



ESOL

in Higher Ed

Preparing the Way

Teaching ELs in the Pre-K-12 Classroom



Edited by Jane M. Govoni, PhD & Cindy Lovell, PhD

[Kendall Hunt Publishing](#)



Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE)





Name: _____

Perspective is everything. Teachers must put themselves in someone else's shoes every day to be empathetic and to support their students. You are in college, so you have an education. But imagine if you were to move to another country next month where you could not speak the language, were unfamiliar with the culture, and enrolled in graduate classes.

Country and language:

What challenges do you expect to have in class?

What challenges do you expect to have outside of class?

What can your instructors do to help?

1. In one classroom four ELs smile, look at their papers, but continue to **do nothing**.
2. In a second classroom, one EL carefully **copied** sentences from another student's draft. Three other ELs had very little written on their papers.
3. In a third classroom, as the teacher circulates to check their work, he finds that four of the ELs are **not doing the assignment**.



These three different class observations show that not all ELs participated despite teachers scaffolding the material, providing native languages resources, and, in the case of one, employing solid ESL pedagogy. Why?

1. **Khadijah:** 16 years old, from Iraq, native speaker of Arabic. Attended school in her home country for six years but was **forced to interrupt her schooling when armed conflicts broke out** and it became too dangerous for her to continue.
2. **Muhamed:** 16 years old, Somalian, **grew up in a refugee camp** in Kenya. He speaks Oromo, Arabic, and Kiswahili. He attended Qur'anic school for approximately four years.
3. **Oliver:** 15 years old, from a rural area in Guatemala, native speaker of an indigenous Mayan language, K'iche. Speaks some Spanish, **had schooling through 3rd grade when he left to work** and help the family. Came as an undocumented minor to escape violence and gangs.
4. **Rosalina:** 17 years old, Oliver's sister and also a native speaker of K'iche. Her Spanish is stronger than Oliver's because she worked as a domestic for a family in a small city in Guatemala before coming with Oliver as an undocumented minor to the U.S. She also **completed through 3rd grade**.
5. **Kasongo:** 16 years old, from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire), native speaker of Tshiluba. Kasongo **lived most of his life in a refugee camp**. He attended school in the camp until he left for the U.S. Class sizes were large, with up to 70 students in a class with few school supplies. Most teachers were not trained and many "teachers" were simply volunteers or young adults in the camp.
6. **Juan:** 16 years old, from Mexico, native speaker of Spanish. He is from a rural area, **attended school until 6th grade**, and worked on the family farm until he arrived in the United States.
7. **Jimena:** 14 years old, from a rural area of Honduras, native speaker of Spanish. She **never attended school prior to coming to the U.S.**, but instead worked in the home and on the farm. She can recognize and write her name.



Pre-Literate

Students have never been exposed to literacy.

Non-Literate

Students' home language is written, has a relatively long tradition of the written word, but students themselves have not developed literacy.

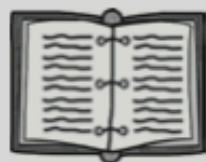
Semi-Literate, Roman, or Very Similar Alphabet

Students have learned basic decoding skills only.

Semi-Literate, Non-Alphabet Literate

Students have very basic literacy skills and must now develop literacy skills in a new language and writing system.

Formal education is predicated on literacy.

