



# ENL Teacher Professional Development: Autobiographical Exploration of Funds of Knowledge

Sari Brodey

Indiana University- Purdue University Columbus

Mentor: Dr. Laura B. Liu, Ed.D.

## Introduction

**Purpose:** The purpose of this OSR project is to reflect on how development of an autobiographical digital story about my cultural *funds of knowledge*:

- (1) supported self-reflection as an ELL teacher (TESOL 2e);
- (2) cultivated greater appreciation for ELL challenges in schools (TESOL 2a);
- (3) guided my development of a lesson plan to engage elementary ELL and students in reflection on their funds of knowledge to share with others.

## Theoretical Framework

### Funds of Knowledge: Understanding the Concept

#### *Moll et al., 1992*

Moll et al. (1992) encourages innovative teaching that draws upon the knowledge and skills of local households, and aims to portray the “complex functions of households within their sociocultural context” to replace false narratives of ELL homes being poor economically and in life quality (p. 132).

#### *ERIC, 1994*

Teaching can enrich a classroom by drawing upon language minorities’ funds of knowledge, defined here as the “historically developed and accumulated strategies (skills, abilities, ideas, practices) or bodies of knowledge that are essential to a household’s functioning and well-being” (p. 2).

#### *Velez-Ibanez & Greenburg, 1992*

Public schools do not acknowledge the “strategic and cultural resources” or “funds of knowledge” (p. 313) that U.S.-Mexican ELLs bring to the classroom from their home environments. Constructive relationships among students, teachers, and parents are needed to achieve equity in the classroom.

### Funds of Knowledge: Recognizing Need to Integrate ELL FoK in Schools

#### *Gallo & Link, 2015*

Preparing educators to practice *humanizing pedagogies* that draw upon ELLs’ *politicized funds of knowledge* can support students in developing critical thinking, literacy skills, and to participate in the process of social equity for all by connecting their lived experiences to school curricula.

#### *Kinney, 2015*

This study found the funds of knowledge of five families presents counter evidence to deficit narratives about minority ELL populations. Home and church visits, classroom observations, informal conversations, and semi-structured interviews highlighted families’ valuable knowledge and skills.

#### *Thomson & Hall, 2008*

Three instances of ELL funds of knowledge in the classroom were not recognized and valued as classroom resources by teachers. It is important for teachers to have team support in systematically documenting community practices to change institutional structures, teacher habits, and attitudes.

### Model Pedagogies for Integrating ELL FoK in Elementary Classrooms

#### *Alvarez, 2018*

Bilingual 1<sup>st</sup> grade students wrote and drew pictures each month as a “window” into their understandings of their life experiences in a bilingual school in a town very close to the Mexican-American border. Products revealed ELL self-perceptions as contributors to family well-being.

#### *Dworin, 2006*

Bilingual 4<sup>th</sup> grade students in a biliteracy (Spanish and English) classroom wrote and translated stories about their families in Spanish and English to improve their skills in both languages, thereby modeling the value of biliteracy as a valuable model for classrooms and schools.

#### *Street, 2005*

Teachers visited families to establish relationships with the families and learn more about their ways of sharing knowledge with each other. Home visits contrast with school-home communication focused on reporting problems or for the school to share knowledge in a one-way flow communication.

#### *Johnson & Johnson, 2016*

Conducted 2-hour home visits with two ELL students to learn about home activities, literacy practices and language use. Integrating marginalized ELL students’ home funds of knowledge into classroom activities supports the individualizes literacy engagement and enhances student investment.

## Digital Story: Funds of Knowledge

**Assignment:** This assignment completed in Introduction to Bilingual Education invited ENL teacher candidates to develop a digital story about their own family’s cultural funds of knowledge. The story had a narrative and explored some aspect important to the candidate. By reflecting on our own funds of knowledge as candidates, we prepared to appreciate the funds of knowledge of the English Language Learners (ELL) in our current and future classrooms.

I drew upon this principle in developing the unit plan below.

### Unit Overview: ELL Family Recipes as Funds of Knowledge

#### Teaching Context

##### Classroom/School Demographics:

White 57.5%, Hispanic 20.5%, Asian 14.9%, Multiracial 5%  
Black 1.8%, American Indian .3%

##### Students receiving free or reduced meals

Paid Meals: 60.1%, Free Meals: 35.3%, Reduced Price: 4.6%

##### Special Education

General: 84.3% & Special: 15.7%

##### English Language Learners

Non-English Language Learners: 76.9%

English Language Learners: 23.1%

<https://compass.doe.in.gov/>

#### Lesson Planning

##### Content Standard:

**Science LST.5: WRITING GENRES-** Write for different purposes and to specific audiences or people

**6-8.LST.5.2:** Write informative texts, including scientific procedures/experiments or technical processes that include precise descriptions and conclusions drawn from data and research.

Students will DESCRIBE the *ingredients* and *procedures* for a recipe made in their homes, and will DESCRIBE the *cultural* and/or *personal values* associated with the dish’s *taste*, *nutrition*, and/or *traditions*.

##### WIDA ELD Standard:

Standard 4 Language of Science

Standard 2 Language of Language Arts

##### WIDA Language Expectations

Domain: Writing

Grade: 6

Levels: 1\_Entering through 4\_Expanding

Use: Recount, Explain

RECOUNT: Students can reproduce or produce words, phrases, or statements related to the recipe’s ingredients and procedures, in English and/or in their home language.

EXPLAIN: Students can indicate relationships between the recipe and its value by drawing and labeling content-related pictures (Level 1) or by producing descriptive paragraphs explaining the recipe’s value by using sentence frames and working with a partner.

