

Completing Student Academic Levels by Attending 50 Hours

or More of Adult ESL Classes

A Special Project

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FACULTY APPROVAL

Completing Student Academic Levels by Attending 50 hours or

More of Adult ESL Classes.

Approved for the Faculty

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ABSTRACT

The researcher investigated the relationship between hours of in class instruction and tests results as measured by the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System pre-test in October 2007 and posttest in mid April 2008 or when students had an accumulation of 50 hours of class instruction time. The researcher recorded all in class instruction hours on an attendance sheet for every class. The results indicated that although the students made significant progress, the hours of in class instruction did not significantly impact the learning of the students.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background for the Project

Ziegler stated, "Reading is a foundational skill and more than 30 million adults in the United States fell below the basic level of skills needed to perform everyday literacy activities in 2003" (Ziegler, McCallum, Mee Bell, 2007 p. 2). On September 27, 2007 President Bush signed the Executive Order 13445, a policy that helped strengthen adult education. The policy stated:

It is the policy of the United States to use existing Federal programs that serve adults, including New Americans, to strengthen literacy skills, improve opportunities for post secondary education and employment and facilitate participation in American life (U.S. Department of Education, 2007 p. 55).

Educating Migrant and English As a Second Language students, low socio-economic groups has been a critical issue at the researcher's community college and at the local migrant center for several years. Student enrollment changed each year. Of the 36 Spanish-speaking students attending in fall of 2007 year only 6 were returning students from last spring of 2007. The Opportunity Center would like to have seen more returning students for classes.

The center was the department that handled the Adult Basic Education classes and English As a Second Language classes. The Opportunity Center had a continual assessment of tracking student progress for students in the following areas: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The center also had work first job programs. The work first center provided low income families with skills needed to become employed or to get more skills for a job. The main objectives for both classes were to become successful and to increase literacy skills for jobs and college classes.

The community college had numerous ways to assist students. The community college provided child care for students who attended evening classes at the local migrant center. A majority of the students who enrolled at the center through the community college were migrant and /or agricultural workers which qualified them for help. Many students had the opportunity to attend classes and learn English.

Students who enrolled at the community college came with different learning needs that varied among students. Learning needs varied amongst students. Many students wanted to enrich vocabulary skills for current jobs. Students also wanted to learn basic letter sounds and consonant blends to learn how to read English. A few students had no previous schooling and knew only how to write learned patterned words like names. Students also

wanted to assist children at home with homework. Over all, students came to Adult Basic Education classes to better understand English.

Statement of the Problem

The researcher asked the question: did regular school attendance affect the student progress levels as measured by the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System's four areas of testing: reading, writing, listening and speaking. The researcher also evaluated the specific English Language Development Standards as targets to help students with learning English at a level that would be appropriate for each student. The researcher also compared English As a Second Language score ranges of the same students from the fall of 2007 and spring of 2008. The researcher used the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System test keys found in the Faculty Handbook to correct the pretests given in the in fall and the posttests given in the spring. The correct answers or the raw score from the pretest were measured on the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System score conversion chart. The worksheets with the test charts for reading and listening interpreted the raw scores into scaled scores. The scaled scores had a next suggested test to give to students after 45 hours of instruction.

The Faculty Handbook had a worksheet with a specific table with aligned scaled scores and English as a Second Language ranges. The table had the adult learning standards next to each range. The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System placed each standard with a level name and range number. The researcher used the score ranges to place students in appropriate pre-tests and/or posttests and reading groups. Student A had a scaled score of 228 and the conversion chart placed Student A at an advanced level 6 for a language level. Student A was placed in a high reading group. Students who received a scaled score of 200 or less were placed in a beginning level and a 201 or higher were placed in an intermediate level (Educational Function Level Table (2006).

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the project was to investigate the relationship between hours of in class instruction and tests results as measured by the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System pre-test in October 2007 and posttest in mid April 2008 or when students had an accumulation of 50 hours of class instruction time. The researcher also investigated scaled score ranges on test results to hours of instruction.

Delimitations

The study was done in a community college in the inland Northwest in Washington State. The Adult Basic Education department had about 35 instructors employed full time and part time. Most instructors at the community college including the researcher did not have adult education endorsements. All 36 of the researcher's English As a Second Language students in the study were Hispanic and were mostly agricultural workers.

Students were divided into a Group A and B reading group. Both groups had 3 standard levels of reading. The standards were measured by the Washington Adult English as a Second Language Standards. Groups A had beginning, low beginning and high beginning students. Group A consisted of 11 students. Group B had low intermediate, high intermediate and one student had an advanced intermediate level. Group B had 25 students.

All but 2 students requested a waiver of the college tuition. Students did not have to pay tuition if the government assisted student's families with housing, provided free and or reduced lunch at school, unemployed at the time of enrollment and received Women and Infants and Children vouchers. Most of the students enrolled in the Adult Basic Education program waived the tuition. Students with poor attendance did not receive a scholarship offered through the center. Students who had an eighty percent or better received a seventy five dollar scholarship from the government.

The study began in October of 2007 and was completed in April 2008. The enrollment had a total of 36 students: All of the students who had a pre-test and a posttest were used in the study. Students who had children at the local migrant center were placed on the enrollment list first. The classes were opened to the public as well. The students who had children at the center and who signed up for the class were called first to attend. The classes were for beginning students. In most cases, students with levels between 4 through 6 and higher were placed with another instructor in the same local area. All of the students enrolled at the community college were Hispanic. The Easy Academic Success for You adult curriculum and Corrective Reading were used in the Adult Basic Education classes.