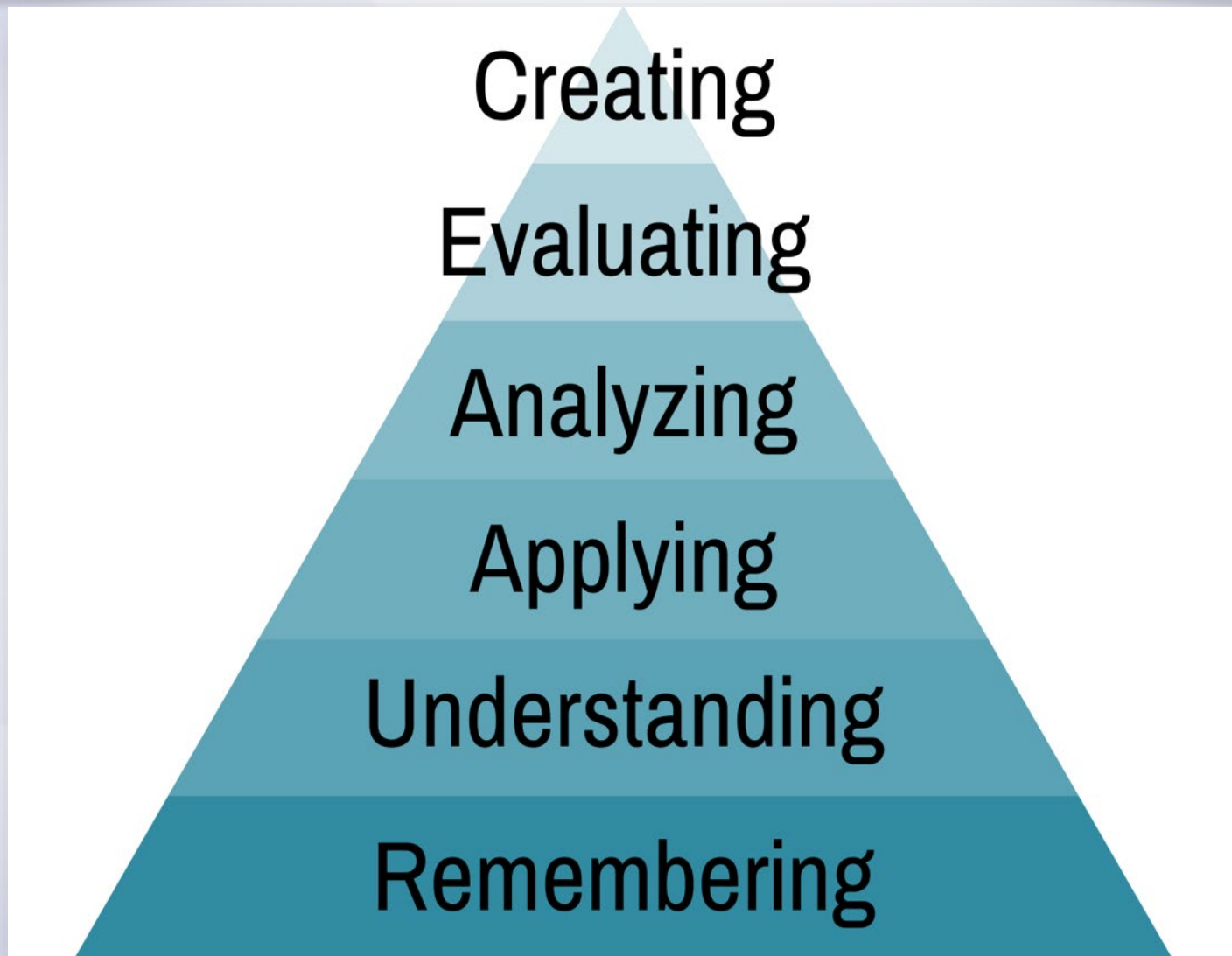


EXAMINING DECONTEXTUALIZED TASKS ACTIVITY

(1) Look at the list of common classroom tasks.

(2) Check all the ones familiar to you.

- ☐ completing KWL charts (What I Know, What I Want to Know, What I Have Learned)
- ☐ completing graphic organizers, such as a Venn Diagram or a T-Chart
- ☐ interpreting graphs
- ☐ matching or sorting information
- ☐ reading maps
- ☐ labeling items
- ☐ looking up words in dictionaries or glossaries
- ☐ answering true/false questions
- ☐ answering multiple-choice questions