##### Key Terms/Vocabulary:

Recipe, Ingredients, Value, Nutrition, Tradition, US vs. Metric Cooking Measurements

##### Prior Knowledge:

Students need to have general knowledge about what a recipe is, and how to measure ingredients in following a recipe.

##### Possible Misconceptions:

Students may not realize a commonly shared family dish represents cultural and historical traditions.

#### Assessment Planning

**Formative:** Graphic organizer to label a recipe’s ingredients, procedures, and values (nutrition, tastes, and tradition-based) first to use as a class for the teacher’s recipe and then to use for their own.

**Formative:** Peer edit check list to provide feedback

**Summative:** Class recipe book

#### Unit Overview

##### Lesson 1

Teacher shares examples of cultural/family foods from around the world and models describing a family recipe and explaining its value.

- Demonstrate in class OR show a video of creating a family recipe, including ingredients, materials, and the finished product.
- Share a model of recipe procedures and value description.

##### Lesson 2

Students develop written descriptions of their selected recipe’s ingredients and procedures, and explanations for the nutritional, taste, and tradition-based values for their family’s recipe. Students work in mixed language ability groups to peer edit the recipes.

##### Lesson 3

Students share their completed class recipe book with their parents invited to a class presentation, and as a paper and online document that can be accessed by parents unable to attend the presentation.

## Professional Standards for Teaching English as a Second or Other Language (TESOL)

**TESOL Standard 2a:** Candidates demonstrate knowledge of how dynamic academic, personal, familial, cultural, and social contexts, including sociopolitical factors, impact the education of ELLs.

**TESOL Standard 2d:** Candidates devise and implement methods to learn about personal characteristics of the individual ELL (e.g., interests, motivations, strengths, needs) and their family (e.g., language use, literacy practices, circumstances) to develop effective instructional practices.

**TESOL Standard 2e:** Candidates identify and describe the impact of his/her identity, role, cultural understandings, and personal biases and conscious knowledge of U.S. culture on his/her interpretation of the educational strengths and needs of individual ELLs and ELLs in general.

## Reflection

### TESOL Standard 2a

The word “dynamic” in this standard stands out to me because this word reminds the teacher that effective instruction is dynamic and always changing or adapting to the students’ needs. Rather than marginalizing the learning experience, the teacher finds a way to acknowledge and utilize the present conditions the students are experiencing. For example, since the outbreak of the Covid-19, my ELL students have been at home taking my class online. I designed a unit plan turning present situation into a strength. They have been asked to share a family recipe and its taste, nutritional, and/or tradition-based values. Some students already may be taking on leadership roles in their homes by helping to cook, particular ELLs and during the Covid-19 crisis creating potential job-related stress on ELL parents. This unit plan supports students in this role and capitalizes on the situation by teaching grade-level content and English language skills related to measurement (math), nutrition (science), and writing (ELA).

### TESOL Standard 2d

This unit plan invites my ELL students to learn more about and then share a favorite family recipe. This requires the student to explore the nutritional and traditional-based value of a recipe by talking with their family members. This helps me as the teacher to understand both the cultural traits and personal interests of my ELLs, and provides a window into how food is discussed and experienced in their family’s homes.

### TESOL Standard 2e

In developing my own autobiographical writing about my family’s funds of knowledge, I noted how my own favorite foods have changed over the years. As a white American child, I liked spaghetti with butter. Later in high school, I learned about Japanese culture and a Japanese restaurant opened up, and my favorite food changed to sushi. In reflecting on my upbringing, I see the importance of education and the doors it can open to one’s tastes, like my introduction to Japanese cuisine. Food plays a huge role in a person’s cultural and emotional well-being. After experiencing my American ideal for a delicious spaghetti sauce, I later lived in an Asian community that put pineapple in the sauce. The spaghetti sauce with pineapple bits did not provide the emotional comfort that tomato-only spaghetti had for me. Yet, I could appreciate the value it may hold for this Asian community.

## References

Alvarez, A. (2018). Drawn and written funds of knowledge: A window into emerging bilingual children’s experiences and social interpretations through their written narratives and drawings. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy, 18*(1), 97-128.

Dworin, J.E. (2006). The family stories project: Using funds of knowledge for writing. *The Reading Teacher, 59*(6), 510-520.

ERIC, (1994.) Funds of knowledge: Learning from language minority households. *ERIC Digest, 1-6*.

Gallo, S. & Link, H. (2015). “Diles la verdad”: Deportation policies, politicized funds of knowledge, and schooling in middle childhood. *Harvard Educational Review, 85*(3), 357-382.

Johnson, E.J., & Johnson, A.B. (2016). Enhancing academic investment through home-school connections and building on ELL students’ scholastic funds of knowledge. *Journal of Language & Literacy Education, 12*(1), 105-121.

Kinney, A. (2015). Compelling counternarratives to deficit discourses: An investigation into the funds of knowledge of culturally and linguistically diverse U.S. elementary students’ households. *Qualitative Research in Education, 4*(1), 1-25.

Moll, L.C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice, 31*(2), 132-141.

Street, C. (2005). Funds of knowledge at work in the writing classroom. *Theory to Practice: Research, Models, & Projects, 13*(2), 22-25.

Thomson, P., & Hall, C. (2008). Opportunities missed and/or thwarted? ‘Funds of knowledge meet the English national curriculum. *The Curriculum, Journal, 19*(2), 87-103.

Velez-Ibanez, C.G., & Greenburg, J.B. (1992). Formation and transformation of funds of knowledge among U.S.-Mexican households. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 23*(4), 313-335.