Assumptions

All students received similar instruction from the Easy Academic Success for You adult curriculum. Also, all students received similar instruction in the Corrective Reading curriculum as measured by the program placement and the English As a Second Language competency levels. The instructor and the instructional aide planned and worked together to construct lessons and activities for both curriculums. The instructor was certificated with a K-8 endorsement. The instructor also had a Bilingual and English as a Second Language endorsement and had taught for 4

years in an English As a Second Language field. The researcher assumed all students were performing at beginning and or low beginning level in the English as a Second Language learning standards.

Research Question

What is the relationship between hours of instruction and progress made for adult ESL students at the community college level?

Significance of the Project

The researcher studied and compared students' competency levels completed to the amount of in-class instruction hours of each student. The researcher wanted to know if the researcher also focused on the levels completed and score range numbers passed. The 6 English Language Development standards were used to assess student performance and guide instruction to all students.

Procedure

All 33 Spanish-speaking students completed registration forms the first three nights of each quarter with the assistance of the instructor. All registration forms were sent back to the college to establish student college identification numbers. All instructors who taught classes were required to check students in the Web-

Based Adult Education Reporting System for testing records and previous quarter hours to determine when to posttest. The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System pre-test were given by both the instructor and the aide in different rooms of the center. Both individuals were trained to administer and correct the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System assessment. The instructor's assistant had several years experience in administering the test. All instructors were required to log on to the Web-base Adult Basic Education Reporting System website to make sure students did not previously attend other Adult Basic Education classes for the local college.

The researcher assumed all students that took the appraisal had only 25 minutes to complete the reading and listening section of the appraisal to prevent maturation of some students. If students were new to the class a reading, listening, oral, and dictation Comprehensive Assessment Student Assessment System appraisals were done for placement for the pretest for each student. Students were pre-tested according to the competency level of the appraisal results. Students not new to the class were given the next suggested test using the scaled score to identify appropriate test form which counted as the pre-test for the new fall quarter year. The Adult Basic Education classes were held fall, winter and spring.

The Instructor Briefcase was to verify that the students were registered for the classes. The briefcase was an on-line data base used for instructors to check all student enrollment for each quarter. The researcher used this data base to check students' history background.

According to the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System English As a Second Language flowchart for testing, a total of 4 pretests was available to students. Students new to the program and not in the system were given a complete appraisal. First students were given 6 oral questions using the oral screening script. After answering the 6 basic oral interview questions on form 20 students who scored 6 or more of the oral questions were given the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System form 20 appraisal pre-tests for reading and listening. If students were unable to answer any of the questions or scored 6 or less on the appraisal from form 20, the instructor gave students 5 practice items from form 27 one on one. Form twenty-seven was used as a whole pre-test and the first 5 as part of a pre-test. Form 27 was a picture pre-test. Form 27 was a recognition of birthdays, calendar dates and social security numbers. If students found difficulty taking form 27 no further testing was done for a pre-test. This was the end of the appraisal. Students who completed form 27 easily

went on to take Form 31 for reading and Form 51 listening as pre-tests.

The reading and the listening pre-tests were given in small groups. The reading and the listening pretests were given to students were determined by the raw score and the scaled score of the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Appraisal pre-test scores were given as raw scores and converted to scaled scores using the score range levels of the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System chart. Students marked the correct answer by reading the question and filling in the bubble with the correct answer using the answer sheet called, the Tracking of Programs and Students, with a number 2 pencil.

The students took the speaking and writing pre-test individually with the same instructor in order to increase the reliability. The speaking pretest and the writing pretest were done in a quiet room by the office of the center. The speaking pretest was scored on how the 5 basic questions were answered and measured by a Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System rubric. The writing pre-test involved the instructor dictating 3 basic sentences in English to students. Each sentence was repeated twice. Students had to write in English what was said by the instructor. Writing samples and speaking samples were collected and filed in a student file for each student. A competency level was

determined for both samples by the instructor using a Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System rubric.

At the center the instructor used the Easy Academic Success for You curriculum on Monday evenings. The instructor had students work on the Easy Academic Success for You curriculum. After 30 minutes of entry task, including conjugating verbs, the instructor taught the entire class with Easy Academic Success for You curriculum using Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol Strategies to help with lesson delivery. Students worked independently and interacted with partners and groups. A total of 120 minutes with a 10 minute break after 60 minutes was used for building background, lesson delivery and student interaction with partners and small group.

On Wednesdays the instructor taught the Corrective Reading curriculum. The instructor had only one assistant to help with the small reading group. All students were tested and placed as measured by the Corrective Reading placement and the Washington Adult Learning Standards Levels. Group A had 11 students placed in Decoding A Corrective Reading text. The other 25 students were placed in Group B and used the B1 Corrective Reading text for reading group.

In April, the instructor and the assistant used the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System posttest to measure competency levels and achievement gains for each student. The instructor used both fall and spring tests to compare levels of competency on the progress forms. The instructor also counted the hours of instruction time for each student.

Definition of Terms

adult education. Adult education was taught or instructed below the post secondary level. The adult education class was designed to improve basic education and the ability to speak, read or write in English language.

consonant blends. Consonant blends were two consonant letters blended together to make a certain sound such as “sh.”

instructor briefcase. Instructors logged on to the web page data base to check student academic history for testing and student enrollment.

raw score. The raw score was the number correct from a Comprehensive Adult Students Assessment System chart pretest or posttest.

scaled score. The scaled score was the number converted from the raw score or number of correct answers. The scaled scores were taken from the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System chart for each reading and listening test in the faculty handbook. The scaled score was aligned specifically to a learning standard and a score range.

score range. The score range was the numbers to identify English language development used by the Washington Adult

Learning Standards Levels. A beginning literacy level had a learning standard of 1 and a score range of 180 or less.