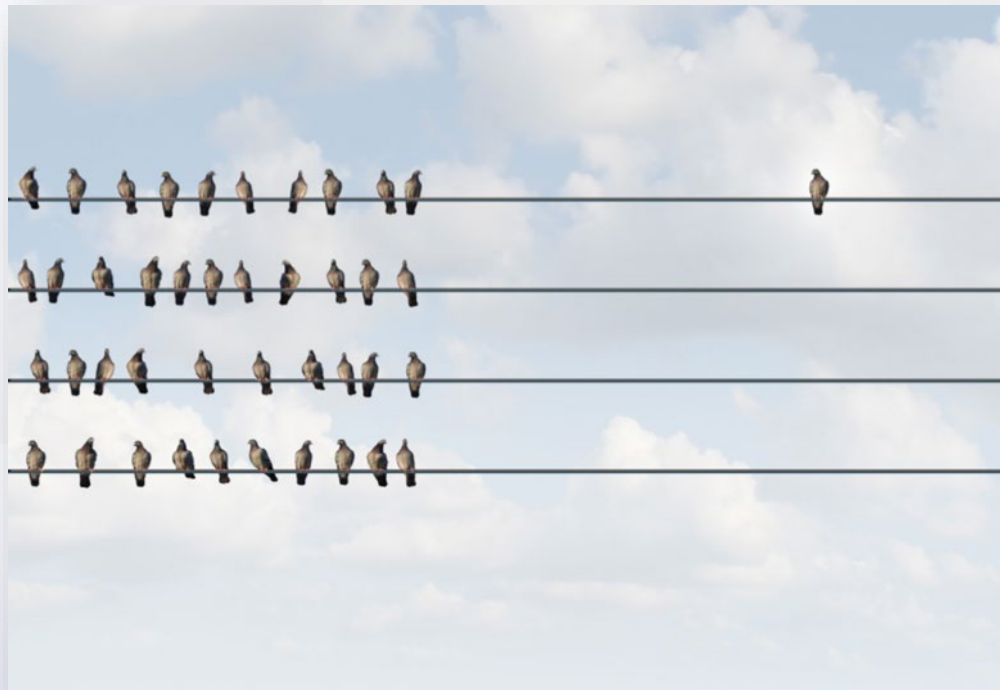


“WE”

Cultures in which members see themselves primarily as highly interconnected, interdependent parts of a whole are termed collectivistic or “we” cultures.

“ME”

Those cultures in which the emphasis is on individuals and independence are regarded as individualistic, or “me” cultures.





In **collectivistic** cultures, sharing, mutual cooperation, and assistance are the norm. Copying—and letting someone copy from you—is seen as providing support for learning.

In the **individualistic** culture of the U.S., individual effort and performance are the standard, and teachers rarely regard copying from others as part of the learning process. Likewise, a common tendency for SLIFE to move around a classroom to seek aid from others, even after the teacher has instructed students to work on their own, is not, from their collectivistic perspective, disobedience or disregard for the teacher, but a normal practice to help them accomplish the assigned work.



NON-SLIFE:

Focus on the future
(What do I want to be
when I grow up?)



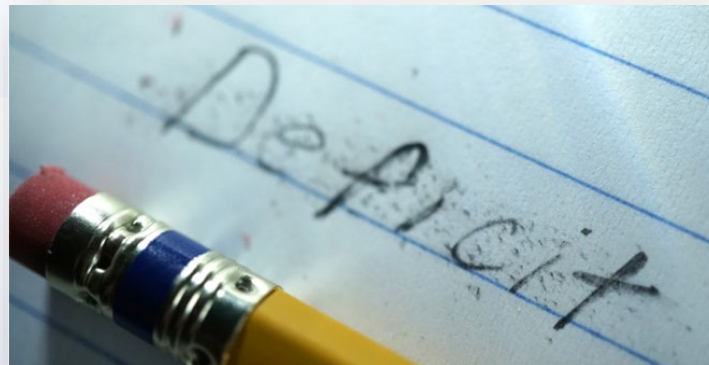
SLIFE:

Focus on the present
(What do I do to
survive and get by
today?)





