The Basics: A One Week Survival Curriculum for English Language Learners

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The Basics: A One Week Survival Curriculum for English Language Learners

By

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of the requirements of the University Honors Program
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

Honors Thesis

This is to certify that the Honors Thesis of

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has been approved by the Examining Committee on April 27, 2013
as satisfying the thesis requirement of the University Honors Program

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The Basics:
A One-Week Survival Curriculum for English Language Learners
Introduction for the Educator

This is a week-long curriculum intends to teach English Language Learners basic English skills and concepts to survive in the United States culture. In addition, the curriculum aims to build confidence in the English student in learning the language. This curriculum is intended to be taught to adult immigrants and refugees the need to be able to function in the United States. Generally, these students will have recently entered the country and know little to no English. Therefore, the students will be no higher than the early-production level of speech language acquisition. You will find that as emphasized within the lesson plans, this curriculum is not intended to teach skills; rather, each lesson is intended to teach students how to perform these tasks in English and in the context of the United States society. However, it may also serve to teach skills to some refugees coming to the United States from rural areas in developing countries.

This curriculum is not intended to stand alone; it is a starting point for students. It is by no means comprehensive—a student is not expected to be fluent by the end of the week. Instead, the goal is that students will be confident, know basic skills, and be ready to advance into a longer term and slightly more challenging curriculum.

Daily lessons implement research-based approaches from both direct instruction and constructivist theories. The lessons use modern methods, such as the TPR method, physical motion, and role play to introduce vocabulary and reinforce skills. Additionally, each day includes very basic instruction on grammar. Therefore, students are simultaneously learning the language and acquiring the language, using strengths from both theories (Reagan 419, Iran-Nejad 17). Repetition is reinforced throughout.

While new concepts are introduced each day, and the flow of the lessons may vary depending on the content being taught; each day has six specific elements, explained below:

**Introduction**: This portion of the lesson is a quick review of the day before, and prepares students to learn for that particular day. It typically involves some form of student interaction or sharing with their classmates or partner.

**Vocabulary**: Each day introduces vocabulary terms or phrases specific to the theme of that day. These are introduced typically with a supplementary PowerPoint. The use of visual images, gestures, speaking, physical motion, and repetition is emphasized.

**Grammar**: Everyday, a simple grammar concept is taught. The concept has some application with the theme of the day, and flows with the rest of the lesson.

**Skill**: A specific real-world skill is taught with the lesson every day. It will either build on the rest of the lesson or be a real life application of the vocabulary and theme.

**Role Play**: The students are given a chance to practice the skill as a class or in pairs. This section gives them a chance to experiment with speech or respond to speech, where in other sections they may simply be using repetition.

**Closing and Challenge**: The teacher wraps up the day with encouragement, and gives a challenge to students to complete by the next class, based on the skills and English the students have learned that day.

Each lesson is intended to last three hours. In each daily lesson, a suggested way to divide the time between sections is provided. This can be seen in parenthesis after each section. For example, “Introduc
0:30) means that the introduction section should take about thirty minutes—from the time that class starts and span thirty minutes. A section that says, for example, “Role Play: Having Conversations (2:10-2:50)” means that the role play should last for about forty minutes—from two hours and ten minutes into class and span forty minutes until two hours and fifty minutes into class.

At the end of each day, there are two additional sections displayed in italics:

**Provided Resources for the Day:** This heading lists all of the supplementary materials that are provided along with the daily lesson plans. This includes PowerPoints, realia, worksheets, handouts, and website resources that follow along exactly with the lesson plan.

**Suggested Materials and Resources:** Some realia could not be included and materials could not be included in the kit, but are easily obtainable. These materials are listed at the bottom of each day. Be sure to check these resources so they made be made available when preparing to teach the lesson for the day.
Necessary Materials and Resources for Curriculum Instruction

In order to fully use the provided curriculum effectively, each classroom should be equipped with the following:

- Working computer with PowerPoint capabilities
- Projector that can display content from the computer

Additionally, each teacher should have the following available for use in preparation:

- Copy machine/ printer for handouts, worksheets, and realia

While not required, it would be beneficial for students to have the following available to them:

- **A picture dictionary**: There are several good picture dictionaries that may be purchased. A suggested picture dictionary is the *Oxford Picture Dictionary*. When purchasing, ensure that this dictionary is not a content area picture dictionary, but rather a standard dictionary.
- **A bilingual dictionary**: There are also several good bilingual dictionaries. When choosing a bilingual dictionary, students’ home languages must be taken into account. Oxford, Merriam-Webster, and Barron’s all have good bilingual dictionaries.

**Resources for students who actively use their Smart Phone:**

- **Bilingual Dictionary**: Many free or discounted bilingual dictionaries are available on apps on both Google Play and the App Store. This may allow the use of bilingual dictionaries in the classroom to be more feasible, especially when given several students from different countries and home languages. Some suggested apps can be found at this website: [http://appcrawlr.com/app/search?device=iphone%2Cipad&price=&category=Education&smartFilter=&src=discover_Education&q=bilingual+dictionary](http://appcrawlr.com/app/search?device=iphone%2Cipad&price=&category=Education&smartFilter=&src=discover_Education&q=bilingual+dictionary)
- **Translation Software**: Although translation software is generally avoided in academia, this software may be temporarily helpful for students who need to learn quickly how to survive in a culture. The following are a couple of translation websites students can use:
  - Google Translate: [https://translate.google.com/](https://translate.google.com/)
Day 1: Introductions

**Introduction (0:00-0:30)**

Say “hello” to students as they walk in, and use other simple greetings. When the students arrive, write on the board: “My name is ___________. I am from ___________.“ Underneath this introduction, write on the board “Hello, ___________.“ If available, pull down a world map for students to share.

Model for the students an appropriate introduction. For example, you may say, “My name is Mary. I am from The United States of America.” In addition, as you explain where you are from, point to the appropriate place on the map. Then, point to the spot on the board that says “Hello, ___________” and have students respond, “Hello, Mary.” Repeat this several times as necessary until students catch on. When students do catch on, go around the room and have each student introduce themselves, and the rest of the students respond with the appropriate, “Hello, __________.”

When students have finished introductions, pass out the **What to Expect Sheet**. This sheet outlines each day of the week for the students in basic English.

**Vocabulary: Important Survival Questions (0:30-1:00)**

The vocabulary for the day does not focus on specific vocabulary terms, but rather teaches important questions students may be asked during introductions. The supplementary **Important Questions PowerPoint** is provided in order to teach five important questions. It is recommended that you advance through the PowerPoint three times, or until you determine that the students have grasped the concept. This lesson focuses on the structure of questions, and answering questions, so it is likely that a student will run into some basic or specific vocabulary that they do not know. Allow the use of bilingual dictionaries or translation software throughout the activities.

As you advance through the PowerPoint, first read the questions aloud. For example, say “What is your name?” Then point at yourself, and respond “My name is **Mary**“ (or use your name, as appropriate). Before you advance to the next slide repeat it again, but have the students repeat it with you. Repeat as a class one more time before advancing to the next slide.

