Course-Based Key Assessment #1 – Case Study Project
Used in TESL 5230 Second Language Acquisition

Introduction
The purpose of the Case Study Project is to ensure that the teacher candidates have the ability to conduct a small-scale case study with at least one ELL learner. The focus is on observing, describing, and reporting the ELL learner's language acquisition process. In order to do so, the teacher candidates have to find a related SLA theory to work on, identify an ELL learner as participant in the project, use a research design (either a pre-test, post-test design or interviews) to collect relevant data about the participant's second language acquisition process, describe the findings and give a conclusion about what they learned.

Standards and Objectives
The Key Assessment objectives are aligned with the TESOL Standards and are directly assessed on the Key Assessment rubric. Please review these objectives and the rubric while preparing and editing your Key Assessment.
Primary Standards are those standards covered in more detail in this particular course. The Secondary Standards are those standards that may be covered in more detail in other courses, but still inform many of the decisions you may make in composing this Key Assessment. Focus more attention on the Primary Standards, but use the Secondary Standards to help inform your ideas, research, and interpretations.

Primary Standards	Objective	Rationale	Assessed by which elements of the assessment
1.a. Language as a System	To observe a second language learner's language acquisition process and analyze his or her learning difficulties from the linguistic perspective	The teacher candidate needs to know how the various linguistic aspects of the English language affect the learner's language acquisition process.	Elements: 3 (Participant Profile) & 5 (Data Collection & Findings)
1.b. Language acquisition and developments	To use systematic research methods (pre- and post-test design or interviews) to find out the learner's language acquisition process and learning trajectory	The SLA course is about using various theories to describe the language acquisition and developments of second language learners. It is necessary to evaluate the teacher candidate's ability to observe and describe such aspects of the learner.	Elements: 2 (Literature Review), 4 (Research Design), 5 (Data Collection & Findings), & 6 (Conclusion & Further Implications)
2. Culture as it affects student learning	To identify and articulate the role that culture plays in learners' acquisition of a second language	The teacher candidate needs to demonstrate cultural sensitivity and whether culturally relevant instruction can be carried out in the classroom. The first step is to understand the second language learners'	Elements: 1 (Introduction) & 3 (Participant Profile)

Secondary Standards	Objective	Rationale	Assessed by which sections of the assessment
		home culture.	
3.a. Planning for standards-based ESL and content instruction	Based on the learner's challenges and particular learning needs, propose appropriate instructional methods which are practical in the classroom	The teacher candidate needs to demonstrate his/her ability to propose and carry out appropriate instruction based on understanding of the learner's needs.	Elements: 5 (Data Collection & Findings) & 6 (Conclusions & Further Implications)
4.b. Language proficiency assessment	To develop an appropriate assessment tool (i.e., research method and design) and to use this assessment for describing and articulating the learner's English language proficiency	The teacher candidate needs to demonstrate his or her knowledge in appropriately assessing the learner's language proficiency using a well established method, e.g., language tests, linguistic analysis of the learner's responses in an interview, etc.	Elements: 4 (Research Design) & 5 (Data Collection & Findings)
5.a. ESL research and history	To combine SLA research, collected data, and other information into an organized piece of research writing To draw on SLA theory for explaining the language acquisition process and learning trajectory of the learner	The teacher candidate needs to understand ESL research and make connections to the learner's language acquisition process.	Elements: 1 (Literature Review) & 5 (Conclusions & Further Implications)

Assignment

Procedures
1. <u>Select from the SLA topics covered in class and develop an objective for the case study.</u> For example, you can study the learner's language acquisition challenges (e.g., Is it about pronunciation, grammar, listening, vocabulary, or any other linguistic aspects of the language?), or the language acquisition process (e.g., What is the order of learning grammar or syntax? Does the learner study all four skills at the same time or is there a sequence?), or the learning trajectory of the learner (e.g., When did the learner start learning ESL/EFL? How did the learner make progress in the past years of learning English?). The topic that you choose should be aligned with the course objectives. Please inform the instructor if you have any other topics in mind. Please be focused and choose only one topic for the study.

2. <u>Write a section on past research relating to your topic.</u> This is the literature review section, which will inform you the existing research findings relating to your topic.

