to connect with some recognizable aspect of learning, and once students connect with the familiar, as has been discussed, they can then make connections

between the familiar and the unfamiliar. As such, “By beginning with connections to the familiar and by exploring how these connections translate to the unfamiliar, it is then possible for the student to begin to move on to the unfamiliar world views, discuss them, and learn about them” (Gholson and Stumpf 80). In other words, this is a way of igniting students’ curiosity and understanding by discovering in others what they know about themselves. Therefore, by learning English through a relatable medium, such as storytelling, students can establish safety in the classroom community, thus fulfilling part of Curran’s objective of establishing a positive community-learning environment, through Community Language Learning. In other words, “An intense atmosphere of warmth and belonging is produced which deeply relates each person not only to the teacher-knower but to everyone in the learning group” (Curran 1). This encompasses two of the goals, then, of the storytelling classroom. This first is to encourage a classroom community where students feel comfortable in their intercultural exchange, both among classmates and between classmates and instructor, or facilitator. The second is for students to then gain from that exchange, advancement in their language skills.

This also echoes distinguished linguist, Stephen Krashen’s Input Hypothesis, in which he made five claims about the language acquisition process, comprised of Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis, Monitor Hypothesis, Natural Order Hypothesis, Input Hypothesis, and Affective Filter Hypothesis. Among these five claims, Krashen notes that sufficient comprehensible input, or input that is just outside of the learner’s level of competence, is “the only *true cause* of second language acquisition” (Brown, “Principles,” 289). Krashen also discusses the notion of *acquiring* aspects of a language. By acquiring cultural competence in the classroom through storytelling, students are

challenged just enough to also acquire new language skills or “intelligences,” without feeling that the challenge is unbearable, thus fulfilling Krashen’s claim. Krashen also established that students learn best in environments of low anxiety.

This is also encompassed by one of the five steps in Krashen’s Input Hypothesis, in his claim that students acquire language best in low anxiety environments (289). Students can establish safety in a classroom that supports their learning styles and cultural affiliations. This also echoes back to Curran’s Community Language Learning, in that when the student is in a supporting classroom environment, he or she becomes proud of his or her accomplishments, large or small. This supporting classroom environment, then, I would argue, encourages the student to reach just outside of their level of language competence, to continue acquiring new language skills. The feeling of safety in the unfamiliar referred to previously, is critical here. In other words, storytelling genres present students with familiar cultural topics to then find comfort in the unfamiliar, thus, supporting their language development and encouraging cultural exchange.

Stories help us to understand the world and where we, as individuals, fit within it, and for this reason, “The ability to tell and understand stories is probably a critical capacity with which humans are innately endowed” (Senehi 44). Therefore, all humans have the ability to engage with stories in some way or another, making storytelling accessible to all learning styles in the classroom, thus, engaging the “seven intelligences” displayed in chapter one. One can also refer back to this notion of the unfamiliar, as students are exposed to all learning styles, to then develop comfort in adapting new modes of learning. Storytelling genres, such as those used in literature and the arts model,

encompass each of the qualities embodied by the seven intelligences. In other words, stories can be told through a number of mediums, which reflect the seven intelligences. To put it another way, stories can be told through sequential presentations or games, videos or artwork, such as drawing, hands-on activities and pantomime, music, problem-solving, and journal-keeping (Larsen-Freeman). This is alluded to in the explanation of curriculum in chapter two and displayed in the curriculum model in chapter three.

As it is so, storytelling genres in the classroom support students' cultural perspectives, learning styles and, thus, personal initiatives in determining how they will engage through these perspectives. In other words, storytelling allows students the freedom and comfort to decide how they will interact with the other cultures in the classroom, including that of the target language. Therefore, the classroom borrows principles from Task-based Language Teaching, "which aims to provide learners with a natural context for language use" (Larsen-Freeman 144).

As this is so, Task-based Language Teaching expects students to cooperatively work to achieve classroom goals through interaction (Larsen-Freeman 144). In encouraging this independence instructors guide students, in a now familiar and relatable setting to become empowered through their use of the English language. Additionally, this can begin to build students' confidence in others and in their learning and speaking abilities, particularly once they have become comfortable with the unfamiliar and with all of the seven intelligences. Thus, students can use this newfound confidence to develop student autonomy, described in chapter two.

Additionally, storytelling embodies culture, and culture embodies communication. In fact, as it has been said, "communication is culture and culture is communication"

(Tang 87). Therefore, as these three components of a storytelling classroom are intertwined, students acquire cultural competence and, therefore, communication, to interact in culturally appropriate ways, through their ability to engage with storytelling, of which they are “innately endowed.” Moreover, this establishes the outcome of reaching communicative competence, an objective of the Communicative approach (Larsen-Freeman 121).

Storytelling genres whether they are told or observed through art, acting, narrative storytelling, fiction or nonfiction writing, are also physically accessible to students outside of the classroom, thus providing a means of relating their classroom experience to the world. As such, students can apply their cultural understandings to familiar environments. Visual artwork for instance, is accessible on the street in the form of graffiti, in free galleries across the globe, or even in restaurants or coffee shops, while “Art can be created by anyone in nearly any location and with limited resources” (Peters 2). Therefore, students can create their own stories outside of the classroom, by relating their classroom experiences to their communities. As such, students can practice their use of the language and their newfound cultural understanding outside of the classroom, to then enhance their learning in the classroom. Hence, this is reflective of the art museum activity found in chapter three. Oral storytelling has also been made accessible to communities across the world, both by professional storytellers and by members of the community.

Thus, in the literature and the arts-based ESL classroom, students share their stories, through various functions, which not only engage a variety of learning styles, but also support their innate abilities and desires to interact with stories. Therefore, the

classroom is reflective of storytelling communities around the globe, which exist through literature and the arts.

Through accessibility, relatedness, and connection, we are drawn to the very nature of storytelling in every genre, and if used effectively and productively, like any powerful resource, stories can be and have been proven to bring communities closer together, including the classroom community. As such, each of these components are also reflective of the 5 Cs of foreign language teaching, in that students are drawing connections between themselves and their classmates and the classroom and the world. Moreover, in order to make these connections, students compare their familiar stories with the stories existing in the classroom. As such, communication and culture are inherent components of the storytelling classroom, and, therefore, each of these functions assists in building the classroom community, which can then be mirrored in the global community.

Thus, while stories might teach us something new about the country, culture, or community in which we are living, we also have this instinctive understanding of the structure of stories and how to interact with them. Humans thrive with the need to tell and hear stories. Whether we are tuning in to the news, hearing about a friend's first date, or jotting down travel experiences in a journal entry, sharing stories is interwoven in our daily lives. Stories teach us about ourselves, our friends, our acquaintances, our enemies, strangers, and about individuals across the globe.

Therefore, when we share stories with one another, our interactions have the power to transform our view of the world, for better or worse. Storytelling in its many forms has also served a moral and community building function for centuries, both

directly and indirectly. Stories communicated through the arts, for instance, have been showcased in community arts programs across the United States, as a space for, among others, “learning and teaching about diverse cultures (multiculturalism)” (Guetzko 6). While the arts serve as a social sphere for building community and bringing diverse groups of individuals together in conversation with one another, it also has cognitive benefits for enhancing academic performance, as is reflected in the connection between the seven intelligences and storytelling genres. However, the arts have also “been said to improve health, mental well-being, cognitive functioning, creative ability and academic performance,” as well as to “improve skills, cultural capital and creativity,” (Guetzko 10) while literature based storytelling has been used to teach moral lessons and share cultural histories throughout time.

For the purpose of displaying how the interactive storytelling ESL classroom is reflective of these communities and, therefore, promotes peace, the subsequent examples provide accounts of how these various means of storytelling build community and bring an assortment of individuals and characters together through communication, culture, connections, and comparisons. Therefore, the 5 Cs support the following section. The examples begin through a broad scope of storytelling as it relates to the arts, then through a more narrow view of the traditional moral-based storytelling, and how each develops community.

Functions of the Storytelling Genres

Storytelling through the Arts

After World War II, Herbert Read determined that art and peace education should be in conversation with one another. In fact, he “argued for the marriage of art and peace education to produce images that would motivate people to promote peace” (Harris 14). Therefore, his aim is for viewers to become moved by the content of the work and to utilize their creative capacities. The intention for the current study, however, is for students to relate through their expression of art and through their perceptions of the work for the purpose of encouraging diverse classroom communication and community.

However, in some cases this occurs through artwork explicitly designed to send a message of peace and justice. As Peters affirms, “The collaboration required of art and the exchange generated by art make it an effective tool for use in community development” (13). In other words, art initiates discussion and asks something of its observers or participants. In fact, I would argue that an individual’s perception of art provides a window into their perception of the world, which contributes to the community’s understanding of who the individual is.

This occurs especially in the ESL classroom, where students are explicitly asked to provide their perspective on a piece, as shown in the arts museum activity from chapter three. Moreover, the discussion of art establishes students’ ability to communicate on a number of topics. Hence, one of the values of “communication” under the 5 Cs is that “Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics” (“National Standards for Foreign Language Learning—ACTFL”).

The arts are comprised of a multitude of mediums, including “concerts, gallery openings, museum shows, and plays” (Peters 3) and is celebrated throughout the world as

a means of encouraging community involvement and accepting cultural and individual diversity. Thus, this understanding illuminates the benefits of art in community development. Hence, “Art allows for the involvement of individuals from various backgrounds and gives those individuals the opportunity to interact with one another” (Peters 2). Moreover, art offers an exchange of perspective and belief. Thus, it “allows for the sharing of ideas and beliefs in a way that is less threatening than other approaches” (Peters 2). This nonthreatening approach to communication, therefore, relieves any potential threat to identity, a source of conflict, as is mentioned in Chapter two and elaborated on in the current chapter. Additionally, art preserves culture, so that culture can be shared, particularly through its globalization. In other words, “Art, in an age of globalization, allows a community to preserve its culture and share that culture with others. The arts are an element of a community’s identity and may help to preserve the heritage and history of the community” (Peters 9). This preservation of identity and heritage of history is largely what the storytelling ESL classroom seeks to achieve.