Washington ESL Adult Learning Standards Standards used to determine a student's performance level in English as a second language classes.

Washington ABE Adult Learning Standards Standards demonstrated student's abilities and expectations for adult basic education classes.

work first program. The work first program was a special government program used to improve employability and workplace skills for adults.

Acronyms

ABE. Adult Basic Education

CASAS. Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System

CR. Corrective Reading

EASY ESL. Easy Academic Success for You English As a
Second language

EFLT. Educational Functioning Level Table

ELD. English Language Development

ESL. English As a Second Language

IB. Instructor Briefcase

OC. Opportunity Center

SIOP. Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol

TOPS. Tracking of Programs and Students

WABERS. Web-based Adult Basic Education Reporting
System

WA ESL. Washington English As a Second Language

WIA. Workforce Investment Act

WIC. Women Infants and Children

CHAPTER 2

Review of Selected Literature

Introduction

President Bush signed Executive Order 13445 which improved the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act that provided adults with the opportunity to improve English language skills and opportunities for better job careers (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). Adult basic education helped students develop skills and knowledge needed to be successful as workers, parents and community members. Across the country and in Washington State, children whose parents had less than a high school education scored lowest on reading and other standardized tests (SBCC, n.d. p. 7). Some Adults wanted to become better readers in order to help children with homework, job enrichment purposes and to be a better citizen and help the community.

In this project, the researcher studied the amount of instructional hours of ABE classes students had over a 6 month period. Students attended ABE classes at a local community college twice a week to improve English skills for communication at the workplace and in the community. The instructor used the ELD Standards and SIOP to guide instruction and lesson delivery.

The CASAS tests were used to measure the students' progress throughout the study.

The Need for ABE

The need for adult basic education classes with ESL support has grown as our future workforce depended on adults who were currently unprepared for the state's economy (SBCC, n.d. p.2). Adults were unprepared because of lack of English skills and adults lacked high school diplomas and basic skills needed for the workforce.

According to the Department of Education, adult education was referred to as teaching or instruction below the secondary level. Adult education was intended for individuals who were sixteen years of age or older. The Adult Basic Education was designed to improve basic education skills and the ability to speak, read, or write in the English language (U.S. Department of Education , 2007). Adults lacking high school level skills and knowledge and speaking English as a Second Language made up a major portion of Washington state's fastest growing population group. Also, adults with no basic reading skills attended ESL Classes. Latino/Hispanic made up only 3.8 percent of the civilian workforce in 1990. By 2010 the population will have made up 15.3 percent of the workforce (SBCC, n.d).

Adults As Learners

Spanish-speaking adults have registered in local community college night classes to improve English language skills. Students came to class with different learning needs. Some students came to classes to learn new vocabulary words for job enrichment and dreams of job promotions. Students also attended classes to learn more English to help with homework the children brought home.

Research has supported the idea that adults learned best when education and life experiences were connected. According to Stephen Lieb (1991), a Senior Technical Writer and Planner for Arizona Department of Health Services, "people learned best under low to moderate stress; If the stress was too high, stress became a barrier to learning" (p. 3). Lieb also believed adults had special needs and requirements as learners and adults were autonomous and self-directed. Adults learned best when stress was low and adults knew the course goals and objectives early in the course (Lieb, 1991). Stephen Lieb wrote, "adults were goal and relevancy oriented. Adults must see a reason for learning something. Learning has to be applicable to work or other responsibilities to be valuable to adults" (Lieb, 1991. p.2). Students came to class to improve literacy skills and to enrich vocabulary for jobs.

SIOP and the History of SIOP:

Selection of key vocabulary for each lesson was important for teaching new words. Vocabulary taught using illustrations, sentences, definitions and the actual word helped students read a contextualized sentence that included a key vocabulary word. This was one of the 8 components of building background. This was referred to as Four Corners Vocabulary (Vogt & Echevarria, 2006). Teachers who used the eight components of SIOP properly increased academic achievement for English Language Learners (Eight Components of Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol, 2008). The 8 SIOP components were: Preparation, building background, comprehensible input, student strategies for success, interactions, lesson delivery, practice/application and review and assessment (Vogt & Echevarria, 2006).

Research has supported that SIOP has been proven to increase student success in ELL students. According to Vince Puzick (2006), a K-12 Literacy & Language Arts Coordinator stated, "I've studied the SIOP Model and, simply stated by following the eight components of the model, any teacher can effectively embed literacy into instruction regardless of the content area" (p. 1). Puzick believed when teachers used a language standard in teaching

student literacy and content knowledge were extended (Puzick as cited in Eight Components of Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) .

CASAS Literacy Levels and Level Descriptors

According to the United States Department of Education , 2003, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, The No Child Left Behind Act legislators took another look at the Workforce Investment Act. The No Child Left Behind stressed the importance that states needed to develop or adapt content standards continuum to guide the teaching and learning process of students (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System Content Standards [CASAS CS], 2006).