3. <u>Choose a context and research participant (i.e., second language learner) for your case study.</u> If you have a topic in mind, you'd better find an appropriate participant at the appropriate grade level. For example, if you want to find out about the language acquisition difficulties of a beginner, you may have better luck finding the relevant participant at the elementary or middle school level. If you are interesting in finding out the learning trajectory, you may need to find a participant with longer learning history, e.g., a high school or above student. Since finding someone to take part in your study could be challenging, and if you already have a participant in hand, you can talk to him or her and identify an SLA topic that will work.

4. <u>Conduct systematic research to find out about your learner.</u> You may choose either a pre- and post-test design OR a series of interviews in this case study. You may discuss the possibility of using other research methods with the instructor. A pre- and post-test design works better if you want to know how much new knowledge the learner acquired during a period of time. If you want to test the result of some original instructional strategies, which you believe will work for your learner, you may use a pre- and post-test design as well. However, if your study is about finding out the learning difficulties or learning trajectory, then a series of interviews will be best for your study. You should find ways to record the research findings, e.g., test results, learner journals, and/or audio or video recordings of the interviews. You should include at least one source of data in your report, the more the better.

5. <u>Describe and analyze the collected samples systematically.</u> How will you analyze the data? How can you make conclusion about your selected topic based on your data?

6. <u>Write a conclusion about the topic, using at least one SLA theory mentioned in class.</u> You need to write a conclusion about your chosen topic. Identify at least one SLA theory that you find is relevant to your findings. You may add your own ideas if the theory does not adequately explain your learner's language learning experience. If you find more than one theory is relevant to your findings, you may mention other theories but please focus on the discussion of one theory only. Also, please suggest instructional strategies, which will be appropriate for the learner.

Organize your case study into the following categories:
> **1. Introduction**
> **2. Literature Review**
> **3. Participant Profile**
> **4. Research Design**
> **5. Data Collection and Findings**
> **6. Conclusion/Further Implications**

1. Introduction (c.f. Procedure 1)
Describe the objectives of the case study and introduce the chosen SLA topic.

2. Literature Review (c.f. Procedure 2)
After choosing an SLA topic, use our library databases or Google Scholar to search for research articles, which are relevant to your topic. You need to include at least 5 research articles in journals or edited books in your report. The 5 articles could be relevant research articles mentioned in the textbook but you are encouraged to find more references other than the textbook.

3. Participant Profile (c.f. Procedure 3)
A minimum of one research subject is necessary to conduct this research. In selecting participants, take their L1 backgrounds, experiences, and culture into consideration. You also need to consider whether the grade level and experience of the learner is relevant to your chosen topic.

Please mind your manners, act ethically and respectfully when dealing with participants in your case study. Although this is a classroom exercise and will not lead to data publication, your participant will have to sign an informal consent form before you begin collecting data (a consent form will be provided and it must be included in the last page of your report).

4. Research Design (c.f. Procedure 4)

Based on your chosen topic, e.g., learner's challenges based on linguistic analysis, learner's language acquisition process and sequence, or learner's learning trajectory, select either a pre- and post-test design or interview design to collect data. If you want to find out your learner's proficiency level, improvement over a period of time, or the effect of an original instructional strategy developed by yourself, you may want to choose the pre- and post-test design. For example, you want to see how many new words the learner acquired by going to class for 2 months. You may give him or her a vocabulary test (e.g., words about schools) at the beginning of your study. Then give him or her the same test after 2 months' time. You can then measure the learning progress of your learner. If you want to know how home culture affects your learner, you may conduct a series of interviews and visit the learner's home, and then you may ask your learner to write some journals about his or her mother tongue and languages spoken at home.

5. Data Collection and Findings (c.f. Procedure 5)

Based on the data sources (at least one is required), you can then analyze the learner's language acquisition process, difficulties, learning trajectory, and how home culture affects your learner's language learning. Sample papers will be provided to you and so you will get a sense of what counts as a well-supported case study report.

6. Conclusion/Further Implications (c.f. Procedure 6)

Find at least one SLA theory to explain the data or your findings. Explain the implications of your findings in terms of language teaching methodology and make recommendations that would lead to your participant's language progress/improvement OR recommendations that would lead to context improvement (i.e., program, school, amount of language exposure, teaching approaches, etc). In your recommendations, make reference to educational public policy (e.g., TESOL standards, DESE standards, district requirements) and to issues of culture that may affect learners.

Other Specifications

Your complete case study needs to be 10-12 pages, double-spaced (this does not include cover page, assessment rubric, consent form, or other attached documents).