By preserving students’ cultural values, expressed through the arts, teachers encourage students to teach their classmates about their identities in an interactive and inherently expressive way. Hence, this facilitates the teaching of culture, both of the target language culture and of all other cultures in the classroom, as it exposes students to new world views. In other words, students study the products of the culture, yet another component of the 5 Cs. In the 5 Cs, understanding “culture” determines that students “demonstrate a relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied” (“National Standards for Foreign Language Learning—ACTFL”). Moreover, as art reassures a sense of safety, where community members engage collectively, it, therefore,

builds trust. In other words, it “facilitates civic engagement and trust within a community” (Peters 6). Hence, trust is a significant element in harboring classroom community, which can then develop into civic engagement to reach the community outside the classroom.

Thus, “Cultural preservation has a definite influence on the development of a community” (Peters 9). Therefore, once students leave the classroom, they can create relationships, which seek to preserve culture. It has also been noted that a trustful community and its qualities, which relate to trust, help to develop leadership in students. In other words, “In the language learning context, values such as courage, cooperation, docility, and trust promote the development of a leadership that is capable of intercultural communication” (La Forge 55). It can be noted then that by establishing a community in which students feel safe to interact and engage with its members, they simultaneously develop the necessary leadership skills to use their intercultural understanding to communicate in the world.

The arts have been used for centuries as an approach to building community in an effort to preserve peace, “in fact, in ancient Greece art was often used as a method for civic engagement” (Peters 10), which Peters references from the Community Arts Network, a project which promotes community-based arts. In Japan, the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale is held every three years, as a means of building community in the surrounding areas. The art show’s “main objective is known as the Tsumari approach, a kind of community building through art that draws media attention and attracts artists, curators, and others in the art industry” (Henderson). Moreover, “Besides viewing works of art in rural fields and open spaces of the region, visitors enjoy performances from all

over the world on stages built in the midst of giant pieces of art and swaying crops” (Henderson). In preparation of this communal celebration, “Urban artists and volunteer groups work with local farmers throughout the festival, inspiring the connection between art, nature, and humanity” (Henderson). Therefore, community is at the fore, even in preparation for the event.

The 1981-established Jerash Festival of Culture and Art in Jordan, upholds a cultural tradition in which spectators would gather in the 2000 year old ruins to “hear Jordanian music, to see folkloric dances performed by Jordanian and other Arab groups, and to watch Arab plays and puppet shows” (Henderson). The tradition today has continued to expand as, “In addition to the music, dance, and theater events, the Jerash Festival also includes an Arab book fair, with titles in both Arabic and English, sponsored by the Jordan Department of Libraries, Documentation, and National Archives” (Henderson). Therefore, this interactive storytelling preserves the stories that help to comprise Jordanian history, shared with visitors from around the world. This tradition provides a sound example of what the interactive, literature and the arts-based storytelling classroom seeks to achieve.

As such, in many cases, the art world serves as a function of promoting peace, without the direct intention of doing so, as is the case for the ESL classroom. Art Basel for instance, is a massive art fair held annually in Basel, Switzerland, bringing together a community of artists from around the world to showcase a global spectrum of work and to engage with diverse art forms and people in a vibrant setting. Hence, each artist brings with him or her, their own story attached to their work and arrives with the expectation of learning about other artists and their work, creating an atmosphere of openness and

acceptance (Henderson).

These are only a few examples among the thousands of cultural arts communities established around the world. Whether established with the intention of promoting cultural awareness or as a function of local and international community building, the arts provide a platform for communal and personal storytelling in an unobtrusive and often indirect way.

Literary Storytelling

If we observe storytelling more narrowly, however, we also find that there is a moral component or some deeper message present, in literature and traditional storytelling, such as in folklore, fairytale, and myth. While versions of these tales may differ between cultures, the message that they share is often the same or similar. These stories are also told for various reasons among cultures. This is also where students can begin to make “connections” between peace, storytelling, and the ESL classroom.

Under the 5 Cs, “connections” asks that students “analyze content, compare it to information available in their own language, and assess the linguistic and cultural differences” (“National Standards for Foreign Language Learning—ACTFL”). Therefore, students can compare stories to make connections and consider some of the differences between cultures and also in the way that stories are used. Moreover, these stories shed light on more explicit messages of creating bonds between opposing people.

Folklore and fairytales “are stories that create new worlds, thus providing an outlet for our frustrations and fears and a platform for our hopes and dreams. They are

also stories that instruct, but they do so entertainingly” (Ashliman 1). Myths on the other hand, though similar, “deal with the great issues of life: the creation of the world, the nature of good and evil, and the relationships between deities and mortals” (Ashliman 3).

Folklore and fairytales, often referred to as peace tales, provide an alternate reality, encouraging storytelling communities while often providing a peaceful escape. However, they also send some sort of underlying message and in many cases, that message is a message of peace. In his study on *Storytelling for Peacebuilding: Toward Sustainable Cultural Diversity*, McKee references the Mangbetu Tales, which derive from the northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo, are often told at night, and encompass the characteristics of folklore (McKee 3-4).

McKee refers to “The tale of the Chicken and Crocodile” (3), which tells a story of a chicken who goes out every day yelling, “My brother Crocodile!” The crocodile can’t understand why the chicken calls him brother, so he gathers a council of animals before which the chicken is asked to explain himself. The chicken asks the animals who give birth by laying eggs to stand on one side, and for those who give birth to live young, to stand on the other. Once the crocodile finds himself on the same side as the chicken, he understands that the chicken is in fact his brother (McKee 3-4). As McKee observes;

By analysis, the two main characters represent different, opposed groups of people...But the two do not allow their differences; however many and obvious, to make the one the eternal, helpless, victim of the other; rather they agree, by Crocodile acceding to Chicken’s invocation of the single sameness of egg-laying, to regard and act toward each other as brothers. (4)

Therefore, when a story, such as this, is shared in the classroom, it promotes that same message of peace. In fact, often, their purpose is to help people to find common ground, even if it means looking past all other differences or accepting those differences as broken pieces of glass in a cultural mosaic.

Many tales often depict a shift in perspective, providing insight into the way we view the world. MacDonald's, *Peace Tales*, for instance, includes an historical tale from Japan, *Music to Soothe the Savage Breast*:

A musician named Mochimitsu was on his way home from a trip to Tosa province when, at a harbor in Aki, he was attacked by pirates. Having no skill at arms, he was quite unable to defend himself and was sure he was going to be killed.

He had taken refuge on top of his ship's cabin. At the last moment he took out his *hichiriki* and shouted, "You pirates, listen to me! I'm defenseless, as you can see. Help yourselves to anything you want! But I'd just like you to hear this piece on the *hichiriki*. I've been working on it for years. It'll be something for you to remember today by!"

"All right, men!" shouted the pirates' leader. "Hold it! We're going to listen to some music!"

When the pirates had quieted down, the weeping Mochimitsu began to play. This was the last time he would ever make music, and he poured his whole soul into the piece. The beautiful sound of his instrument floated far out over the waves and filled the bay where the ship was moored. It was just like a scene in an old tale.

The pirates listened in perfect silence. When the music was over, their leader loudly declared, “I came because I wanted your ship, but your playing has brought tears to my eyes. I couldn’t possibly harm you now!”

The pirates rowed away. (MacDonald 62)

Before Mochimitsu sang, he was only a man with a ship, a means to an end. However, once the pirates heard his voice, their perception of his identity shifted, and he became human. In response to this tale, MacDonald references the Mexican proverb, “*todo el mundo sonrie en el mismo idioma*” or “All the world smiles in the same language” (62).

While peace tales relay an underlying message of acceptance, they also depict the interwoven similarities or “connections” between cultures and their stories, and while each individual story is unique to its given culture, the message is often the same. This is also the case for many myths, as they also convey a moral message, though more explicitly and authoritatively. Also, as previously mentioned, Achebe presents a number of myths in the form of creation stories, which can communicate a message of commonality and diversity among humanity, in our hopes and understandings of life and death, as we know it. He also includes a myth from the Igbo people in Nigeria, “which bears more directly on the question of language” (Achebe 136):

When death first entered the world, men sent a messenger to Chuku, asking him whether the dead could not be restored to life and sent back to their old homes. They chose the dog as their messenger.

The dog, however, did not go straight to Chuku, and dallied on the way. The

toad had overheard the message, and as he wished to punish mankind, he overtook the dog and reached Chuku first. He said he had been sent by men to say that after death they had no desire at all to return to the world. Chuku declared that he would respect their wishes, and when the dog arrived with the true message he refused to alter his decision.

Thus, although a human being may be born again, he cannot return with the same body and same personality. (Achebe 136).

Achebe notes the many variations of this myth throughout Africa, communicated in a number of different ways, but always maintaining the same message that language must be spoken with intention and that stories must remain true to their original form, so as to achieve and preserve harmony. As such, while students are learning about stories from other cultures, as they do in chapter three in the lesson on folktales, it is critical that they understand and be able to properly articulate these stories so as not to misconstrue their message.