Effective July 1, 2006 the Washington Adult and Family Literacy Competencies, measurable learning objectives for life skills, and CASAS updated the content standards learning standards to better guide the ABE programs in Washington State. The handout given to the instructors was called a Educational Functional Level Table . The EFL Table had detailed descriptors and literacy level names. “The descriptors are entry- level descriptors and are illustrative of what a typical student functioning at the level should be able to do” (Educational Function Level Table, (2006 p. 1). The Washington ESL Adult

learning standards met a Literacy Level that matched. The 6 learning standards had different levels for literacy CASAS test benchmarks in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The table also listed skills that students can perform on the job.

According to the Washington Adult ESL standards and the Educational Functioning Level Table (2006), the beginning level CASAS ESL labeled this as Beginning ESL. The CASAS score benchmark range with a score range of 180 and below was beginning. The level descriptor for speaking and listening placed students as not being able to speak or understand English. Some students understood only a few words or phrases in this level. The level descriptor for reading and writing was at an absence of minimal reading or writing skills. Students only communicated using single words and gestures. Students only handled very routine entry-level jobs that did not require oral or written communication in English (Educational Functional Level Table (ESL), 2006).

Literacy level 2 was the low beginning level and CASAS also labeled this category as a low beginning level. The score range was a 181 to 190. The speaking and listening descriptors included that students understood basic greetings, simple phrases and commands. Students read numbers, letters and sight words. Student should be able to sound out simple words and write basic

personal information. Students had difficulty in social situations. Students handled routine entry level jobs. Students had limited knowledge and experience with computers (EFLT, 2006).

Literacy level 3 or was the high beginning literacy level. The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System labeled this category also as high beginning with a 191 to 200 score range. "Communication used was common words and simple phrases. Individuals responded to simple questions about personal everyday activities. Individuals read and wrote basic sight words and common words (p. 1). Students had limited understanding (EFLT (ESL), 2006).

Literacy level 4 was the low intermediate level. The level marked on the CASAS chart had a 201-210 score range. "Speaking and listening skills expressed basic survival needs. The conversations were social routine conversations with some difficulty. Individuals read simple materials on subjects that were familiar or job related" (p. 1). Students wrote simple sentences. (EFLT (ESL), 2006).

Literacy level 5 or a high intermediate placed had a 211 to 220 score range. Students had conversations about familiar social situations. Student attempted to try new words in speaking. The writing made more sense. Individuals were able to take notes and

follow simple oral instructions for the workplace. Computers and technology were appropriate at this level (EFLT (2006)).

According to the EFLT ESL Literacy level 6 or the advanced level CASAS had a 221-235 score range. Speaking and listening were related to daily life and work. Students in this level showed some ability to go on and learn new ideas about work skills. Students were able to write and invent new sentences. Students were able to speak in basic sentences. Students at this level were able to communicate on the telephone for basic needs. At this level students were able to understand charts, tables and graphs and complete forms. Students who placed over a 235 score range were ready to exit the ESL program and were ready to transition for a GED or try to get a college education (EFLT (ESL), 2006).

The background of CASAS and the CASAS Competencies

Field research for CASAS began in 1980 and education providers to community based-agencies gave recommendations to help support the CASAS curriculum (CASAS Competencies, 2008). The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System was the most widely used system for assessing adult basic reading, mathematics, listening, writing, and speaking skills. Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System had competencies that focused on teaching and assessing basic skills to

adult learners. Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System made objectives to meet the needs for adults to become fully functional and productive members of society. The system put together more than 360 life skills needed for adults to be successful. Adults could also be successful members of the family, community, and the workforce (Aligning CASAS Competencies, 2008).

Regardless of the paper work involved in recording the data for each student, CASAS provided the instructor with valuable information. Forms were used for recording student academic history. This form was called the Web-based Adult Basic Education Reporting System ESL Progress form. The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System data provided information necessary to the instructor to place students in appropriate reading groups, diagnose and monitor progress. Each students' file had WABERS forms with pre-test and posttest information for each quarter. Student tracking of academic history was kept on WABERS forms. The form called WABERS was a fill in the blank worksheet of student information that instructors kept on each student. Registration forms with student information and student sample work were also placed in the student file. The researcher also checked the Instructor Briefcase to make sure all students were tested on the correct test. The students' assessments

in reading, mathematics, listening, writing and speaking, measured critical thinking skills in everyday life and work context for adults (About CASAS, n.d.).

Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System had competencies that went along with the Adult Washington State Standards. The competencies started with beginning literacy to high school level and transitioned to college-level education. Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System had a total of 180 tests that were customized and measured to fit the adult learning standards (Aligning CASAS Competencies, n.d.). The article listed nine major content areas. The content areas included: basic community, community resources, consumer economics, health, employment, government and law, mathematics, learning and thinking skills, and independent living (CASAS, 2008). “Through the competencies educators and trainers were able to identify curriculum materials that targeted specific learning needs at appropriate instructional levels for adults” (CASAS, 2008 p.2).

About CASAS Research

According to the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System research CASAS was the only adult testing system to be approved and validated by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of labor to assess both English and Spanish

speaking adult speakers. The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System had been backed by 25 years of research and development. The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System helped meet the requirements of state and national initiatives and legislation that have influenced education, training and welfare systems including: Workforce Investment Act, Welfare reform initiatives, School- to- Work- efforts and National Education Goals 2000 (CASAS, n.d.).