As you advance through the PowerPoint a second time, first read the question aloud, and point at yourself to answer. Then, have the class join in. On the third repetition, point at one particular student, and have them answer the questions. Use this format throughout the whole PowerPoint, but point at different students each time, and have them respond. Allow students the option to pass if they are uncomfortable.

As you advance through the PowerPoint a third time, continue the pattern of first reading the question aloud as a class, and then point to a specific student. Have three students answer the question per slide.

Once you feel the students are somewhat comfortable, advance to the grammar section, which is an extension of this activity.

**Grammar: Answering Questions (1:00-1:40)**

Pass out the **Questions and Answers Sheet** to each student. The questions and answers sheet has the questions that the students learned in the PowerPoint on the left side, and a “yes or no” question variation on the right side.
Under each question there are sample responses that students can use to base their response. Point to the left side, which will demonstrate to the students the questions are the same as those shown on the PowerPoint. Then, point to the right side, and demonstrate to the students that the questions are similar.

Read through the sheet with the students in a manner similar to how you introduced the PowerPoint. However, this time the students will be required to choose an appropriate response based on their situation. Model the choice of response for the students.

When you have repeated several times, and feel that the students are comfortable with the type of questions being asked, move on to the skill, which is also an extension of the grammar.

**Skill: Making Basic Conversation (1:40-2:10)**

Take out your Starting Conversations Beach Ball. On the beach ball (which is not provided), you should write all the questions from the Questions and Answers Sheet in various places on the ball using a permanent marker. For the activity, the students will toss the beach ball to one another. When they catch the ball, they will look at the place on the ball where their right thumb is. They will read aloud the question closest to where their right thumb is, and answer based on their lives. They may use the Questions and Answers Sheet to help them answer the questions.

First, model how to do this several times before tossing the ball to a student. Once, you do toss the ball to the student, circle around the classroom and assist the students finding the questions, reading it out loud, answering, etc. If the student is struggling or uncomfortable answering the question, they may find another one or pass the ball. The goal is to make this activity a fun learning experience; therefore, there is no pressure if the student feels uncomfortable in front of the class.

Continue this activity for an appropriate amount of time. Give each student several opportunities to catch the ball and answer the questions.

**Role Play: Having Conversations (2:10-2:50)**

Group students into pairs. Have one student in each group be the “questioner” and the other student answer the questions. The student that asks the questions can look at the Questions and Answers Sheet, but challenge the student who answers the questions not to look at the sheet. Circle around the room, and assist the pairs as needed. After all the questioners in the group have asked their partner all of the questions, have them switch roles. Now the original questioner is answering the questions, and the original student answering the questions is now the questioner. Continue to circle around the room and provide assistance when needed.

**Closing and Challenge (2:50-3:00)**

Group students back together. Congratulate the students on the progress they have made that day.

Finish class by giving students a challenge for the next day. Tell the students to come up with a new question to ask their partner. Have them also be prepared to answer their own question. Provide students with an example questions to show them how easy coming up with a question can be. A suggested example is, “Do you have children?” Encourage the use of a dictionary or translation software in order to come up with questions and answer other questions.
If you perceive that students will be uncertain about how to come up with a question, provide them each with a question they have to answer at home and share the next day. You can choose to give the whole class the same question or each student a different question. A few sample questions are as follows:

Do you have children?
Do you have a pet?
Do you have any brothers?
Do you have any sisters?
How long have you lived in the United States?

For more variety of questions ranging from hard to easy, visit this website:  

Dismiss students for the day; tell them you will see them tomorrow.

**Provided Resources for the Day:**

- What to Expect Sheet
- Important Questions PowerPoint
- Questions and Answers Grammar Sheet

**Suggested Materials and Resources:**

- Starting Conversations Beach Ball
Day 2: Routines and Directions

**Review of Introductions (0:00-0:30)**

Welcome students to class. Group students into pairs to ask each other their questions. Be sure to check if students are prepared with a question. If students are not prepared, or were not there the day before, pair them with a student who is prepared with a question. Encourage the use of a dictionary or translation software, as many students may not know specific vocabulary within their classmate’s question.

After the students have shared with one another, turn their attention back to the front. Ask a couple students to share their question with the class. Write their question on the board for the class to read. Have the class try to answer the questions. Assist as appropriate.

**Vocabulary: Daily Routine (0:30-1:15)**

The vocabulary for the day is based on daily routine. A supplementary Routines PowerPoint is provided, covering the daily routine.

Gesture for the students to stand up with you. As you advance through the PowerPoint, read every word or phrase aloud and have the students repeat in unison (optional).

Model the action for each part of the day as indicated below. Have the students then repeat the actions with you as you go through them a second time. The following is a list of suggested gestures:

- **Wake up, Get out of bed**: Tilt your head sideways, close your eyes, and place your hands underneath your head, as if you were sleeping. Open your eyes, stand up straight, and stretch your arms.
- **Undress, Take clothes off**: Imitate the motion of pulling off your shirt over your head, then stepping out of your pants.
- **Take a shower**: Pulse your hands above your head, as if you were lathering shampoo into your hair. Then, imitate the motion of scrubbing your arms and your body.
- **Dry off, towel off**: Imitate the motion of stretching a towel behind your back, and using it to dry off your body.
- **Get dressed, put clothes on**: Imitate the motion of pulling on the shirt back over your head, and stepping back into your pants.
- **Brush hair, comb hair**: Make a fist as if you were holding a hairbrush, and run your hands from the top of your hair to the bottom, as if you were brushing it.
- **Make breakfast, eat breakfast**: Open your hands as if you are holding a box of cereal. Tilt your hand, pretending to pour the box of cereal. Then, put one hand facing up, and one hand pinching an imaginary spoon. Pretend to scoop cereal from the bowl into your mouth.
- **Brush teeth**: Pinch an imaginary toothbrush in your hand, bare your teeth, and run the toothbrush back and forth in front of your face, as if you are scrubbing your teeth.
- **Put on makeup**: Hold at your left hand, and with the right hand dab into imaginary blush. Then take the right hand and dab it onto your face.
- **Get keys**: Take imaginary keys off of an imaginary rack.
  - Or:
  - Pull your keys from your pocket.
- **Drive, Drop children off at school, Drive to work**: Pretend to grip a steering wheel, and turn it.
- **Eat Lunch**: Pinch an imaginary sandwich in your hand and take a bite from it.
- **Pick children up from school, drive home**: Pretend to grip a steering wheel, and turn it.
**Make dinner:** Pretend to stir a pot.

**Eat dinner:** Pinch an imaginary spoon, and spoon the imaginary food into your mouth.

**Change clothes:** Imitate the motion of pulling off your shirt over your head, then stepping out of your pants. Then, imitate the motion of pulling on the shirt back over your head, and stepping back into your pants.

**Go to Sleep:** Tilt your head sideways, close your eyes, and place your hands underneath your head, as if you were sleeping. Close your eyes.

Repeat the slideshow three more times. Repeat, gesture, and then repeat.