Thus, this inevitably brings us back to the discussion on language. As such, in reference to the myth, Achebe responds, “This to my mind, is the great myth about language and the destiny of man. Its lesson should be clear to all. It is as though the ancestors who made language knew from what bestiality its use rescued them are saying to us: Beware of interfering with its purpose!” (137). Therefore storytelling is a powerful, yet dangerous force, similar to language, and must be carefully articulated, as it can build a bridge to peace or destroy it. Or in other words, as the Finnish proverb states, “*Miekka tappaa yhden, mutta kieli tappaa tuhansta*” or, “A sword kills one, but a tongue kills

thousands” (MacDonald 11). Hence, this value can be used to assist students in their language learning. In other words, storytelling and understanding the story’s message can enhance students’ ability to retell and articulate information. Moreover, storytelling can also be utilized as a tool for understanding language structure. In terms of language, storytelling encompasses “vocabulary, grammar rules, norms of communicative behavior, and narrative forms” (Senehi 43). Therefore, through stories, students can exhibit yet another aspect of the 5 Cs, “comparisons.”

“Comparisons” asks that students “demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of cultures studied and their own” (“National Standards for Foreign Language Learning—ACTFL”). Therefore, students create comparisons through their accurate understanding of the culture’s stories, which in turn, promotes accurate articulation and retelling of the concepts of another culture. The term “accurate” is critical here, as storytelling can be considered “constructive” or “destructive.”

Destructive Storytelling is associated with “a lack of mutual recognition, dishonesty, and a lack of awareness” (Senehi 45). Constructive Storytelling on the other hand, is “inclusive and fosters collaborative power and mutual recognition; creates opportunities for openness, dialogue, and insight” (Senehi 45), each of which are critical in the peace process and are inherently necessary in any ESL college classroom. Constructive storytelling, then, allows for these comparisons to be made in a knowledgeable, thoughtful, and productive way.

Moreover, “comparisons” provide students with the opportunity to “demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own” (“National Standards for Foreign Language Learning—ACTFL”). Therefore,

When students engage with stories they are exposed to the “nature of language” and can then compare the language to their own vocabulary, grammar rules, communicative behavior, and narrative forms.

If used with intent, then, storytelling is transformative and empowering, two critical factors in peace-making and peace-building, making it an ultimate instrument for the peace process. (Senehi 45) If we, therefore, teach through various storytelling genres to empower our students and transform them from members of a classroom to cultural ambassadors, then this instrument for peace can function in our classrooms.

Storytelling is a bridge to “community,” the final component of the 5 Cs, which notes, “Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting” (“National Standards for Foreign Language Learning—ACTFL”). This occurs regardless of the story’s genre or functionality. Whether we are talking about a literary story that teaches a moral lesson or a story told through dance and song, culture, individuality, and history speak for peace through literature and the arts, and this can be reflected in the ESL classroom.

The Classroom as a Microcosm for Peacebuilding

As has been noted, the storytelling ESL classroom, in its relation to literature and the arts communities and, therefore, its relation to peacebuilding, is an alternative peacebuilding apparatus. In other words, its purpose is not to replace or challenge other peacebuilding methods, but to provide another option, which benefits language learning in its capacity for peacebuilding. Moreover, this classroom model is not meant to teach

peace education, but rather to teach peaceful interaction through experience with other cultures. It should be noted, therefore, that peace education is an established field, with a long history of evolution, which seeks to teach people about the “threats of violence and strategies for peace” (Harris 11). However, despite the growing expansion of peace education within the U.S., it has not yet expanded to school systems globally. In other words, Harris emboldens this point when he reflects that;

In spite of its tremendous growth in the [twentieth century], peace education has not really taken hold in school systems around the world. Some countries, like the Philippines, have mandated peace education in public schools, but there are not resources for training teachers in the various complexities of this new subject. (Harris 19)

Hence, while peace education is a valuable field and should be incorporated where it is feasible. Rather than search for resources and attempt to establish peace programs where there are limited funds, why not utilize what we already have? This is not suggesting that principles of peace education can be or should be taught across the disciplines. On the contrary, the ESL classroom can be a supplemental resource where there is a lack thereof. Hence, the ESL system is unique because it is already established across the globe.

Furthermore the ESL classroom is set up for peaceful dialogue, as it is necessary for building classroom community and supporting language-learning development. Additionally, many ESL students will likely take their English into a global setting. Therefore, ESL instructors do not need to learn how to teach peace education or study conflict resolution, the current study on the other hand, simply suggests that teachers take

the tools they already have and use or refocus them to develop a model for peaceful interaction.

Incorporating and encouraging peaceful dialogue through cross-cultural understanding, under the umbrella of storytelling genres, presents a less formal mode of peacebuilding, which can be applied to the ESL classroom. Thus, rather than teach students about peace strategies, ESL instructors can teach them about relating to the “other” and provide them the structure for modeling these relationships in class. We first teach them to discover where their own identities come from, so that they are more equipped to learn about the other identities functioning in the classroom.

There are current disputes operating around the value of peace education, as some argue that peace is an illusion and that wars never actually end. In other words, there is no need for peace education because peace does not exist. Hence, “Such sentiments echo James (1910), who pointed out that ‘peace’ in military mouths today is a synonym for ‘war expected’” (Salomon and Cairns 1). Essentially, James argues that peace and war are interchangeable terms, which mean the same thing.

However, there is far more evidence in support of the value of preparing for peace. Thus, by preparing for peace in an unconventional environment where we are not necessarily pointing directly to conflict or peace strategies, we are leaving students with an essence of peace. Therefore, the storytelling method allows for an alternative to these current debates, by excluding explicit language about peace education, while preserving its objectives.

Additionally, as discussed earlier in chapter two, the instructor takes on yet another identity role, as mediator. Thus, the teacher or facilitator’s identity shifts to that

of “cultural mediator” (Yesil and Demiröz 91) Prior to entering the classroom, the instructor must prepare for cultural mediation. However, an instructor is, nevertheless, by trade, expected to act as a classroom mediator, when there is any sort of misunderstanding or miscommunication, so this identity shift is not a drastic one. Moreover, the current study provides suggested activities and classroom experiences, to prepare the instructor as cultural mediator, as previously discussed in chapter two and modeled in chapter three. In other words, the model curriculum in the current study assists in preparing instructors as cultural mediators, as it is expected of peace educators to consider the values, which should be taught in the class. In other words, “Peace educators themselves must first engage in a transformational process, envisioning the values to be sought and imaging the educational process for which model curricula might be planned” (Reardon 74). The current study, therefore, provides instructors with information to “engage in a transformational process.” In other words, the teacher must prepare to maintain the role of ESL instructor and adopt a new persona as cultural mediator and peace educator, when entering the classroom. However, the latter two roles, for one, operate indirectly within the lesson and are also depicted in the current study in preparation of this shift in identity.

To provide a parallel for the way in which both instructor and student roles morph according to circumstances, I refer to a training project that Lederach discusses in his work. He addresses the role adaptation of Doña Fidelia, a great-grandmother and the oldest person in the group, who at first felt that she was ill-equipped to lead a group in a peace process, as “Pounded in through the years had been this message of what was needed to be someone, to count, to lead” (Lederach, “Preparing Peace,” 83). However,

once the correlation was made between being a great-grandmother and being a leader, Doña Fidelia was convinced to remain in the group.

In other words, Fidelia finally understood that leaders are not necessarily elite individuals who fulfill some prescribed definition of what a leader should look like. In other words, she realized that being a leader is a characteristic, which can be encompassed in daily roles, particularly in one as substantial as that of a great-grandmother. Later, “she stayed as a valued grandmother, as trusted a peacemaker as you can get in that setting” (Lederach, “Preparing Peace,” 83). She even notes, “leading a group is a lot like being a grandmother” (Lederach, “Preparing Peace,” 83). Therefore, this example also solidifies the assertion that class members can take on multiple roles. Hence, teacher becomes cultural mediator or peace educator and student becomes peacebuilder. Moreover, students can become global leaders or peacemakers. In other words, peacemakers can be found in any setting and can encompass several different identity roles.

In fact, role-playing is another interchangeable feature of both the storytelling ESL classroom and mediation classrooms. In 2013, for instance, I participated in a mediation course in which every week, a new student was assigned to mediate a hypothetical conflict scenario, among the many other role-playing scenarios, which occurred throughout the semester. Actually, it is a major function in mediation training courses and can be found in ESL curricula across the board. “Role plays and simulations are a major part of conflict-resolution training, and particularly so in mediation” (Lederach, “Preparing Peace” 101). Therefore, students can be trained in conflict resolution and mediation without explicitly being taught the subject matter of

peacebuilding.

Similarly, active listening, non-verbal cues, and negotiation are also components at the core of interaction and effective communication, both in the ESL classroom, as depicted in chapter one and in mediation and peacebuilding settings, as both are at the root of building community in any respect. In the same 2013 meditation course, we were asked to display active listening skills by sharing with our partner, a personal story about a time in our lives when mediation would have been necessary. The objective was to listen to our partner and respond to their story. In our response, we were asked to repeat critical components of the story, a concept understood as “looping” (Friedman and Himmelstein 65), to ensure our partner that we had been listening. Physical cues, such as eye contact, body position, and head nodding, were also critical to this assignment, as our partner had to feel as though we were engaged in the story.

In the ESL classroom, such active listening and communication skills encourage student autonomy. So too, one of the many objectives of mediation is to preserve the autonomy of those involved, particularly in the understanding-based approach to mediation, which endorses the value in working together to reach a common goal. In other words, “the principle of working together with the parties has this dual focus: supporting their autonomy while also honoring their connection” (Friedman and Himmelstein 93). This is exceptionally similar to the ultimate objective of the learner-centered ESL classroom.

