

**English Literacy Development - Level 5: A course design  
based on a holistic and constructivist perspective**

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**Course: CTL1799  
Dr. Selia Karsten  
“Holistic Approaches to Information Technology”**

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## Course Rationale

For decades, second languages have been traditionally taught in fragments, isolating each of the strands from one another: writing, reading, listening and speaking. There used to be a large focus on establishing *written* competency for students and as a result, students studying second languages such as French as a Second Language in Ontario schools, would have adequate writing skills upon graduation. However, they were lost when it came to understanding or speaking French with native speakers. One of the main issues surrounding this was that language was being taught out of context and the use of the language had little connection to the students' lives. These issues exist in many second language courses. Fortunately, in English as a Second Language settings in Canada, students have the benefit of being surrounded by native English speakers and as a result, they have more opportunity to practice the language in more meaningful ways inside and outside of the classroom.

In English as a Second Language courses, we feel that it is extremely important to view the language as a whole. To us, following a “whole-language approach” or a “holistic approach” to teaching a second language embodies three main principles:

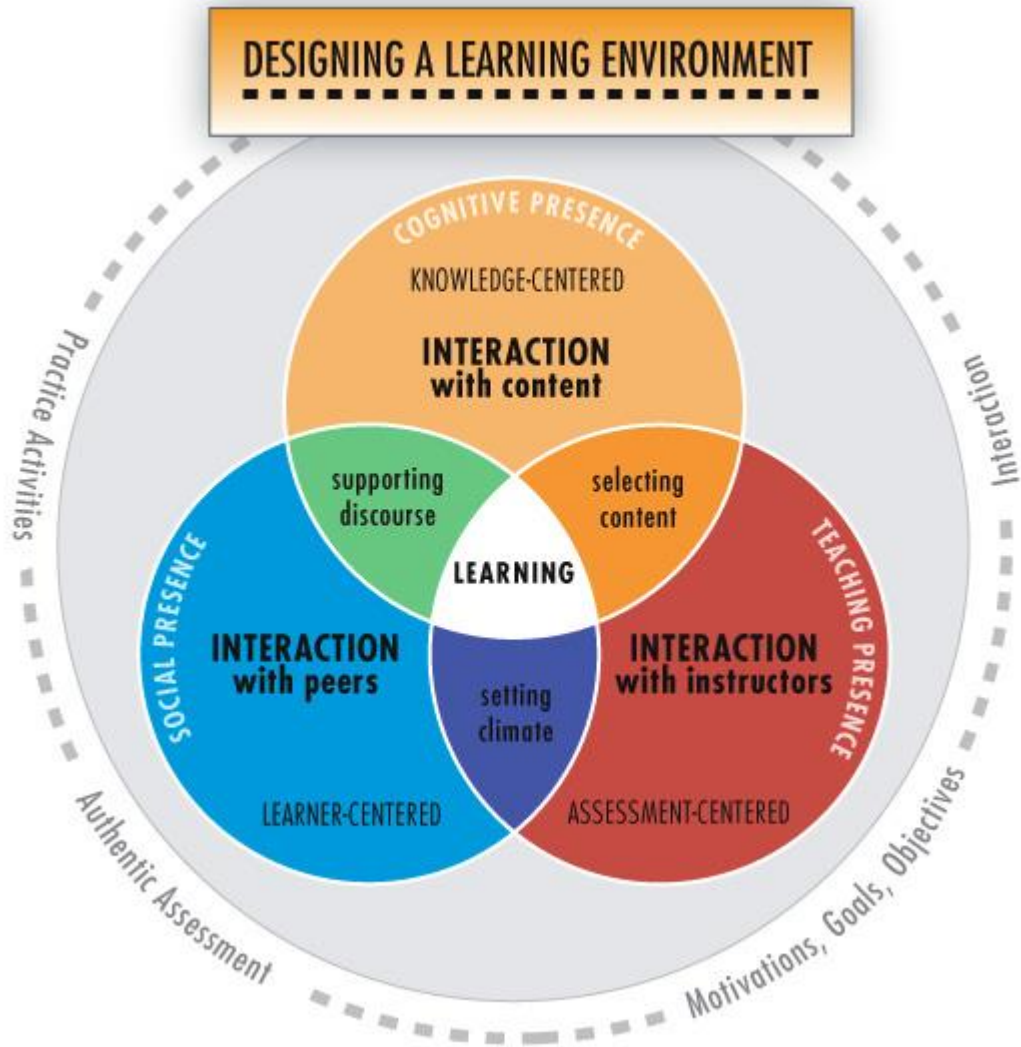
1) All language strands (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) should be used together to effectively communicate, rather than fragmenting unconnected language exercises one at a time.

2) The focus should be obtaining knowledge about a particular topic through the use of the second language. The content of the course should be the primary focus and the language development should be the secondary focus.

3) The second language is used to research and discuss topics of great interest to the students. Students should be able to construct meaning of the course content through personal experience and personal interest.