Repeat it the second time just as you did the first time: read the phrases aloud, and model the action. Have the students perform the action with you, and say the phrases aloud.

Repeat it the third time by reading the phrases aloud, and having the students say it with you. However, this time, do not perform the action, but have the students perform the action.

Repeat it the last time by merely showing the slide. Have the students say the phrase aloud, and perform the action. Provide assistance as needed.

**Skill/ Role Play: Daily Routine**

Instruct students to write 5 things they do as part of their daily routine. This can be in their native language. Give students five to ten minutes to do this. When they have completed, pair the students up.

Instruct the students to share their routine with their partner. They will use gestures, and attempt to use English words to describe what they are doing. While the students are sharing, circle the room and assist with coming up with phrases if the student is unsure.

Once the pairs finish, ask for a volunteer to share with the whole class.

**Grammar: Direction words (1:15-1:45)**

In this grammar section, you will provide basic directional words, in order that the students may give, receive, and follow basic directions.

Pass out maps of the area in which you are teaching the lesson.

A supplementary Directions Words PowerPoint is provided to teach the following direction words. You may also use a map to help assist in understanding these words. Here are some recommended gestures as you read the words aloud:

- **North:** Using a map, point in an upward direction.
- **South:** Using a map, point in a downward direction.
- **East:** Using a map, point in right direction.
- **West:** Using a map, point in a left direction.
- **Right:** Point in a right direction
- **Left:** Point in a left direction
- **Turn:** Walk forward and turn to the left or to the right, or turn completely back around.
- **Straight:** Point and walk straight ahead.
- **Back:** Point over your should and back up.
- **Up:** Point straight up towards the sky.
- **Down:** Point down to the ground.
- **Stop:** Walk forward and stop suddenly. Put your hand up for extra emphasis.
- **Go:** Move quickly from a stopped position.

Repeat the slideshow three more times, having students motion and gesture along with you as you say the words. The last time, do not perform the gestures, but have the students try them as you say the words.

**Skill: Directions and Using Maps (1:45-2:15)**
Write on the board, “Places we go”. Write under the words specific locations in your area; for example, a specific local grocery store (Publix, Food Lion, Hyvee, Walmart, etc.). In addition, find a specific address; for example 250 3rd St. South St. Petersburg, FL 33701.

Model to the students how to navigate to an online map program—a list of suggested programs is displayed in the resources section of this lesson.

Then, model to the students how they can search for driving directions from the facility in which you are teaching the lesson. Enter in the sample address, and show the students how the program will find them directions from one specific location to another. Read the driving directions aloud, and point the correct corresponding portions of the displayed driving route.

After you model the specific address, teach the students how they can search for a specific business—such as Publix Supermarket. Explain that you can type in Publix, and all of the local Publix supermarkets will be displayed on the map. Model clicking on one and use the driving directions to that location. Again, read the driving directions aloud, and point to the correct corresponding portions of the displayed driving route.

Optional:

If the group of students you are teaching is comprised of young adults, or they are active users of SmartPhones, you may also consider teaching this exercise using a smartphone app. The process is very similar to the online version. A list of suggested apps is listed in resources for the day.

Role Play: Giving and Receiving Directions (2:15-2:50)

Write on the board, “Where is your house?”, “Where is the school?”, and “How do I get there?” Ask these questions at the appropriate location as you go on with your instruction.

Pull up Google maps (or another map program) on the screen, and show the students where your house is. Point the mouse at the location, and use several different words such as, “house” and “home” to get your meaning across. If you think that students still do not understand you, display the street view of Google maps so it shows a picture of your house. Note: In the latest update of Google Maps, street view is in the bottom right hand corner.

Then, show students where on the map the facility you are teaching this lesson is. Use appropriate words such as “school” or “class”, or even the name of the facility. Use street view if necessary.

Next, using the mouse or a pointer, give the students simple directions from your house to the facility. Use the direction words that you have taught them to describe how to get there. For example, “Turn left at 1st street”; “Go straight at the stop sign”. Repeat two or three times if necessary.

Then, put the students back into pairs. Make sure that the pairs have at least one map. Instruct the pairs to locate their houses (or another place). They will point on the map, and give one another directions on how to get from their home to the facility, using direction words. Circle the classroom and assist as needed.

Once the pairs finish, ask for a volunteer to share with the whole class.

Closing and Challenge (2:50-3:00)
Congratulate the students on the progress they have made that day. Write on the board, “Places I want to find”. Instruct students to write down a few places (in their native language or in English) that they want to find in the area. Challenge the students to go home and find the directions to one of those places from their home on a map website. Tell them to be prepared to share it with the class tomorrow.

Dismiss the students; tell them you will see them tomorrow.

**Resources for the Day:**

- Routines PowerPoint
- Direction Words PowerPoint

**Suggested Materials and Resources:**

- Maps- You will need maps to hand out to students, as well as maps to display on the board through the projector. It is suggested that you acquire larger, foldable maps of the area to distribute to students, but you may also print off maps from any of the online direction websites. You can often find tourist maps at your local chamber of commerce or welcome centers.
  - Online map programs—choose one of these to share with your students
    - Google Maps [www.google.com/maps](http://www.google.com/maps)
    - Mapquest [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com)
    - Bing Maps [www.bing.com/maps](http://www.bing.com/maps)
    - Yahoo Maps [www.maps.yahoo.com](http://www.maps.yahoo.com)
  - Online Map apps—choose one of these to share with your students. Apps are listed on both the Apple App Store, and Google Play.
    - Google Maps (free)
    - Mapquest (free)
    - Sygic: GPS Navigation (free)
Day 3: Money

Review of Routines (0:00-0:15)

Welcome students. Write on the board: My name is __________. I want to go to: __________.

Model for the class what you did for the challenge activity of the previous day. Say aloud, “My name is (insert your name). I want to go to (insert place, for example: the grocery store). Then, present your print out of the directions from your house (or from the classroom location) to the grocery store. Read aloud the directions, and point on the map where the directions are leading you.

Then, go around the room and have the students answer the prompt, “My name is:_________. I want to go to:________.” Then, the student can choose whether or not they want to attempt to share the directions with the others.

Vocabulary: Money (0:15-0:45)

The vocabulary for the day is based on money. A supplementary Money PowerPoint is provided, covering the daily routine. Money Realia Sheets are also provided.

Pass out the Money Realia Sheets to students. Keep a set for yourself. You will want to have already cut up the sheets, as they provide many bills and coins on one sheet.

Advance through the slides of the PowerPoint. As you teach each word of the PowerPoint, hold up the correct item, and say the value aloud if applicable.

Go through the PowerPoint about three times. Each time, read the words aloud. On the last time through, read the words aloud, but do not hold the correct item up. Have the students do their best to hold up the correct amount. Be sure to wait until each student is holding up the correct bill, coin, or item before advancing to the next slide.