Moreover, within the field of mediation, trust must be established in order to reach a common goal, as is the case in developing classroom community and communication through intercultural exchange. In mediation, the concept, *mutuality of*

vulnerability is part of the foundation of establishing a mutual agreement. The concept essentially refers to attaining mutual communication from both parties. In other words, in order to establish a safe environment for open communication, both parties must be willing to share their perspectives (Friedman and Himmelstein 151).

As mentioned in Chapter two, negotiation is a skill and must be learned in the ESL classroom. Negotiation means negotiating self-expression and negotiating another perspective—hence, negotiating one another’s autonomy, and that is fundamental to peacebuilding, as well as to ESL. Moreover, peacebuilding requires that all parties are satisfied with the outcome, and this requires communication, which has been established as a necessary component to language learning. Hence, “Negotiation is a basic means of getting what you want from others. It is a back and forth communication designed to reach an agreement when you and the other side have some interests that are shared and others that are opposed” (Fisher and Ury xi). Therefore, instructors have an opportunity to use English to promote peaceful dialogue at the very outset of learning in the second language classroom as soon as they begin developing classroom community. However, this must occur through mutual exchange.

Hence, instructors are equipped to set the stage for a cross-cultural exchange in the classroom that reflects conflict resolution models. Thus, the storytelling classroom utilizes culture as a way of accessing mutual communication, understanding of humanity, and, therefore, as a resource for peacebuilding (“Building Peace” 95). For instance, in one of my Kean University ESL classes, the subject of food came up in a chapter lesson on nutritional studies. Students began discussing their favorite foods from their own cultures. When a student from Peru began describing one of his favorite dishes, another

student made a joke that Peruvians only eat guinea pig.

While the joke was not intended to hurt the student from Peru, the student responded that he does think guinea pig is delicious, and while it is popular in Peru, it is not his favorite dish. He also noted that he happens to be the only person in his family who likes guinea pig. To further diffuse any further harm, I then added that guinea pig is also eaten in the United States and noted that I would like to try it. The class laughed about this, and while it was a harmless interaction, it depicted a profound message in generalizing a culture and a model response for how to diffuse a potentially harmful situation, particularly on the part of the student.

The values shared in peace education, conflict resolution, and ESL are highlighted in the 5 Cs, which have been discussed in chapters one and two, and which can be applied to teaching or peacemaking. In peacebuilding and conflict resolution, we encourage communication, we explore various cultures and their methods for peacemaking, we draw connections between cultures, we make comparisons to bridge gaps in our understanding, and we strive to comprehend and encourage community. According to ACTFL, as has been mentioned, each of these same principles are at the core of language instruction.

Furthermore, ESL instructors, or “mediators,” help to mold students into who they become when they leave the classroom, thus, it is the responsibility of the instructor to encourage all of the seven intelligences, through the “whole person,” by enacting Communicative Language Theory, Task-based Language Teaching, Community Language Learning, and the interconnection of the 5 Cs. This occurs through a learner-centered classroom, which encourages student autonomy to produce global leaders. The

eventual expectation for an autonomous learner is that the student will eventually use their learning outside of the classroom. In other words, the objective of cultivating a learner-centered environment is to develop “learner autonomy inside the classroom for use outside” (Wenden 280). This is the tool package that students acquire to interact with the world.

Consequently, in time, the student learns the values of peace and acquires the relevant experience to apply these values to the global community. When students develop confidence in the classroom and comfort among classmates, they expand themselves as English language learners. As their confidence grows, they become empowered, eventually increase participation, and become independent. The storytelling classroom empowers its learners with the relevant intercultural knowledge to use their peaceful classroom leadership skills in the world.

This empowerment through intercultural understanding assists in establishing the “whole student.” This wholeness, therefore, “requires that integrity becomes a major educational goal; certainly integrity in the traditional sense, but most important, integrity also in the sense of wholeness and relationship to others, to society, and to the natural order” (Reardon 58-9). If nothing else, the goal is to leave students with a sense of accomplishment and newfound understanding for the English language and for their capacity to learn about others.

As such, “Capacities are like buds within us, and they blossom through our experience with others, through social and personal interactions” (Reardon 50). In this case, students’ capacities are reached through their interactions with one another through literature and the arts, and in this interaction, there is an expectation that students will

develop their capacity for peace. In other words, ESL instructors have the opportunity to ignite students' capacities for peace as autonomous learners.

As Reardon notes, "Just as the capacity for war and violence is within us and the way we think, so too is the capacity for peace. Perhaps peace is not so much to be achieved as it is to be discovered, nurtured, and developed, as are all human capacities" (50-1). Therefore, the instructor's job is to awaken a peace process within students, by encouraging them to discover, nurture, and develop their utmost potential, and this occurs through communication and culture.

As such, the literature and the arts-based ESL classroom promotes a sharing of values, experiences, and individuality in an environment that promotes creativity, interaction, and peace. This is a design that can be reflected in the global community. In other words, "We have to be able to design our own preferred reality, to make images of new social structures informed by our highest values. And we have to communicate our visions and images to others. Thus the development of the capacity for reflective, imaginative conversation is central to paradigm change..." (Reardon 50). Thus, reflective, imaginative conversation is inherent in teaching through storytelling genres, allowing for students to explore images of new social structures along with their own creative intelligence.

Moreover, in order to become peacebuilders, students must develop confidence through the classroom environment and through their use of the English language. In other words, creativity and individuality must be encouraged and developed in the ESL classroom, to support students' personal identities. Hence, "Creativity and individuality, though given much lip service, are not given much chance for development, except

among those who exhibit the specific talents that the prevailing paradigm values so highly” (Reardon 68). Thus, confidence can be developed in allowing students to explore and express their creativity through storytelling, as it is unique to their individuality, hence, further assisting in building student autonomy. Therefore, the confidence instilled in the classroom also instills the foundation for global leadership. Hence, while these qualities are in reference to peace education, the concept of peace education can also be applied to the ESL classroom.

Therefore, peace is a concept that must be instilled in the minds of students at the influential college age, in a college environment designed for communication, to promote peaceful dialogue. In fact, the United Nations Educational, Social, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) states, “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the foundations of peace must be constructed” (Reardon 55). Hence, peace begins in the minds of students. In other words, in the ESL classroom there is an opportunity to plant the seeds for a peaceful foundation within students. Therefore, while storytelling can certainly pose consequences, when it is misunderstood through language, as has been discussed, it is critical to set up the classroom in a way that encourages positive discourse. Thus, the ESL classroom is a peaceful space for students to engage in Constructive Storytelling, previously described, and to then bring those stories into the global community.

Another device that the storytelling ESL classroom can offer is equal opportunity for all students to participate in peaceful dialogue through the sharing of ideas and by addressing the needs of all students. This is also the case for any community that facilitates peace. Accordingly, a peaceful environment requires equal exchange and equal

opportunity, which addresses the needs of all members. In other words, “In a peaceful community, all persons have access to processes for developing knowledge, and research goals to serve the interests of all groups” (Senehi 47). As it is mirrored in all peaceful communities, the objective of the classroom community is to provide a fair environment, which acknowledges all member’s needs and interests.

Students are, then, already in an environment for sharing stories with one another and for feeling heard. This, in combination with the literature and the arts-based curriculum, supports the objective of bridging peace from the classroom to the world. In other words, “Story-based interventions and projects can be a means for facilitating more voices into the public transcript” (Senehi 47). In this case, the ESL classroom is a story-based project that provides students with a peaceful platform to securely practice peaceful dialogue, which they can then apply to the public sphere.

Furthermore, as multiple identities are present in the ESL classroom, stories are the means through which identity is shared. To put it another way, “Stories create and give expression to personal and group identity. The very process of storytelling and narration fosters empathy as listeners identify with the characters in a story” (Senehi 48). Hence, while students are interacting with any form of narrative, they are engaging with the story, its cultural history, or its characters, helping them to subconsciously build empathy for a person with whom they either are in class with or have never met. As such, students learn how to interact with and understand their classmates, as well as otherwise total strangers.

Thus, in peacebuilding, it is critical to exchange stories of conflict and the lives in which it inhibits. In other words, “It is important that students have the opportunity to

share their stories and to hear about the voices of other people whose lives have been affected by conflict” (Jakar and Milofsky 45). However, while it is, of course, important to understand stories of conflict, the aim of the current study is for students to look beyond conflict or other individual parts of a person’s story and learn how to recognize an individual as someone who is made up of many stories, resulting in their identity as a whole. Identity is the book, the stories are only chapters.

By engaging with one another on a human level and sharing narratives in the classroom, students have the opportunity to build empathy for their classmates and for their instructor. These peacebuilding values, then, find an appropriate fit in the ESL environment, as they are aligned with teaching practices, as discussed. In other words, “These teaching practices can help English language teachers engage students in the conversations and skills development that will enhance their understanding of the ‘other’” (Jakar and Milofsky 45). This way, when students engage outside of the classroom environment, they leave with an openness and acceptance of those around them, and they express this acceptance through the English language.

As the instructor models an openness and receptivity for hearing stories while sharing his or her own, instructors are also preparing ESL students as ambassadors for their cultural engagement and for peace. For the purpose of this study, the intention is to look beyond cultures that are grappling with cultural conflict. Rather, the purpose is to prepare and train students from countries that are not necessarily dealing with major conflict, to understand their peers as individuals and to take that understanding into the world. This way, when students use their English language in the global community, no matter where they find themselves, they have learned how to use their language and

intercultural skills in a constructive and thoughtful way, while also acknowledging the prominence of other languages and cultures throughout the world.