(Blanton, 1992)

All three of us have a particular interest in teaching second languages. Rebecca has one year of experience teaching French as a Second Language in Ontario, and Jing and Yiqi have many years of experience teaching English as a Second Language in China. We decided to create a course design for the English Literacy Development - Level 5 high school course, included in the Ontario curriculum. We believe that this course design would be effective for teaching *any* second language. This is an in-class course that incorporates various technological elements. Students are considered to be active participants in their own learning. All activities are student-centred and there is large focus on the learning *process* throughout the course. We believe that a mix of students constructing their own knowledge and teacher facilitation is important.



( Joyce Kincannon - curriculum specialist at NAU's e-Learning Center:  
<http://www.nativeamericanscience.org/about-us/overview/constructivist-classrooms> )

## Course Outline:

### English Literacy Development - Level 5

Welcome to the English Literacy Development course - Level 5! By now, as an English Language Learner, you have advanced knowledge about the structures and functions of the English language. You are able to effectively express yourself and discuss a variety of topics through oral and written communication. With a whole-language, constructivist approach, this course will provide you with the opportunity to advance these communication skills by studying a variety of topics of interest to you and your own personal development.

### This course aims to:

1. Engage students/capture students' interest
2. Promote critical thinking and inquiry
3. Require students to be able to communicate meaningfully
4. Encourage interaction with others in face-to-face settings and through the use of technology
5. Include activities that incorporate all strands of language development (listening, speaking, reading and writing)
6. Be student-centred and encourage active participation
7. Make content knowledge a primary focus and language development as a secondary focus
8. Increase student self-confidence
9. Inspire reflection on an ongoing basis
10. Provide a basis for lifelong language learning
11. Create opportunities for students in the future

Principles from (Blanton, 1992)

## Course Overview

Unit	Topic of Study	Activities	Duration	Use of Technology
1	Novel study: "I Am Malala"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Independent and guided reading</li> <li>-Daily literature circles in class</li> <li>-Adding to "New Vocabulary List" on an ongoing basis</li> <li>-Interpreting media artefacts and identifying existing inequities</li> <li>-Blog entries 1, 2, &amp; 3: analyzing the text and making personal connections</li> </ul>	4 weeks	<a href="http://www.studentnewsdaily.com">www.studentnewsdaily.com</a> <a href="http://www.edublogs.org">www.edublogs.org</a>
2	Canadian Diversity and Citizenship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Research of Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</li> <li>-Oral presentation on rights and freedoms of Canadians and a comparison to another country that may not have those same rights and freedoms</li> <li>-Creation of Canadian citizenship handbook</li> <li>-Adding to "New Vocabulary List" on an ongoing basis</li> <li>-Blog entry 4: Making comparisons between Malala's rights and Canadian citizens' rights, their feelings and connections</li> </ul>	5 weeks	<a href="http://www.edublogs.org">www.edublogs.org</a> <a href="http://www.glogster.com">www.glogster.com</a>
3	Career Research Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Individual research on career of choice using school library, online databases, media texts, and informative videos</li> </ul>	6 weeks	<a href="http://www.watchknowlearn.org">http://www.watchknowlearn.org</a> <a href="http://www.edublogs.org">www.edublogs.org</a> <a href="http://www.skype.com">www.skype.com</a> <a href="http://www.lucidpress.com">www.lucidpress.com</a>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Adding to “New Vocabulary List” on an ongoing basis</li> <li>-Blog entries weekly - reflection, progress, setbacks and questions</li> <li>-Skype or face-to-face interview with professional from the field of work</li> <li>-Create pamphlet on career</li> <li>-Career fair → students set up information in their stations and then groups rotate around the classroom to learn from one another’s research</li> </ul>		
4	Self-Reflection/ E-Portfolio Creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Collection of work throughout the course</li> <li>-Link to all journal/blog entries</li> <li>-Personal reflection of development in course</li> <li>-Consider linguistic and communicative development</li> <li>-3 lessons to take away from course</li> <li>-1 remaining question</li> <li>-What improvements still need to be made?</li> <li>-Preparation for lifelong language learning</li> </ul>	3 weeks	<a href="http://www.google.com">www.google.com</a> (Google Sites)

Before starting the course, students will be expected to create an “Edublogs” profile linked to their e-mail. Once doing so, they will provide their teacher with their username and e-mail that they used to create their profile. The teacher will add them to the online class. Students will be expected to create online blogs throughout the course of the novel study and individual projects. Students will also be expected to comment on other students’ blogs to share thoughts and ask questions.

Throughout each unit, students are expected to add to their “New Vocabulary List” if they come across unfamiliar words in a text or audio clip. Here are the specific curriculum expectations this process is linked to:

**Reading:**

**Vocabulary Building Strategies 3.1:** use a wide variety of vocabulary acquisition strategies to build subject-specific vocabulary and determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., compare multiple definitions found in a dictionary and select the correct meaning for a particular context; compile subject-specific glossaries; create lists of synonyms)

**Word Recognition Strategies 3.2:** use knowledge of a variety of patterns of word structure and derivation to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g., recognize changes of meaning caused by suffixes that differentiate parts of speech [photograph, photographer, photographic]; recognize root words with Latin and Greek origins used in science, mathematics, and technology [milli = thousand: millimetre = a thousandth of a metre; micro = small: microscope = an optical instrument for viewing very small objects])

**Use of Resources 3.3:** use a wide variety of resources to extend vocabulary and determine the precise meaning of words (e.g., select among a range of vocabulary resources, such as dictionaries, glossaries, manuals, online references, and technical dictionaries)

**Detailed explanations of each unit and links to curriculum expectations:**

**Unit 1: Novel Study: “I Am Malala”:**

“I am Malala” is a novel about a young women named Malala Yousafzai who fought for her rights to education in Pakistan. She faced a number of terrifying obstacles including getting shot by the Taliban. Miraculously, she survived and is able to tell her story to the world today.