The CASAS assessment system recently underwent revalidation and revisions were made. The changes that were added to the CASAS competencies were: Education, financial literacy, health, medical information, media literacy and technology (CASAS Competencies, 2008)

About EASY and the History of EASY

The Easy Academic Success for You English As a Second Language program was adapted to meet the basic needs of adults in everyday survival skills. The EASY ESL program was intended for adult and teenage students learning English as a Second Language. The EASY ESL program came in a two part set. The first six units referred to as EASY ESL Part 1 had the basics of learning greetings, introduction and the calendar. Part 1 was the beginner series. The second 6 units had community essentials. The

EASY ESL was a video-based program of 12 units (Buntz, Hambright & Lee, 2003).

Instructors have used EASY ESL for ABE classes across the nation for many years. The research came from many sources including two respected men. Stephen Krashen and Jim Cummins theories were used with the EASY ESL program. The program correlated with the CASAS competencies in series part 1 and part 2. For example, if a student had a score range of 180 and below he would enter the EASY ESL program at unit 1. The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System competencies also fit all state's published standards. Standards, objectives and materials were listed at the beginning of each lesson plan in a unit (Buntz, et. al, 2003).

About Corrective Reading Research

The Corrective Reading was first developed in 1975 and later revised in 1978 and again in 1990. The Corrective Reading curriculum was a scripted reading intervention program intended for students who are performing below grade level. This comprehensive reading program contained all the five components of reading included: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehensive. The three essential goals for the Corrective Reading program included: reading with accuracy,

developing reading fluency, and building reading comprehension (Florida Center for Reading Research SRA Corrective Reading n.d). The Decoding levels included: A, B1, B2 and C Books. Decoding A Book was 60 words per minute with a 90% accuracy. The B1 Book had 90 words per minute with a 98% accuracy. The B2 Book required 120 words per minute with a 98% accuracy. Level C Book required 130 words per minute with a 98% accuracy. Level C book needed a full year implementation (Florida Center for Reading Research SRA Corrective Reading n.d.).

Summary

Much research has been done to investigate the need for ABE across the country. Millions of people in the United States fell below the basic literacy level. English language learners were a huge population of adults who lacked the basic skills for the workforce.

Research on how to teach adults has also been a huge concern for ABE adult learners. Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System has been the only system to be approved by the U.S. Department of Education to assess native and non native English speakers.

Research had studied the similarities between the CASAS and the EASY ESL curriculum using the Adult Learning Standards. In

the first competency or standard was basic communication.

Communication in interpersonal interactions was in unit part 1 of the EASY ESL curriculum. The basic communication competencies were found in units 1 through 12 (EASY Correlation to CASAS Competencies, 2003). The standards were used to guide instruction for adult learners and targeted specific learning needs. The standards assisted the ESL programs to become more effective by saving time on instructional teaching.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Treatment of Data

Introduction

The researcher investigated the relationship between hours spent in an ABE ESL class and CASAS levels passed as measured by the CASAS pre-test in early fall of 2007 and CASAS posttest in the spring for a 6 month study. The researcher recorded all pre and post tests in reading, writing, listening and speaking. Hours were also recorded on sign in attendance sheets at the beginning of each class. The researcher recorded all in class hours on the WABERS ESL form at the end of each quarter.

Methodology

The qualitative experiment was conducted in Washington State. The researcher gathered the qualitative data from the CASAS pre-test in October and the CASAS posttest in April of 2008. The attendance data was recorded in student files for each quarter.

Participants

The study compared 33 adult learners who attended ABE ESL classes and received in class direct instructional hours. The study was done in a community college in a rural community in Washington State.

The Adult Basic Education classes were located at a local Migrant Head Start Center. The class was a community college ESL course. The class had 6 ESL learning levels among students with 1 instructor and 1 assistant. The Adult Basic Education classes had 2 child care providers to help as well. Most of the adults had children who received child care at the center. The child care was free each night.

All of the adult learners were Hispanic and almost all students worked in some kind of agricultural work but 2. One student was a home maker and married to a retired military officer. The other student worked the night shift at Wal-mart. The majority of the students had college tuition paid for by government scholarships.

The study began the first week of October 2007 and was completed in mid April 2008. The Adult Basic Education class had a total of 36 adult learners; all of the students in the ABE class were used in the study but three. The three students did not stay long enough to be posttested. During the study, half of the students indicated on the demographic worksheet that employment was full-time, if the agricultural season was present and if weather permitted. Of the 33 students, 15 students worked year round.

All but one student represented a low-socio economic level. Students were on various forms of government assistance: housing, free and reduced lunch and breakfast, medical assistance and WIC.

Instruments

The researcher used the CASAS reading, listening, writing, and speaking tests in the project. The students were asked to record the answers on the CASAS TOPS answer sheet for reading and listening. The students were given a raw score that was later converted into a scaled score for each of the assessments and used for CASAS placement and students were given a Washington ESL competency level descriptor for registration purposes. The CASAS testing materials were designed for adult education classes. The state of California along with the U.S. Department of Education Program Effectiveness Panel coordinated adult basic skills through the CASAS National Consortium. Also, local agencies provided feedback to help design CASAS testing materials. The assessments were published by CASAS publications (Aligning CASAS Competencies, 2006).

The CASAS reading Test was a standardized assessment. The tests came in a variety of levels. Some tasks included multi-step directions, written instructions and interpreting manuals and legal forms. The CASAS listening test was a standardized assessment.

The students were asked to record the answers on the CASAS TOPS answer sheet. Students took this part of the assessment with a tape. Students listened to the instructions on the tape and answered the questions from the tape. The instructor dictated three sentences for the CASAS writing section of the pre-test. The instructor used a writing rubric to determine the CASAS ESL writing level. The CASAS oral speaking test consisted of 5 oral questions called an interview. Students were asked questions about work, previous education and why English is important. The oral questions were graded using a CASAS rubric.