Once again, as discussed in earlier chapters regarding students studying ESL in the United States, we noted that students interact with diversity every day, so if they are able to understand their classmates and instructor, on an individual level, then they have a better chance of understanding those within larger communities outside of the classroom. The same goes for students in China, who are surrounded by individuals from various provinces or regions who perhaps speak another language or engage in different cultural or religious practices. Again, students may all speak the same language and live in the same geographical context, but this does not mean that they share the same views, experiences, or cultural affiliations. This means that “Culture is not one worldview, shared by all the members of a national speech community; it is multifarious, changing, and, more often than not, conflictual” (Nunan and Choi 4).

The storytelling ESL classroom, then, sheds light on the multiple identities that make up the classroom. While the ESL classroom is certainly not the only way to learn about and engage with cultural competence, it is indeed an effective space, where students can develop their English language, while simultaneously learning to use it peacefully. In today’s day and age, it has become a necessary space to acquire cultural competence, as the English language increasingly expands across the globe, and therefore, so do ESL programs. Thus, language or “Foreign language education is not the sole way to have intercultural competence, but it is regarded as the major source of having knowledge and skills to communicate better by integrating discourse elements to

your daily speech patterns” (Yesil and Demiröz 81). Hence, language education has been acknowledged as a critical space for engaging in the peace process.

As has been discussed in chapter two, college aged ESL students are likely to use their English language in a global setting, for the purpose of business, further education, or travel, though many are living abroad already. It is the case, then, when taking these daily speech patterns to another country, that the individuals one meets along the way may or may not share the same motivation for being abroad. People from all over the world come together in a new place for many different reasons, but the fact that they are there sharing in that experience is what binds them.

Traveling and studying abroad help to make the world smaller by exposing students to various social connections with individuals who may look and sound different from those whom students are normally accustomed. By comparison, the classroom is a social sphere, where students come together, bringing all of their experiences with them, with the same common goal of learning a language and using the language to communicate. In order for students to communicate in the classroom, they have to use that common language to understand one another.

Similarly, when living or traveling abroad, individuals have to somehow find a common language, even if communicated through nonverbal language or sign language as opposed to verbal language. This combined effort of searching for a common language, no matter how that language presents itself, is part of what brings individuals together in the process of getting to know one another. It is a means of telling their story. The same goes for the ESL classroom. While the current chapter has highlighted spoken language and the power of language, it has also reviewed the various components that

define language, including nonverbal communication, and how that can be applied to various cultural settings.

Language in its entirety and in any form is a medium for connection, and these connections are seen all over the world in a global context, not just within the classroom. In fact, “When people travel they take with them their stories—together with other pieces of linguistic, cultural, and psychological baggage” (Ashliman 17). Therefore, when students enter any social space outside of the narrative-based ESL classroom, they are prepared to interact with people in the same way that they have learned to interact with their classmates, with respect and understanding for one another, both verbally and non-verbally.

In this way, they have learned, not only to share their own stories and parts of their own identities, but also to listen and to try to understand the stories that might be presented to them in various ways. It is also a matter of learning how to share their stories by understanding nonverbal cues. However, for ESL students, English, as a world language or a lingua-franca, is beneficial for career-related or casual travel after college and a stepping stone to peace. As such, students are not only learning how to use language more broadly in a constructive and open-minded way, but are also learning how to use a language that will carry them a long way globally.

While students share the common goal of learning English in the ESL classroom, and while students are encouraged to speak it, they reach that common goal by sharing narrative through multiple vehicles. For instance, as displayed in chapter three, students research folklore and fairytales to learn about their own identities, as well as those of their classmates and teacher. Thus, while students are striving to achieve the common

goal of learning English, they are simultaneously doing so in a way that encourages understanding for one another, further solidifying their connection.

The ultimate objective is to teach students how to use their voices and their stories, through various functions of storytelling, to connect with and relate to other individuals in the classroom, on the college campus, and in the world outside of academia, and by using English as a common language, finding that common ground can be made easier. If students learn positive speech patterns in the classroom, they can then take that knowledge and use it as a model for their communal and global interactions outside of the classroom in a way that does not diminish other languages.

This way, students can develop peaceful intercultural relationships outside of the classroom. Hence, by developing communication skills in the classroom, intercultural encounters can turn into intercultural relationships (Yesil and Demiröz 81). It is noted then, that by building relationships in the classroom, students learn how to model that behavior outside of their ESL environment, particularly as autonomous learners. This idea of relating is critical. It is one thing to encounter an individual from another culture or country or class status, but to develop a relationship with that person, with the knowledge that their stories represent an identity far different from one's own, can create change.

In conversation with the aforementioned accessibility of storytelling genres, students can use the storytelling genres incorporated in the classroom to relate with individuals in the larger community. For instance, as noted, artwork is accessible across the globe, and, therefore, students can create connections in their communities by discussing their perceptions and conceived stories about the artwork that they come

across. As such, they can begin mirroring classroom activities in the global community. Relating is a part of making the world smaller, particularly when students bring this foundation out into the world, and the way that we relate is by sharing experiences with a ready and willing ear to listen.

Cross-cultural awareness is a necessity in understanding the unfamiliar. Moreover, it is “regarded as a prerequisite in forming an understanding towards other communities” (Yesil and Demiröz 81). Therefore, language and culture are in connection with one another and with storytelling. Additionally, cross-cultural awareness influences individuals to build an understanding toward other communities. Then, the storytelling ESL classroom is a prime space to act as a function for using language to break down social and cultural barriers and replace them with peaceful communication. Hence, Yesil and Demiröz found in their study regarding teacher’s perceptions of culture teaching, “As it is imperative to address to the interwoven relationship between culture and language, the teachers feel the need to develop students’ communicative abilities to be agents of world peace in today’s multicultural world” (90). In other words, a culturally rich, individually focused classroom environment promotes grassroots and global peacebuilding.

It is not, then, only imperative for students to be agents of peace, but also for teachers to provide students with a platform for peacebuilding within the classroom. Participants in Yesil and Demiröz’s study “united in the common idea that the teachers should help the learners form tolerance toward target language culture and dispel the prejudices against the stereotypes in certain communities” (91). While this is certainly valid, and is, of course, part of the instructor’s job in the classroom, the argument needs

to go further, in that instructors can help students build tolerance, not just in the target language culture, but also among their peers and the communities from which they come.

When students know how to communicate in an intercultural setting, they are less likely to offend or take offense to any misunderstandings or misrepresentations. If a student leaves the classroom to use his or her English in other communities or abroad, without having taken the time to understand his or her classmates or instructor individually and culturally, then English runs the risk of being used as a tool for perpetuating personal and intercultural misunderstandings.

In the case of learning about language and identity through story, the motivation for students to learn about their classmates comes from being able to tell their own story. Using personal experience to share and relate with classmates comes more fluently to students, because they are talking about themselves, and when they relate with classmates on certain topics or issues, learning about the “other” comes instinctively, too. While the instructor should use effective modeling, this is primarily a student-initiated process, in that it is up to the student to choose what he or she wants to share and what he or she wants to acknowledge and accept from their peers.

While cultural activities can be and are often used in the ESL classroom to motivate students, the motivation, indeed, needs to come from the student him or herself. Hence, students must find ways of relating to the material to become motivated, as has been shown in the learner centered classroom environment. In other words, “if the activities included in the course books are totally unfamiliar to students, they feel unsympathetic towards foreign language culture” (Yesil and Demiröz 89). It is, therefore, critical to engage the feeling of empathy and sympathy toward the other culture, a value

critical to peacebuilding. This same theory can be applied to learning about their classmates as individuals coming from various sociocultural and experiential backgrounds. Again, students have to relate to feel motivated, which is another important reason for incorporating storytelling and native culture in the classroom. When students are presented with something with which they are familiar, they light up. They can relate to the material, and it builds confidence in them as a student and storyteller.

By giving students the opportunity to tell their individual stories, we help to break down any preconceived notions about the communities from which they come. It is a way of not merely avoiding, but dismantling stereotypes. Avoiding stereotypes and disregarding the critical need for the teaching of culture in the classroom, perpetuates fear and therefore, conflict. In fact, “avoidance and denial are perhaps the most universally practiced responses to conflict (Augsburger 18), leading to greater issues in learning how to understand and negotiate with large and small-scale conflict. The storytelling classroom is a way of approaching the roots of conflict through an alternative route. When teachers encourage engagement of material from another culture and give students the opportunity to “play” with that material, we are not simply providing an overview of a culture at face value, but allowing students a look into various parts of that culture and what they represent.

Furthermore, learning about and expressing cultural values also helps students to learn and express vocabulary. This way, students use vocabulary that is relevant to their daily lives and to the lives of those around them. In learning this vocabulary, they are able to connect and relate with individuals in ways that they may not have been able to before. Thus, by balancing potentially stereotypical cultural values with personal cultural

values, students have the opportunity to answer questions about their home cultures, so as to learn appropriate language to express their ideas. (Yesil and Demiröz 90). In other words, intercultural exchange in the classroom is a vehicle for learning peaceful vocabulary to express peaceful ideas.

One can note then, that students not only relate to the material as a means of motivation, but it also as an opportunity to properly express themselves, regardless of where they are from, as a way of portraying their individuality and identity. The teachers in Yesil and Demiröz' study "emphasized the significance of incorporating target culture elements in order to help students achieve a native-like proficiency" (90). Thus, though teachers can teach without a strong emphasis on culture, they will not receive profound results, even in regards to fluency. Hence, students' knowledge of the language is dependent on their cultural knowledge. In other words, "As language is accepted as the main medium through which cultural meanings are conveyed, the successful command of language is dependent on the extent of cultural knowledge" (Yesil and Demiröz' 90). Thus, in teaching cultural understanding through the medium of storytelling, students' simultaneously improve their language skills.