<b><u>Activities:</u></b>	<b><u>Specific Curriculum Expectations:</u></b>
<p>There will be some teacher-guided reading sessions in class, but the majority of the novel reading will take place on an independent basis as the students’ homework. Students will look up unknown vocabulary in the text and add to their “New Vocabulary” list on an ongoing basis. Periodically throughout each week, students will be broken up into literature circles and will be provided with a set of “starter questions” to discuss</p>	<p><b><u>Reading:</u></b>  <b>Reading a Variety of Texts 1.1:</b> read a wide variety of increasingly complex texts (e.g., novels, magazine articles, manuals, online and print encyclopaedias, textbook excerpts, informational books on a range of topics)  <b>Demonstrating Understanding 1.2:</b> demonstrate an understanding of complex texts in a wide variety of ways (e.g., follow a series of instructions to set up a DVD</p>

<p>with their circle. As the discussions about the assigned chapters continue, students take the lead in directing the discussion by bringing up their own questions and explaining the reasoning behind choosing their favourite passages.</p>	<p>player; summarize a report about the impact of human activity on aquatic systems; describe how they would “counsel” a character in a novel)</p> <p><b>Listening to Interact 1.2:</b> demonstrate understanding of spoken English on a wide variety of topics in interactive situations (e.g., in a collaborative activity to develop a group presentation; in discussions with peers about current events or issues)</p> <p><b>Speaking to Interact 2.1:</b> engage in extended spoken interactions on a variety of topics and in a variety of situations (e.g., work in a group to plan and organize a class trip, to dramatize events from stories and novels studied in class, and/or to negotiate solutions to tasks and problems)</p> <p><b>Sound Patterns 3.2:</b> use appropriately a wide variety of pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation patterns of spoken English to communicate both explicit and implicit meaning accurately (e.g., stress the content words in a sentence to clarify meaning [I read the book last night]; use pitch and volume appropriately to indicate emphasis and /or emotions [surprise, joy, annoyance]; use tone and volume to clarify implied messages)</p>
<p>Students will be exposed to a number of media artefacts written in English, reporting on events and issues from around the world. Students will be asked to read or view and listen to these media artefacts with a team. Students will identify inequities that exist for human beings around the world, and display them on a class chart, which will be used as reference in later class discussions about equity and equality.</p>	<p><b><u>Socio-Cultural Competence and Media Literacy:</u></b></p> <p><b>Understanding Media Texts 4.1:</b> view, read, and listen to media texts, and identify strategies used in them to influence specific audiences</p> <p><b>Interpreting Media Texts 4.2:</b> compare a variety of media texts, and evaluate them for balance, inclusiveness, and possible bias (e.g., media texts representing people of different ages, genders, income levels, and ethnocultural backgrounds; news reports of a conflict that present single or multiple points of view) Teacher prompt: “What different groups do you</p>



	<p>see in this media text? Does the text treat them differently? If so, how and why?”</p> <p><b><u>Listening and Speaking:</u></b></p> <p><b>Listening to Interact 1.2:</b> demonstrate understanding of spoken English on a wide variety of topics in interactive situations (e.g., in a collaborative activity to develop a group presentation; in discussions with peers about current events or issues)</p> <p><b>Speaking to Interact 2.1:</b> engage in extended spoken interactions on a variety of topics and in a variety of situations</p>
<p>On an ongoing basis throughout the novel study, students will be asked to create online blog entries, using the “Edublogs” site. Students will be provided with “topic suggestions”, but ultimately, students can decide what in the novel they would like to write about. They must make personal connections to the story by discussing how it made them feel, or perhaps by sharing personal experience.</p> <p>Blog #1 Topic suggestion: Identify a favourite passage in the text and explain what you like about it. Why did this part resonate with you. How does this make you feel and why?</p> <p>Blog #2 Topic suggestion: How would you counsel Malala if you were a character in the novel?</p> <p>Blog #3 Topic suggestion:Talk about a situation in your own life where you felt discriminated against. How did it make you feel?</p> <p>Students are required to comment on at least 3 other students’ blogs to ask questions, add ideas, or give feedback.</p>	<p><b><u>Writing:</u></b></p> <p><b>Personal Purposes 1.2:</b> write longer and more complex texts to express ideas and feelings using a wide variety of forms (e.g., poems, song lyrics/raps, blogs, e-mails or letters, narratives, descriptions, journal entries)</p>

Unit 2: Canadian Diversity and Citizenship:

