**ITEC 7430 Post-Field Experience Reflection:**

After reviewing my initial thoughts concerning working with English Language Learners, I still believe in many of my initial thoughts, but there are some areas that I would add more emphasis too. When working with our ELL students, gifted students, special needs, or regular education students it still requires that we differentiate their learning, foster a welcoming environment for our families, and activate their prior knowledge. The difference between our ELL students lies in their understanding of the social and academic or cognitive language. While working with both Bob and Sue, during this ELL module, I don’t think it really occurred to me how important it was to activate their prior knowledge, encourage cooperative groups, and determine which type of language they had a firm grasp on. I didn’t realize that there were two types of language that students had to learn.

Understanding the difference between the two can greatly impact teacher’s perceptions or generalizations made of students. Students can best acquire these language skills while working in cooperative groups, which provide our ELL students with the practice and exposure that they need. These conversations are in student friendly language, which is another added bonus. Many of the general instructional practices mentioned in our module and by my ELL support teacher were very similar. In fact these practices, in my opinion, are some best teaching practices. The only difference is understanding how these strategies can impact our student’s learning. Some of the strategies mentioned were implementing word walls, using graphic organizers, illustrations, and other visual representations. There were some tools that my ELL teacher shared with me for example, the bilingual dictionary and home language help. She provides our staff with quarterly trainings on student’s current goals, technology resources, and strategies to use with our students.

Looking back on my time with Bob and Sue there are some changes that I would make in my instruction. During our guided reading groups, in the students reading response journals, I would like to create an area for new vocabulary terms. In this area students could write down the definition of unknown words, use it in a sentence, and add a drawing for clarification. Also, while the students are pre-reading I could give them some sticky notes to jot down their questions, wonderings, new vocabulary words, or even Ah-ha moments. I could also do this in our math classes too. Another area that most teachers do not realize is that language is integrated into all of our subjects. The same strategies and tools we use for language arts can also be used in our math classes.

**Questions:**

During our module the authors strongly encourage providing our ELL students with extra testing time, the use of the bilingual dictionary, or even taking their test with a bilingual teacher. Considering that it takes several years for our ELL students to acquire the English language are our state tests a true representation of their knowledge?