If students can engage in socially-conscious, imaginative, and personal conversation and understand culture on a deeper level, in small-scale communities, such as between provinces and among cultures around the world, and if they can understand cultural history through the medium of fairytales, folklore and other storytelling techniques, then they can take that knowledge and use their English language more effectively and progressively. This occurs not only in the United States, but also abroad. ESL is not simply a matter of students learning the target language culture, but also

learning to feel familiar and confident in engaging with other cultures in a peaceful manner.

We live in a world where the many layers of culture are constantly changing. Regardless of whether students are from the same continent, country, province, or town, they are individuals who bring with them their own shifting stories built of their own personal cultural beliefs and affiliations. While these beliefs are likely to be influenced by widespread cultural values, individuals bring their own experiences with them to the classroom. Students and instructors then, have an obligation to learn about both personal and cultural history through the storytelling ESL classroom, in order to better understand themselves, their classmates, their students, and the world.

Conclusion

This study has considered the benefits of an unconventional method of peacebuilding through the literature and the arts-based, college-level, ESL classroom, mirrored by global literature and the arts communities and supported by evidence found in historical trends in language teaching, which allude to the benefits of Communicative Language Theory, Task-based Language Teaching, the Whole-Person Model, and the importance of the integration of the 5 Cs, all of which support a humanities-based, student-centered, model of instruction. It has also shown that the literature and the arts-based classroom engages the “seven intelligences” to establish effective use of the English language, by building student autonomy, to enhance communication and intercultural competence, to interact respectfully and peacefully in the world. The study suggests that modes of storytelling, such as literature and the arts cultivate a learner-centered environment through cross cultural exchange and communication in the college-level ESL classroom, where students gain sufficient confidence to become culturally competent autonomous learners, communicators, and, therefore, eventual peace builders.

Now, more than ever, as the English language and, therefore, ESL courses continue to expand globally, there is a growing need for cultivating cultural competence and communication in the college-level ESL classroom. The English language consumes the fields of academia, global business, and international travel. As a result, the demand for ESL programs continues to grow. Once students graduate from college, they often become members of the global society, using their English in business or graduate studies, as well as in numerous forms of intercultural interchange in the global agencies.

English also is often the *lingua franca* used in travel or communication within their local communities and beyond. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the college-level ESL instructor to ensure that students are prepared to engage in other intellectual and social contexts and situations beyond the ESL classroom with respect and cooperation, once they leave the college campus.

Over the course of recent decades, language teaching has established the need for the integration of ACTFL's 5 Cs at the core of language instruction. While each works with the others in some capacity, this study highlights communication and culture as leading forces in the literature and the arts-based classroom. As language-teaching trends have demonstrated, a classroom rich in communication produces positive learning outcomes for students, while the teaching of culture further enhances language learning outcomes, as well. Moreover, in combination with one another, communication and culture support the practical results of the study of the English language.

Storytelling, as a mode of communication, therefore, supports the development of communication and cultural exchange, particularly when students participate through multiple storytelling mediums, such as scripting, acting, art analysis, and oral and written storytelling, which engage all learning styles. As such, when students are exposed to various learning styles, they have the opportunity to strengthen those with which they are less comfortable or familiar. In order for this to occur, the classroom must establish a safe, strong foundation, which supports this exploration. This study has, therefore, attempted to show the ways in which storytelling can be used to support each individual student, to maximize their language learning abilities. In doing so, the storytelling classroom facilitates a learner-centered environment, where students can become

empowered through their communication with the classroom community. Students eventually feel supported by new concepts, including learning styles in the target language culture, as well as through the cultures of others, which exist in the classroom.

This study has revealed that when students feel comfortable in their environment and engage through learner-centered activities, they build confidence in their language learning abilities and in their interactions with the other identities in the classroom. While students recognize that the classroom is a safe environment, which establishes an equal communicative exchange, they gradually develop a sense of autonomy. As autonomous learners, they, therefore, begin to feel positive about their own learning abilities and take ownership and responsibility for the outcome of their learning. Autonomous learners are able to apply their language abilities to various contexts, which provides them with the tools for using the language beyond the classroom. These qualities are, in turn, reflected in the leadership skills necessary to navigate the global society in peace-oriented and thoughtful ways. Hence, it has been established that students develop autonomy within the classroom to then use the language in various contexts outside the classroom.

It is apparent, then, that storytelling has been established as a critical component to the field of peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Storytelling communities around the world have displayed peaceful interaction and communication through the sharing of individual stories in community spaces. The communities often involve individuals from various global settings, who come together to engage in literature and the arts. Hence it has been shown that storytelling has brought individuals together across the world and that it can serve as a valuable tool in “preparing for peace” (Reardon). It is, indeed, possible to mirror these communities in the ESL classroom, by merging literature and the

arts with the language-learning curriculum. It has also been shown that this is particularly relevant in the English language classroom, which teaches one of the most widely spoken languages in the world.

A principal notion of this study is that once students establish confidence and independence in the classroom as autonomous learners, they can bring their leadership skills into the global community through the practical use of their English language abilities. In other words, once students leave the classroom, they have not only been exposed to varying ideologies, perspectives, identities, and cultures, but have also grown the confidence to use their language skills in a way that promotes peace-oriented dialogue through the English language. Therefore, the intention of this study is to serve as a guide for instructors in preparing a peacebuilding curriculum through storytelling genres in their own classes.

This study includes lessons that have been taught in intermediate and high-intermediate level ESL classes at Wenzhou-Kean University, Wenzhou, China, and in high-beginning level ESL classes at its sister school, Kean University, Union, NJ, for integrating language learning into literature and the arts-based classroom models within college-level ESL instruction. In doing so, the intention of these curricular models is to provide inspiration and supplemental materials to be incorporated into other curriculums and classroom objectives. In doing so, it is hoped that all ESL instructors have the option, if nothing else, to facilitate a classroom of peacebuilders.

The study also speaks to the relevance and power of language in our world. It has explored the hegemony of English and the ways in which we can use its prevalence as a tool for peacebuilding and cultural exchange, in opposition to its potential threat to the

stories that exist within all languages and cultures. Storytelling has woven a common thread throughout the field of peacebuilding as a critical medium for cultural dialogue. This study has applied this fact to the teaching of ESL through storytelling genres under the umbrella of literature and the arts, as a means of creating and promoting an unconventional peacebuilding model.

In keeping with this project's initial expectations, the preceding chapters have probed how the college-level ESL classroom can serve as a foundation for peacebuilding in the twenty-first century. It has been shown, then, that by establishing a literature and the arts-based community in the classroom, the ESL setting can facilitate global, cultural exchange and peaceful English language dialogue, through the development of students as global agents for peace.

Chapter one explains the terms related to culture and classroom related terms used in the subsequent chapters, informing the literature and the arts-based curriculum expounded upon in chapter two. The chapter then reviewed the shifting trends in language teaching over the course of the twentieth century and their influence in the twenty-first century ESL classroom, as a means of displaying the methodological influence in the literature and the arts-based classroom model. As such, the chapter probed the historical emergence of recognized language trends, to then illuminate the comparative qualities of a variety of theories and methods, including but not limited to the Communicative Language Theory, Task-based Language Teaching, and the Whole-Person Model of language learning. In doing so, the chapter has elucidated their combined contribution to a humanities based model focused on literature and the arts. The chapter has also illuminated the development of ACTFL's 5 Cs in language teaching,

to designate their inclusion and significance in the literature and the arts-based classroom as an integrated whole.

As this is so, chapter one has used the aforementioned language trends to also provide the historical context to validate the incorporation of communication and culture in the classroom. In doing so, the chapter has explored the various definitions of “culture” to describe its influence on communication and the development of a language learning community in the ESL classroom. The study illuminates the ongoing debate around the term “culture” and the teaching of culture in the ESL classroom, as paramount to this project.

As the study describes these influences for the literature and the arts-based classroom, the curriculum explanation in chapter two is grounded in relevance to the field of language acquisition. Chapter two has served primarily as a guide for the curriculum and classroom examples displayed in chapter three. As such, the chapter provides further scholarly support and explanation of the curriculum modeled in chapter three, while suggesting the ways in which the many cultural components and, therefore, various layers of identity, influence classroom management. The purpose of this description is to help instructors better understand how to deal with intercultural communication and the misunderstandings, which have been shown to arise from it, i.e., those described chapter three.

This intercultural understanding can also help instructors to understand students’ learning styles, further described in chapter four. In order to explain these intercultural interactions, the chapter defines and illuminates the many layers of identity, which help to compose the classroom community. In so doing, this study has provided a detailed

description of an ESL instructor's identity in China and the U.S., as well as the identities of students, both in the Chinese ESL classroom and in the U.S. ESL classroom.

Connections have been made between the functions of identity in the classroom and the many intercultural interactions described in chapter three's classroom model, connecting the description of culture from chapter one in its relation to identity. The chapter also explains how this acknowledgement of identity supports various learning styles, classroom community, and effective intercultural communication, and, therefore, confidence and student autonomy. It further endorses the philosophy of a literature and the arts-based classroom, which is meant to bridge these intercultural interactions.

Chapter one and two, together, then, have established the cultural and linguistic foundations for the curriculum model displayed in chapter three and the connections made between the learner-centered ESL classroom, storytelling, and peacebuilding, shown in chapter four.