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Specific Curriculum Expectations</u>
<p>After finishing the novel, “I Am Malala,” you are asked to think about Malala’s lack of rights. With a partner, you are then asked to conduct research on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Then, you are to research the rights and freedoms of another country of your choice. Make comparisons between humans’ basic rights in Canada and humans’ basic rights in your selected country.</p>	<p><b><u>Socio-Cultural Competence:</u></b>  <b>Canadian Citizenship 2.2:</b> demonstrate knowledge of important social and political documents that guarantee rights and freedoms in Canadian society (e.g., identify the basic rights specified in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms)</p> <p><b><u>Reading:</u></b>  <b>Locating Information 4.1:</b> locate and compare information for independent research from a variety of school and community sources selected in collaboration with the teacher-librarian, and cite information from those sources appropriately (e.g., articles, non-fiction books, encyclopaedias, websites, DVDs, blogs)</p> <p><b>Reading Strategies 2.1:</b> apply a wide variety of appropriate reading strategies to:          -familiarize themselves with texts before they read them (e.g., independently generate a list of questions about the topic; brainstorm the topic with a partner to activate prior knowledge; preview text features to understand organization)          -understand texts while they are reading them (e.g., interpret context clues; use visualization to clarify details of characters, scenes, or concepts; monitor understanding by identifying and restating the main idea and supporting details; summarize sections of text during reading; make inferences about a character’s motivation)          -confirm and extend understanding of texts after they have read them (e.g., do further research to deepen understanding of a topic; identify bias; participate in school reading clubs)</p>

<p>Each pair of students is to present their research orally. You will prepare visual aids to show the class and explain what this process has made you realize or feel. You will incorporate at least 5 new vocabulary words that you have learned during your research, and use them in the right context during your presentation.</p>	<p><b><u>Speaking:</u></b>  <b>Speaking for Academic Purposes 2.3:</b> present ideas and information orally for academic purposes in a wide variety of situations (e.g., make a presentation on the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship, with reference to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms)</p>
<p>Create a Canadian citizenship handbook. Based on the research you have done, what does it mean to you to be Canadian?  Students will use the tool “Glogster” to create an online media text with images, describing what it means to be Canadian. For homework, students must use the comment feature on glogster to comment on at least 3 other students’ work to ask questions and go into deeper discussion about citizenship.</p>	<p><b><u>Socio-Cultural Competence:</u></b>  <b>Canadian Citizenship 2.2:</b> demonstrate knowledge of important social and political documents that guarantee rights and freedoms in Canadian society (e.g., identify the basic rights specified in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms)</p> <p><b><u>Writing:</u></b>  <b>Using Pre-writing Strategies 4.1:</b> use a wide variety of pre-writing strategies to generate vocabulary and develop and organize ideas for writing (e.g., consider purpose and audience in choosing a form for writing; generate ideas using webs, discussions with peers and the teacher, and prior reading and experience; cluster and sort ideas and information; consult the teacher librarian about relevant print and electronic resource materials)  <b>Publishing 4.4:</b> use a wide variety of elements of effective presentation to publish a final product  <b>Spelling Strategies 3.2:</b> use a wide variety of spelling strategies to spell words accurately (e.g., divide words into syllables; consult specialized print and electronic dictionaries; use electronic spell-checkers; record difficult words in a spelling list or journal, highlighting tricky letters or groups of letters)</p>
<p>Blog Entry #4: (“Edublogs”) Reflect on everything you have learned this unit.</p>	<p><b><u>Socio-Cultural Competence and Media Literacy:</u></b></p>

<p>Think about the knowledge you have gained about Canadian rights and citizenship. In your blog, describe some benefits and challenges of living in a society composed of diverse linguistic and cultural groups. What questions do you still have? Class members will read each others' entries and respond to each others' questions using the comments feature.</p>	<p><b>Canadian Diversity 2.3:</b> describe some benefits and challenges of living in a society composed of diverse linguistic and cultural groups</p> <p><b>Writing:</b>  <b>Personal Purposes 1.2:</b> write longer and more complex texts to express ideas and feelings using a wide variety of forms (e.g., poems, song lyrics/raps, blogs, e-mails or letters, narratives, descriptions, journal entries)</p>
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Unit 3: Career Research Project:

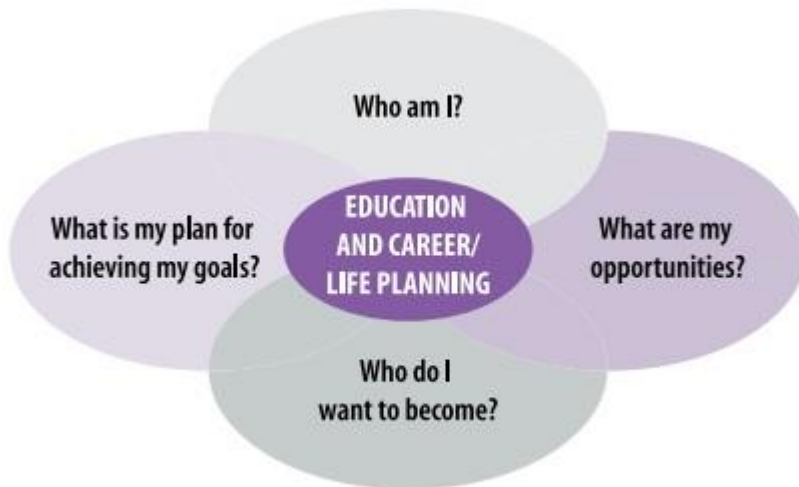
<u>Activities</u>	<u>Specific Curriculum Expectations</u>
<p>At the beginning of this unit, you will select a career of your choice that you would like to learn about or think you might like to pursue in the future. With teacher guidance, students will formulate a set of their own questions that they would like answered about this career. Example questions:            “What does a veterinary technician’s average day look like?”            “What educational route would I need to take to become a veterinary technician?”. Students spend one period in the computer lab watching information videos on the career of their choice. The site they will be using is <a href="http://watchknowlearn.org">http://watchknowlearn.org</a>.</p>	<p><b>Listening:</b>  <b>Listening for Specific Information 1.1:</b> demonstrate comprehension of specific information in complex directions, instructions, and classroom presentations (e.g., take notes on a documentary; use information from a classroom presentation to complete a graphic organizer; identify differences between reports of a news event from radio and television broadcasts; follow a series of technical instructions to complete a task)</p>
<p>Students will spend time in the library and in the computer lab doing research on their career choice. The point of this research is to answer the questions they formulated at the beginning of the unit. This activity is inquiry based.</p>	<p><b>Locating Information 4.1:</b> locate and compare information for independent research from a variety of school and community sources selected in collaboration with the teacher-librarian, and cite information from those sources appropriately (e.g., articles, non-fiction books, encyclopaedias, websites, DVDs, blogs)</p>

	<p><b>Reading Strategies 2.1:</b> apply a wide variety of appropriate reading strategies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-familiarize themselves with texts before they read them (e.g., independently generate a list of questions about the topic; brainstorm the topic with a partner to activate prior knowledge; preview text features to understand organization)</li> <li>-understand texts while they are reading them (e.g., interpret context clues; use visualization to clarify details of characters, scenes, or concepts; monitor understanding by identifying and restating the main idea and supporting details; summarize sections of text during reading; make inferences about a character's motivation)</li> <li>-confirm and extend understanding of texts after they have read them (e.g., do further research to deepen understanding of a topic; identify bias; participate in school reading clubs)</li> </ul>
<p>Students will have the opportunity to interview a professional in the field that they have chosen via skype or face-to-face. The teacher will make arrangements for these professionals to come to the school to meet the students. With the permission of the professional and of the students' parents, the interview may be videotaped for the students' future reference. Students prepare questions they would like to ask the professional and practice appropriate conversational strategies/expressions used in spontaneous English conversation.</p>	<p><b>Speaking:</b></p> <p><b>Speaking to Interact 2.1:</b> engage in extended spoken interactions on a variety of topics and in a variety of situations</p> <p><b>Using Conversational Strategies 2.2:</b> use a wide variety of conversational expressions to negotiate spoken interactions of many different types (e.g., accept and reject information using expressions such as "I thought so", "I knew it", "I don't see it that way", "I'm not sure about that"; close a formal conversation or job interview using expressions such as "Thank you for your time", "I really appreciate ...")</p> <p><b>Grammatical Structures 3.1:</b> use correctly the grammatical structures of spoken English appropriate for this level</p>

	<p><b>Sound Patterns 3.2:</b> use appropriately a wide variety of pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation patterns of spoken English to communicate both explicit and implicit meaning accurately (e.g., stress the content words in a sentence to clarify meaning; use pitch and volume appropriately to indicate emphasis and /or emotions [surprise, joy, annoyance]; use tone and volume to clarify implied messages)</p> <p><b>Communication Strategies 3.3:</b> use a wide variety of oral communication strategies to bridge gaps in spoken communication (e.g., notice and correct slips and errors; anticipate misunderstandings and rephrase to avoid or correct them; use circumlocution and paraphrase to compensate for incomplete knowledge of vocabulary and grammar)</p>
<p>Students will use lucidpress.com to create a pamphlet sharing all of the information they have gained through their research with the help of appropriate headings and visuals. Students are asked to include at least 5 new vocabulary words that they learned throughout their research and incorporate them in the appropriate context.</p>	<p><b><u>Socio-Cultural Competence and Media Literacy:</u></b></p> <p><b>Creating Media Texts 4.3:</b> create media texts for a wide variety of audiences and purposes, and explain their content and design decisions</p> <p><b>Knowledge of the Ontario Secondary School System 3.1:</b> describe graduation requirements of the Ontario secondary school system and support services that are available to help them achieve their goals (e.g., graduation requirements and related components, such as compulsory credit, transcript, full-disclosure requirements, the literacy test, diploma requirements for community involvement activities, the Specialist High-Skills Major program, criteria for earning a diploma or certificate of achievement; services to assist with planning and goal-setting for postsecondary life)</p> <p><b><u>Writing:</u></b></p>