Submit all materials through Canvas *and* Tk20. Be certain to combine all files of the same format into *one* document before submitting (i.e., do not submit 4 separate Word documents, rather combine them in one file to submit). Please label your file beginning with your last name (e.g., Smith-5230-CaseStudy.doc, Smith-5230-CaseStudy.pdf). Consent forms need to be scanned, included in the document, and submitted with the case study. Please be reminded to also include a reference page in APA format.

Special Note

This assignment serves as a Key Assessment for the TESL Program. TESOL specifies 11 standards all TESL candidates should be able to demonstrate upon completion of their program. Each Key Assessment assignment is aligned with several of these standards. Your instructor may articulate additional and/or more specific requirements for this assignment to also meet the goals and/or requirements of this course. Refer to this assignment description, the accompanying rubric, and any additional instructions provided by your instructor when completing this assignment.

Assessment #1 Data and Analysis – Case Study Project – TESL 5230

Webster Groves Campus – 2 Applications (Fall 1 2012 & Fall 1 2013 – n=30)

TESL Standard	Improve-ment Needed	Approach-es Standard	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard	% Meets or Exceeds Standard
1.a. Language as a System		13	12	5	56.7%
1.b. Language acquisition and developments	1	7	17	5	73.3%
2. Culture as it affects student learning	3	6	13	8	70.0%
3.a. Planning for standards-based ESL and content instruction	4	5	17	4	70.0%
4.b. Language proficiency assessment	4	7	16	3	63.3%
5.a. ESL research and history	3	6	17	4	70.0%

More than 70% of our teacher candidates (n=30) in our Webster Groves campus meet or exceed Standards 1b, 2, 3a, and 5a, which indicates that the majority of them meet the requirements of the standards. Standard 1a (56.7%) and Standard 4b (63.3%) are the areas that the instructors and teacher candidates should work on. In most cases this is the first course and assessment completed by candidates. This means that candidates are still early in their development of the content knowledge and pedagogical skills needed for this program. To assist candidates with this process, this assessment has been redesigned to make instructions more explicit to help more candidates successfully demonstrate proficiency in these standards.

Kansas City Campus – 4 Applications (Fall 1 2012, Spring 1 2013, Summer 2013, & Spring 1 2014 – n=45)

TESL Standard	Improve-ment Needed	Approach-es Standard	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard	% Meets or Exceeds Standard
1.a. Language as a System		4	37	4	91.1%
1.b. Language acquisition and developments		6	27	12	86.7%
2. Culture as it affects student learning		11	29	5	75.6%
3.a. Planning for standards-based ESL and content instruction		8	27	10	82.2%
4.b. Language proficiency assessment	1	14	28	2	66.7%
5.a. ESL research and history		10	29	6	77.8%

More than 75% of our teacher candidates (n=45) in our Kansas City campus meet or exceed all standards except Standard 4b (66.7%), which indicates that the majority of them meet the expectations of the standards. Standard 4 (Assessment) has been a program-wide weakness. As a program we are working

to embed more instruction in assessment methods in all courses to help strengthen this standard. Our new full-time professor on the Webster Groves campus has been working to strengthen this syllabus and the course materials and will be working with the new instructor who will be hired to take over this course.

Online Program – 2 Applications (Spring 1 2013 & Spring 1 2014– n=▮)

TESL Standard	Improve-ment Needed	Approach-es Standard	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard	% Meets or Exceeds Standard
1.a. Language as a System		▮	▮		75.0%
1.b. Language acquisition and developments		▮	▮	▮	75.0%
2. Culture as it affects student learning			▮	▮	100.0%
3.a. Planning for standards-based ESL and content instruction		▮	▮		75.0%
4.b. Language proficiency assessment		▮		▮	50.0%
5.a. ESL research and history		▮	▮	▮	75.0%

More than 75% of our teacher candidates in our Online Program (n=▮ meet or exceed all standards except Standard 4b, which indicates that the majority of them meet the requirements and expectations of these standards. There are few data for this assessment due to low enrollment in the online program. It appears that one candidate had difficulties with this assessment. We will work on the same improvements described in the previous sections.