Chapter three describes the college-level ESL classroom setting in China and the U.S. It has established that these activities are suitable for an intermediate to high-intermediate level classroom, as well as high beginner-level classrooms, and has described the ways in which the classroom prepares students for the critical thinking and analytical skills necessary for the designated activities. The chapter displays how literature and the arts can be used in the ESL classroom and provides a classroom model for this peacebuilding method, including instructor guides and explanations for the activities. It further addresses the ever-present need for assessment and the ways in which formative and summative assessment can be incorporated into the model lessons. The chapter asserts, also, that the role of formative and summative assessment is not only to

evaluate student progress, but also to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching. Within these explanations are integrated classroom experiences from an instructor's perspective, so as to prepare instructors using this curriculum model for the intercultural interactions, which occur in the classroom. This, then, has provided an example for the discussion in the preceding chapters, as well as the chapter that follows (chapter four). Furthermore, it echoes the ways in which the curriculum provides the classroom with the tools for peacebuilding, mentioned in chapter four. Chapter four, then, describes how storytelling genres through literature and the arts help to develop a peacebuilding model in the classroom.

In congruence with the foundation, philosophy, and curriculum model explained in previous chapters, chapter four demonstrates the ways in which the literature and the arts-based classroom grows peace leaders for the global community. It displays this by establishing the range of definitions, which encompass peacebuilding. In sifting through the various definitions, the chapter ultimately ascertains that "peacebuilding," as it is used in this study, means an effort on the "far side of conflict" to reconstruct the foundations of peace and to provide tools for "building on those foundations" (Barnett, Kim, O'Donnell, and Sitea 42).

Chapter four, then, explains that the literature and the arts-based model serves as the reconstruction of that foundation; the ESL classroom. The tools provided for building on the foundation are the various storytelling methods incorporated in the classroom. The chapter then goes on to highlight the importance of language and how language and culture are facilitated through community, established by storytelling. This bridges the connection between storytelling, language learning, and community.

As storytelling brings communities together, the chapter reflects on the ways in which storytelling encourages classroom community and cultural exchange. This exchange is used, also, to assist in developing students' active listening skills, communication skills, pronunciation skills, interpretation skills, and vocabulary expansion, while further supporting the various learning styles in the classroom, and developing student autonomy. The chapter, then, gathers all of the collective information gathered from its preceding chapters to describe the ways in which storytelling, peacebuilding, and language learning mirror one another to rebuild a foundation for peacebuilding.

The present work responds to overarching research questions such as “How do shifting trends in language teaching and research in learner development support a student-centered, communicative, culturally rich classroom environment, and how does the learner-centered classroom contribute to learner autonomy?,” “What are the ongoing debates around the teaching of culture in the language classroom, and how does the facilitation of culture contribute to that discussion?,” “In what ways has the English language become globalized and what are the existing perceptions of its globalization?,” “In what ways does storytelling through literature and the arts, contribute to community development and cultural exchange?,” “In what ways do the teaching of English and the field of peacebuilding intersect, and how does the field of peace education differ from the facilitation of peace in the ESL classroom?.” The responses to those research questions reviewed in this study are as follows.

Learner-centered Language Teaching and Learner Autonomy

How do shifting trends in language teaching and research in learner development support a student-centered, communicative, culturally rich classroom environment, and how does the learner-centered classroom contribute to learner autonomy?

The shifting trends in language teaching have been documented in this study. The research and scholarship of Diane Larsen-Freeman and H. Douglas Brown have contributed heavily to the discussion of how these trends have materialized over the twentieth and into the twenty-first century. Their findings have shown that Communicative Language Theory and Task-based Language Teaching have prevailed among the changing currents. Concurrently, Curran's Whole-Person Model has further solidified these findings.

Another significant component of the language-teaching classroom are the integrated 5 Cs, documented by The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) as the five national standards of language teaching and learning. By probing the existing theories and methods in the language classroom, the current study has found that a student-centered classroom, which incorporates the aforementioned prevailing trends in language teaching, is conducive to language learning. This, then, validates the current study's findings that a literature and the arts-based curriculum, which incorporates these trends, enhances learner development. Larsen-Freeman also describes what are known as the "seven intelligences." In her view, these endorse the notion that learners have different ways of acquiring information, or learning, and should, therefore, be taught using a variety of learning styles. Again, this is achieved in the literature and the arts-based classroom.

This classroom model functions, then, through a student-centered curriculum designed to encourage students' confidence in their language and communication skills as a means of developing autonomy. This can also be supported by each of the 5 Cs, particularly through culture and connections, as they influence learning styles and the context through which students learn. The learner-centered classroom and student autonomy are documented as working in tandem with one another, so the literature and the arts classroom is in keeping with pre-existing models of enhancing student autonomy. This is further supported by Brown in his scholarship on student autonomy in the learner-centered classroom. Brown, Larsen-Freeman, Curran, and ACTFL, then, affirm this study's claim that autonomy can be achieved in the learner-centered classroom and particularly in a classroom that incorporates a variety of teaching strategies.

The Facilitation of Culture Through Storytelling and the Culture Teaching Debate

What are the ongoing debates around the teaching of culture in the language classroom and how does the facilitation of culture contribute to that discussion?

The discussion of culture is one that has received significant attention in this study, as the concept is vital to the notion of language learning and peacebuilding. The works of Sommer, Senehi, Lee and VanPatten, Darling-Hammond and Bransford, Brightman, Gay, Gass, and Achebe have served as primary contributors to this discussion.

As has been thoroughly documented in this project, the concept of culture is one of great complexity and is of paramount importance to the ESL classroom. As this is so,

this dissertation has reviewed the many fields in which the term is used to establish its most appropriate definitions for its purpose to this discussion. For this study, then, culture cannot be condensed into a single definition. Rather, it is considered as being composed of three definitions. Culture is, then, “a system of shared objects, activities and beliefs of a given group of people.” Further, it is “The membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, and acting.” It is also “The process by which people make sense of their lives, a process always involved in struggles over meaning and representation” (Nunan and Choi 3).

Through the understanding of these integrated definitions, this study has asserted that culture is ever-present in the ESL classroom and should, therefore, be acknowledged and used for the benefit of language learning and communication. This study has reviewed the ways in which the 5 Cs are already established in the language classroom and has recognized the ongoing debates around the teaching of culture. There are two opposing overarching opinions present in this debate. One is that the teaching of culture distracts from the language-learning environment and should, therefore, be omitted from instruction. As it has been noted, this argument can be summarized by three overarching viewpoints which are as follows: “culture is complex, it is not a language, and it could push students out of their comfort levels in the classroom (Lange and Paige x). The opposing argument is that culture is a necessary function of language learning, and therefore, must be present in the language learning classroom. This is endorsed by the argument that “the true content of the foreign language course is not the grammar and the vocabulary of the language, but the cultures expressed through that language” (Dema and

Moeller 77). Through these findings, however, the current study offers a third option. That is, it suggests the importance of the facilitation of intercultural competence that needs to be developed in consideration of the various identities in the multicultural ESL classroom.

This study argues, then, for the incorporation of the teaching of culture while also facilitating an intercultural dialogue among individuals in the classroom. In recognizing the individuality and cultural diversity, which exists among students and teacher, this study supports an environment that enhances language learning through intercultural communication. This is accomplished in a number of ways. Most distinctly, students gain the cultural understanding to use the target language practically, while also developing the confidence needed to become autonomous learners and speakers of English. This confidence is advanced by establishing an environment that encourages individuality in the classroom and by encouraging respect and understanding within the classroom community. By so doing, students feel supported by classmates and by their instructor to express themselves in English, the language of the ESL classroom.

In order to establish this interactive community, acknowledging the reality of its multicultural character, the classroom must support a learner-centered environment that encourages culturally relevant communication. This study suggests one way to facilitate this communication is through the literature and the arts-based classroom model in which storytelling is encouraged. Through storytelling genres, students have the opportunity to share their own cultural heritage and identity while also learning about those of their classmates and instructor.

Storytelling genres provide the curriculum that facilitates a peace-oriented

dialogue in the classroom and are reflective of global storytelling communities throughout the world. This study establishes the ways in which they are used in the classroom and in various cultural communities, offering evidence of their benefits. Stories are told through numerous media such as dancing, acting, singing, sculpture, painting, photography, and oral and written traditions. Stories are the way in which all cultures relate on a human level through a common narrative, so when incorporating them in the ESL classroom, the classroom community is provided with the tools needed to share their respective identities.

In other words, the teaching of English through literature and the arts provides a voice for sharing intercultural dialogue. Students then have a means of finding common ground, analytically, by engaging with conceptual connections and also by simply expressing themselves and their cultural understandings. Literature and the arts encourage classroom community, student autonomy, positive dialogue, and also allow students the freedom of self-expression, supporting and nourishing their individuality as a way of encouraging them to do the same for their community.

The Globalization of the English Language

“In what ways has the English language become globalized and what are the existing perceptions of its globalization?”

The globalization, or hegemony, of the English language is a phenomenon endorsed by Altbach and Ahmad. This dissertation has discussed the broad array of contexts in which English is used and has explained that as a result of its broad

expansion, it has been redefined as being hegemonic. Altbach supports this discussion in a number of ways, from noting its official status in over seventy countries, to describing the ways that English is used across science, scholarship, and instruction (Altbach 3608).

Learning a second language is personal, and learning English can be conflictual. Hence, language can be emotionally taxing. We learn vocabulary to express our emotions and to share our identity. When language is threatened, the entire person is challenged, leading to potential conflict. The hegemony of English threatens other languages and therefore, the cultures and various layers of identity, which correspond. However, this study suggests that English can be used as a medium for peaceful dialogue, both in the classroom and in the world. As English continues to expand globally, this study has endorsed the critical aspect in teaching students to use it in a positive and productive way. As such, teaching English is a delicate process, having everything to do with peacebuilding and the prevention of conflict.