- Training has not adequately prepared educators for such significantly different students. (Even this one chapter is not sufficient. But, it's a start!)
- Deficit views prevail. ("These children are lacking.")
- SLIFE do have extensive experiences, knowledge, and skills. (How can this help?)
- All SLIFE need a different pedagogical approach than conventional ones developed for ELs with age-appropriate formal education.
- SLIFE, ***unlike other ELs***, must make a major shift in their accustomed learning paradigm when they enter U.S. classrooms.
- SLIFE benefit from newcomer programs (designed for recent immigrants at the secondary school level who have little or no English proficiency, and limited or no formal education in their native countries).



This is an instructional approach designed specifically for this population.

Mutually adapting requires that there are certain crucial elements from the SLIFE learning paradigm that educators:

- **accept** conditions and incorporate into their classroom.
- **combine** with crucial elements from the paradigm of formal education.
- **focus** on critical, new elements in the paradigm of formal education.

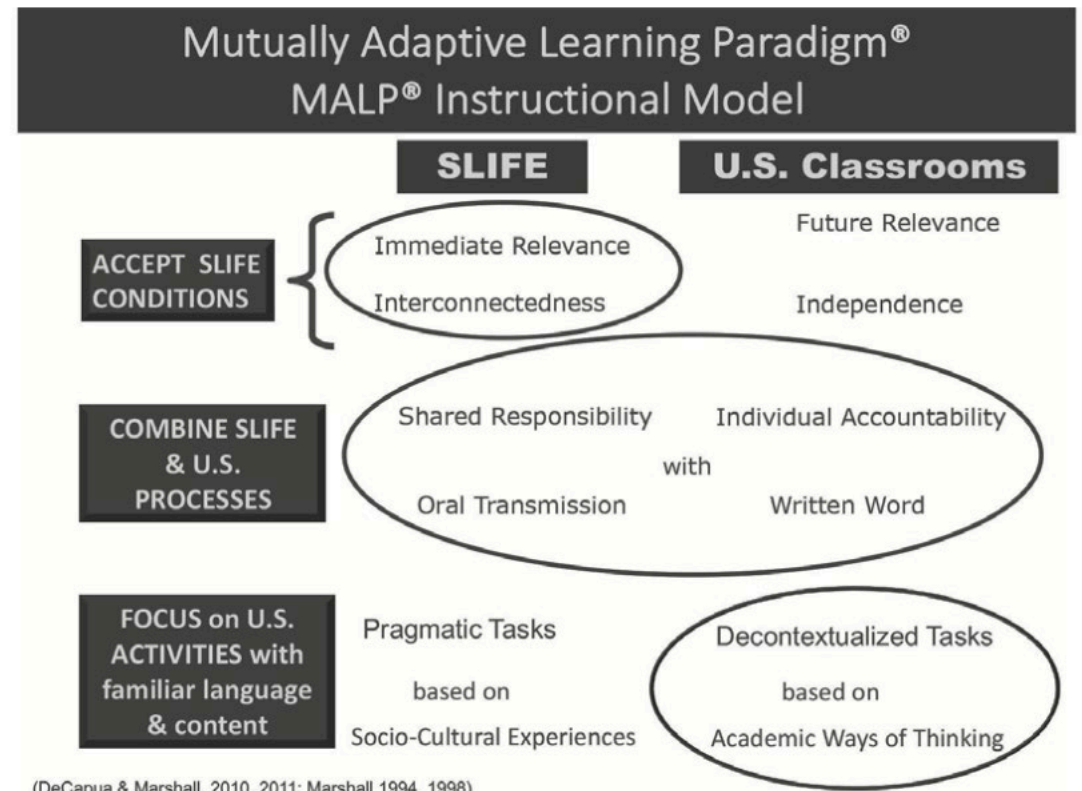


Figure 3.2 Schematic of the Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm (MALP®).



Some **key differences** between the learning paradigm of SLIFE and those of formal education:

- a preference for **oral transmission** versus the centrality of **literacy**
- **pragmatic tasks** ground in socio-cultural experiences versus **decontextualized tasks** based on academic ways of thinking
- **collectivism** versus **individualism**
- **immediate relevance** versus **future orientation**





Review these resources:

[What is MALP?](#)

[¡Colorín Colorado!](#)

ESOL
in Higher Ed

www.esolinhighered.org