	<p><b>Using Pre-writing Strategies 4.1:</b> use a wide variety of pre-writing strategies to generate vocabulary and develop and organize ideas for writing (e.g., consider purpose and audience in choosing a form for writing; generate ideas using webs, discussions with peers and the teacher, and prior reading and experience; cluster and sort ideas and information; consult the teacher librarian about relevant print and electronic resource materials)</p> <p><b>Publishing 4.4:</b> use a wide variety of elements of effective presentation to publish a final product</p> <p><b>Spelling Strategies 3.2:</b> use a wide variety of spelling strategies to spell words accurately (e.g., divide words into syllables; consult specialized print and electronic dictionaries; use electronic spell-checkers; record difficult words in a spelling list or journal, highlighting tricky letters or groups of letters)</p>
<p>On the final day of the unit, students will hold a career fair in class. Students will set up information stations displaying the research they have collected and including visuals. Students may also want to bring a laptop and show the interview they conducted with the professional from their field. Students will be numbered off to circulate the room in rounds, so that each student has the opportunity to learn about their peers' research, ask questions, and give feedback.</p>	<p><b><u>Socio-Cultural Competence:</u></b></p> <p><b>Strategies for the Cooperative Classroom 3.3:</b> participate and interact effectively, and take on leadership responsibilities to complete collaborative classroom projects (e.g., listen actively; clarify directions; share ideas; offer constructive criticism)</p> <p><b><u>Listening and Speaking:</u></b></p> <p><b>Listening to Interact 1.2:</b> demonstrate understanding of spoken English on a wide variety of topics in interactive situations (e.g., in a collaborative activity to develop a group presentation; in discussions with peers about current events or issues)</p> <p><b>Speaking to Interact 2.1:</b> engage in extended spoken interactions on a variety of topics and in a variety of situations</p>

<p>Ongoing Blog entries using “Edublog”: Throughout the entire unit, students will be expected to write an online blog at the end of each week. Each blog will provide the reader with an update on how the research is going. The blog may include questions that have been answered, setbacks, progress, and further questions that have come up. Each blog must include a personal reflection from the student, sharing whether they think they would be suitable for this career or if their opinion on this career choice has changed since they started their research.</p>	<p><b>Writing:</b> <b>Personal Purposes 1.2:</b> write longer and more complex texts to express ideas and feelings using a wide variety of forms (e.g., poems, song lyrics/raps, blogs, e-mails or letters, narratives, descriptions, journal entries)</p>
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Unit 4: Creating an online e-portfolio:

This entire unit will take place in the computer lab.

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Specific Curriculum Expectations</u>
<p>After a lesson on how to create an “E-portfolio” using Google sites at <a href="http://www.google.com">www.google.com</a>, students will create a website that features all of the projects they have done throughout the course. Students will also provide a link from their e-portfolio website to their collection of blogs throughout the year. Students will</p>	<p><b>Writing:</b> <b>Academic Purposes 1.1:</b> write longer and more complex texts to convey information and ideas for academic purposes using a wide variety of forms <b>Personal Purposes 1.2:</b> write longer and more complex texts to express ideas and feelings using a wide variety</p>



have a “Personal Reflection” page on their google site, where they are expected to discuss everything they have learned since the beginning of the course. Students should discuss how they have progressed linguistically. Ask themselves the question: Have I become a better communicator in English? How can I still improve? Students should include at least 3 things they will take away with them from the course, as well as 1 question they have remaining. One of the goals of the Ontario curriculum is to make students “lifelong language learners”. Students must make a commitment to continue learning and practicing the English language after graduating high school. In their reflection, students must respond to the question, “What activities will you participate in going forward to continue your language development?” Students will consider how reading the texts in the course, conducting research, interacting orally, and their written practice has made them better communicators. This e-portfolio is a website that can follow them into the future, can be added to as they continue their education, and will help make them lifelong learners and reflectors.

of forms

**Linking Ideas 2.2:** use a wide variety of connecting devices and transition words and phrases to show relationships between ideas in linked sentences and paragraphs (e.g., now that, as a result of, because of, although, even though)

**Grammatical Structures and Conventions of Print 3.1:** use correctly the grammatical structures and print conventions of written English appropriate for this level