Through the retelling of stories in and outside of a classroom module, the study has demonstrated and analyzed the ways in which literature and the arts support the learner's identity and English language development. This is partly to display the ways that intercultural exchange can be used to highlight various cultures, so as not to be consumed by the English language and culture. This study has shown, then, that by engaging with written and oral storytelling traditions, analyzing artwork, and scripting and acting, students preserve their personal identities while learning about and understanding the various identities of the other students from numerous backgrounds functioning in the classroom. With that, students have the opportunity to bring this structure into the global community as a way of spreading peace-oriented dialogue

through the increasingly globalized English language.

The Contribution of Storytelling Genres to Community Development and Cultural Exchange

In what ways does storytelling through literature and the arts contribute to community development and cultural exchange?

Storytelling, through literature and the arts has been shown to contribute to community development and cultural exchange. Achebe supports this in his discussion of language. He explains that the body of stories present in every culture is a people's way of making sense of existence (Achebe 134). And so, as stories are present in every culture, they serve as a way to integrate communities within those cultures and also to connect communities interculturally.

Ashliman also endorses the relationship between stories and community development, noting that they unite communities together (4). While orally told stories receive much attention in these discussions, this study also turns to the many storytelling genres, which encompass literature and the arts. This is so as to determine the ways in which community is established through a variety of storytelling mediums.

The study, then, looks at various arts communities and their contributions to storytelling and community building, as well. This discussion ranges from the art found in coffee shops, appealing to a variety of communities, to community arts conventions as have been established in global contexts such as Greece, Japan, Jordan, and Switzerland.

The current study, then, refers to Peters in his explanation that in “ancient Greece,

art was often used as a method of civic engagement” (10). Similarly, this study has reviewed the community building, which takes place in the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale, as well as within several other festivals. Namely, the Jerash Festival of Jordan and Art Basel of Switzerland (Henderson). Each of these arts communities has contributed in facilitating cultural exchange and community through literature and the arts. This study, then, has used these examples to convey the profound influence of storytelling genres in community development.

The Intersectionality of ESL and Peacebuilding

In what ways do the teaching of English and the field of peacebuilding intersect, and how does the field of peace education differ from the facilitation of peace in the ESL classroom?

This project has shown the ways in which literature and the arts inherently intersect in the ESL classroom to create a peacebuilding model, facilitating elements of peacebuilding and conflict resolution. This is not to be confused, however, with peace education, as is made clear in the preceding chapters. This study, rather, borrows from peace and conflict experts such as Augsburg, Friedman and Himmelstein, and Lederach to demonstrate how elements of peace and conflict studies can be applied to an ESL classroom philosophy and curriculum.

Friedman and Himmelstein support the relationship between building connection and developing autonomy within the field of peacebuilding, as is mirrored in the literature and the arts-based classroom. The two further support this study in their

reference to the understandings-based approach in mediation, which encourages relationship and connection through understanding (Friedman and Himmelstein 25). This serves as yet another example, then, of how the field of peacebuilding and the literature and the arts-based classroom intersect. Augsburg heavily endorses this discussion as well, in noting, “we bring to each situation differing- frequently contrasting- stories and must create together a single shared story with a role for each and for both” (Augsburger 11). Lederach, too, endorses this position in his assertion that proverbs, for instance, “can serve as an interesting window into how people understand and work with conflict” (“Preparing Peace” 78).

Within the current study, each of these scholars comes together in conversation with one another, establishing the many intersecting characteristics of the storytelling classroom and the field of peacebuilding. Reardon's work with peace education is also described in full, so as to depict the contrast between peace education and the facilitation of peace-oriented dialogue in the ESL classroom. In other words, peace education is the teaching of peace, while the facilitation of peace-oriented dialogue is a matter of creating connections in the classroom community, as is endorsed by the 5 Cs.

As it has been shown, many students in China are learning English as a means of entering the global business market or to attend graduate school in the United States or Canada, and students studying ESL in the United States are already using their English in a global environment. Therefore, ESL students often take their English into the global community, using it as a means of communication in multiple global settings and in diverse communities.

This study has shown that as a result of this step from the classroom to the world,

the college-level ESL classroom is a space for providing students with practice in engaging peacefully through the English language before they use it beyond the classroom. This concept corresponds with instances of English used as a common language in peace processes. A decade ago in India, for example, Tamil speakers did not want to speak Hindi, the national language, and vice versa. Thus, to discuss critical issues they agreed to use English. English was not a threat because it was a neutral language that came from the outside. This notion can be applied to conflict situations across the globe, particularly with the rise of globalization and can, therefore, be applied to the ESL classroom setting as well.

The ways in which the English language is used as a tool for peace are also established in this study through the multiple encounters with students, the stories shared within the classroom, and through the ongoing dialogue between students and their communities. Consequently, in this model, the instructor acts as facilitator and mediator to ensure that students gain proper experience in engaging tolerantly with diverse communities. This way, the classroom has been shown to serve as a valuable setting for breaking down preconceived notions of the “other” by interacting with classmates on an individual level. The stories shared in the classroom are what facilitate the peace model as an undercurrent for building relationships. Combining literature and the arts with the ESL classroom as a model for peaceful dialogue, serves as a resource for peacebuilding and can be used in any ESL setting across the globe.

In the United States and across the globe, we have perpetuated this notion of the “other” and often in our efforts to acknowledge diversity, we do more harm than good. Rather than looking at identity as fluid, it has become a stagnant entity, which cannot be

altered at the risk of losing self. By constantly labeling and categorizing, we have forgotten that we are all human with various layers, which make up who we are, and that the very concept of interacting with diversity, which we are trying to promote, is being swallowed up in the process. In our political correctness and hypersensitivity, we have begun to push people away from one another, perpetuating the idea of the “other,” rather than acknowledging another person as having come from a different life experience or cultural background, learning about who they are as an individual through the sharing of stories, and gaining understanding from interaction.

The college-level ESL classroom is a setting in which cultural understanding and interaction can thrive. It is a place where students’ personal experiences, encompassed by identity and, therefore, culture, are bound by the common goal of learning English. This is essentially a paradox, as it means that English levels the language-learning environment, but skews and complicates the personal engagement within it. Storytelling, then, balances these two and grants a more expansive form of access for the ESL student. The classroom, then, can be used as a foundation for peace-oriented dialogue within our global ESL community, as students carry their voices into the world, through a language, with the potential to be used for destruction or for peace. The hope for this study is that it can provide that alternative.

The college-level ESL classroom has the distinct potential for developing new generations of peace leaders, while enhancing and encouraging language development. For this to be possible, however, students must develop cultural competence and learner autonomy in order to establish the confidence and understanding needed to use their English language progressively.

Through this study's findings, it has been realized that the facilitation of culture is a key component in establishing a peace model in the ESL classroom. While it has been shown that debates support the range of opinions regarding either teaching or not teaching culture, the facilitation of intercultural exchange adds a third option. By facilitating intercultural exchange in combination with the teaching of culture, a well-rounded, classroom peacebuilding model, conducive to all learning styles, can be accomplished. This study concludes, then, that there is, yet, more to the vast discussion of culture, which must be considered, and the facilitation of intercultural exchange in the ESL classroom contributes to filling that space. In doing so, the ESL classroom can be used to transform English from its position of being a hegemonic language to a language used for peace-oriented, intercultural exchange.

Furthermore, through an approach to the ESL classroom that engages all learning styles through a variety of creative mediums, students can become motivated and encouraged to learn the language. The confidence gained in such a classroom setting is reason enough to supply students with a means of self-expression, which encourages student confidence and intercultural interchange and communication. With the many methodological resources available to ESL instructors today, this holistic approach to language teaching can be made possible.

Finally, this study serves as another step forward in the language-learning and peacebuilding process, in its recognition of the complexities of culture and learning styles in the ESL classroom. At the very least, the hope is that it will contribute to the literature regarding how instructors can best influence the encouragement of learning and the betterment of humanity.

As Bassam Aramin, a world-famous storyteller, heart wrenchingly expressed at Drew University in 2014, “People see their history through their own eyes. When you understand how the other sees their history, then you can resolve conflict.” And as equally renowned storyteller, Robi Damelin, so eloquently articulated, “Sometimes it is like taking the water out of the ocean with a teaspoon, but we cannot afford to give up hope.”

Future Research

In this technological age, movement away from the physical classroom and into the digital realm has increasingly become more vibrant. As I continue my scholarship as a language educator, I intend to direct my research toward the digital community of language teaching and learning. In doing so, I hope to explore the ways in which technology can assist in building intercultural interactions and relationships among language learners as they develop their intercultural skills as ambassadors to peace building. As Kean, Union and Wenzhou-Kean University are closely related, I hope to collaborate with colleagues at Kean, Union, using technology for the development of intercultural relationships among students internationally.

Through such collaborations, the Chinese ESL classroom can incorporate the “Zoom” application with a U.S. ESL classroom. In this digital session, students would have the opportunity to engage in storytelling activities as a means of establishing communication with ESL students in the United States. In doing so, relationships can also be established from the U.S. ESL classroom with colleagues from WKU. By

launching these global relationships, students in China can expand upon stories shared in the local classroom and can share with classmates, their interpretations of the interactions with the U.S. ESL classroom.

In order to conduct these digitally charged classrooms effectively, it would be advantageous to establish a training session on how to properly use “Zoom” in the classroom. Another option would be to use the already globally widespread application, WeChat, to establish communication among the students internationally. Students in the Chinese ESL classroom can share their WeChat contact information with students in the U.S. ESL classroom and can share stories with a selected student partner. WeChat also offers the option of creating a group chat, which the Chinese ESL classroom can use to communicate with the U.S. ESL classroom. Students can then use the application as another means of circulating peace-oriented dialogues as global ambassadors. Indeed, there is much to investigate in this area, as well. As technology and its options continue to advance in the field of language learning, I look forward to engaging those opportunities with students and colleagues such that countless opportunities for peace-oriented interactions can become a reality.

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