Skill: Paying for something using cash and check (0:45-2:00)

Paying for something using cash:

Write five amounts on the board. Read each amount aloud several times. Hold up the correct amount from the money in front of you. Wait until your students are also holding up the correct amount. A list of suggested amounts follows:

$5.75
$1.74
$21.38
$7.17
$50.01

Then, write three more amounts on the board. Have students hold up what they think equals that amount. Do not move on until students are holding up the correct amounts. A list of suggested amounts follows:

$12.15
Then, write two amounts on the board. Have students pair up. One student will pay their partner the first amount, and then the other student will pay their partner the second amount. Circle the room to assist as the students pay each other. A list of suggested amounts follows:

$6.12
$30.30

_Paying for something using check:_

Pass out **Blank Checks and Check Registers** to the students. Write three scenarios on the board. Based upon the scenarios, you and the students will write a check. The first scenario, you will model for the students. The second scenario, you will write together with the students. You will ask them to prompt you to fill in the correct category. The final scenario you will have the students write on their own. Circle the room and assist the students. The following are three suggested scenarios:

**Date:** Today  
**Place:** Publix (or Grocery Store)  
You buy: Groceries  
You owe: $47.89  

**Date:** Today  
**Place:** Apartment complex  
You pay: Rent  
You owe: $650.00  

**Date:** Today  
**Place:** Dance Studio  
You Pay: Lesson fee (or cost)  
You owe: $30.00  

**Grammar: Action Verbs (2:00-2:20)**

Pass out the supplemental grammar **Important Money Verbs Sheets** covering action verbs “pay, spend, buy, and owe.” Call up a student to help you act out the action verbs. The student will function as the customer, and you will function as the cashier. Perform the role play using an object such as a hat, and two dollars. The following is a suggested exchange between you and the student:

*Pay:* The student will give you the hat and two dollars. They will read aloud from the worksheet, “I pay $2.00 for the hat.” You will take two dollars from them and give them the hat.  
*Spend:* The student will give you the hat and two dollars. They will read aloud from the worksheet, “I spend $2.00 for the hat.” You will take two dollars from them and give them the hat.  
*Buy:* The student will give you the hat and two dollars. They will read aloud from the worksheet, “I buy the hat for $2.00.” You will take two dollars from them and give them the hat.  
*Owe:* You say to the student “You owe me $2.00 for the hat.” They will give you two dollars and the hat. Take the two dollars and give them the hat.
Encourage the students to use these words and pay attention to the words. Repeat this several times until you feel the students can use the words.

**Role Play: Paying for something using cash or check (2:20-2:50)**

Set up several items on a table, each labeled with a price. Tell the students they will be the customer and you will be the cashier. Ask them to choose one or two items off of the table, and come to your counter to pay for the items. The students will be able to pay with cash or with check. The students will practice paying with the correct amount.

If you perceive the students are ready, extend the role play to where you will have to give the students change back for a purchase. For example, an item costs $2.25, and the student pays $3.00.

**Closing and Challenge (2:50-3:00)**

Congratulate the students with the progress they have made that day. Tell them that you want them to practice, and their challenge is to go to a store and buy something using one of the methods that you have taught them (either cash or check). Ask them to come back tomorrow and be prepared to say something short about their experience. Tell the students that the cashier may ask them if they want a receipt. Provide an example of a receipt and tell them that they may choose to respond with a yes or a no. Bring the receipt.

Dismiss students and tell them you will see them tomorrow.

**Resources for the Day:**

- Money PowerPoint
- Money realia
- Check and check register realia
- Important Money Verbs Grammar Sheets

**Suggested Materials and Resources:**

- All are provided for the day
Day 4: Shopping at the Grocery Store

Review of “What is on Time?” (0:00-0:15)

Welcome students to the class. Write on the board: My name is ________. I bought ___________ for $____. It was hard/ easy.

Begin the lesson by modeling for the students what you did for the challenge the day before. Bring in the object you bought if possible. Fill in the appropriate blanks, saying your name, the object you bought, how much you bought it for, and if it was hard or easy. Provide a small explanation of why the experience was hard or easy if you wish. Go around the classroom, and have the students share their experiences in the same format.

Vocabulary: Sections of the Grocery Store and Grocery Store Items (0:15-0:50)

The vocabulary for the day is based on sections of the grocery store and grocery store items. A supplementary Shopping at the Grocery Store PowerPoint is provided. A Grocery Store Sections Graphic Organizer is provided.

For the vocabulary section, pass out graphic organizers. The students will use these organizers as you advance through the PowerPoint. The PowerPoint consists primarily of introducing typical sections of a grocery store. It introduces 11 different sections that one might run into at varying grocery stores. Within each section, labeled pictures are found, explaining the types of items in each section. For example, the “dairy” section is introduced. Within the dairy section, labeled pictures of milk and cheese are shown, showing students that they can find milk and cheese items in the dairy section.

As you advance through the PowerPoint, have students take notes on their graphic organizers. The graphic organizer lists 10 of the different sections (it excludes canned goods). The students will write a couple examples of items they might be able to find in that section. Note: they can write the items in their home language. Model the use of the organizer as you go through the PowerPoint.

At the end of the PowerPoint, there is a small section of additional grocery store vocabulary. Say these words aloud as you advance. Advance through the PowerPoint three times.

When you finish the PowerPoint, introduce the term “bag”. Pull out the paper bag and the plastic bag. Hold up both the bags, and say the term “bag”. Have students repeat after you. Hold up the plastic bag “plastic”. Repeat with the term “paper”.

Grammar: Singular and Plural (0:50-1:10)

Pass out Basic Singular and Plural Grammar Sheets to students. Choose one example word from each section to explain how words change from singular to plural. Emphasize what you do to change the word from singular to plural and how the changed ending sounds.

Give students some words, and have them try to change them from singular to plural. The following are suggested food words you could use:

- Cracker
- Raspberry
- Cherry
- Juice box
- Cucumber
Tell students that the sections of the grocery store do not change. For example, if you were going to use the word “Produce” it would stay “produce”. You never use the word “produces”.

**Skill: Sections of the Grocery Store (1:10-1:50)**

Write the ten general sections of the grocery store on the board: *dairy, bakery, produce, seafood, frozen, deli/meat, baby, baking supplies, condiments/ sauce, health/ beauty*. Next to your list of the sections, write the following: I need to buy:_________, I can find it:_________. Model the first example by writing I need to buy: *apples*. Then say to students, I can find it in: *produce*.

Next, give ten more items that students need to buy, and have the students write what they think is the correct section on their paper. Perform each item one at a time. Allow students to use both English-native language dictionaries and picture dictionaries. The following are suggested items you can give to students:

- Bread
- Milk
- Fish
- Ham
- Mustard
- Soap
- Ice cream
- Measuring cup
- Bottle
- Oranges

Circle around the room and provide help as needed.

**Role Play: Asking for Help Finding an Item (1:50-2:20)**

Tell the students to write down five items that they would be looking for if they went to a grocery store. You can have them write the items in their native language, and then use their dictionaries to translate the word if they do not know the English word.

When students have finished gathering their English words, pass out the *Asking for an item role play sheet*. Tell students that when they cannot find an item, they can always ask for help.

