**Summary of ACE (Accelerated College ESL) Curricular Applications**

**Interdisciplinary ESL Working Group**

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**The foundational principle to be applied to our interleveled, one-year curriculum is that new knowledge, including language acquisition, is socially constructed over time** (Vygotsky).We understand the development of mind, thought, and language to be rooted in interpersonal dialogue. While we have to assess students as the individuals they are, we cannot divorce their individual progress (or lack of progress) from the classroom spaces we create. Rather, we understand our students' individual and gradual developmental trajectories to be situated in, and emerging from, particular social settings and interactional histories. All of our activities must build in this awareness.

Let's extend this concept to our understanding of **a second core principle of our ACE curriculum: reading as a dialogic activity**. Even if reading may seem on the surface to be individualistic, it is a complex interaction between one's previous readings, conversations with others, conversations with ourselves, life events, and bits of knowledge we have accumulated. It is through these dynamic connections that we are able to comprehend, analyze, and apply what we are reading. Our students are with us because they have not had, in English and possibly in their native languages, these foundations for thinking, language, and literacy. Because of this, we will create an experience that provides for the dialogic foundations of reading and encourages joy in reading. Besides classroom conversations and responses about required course texts, we will facilitate an ongoing component that will give students the opportunity to choose their own texts in multiple genres and engage with these texts on their own terms, allowing them to develop their own style and pace of reading, and to share aspects of their reading with others.

Encompassing our view of reading as dialogic, **our third aim is to create a literacy-based approach to teaching** (Kern).We understand literacy as not only involving systems of writing, but also requiring knowledge of how language is used in spoken contexts. To this end, we will work with our students on activities such as: researching uses of language inside and outside the classroom through data collection and interviews, searching out “patterns” within these texts, exploring various registers of language (“formal” and “informal”), and engaging with such materials and media as TedTalks, podcasts, and plays and theater.

**Our fourth curricular aim is to activate students’ meta-awareness**. We will encourage students to reflect on their uses of language, and also on their own cognitive processes to explore the layered relationships between words, larger units of meaning, real and imagined worlds, and themselves (Kern). We will weave in their psychology course content wherever possible to make such reflections meaningful. We will work to promote students’ metalinguistic awareness of their native languages and of English, and the similarities and differences between languages. We will explore the cultural knowledge needed for literacy, and the particular systems of attitudes, beliefs, customs, ideals and values embedded in texts (Kern). In addition to teaching the sub-components of language—e.g., grammar, phonology, and the lexicon—we will work with students to establish concrete goals with students in these areas, and to document their learning processes for their yearlong (and lifelong) education.

**A fifth aspect shaping our curriculum is play**. According to Vygotsky, it is through play that we bridge the mind’s imagination and the rules of real life in cognitively transformative ways. Play is memory in action. It brings about imitation, highlighting what a student is noticing in another’s behavior and can do with this behavior as a model. Play is creative, evoking narrative, symbolism, metaphor, and new ways of thinking, behaving, and being. Play grows out of agency and desire.

**A sixth curricular principle is the development of self and identity in learning, and the role of emotions**. These two interconnected notions have been critical contributions to second language research over the past decade (Norton, Pavlenko, Lantolf, Kramsch). Learning another language and investing in it emotionally, culturally, and socially, second language (L2) learners construct a new identity—a process our classrooms can promote by encouraging culture-immersing reading “in massive amounts” and creating multilingual identity empowering assignments, i.e. a/b narratives, creative multi-sensory and artistic projects. The development of a new (L2) self occurs via the construction of a personal narrative (Bruner’s narrativity and Bakhtinian dialogism) in the process of self-translation (Pavlenko, Besemeres), where the L2 is used for emotional expression and self-representation. When learners are encouraged to develop creativity, metaphoric thinking, subjectivity and language emotionality for their “stories” and interactions with each other, language becomes the foundation for this new developed self (or vice versa). Taking into account emotionality and subjectivity in SLA reflects the Vygotskyan socio-cultural framework of language and thought/ZPD and literacy: students learn the language in and through carefully configured social environment, each at their own pace and in individually formed, subjective, and emotional spaces, re-narratizing their stories/personae.

**A seventh is multimodality**. We will promote the use of technology as part of literacy, inextricable from larger networks of discourse practices and constraints (Kramsch).

**An eighth is project-based learning**. In addition to assignments given over the short term, we will work with students to refine pieces of work over long stretches of time. These projects will be based an underlying view that focuses on learning as participation (over acquisition), transformation (over transmission), and classrooms as “busy workshops with lots of activity” (van Lier).