Design

The CASAS reading, listening, writing and speaking pre-tests were given to the adult learners on the second week of October. In April, the instructor used the CASAS reading, listening, writing and speaking tests as a posttest to measure the adult learners' academic achievement.

Procedure

All 33 Spanish-speaking students completed registration forms the first three nights of each quarter with the assistance of the instructor. All registration forms were sent back to the college to establish student college identification numbers. All instructors who taught classes were required to check students in the Web-

Based Adult Education Reporting System for testing records and previous quarter hours to determine when to posttest. The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System pre-tests were given by both the instructor and the aide in different rooms of the center. Both individuals were trained to administer and correct the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System assessment. Both the instructor and the assistant were experienced in giving the test.

All instructors were required to log on to the Web-base Adult Basic Education Reporting System website to make sure students did not previously attend other Adult Basic Education classes for the local college. The researcher assumed all students that took the appraisal had only 25 minutes to complete the reading and listening section of the appraisal to prevent maturation of some students' tests. If students were new to the class a reading, listening, oral, and dictation Comprehensive Assessment Student Assessment System appraisals was done for placement for the pre-test for each student. Students were pre-tested according to the competency level of the appraisal results. Students not new to the class were given the next suggested test to identify the appropriate test form which counted as the pre-test for the new fall quarter year. The Adult Basic Education classes were held fall, winter and spring.

The Instructor Briefcase was to verify students were registered for the classes. The briefcase was an on-line data base used for instructors to check all student enrollment for each quarter. The researcher used the data base to check students' history background.

According to the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System English As a Second Language flowchart for testing, a total of 4 pretests was available to students. Students new to the program and not in the system were given a complete appraisal. First students were given 6 oral questions using the oral screening script. After answering the 6 basic oral interview questions on form 20, students who scored 6 or more on the oral questions were given the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System form 20 appraisal pre-tests for reading and listening. If students were unable to answer any of the questions or scored 6 or less on the appraisal from form 20, the instructor gave students 5 practice items from form 27, one on one. Form twenty-seven was used as the whole pre-test and the first 5 as part of a pre-test as an Appraisal. Form 27 was a picture pre-test. Form 27 was a recognition of birthdays, calendar dates and social security numbers. If students found difficulty taking form 27 no further testing was done for a pre-test. This was the end of the appraisal.

Students who completed form 27 easily went on to take Form 31 for reading and Form 51 listening as pre-tests.

The reading and the listening pre-tests were given in small groups. The reading and the listening pre-tests given to students were determined by the raw score and the scaled score of the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Appraisal. Pre-test scores were given as raw scores and converted to scaled scores using the score range levels of the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System chart. Students marked the correct answer by reading the question and filling in the bubble with the correct answer using the answer sheet called, the Tracking of Programs and Students with a number 2 pencil.

The students took the speaking and writing pre-test individually with the same instructor in order to increase the reliability. The speaking pre-test and the writing pre-test were done in a quiet room by the office of the center. The speaking pre-test was scored on how the 5 basic questions were answered and measured by a Comprehension Adult Student Assessment System rubric. The writing pre-test involved the instructor dictating 3 basic sentences in English to students. Each sentence was repeated twice. Students had to write in English what was said by the instructor. Writing samples and speaking samples were collected and filed in a student file for each student. A competency level was

determined for both samples by the instructor using a Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System rubric.

At the center the instructor used the Easy Academic Success for You curriculum on Monday evenings. The instructor had students work on the Easy Academic Success for You curriculum. After 30 minutes of entry task, including conjugating verbs, the instructor taught the entire class with Easy Academic Success for You curriculum using Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol Strategies to help with lesson delivery. Students worked independently and interacted with partners and groups. A total of 120 minutes with a 10 minute break after 60 minutes was used for building background, lesson delivery and student interaction with partners and small group.

On Wednesdays the instructor taught the Corrective Reading curriculum. The instructor had only one assistant to help with the small reading group. All students were tested and placed as measured by the Corrective Reading placement and the Washington Adult Learning Standards Levels. Group A had 11 students placed in Decoding A Corrective Reading text. The other 25 students were placed in Group B and used the B1 Corrective Reading text for the reading group.

In April, the instructor and the assistant used the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System posttest to measure competency levels and achievement gains for each student. The instructor used both fall and spring tests to compare levels of competency on the progress forms. The instructor also counted the hours of instruction time for each student.

Treatment of the Data

In April, the instructor used the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System tests as posttests to measure the adult learners' academic achievement. The posttest was given by the instructor and the assistant so that all the students were tested in the same environment with few distractions.

At the end of the study all hours were recorded for attendance purposes. Students signed in every night for class. If students left early, students signed out on the attendance sheet.

Summary

Adult Learners were given the CASAS reading, listening, writing and speaking pre-tests in October. All the adult learners received similar instruction throughout 2 college quarters. Most students were encouraged to come to class so college tuition could be paid and a scholarship could be awarded for attendance. The instructor recorded all hours of class attendance. In April the students were

given the CASAS posttest. The students' posttest scores were compared to the individual pre-test scores. The student's academic achievement was compared to the amount of time spent in class to the levels passed.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis of the Data

Introduction

The researcher investigated the relationship between hours of in class instruction and tests results as measured by the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System pre-test in October 2007 and posttest in mid April 2008. The researcher post-tested in the areas of reading, listening, speaking and writing. The researcher also investigated scaled score ranges on test results to hours of instruction.