Pair students, and assign one student to act as the customer and the other as the employee. Then have them switch roles. The student that is the customer will fill their dialogue in with the foods they would be looking for if they went to the grocery store. (This means they will repeat the dialogue five times, filling in different foods each time). The student that is functioning as the employee will have to decide the section that they think each of their foods will be found in. They may use a dictionary if they are not familiar with the food that their classmate has asked about. This will make the students more comfortable with speaking with others in the store, as well as give them more practice looking for an item.

Circle around the room and assist as needed.

**Role Play: Checking out (2:30-2:50)**

Pass out the *Questions and Phrases You Might Hear While Checking out Sheet* to students. Tell the students that these are things they might be asked or told when they are buying their food at the grocery store.
Similar to the previous day’s activity, put several items (preferably food or grocery store items) on a table, and label them with a price. Redistribute the money realia.

Have each student choose an item, and come “check out” at a table that you are at. This time, however, randomly ask questions that are on the sheet. For each student, make sure you ask some form of question about their preference of paper or plastic bag.

Closing and Challenge (2:50-3:00)

Congratulate the students on the progress they made that day. Depending on the needs of your group of students choose one of the following challenge activities:

1. Tell the students to go to three different sections of the grocery store and write down at least three different items or types of foods that they see there in English. They may also write it in their native language to help them remember what the words mean. Ask them to be prepared to share tomorrow.
2. Tell the students to think of an item that they want to find at the grocery store. Challenge them to go to a store and ask an employee for help finding that item. Ask them to be prepared to share their experience tomorrow.

Dismiss students for the day.

Resources for the Day:

- Shopping at the Grocery Store PowerPoint
- Grocery Store Sections Graphic Organizer
- Basic Singular and Plurals Grammar Sheet
- Asking for an Item Sheet
- Questions and Phrases you Might Hear While Checking Out Sheet
  - Note: Asking for an Item Sheet and Questions and Phrase You Might Hear While Checking Out sheet are on the same sheet.

Suggested Materials and Resources:

- Paper Bag (realia)
- Plastic Bag (realia)
Welcome students to the class. Depending on which challenge activity you selected the night before, do one of the following:

1. Write on the board: “I went to the ______________ section. I saw __________ there.” Model for the students an appropriate response. For example, “I went to the produce section. I saw bananas there.” Go around the room and have the students share their experiences.

2. Write on the board: “I was looking for __________. The employee (did/ did not) help me. Did and did not are complicated verbs, so slowly say the words did and did not. As you say “did”, nod your head up and down, as if showing “yes”. As you say “did not”, shake your head back and forth as if saying “no”. Model for the students an appropriate response. For example, “The item I was looking for was: celery. The employee did understand me. I did not understand the employee.” Go around the room and have the students share their experiences. If the students think they are able, have them explain a little more about the experience than just the prompt.

Vocabulary: Concepts about Time (0:15-1:15)

The vocabulary for the day is based on important time words and concepts in telling time. A supplementary Concepts about Time PowerPoint is provided. The objective is not to teach students to tell time, but rather teach students to tell time in English.

The beginning of the PowerPoint has several words and concepts about time. Then, it reviews numbers 1-60. The end of the PowerPoint has several example times for practice in telling time. Advance through the PowerPoint. First, demonstrate through reading the term aloud and pointing to where it is depicted on the slide. Have the students repeat the term after you read it aloud. For example, for the word “hour”, point to the place on the slide that visually depicts hour with numbers. Then, as you advance to the part to practice telling time, read the time aloud and have the students repeat back after you. On the second and third times, continue to point, but have the students attempt to say the word and times aloud. Advance through the PowerPoint three times, or when you believe they have a grasp on telling time in English.

Note that some students may be more familiar with the 24-hour clock or military time. While this will be helpful, you are focusing on teaching the 12-hour clock, as it is predominant in United States society. Keep in mind that it will be more challenging to teach students this concept if they are most familiar with the 24-hour clock. You may have to spend extra time teaching AM and PM.

Grammar: Basic Past and Future (1:15-1:35)

Keep the Concepts about Time PowerPoint up on the projector. Pass out Basic Past and Future Tense Sheets to students. Read through each worksheet. As you come to the terms “past” and “future”, have the students say the words aloud with you. Perform an appropriate gesture to enhance student understanding of the concepts of past and future. Have students stand and perform these gestures along with you. Suggested gestures are as follows:
**Past:** Point behind your shoulder, as if something is behind you, and walk forward.

**Future:** Point in front of you, as if something is ahead of you, and walk forward.

Read through the sheet with the students, drawing specific attention to the bolded verbs on the sheet. Have the students repeat the example after you. Use some of the times that are listed on the PowerPoint, and form new sentences using the same verbs that are on the sheet. For example, take the time 9:15 AM from the PowerPoint, and say “The party was at 9:15 AM”. Model this first for the students, and then have them try using the sentences.

Repeat this until you feel students have grasped a basic concept of past and future tense. Then, advance to United States Customs/ Views of Time.

**Skill: United States Customs/ Views of Time (1:35-2:10)**

The skill for the day is intended to familiarize students with United States Customs and Views of Time. A supplementary **When Do I Arrive? PowerPoint** is provided. It is recommended that you repeat the PowerPoint at least three times.

The first segment of the PowerPoint familiarizes students with the concepts of Early, Late, and On Time. These concepts are visually represented in a couple of ways. As you go through the slides, read the word aloud (for example, “early”). Then use your fingers or arm to point to the portion of the slide that represents early. You are helping the students to make sense of the visual. During the first time you go through the set of slides, read the slides aloud, and gesture, having students make sense of what you are doing. During the following repetitions, have the students say the words and the times aloud.

The next segment helps students practice using the terms early, on time, and late. Again, read the slide aloud to help the students make sense of what they are seeing. During the first repetition, model the correct responses for the students. For example, point to the blank where “on time” should be, and say “on time” for the students. In the next couple of repetitions, merely point to the blank spot, and have the students respond with the correct answer.

After you repeat the PowerPoint several times, and you gauge that students have a working understanding of the terms “early, late, and on time”, pass out the **When You Should Get There Help Sheet** to each student. Encourage students to use bilingual dictionaries or computer translating software for words that they do not understand on the help sheet. Read the help sheet aloud with students. Instruct students to raise their hand if they need help or do not understand something on the sheet. Repeat as many times as you feel is necessary for understanding. Once you have addressed student misunderstandings, and you gauge they are ready, advance to the role play activity.

**Role Play: Scenarios about Time (2:10-2:50)**

Pass out the worksheet, **Scenarios about Time**. Group the students up into pairs in order to perform the activity. Have student use their **When You Should Get There Help Sheet** as well as a bilingual dictionary or computer translating software to help them.

Read the first scenario aloud to the students. Have the pairs work to decide on the time they should arrive. Once the pairs have had some time to decide, ask each group what time they decided on. Discuss their responses, and repeat the activity with each scenario on the worksheet.
Closing and Challenge (2:50-3:00)

Congratulate students on the progress they have made that day, and throughout the past week.