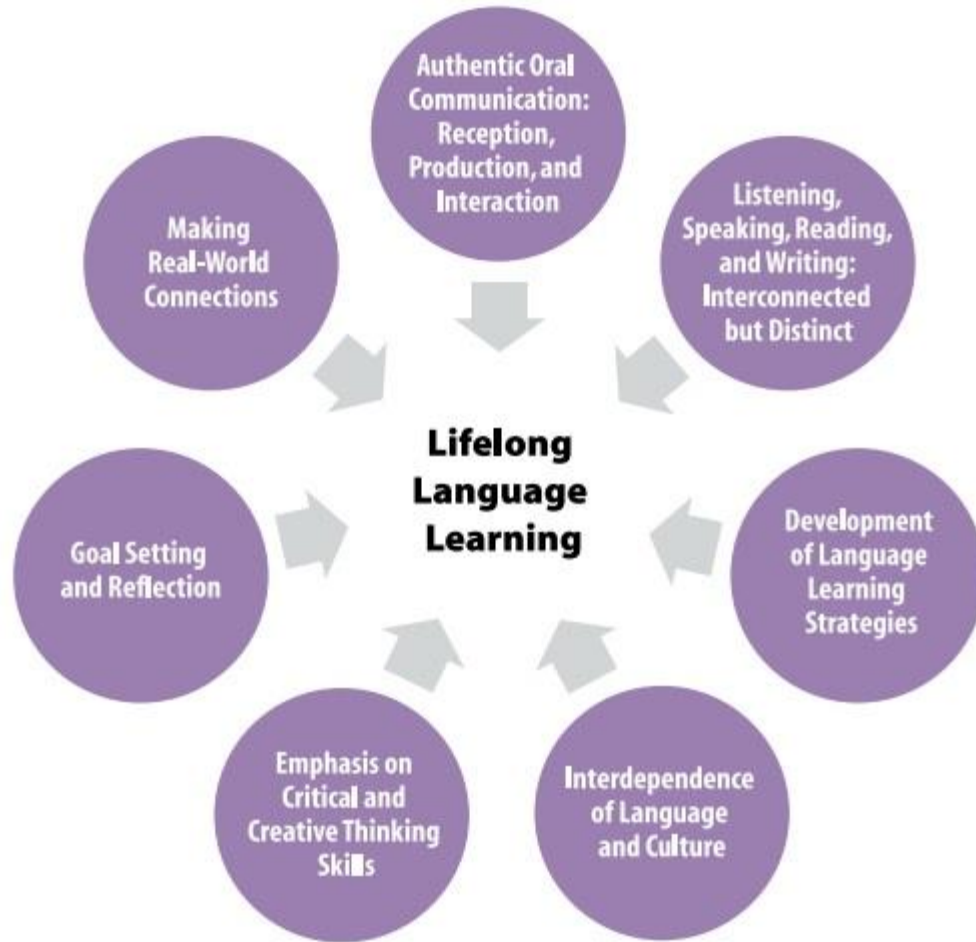
**Spelling Strategies 3.2:** use a wide variety of spelling strategies to spell words accurately (e.g., divide words into syllables; consult specialized print and electronic dictionaries; use electronic spell-checkers; record difficult words in a spelling list or journal, highlighting tricky letters or groups of letters)

**Using Pre-writing Strategies 4.1:** use a wide variety of pre-writing strategies to generate vocabulary and develop and organize ideas for writing (e.g., consider purpose and audience in choosing a form for writing; generate ideas using webs, discussions with peers and the teacher, and prior reading and experience; cluster and sort ideas and information; consult the teacher librarian about relevant print and electronic resource materials)

**Producing Drafts 4.2:** produce draft pieces of writing using a wide variety of strategies and models

**Revising and Editing 4.3:** revise, edit, and proofread drafts using a wide variety of strategies (e.g., reread for clarity and organization of ideas; use print and electronic resources to confirm spelling; vary word choice through the use of a thesaurus; review drafts with the teacher and peers, and explain how a piece of writing has evolved) Teacher prompt: “Explain how your dictionary and thesaurus helped you with your revisions.”

	<p><b>Publishing 4.4:</b> use a wide variety of elements of effective presentation to publish a final product (e.g., a cast list and drama dialogue format for a play, a table of contents for a handbook or manual, a brief glossary of terms for an essay about new technology, computer-generated graphs and charts for a science report)</p> <p><b>Metacognition 4.5:</b> select and use a wide variety of writing strategies before, during, and after writing, and reflect after writing on the strategies they found most helpful (e.g., use a reflection journal to explain thinking and identify strengths, areas for improvement, and next steps; respond to teacher and peer questions about why they used certain strategies more often than others) Teacher prompt: “In what way does reading a variety of texts help you in your writing?”</p>
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Assessment Breakdown:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
Ongoing online Edublogs and comments on peers' blogs	30%
In class discussion contributions (including "I Am Malala" literature circles and all-class discussions)	20%
Canadian Citizenship Handbook and Presentation	10%
Career Fair Interaction, Pamphlet creation, and Interview with Professional	10%
Final Online E-Portfolio and Self Reflection	30%

### Summary of our learning:

While brainstorming a design for this course, we agreed that in order for a second language course to be effective, it must have a face-to-face component, because listening and speaking to people are integral to effective communication. With this being said, after reading the article “Chapter 7 - Nothing but the Blues: A Case Study in the Use of Technology to Enrich a University Course” written by Tracy Chao and Bruce Stovel, we were given some inspiration as to how to incorporate technology into a traditional setting. By making the ongoing blogs and online interaction a requirement that could often be completed as homework, we were able to put much of the in-class emphasis on listening and speaking to interact. Just as our course introduction highlights, each of the overall activities to be completed by students incorporated multiple, if not all language strands in order to complete the task. This follows our “Holistic Approach” to teaching language. Also, instead of having the students focus on isolated, grammar exercises, we designed activities that had them use their language to complete meaningful tasks that were relevant to their lives. The article introduced us to a constructivist approach where courses are designed so that students “do” in order to learn and construct meaning through their own experiences and reflection. We enjoyed creating a course that allowed students to be active in their own learning and reflect on their personal progress often.