Description of the Environment

The study investigated the relationship between hours of instruction and test results. The study was done in a rural community in northwest Washington. The adult education class had 36 students who attended evening classes. All the students were Hispanic and were English As a Second Language students. The students represented were mostly agricultural workers and had a low social economic status and employed full- time. The tuition was paid for by the government if students received some kind of financial assistance. The college provided free child care services for students who had children. The study began in October 2007 and was completed in mid-April 2008.

The adult education classes had a total of 36 students. Three of the students were not used in the study because the students did not stay long enough to be post-tested. Of the 36 students 2 students paid the tuition of twenty-five dollars. The students who paid the tuition did not qualify to receive the scholarship. The Corrective Reading curriculum and the Easy Academic Success for You curriculum were used in the Adult Education classes.

Research Question

What is the relationship between hours of instruction and progress made for adult ESL students at the community college level?

Results of the Study

Figure 1: CASAS data Pre and Post Scores for the Reading

Student	Pre	Post	Levels Completed	Hours	Met Goal
1	2	4c	2	97	Yes
2	5	5	0	66	Yes
3	4	4c	1	90	Yes
4	4	5c	2	111	Yes
5	6	6	0	72	Yes
6	4	4	1	96	Yes
7	4	4	0	74	Yes
8	4	4	0	90	Yes
9	3	3c	1	72	Yes
10	1	3c	2	75	Yes
11	1	1c	1	129	Yes
12	4	5	2	69	Yes
13	3	3c	1	66	Yes
14	3	3	0	62	Yes
15	4	4	0	111	Yes
16	3	3c	1	73	Yes
17	5	5c	1	63	Yes
18	4	3	-1	49	No
19	6	6c	1	107	Yes
20	3	5c	3	84	Yes
21	3	5	2	83	Yes
22	4	4	0	39	No
23	4	4	0	57	Yes
24	4	3	-1	81	Yes
25	3	4c	2	78	Yes
26	3	3c	1	68	Yes
27	4	4c	1	122	Yes
28	4	5c	2	59	Yes
29	1	2c	2	134	Yes
30	3	3	0	51	Yes
31	4	4	0	51	Yes
32	6	6	0	104	Yes
33	3	4	1	54	Yes

For the CASAS reading table the letter c symbolized students completed the whole level. Eight students completed 2 levels in the posttest. Of the 33 students, 11 passed 1 level and 11 students did

not complete a level. Student 20 completed three levels in CASAS reading. Two students dropped a level in reading.

Figure 2: CASAS data Pre and Post Scores for the Listening

Student	Pre	Post	Levels Completed	Hours	Met Goal
1	3	4	1	97	Yes
2	3	3c	1	66	Yes
3	4	3	-1	90	Yes
4	5	5c	1	111	Yes
5	5	5c	1	72	Yes
6	3	3	0	96	Yes
7	3	3	0	74	Yes
8	3	3	0	90	Yes
9	4	4	0	72	Yes
10	1	-	0	75	Yes
11	1	1c	1	129	Yes
12	3	4c	-1	69	Yes
13	5	4	-1	66	Yes
14	3	3	0	62	Yes
15	3	3	0	111	Yes
16	3	3c	1	73	Yes
17	4	4	0	63	Yes
18	5	5c	1	49	No
19	6	6c	1	107	Yes
20	3	4c	2	84	Yes
21	4	4	0	83	Yes
22	3	3	0	39	No
23	3	3	0	57	Yes
24	3	3	0	81	Yes
25	3	3	0	78	Yes
26	3	3	0	68	Yes
27	3	4c	2	122	Yes
28	5	5	0	59	Yes
29	1	1c	1	134	Yes
30	2	2	0	51	Yes
31	3	3	0	51	Yes
32	5	5c	1	104	Yes
33	4	4	0	54	Yes

In the CASAS listening posttest 2 students completed 2 levels.

Ten students completed 1 level in the CASAS listening posttest. A

huge amount of students 18 did not complete any levels of the

CASAS listening section. Three students made no progress and

dropped a level.

Figure 3: CASAS data Pre and Post Scores for Writing

Student	Pre	Post	Levels Completed	Hours	Met Goal
1	2	2c	1	97	Yes
2	4	4	0	66	Yes
3	4	4	0	90	Yes
4	4	4c	1	111	Yes
5	5	5c	1	72	Yes
6	1	1c	1	96	Yes
7	1	1c	0	74	Yes
8	3	3	0	90	Yes
9	3	3	0	72	Yes
10	1	1	0	75	Yes
11	1	1c	1	129	Yes
12	4	4c	1	69	Yes
13	2	2c	1	66	Yes
14	1	1	0	62	Yes
15	1	1	0	111	Yes
16	3	3	0	73	Yes
17	3	3	0	63	Yes
18	4	4	0	49	No
19	6	6c	1	107	Yes
20	3	3c	2	84	Yes
21	2	2c	1	83	Yes
22	4	4	0	39	No
23	2	2	0	57	Yes
24	1	3	2	81	Yes
25	3	3c	1	78	Yes
26	1	1c	1	68	Yes
27	4	4c	1	122	Yes
28	4	4	0	59	Yes
29	1	1	0	134	Yes
30	2	2	0	51	Yes
31	1	1	0	51	Yes
32	6	6	0	104	Yes
33	3	3c	1	54	Yes

The CASAS writing table showed 2 students that completed 2 levels. Fourteen students completed at least 1 CASAS writing level. On the other hand, 17 students did not complete any levels. There were no students who dropped a level for the CASAS writing posttest.