Challenge the students to go home, and in their native language, interview a family member about their values about time. For example, what times they need to arrive at work, school, etc. Then, they will compare the differences with their home cultural customs and with what they learned about the time values of the United States.

Resources for the Day:

- Concepts about Time PowerPoint
- Basic Past and Future Tense Sheet
- When Do I Arrive? PowerPoint
- When You Should Get There Help Sheet
- Scenarios about Time Worksheet

Suggested Materials and Resources:

- All are provided for the day
What to Expect

Day 1: Introductions and Questions

Day 2: Routines and Directions

Day 3: Money

Day 4: Shopping at the Grocery Store

Day 5: Time
Important Questions
What is your name?

My name is Mary.
What language do you speak?

I speak English.
Where are you from?

I am from the United States
Where do you work?

I work at McDonalds.
Where do you live?

I live in St. Petersburg.
## Questions and Answers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>What is your name?</strong></th>
<th><strong>Is your name Mary?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My name is _______</td>
<td>Yes, my name is Mary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No, my name is _______</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>What language do you speak?</strong></th>
<th><strong>Do you speak English?</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I speak _______</td>
<td>Yes, I speak English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No, I speak _______</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Where are you from?</strong></th>
<th><strong>Are you from the United States?</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am from _______</td>
<td>Yes, I am from the United States.</td>
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<td>No, I am from _______</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Where do you work?</strong></th>
<th><strong>Do you work at McDonalds?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I work at _______</td>
<td>Yes, I work at McDonalds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not work.</td>
<td>No, I work at _______</td>
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<td></td>
<td>No, I do not work.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Where do you live?</strong></th>
<th><strong>Do you live in St. Petersburg?</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I live in _______</td>
<td>Yes, I live in St. Petersburg.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No, I live in _______</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Routine 1
Wake up
Get out of bed
Undress
Take clothes off
Take a shower
Dry off
Towel off
Get dressed
Put clothes on
Brush hair
Comb hair
Make breakfast
Eat breakfast
Brush teeth
Put on Make-up
Get keys
Drive
Drop children off at school
Drive to work
Eat lunch
Pick children up from school
Drive home
Make dinner
Eat dinner
Change clothes
Go to sleep
Directions
Right
Left
Straight
Back
Up
Down
Turn
Money
Cash
Card
### Check Register

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Check Number</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Check Paid To</th>
<th>Check/Deposit Amount</th>
<th>BALANCE</th>
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</table>
Dollar Bill
$1.00
10 Dollar Bill
$10.00
20 Dollar Bill
$20.00
50 Dollar Bill
$50.00
Quarter
$0.25
Dime
$0.10
Nickel
$0.05
Penny
$0.01
Play Money - $5 Bills
Play Money - $10 Bills
Play Money - $20 Bills
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Pay to the Order of</th>
<th>$</th>
<th>MoneyInstructor.com Bank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1221 Main Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Anywhere, US 10001</td>
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<tr>
<td>102</td>
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<td>103</td>
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</table>
Practice filling out your own Checkbook.

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<th>Check Number</th>
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<th>Check Paid To</th>
<th>Check/Deposit Amount</th>
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</table>
Important Money Verbs

**Pay:** Giving money to get an item.
Example: I **pay** $2.00 for the hat.

**Spend:** Using money to get an item.
Example: I **spend** $2.00 for the hat.

*Pay and spend are synonyms*

**Buy:** Getting an item with money.
Example: I **buy** the hat for $2.00.

**Owe:** What you need to give.
Example: You **owe** me $2.00 for the hat.
Grocery Store
Sections of the Grocery Store
Dairy

Milk

Cheese

Yogurt
Bakery

Bread

Cakes
Produce

Vegetables

Fruit
Seafood

Shrimp

Fish
Frozen Ice Cream
Deli/ Meat

Sandwich
Baby

Pacifier

Bottle
Baking Supplies
Condiments/ Sauce
Health/ Beauty
Canned Goods
Important Grocery Store Vocabulary
Aisle
Cart
# Basic Singular and Plural Grammar*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word ends in:</th>
<th>Add:</th>
<th>Sounds like: (Most of the time)</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Most words   | -s   | s                               | Banana→Bananas  
                           | Plant→Plants  
                           | Carrot→Carrots |
| Ch, x, s, sh | -es  | z                               | Peach→Peaches  
                           | Box→Boxes  
                           | Grass→Grasses |
| F or fe      | Change f to v  
                           | Add -es  | z                               | Leaf→leaves  
                           | Life→lives |
| Some y’s     | Take away y  
                           | Add -es  | z                               | Baby→Babies  
                           | Blueberry→Blueberries |
| Other y’s    | Keep y  
                           | Add –s  | z                               | Toy→Toys  
                           | Pay→Pays |

*There may be exceptions to these rules

---

In a grocery store, categories stay the same:

For example: Produce stays produce, dairy stays dairy.

NEVER use “produces” or “dairies”
Customer and Employee Role Play Sheet

* Asking for an item *

**Employee:** Can I help you?

**Customer:** I am looking for ______.

**Employee:** That is in the ______ section.

**Customer:** Thank you!
Questions and phrases you might hear checking out

Paper or plastic?

Is plastic ok?

Do you need help out to your car?

Do you want ____ in a bag?
Time
Time

11:13:05

Hour  Minute  Second
Times of day

12:00 AM - 11:00 AM: Morning

12:00 PM - 11:00 PM: Afternoon/Evening
Clock
Let’s practice numbers!

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9
10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19
20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29
30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39
40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49
50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59
60
Noon

12:00 PM
Midnight

12:00 AM
Let’s Practice Telling Time

3:45 PM
7:04 AM
3:12 AM
5:27 PM
10:57 PM
12:30 PM
6:45 AM
9:15 PM
9:50 AM
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The party <em>was</em> at 3:00 PM.</td>
<td>The party <em>will be</em> at 3:00 PM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I <em>went</em> to work at 9:00 AM.</td>
<td>I <em>will go</em> to work at 9:00 AM.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When do I arrive?
On Time

2:00 PM

Early

2:30 PM

Late

3:00 PM
On Time

Early

Late

8:30 AM

9:00 AM

9:30 AM
On Time: 8:05

Early: 7:30 - 8:04

Late: 8:06 - 8:30
You Try!