Combined Data – 8 Applications (n=79)

TESL Standard	Improve-ment Needed	Approach-es Standard	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard	% Meets or Exceeds Standard
1.a. Language as a System		18	52	9	77.2%
1.b. Language acquisition and developments	1	14	45	19	81.0%
2. Culture as it affects student learning	3	17	44	15	74.7%
3.a. Planning for standards-based ESL and content instruction	4	14	47	14	77.2%
4.b. Language proficiency assessment	5	23	44	7	64.6%
5.a. ESL research and history	3	17	48	11	74.7%

The combined data from the three campuses is consistent that the majority of our teacher candidates (n=79) in our three campuses meets or exceeds all standards except Standard 4b. The findings indicate that our candidates in all three campuses are competent and proficient pre-service and in-service ELL instructors.

For many of our candidates, this is the first course and key assessment that they encounter. Revisions to this key assessment have been made by our new full-time professor to make the instructions more explicit to help candidates demonstrate proficiency in the necessary content knowledge and pedagogical skills required to teach ELLs. By strengthening this course and assessment we hope to provide candidates with a stronger base, earlier in their program, to help strengthen their work throughout the program and in the current and future classrooms.

Assessment 1 – Case Study Project – TESL 5230 Second Language Acquisition

Standard Description	Improvements Needed to Approach Standard	Approaches Standard	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard	Scores (1, 2, 3, or 4)
Key Assess. Score	1	2	3	4	
1.a. Language as a System	Candidate has trouble observing and analyzing the participant's language learning process and learning difficulties	Candidate identifies some particularities of the participant's language learning process and learning difficulties	Candidate analyzes the participant's language learning process and learning difficulties from a linguistic perspective	Candidate provides a detailed and systematic analysis of the participant's language learning process and learning difficulties from a linguistic perspective, which demonstrates substantial linguistic knowledge	
1.b. Language acquisition and developments	Candidate failed to draw on a relevant SLA theory and/or research design when describing the collected data	Candidate refers to an SLA theory and/or knowledge of research design to describe the participant's language acquisition process and learning trajectory	Candidate draws on SLA theories and use an effective research design to describe the participant's language acquisition process and learning trajectory	Candidate demonstrates substantial knowledge about SLA theories and various research designs when describing the participants' language acquisition process and learning trajectory	
2. Culture as it affects student learning	Candidate shows a lack of awareness of the role that culture may play in language acquisition and instruction	Candidate acknowledges the role of culture in the participant's language acquisition and learning process; candidate attempt to address the cultural needs of the participant but in-depth description is lacking	Candidate identifies how culture may affect the participant's language acquisition and learning process; candidate describes the first language interference and cultural adaptation process of the participant	Candidate explicitly accounts for cultural differences between the L1 and TL and their influences on language acquisition and cultural adaption inside and outside of the classroom	
3.a. Planning for standards-based ESL and content instruction	Candidate failed to draw on SLA theory when proposing instructional recommendations; the standards and/or content needs of the participant are not addressed or not linked to SLA theory	Candidate references SLA theory when proposing instructional recommendations; candidate links SLA theory to the standards and/or content needs of the participant	Candidate draws on specific theories from SLA and the findings from the project when proposing instructional recommendations; candidate proposes pedagogically sound methods to meet the standards and/or content needs of the participant	Candidate provides a detailed rationale for innovative recommendations based on SLA theories and the findings from the project; candidate justifies how these methods will be more effective to meet the standards and/or content needs of the participant	
4.b. Language proficiency assessment	Candidate has trouble selecting or designing an appropriate assessment tool and the candidate has not considered the need to describe or assess the participant's language proficiency level	Candidate uses an appropriate assessment tool (or research method) for data collection; candidate considers the need to have an inquiry of the participant's language proficiency but systematicity is lacking	Candidate adequately describes an appropriate assessment tool (pre-test, post-test design or interview) and data collection methods based on the selected topic; candidate develops a systematic inquiry of the participant's language proficiency	Candidate develops a creative and/or innovative assessment tool specifically tailored for the selected topic and contexts; candidate reports a systematic inquiry of the participant's language proficiency and shows expertise in observing and assessing the participant	

5.a. ESL research and history	Candidate needs more work on conducting research; candidate needs more work on combining required elements into a unified piece of research writing	Candidate addresses SLA theory, ESL standards, and individual analysis in an organized manner that resembles a case study and/or piece of research; candidate shows a preliminary understanding of conducting research	Candidate combines SLA theories, ESL standards, and individual data analysis into a cohesive piece of research writing; candidate demonstrates good research practices in terms of data collection and treatment of participant	Candidate synthesized a sound piece of research with a thorough literature review related to the topic; candidate demonstrates a strong ability to combine and synthesize numerous elements into a cohesive case study	