Figure 4: CASAS data Pre and Post Scores for Speaking

Student	Pre	Post	Levels Completed	Hours	Met Goal
1	2	2	0	97	Yes
2	4	4	0	66	Yes
3	1	1c	1	90	Yes
4	4	5c	2	111	Yes
5	5	5	0	72	Yes
6	1	1c	1	96	Yes
7	1	1	0	74	Yes
8	4	4	0	90	Yes
9	3	3	0	72	Yes
10	1	1	0	75	Yes
11	1	1c	1	129	Yes
12	3	3c	1	69	Yes
13	2	2c	1	66	Yes
14	1	1	0	62	Yes
15	2	2	0	111	Yes
16	3	3	0	73	Yes
17	2	2c	1	63	Yes
18	4	4	0	49	No
19	6	6c	1	107	Yes
20	3	3c	1	84	Yes
21	2	2c	1	83	Yes
22	3	3	0	39	No
23	2	2c	1	57	Yes
24	1	2c	2	81	Yes
25	2	2c	1	78	Yes
26	2	3c	1	68	Yes
27	4	2c	0	122	Yes
28	3	4	0	59	Yes
29	1	3	0	134	Yes
30	1	1	0	51	Yes
31	1	1	0	51	Yes
32	5	5c	1	104	Yes
33	2	2c	1	54	Yes

In this speaking table, of the 33 students, 6 students did not pass any levels but showed some progress. Student 8 did not pass any levels, but had 90 hours of instruction. Student 14 did not pass any levels, but accumulated 62 hours of in class instruction.

Findings

The results indicated that students did not make significant progress in completing ESL levels as measured by the CASAS pre and post tests. The results also indicated that in the study the completion of levels by students was not significantly affected by hours spent in ESL classes. All of the adult students were attending college community classes during the study, but not all of the students met the goal of attending 50 hours or more. The posttests for CASAS indicated that the relationship between hours of instruction and progress made for adult ESL students at the community college level had no effect on levels completed.

Discussion

The results indicated that although the adult students made significant academic progress, the hours spent in in-class instruction did not significantly impact the levels completed of students. All of the students were attending class, but some students did not meet the attendance goal of 50 hours or more from October through April. The instructor noticed that some students were shy and embarrassed to ask questions. Many students asked questions about something that was not understood. This study showed that 50 hours or more of instruction was not enough to

show significant progress. The accumulation of hours of instruction and progress showed not significant gains.

Summary

Students in the adult ESL classroom in this study made progress in learning English as based on the CASAS pre and post assessment scores; the hours spent in class was not directly related to the levels completed at the end of class. My research question was answered as the hours spent in class and levels completed showed no significant gains as measured by the CASAS assessments.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

The researcher investigated the relationship between hours of in class instruction and tests results as measured by the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System pre-test in October 2007 and posttest in mid April 2008. The researcher post-tested in the areas of reading, listening, speaking and writing.

Summary

Adult basic education can be a powerful, life-changing opportunity for the one in six Washington adults who lack the literacy skills needed to succeed as a worker, parent and citizen (SBCC, nd. p.3). Research showed that CASAS was the most widely used system for assessing adult basic reading, mathematics, listening, writing, and speaking (CASAS Competencies, 2008).

In this study the students' hours of instruction were recorded each week in class from October 2007 through April 2008. The instructor taught the adult learners basic reading strategies and life skills. The adult learners' academic progress was measured by the CASAS assessments in October and April. The instructor learned that focusing more on the adult learning standards could have

shown more improvement in the CASAS Posttests. In the future, the instructor would post and explain the adult learning standards before teaching the lesson. The instructor did not see connections between levels passed and hours of instruction.

Conclusions

The CASAS listening posttest table showed the least amount of students who completed a level. The students who did not complete a level were 18 students. The CASAS reading table showed the most gains with a total of 20 students completing at least 1 level.

The CASAS reading posttest showed the most growth with 20 out of 33 students completing at least one level. The most improved student was student 20 completing 3 whole CASAS reading levels in the posttest. Also, student 20 showed growth in all areas of the CASAS testing. Student 12 completed 2 levels in the CASAS reading posttest but had difficulty in the listening posttest with a -1 in listening. All but 2 students met the benchmark of 50 hours of instruction time. In the speaking posttest 16 out of 33 passed a level or more. The ABE class did show learning gains from October to April as measured by the CASAS pre-test and posttest. If all students would have completed

a least 1 level in all areas the CASAS would have been more effective.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends a future study to be done to encourage and empower adults to continue adult education regardless of race, socio-economic status and age. Instructors of adult education should provide adults with a purpose for learning and making learning meaningful in lesson instruction delivery. Adult learners could also be aware of the study to better help the study. Increasing class days per week could be used to better encourage and empower the adult learners to continue adult education regardless of race, socio-economic status and age.

A future study should also take into consideration each of the students' academic histories and share with each student the gains made after the pre-test and posttest. Instructors should set up a mini conference to speak with each student about future goals, difficulties and test scores. Also, students who have special interests about learning new ideas or job skills should share thoughts and comments in a comment box or tell the instructor. This researcher concludes that adult education classes are beneficial for motivated adult learners. The researcher also

concludes that class instruction hours had no effect on levels completed.

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Comment [A1]: these should all be double spaced.

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