__________: 9:00 AM-9:29 AM

On Time: 9:30 AM

__________: 9:31 AM- 10:00 AM
You Try!

Early: 3:30 PM - 3:59 PM

__________: 4:00 PM

__________: 4:01 PM - 4:30 PM
You Try!

___________: 9:00 AM-9:29 AM

___________: 9:30 AM

Late: 9:31 AM- 10:00 AM
When You Should Get There

Help Sheet

1. Your Job or Work
   When you should get there: **Early**
   5-15 minutes before start time
   Example: Work starts at 9:00 AM
   Get there between 8:45-8:55 AM

2. School for Children
   When you should get there: **Early**
   15+ Minutes before start time
   Example: School Starts at 8:30 AM
   Get there by 8:15 AM or earlier

3. An Appointment (Doctor, Dentist)
   When you should get there: **Early**
   10-15 Minutes before start time
   Example: Appointment at 3:15 PM
   Get there between 3:00- 3:05 PM

4. A Job Interview
   When you should get there: **Early**
   15 minutes before start time
   Example: Interview at 10:00 AM
   Get there by 9:45 AM

5. A friend’s house
   When you should get there: **On time**
   At the time you are invited
   Example: Invited over at 6:00 PM
   Get there at 6:00 PM

6. A party
   When you should get there:
   **On time or a little late**
   0-30 minutes after start time
   Example: Party starts at 6:00 PM
   Get there between 6:00- 6:30 PM

7. Going to an Event
   (Wedding, Funeral, Graduation)
   When you should get there: **Early**
   About 30 minutes before start time
   Example: Wedding starts at 5:00 PM
   Get there about 4:30 PM

8. Going to a Movie
   When you should get there:
   **Early**
   5- 10 minutes before start time
   Example: Movie starts at 7:40 PM
   Be at theater around 7:30- 7:40 PM
Scenarios about Time

1. Your shift at work starts at 9:00 AM. What time will you get there?
2. You get invited to a party that starts at 5:00 PM. What time will you get there?
3. Your doctor’s appointment starts at 1:00 PM. What time will you get there?
4. A friend invites you to come over for dinner at 6:30 PM. What time will you get there?
5. You are going to a wedding that starts at 3:00 PM. What time will you get there?
6. You are going to a movie that starts at 10:00 PM. What time will you get there?
Kristin Nesslar

Reflection on Writing Process

As a student, I am constantly looking to expand my knowledge. As I build on my current knowledge, the things I learn and understand become increasingly more advanced and complicated. However, while the knowledge I have in my existing skill sets becomes more thorough, I become less comfortable with the thought of learning a new skill set. For example, I know nothing about writing computer code, and the thought of learning such a task daunts me. It is not because I believe I am incapable; on the contrary, I certainly could do it, and learning code would prove rewarding. Rather, it is because I know that to learn code would require me to start from scratch. I would be leaving the advanced and returning to the simple. Basic concepts would be essential for me to learn. It takes courage to go back to a simple concept after you have spent considerable time with lofty ideas.

Simplicity. I feel this has been the theme of the entire process of writing this thesis. In fact, it is something I have had to learn while enrolled in the Elementary Education major at USFSP. It is easy to forget as a learner that every concept I know intricately, I had to start learning it simply. Somewhere along the way, someone introduced it in simple form in order that I could make sense of it.

I can distinctly remember the moment I grasped multiplication. I recall realizing for the first time that the second number tells you how many times to add the first number together. $4 \times 3$ tells me that I should add the number four three times, or $4+4+4$. Of course, as my knowledge and understanding grew, I began to do more complicated things with multiplication; so complicated that multiplication was only one small, foundational step of the problem.
I am now discovering this facet of learning: that as time passes and knowledge grows, that basic knowledge is taken for granted. However, basic knowledge is foundational to learning all that follows. While I am convinced that it is imperative to know a concept deeply, intricately, inside, and out, I must remember that others may not understand the concept as thoroughly as I do. This is where a teacher plays a role. The mark of a great teacher is one that can simplify a concept. This is not a call for a teacher to “dumb down” a concept or avoid challenging his or her students; rather, the teacher makes the concept available for different learners to grasp.

Therefore, while developing my own curriculum through this thesis, the need for simplicity became even more relevant to me. I realized that sometimes making something simple can be even harder than keeping something at a high level. The same principle follows for writing: it is easy to be wordy, but considerably harder to be concise.

When I started to think about what I wanted to do for my thesis, I had large and complicated ideas. I knew that I wanted to do something for ESOL (English as a Second or Other Language) students; I just was not sure exactly what. My first wave of inspiration hit about a year ago, in late Spring semester of 2015. That inspiration was book sitting on my shelf inside my dorm room.

At that time, I was thick into the process of learning a second language for myself. I was taking Spanish IV with plans to stay at a home of a Spanish speaking family for three weeks that summer. Recently, I had made what I considered to be one of the best purchases ever: a picture dictionary. I was overwhelmed with the usefulness of that fat book. I would often flip open the book and show my friends just how detailed it was. There was a certain page in particular that displayed a television remote. I was fascinated by that page; it displayed not only the Spanish word for remote, but also each separate button.
One day, while using that useful reference, I had my first idea for my thesis. I sat up straight in my chair, and realized that perhaps I could make something like this, but for students in the United States learning English. It was a starting idea; of course, nothing like what my final product turned out to be, but that is what initiated my thinking process. As I dwelled more on this idea, I concluded that a project like this would be a huge undertaking for merely two semesters. I could do it, but there were existing resources out there that were doing the same thing, and they had been developing their resource for a much longer process than the 9 months I would have.

My ideas then shifted slightly to developing a curriculum for teachers to teach adult ELLs (English Language Learners). I liked this idea, because it would allow me to use what I had been learning through my studies to teach students, and it would be helpful for the ESOL community. However, as I began to think even more thoroughly on this topic, I continued to run into the same issues that I had earlier. First of all, I again had large and complicated ideas. I envisioned creating plans for an entire year. Was this manageable? Perhaps. Was it reasonable to create in a semester? Absolutely not. In addition to having to produce this curriculum, I began to feel pressure to make my product distinct from the rest. There are plenty of lesson plans, products, and curriculum out there for ESOL students; would it be possible to make my different? I was not sure, myself. Furthermore, if I created a product that was different than the others, would it be better? Would it even work?

I wrestled with these thoughts and questions, and one day I was given great advice: narrow your curriculum down. I was told to consider creating a week long curriculum as opposed to a yearlong curriculum. At first, I wondered if doing such a thing would be a cop out. I would be cutting down my work load immensely. However, as I would learn later, simpler does not necessarily mean easier. I was encouraged by my director and others that if I narrowed it down to
one week, I would be able to focus on creating lesson plans that were very thorough and in depth. The lessons would not be nearly as thought through or comprehensive had I created a yearlong curriculum.

Although I had the length of my project figured out, I still had not yet determined how it would be set apart from other curriculums or even meaningful. I knew that I could not have too lofty of a claim for this curriculum either. I knew it would be too much to claim a student would come out of a weeklong program fluent in English if they were not fluent already. What helped me most to form my curriculum was placing myself in the perspective of a potential student. I began to think about and consider the needs of the ESOL community. I initially envisioned myself as an adult speaker of Spanish, recently emigrated from a country in Latin America. I imagined myself as a mother of three children, moving into a community of primarily Spanish speakers. I care for my children, and want to see them succeed, so I put them into school. However, I need to find a job, and will work hard just to make ends meet. I want to learn English, but there is hardly time in the day to make it happen. Plus, the thought is kind of intimidating; I am already proficient in so many things, and speak and write Spanish very well. I am living in a Spanish-speaking community, so if I don’t leave, or just rely on my kids to translate, I’ll be ok.