Individual Comments from group members:

#### Rebecca:

Having learned French as a second language throughout grade school and university, I understand the importance of making the connection between language and culture. I have always been a strong believer in focusing on “delivering the message” through language, rather than focusing on perfect grammar and the smaller details. This can be achieved through active learning and “doing” (interacting in your second language). Just as a baby learns language when they are young, they make mistakes at first, but the more they use their new language to complete important tasks, the grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation are eventually picked up implicitly. I very much enjoyed helping to design a course that allows students to practice language in this way, and integrate technology meaningfully, as well. As language teaching strategies are often transferable, I look forward to using this type of model in the future French courses that I teach.

#### Yiqi:

As an English as a foreign language learner for the past 22 years and also an EFL teacher for 9 years, I have gradually realized that it is necessary to associate learners’ own experiences and interests with language learning. It is too bad that in the past, myself and many other English learners in China have wasted so much time on learning the perfect grammar rules and thousands of words’ meaning and passages, many of which are very boring and not practical. It would have been better to spend time on learning about what we were interested in, like authentic conversations for real communication. It would be interesting to study beautiful English songs and analyze the

meaning of their lyrics, etc. I would definitely like to design a EFL/ESL/MSL course that could facilitate learners to enjoy the language learning in their own way, assisted by a bunch of related technologies and resources.

Jing:

From designing this course, I now understand that if we identify clear expectations or the intended outcomes at the initial stage of the design, we can appropriately decide on the selection of course materials, plan class activities, and incorporate the use of technology. Clear course objectives will also guide students to achieve their goals. Furthermore, the quality of our course expectations relates to how deeply we employ the holistic design approach. It is also important to integrate technology into the course guided by the constructivist principles. Most of the concepts, principles and technological approaches I have learned in this program are new in my professional life. Therefore, working on a course design gives me the opportunity to apply what I have learned in *Holistic approaches to Information Technology*. We have managed to successfully employ the new technology, new approaches, and new principles we have learned in this course. It was a challenging experience, but it was also very exciting because I know it has helped and changed me. These changes in myself will improve my future work. In addition, I have learned from my partners. Our working styles, ideas, views on teaching and learning are not the same sometimes because of different backgrounds and working settings. However, these differences let us learn from one another and made me consider my strengths and weaknesses.

The article's discussion questions:

**What are the advantages and the drawbacks of implementing constructivist principles in a course? What are some foreseeable problems if you were to follow the same principles in your course?**

Advantages:

- Learning occurs through the association of the learners' previous experience with newly acquired knowledge (so that they can have a better understanding of new knowledge and are more willing to be involved in the learning process)
- A course based off of constructivist principles offers an authentic environment and communication platform, so learners can engage in authentic tasks - this contextualizes learning in order to construct knowledge.
- Enhances holistic education
- Encourages students to be active in their own learning - student centred activities allow students to make decisions about their own learning

If we were to follow the same principles in our course, the foreseeable problems might be:

- Since the course we are designing is for second language learners, there may be many students in the class from all around the world who are not used to student-centred learning in their country of origin. This could be an issue that arises in the SLL classroom. Students may feel uncomfortable without traditional lecture-type lessons from teachers.
- As for active learning, it is good for advanced learners, but not easy for the young learners, especially the ones raised in east asian culture like China, who are accustomed to passive learning.
- The computer systems for constructivist learning may be designed by the technology teams who are not familiar with education, so the softwares or apps might be not very user-friendly.

**What are the benefits and challenges in integrating technology into a conventional course in higher education? How can you ensure that students have a valuable learning experience?**

Benefits:

- Many students nowadays are very familiar with using technology, so they may prefer learning in an online setting
- Students are given more flexibility for when they complete the online tasks - on their schedule and at home, in a more comfortable setting
- Teaches students about Learning Management Systems they would have otherwise not had the opportunity to work with
- Gives students who are timid the chance to express their opinion online instead of face-to-face
- Creating reflection tools such as e-portfolios help students reflect and help the instructor monitor the students' progress

Challenges:

- Constraint of students' access to technology (as not all students' families or schools can afford technology equipment )
- Constraint of students' technology skills and instant support from instructors and technological staff
- Lack of instructors' presence and guidance

Finally, to ensure that students have a valuable learning experience, we could:

- Get to know the learners first and find out about their background
- Create an authentic learning environment to help students to obtain new skills
- Design inquiry-based tasks to give students the opportunity to explore and construct knowledge by themselves
- Use blogging, eportfolios, class chat forums, and group collaboration to enhance student engagement in a social learning community

- Include a variety of resources so that a number of different needs and learning styles can be addressed.
- Design the tasks to be authentic and significant to the learners' lives, making the learning experience meaningful
- Provide ongoing and descriptive feedback to give the students' an idea of their progress and “next steps”
- Encourage students to give feedback to their peers and reflect on their own learning

### **References:**

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