I thought up this scenario, and a couple other scenarios involving refugees. As I thought about this, I noticed that the two main things that would stop someone from learning English would be busyness and fear. I think those two things are somewhat intertwined. The honest reason someone would not try to learn English would be fear, but I would say that busyness could be an honest and valid excuse that hinders the immigrant or refugee from facing their fear.
Based upon these scenarios, I tried to think what one of these students would need most. They need more time in their busy schedules; I obviously could not provide that. However, they also need confidence in their capabilities to learn and speak English. I knew that if I planned the lessons carefully, I could help provide that. Additionally, I noticed that adults new to the United States must perform basic tasks in order to survive, such as going to the store, that require English. Some of these tasks the learners have performed in their home country, but not using English. As a result, it is essential they learn the English needed to perform the tasks. In other cases, learners may not even know the task from their home country; so, they need to learn the task along with the English. Finally, there are obvious cultural differences between the United States that an immigrant or refugee would not know upon their arrival. For example, there are differences in keeping time, and a learner would need to know these differences. I decided these were all things I could use my curriculum to accomplish. Therefore, my curriculum became a one-week survival curriculum: students would learn survival English and skills while gaining confidence in their ability to learn English.

Finally, after several months of playing with my ideas, I was ready to begin. The first thing I did was to establish a loose outline of the concepts I would cover for each day, and compile starting vocabulary list for each day. For a while, I contemplated creating SmartBoard activities to make the introduction of vocabulary and concepts even more interactive. However, I quickly decided against that because I realized that would limit where my curriculum could be taught.

Before jumping into writing my lessons, I decided I would do the “grunt work” of compiling vocabulary images. Surprisingly, this turned out to be the most difficult and frustrating part in the process of writing my thesis, and I hadn’t even started writing it yet! I
think I was partially feeling restless. I was feeling like I had done so much preparation for it that I just needed to start it. I began to worry that I was going to run out of time to actually write it. While these worries were understandable, they were unmerited. Those vocabulary photographs would prove invaluable in keeping my progress flowing.

Once I compiled the pictures, I initially did not know how I should attack my project from there. I sat down and decided to make my daily outline even more detailed than I had made it in the beginning. I had already known that I wanted each day to contain six key elements: an introduction, vocabulary, grammar, skill, role play, and a closing and challenge. However, I made them more specific at this point, and loosely decided what skill or activity I was going to do for each. When I finished this, I finally began to feel better about my project; I was more confident that I knew what I was doing and that I could attain it.

Then I began actually writing the lessons. I started with day two instead of day one. Day one was an introductory day, and I did not feel confident introducing something uncreated. As my work commenced, I alternated between writing and developing the supplementary items such as the PowerPoints and worksheets. I created PowerPoints for the vocabulary section of each day. As I made these PowerPoints, I incorporated the vocabulary pictures and graphics to match each of the vocabulary words.

However, I found myself taking out many of the vocabulary words that I had originally decided to use. The issue of the need for simplicity again rose to the forefront of my project. In my preparations, I had selected some really good words that are foundational and necessary to know. However, I had selected too many words. To learn that many words a day, I reasoned, was not practical. It would be better to learn a few highly important words for survival rather than many words that would be forgotten at the end of the lesson. I came to terms with the fact that if
I had planned anything that was not absolutely essential, it would be cut. This was hard on me emotionally. I felt those three weeks that I had spent compiling vocabulary graphics and pictures were completely wasted. I wondered why I had felt it was so important to do that first, when I had come to this obvious conclusion not much later. However, as I stated earlier, the more I worked, the more I realized just how helpful that session of three weeks had been for me. Most times when I decided I needed a picture to represent a concept, I did not have to go digging through the internet; rather, I had a good one saved in a logical place on my computer that was easy to find. The ability to easily pull up a picture kept my flow of ideas going; it was not interrupted by an internet search. Once I got the picture, I could just keep going. Despite my preliminary frustration, I found myself glad that I had taken the time to do that for myself.

In addition, the need for simplicity was not only hard on my emotionally, but it was also difficult when I was writing. Some days, I felt like I stared at my computer screen for an hour, and had maybe two or three sentences to show for my work. I had all these ideas flowing in my head, but I struggled to communicate it simply and in a format that an adult ELL would grasp. Other days, I would work on it, and write nearly a whole day’s plan in one sitting. On those days, I would wonder how if I just had not been focused during my other sessions. However, I know that those times were productive in terms of my thought development; if I had not spent all of that time thinking, I would not have been able to produce what I did on my days that looked more productive on paper.

From that point, writing my thesis was just a process of taking my ideas and creating them into a simple, teachable format. I again found myself grateful for all the preliminary work I had done. The outline I completed several weeks prior proved helpful, as I began each new day. My thoughts were not beginning from scratch; rather, I would look at the outline and remember
the ideas I had. I’m confident that this outline, as well as the vocabulary pictures helped me to keep lesson plans flowing. Understandably, I made some minor changes to the outline as I progressed on my thesis; realizing in the thick of writing that some things would be more effective than my original ideas. I think the main change I made was reordering the topics of the days that were to be taught. However, I stayed closely to what I had originally planned.

These past two semesters consisted wholly of me writing the plan; I have not tried to teach it yet. However, that is my hope moving forward. In the upcoming months, I plan to reach out to several adult education centers and refugee services to see if they will give me a chance to try it out. I think it will be interesting to see if my plan works as well as I anticipate that it will. In addition, after spending two semesters of writing, I think it will be immensely enjoyable and rewarding to actually teach it.

I wish to wrap up my thesis by leaving advice for any future honors student that is considering a more creative project like mine. The advice that I will give is all reflected from the lessons that I learned and issues that I ran into along the way.

First, I would advise a thesis student not too be afraid to narrow down an idea or make it simpler. Doing so will not damage the potency of your idea or thesis; rather, it will only make it stronger as your energies will be more focused. Huge, scattered ideas will only lead to a weak thesis, and a stressed, burned out student. If writing a thesis in the typical amount of time as I did (from Fall to Spring), you will have eight months or less to generate an idea, and follow through with it. While I do not want to discourage you from a “dream” idea, I want to encourage you to be realistic.

Next, realize that you cannot just sit down one day and start a creative project. Creativity takes a lot of thought behind it. All creative ideas have a plan behind them. Therefore, do not be
discouraged if the preparation process takes longer than you think it might. Eventually, you will reach a point where you need to just go ahead and begin, figuring out things as you go, but there is something important about that time you take in planning and preparation. Certainly each project will be unique in its own way, and each writer and creator is unique in their style; however, for me this proved to be true despite my expectations.

Finally, make sure the topic you focus on is your passion. There will be days when the project is tiring, frustrating, or even tedious. However, the overall process should be enjoyable for you. If you love the subject you are writing about, it will help you get through the days when you want to be doing anything else but writing your thesis. If you write about what you love, finishing your thesis will feel even more rewarded. I think “rewarded” is the word that best sums up how I feel now!
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